

Elderly public servants: assessment of their satisfaction with quality of life at work

Servidores públicos idosos: avaliação da sua satisfação com a qualidade de vida no trabalho

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ABSTRACT

This work aims to test the Walton Model based on the perception of quality of life (QWL) of elderly employees of the state government of Amazonas. Furthermore, the model's predictive capacity to explain the satisfaction of public servants with QWL will also be analyzed. This research presents a quantitative approach in which the questionnaire represents the eight dimensions of Walton's model. Data collection occurred electronically by sending the Google Forms link to all state elderly servers. Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The results show that the dimensions of the Walton Model that most impact the overall QWL perceived by state government employees are balance, work relevance, and professional growth, respectively. On the other hand, social integration negatively impacts general QWL. Furthermore, it was found that the Walton Model can explain more than 73% of the overall QWL. The main theoretical contributions of this work fall on the test of the nomological validity of Walton's model, on the study that addresses elderly public servants who are little studied and presents specific and pertinent considerations on the support and rejection of the hypotheses that represent the eight dimensions of the Walton model.

Keywords: Quality of life at work. Public servants. Elderly employees. Satisfaction. Walton Model.

RESUMO

Este trabalho tem como objetivo testar o Modelo Walton baseado na percepção de qualidade de vida (QVT) de idosos servidores do governo do estado do Amazonas. Além disso, também será analisada a capacidade preditiva do modelo para explicar a satisfação dos servidores públicos com a QVT. Esta pesquisa apresenta uma abordagem quantitativa em que o questionário representa as oito dimensões do modelo de Walton. A coleta de dados ocorreu de forma eletrônica, por meio do envio do link do Google Forms para todos os servidores de idosos do estado. Os dados foram analisados por meio de modelagem de equações estruturais. Os resultados mostram que as dimensões do Modelo Walton que mais impactam a QVT geral percebida pelos servidores do governo estadual são equilíbrio, relevância no trabalho e crescimento profissional, respectivamente. Por outro lado, a integração social impacta negativamente a QVT geral. Além disso, constatou-se que o Modelo Walton pode explicar mais de 73% da QVT geral. As principais contribuições teóricas deste trabalho recaem no teste da validade nomológica do modelo de

Walton, no estudo que aborda servidores públicos idosos pouco estudados e apresenta considerações específicas e pertinentes sobre o apoio e rejeição das hipóteses que representam as oito dimensões do modelo Walton.

Palavras-chave: Qualidade de vida no trabalho. Servidores públicos. Funcionários idosos. Satisfação. Modelo Walton.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Among the various topics that demand attention in people management, quality of life at work (QWL) has grown significantly in recent years. Therefore, this topic is the subject of much research that seeks to understand and measure employees' perceptions of their well-being and their satisfaction with the quality of life at work (Ribeiro, Shimosaka & Costa, 2015).

The business environment increasingly realizes the need for QWL management within organizations (Garcia, 2007), and companies need to generate satisfaction for their employees, both in the work environment and the work itself (Doudaran et al., 2021; Pereira, Leitão & Ramos, 2022).

Furthermore, work represents a large portion of people's time, becoming part of their daily lives, increasing the dynamics of social and personal relationships (Borges & Henig, 2020).

However, QWL is a relatively new topic within companies and society. Around 50 years ago, it was realized that applying QWL in the corporate environment directly affected the effectiveness of the activities carried out by employees and their corporate performance (Siqueira et al., 2021). Although some consider that QWL emerged from Elton Mayo's studies in the 1920s (Daehn, 2020), it was only in the 1970s that the movement for QWL emerged in the USA, primarily derived from the success of Japanese companies and, consequently, due to the need for better competitiveness for North American companies (Siqueira et al., 2021). Furthermore, in this era characterized by "standard employment," QWL was an essential tool for improving workers' lives within organizations (Warhurst & Knox, 2022).

In Brazil, attention to QWL is even more recent, but the interest shown in carrying out studies and research is very significant (Fialho, Mafra & Silva, 2017), and its growth is credited to the emergence of factors such as inadequate working conditions, employee dissatisfaction and psychological problems (Garcia, 2017, Silva Junior et al., 2012).

Today, companies need to implement projects and processes that effectively generate positive results on the perception of QWL by their employees (Doudaran et al., 2021; Ribeiro, Shimosaka & Costa, 2015). Currently, QWL is considered fundamental to the success of organizations (Sabonete et al., 2021) in their quest to present better results and achieve their objectives (Borges & Henig, 2020). The management of employee satisfaction and, consequently, their motivation and the influences on their performance are a concern for managers (Bichett & Vargas, 2021; Doudaran et al., 2021; Pereira, Leitão & Ramos, 2022).

In the case of education, the work of professionals is related to the training of individuals through the construction of knowledge, reflecting on society as a whole (Santana et al., 2012).

Recently, studies have been conducted to measure perceived QWL in different public administration spheres. At the municipal level, Bichett and Vargas (2021) researched the QWL as perceived by municipal employees. Correa and Pinheiro (2023) researched QWL in federal institutes. In the case of university professors, researchers Lopes-Pereira et al. (2023) studied QWL at a federal university in the state of Goiás. Regarding public servants with disabilities, Amâncio and Mendes (2023) studied their perception of QWL in the Federal University of Viçosa. Furthermore, at the state level, Piacentini and Winck (2023) studied teachers from municipal public education networks in the State of Rondônia to – among other objectives – assess their perception of QWL.

