

Mental health and suffering in Integrated High School: a state of knowledge

Salud mental y sufrimiento en el instituto: estado actual de los conocimientos

Saúde mental e sofrimento no Ensino Médio Integrado: um panorama do conhecimento

Avelino Aldo de Lima Neto ¹

Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil.

Beatriz Sales de Mendonça ²

Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil.

Alyson Thiago Fernandes Freire ³

Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil.

Robério Nunes Maia ⁴

Universidade Federal da Paraíba, Brasil.

Abstract

This paper provides a state of the art on mental health and suffering in Integrated High School (IHS) within Professional and Technological Education (PTE) offered by the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific, and Technological Education (RFEPCT in Portuguese). Based on searches conducted in the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD in Portuguese) and the CAPES Thesis and Dissertation Catalog (CTD in Portuguese), five studies were selected which discuss, from different perspectives, students' experiences of suffering and care practices within the school setting. The results point to the incipient state of research in the field of Education, the centrality of a socio-historical understanding of distress and mental health, and the importance of pedagogical and institutional support practices for student retention and success. The study concludes that there are significant gaps in academic production, and further research is needed to subsidize educational policies and pedagogical care strategies.

Keywords: Mental Health. Suffering. Professional Education. Integrated High School. State of the art.

¹ Doutor em Ciências da Educação. Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio Grande do Norte. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4810-8742>. E-mail: avelino.lima@ifrn.edu.br.

² Licencianda em Letras Português/Espanhol. Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio Grande do Norte. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2344-1890>. E-mail: beatriz.sales@escolar.ifrn.edu.br.

³ Doutor em Sociologia. Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio Grande do Norte. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6673-6289>. E-mail: alyson.freire@ifrn.edu.br.

⁴ Pós-doutorando no PPGE/UFPB. Doutor em Educação. Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio Grande do Norte. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3468-6122>. E-mail: roberiohc@hotmail.com.



Resumen

Este artículo presenta un análisis de la situación actual en materia de salud mental y malestar en los institutos de enseñanza secundaria integrada (IHS) dentro de la Educación Profesional y Tecnológica (EPT) que imparte la Red Federal de Educación Profesional, Científica y Tecnológica (RFEPCT) en Brasil. A partir de búsquedas realizadas en la Biblioteca Digital Brasileña de Tesis y Disertaciones (BDTD) y en el Catálogo de Tesis y Disertaciones de la CAPES (CTD), se seleccionaron cinco estudios que, desde diferentes perspectivas, abordan las experiencias de sufrimiento de los estudiantes y las prácticas de atención en el contexto escolar. Los resultados ponen de relieve la escasez de investigación en el ámbito de la educación, la importancia de una comprensión sociohistórica del sufrimiento y la salud mental, y la relevancia de las prácticas de atención pedagógicas e institucionales para garantizar la permanencia y el éxito de los estudiantes. Se concluye que persisten importantes lagunas en la investigación académica, lo que requiere nuevos estudios para fundamentar las políticas educativas y las estrategias pedagógicas de atención.

Palabras clave: Salud mental. Sufrimiento. Educación profesional. Escuela Secundaria Integrada. Estado del conocimiento.

Resumo

Este artigo apresenta um panorama atual sobre a saúde mental e o sofrimento emocional no Ensino Médio Integrado (EMI) no âmbito da Educação Profissional e Tecnológica (EPT) oferecida pela Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica (RFEPCT) no Brasil. Com base em pesquisas realizadas na Biblioteca Digital Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações (BDTD) e no Catálogo de Teses e Dissertações da CAPES (CTD), foram selecionados cinco estudos que, a partir de diferentes perspectivas, abordam as experiências de sofrimento dos alunos e as práticas de acolhimento no contexto escolar. Os resultados destacam a escassez de investigação no campo da educação, a centralidade de uma compreensão sociohistórica do sofrimento e da saúde mental e a relevância das práticas de acolhimento pedagógicas e institucionais para garantir a permanência e o sucesso dos alunos. Conclui-se que subsistem lacunas significativas na investigação acadêmica, exigindo estudos adicionais para informar as políticas educativas e as estratégias de acolhimento pedagógico.

Palavras-chave: Saúde Mental. Sofrimento. Educação Profissional. Ensino Secundário Integrado. Estado do conhecimento.

1 INTRODUCTION

Professional and Technical Education (PTE), particularly that offered through the Federal Network for Vocational, Scientific, and Technical Education (RFEPCT in Portuguese)⁵, stands out for adopting a pedagogical and policy approach committed to the principle of the student's Integral Human Development (IHD), through the development not only of technical and professional skills, but also their physical, intellectual, emotional, and social potential (Araújo; Frigotto, 2015). In this context, student well-being becomes a key element not only from a pedagogical perspective but also from political and administrative angles, as it directly impacts both educational processes and student retention and success.

