

## Teacher identity in times of exhaustion: between pedagogical practice and the burnout society

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### Abstract

The present study investigated the impacts of the demands of a society oriented toward overproduction on teaching practice, with emphasis on workload overload and its effects on teachers' professional identity. A qualitative approach is adopted, grounded in an integrative literature review and in the articulation of Byung-Chul Han's writings on contemporary society with the normative guidelines for teacher education established in Resolutions CNE/CP No. 02/2015, No. 02/2019, and No. 04/2024. The objective was to understand how pressure for high performance and the logic of self-exploitation influence teachers in their emotional, physical, and pedagogical dimensions. The results show that the intensification of tasks and the demands for continuous professional development contribute to teacher burnout, culminating in the loss of satisfaction with teaching, the weakening of pedagogical relationships, and the erosion of professional identity. Teaching has therefore been impacted by a performance-driven culture that encourages incessant productivity, making it difficult to achieve a balance between work and well-being. It is concluded that there is an urgent need to reform institutional practices and to implement teacher support policies.

**Keywords:** Teaching working conditions; occupational stress; professional identity; educational legislation; society.

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## A identidade docente em tempos de exaustão: entre a prática pedagógica e a sociedade do cansaço

### Resumo

O presente estudo investigou os impactos das exigências da sociedade voltada à superprodução na prática docente, com ênfase na sobrecarga de trabalho e seus efeitos na identidade profissional dos professores. Adota-se uma abordagem qualitativa, fundamentada em uma revisão integrativa de literatura e na articulação dos escritos de Byung-Chul Han acerca da sociedade contemporânea com as diretrizes normativas sobre formação docente estabelecidas nas Resoluções CNE/CP nº 02/2015, nº 02/2019 e nº 04/2024. O objetivo foi compreender como a pressão por alto desempenho e a lógica da autoexploração influenciam os docentes em suas dimensões emocional, física e pedagógica. Os resultados evidenciam que a intensificação das tarefas e as demandas por atualização contínua contribuem para o esgotamento dos professores, culminando na perda da satisfação com o ensino, no enfraquecimento das relações pedagógicas e no desgaste da identidade profissional. A docência tem sido impactada, portanto, por uma cultura do desempenho que estimula a produtividade incessante, dificultando o equilíbrio entre trabalho e bem-estar. Conclui-se que há uma necessidade urgente de reformulação das práticas institucionais e da implementação de políticas de suporte ao professor.

**Palavras-chave:** Condições do trabalho docente; estresse profissional; identidade profissional; legislação do ensino; sociedade.



## La identidad docente en tiempos de agotamiento: entre la práctica pedagógica y la sociedad del cansancio

### Resumen

El presente estudio investigó los impactos de las exigencias de una sociedad orientada a la superproducción en la práctica docente, con énfasis en la sobrecarga laboral y sus efectos en la identidad profesional del profesorado. Se adopta un enfoque cualitativo, fundamentado en una revisión integrativa de la literatura y en la articulación de los escritos de Byung-Chul Han sobre la sociedad contemporánea con las directrices normativas sobre la formación docente establecidas en las Resoluciones CNE/CP n.º 02/2015, n.º 02/2019 y n.º 04/2024. El objetivo fue comprender cómo la presión por el alto rendimiento y la lógica de la autoexplotación influyen en los docentes en sus dimensiones emocional, física y pedagógica. Los resultados evidencian que la intensificación de las tareas y las demandas de actualización continua contribuyen al agotamiento del profesorado, culminando en la pérdida de la satisfacción con la enseñanza, el debilitamiento de las relaciones pedagógicas y el desgaste de la identidad profesional. La docencia ha sido impactada, por lo tanto, por una cultura del rendimiento que estimula la productividad incesante, dificultando el equilibrio entre trabajo y bienestar. Se concluye que existe una necesidad urgente de reformular las prácticas institucionales y de implementar políticas de apoyo al profesorado.

**Palabras clave:** Condiciones de trabajo docente; estrés profesional; identidad profesional; legislación educativa; sociedad.



## Introduction

Teacher fatigue is a recurring issue in the educational field, widely discussed in light of its multiple determinants and impacts. Factors such as excessive workload, precarious teaching conditions, bureaucratic demands that do not align with the true teaching role, and a lack of professional recognition contribute significantly to the physical and mental exhaustion of teachers. In this context, academic literature highlights that mental burnout affects not only the health and well-being of teachers but also compromises the quality of education and influences the (re)configuration of professional teaching identity (Reis et al., 2006). It is, therefore, necessary to analyze how such structural and subjective factors shape the professional experience of teaching and their potential impacts regarding motivation, performance, and the teacher's professional identity.

Based on the articulation of Han (2015) with the current legislation guiding the Brazilian educational field, teacher fatigue can be analyzed from the perspective of the achievement society (*Leistungsgesellschaft*), in which subjects are constantly pressured to maximize their productivity and efficiency within the professional sphere. It is argued that contemporary exhaustion and fatigue are not merely physical but primarily psychic, attributing individual responsibility for professional success to individuals while masking the structural precariousness of education (Han, 2015). In this context, various professionals find themselves subjected to an excessive workload, as well as an educational model that demands continuous self-management, adaptation to new methodologies, and the fulfillment of increasingly intense and unachievable bureaucratic demands.