Another phenomenon observed nowadays is the aging process in several countries, including Brazil (Ribeiro, Shimosaka & Costa, 2015). This creates a tendency for the elderly population to increase in the population composition of countries. In Brazil, the expectation is that we will have the sixth-largest elderly population in the world in 2025 – aged 60 or over (Ferreira, Cunha & Menut, 2010), and this is the segment of the population that shows the most significant growth (Cunha Filho, 2020). From this age on, most people still have a high level of autonomy, despite illnesses and some physical and psychological weaknesses (Cunha Filho, 2020).

In addition to the aging of the population in general, this phenomenon also occurs in the case of public servants, with the retirement age of male public servants rising from 61 to 62 years old and in the case of women from 58 to 59 years old, and in recent years reaching 60 years (Cunha Filho, 2020).

The most commonly used model by researchers on QWL and by managers who implement QWL within organizations is the Walton Model (1973). This comprehensive model covers aspects related to labor legislation, legality, the safety of the work environment and infrastructure, as well as social factors such as life outside of work, relationships between employees, the perception of the importance of their work, and the company's image.

Thus, the eight dimensions of this model can represent a broad set of aspects related to the employee's experience in their work environment (Cunha Filho, 2020).

This work aims to test the nomological validity of the Walton Model based on the perception of satisfaction of state employees in Amazonas with their quality of life. Furthermore, the nomological validity of Walton's model will also be analyzed.

The justification for choosing the topic lies in its importance in academic research and within organizations (Correia, 2021). Furthermore, although there is research on the motivation of elderly employees to work and their specific demands, work on the QWL of elderly workers is still little explored (Fialho, Mafra & Silva, 2017).

In theoretical terms, Walton himself (1973) describes that in addition to the development of the model itself, studies on the relationships of the eight components with the level of satisfaction in general as well as with the perception of well-being, are desirable, in addition to those dimensions that may not apply to company employees.

Regarding practical implications, for companies to improve their employees' perception of QWL, they need to have tools to evaluate the results of their actions (Ribeiro, Shimosaka & Costa, 2015).

The same occurs with older public servants. Only by understanding the factors that contribute to increasing your perception of QWL is it possible to develop and implement policies to make better decisions and improve the execution of activities that affect your perception of QWL (Ribeiro, Shimosaka & Costa 2015).

These processes are critical because the implementation of QWL has been generating a competitive advantage for organizations (Correia, 2021), allowing them to achieve their objectives (Borges & Henig, 2020; Garcia, 2017), and its benefits are reflected for both employees and managers (Siqueira et al., 2021)

Other aspects to be explored based on the research results are the possibility of preventing factors that can reduce the feeling of well-being, as well as the perception of QWL by workers (Sousa, Ribeiro & Bortoloni, 2021). Managers can make changes to the organization based on employees' opinions about QWL (Mariwa et al., 2021).

Finally, this study concerns the perception of QWL in the public service environment, which has peculiarities about the professional development of employees and their careers, which are part of QWL models (Daehn, 2020).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Quality of work life

Quality of life at work can be conceptualized as management aimed at the well-being of the company's employees, which is represented by the diagnosis, execution, control, and evaluation of actions, projects, and processes. QWL concerns worker satisfaction through their working conditions and the humanization of work relationships (Cunha Filho, 2020; Osman, Omar & Elsayed, 2022). It is related to the perception of employees based on their experience of working within an organization (Sabonete et al., 2021).

QWL is also a way of innovating in people management and a new way for managers to consider people and their work (Sabonete et al., 2021). It is a management instrument whose primary focus is on offering employees a satisfactory work environment (Siqueira et al., 2021; Sulistiasih & Widodo, 2021).

The concept of QWL must be understood in several aspects that complement each other to form the employee's perception of satisfaction based on their experiences within the organization. Therefore, aspects of personal life outside the organization also need to be considered, in addition to aspects of safety, health, and personal relationships related to their professional activities. QWL is then formed by social, personal, psychological, and legal aspects present in and also resulting from the work environment (Calixto, 2020; Cunha Filho, 2020; Lustosa et al., 2021; Osman, Omar & Elsayed, 2022).

QWL can be understood as a guideline to balance employees' demands concerning their personal and social aspects and, at the same time, managers' business interests (Silva et al., 2021). Employees have different career motivations and objectives, and QWL seeks to meet their needs, generating greater satisfaction (Siqueira et al., 2021).

QWL deals with the well-being of people in their work environment (Calixto, 2020). Among the aspects considered, the appropriate organization of the workspace stands out, which must be efficient in terms of productivity and service provision. They also need to be safe and comfortable, generating well-being for employees (Ribeiro, Shimosaka & Costa, 2015; Sulistiasih & Widodo, 2021). QWL is the result of the comprehensive experiences of workers within companies (Cunha Filho, 2020) and involves different approaches to new ways of organizing work (Lustosa et al., 2021) through support for healthy lifestyles, leisure, integration of families into the company, a set of benefits for employees, and conditions of physical facilities, among others (Calixto, 2020; Cunha Filho, 2020; Osman, Omar & Elsayed, 2022; Pereira, Leitão & Ramos, 2022).

On the other hand, the complexity of adequately implementing QWL programs within companies must be considered because, on many occasions, the interests and objectives of managers and workers are different (Calixto, 2020).

Effectively, employee satisfaction is related to their satisfaction at work, which necessarily involves meeting their needs, whether they are related to aspects of resources and materials or whether they refer to social aspects in their work environment and even outside (Pereira, Leitão & Ramos, 2022; Ribeiro, Shimosaka & Costa 2015).

Another result arising from adequate QWL management is the level of motivation of employees and their level of perception of belonging to the organization (Borges & Henig, 2020; Doudaran et al., 2021), as well as a reduction in the accident rate, level of complaints, and absenteeism (Ghasemi et al., 2021; Pereira, Leitão & Ramos, 2022).