⁵ The RFEPCT comprises the Federal Institutes (IF), the Federal Centers for Technological Education of Rio de Janeiro (CEFET-RJ) and Minas Gerais (CEFET-MG), Colégio Pedro II, the Federal Technological University of Paraná (UFPR), and the technical schools affiliated with the federal universities.

In the epistemic field of PTE, recent studies suggest the need to expand research on health within the institutions comprising the RFEPCT. Pacheco, Nonenmacher, and Cambraia (2020) identified factors of distress related to the school context among graduating students from three Integrated High School (IHS) programs at the Federal Institute of Farroupilha. In this study, difficulties in adapting to the institution and in interpersonal relationships, in addition to bullying and pressure to perform well, emerge as pathogenic experiences. However, the limitations of the sample, acknowledged by the authors, would require the development of new research to obtain more robust data. Silva and Dias (2022), in turn, analyzed students' perceptions of their own illnesses and found a progressive disconnection between the institution and students regarding the subject in question, making suffering a diffuse topic. Sampaio and Lima Neto (2024), meanwhile, identified a lack of studies on health-related pedagogical practices in the context of PTE.

Thus, we became interested in understanding the processes of identifying, addressing, and managing the suffering of IHS students as conceived and practiced in the institutions that comprise the RFECPT. We refer to the understanding that IHS takes work as an educational principle and, therefore, not only prepares professionals for the world of work but also integrates science, culture, and technology (Ramos, 2011) with a view to Integral Human Formation (IHF) and the individual and collective emancipation of individuals.

For this reason, this study aims to provide an overview of the current state of knowledge regarding research studies that have focused on mental health and suffering in the IHS program of the PTE offered by RFEPCT. We do so with the goal of mapping existing scientific literature and critically examining it, in an introductory manner. To this end, we first present the theoretical framework regarding the main categories of the study, namely: mental health and suffering. Next, we describe the methodology adopted for the study in question. In the following section, we present and analyze the results obtained. Finally, in the conclusion, we reflect on the scope of this paper's objectives, acknowledge its limitations, and point out possible avenues for future research.

2 MENTAL HEALTH AND SUFFERING AS INTERPRETATIVE KEYS

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health does not have a unifying concept capable of summarizing its scope, especially in the context of the constant changes in which our social systems are immersed. It is understood, however,

that mental health goes beyond the idea of psychological suffering, as it consists of an individual's state of well-being in their physical, mental, and social aspects, thus encompassing the capacity to develop the skills necessary for healthy social interaction (World Health Organization, 2022).

In this regard, Neves *et al.* (2022, p. 129) emphasize: “in mental health, disorders not only impact life expectancy but often reduce or even deprive people of their productive capacities.” The lens of productivity also carries weight in the scenario under analysis, given the connection between IHS and the world of work. Discussing this topic requires attention to multiple factors that generate suffering and/or illness, such as poverty, lack of access to healthcare, housing, leisure, and education. These elements are further exacerbated in neoliberal agendas through the continuous attack on public policies, materializing what Butler (2009) calls the precariousness of life, which takes on distinct forms as social cleavages such as race, gender, or sexuality, for example, interact with one another (Greenshaw, 1991).

Suffering is the subject of various discourses, which address it in different ways and with different connotations. The discursive diversity surrounding suffering highlights an important aspect: it is a “dense concept” (Herzog, 2019) capable of articulating, combining, and condensing a variety of aspects and experiences of human existence — which makes defining it precisely a difficult task. In this sense, suffering can be better understood as a legitimate form of expression and synthesis of affections, emotions, and uncomfortable and distressing constraints. It is a “subjective response to physiological, psychological, and social events” (Herzog, 2019, p. 02) that stem from diverse and independent sources: we may suffer from chronic illnesses, acute physical trauma, violence, and hunger, as well as from the loss of loved ones, unemployment, insults, unwanted loneliness, romantic or academic frustration, or political repression.

As a result, Philosophy and the Humanities and Social Sciences of the late 20th and early 21st centuries have taken an important step toward interrogating and studying suffering, namely: that the suffering and anguish experienced by individuals are not reducible to strictly personal matters. Many of the forms of suffering experienced are closely linked to the historical and societal situations in which individuals live (Illouz, 2003). Such forms have systemic causes and are linked to shared contextual factors; therefore, they are not strictly and solely “psychological or medical — and thus individual” — but rather, first and foremost, an “interpersonal and social” experience (Kleinman; Das; Lock, 1998, p. 9). This understanding elevates the notion of suffering beyond a sensory

experience and complements and expands the biomedical perspective. Suffering can thus be viewed as a lens through which to interpret the social world, an indicator of the painful effects and discomforts — often suppressed and difficult to interpret and express — that individuals and communities face in their daily lives (Renault, 2017).