In the case of teachers, this situation manifests in the demand for constant innovation, the precarization of working conditions, and the internalization of guilt for their own exhaustion. The consequence of this process is the emptying of the teaching identity, which becomes marked by a feeling of insufficiency



and professional helplessness (Han, 2015). For the philosopher, such a form of exhaustion is directly linked to the “positivity of excess”—that is, a society that does not necessarily impose rigid external prohibitions but encourages permanent self-control and an incessant search for high performance in all areas of life. In this environment, teacher fatigue is configured not only as an individual problem but as a symptom of a system that values productivity above health and psychological well-being.

A subject’s professional identity is a multifaceted concept that can be approached from various theoretical perspectives, such as psychology, philosophy, anthropology, and, especially, sociology. Each area offers a unique contribution to the understanding of identity; therefore, we will focus on one of the existing approaches, namely the sociological approach proposed by Dubar (2005).

According to the French sociologist Dubar (2005), identity is seen as a dynamic phenomenon, considered a product of social interactions and socialization processes in which the subject, through social relations and cultural contexts, constructs and redefines their understanding of self. In this sense, professional identity is not a fixed or intrinsic characteristic of the individual, but rather a process in constant reconstruction, influenced by historical, institutional, and relational factors. A professional identity emerges from the intersection between the individual’s subjective trajectory and the social representations attributed to occupations in the environment in which they are inserted. Thus, identity construction occurs through a dual movement: on one hand, the interiorization of expectations and norms established by the social environment surrounding the individual; on the other, the affirmation of a singular identity resulting from individual experiences and reflections contained within each being (Dubar, 2005).

Professional identity is continuously negotiated, reaffirmed, or transformed based on interactions and challenges faced throughout professional and social life, influenced by both primary socialization processes and the learning and



adaptations acquired in the specific professional contexts of each subject. Based on studies concerning the “burnout society” described by Han (2015), professional identity becomes unstable and fragile, as teachers frequently face challenges that undermine their sense of belonging and recognition, permeating a feeling of insufficiency and wear and tear as a result of the incessant search for excellence and adaptation to structural changes in education.

Given this scenario, the following problem arises: What are the relationships between the overproduction and overperformance of contemporary society and professional teaching identity? This study aims to analyze the effects of the demands of a society focused on overproduction on the practice of teaching and the possible influences on the constitution of teaching identity, highlighting the positioning of legislation regarding this scenario. This research is justified by the need to dismantle and analyze this theme due to its strong and direct influence on the experience of teachers and, consequently, on the teaching-learning process of students in teacher training courses.

Initially, the identity constitution of the teacher and their initial training are discussed, considering Dubar’s (2005) identity perspective. Next, an analysis of the main legislations concerning teacher training and their positioning regarding teaching identity was conducted. Subsequently, based on Han (2015), the relationship between educational demands and teacher burnout was examined, highlighting the challenges of hyper-productivity.

It is concluded that, to face this reality and strengthen teaching identity, it is fundamental to promote well-being and autonomy in professional practice, recognizing the teacher as a historically situated subject whose life trajectory and social context directly influence their pedagogical practice. Furthermore, a critical reflection on educational and institutional policies is necessary, so that these not only value teaching identity in its multiple dimensions but also have concrete effects on improving working conditions and professional well-being. In this way, building a more sustainable environment for teaching depends on



strategies that consider both the individual aspects of professional identity and the structural dynamics that affect education.

### Methodological Design

The present study is grounded in a qualitative approach, adopting Han (2015) to conduct a trenchant critique of the subjective and social configuration of contemporary society. This configuration is characterized by the replacement of the negativity of repression, typical of Foucault's disciplinary societies, with the positivity of performance, self-exploitation, and the hyperactivity present in modernity. From this perspective, we analyze how the imperative of unlimited productivity and self-management leads teachers to psychic and physical exhaustion, generating psychopathologies such as depression, burnout, and anxiety. According to the author, these are understood as emblematic manifestations of the achievement society (*Leistungsgesellschaft*) (Han, 2015).

As evidenced by Han (2015), the concept of the "achievement society" describes a social model in which the subject is no longer coerced by external forces but begins to exercise a regime of self-exploitation, motivated by ideals of productivity, efficiency, and constant self-surpassing. In this context, the individual is called upon to assume the role of an "entrepreneur of the self," which, paradoxically, leads to physical, emotional, and psychic exhaustion. In the educational field, this manifests through the constant demand for pedagogical updating, increased bureaucratic responsibilities, and the internalization of an often unachievable ideal of productivity (Han, 2015).