Currently, QWL seeks to understand the factors that interfere with workers' satisfaction with their well-being and the organization's internal environment, expanding its search for external factors related to their social life (Maia, Araújo & Alloufa, 2012).

About the public service environment, stress, a backlog of work, and a lack of infrastructure, among others, generate poor performance on the part of the employee. Furthermore, the quality of service to the general public will also be affected (Borges & Henig, 2020). Despite the importance of QWL, it appears that it is still not considered a necessity in most public bodies in Brazil (Borges & Henig, 2020).

2.2 Elderly employees

Aging is a progressive process the body goes through over time, influencing the human's psychological, social, biological, physiological, and functional aspects (Ribeiro, Shimosaka & Costa, 2015). Individuals over the age of 65 are considered elderly as long as they reside in developed countries. For people aged 60 or over who live in other non-developed countries, this age already characterizes them as elderly (Ferreira, Cunha & Menut, 2010).

With the increase in life expectancy, greater access to information, and the adoption of healthier lifestyles, the number of elderly workers has been growing. Therefore, working relationships with elderly employees require forms of adaptation by companies to this new reality (Calixto, 2020).

In the case of worker aging, it is necessary to consider not only the physical aspects but also the social and psychological aspects and their consequences on the work environment, which are generally negative (Cunha Filho, 2020).

Concerning work that seeks to understand and evaluate the QWL of elderly employees, Calixto (2020) discovered that teachers in the municipal education network in the city of Ponta Grossa-PR are generally satisfied with their QWL, despite their dissatisfaction with health and social assistance services, with financial resources and extra benefits.

2.3 Walton's model

For Walton (1973), the main problem faced by workers is their dissatisfaction with work, regardless of the position held (Santos, Lima & Silva, 2021), and managers constantly seek to reduce this phenomenon, both concerning their team and themselves (Biscaia, 2021).

In the 1970s, Walton had a more comprehensive view of QWL, in which it should not only be concerned with the legal, regulatory, labor, or claims aspects but also with the subjective and social aspects of work relations – social integration, autonomy, and company image, among others (Garcia, 2007).

Thus, Walton (1973) developed a complex model formed by eight dimensions that represents the relationships that occur between motivation, self-esteem, and satisfaction of workers, considering their desires and needs together with their perception of social responsibility (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017; Paula et al., 2022).

However, depending on the context in which the company and its workers are inserted, other dimensions can be inserted to make the model more representative of the quality of life perceived by employees (Maia, Araújo & Alloufa, 2012). The eight dimensions that form Walton's model are presented below.

2.3.1 Fair and Adequate Compensation

This dimension concerns the compensation obtained for the work performed. It can be salary, allowances, bonuses, and the like (Garcia, 2007). Despite the simplicity of the concept, it has different meanings in terms of justice considering different groups of workers, as there are no objective parameters to evaluate compensation (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017; Garcia, 2007). This occurs mainly when comparing payment for other activities (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017), in addition to the requirements necessary to carry out the work and qualifications and training required to carry out the activities (Biscaia, 2021), employee experience and responsibilities of their activities (Maia, Araújo & Alloufa, 2012; Walton, 1973).

It is also necessary to verify whether the compensation for workers with the same activities and standards is equivalent (Garcia, 2007; Walton, 1973).

2.3.2 Safe and Health Conditions

Working conditions are related to taking care to expose employees to situations that are harmful or even dangerous to their health (Biscaia, 2021).

Examples of this dimension can be observed in terms of defined working hours with extra payment for hours worked above the agreed amount and restrictions on workers with specific characteristics, such as age, for example (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017), in short, taking into account physical conditions capable of minimizing the possibility of illnesses, accidents or injuries occurring (Biscaia, 2021, Garcia, 2007), in addition to providing physical infrastructure to carry out activities (Maia, Araújo & Alloufa, 2012; Walton, 1973).

2.3.3 Use and Development of Capacities

This factor represents the level to which the employee uses and develops their capacities to carry out their activities. It involves maintaining or increasing your self-esteem and perception of the challenges you face in your work (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017).

The importance of this factor results from the division of work into increasingly smaller parts. Workers have less and less autonomy, and their work is increasingly divided (Walton, 1973).

Aspects that represent this dimension are the need for the employee to use different skills knowledge about the entire process that involves their activities, being responsible – at least in part – for their activities, having autonomy over their work in terms of planning and implementation (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017; Biscaia, 2021; Garcia, 2007) and about obtaining information about the role of their work and the results of their actions (Walton, 1973).

2.3.4 Opportunity for Professional Growth and Security

This factor is related to the possibility of employees – both in the technical and administrative areas – reaching high levels in their jobs and advancing in their careers (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017). This represents an appreciation of your work in the perception of employees and opportunities for advancement, considering the chosen career (Biscaia, 2021). The focus shifts from tasks and activities to the employee's career (Garcia, 2007).

It is directly linked to the incentive for the worker to continue updating and improving their technical capacity (Garcia, 2007), resulting in the possibility of reaching higher positions and having greater stability in their job (Maia, Araújo & Alloufa, 2012).

In the case of security, it is represented by the employees' perception of security about their employability in the organization and their income from their work (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017).

2.3.5 Social Integration in the Organization

This factor represents how work relationships occur within the company (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017) and what possibilities the worker has for expressing themselves in the work environment (Garcia, 2007).

Examples that represent this dimension can be identified as an environment in which people are accepted regardless of their race, sex, religion, or physical appearance, among other aspects, the possibility of mobility between positions and career opportunities for everyone, support groups between employees and a sense of community in which they consider relationships beyond groups and professional contact (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017; Biscaia, 2021). These factors are related to social equality, forms of relationships, and a sense of community (Maia, Araújo & Alloufa, 2012; Walton, 1973).