Thus, the theoretical-empirical call for the analysis of suffering brings the need for an in-depth understanding of the adverse realities and subjective experiences related to some of the central phenomena of contemporary societies, especially those linked to labor relations, the emergence of new technologies, the rise of social inequality, the exercise of forms of power and domination, armed and territorial conflicts, and the outbreak of epidemics and environmental disasters. Thus, suffering emerges as a key interpretive framework within a critical category, valuable both for the development of a normative theory on contemporary social conflicts (Honneth, 2003) as for socio-anthropological research and analysis on personal and collective afflictions and anxieties — commonly neglected — that are socially produced in the various spheres and contexts of social action (Wilkinson, 2005).

When it comes to reflections that take PTE and, specifically, IHS as a locus of analysis, it is essential to underline studies that conduct a class analysis — a central category for understanding the educational processes experienced by the working classes, who constitute the majority of the public served by RFEPC institutions. Some classic works, such as *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (Sennet; Coob, 1977) and *The Misery of the World* (Bourdieu, 1997), are compelling examples of suffering as a social experience.

Both books strive to elucidate the material and symbolic links that takes social class identities and inequalities — in the contexts of American deindustrialization and neoliberal policies in France, respectively — as experiences marked by hidden wounds and permeated by the painful little hardships of daily life, such as: frustrated expectations of social mobility, the weight of territorial stigmas and social invisibility, feelings of powerlessness in the face of structural constraints, the symbolic violence of institutions such as schools and the justice system, and, finally, the shame and humiliation of unemployment and dependency.

It is worth mentioning, within this same analytical framework, the researches conducted by Christophe Dejours (1992; 2006) on suffering at work. The work of this French physician and psychoanalyst, marked by profound sensitivity and sociological expertise, represents another relevant example of how attention to the issue of suffering can lead us to a grounded and critical understanding of the contexts under investigation. In

this case, Dejours (1992) sheds light on the dynamics between the forms and demands of work organization and the strategies workers employ to cope with them in their daily work lives.

Dejours' (1992) objective is to understand the psychological and mental health outcomes in terms of the preservation of balance or the onset of illness resulting from these dynamics. He notes that many of the organizational structures and policies of contemporary work produce suffering — not only psychological, somatic, and social, but also ethical suffering — insofar as the rationality and the productivist, competitive, and individualizing demands of organizations lead workers to adopt attitudes and make decisions contrary to their values and the well-being of their relationships at work.

In social philosophy, we can mention Axel Honneth (2003), for whom the notion of suffering lies at the heart of his formulation of a Theory of Recognition. For the German philosopher, the suffering of individuals and communities reveals, on the one hand, the failure of relations of recognition in the three spheres (love, law, and esteem) and the concrete, exercise of institutionalized forms of disrespect, thus materializing both in emotional, moral, and social pain and wounds — such as humiliation, abandonment, and invisibility — and in repeated experiences of domestic violence, discrimination, and the denial of basic rights. On the other hand, however, suffering carries a mobilizing and assertive potential to confront and reverse the ways in which the basic need for recognition is ignored or denied. It represents the affective and moral backdrop of the interplay of injustices and violence and, in this way, can drive and motivate political struggles and collective actions for social recognition and respect (Honneth, 2003).

Finally, other indispensable references in addressing the issue of suffering include some recent works in the anthropology of morality and medicine (Das, 1995; Kleinman *et al.*, 1998). In this literature, suffering signifies and encompasses more than physical pain and trauma; it involves everyday processes and ways of life in which personal histories, emotions, health conditions, social structures, morality, and sociopolitical and institutional contexts intertwine in ways individuals' bodies feel and make sense of their afflictions.

Anthropologists such as Arthur Kleinman and Veena Das draw on research and an ethnographic approach that pays close attention to the ways specific social groups experience and express themselves in their local worlds. Thus, they focus intensively on the ways in which people embody and form narratives and concepts about their anxieties and suffering when confronted with critical events (Das, 1995) in their lives, such as material deprivation, chronic illness, war, forced displacement, or sexual violence. For

these authors, investigating suffering means unraveling the complex web that constitutes the moral, political, and cultural nexus in which human pain and afflictions unfold and are processed to constitute different meanings and purposes, which can range from ethical self-transformation and the expansion of feelings of moral community in the face of others' pain to the political instrumentalization and commercialization of suffering by dominant forms of power and their interests (Kleinman *et al.*, 1998).

3 METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objective proposed in this study, we adopted the state of the art as our methodology, as it allows, according to Creswell (2010), the mapping of existing scientific literature and, from an epistemological perspective, justifies the conduct of a given investigation in order to fill any gaps.