Furthermore, a documentary analysis of the educational regulations governing initial teacher training in Brazil was conducted, with emphasis on resolutions issued by the National Council of Education (CNE). Initially, Resolution CNE/CP No. 02/2015 was examined, which established the National Curricular Guidelines for the training of basic education teachers, promoting a conception of training based on criticality, reflection, and an ethical-political commitment to social transformation (Brasil, 2015). Subsequently, Resolution



CNE/CP No. 02/2019 was analyzed, which represented a significant redirection by emphasizing the Common National Base for Teacher Training (*Base Nacional Comum para a Formação de Professores*) and adopting a more technical and instrumental perspective centered on the development of competencies and skills aligned with market demands and the premises of the BNCC (Brasil, 2019). Finally, the recently approved Resolution CNE/CP No. 04/2024 was considered for its attempt to find a balance between previous models, although it maintains the BNCC as the structuring foundation of initial teacher training, revealing the persistence of a formative logic oriented by homogeneous and performative standards (Brasil, 2024).

The interpretation of the regulatory documents was carried out in light of the theoretical framework of Schultz (1973), especially regarding the conception of human capital and its implications for educational policy. This approach made it possible to situate teacher training within a historical-critical perspective, highlighting potential advances, limits, and contradictions of official guidelines, while simultaneously allowing for an analysis of the legislative positioning regarding the construction of teaching identity.

To establish relationships between Han's (2015) thought, the constitution of teaching identity, and educational legislation, the "state of knowledge" methodology was utilized. This consists of a systematic process of identifying, recording, and categorizing scientific production within a specific area over a given period. As pointed out by Morosini and Fernandes (2014), the state of knowledge is configured as a modality of bibliographic research that aims to map, organize, and analyze academic-scientific production on a particular theme, area, or research problem. It is noteworthy that such investigative practice goes beyond a simple bibliographic survey, as it involves an analytical and interpretive process, thus allowing for the identification of thematic recurrences, trends, gaps, contributions, and existing contradictions in the studied field. It is, therefore, a methodological tool that supports the construction



of new objects of study and guides the development of research with greater theoretical density and thematic relevance.

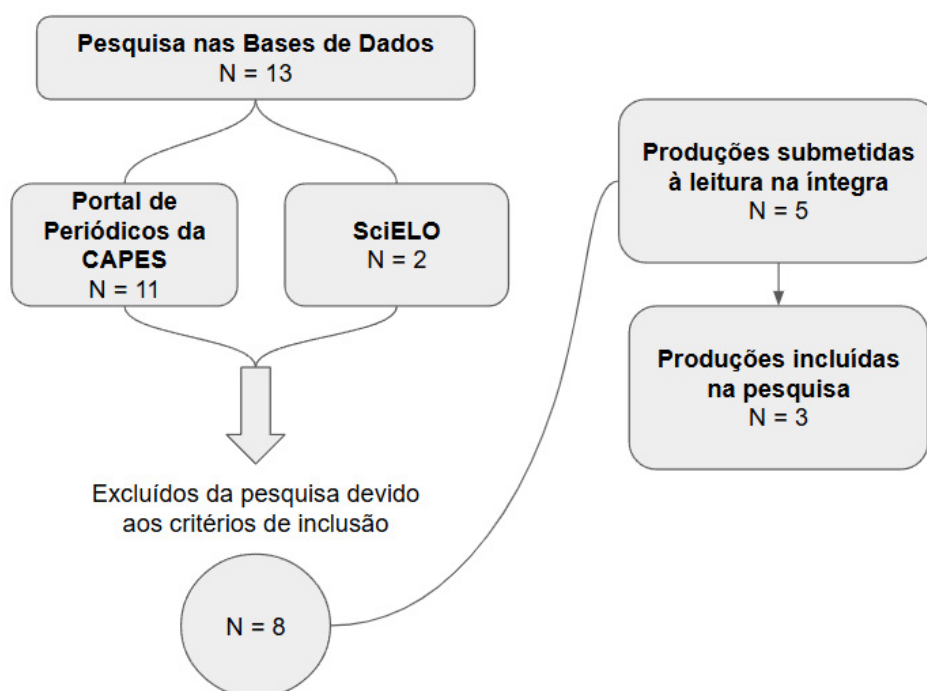
In light of Minayo (2012), qualitative analysis is centered on the act of understanding—a process that requires the ability to place oneself in the position of the other. This implies the exercise of recognizing the uniqueness of each individual, understanding that their subjectivity represents a manifestation of their way of existing and experiencing the world around them. Qualitative analysis is conceived as a process of meaning construction, in which data are systematized, organized, and interpreted in light of emerging theoretical and empirical categories. For the purpose of this research, attention was paid to the logic of social subjects to produce an analytical narrative that reflects their experiences, contradictions, and meanings. Furthermore, the interpretation of the findings will be articulated with the adopted conceptual framework, aiming not only to describe but to critically understand the investigated phenomena (Minayo, 2012).