2.3.6 Constitutionalism – Constitutional Guarantees

This dimension is related to the level of protections employees perceive against undue, unfair, and arbitrary behavior by those representing the company (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017). It is characterized by the company's respect for worker rights and the way to guarantee them for everyone (Biscaia, 2021).

Aspects such as freedom of expression differing from bosses without the occurrence of reprisals, compliance with labor legislation, equal treatment among all employees, and privacy are examples of this dimension (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017; Garcia, 2007; Walton, 1973).

2.3.7 Balance - Work and Total Life Space

This dimension is related to employees' perception of balance between their private and professional lives. More specifically, work must play a balancing role in the employee's personal life (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017). Long working hours can create problems in relationships between workers and their families. Work should not absorb workers' energy and time (Biscaia, 2021) so that employees can dedicate themselves to other responsibilities or tasks (Maia, Araújo & Alloufa, 2012; Walton, 1973).

Factors such as business trips, work shifts, changes of residence in different cities or regions, etc. represent the balance between personal and professional life (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017; Garcia, 2007).

2.3.8 Social Relevance of Work in Life

This factor is represented by the positive or negative aspects resulting from the business activities of the organization where the employee works, notably the socially responsible parts (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017). More specifically, it concerns the social roles – beneficial or harmful – resulting from the organization's activities (Biscaia, 2021).

Aspects such as pollution, ethical issues involving relationships with consumers, and relationships with the societies in which the company operates, among others, are examples of this factor (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017), which are capable of impacting employees' self-esteem both positively and negatively (Biscaia, 2021; Garcia, 2007). This occurs because the worker feels responsible for the company's activities and impacts on society and its products and services (Maia, Araújo & Alloufa, 2012; Walton, 1973).

2.4. Justification for choosing the Walton model

As previously seen, the Walton Model covers several facets of workers' perceptions of satisfaction with their quality of life at work. Therefore, it is more efficient than others in measuring the quality of life at work

(Biscaia, 2021), continuing to be able to measure QWL today. The focus of thousands of studies in companies and universities in recent decades (Santos, Lima & Silva, 2021) is the most commonly used model among QWL researchers (Maia, Araújo & Alloufa, 2012) and organizational psychologists (Calixto, 2020). It should also be noted that the Walton Model has great validity in different types of research and a high level of applicability (Sabonete et al., 2021).

Furthermore, in addition to covering various aspects of quality of life at work, this model also presents complex relationships that can be positive; for example, if there are challenging activities for the worker, aspects such as professional improvement or satisfaction with work tend to increase. On the other hand, functional norms can prevent problems with bosses or rights violations but can also make activities less challenging (Garcia, 2007).

The Walton Model prioritizes aspects such as compensation, worker safety, and physical conditions. It is evaluated as the one that best describes topics on quality of life at work (Biscaia, 2021), as it encompasses everything from the most basic needs to the highest levels of needs (Maia, Araújo & Alloufa, 2012).

The Walton Model should be used because, although eight dimensions concisely form it, it is very comprehensive with a high level of applicability (Ayres, Nascimento & Macedo, 2017).

Thus, due to its breadth, effectiveness, and scope in which it considers both internal and external factors in addition to being able to be applied in different organizational, cultural, and social contexts (Sabonete et al., 2021), the authors chose this model as the theoretical basis for measuring the perception of quality of life at work among elderly employees in the public administration of the State of Amazonas..

3 PREPARATION OF HYPOTHESES AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE HYPOTHETICAL MODEL

From the description of the Walton Model, it is possible to develop hypotheses that represent the relationships between the eight dimensions of this model.

Hypothesis 1: Capacities positively impact the general satisfaction perceived by state employees in Amazonas in relation to quality of life at work.

Hypothesis 2: Professional growth positively impacts the general satisfaction perceived by state employees in Amazonas in relation to quality of life at work.

Hypothesis 3: Balance positively impacts the general satisfaction perceived by state employees in Amazonas in relation to quality of life at work.

Hypothesis 4: Constitutionalism positively impacts the general satisfaction perceived by state employees in Amazonas in relation to quality of life at work.

Hypothesis 5: Social integration positively impacts the general satisfaction perceived by state employees in Amazonas in relation to quality of life at work.

Hypothesis 6: Social Relevance positively impacts the general satisfaction perceived by state employees in Amazonas in relation to quality of life at work.

Hypothesis 7: Compensation positively impacts the general satisfaction perceived by state employees in Amazonas in relation to quality of life at work.

Hypothesis 8: Safety and health conditions positively impact the general satisfaction perceived by state employees in Amazonas in relation to quality of life at work.

Figure 1 below represents the hypothetical model used to represent the Walton model.