Our review of the current state of knowledge was organized into four stages. In the first stage, we selected the search sources, namely: the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD in Portuguese) of the Brazilian Institute of Information in Science and Technology (IBICT in Portuguese) and the Thesis and Dissertation Catalog (CTD in Portuguese) of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES in Portuguese), as they are official repositories for information on dissertations and theses produced within the National Graduate Studies System (SNPG in Portuguese).

The second stage consisted of selecting search terms and other filters for the search, which required the prior establishment of criteria for including the findings in our analysis. In our case, the works should: belong to the field of Education, as this is the epistemological field under discussion; have as their reflective focus IHS students and/or the pedagogical practices directed at them, given our interest in the experiences lived by the students themselves or provided to them through the practices carried out by educators, whether they be faculty, administrative staff, or others; and, finally, have an PTE institution as their empirical locus, because it is this educational modality that is the focus of our intention to understand the problem at hand.

After establishing the criteria, we selected the search terms to conduct the search in the BDTD and CTC databases: "Suffering and Professional Education"; "Professional

Education and Mental Health⁶,” entered in the field titled “Advanced Search,” used together and enclosed in quotation marks. While “Suffering” is a concept with a more restricted scope, “Mental Health” encompasses the dimension of suffering and other phenomena connected to it. Both terms are closely linked, as we demonstrated in the previous section. Also in this stage, we applied a time frame from 2016 to 2025, considering the year theses and dissertations were made available in the aforementioned repositories up to the date of the search, which was March 31st, 2025.

In the third stage, we cataloged the findings in tables containing the title, degree level, author, year of publication, and graduate program. Finally, the last stage consisted of a summary presentation of the works and a preliminary epistemological analysis.

In addition, we note that, in the case of BDTD, the initial search does not allow filtering by graduate program, a feature available in CTD. This resulted in the appearance of numerous dissertations and theses defended in various fields of study. However, only those in line with the inclusion criteria were chosen to undergo abstract review and be effectively selected for the state of the art.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Search conducted in the BDTD

A search conducted in the BDTD database, using the descriptors “Suffering and Professional Education” in the “All fields” filter⁷, yielded 31 results. Most of them referred to suffering in teaching work, nursing education, work in the Psychosocial Care Network, or palliative care. When they referred to PTE as an empirical locus, it did not pertain to IHS, and for this reason, they were excluded from our analysis. Another study, although it had a direct thematic link, had its empirical field conducted at a PTE institution not belonging to the RFEPCT, which justified its removal from the analysis. After reading the titles and abstracts, three findings were selected for their thematic relevance to the subject of this state of the art.

Upon applying the descriptors “Professional Education and Mental Health” to the same repository, thirty-five results were found, many of which were present in the previous

⁶ We point out that the search terms were originally language conveyed in Portuguese and translated here for the English version of this paper. The original search terms were “Sofrimento e Educação Profissional” and “Educação Profissional e Saúde Mental”.

⁷ Includes Title, Author, Year of Publication, Subject, and Abstract.

search. Among the thirty-five, one had already been selected in the prior search. Most addressed the same topics mentioned above, with no direct relation to PTE. Two showed a clearer alignment with the study's criteria; however, they had defended programs in other fields, thus leading to their exclusion⁸.

Table 1 shows the number of results from both searches:

Table 01 – Results in the BDTD

KEYWORDS	RESULTS
Suffering and Professional Education	3
Professional Education and Mental Health	1

Source: own elaboration (2025).

In Table 02, regarding findings related to “Suffering and Professional Education,” we detail the title, the degree level, the author, the year of defense, and the program in which the research took place:

Table 02 – Details of findings related to “Distress and Professional Education” in the BDTD

TITLE ⁹	COURSE	AUTHOR	YEAR OF DEFENSE	PROGRAM
Analysis of anxiety and depression symptoms and their preventive implications among students at the Federal Institute of Espírito Santo - Itapina <i>Campus</i>	Master's Degree	Fabício Zorçal dos Santos	2020	Agricultural Education (UFRRJ)
On the Shores of Desires: (In)visibilities of Dissident Sexualities in Professional Education	Master's Degree	Robério Nunes Maia	2021	Education (UFRN)
Evaluation of student support services and the retention of racial quota students in the integrated technical education program at the Federal Institute of Minas Gerais - Governador Valadares <i>campus</i>	Master's Degree	Graciele Rocha Moraes	2023	Agricultural Education (UFRRJ)

Source: own elaboration (2025).

In a quantitative study, Santos (2020) describes the levels of anxiety and depression among first and final-year students in the Zootecnics and Agricultural Science programs at *the Itapina campus* of the Federal Institute of Education, Science, and

⁸ We refer to the thesis by Ana Maria do Nascimento Moura, titled “Art, Existences, and Resistances: Productions of State, Nation, and Subjectivities in the Context of Performing Arts at IFRN,” defended in the Social Anthropology program at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte in 2022; and to the dissertation by Caetano Roberto Sousa de Freitas, titled “Evaluation of the public educational policy developed in high school integrated with vocational education in Ceará,” defended in the Public Policy program at the Federal University of Ceará in 2024.