Searches were conducted by two independent researchers in the following databases: SciELO and the CAPES Periodicals Portal, using the descriptors and operators “Teaching” (*Docência*) AND “Fatigue” (*Cansaço*), adopting a timeframe of the last 10 years. Subsequently, a pre-reading of the selected articles was performed, taking into account the criteria established for the analysis of titles, abstracts, and keywords to ensure the relevance of the materials to the investigated theme and to enable a better delimitation of the *corpus* of analysis. The inclusion criteria adopted were: a) articles published in journals or proceedings of scientific events in the field of education; b) full-text availability; c) productions published in the Portuguese language (Brazil); and d) reflections on teaching practice in the context of contemporary overproduction.

The initial survey identified 13 articles related to the theme, with 11 located in the CAPES Periodicals Portal database and 2 in the SciELO database, 5 of which were selected for full reading. After the complete reading, 2 articles and 1 dissertation were selected for final analysis.



Figure 1 - Flowchart of article selection



Source: The authors (2026).

To perform the analysis of the productions, the articles were subjected to thematic categorization protocols which, according to the assumptions of Richardson (2007), consist of a method widely used in qualitative research for the systematization and interpretation of collected data. Thematic categorization allows for the organization and analysis of content through the identification of patterns, meanings, and recurrences within the examined texts, enabling a more structured and analytical approach to the investigated theme.

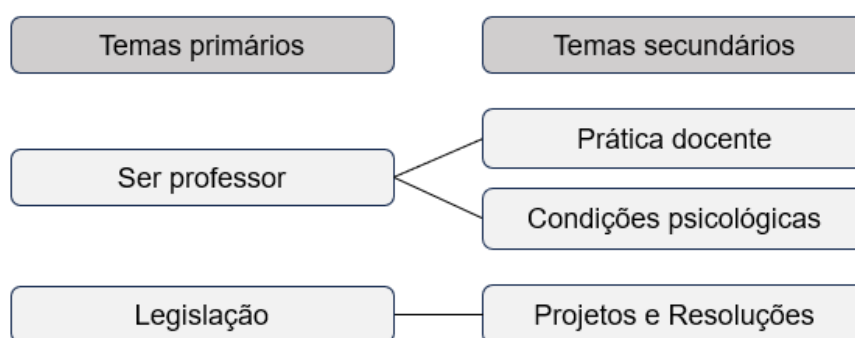
## Search Results

Based on the analysis of the selected productions, namely: 1 - “Teaching and emotional exhaustion” (*Docência e exaustão emocional*) (Reis et al., 2006); 2 - “Burnout: a study in a sample of Portuguese public Higher Education teachers” (*O burnout: estudo numa amostra de professores do Ensino Superior público português*) (Aguilar; Costa, 2014); 3 - “Teaching and the daily routine of the public school: influences on the teacher’s mental health” (*A docência*



*e o cotidiano da escola pública: influências na saúde mental do professor*) (Lourenço; Valente, 2020), the following primary and secondary themes were identified (Figure 2).

**Figure 2** - Primary theme and secondary themes



**Source: The authors (2026).**

The primary theme, Being a Teacher, branches into the secondary theme, Teaching Practice, in which it is held that “teaching is generally a highly stressful activity, with evident repercussions on the physical and mental health and professional performance of teachers” (Reis et al., 2006, p. 231), potentially impacting significantly the physical and mental health of educators, as well as their professional practice. Workload, pressure for results, the absence of adequate teaching conditions, added to the individual accountability of the teacher regarding the structural problems of education, contribute to a scenario of continuous attrition that compromises both the quality of the teaching-learning process and the construction and maintenance of professional teaching identity.

#### Work itself:

It will occupy individuals eight hours a day for more than thirty years. Given the current situation, these numbers may increase. In this sense, a large part of our lives is spent working; therefore, it is of paramount importance to our physical and psychological well-being. Unfortunately, work does not always allow for professional recognition, growth, and independence, frequently leading to demotivation, lack of interest,



irritation, and, ultimately, a feeling of exhaustion that, when occurring, may give rise to Burnout Syndrome (Aguilar; Costa, 2014, p. 1).

The teaching profession is permeated by “individual characteristics of the teacher and the student, the education provided by the family, and interaction with others” (Lourenço; Valente, 2020, p. 7), requiring constant adaptation from educators. However, such adaptability, which should be accompanied by institutional support and professional valorization, is often found in a scenario marked by workload, low salaries, and the accumulation of bureaucratic tasks that exceed the teacher’s pedagogical functions. These conditions contribute to the intensification of teaching work and accentuate the process of career precarization, directly affecting the quality of education and the psychic and emotional balance of professionals. In addition to compromising the quality of teaching, such conditions raise risks to the physical and mental health of teachers, intensifying emotional exhaustion and professional devaluation, since:

Regarding the researched teaching work process, the results indicate that conditions are not always satisfactory, as the school environment in public education and the organization of work present inadequate characteristics. Thus, it was identified that there are elements that negatively interfere with the mental health of this worker (Lourenço; Valente, 2020, p. 8).