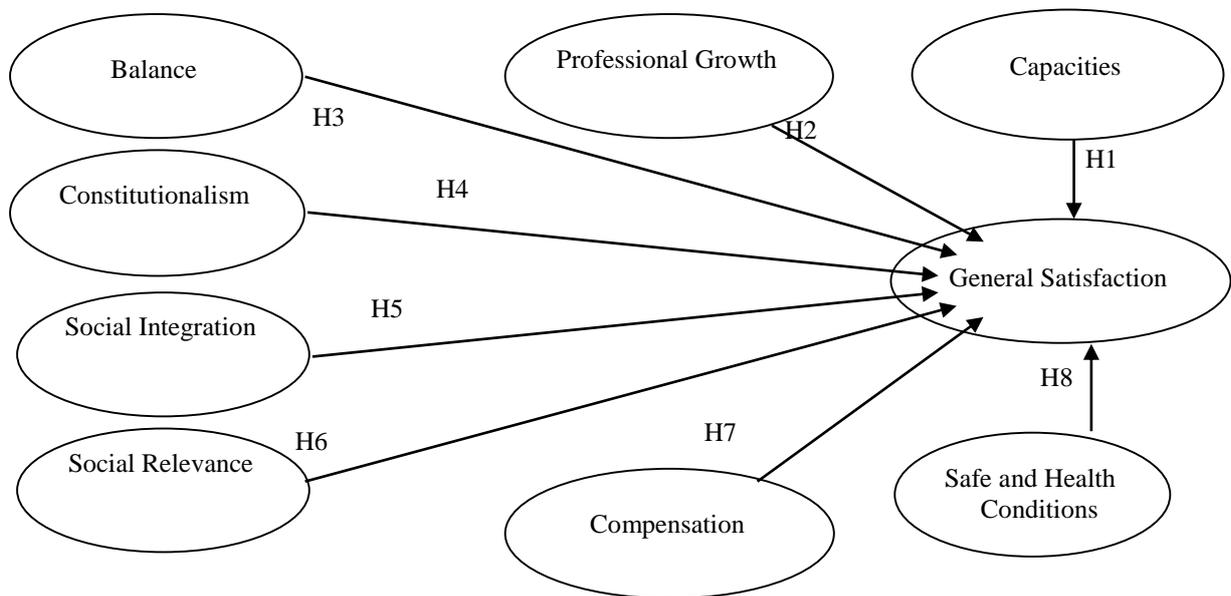


Figure 1. Hypothetical model developed for this research.

Source: elaborated by the authors.

4 METHOD

Considering the research objectives, a quantitative, descriptive approach was chosen. The research audience consists of public servants over the age of 60 who remain working in the direct administration departments of the Government of Amazonas. Therefore, we sought to interview this audience, comprised of 5,262 employees to whom the questionnaire was emailed.

The questionnaire is an adaptation of the eight QWL factors and the dimensions that each of them covers, according to the model developed by Walton (1973). As a reference for constructing the questionnaire, the studies of Biscaia (2021), Coelho, Harb, and Veiga (2017), Maia (2012), and Mesquita (2018) were analyzed. In addition, one question also assessed the general perception of quality of life among by state government employees.

To identify the employee's perception of QWL, an interval scale from 0 to 10 points was adopted, with anchors ranging from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied." 11-point scales are more appropriate than those with seven or five options and represent the same size among all scaling options between 0 and 10 (Rocha et al., 2022). Another factor to be considered is that this type of scaling allows a better perception of options for respondents (Fornell et al., 1996).

The questionnaires were administered online (via the Google Forms platform) and were forwarded to elderly employees of the State Administration of Amazonas, asking them to fill in the access link.

The sample size was estimated because the 33 quantitative variables in the questionnaire are part of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Therefore, it meets the criterion of having at least 10 cases for each quantitative variable in the questionnaire, which would be a minimum of 333 cases, according to Hair et al. (2014). The number of respondents reached 371, meeting the sample size criterion.

5 DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Sample characteristics

The sample consisted of 371 active elderly public servants, 204 (55.0%) female, 163 (43.9%) male, and four (1.1%) of other genders. Of these, 211 (56.9%) are aged 60 to 65, and 146 (39.4%) are aged 66 to 70. Only 14 (3.8%) employees are over 70 years old. As for other characteristics, these civil servants are mostly married (50.4%), have completed secondary education (59.3%), and have served in public service for over 30 years.

5.2 Unidimensionality, reliability and validity

To test a hypothetical model, it is necessary to ensure that the constructs composing it are formed by only one unidimensional dimension. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is carried out to investigate this condition for each of the constructs.

When analyzing Table 1, it is possible to verify that all the constructs that form Walton's QWL model are unidimensional. For these results to be considered valid, it is also necessary to confirm that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sample adequacy value is equal to or greater than 0.700, that the Bartlett Sphericity Test value is equal to zero, and that correlations between all indicators of a construct are statistically significant (Hair et al., 2014). All these assumptions were met.

The value of the explained variance is greater than the minimum of 60%. The component value of all indicators is greater than 0.700, and the communality value is greater than 0.500.

All of these values were met, except for the fourth indicator of the compensation construct – in italics in Table 1 – which was removed from subsequent analyses. A new EFA was carried out for the compensation construct, and the results are adequate.

Furthermore, the reliability of each scale used to measure the constructs must be investigated. Thus, the authors calculated Cronbach's Alpha, whose values must be at least 0.700 (Hair et al., 2014). The results in Table 1 show that all scales are reliable, with the lowest value achieved being 0.880.

It is also necessary to test the model to determine whether the constructs present convergent validity, verified through the average variance extracted (AVE) values and the composite reliability (CC). In the first case, the minimum acceptable value is 0.500; for CC, the minimum appropriate value is 0.700 (Hair et al., 2014). Convergent validity was achieved for all constructs – see Table 1.

Table 1 - Results of the EFA, reliability, and validity of the scales.