⁹ The original titles were translated to English.

Technology of Espírito Santo (IFES in Portuguese). The samples showed considerable levels of anxiety (52.7%) and depression (58.1%), which, according to the author, may escalate to higher percentages. To prevent the situation from worsening, Santos (2020) proposes the implementation of preventive measures and listening spaces, with the aim of preventing academic failure or school dropout.

Maia (2021) addresses dissident sexualities within the pedagogical framework of PTE, focusing on the Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN in Portuguese). The author utilizes a film *corpus* as a means of exploring the issue through an aesthetic lens. Through documentary analysis, the study identified the existence of situations of distress linked to issues of gender and sexuality reported to the Student Assistance and Psychology departments at IFRN.

The dissertation presents a table classifying the complaints received by psychology professionals, among which those related to anxiety, sexuality, and violence or harassment stand out. Thus, in the author's view, the present study contributed to identifying existing gaps regarding issues of dissident bodies and sexuality in the epistemological field in question, as well as to identifying the absence of these issues in the IFRN's Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP), which, in its conception, integrates them in a generalist manner under the category of diversity.

Morais (2023), in turn, aimed to understand the relationships between the actions promoted by the student assistance policy and the retention and educational training of racial quota students at *the* Governador Valadares *campus* of the Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Minas Gerais (IFMG in Portuguese). The participants were second- and third-year students in the IHS who were beneficiaries of racial quotas. The data for this qualitative study were collected through questionnaires and interviews. The author concludes that the Student Assistance Program (PAE in Portuguese), notably the socioeconomic aid, is fundamental to the retention of quota students, in conjunction with the pedagogical support offered by the institution.

4.2 Search in the CTD

In the research conducted in the CTD, using the search terms "Suffering and Professional Education", with quotation marks around both terms, 49 results were found. To refine the results, we filtered by the field of Education, for the reasons previously explained, which yielded 3 studies. When applying the search terms "Professional

Education and Mental Health”, with quotation marks, 88 results were found. By performing the same procedure regarding the field of study, we arrived at 5 studies. The following table details the results:

Table 03 – Findings in the CTD

KEYWORDS	RESULTS
Suffering and Professional Education	3
Professional Education and Mental Health	5

Source: own elaboration (2025).

Table 04 details the results obtained by combining the descriptors “Suffering and Professional Education”, all at the master’s degree level:

Table 04 – Breakdown of findings related to “Suffering and Professional Education” in the CTD

	TITLE	AUTHOR	YEAR OF DEFENSE	PROGRAM
01	On the Shores of Desires: (In)visibilities of Dissident Sexualities in Vocational Education	Robério Nunes Maia	2021	Education (UFRN)
02	Teacher empowerment: reflections on social representations in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic	Luciana Ferreira dos Santos Vaz	2022	Education (UFTM)
03	Black and low-income students: from the peripheries to admission to the medical program at the Federal University of Minas Gerais	Priscila Brito de Farias	2019	Technological Education (CEFET-MG)

Source: own elaboration (2025).

Table 05 details the findings related to the search using the descriptors “Mental Health and Professional Education,” also at the master’s degree level:

Table 05 – Breakdown of findings related to “Mental Health and Professional Education” in the CTD

	TITLE	AUTHOR	YEAR OF CONCLUSION	PROGRAM
01	Contributions of psychology to the training of vocational and technical education teachers: a historical-cultural approach to the reality of Ceará	Natália Holanda Luz do Nascimento	2016	Education (UECE)
02	Our Precious Ones: Gender Violence, Pedagogical Practices, and the Reception of Female Students in Integrated High School at IFRN	Maria Carolina Xavier da Costa	2022	Education (IFRN)
03	Human ethics and market ethics: formative experiences of being a woman in IT	Joseli Christine Mendonça Machado Quaresma	2023	Education (UCS)
04	Professional Development of Teachers at	Camila Lopes	2022	Education

	the Federal Institute of Bahia During the COVID-19 Pandemic (2020–2021): A Study of Integrated High School Education Based on Grounded Theory	da Silva		(UEFS)
05	Mapping of pedagogical practices at the IF SertãoPE Petrolina <i>campus</i> : comprehensive training in interdisciplinary ciranda rhythms for a unique pedagogical project	Érika Vanessa Soares Freire	2021	Teacher Education and Interdisciplinary Practices (UPE)

Source: own elaboration (2025).