The teacher is, therefore, in a situation of permanent surveillance over their actions, in which they develop “psychic defenses, defense strategies in the constant struggle between daily adversities and the fight against psychic suffering” (Lourenço; Valente, 2020, p. 10), attempting to reorganize their work in order to combat malaise in the workplace. Teaching work, therefore, ceases to be recognized in its formative and relational dimension to be understood under a productivist lens, in which results override processes.

The precarization of working conditions, associated with the intensification of shifts and the symbolic devaluation of the profession, further aggravates this situation. As Han (2015) points out, the positivity of achievement turns



into an internalized mechanism of oppression, in which the subject is no longer exploited by another, but by themselves, under the imperative of constant self-surpassing. The teacher, in this context, becomes a manager of the self, accumulating functions, reinventing practices, and, simultaneously, being held responsible for systemic failures that exceed their direct sphere of action.

From this, the secondary theme **Teachers' Psychological Conditions** emerges, in which, resulting from the professional scenario, teachers with burnout are observed. This syndrome is frequently associated with service professions—those that require constant and intense contact with other people, especially in contexts of high emotional demand. Professionals working in these areas, such as teachers, healthcare professionals, and social workers, present an elevated risk of developing burnout syndrome due to workload, the need to deal with emotionally demanding situations, and, often, the lack of adequate institutional support (Aguilar; Costa, 2014).

Problems related to students in the school environment, such as indiscipline and lack of motivation, and the perception of low autonomy and control over their activities aggravate the situation, as they reduce the teacher's capacity to deal with the challenges of the profession, increasing the sense of overload and psychological vulnerability, given that the syndrome "is often established based on high and unfulfilled expectations" (Reis et al., 2006, p. 233).

Stress is a general state of physiological tension and maintains a direct relationship with the demands of the environment. Occupational stress constitutes an extremely unpleasant experience, associated with feelings of hostility, tension, anxiety, frustration, and depression, triggered by stressors located in the work environment (Reis et al., 2006).

The absence of social support is denounced as a determining factor for the worsening of stress and emotional exhaustion among teachers. The consequences of this scenario affect not only teachers but also their families, the teacher-student relationship, and society as a whole, which loses the



opportunity for a healthy and transformative educational system (Aguilar; Costa, 2014; Reis et al., 2006).

When addressing the secondary theme **Projects and Resolutions**, Resolution CNE/CP No. 02/2015 is analyzed. It establishes the National Curricular Guidelines for the initial and continuing training of basic education teachers, aiming to ensure teacher training that meets the country's educational demands, promoting the valorization of the teaching profession and the improvement of pedagogical practices (Brasil, 2015). However, what is observed in practice are challenges in its effective implementation due to career precarization, workload, and lack of institutional support, rendering them mere theoretical guidelines without concrete reflections on the improvement of teachers' working conditions.

Resolution CNE/CP No. 02/2019, which replaces Resolution CNE/CP No. 02/2015 and establishes new National Curricular Guidelines for the Initial and Continuing Training of Basic Education Teachers, reflects a technicist view of teacher training. It aligns strongly with the Human Capital Theory of Schultz (1973), viewing Education as an investment to increase the individual's productivity in the labor market, reducing the role of training to the development of competencies aimed at employability and economic efficiency.

Han (2015) argues that, while the disciplinary society described by Foucault was marked by surveillance and external control, contemporary society has transformed into an achievement society (*Leistungsgesellschaft*). In it, the focus is no longer on repression but on self-exploitation, where individuals "no longer call themselves 'subjects of obedience,' but achievement and production subjects" (Han, 2015, p. 14). This scenario fosters so-called neuronal violence, with disorders such as depression, burnout syndrome, anxiety, and other psychic illnesses, configuring a form of silent but deeply destructive violence. In this sociological context, the negativity of coercion gives way to an illusory positivity, in which the individual is constantly encouraged to achieve goals,



results, and productivity, becoming a prisoner of the incessant demand to surpass themselves; therefore:

In place of prohibition, commandment, or law, there appear projects, initiatives, and motivation. Disciplinary society is still dominated by the 'no'. Its negativity produces madmen and delinquents. Achievement society, on the contrary, produces depressives and failures (Han, 2015, p. 14).

Given the increasing incidence of stress, fatigue, and professional burnout among teachers, it becomes imperative that educational and labor legislations include specific guidelines aimed at preserving teachers' mental health. The formulation of public policies must transcend normative character and ensure the effective implementation of measures that guarantee adequate working conditions, reduce teacher workload, and promote continuous psychological and emotional support.

### **The Constitution of Teaching Identity**

Teaching identity is a complex and dynamic phenomenon resulting from the interaction between individual, social, and institutional factors. In the educational field, the construction of a teacher's identity is not restricted to academic training or professional practice but involves a continuous process of resignification influenced by personal experiences, institutional demands, and the evolution of pedagogical practices themselves. This section aims to deepen the understanding of the constitution of professional teaching identity, exploring its multiple dimensions and the factors that influence its formation and development.