Construct	Items Description	Standardized Factor Loading
Capacities V.E.= 78.52% KMO= 0.845 A.C.= 0.909 A.V.E.= 0.175 C.C.= 0.909	Satisfaction with the freedom of action you have to perform your work.	0.838
	Satisfaction with the extent to which your skills are used at work.	0.825
	Satisfaction with the information you have to carry out tasks.	0.909
	Satisfaction with the feedback received on the results of the task performed.	0.808
Professional Growth V.E.= 77.49% KMO= 0.836 A.C.= 0.901 A.V.E = 0.704 C.C.= 0.904	Satisfaction with the Institution's opportunities to develop new knowledge and/or skills related to their role.	0.910
	Satisfaction with the possibilities you have to apply the knowledge acquired (in the courses taken) to develop your activities.	0.879
	Satisfaction with the opportunities you have to "grow" as a human person in carrying out your work.	0.835
	Satisfaction with the security you have regarding your future in this Institution.	0.720
Balance V.E.= 81.39% KMO= 0.847 A.C.= 0.919 A.V.E.= 0.760 C.C.= 0.926	Satisfaction with the space of time (duration) that work occupies in your life.	0.920
	Satisfaction with the time left after work to dedicate to leisure and/or family.	0.936
	Satisfaction with the balance between work and leisure that you have.	0.910
	Satisfaction with the Institution's respect for your privacy after the working day.	0.701

Constitutionalism V.E.= 81.59% KMO= 0.829 A.C.= 0.924 A.V.E.= 0.756 C.C.= 0.926	Satisfaction with respect for your rights established by law.	0.883
	Satisfaction with the freedom to claim their rights is guaranteed by law.	0.891
	Satisfaction with the Institution's commitment to implementing his and my colleagues' suggestions.	0.894
	Satisfaction with the rules and routines being clearly transmitted by the Institution.	0.806
Social Integration V.E.= 82.37% KMO= 0.855 A.C.= 0.924 A.V.E.= 0.767 C.C.= 0.929	Satisfaction with the social relationship you maintain with your superiors.	0.879
	Satisfaction with the social relationships I maintain with my work colleagues.	0.911
	Satisfaction with the climate (friendships, respect, good relationships, etc.) you perceive in your workplace.	0.906
	Satisfaction with the way conflicts are resolved in the Institution.	0.803
Social Relevance V.E.= 78.84% KMO= 0.803 A.C.= 0.909 A.V.E.= 0.716 C.C.= 0.910	Satisfaction with the image that the Institution conveys.	0.800
	Satisfaction with the opportunity to help other people while working.	0.903
	Satisfaction with the importance of the activities carried out for society.	0.874
	Satisfaction with the Institution and its responsibility towards employees.	0.802
Compensation V.E.= 88.96% KMO= 0.760 A.C.= 0.938 A.V.E.= 0.836 C.C.= 0.939	Satisfaction with the salary you receive.	0.918
	Satisfaction when comparing the salary with the activities performed.	0.948
	Satisfaction when comparing salary with the salary of co-workers.	0.875
	You are entitled to satisfaction with the benefits (health plan, insurance, etc.).	Not Available
Safe and Health Conditions V.E.= 73.66% KMO= 0.813 A.C.= 0.880 A.V.E.= 0.662 C.C.= 0.884	Satisfaction with working hours.	0.598
	Satisfaction with the resources that the Institution offers to carry out activities.	0.844
	Satisfaction with the degree of personal safety (absence of risk of accidents) you feel when carrying out your activities.	0.849
	Satisfaction with the workplace's physical conditions (lighting, ventilation, noise, etc.) and adaptations (ramps, elevators, signage).	0.926

Notes. 1) V.E. is the variance explained by the factor. 2) KMO is the value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test. 3) A.C. is the value of Cronbach's Alpha. 4) A.V.E. is the average variance extracted. 5) C.C. is composite reliability.

Source: research data.

Discriminant validity is another aspect that needs to be examined and occurs by comparing the correlation values of two constructs with the square root values of each AVE (Moura, 2010). In this case, when the correlation value is lower than the AVE values, there is discriminant validity between the two indicators (Hair et al., 2014). Table 2 displays the results achieved.

Table 2 - Discriminant Analysis

Construct	Capacities	Professional Growth	Balance	Constitutionalism	Social Integration	Social Relevance	Compensation	Safe and Health Conditions
Capacities	0.846							
Professional Growth	0.860	0.839						
Balance	0.740	0.672	0.872					

Constitutionalism	0.795	0.800	0.735	0.869				
Social Integration	0.830	0.701	0.801	0.800	0.876			
Social Relevance	0.819	0.665	0.731	0.798	0.903	0.846		
Compensation	0.472	0.457	0.282	0.394	0.240	0.182	0.914	
Safe and Health Conditions	0.682	0.741	0.699	0.689	0.588	0.508	0.334	0.814

Note. The bold value on the main diagonal of the table represents the square root value of the AVE.

Relationships that violate discriminant validity are italicized and underlined.

Source: Research data.

Of the 28 correlations between all the constructs, two showed a violation of discriminant validity – the relationship between the constructs capacities and professional growth and social relevance and social integration.

Model testing and hypothesis verification occur through structural equation modeling. The authors chose the Maximum Likelihood estimation method, which generates suitable results for samples that do not have a normal distribution (Hair et al., 2014). Table 3 and Figure 2 display the results achieved for SEM

Table 3 - Presentation of research hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	Test T Significance	Result
H1 – Capacities -> general satisfaction perceived QWL.	-0.138	0.365NS	Rejected
H2 – Professional Growth -> general satisfaction perceived QWL.	0.351	**	Supported
H3 – Balance -> general satisfaction perceived QWL.	0.537	***	Supported
H4 – Constitutionalism -> general satisfaction perceived QWL.	0.108	0.260NS	Rejected
H5 – Social Integration -> general satisfaction perceived QWL	-0.390	**	Rejected
H6 – Social Relevance -> general satisfaction perceived QWL.	0.448	***	Supported
H7 – Compensation -> general satisfaction perceived QWL.	0.062	0.219NS	Rejected
H8 – Safe and Health Conditions -> general satisfaction perceived QWL.	-0.003	0.970NS	Rejected

Notes. *** Significant relationships at the 0.001 level.