Upon reviewing the abstracts of the works listed in Table 05, the following dissertations were excluded by the analysis: Natália Holanda Luz do Nascimento and Camila Lopes da Silva, since, although the setting was an PTE institution, the focus was on the teachers; Priscila Brito de Farias, because the empirical field took place at a federal university, not at an PTE institution; Luciana Ferreira dos Santos Vaz, given the emphasis on teachers' social representations; and Joseli Christine Mendonça Machado Quaresma, because the locus was the LinkedIn social network. Maia's dissertation (2021) had already appeared in the search conducted in the BDTD and was summarized previously. Therefore, we will only present below the studies conducted by Freire (2021) and Costa (2022).

Freire (2021) sought to map the pedagogical practices aimed at the holistic education of students at a *campus* of the Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of the Pernambuco Sertão (IFSertãoPE), proposing an experiment in the collaborative development of what she named the Singular Pedagogical Project (PPS in Portuguese). This is a framework originating in the field of Health — that of the Singular Therapeutic Project (PTS in Portuguese) — and adapted, in the present study, to the domain of PTE. The proposal was to foster dialogue between the two fields, with a view to offering, as a product, a guide for the development of the PPS within the scope of the Federal Institutes.

To develop the framework, the author held six meetings with the research participants, each lasting an average of two hours. During these sessions, group dynamics, drawings, and field journals (from both the participants and the researcher) were used as data collection techniques. The audio from these meetings was transcribed and formed the set of analyzed narratives, which were organized into four themes, with the following focal points: the student's holistic education; interdisciplinarity; network building; and the development of the PPS.

Freire (2021) pointed out, as findings, the existence of isolated pedagogical practices, at odds with the principle of integration advocated by PTE. On the other hand, the experience gained during these meetings demonstrated the possibility of new integrative practices, capable of generating powerful educational processes intertwined not only with formal education but also with care and, therefore, with affection.

In her turn, Costa (2022) sought to understand the connections between the pedagogical practices of the IFRN and the processes of subjectivation among female students experiencing gender-based violence enrolled in the IHS at two IFRN campuses. Initially, in a documentary review, the author found an absence of discussions on gender-based violence in the institutional documents analyzed, as well as on pedagogical practices related to this topic. Subsequently, the author employed the technique of a requested diary to build the data, which was analyzed using Discursive Textual Analysis (DTA). The results highlight that violence experienced both inside and outside of school directly impacts academic performance and leads to discouragement, with harmful consequences for mental health, professional life, and access to higher education.

4.3 Initial discussion of the findings

The studies of Santos (2020), Maia (2021), Freire (2021), Costa (2022), and Moraes (2023) approach the discussions surrounding mental health and suffering in the IHS of the RFEPCT from different yet complementary perspectives. In this direction, we will initially address three points that cut across these findings: the limited number of results in the field of Education; alignment with the perspective of studies on mental health and suffering within the Humanities and Social Sciences; and the connection between health and care in the educational setting, in relation to student retention and success.

First, considering the limited number of findings, as well as the fact that all are at the master's level, it is evident that the topic in question is under-explored and/or that it is perhaps beginning to attract interest in the field of PTE, despite its political and pedagogical relevance.

A clue for possibly understanding this finding lies in the fact that the themes of mental health and suffering do not seem, *a priori*, to have a direct link to the epistemic field of Education. This would explain the low incidence, given that research conducted in graduate programs must align with their research lines — one of the requirements of CAPES' quadrennial evaluation. The topics under discussion are often viewed as subjects

specific to programs in the fields of Health or Psychology. However, understanding the causes of these preliminary results would require further reflection that cross-references the findings of this current state of knowledge with another, conducted specifically within the programs of the two aforementioned fields, for example.

In any case, restricting reflections on the subject under discussion to the fields of Psychology and/or Health not only directly conflicts with the current understanding of the Humanities and Social Sciences outlined in Section 2 regarding the dynamics analyzed, but also contradicts the theoretical perspective adopted by the authors of the findings. This leads us to the second dimension of our analysis, since the presentation in the preceding section allows us to assert that the five dissertations align with the approach of Sennet and Cobb (1977), Bourdieu (1997), Dejours (1992; 2006), Das (1995), Kleinman *et al.* (1998), and Honneth (2003). The findings of this state of the art treat mental health and suffering as socio-historical phenomena, implicated in the material reality of the subjects' lives both within and outside the school environment.

These studies highlight the connections between mental health and other institutions intrinsically linked to the processes of youth subjectivation and their dynamics of recognition (Honneth, 2003), namely: the family, religions, and the State itself as the entity responsible for guaranteeing access to education as a constitutional right, including PTE as an educational modality provided for in the Law on Guidelines and Bases for National Education (Brazil, 1996).