The dynamics of teaching identity constitution can be understood through various theoretical lines, each offering a distinct approach to the processes of professional identity construction. In the present study, the sociological perspective of Dubar (2005) is adopted, which conceives identity as a dynamic and relational process resulting from interactions between the individual and the social environment. It is proposed that identity is not something fixed or



given, but rather a process in constant transformation, emerging from the interaction between the subject and the social environment. It is, therefore, a relational construction involving both the internal perception the individual has of themselves and the external influences arising from interactions with other individuals and institutions.

Identity, therefore, is not merely a self-definition but also a reflection of the definitions that other individuals impose on the subject based on their actions, behaviors, and social characteristics. It is a social and subjective construction marked, according to Dubar (2005), by a duality that articulates complementary dimensions: *identity for oneself* and *identity for the other*. “**Identity for oneself**” refers to the way the individual perceives and constructs their self-understanding, encompassing subjective aspects related to personality, thoughts, feelings, and actions. This identity dimension is intrinsically associated with the process of self-reflection and the continuous development of the sense of being.

The construction of “identity for oneself” occurs in a dynamic and processual manner, being constantly influenced by the experiences lived by the individual and the interactions established throughout life. In this sense, this identity is neither fixed nor immutable, but transforms as new meanings are attributed to personal and social experiences. By interpreting their own experiences and relating them to their values and motivations, the subject develops a deeper understanding of who they are and how they wish to position themselves in the world.

Furthermore, “identity for oneself” cannot be dissociated from the sociocultural context in which the individual is inserted. Norms, discourses, and social representations exert influence on identity construction, offering symbolic references that can be assimilated, reinterpreted, or contested by the subject. Therefore, although personal identity is constructed internally, there is a dialogue with external elements that contribute to the formation of a coherent and meaningful sense of identity (Dubar, 2005).



On the other hand, Dubar (2005) also presents the so-called “**identity for the other**,” which refers to the way the individual is perceived and categorized socially—that is, the identity attributed to them by others. Its construction occurs through social interactions, social roles designated by the group, and cultural norms that establish expectations regarding the subject’s behavior and characteristics. In this sense, identity for the other is not a direct reflection of the individual’s self-perception, but rather a collectively constructed representation mediated by prevailing social discourses, values, and conventions.

It is observed that identity attributions of this nature are closely linked to stereotypes, labels, and social categories—such as social class, gender, ethnicity, and nationality—which often serve as markers in the classification of individuals within certain sociocultural contexts. These social constructions influence how subjects are accepted, included, or marginalized in different spheres of public and private life, reinforcing dynamics of power and social recognition. As Dubar (2005) highlights, identity is not a fixed datum but a dynamic and relational process in which the subject’s self-perception is constantly negotiated in dialogue with the representations others construct about the individual.

“Identity for the other” is fluid and subject to transformations throughout the individual’s life trajectory. Elements such as socialization, education, historical context, and family environment play a crucial role in the formation and resignification of these attributed identities. The subject, in turn, can accept, contest, or resignify the labels imposed on them in a continuous movement of identity construction involving both individual and collective aspects. Understanding “identity for the other” implies recognizing that personal identity is not formed in isolation but in a complex process of social interaction and mutual recognition.

The process of constructing the teacher’s identity occurs from the transition from the personal and family sphere to the field of education, where social, cultural, and institutional influences are articulated. In this context, the decisive and influential role of initial training and the university professor in



the teaching identity constitution of undergraduate students stands out, since, according to Dubar (2005), the teacher's professional identity is forged, to a large extent, during their academic trajectory. Higher education plays a central role in this process by providing the necessary theoretical support to face the practical challenges of teaching, in addition to representing a crucial moment in which the subject internalizes the expectations, values, and definitions attributed to them by peers, professors, and other agents of academic training.

The role of legislation in the professional identity constitution of students proves to be impactful, since the regulatory frameworks that govern teacher training, by defining competencies, skills, and desirable professional profiles, exert significant influence on the way future teachers construct their professional identities. Legal guidelines, by establishing curricular parameters and outlining institutional expectations, not only guide pedagogical practice but also shape the discourses, positionings, and relationships established in the formative process.

Identity conflicts emerge when external perceptions do not coincide with the subject's self-image, generating a space for negotiation and adaptation, which is how the subject deals with such contradictions, whether through adaptation, conformity, or resistance (Dubar, 2005). In this context, according to the author, "identity strategies" emerge, understood as the ways in which subjects deal with the tensions and contradictions inherent in the identity construction process—especially when confronted with conflicts between identity for oneself and the identity projected by the other, in this case represented by the legal and institutional prescriptions that delimit what is expected of a "good teacher." The subject may, for example, seek to meet the expectations of legislation and society, adjusting to the imposed roles and norms, or, conversely, may adopt a posture of resistance, challenging categorizations and constructing an identity that distances itself from external expectations.

Identity construction, whether in the personal, social, or professional sphere, reveals itself as a dynamic and relational process permeated by



subjective and collective influences. In the case of teaching identity, the process of identity constitution becomes even more complex, since the trajectory of initial training plays a fundamental role in the internalization of values, conceptions, expectations, and challenges of the profession. Thus, professional teaching identity is not configured in a static way but is continuously shaped by academic experiences, institutional interactions, and practical experiences in the exercise of teaching, making it necessary to understand identity as a phenomenon in constant construction that allows for a broader reflection on the factors that influence the constitution of subjects in different social and professional contexts.