** Significant relationships at the 0.01 level.

NS Non-significant relationships.

Source: research data.

Figure 2 also presents the results considering the nomological chain of the Walton model and the effect on the general satisfaction of state employees in Amazonas with their quality of life at work.

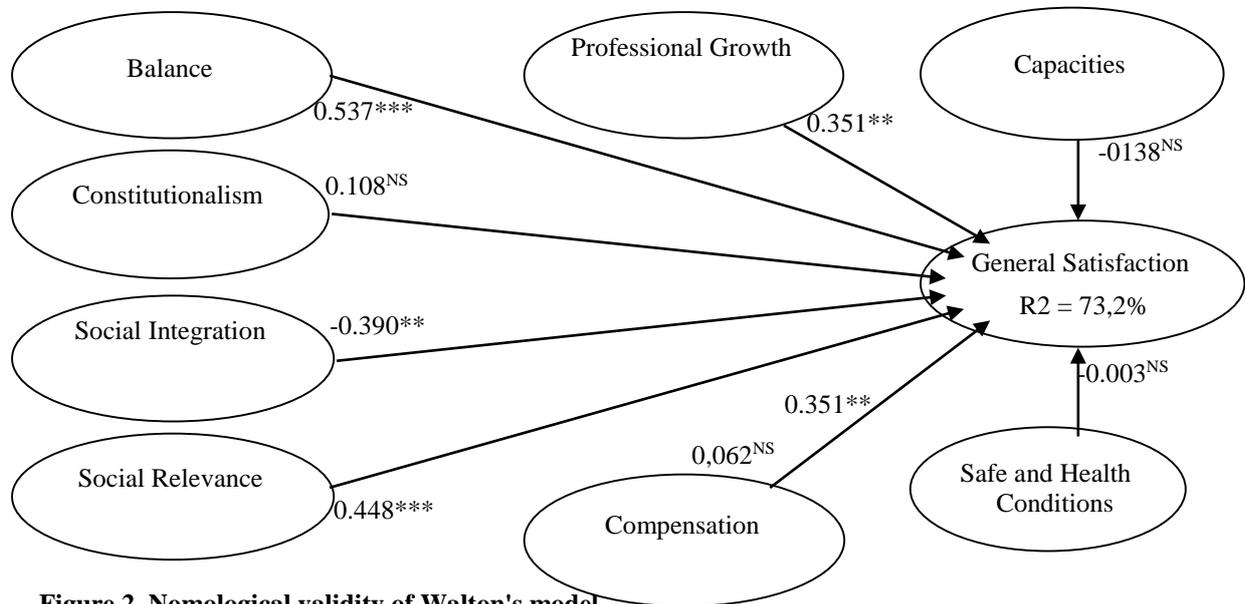


Figure 2. Nomological validity of Walton's model

Notes. *** indicates that the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.001 level.

** indicates that the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

NS indicates that the relationship is not statistically significant.

Source: research data.

From the analysis of Table 3 and Figure 2, it can be concluded that three of the eight hypotheses examined in this study were supported and five were rejected. Although the relationship between social integration and general satisfaction is statistically significant, the direction of this relationship is inversely proportional, contrary to what hypothesis H5 advocates.

In addition to the values and significance of the relationships between the constructs, SEM also generates the values of the fit indices that indicate the validity of the tested model. Table 4 below presents the results achieved.

Table 4 - Model fit indices

Fit Indices	Value	Reference value*
X ² /df (Normad Chi-Squared)	4.045	≥ 3 or values up to 5 in complex models
IFI (Incremental Fit Index)	0.895	≥0.90
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.895	≥0.90
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	0.878	≥0.90
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.091	≥ 0.07 or slightly higher values in complex models

Note. * values for a sample with more than 250 elements and at least 30 observed variables.

Source: research data.

The model comprises 33 observed variables, and the sample has 371 cases. Therefore, this model can be classified as highly complex (Hair et al., 2014).

Although the RMSEA value was slightly higher than expected, for complex models, the reference values can be evaluated more flexibly (Hair et al., 2014). Therefore, the other indices can be considered adequate.

6 DISCUSSION

Analyzing the results described above, it is possible to conclude that the dimensions of the Walton Model that most influence satisfaction with QWL among state employees in Amazonas are balance, relevance of work, and professional growth. It is noteworthy that social integration also influences QWL in a statistically significant way, but in a negative way.

These results differ from those found by Sabonete et al. (2021), who studied QWL in the perception of employees at a military institute in Mozambique. In this case, the items that contributed most to satisfaction with QWL were constitutional guarantees and opportunities for growth and security.

Hypothesis H1, which stated that the skills of public servants in Amazonas had a positive impact on general satisfaction with QWL, was rejected. This is due to the often "fixed" nature of positions in the public service, which leads to the division of tasks and sometimes underutilization of the capabilities of employees, who may only need to use some of their technical and personal skills. Furthermore, the lack of autonomy of employees to solve problems or make decisions in their work, depending on the approval of higher hierarchies, is also a factor to be considered.

The results indicate that professional growth positively affects the general satisfaction perceived by state employees in Amazonas in relation to QWL, confirming hypothesis H2. This can be explained by the fact that the state of Amazonas has a system of positions, careers, and salaries that values merit and career progression, regardless of political influences. Furthermore, the job stability of public servants, especially the more experienced ones, contributes to this positive perception of QWL, as observed in this research. Job security is an important factor that influences the impact of professional growth on employee satisfaction.