From this perspective, the studies emphasize the various vulnerabilities experienced by IHS students, especially those of a socioeconomic nature (Santos, 2020) and/or those caused by LGBTphobia (Maia, 2021), misogyny (Costa, 2022), or racism (Morais, 2023). Thus, the studies highlight the social dynamics of the precariousness of life (Butler, 2009) in an intertwined manner, which simultaneously alerts us to the need to analyze mental health from an intersectional perspective (Greenshaw, 1991), framing the dynamics of suffering according to the social markers of difference.

Finally, we emphasize that, in all of the studies, there is a convergence between health and education through the lens of care, manifested in practices of acknowledging suffering and/or violence. Among these practices, listening stands out, whether carried out by education professionals themselves or experienced through student social networks, such as student councils, collectives, or groups of friends. In this regard, the intersection between health and care can take institutional forms, such as those implemented by

Student Assistance, the Psychology Service, or the Technical-Pedagogical Teams, whether jointly or separately.

In this sense, the five findings are unanimous in affirming that the coordination of these institutional sectors – in connection with faculty members, in promoting inclusive pedagogical practices capable of listening to suffering – is essential to promoting student retention and success at IHS. Notably, this reality is most tangible in the case of students affected by the forms of vulnerability mentioned earlier, which cause specific forms of distress, requiring distinct mental health care strategies within the PTE setting.

5 CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to provide a state of the art review of researches focused on Mental Health and suffering in PTE. This study sought to map existing scientific literature on the topic and problematize it within the field of Education, albeit in a preliminary manner.

The state of the art was conducted in BDTD and CTD repositories. In both of them, the descriptors “Suffering and Professional Education” were applied, and subsequently, “Mental Health and Professional Education.” In the BDTD, the results indicated the existence of five studies, two of which were excluded because they were defended in programs outside the field of Education. In the CTD, eight results were found in the field of Education, five of which were excluded.

After the exclusions, the works of Santos (2020), Maia (2021), Freire (2021), Costa (2022), and Morais (2023) were presented and briefly analyzed. Initially, we found that there are few studies on the topic, which may be related to CAPES’ evaluation criteria — a hypothesis that would require further research, which is beyond the scope of this reflection. A second finding stated was the authors’ understanding of mental health and suffering as macrostructural socio-historical phenomena that affect IHS students through various institutions — family, religions, the State — in an intersectional manner. Finally, the studies highlighted the importance of the link between health and care, through institutional initiatives or those led by the students themselves, which have an impact on the retention and success of vulnerable students in IHS.

It is acknowledged, as a limitation of the study, that restricting the search to Education programs excluded research on topics closely related to this state of knowledge. In the initial search, studies conducted at PTE institutions were identified, but

these had been carried out in programs in other fields, including and especially in the field of Teaching, which offers a national *stricto sensu* program focused on training staff working in various PTE networks¹⁰, in addition to the RFEPECT. It is also possible that other dissertations and theses were made available in BDTD and CTD after the date of the search that gave rise to this reflection.

As potential pathways for further exploration, and to address this limitation, we suggest conducting another state of the art review that includes programs from other areas of the National National Postgraduate Education System (SNPG in Portuguese), which will also provide additional elements for considering other significant variables, such as regional diversity.

Finally, it is necessary to emphasize that investment in research of this nature aligns with the political-pedagogical importance of the topic, given that its results can provide RFEPECT institutions with empirical material to create and/or improve their mechanisms for identifying, addressing, and managing suffering in the IHS, in line with pedagogical practices committed to the IHF.

REFERENCES

ARAÚJO, Ronaldo Marcos de Lima; FRIGOTTO, Gaudêncio. Práticas pedagógicas e ensino integrado. **Revista Educação em Questão**. maio/ago. 2015. v. 52, n. 38.

BOURDIEU, Pierre (org.). **A miséria do mundo**. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1997.

BUTLER, Judith. **Frames of War**. When is life grievable? London/New York: Verso. 2009.

BRASIL. **Lei nº 9.394, de 20 de dezembro de 1996**. Estabelece as diretrizes e bases da educação nacional. Disponível em: <<http://portal.mec.gov.br/seed/arquivos/pdf/tvescola/leis/lein9394.pdf>>. Acesso em: 04 mar. 2025.

COSTA, Maria Carolina Xavier da. **Nossas preciosas**: violência de gênero, práticas pedagógicas e acolhimento de mulheres estudantes no ensino médio integrado no IFRN. 2022. 198 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação Profissional) – Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio Grande do Norte, Natal, 2022.

CREENSHAW, Kimberle. Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. **Stanford Law Review**, v. 43, n. 6, pp. 1241-1299, jul. 1991.

¹⁰ We refer to the Graduate Program in Professional and Technological Education (PROFPTE).

CRESWELL, John Ward. **Projeto de pesquisa:** métodos qualitativo, quantitativo e misto. Tradução: Magda França Lopes. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2010.