### The Positioning of Legislation

In times of exhaustion, characterized by excessive demands and emotional overload, it becomes fundamental to analyze the role of legislation in the construction and preservation of the professional identity of teachers. Educational policies and regulatory frameworks not only establish parameters for pedagogical practice but also reflect conceptions of the teacher's role in contemporary society. This section seeks to examine how educational legislation responds to the demands and challenges faced by teachers, considering the impact of regulations on the valorization, recognition, and well-being of these professionals within a context marked by the “burnout society.”

When analyzing the legislation, Resolution CNE/CP No. 02/2015 addresses the National Curricular Guidelines for the Training of Basic Education Teachers, focusing on the competencies and skills necessary for the teacher without, however, delving into the construction of professional teaching identity. The resolution addresses aspects related to teacher training, emphasizing the development of competencies for the exercise of teaching, but does not dedicate specific attention to the process of constructing the educator's professional identity—a fundamental dimension for the development of their pedagogical practice and their role within society (Brasil, 2015).



By establishing guidelines for teacher training, the resolution aligns with the premises of capital, especially regarding the emphasis on productivity and the alignment of teacher training with labor market demands. Priority is given to teacher training focused on competencies and skills that directly meet market demands, reflecting a market-oriented perspective in which education is viewed through a pragmatic lens, aimed at preparing the educator with clearly outlined competencies that meet the expectations of the educational sector—often reduced to a set of technical and operational skills.

Resolution CNE/CP No. 02/2019, in guiding teacher training, reflects a clear emphasis on pedagogical competencies and the application of effective teaching methods, predominantly focusing on “how” to teach, while substantially neglecting “what” to teach and the broader aspects of the teacher’s human and reflective training (Brasil, 2019). This approach places the focus on specific pedagogical practices, the efficiency of the teaching-learning process, and compliance with pragmatic and utilitarian criteria, disregarding the complexity of the educator’s formative process as a subject and their role as an agent of social transformation. In this model, education comes to be seen merely as a means to achieve measurable results, often disconnected from the broader needs for the critical, ethical, and reflective training of students.

Resolution CNE/CP No. 04/2024, the most recent resolution establishing the National Curricular Guidelines for Initial Higher Education Training of Basic School Education Professionals, has generated significant debate within the educational field (Brasil, 2024). Although the resolution seeks to integrate elements from previous guidelines, such as the relationship between theory and practice and the valorization of education professionals, it maintains the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) as the structuring axis of initial teacher training. In this scenario, Resolution No. 04/2024 reinforces a technicist and instrumental logic of education, prioritizing market-oriented competencies to the detriment of critical and reflective training. This approach, therefore, tends to reduce the teacher to a mere executor of standardized methodologies,



disregarding their intellectual autonomy and the complexity of the act of teaching.

Such emphasis on the BNCC is criticized, as it leads to standardization and the restriction of historically produced knowledge, limiting the critical and reflective training of teachers. By prioritizing teacher training to meet market demands, these resolutions fit into the context of an educational model that views teaching as a means of enhancing human capital, where investment in teacher training is treated as a way to increase the “profitability” of the professional in the labor market.

It is observed, therefore, that the resolutions are aligned with the Human Capital Theory proposed by Schultz (1973), in which investment in education, training, and skills increases the value and productivity of an individual in the labor market, considering education as a type of “capital” that can be invested in to generate economic returns. Schultz (1973) argues that, just as physical capital (money, tools, machinery) can be used to increase production, human capital (knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired through education) can also be a means of generating greater productivity and, consequently, economic growth.

By concentrating primarily on technical qualification and productivity, the legislation thus appears unconcerned with fundamental aspects of the teaching profession, such as critical reflection on education, ethical training, and the promotion of an emancipatory education, which are necessary for true social transformation through education. In this way, the utilitarian and market-based approach limits teacher training to a “training for the market” perspective, without considering the identity and reflective practice of the educator as agents of change.

### **Byung-Chul Han’s Burnout Society**

In his work *The Burnout Society (Sociedade do Cansaço)*, the philosopher Han (2015) analyzes the consequences of contemporary demands



for productivity, which directly impact the mental and emotional health of professionals. Modern society does not impose external discipline on individuals but rather an internal drive for achievement, creating an environment of self-exploitation and exhaustion. The pressure for efficiency and performance results in physical and psychological depletion—a phenomenon observable in many contemporary teachers, as they face not only classroom demands but also an overload of administrative tasks and pressure for academic and professional results (Han, 2015).

This scenario can be observed in the State of Paraná, where teachers in the state school system have the opportunity to receive the Learning Results Bonus (*Bônus de Resultado de Aprendizagem* – BRA), a financial incentive intended to encourage the improvement of educational quality. According to State Law No. 21,847/2023, enacted on December 14, 2023, the bonus is granted to all professionals in schools that meet or exceed the target for the Basic Education Development Index (*Ideb*) stipulated by the State Secretariat of Education (*Seed*) (Paraná, 2023).