Another result achieved shows that balance has a positive impact on the general satisfaction perceived by state employees in Amazonas about QWL, supporting hypothesis H3, which presented the highest value for the path coefficient ($\beta = 0.537$), that is, this is the construct – balance between professional and personal life – with the greatest impact on the general QWL perceived by state employees in Amazonas.

This aspect can be explained by the nature of the work of employees in the state of Amazonas, which is largely carried out at their place of work and does not require shifts, differentiated work schedules, or the need to extend the working day due to the delivering products to customers or providing services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It should also be noted that, depending on their life experience, older people can balance their work needs with their lives outside the workplace.

Hypothesis H4, which suggested a positive impact of constitutionalism on the satisfaction of workers in the state of Amazonas about quality of life at work (QWL), was rejected. This was due to employees' perception that, despite job stability, they face arbitrary and unfair behavior by management, which is more common in the public sector due to the influence of political and ideological interests at higher hierarchical levels.

Although the social integration construct has a statistically significant impact on the perception of QWL of state employees in Amazonas, this impact is negative. Therefore, hypothesis H5 is rejected. The explanation for this result is that this construct is the least related to QWL according to employees' perceptions. Thus, factors relating to employees' ability to express themselves and the quality of the working relationships within their work environment do not generally reflect positively on QWL.

The study results demonstrate that social importance positively impacts the general satisfaction of public employees in Amazonas about QWL. This means that when employees perceive their work has a significant social impact, they tend to be more satisfied with their QWL. This can be explained by the fact that the public sector serves both people who can pay for services and people who cannot, and many of these services have the potential to improve people's lives, whether through education, professional growth, health or self-esteem. Therefore, hypothesis H6 of the study is confirmed.

This research found that compensation does not have a statistically significant and positive impact on QWL, leading to the rejection of hypothesis H7. This may result from the financial problems in most Brazilian states, perhaps in all of them. The COVID-19 pandemic also generated an increase in costs for the public administration in general, and, therefore, even though civil servants' compensation was out of date over the years, there was no salary increase for state civil servants in Amazonas.

Cunha Filho (2020) also found dissatisfaction with compensation, whose studied workers were dissatisfied with their pay, generating demotivation about the activities to be performed.

Hypothesis H8, which suggested that health and safety conditions would positively impact the general satisfaction perceived by public servants in Amazonas about QWL, was rejected. This may be explained by the fact that the study occurred at the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, and respondents still faced a high risk of

contagion. Because the research focused on older employees, all of whom were considered high-risk, they were more sensitive to health and safety issues. Therefore, even with professional activities carried out remotely in some situations, there was still a risk of exposure to the public and, consequently, to the virus.

Regarding the variance explained in the QWL perceived by state employees in Amazonas - despite the rejection of some hypotheses - it appears that the value exceeds 70%. This value can be classified as substantial (Chin et al., 1998) – the highest level of this classification, or moderate (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2011) – the second-highest level.

These results, with their considerable value for the explained variance, give rise to several practical implications arising from this work, which will be described in the final considerations.

7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In academic terms, this study deepens knowledge about the application and testing of the Walton Model with elderly public servants. Although there are studies on QWL in the public service, and some of them adhere to the Walton Model, no studies were found that sought to investigate the nomological validity of this model with elderly employees through structural equation modeling.

Another contribution of this research concerns validating the scales of the eight dimensions of the Walton Model for elderly public servants.

Still, in theoretical terms, this research presents exciting findings about both the supported and the rejected hypotheses. Elderly employees, in theory, have a greater balance between professional and personal life, as well as relevance to work and the possibility of professional growth – perhaps many of them are already “at the end” of their careers, which also strongly impacts satisfaction with QWL.

The substantial value achieved for the variance explained for the QWL perceived by state employees in Amazonas reinforces the possibility of practical application of the results. As the constructs balance, the relevance of work and professional growth presented a significant level of the QWL perceived by the state of Amazonas; they should be the managers’ priorities.

Regarding the balance between professional and personal life, the aspects that already exist and provide this positive perception by employees must be maintained and improved. Thus, for example, specific training on this type of relationship with the participation of psychologists – among other professionals – can help state public servants further improve their perception of professional balance.

The state of Amazonas has implemented a job, career, and salary plan. Thus, it is possible to identify aspects that can be improved to generate a better perception of professional growth, such as the criteria used to encourage employees to improve in technical terms and the possibility of reaching higher levels in their careers.

The relevance of work is part of the daily lives of state public servants. Projects and processes can be implemented to facilitate the perception of the relevance of the work by state public servants. For example, improving internal communication to show the impact of these employees’ activities on people’s lives can further increase the effect of work relevance on perceived QWL.

The authors also consider that other actions regarding other constructs should not be disregarded, such as regarding the safety and health of employees, and can be implemented to improve the perception of these aspects. This will probably make this construct statistically significant about the perception of QWL in general by state employees in Amazonas.

Regarding the study’s limitations, the results cannot be generalized to all state employees in Amazonas, as many employees did not participate in the survey and may have different opinions from those who responded.

It should also be considered that there may have been embarrassment in answering these questions about QWL within the state and using their functional emails. Thus, the interviewees may have felt fear or apprehension in expressing their genuine opinion about their perception of QWL, as it involves the actions of the Amazonas state government leaders.

As a suggestion for future work, this study measured satisfaction with general QWL in relation to the dependent variables. Other variables can be useful to expand knowledge on this topic, such as the individual’s perception of well-being. The analysis of QWL and well-being is complementary, since it is impossible to understand the quality of life at work without understanding the perception of personal well-being within the organization.

Finally, it is suggested to carry out qualitative research on the meaning of each of the constructs of Walton's model, mainly for the construct's capacities and professional growth, work relevance, and social integration that present a violation of discriminant validity.

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