DAS, Vëena. The Anthropology of Pain. *In*: DAS, Vëena. **Critical events:** an anthropological perspective on contemporary India. New Delhi/Oxford: Oxford University Press; 1995.

DEJOURS, Christophe. **A loucura do trabalho:** estudo de psicopatologia do trabalho. São Paulo: Cortez, 1992.

DEJOURS, Christophe. **A banalização da injustiça social.** Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2006.

FREIRE, Érika Vanessa Soares. **Cartografia de práticas pedagógicas no IFSertãoPE Campus Petrolina:** a formação integral em compassos de cirandas interdisciplinares para um projeto pedagógico singular. 2021. 162 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Formação de Professores e Práticas Interdisciplinares). Universidade de Pernambuco, Petrolina, 2021.

HERZOG, Benno. **Invisibilization of Suffering:** The Moral Grammar of Disrespect. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

HONNETH, Axel. **Luta por Reconhecimento.** São Paulo: Editora 34, 2003.

ILLOUZ, Eva. **Oprah Winfrey and the Glamour of Misery:** An Essay on Popular Culture. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003.

KLEINMAN, Arthur; DAS, Vëena.; LOCK, Margaret. **Social Suffering.** University of California Press: Berkely, 1998.

MAIA, Robério Nunes. **Nos litorais dos desejos:** (in)visibilidades das sexualidades dissidentes na Educação Profissional. 2021. 234f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação) - Centro de Educação, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, Natal, 2021.

MORAIS, Graciele Rocha. **Avaliação da assistência estudantil e a permanência de estudantes cotistas raciais do ensino técnico integrado do Instituto Federal de Minas Gerais - campus Governador Valadares.** 2023. 85 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação Agrícola) - Instituto de Agronomia, Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro, Seropédica, RJ, 2023.

NEVES, Antonio; ISMERIM, Augusto.; BRITO, Bruna.; COSTA, Fabrício Donizete da.; SANTOS, Luckas Reis Pedroso dos.; SENHORINI, Mario.; JUNIOR, Nelson da Silva.; BEER, Paulo.; BAZZO, Renata.; GONSALVES, Rodrigo.; COELHO, Sania Pitta.; CARNIZELO, Viviane Cristina Rodrigues. A psiquiatria sob o neoliberalismo: da clínica dos transtornos ao aprimoramento de si. *In*: SAFATLE, V.; SILVA JÚNIOR, N.; DUNKER, C. (Orgs) **Neoliberalismo como gestão do sofrimento psíquico.** Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2022. p. 125-175.

PACHECO, Fabiane do Amaral; NONENMACHER, Sandra Elisabet Bazana; CAMBRAIA, Adão Caron. Adoecimento mental na Educação Profissional e Tecnológica: o que pensam os estudantes concluintes de cursos técnico integrados. **Revista Brasileira da Educação Profissional e Tecnológica**, [S. l.], v. 1, n. 18, p. e9173, 2020. DOI:

10.15628/rbept.2020.9173. Disponível em:
<https://www2.ifrn.edu.br/ojs/index.php/RBPTE/article/view/9173>. Acesso em: 25 maio.
2025.

RAMOS, Marise. O currículo para o Ensino Médio em suas diferentes modalidades: concepções, propostas e problemas. **Educ. Soc.**, Campinas, v. 32, n. 116, p. 771-788, jul.-set. 2011.

RENAULT, Emmanuel. **Social suffering**: sociology, psychology, politics. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

SAMPAIO, Ana Kamily de Souza; LIMA NETO, Avelino Aldo. As práticas pedagógicas em saúde na educação profissional: reflexões introdutórias sobre o estado da arte. **Revista Brasileira da Educação Profissional e Tecnológica**, [S. l.], v. 2, n. 24, p. e15506, 2024.

SANTOS, Fabrício Zorzal dos. **Análise dos sintomas de ansiedade e depressão e seus desdobramentos preventivos entre os alunos do Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo – Campus Itapina**. 2020. 100 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação Agrícola) - Instituto de Agronomia, Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro Seropédica, 2020.

SENNETT, Richard; COBB, Jonathan. **The hidden injuries of class**. Londres. Cambridge Press, 1977.

SILVA, Marcel Freire da; DIAS, Vagno Emygdio Machado. Educação integrada e adoecimento estudantil na Educação Profissional e Tecnológica. **Revista Brasileira da Educação Profissional e Tecnológica**, [S. l.], v. 2, n. 22, p. e11670, 2022. DOI: 10.15628/rbept.2022.11670. Disponível em:
<https://www2.ifrn.edu.br/ojs/index.php/RBPTE/article/view/11670>. Acesso em: 25 mai.
2025.

WILKINSON, Ian. **Suffering**: a sociological introduction. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. **World mental health report: Transforming mental health for all**. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2022.