Bauman (2001), in discussing liquid modernity, describes human relations as fragile, characterized by fluidity, ephemerality, and the weakening of human bonds, resulting in a world where relationships are increasingly unstable and volatile. The logic of liquid modernity applied to Education is reflected in the way teachers are constantly pressured to adapt to new pedagogical, technological, and administrative demands without, however, receiving the necessary support to deal with such transformations.

Teaching, once conceived as a profession based on solid and lasting bonds between teacher and student, is becoming increasingly fragmented, guided by a culture of results and productivity. Pedagogical work, which should be a formative and reflective process, is reduced to performance indicators, quantitative evaluations, and institutional goals that ignore the complexity of teaching practice. Concomitantly, the excess of positivity and self-exploitation



lead to teacher exhaustion and burnout, as constant evaluation and the demand for performance transform their vocation into a source of suffering (Han, 2015).

In this scenario, the teacher becomes an “inanimate” being, with their function geared toward following rules and norms, hitting targets, and obtaining results. This places them in a position that fosters negative psychological conditions, making them just another subject embedded in the burnout society. Such a work model, based on hyper-productivity and the incessant search for performance, not only dehumanizes teaching but also places the teacher in a position of psychological vulnerability, favoring the emergence of disorders such as anxiety, depression, and burnout. Thus, the teacher becomes another subject absorbed by the logic of the burnout society (Han, 2015), where exhaustion is normalized and overload is interpreted as an indicator of professional commitment.

Regarding interpersonal relationships in the school and academic environment, the liquidity of modernity manifests in the ephemerality and instrumentalization of bonds. Interactions, once based on the sharing of knowledge and the collective construction of learning, are progressively emptied, turning into mere formalities aimed at meeting bureaucratic and institutional requirements. Cooperation gives way to competition, dialogue yields to technicality, and human formation loses ground to standardized teaching focused on productivity and the quantification of learning (Bauman, 2001).

The reality of the burnout society in the educational context directly impacts not only the identity and well-being of teachers but also the quality of education and the experience of the students themselves. Students cease to experience a rich and transformative educational process and instead become consumers of fragmented content, formatted to meet the demands of the system. Given this situation, rethinking the role of teaching and seeking alternatives that recover the humanizing essence of education becomes a social and educational urgency.



## Final Considerations

The present study has enabled an understanding of how academic literature discusses teacher fatigue and how educational regulations may be related to the intensification of this phenomenon. By examining the guidelines that regulate the training and professional practice of teachers, substantial impacts were identified both on the physical and emotional exhaustion of these professionals and on the construction and resignification of their teaching identity. The clash between institutional expectations and actual working conditions creates a paradoxical scenario in which teachers are continuously encouraged to improve their pedagogical practices while simultaneously facing adverse conditions that hinder such improvement.

The idealization of the “perfect teacher” figure, associated with the logic of hyper-productivity and self-exploitation, imposes unachievable demands that directly affect the mental health of educators. In this sense, the educational system fosters an environment of constant pressure, in which the teacher is compelled to meet not only academic requirements but also administrative, bureaucratic, and emotional responsibilities. This accumulation of functions, combined with a lack of recognition and institutional support, contributes to the development of burnout syndrome, generalized anxiety, and other psychosocial disorders that compromise both the quality of education and the retention of these professionals in the career.

The emotional exhaustion of teachers reflects a structural phenomenon that transcends individual experience and highlights the contradictions of the contemporary educational model. The logic of the achievement society, as analyzed by Byung-Chul Han (2015), promotes a culture of incessant demand and unlimited productivity, in which the subjects themselves internalize the pressure and become agents of their own exploitation. In the context of teaching, this scenario manifests in the constant demand for pedagogical updating, the increase in bureaucratic responsibilities, and the difficulty of



establishing boundaries between professional and personal life. The loss of the human character of education, reduced to quantitative goals and performance evaluations, compromises the construction of a healthy and genuine learning environment.

Given this scenario, it becomes imperative that educational policies cease to be mere normative instruments and begin to act effectively in promoting teacher well-being. The creation of professional valorization programs, the reduction of the bureaucratic burden, the provision of psychological assistance to teachers, and the adjustment of working conditions are fundamental measures to mitigate the impacts of teacher fatigue. Furthermore, a collective effort is necessary to resignify the professional identity of the teacher, promoting an educational management that is more humanized, ethical, and committed to the quality of life of teachers and, consequently, to the excellence of education.

Although various legislations aim to ensure better working conditions, in practice, regulations frequently prove to be insufficient and contradictory, failing to address the structural challenges that perpetuate the precarization of the teaching profession. Thus, it is essential that managers, public policy makers, and society at large understand the urgency of transforming the educational landscape, recognizing that the valorization of teaching is not only a professional issue but also a social necessity for the construction of a more just, equitable, and sustainable educational system.

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