

In the intertwining of practices and challenges: the professional identity of the pedagogical coordinator in the school environment^I

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Abstract

Pedagogical coordination holds a position of great importance within the educational context. However, the role is carried out amidst various challenges encountered during the performance of its functions. Adopting a qualitative approach and a descriptive-exploratory nature, this research aimed to analyze the challenges experienced by pedagogical coordinators as they construct their professional identities within the school environment. Three pedagogical coordinators working in state schools in the municipality of Vitória da Conquista (BA) participated in the study. Data collection involved observation and narrative interviews. Subsequently, the records were organized and analyzed using Bardin's (2011) content analysis method, enabling the systematization and interpretation of meanings found in the participants' statements and field journal entries. The results revealed that the coordinators' professional identity is constructed through relationships—shaped by both their self-perceptions and the conceptions held by other groups within the school. This process is dynamic and marked by challenges that create tension in their actions. Through these experiences, pedagogical coordinators affirm, transform, and reconstruct their identities within their work environment.

Keywords: Pedagogical coordination; professional identity; school practice.

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No entrelaçar das práticas e dos desafios: a identidade profissional do(a) coordenador(a) pedagógico(a) no ambiente escolar

Resumo

A coordenação pedagógica ocupa um espaço de grande importância no contexto educacional. Entretanto, sua atuação se desenvolve em meio aos enfrentamentos experienciados no exercício de sua função. De abordagem qualitativa e natureza descritiva-exploratória, esta pesquisa teve como objetivo analisar os desafios vivenciados pelos(as) coordenadores(as) pedagógicos(as) no processo de construção de sua identidade profissional no ambiente escolar. Participaram do estudo três coordenadores(as) pedagógicos(as) que atuam em escolas estaduais do município de Vitória da Conquista (BA). Para a produção de dados, foram utilizados a observação e a entrevista narrativa. Por conseguinte, os registros foram organizados e analisados a partir da análise de conteúdo de Bardin (2011), o que possibilitou a sistematização e a interpretação dos significados presentes nas falas e nas descrições do diário de campo. Os resultados revelaram que a identidade profissional dos(as) coordenadores(as) é construída no processo das relações, a partir das percepções que esses profissionais têm de si e das concepções atribuídas pelos demais grupos presentes na escola. Esse processo é dinâmico e marcado pelos desafios que tensionam suas ações. Ao vivenciarem essas experiências, os(as) coordenadores(as) pedagógicos(as) afirmam, transformam e reconstroem a sua identidade em seu ambiente de trabalho.

Palavras-chave: Coordenação pedagógica; identidade profissional; prática escolar.



En la interrelación de prácticas y desafíos: la identidad profesional del coordinador pedagógico en el entorno escolar.

Resumen

La coordinación pedagógica ocupa un lugar de gran importancia en el contexto educativo. Sin embargo, su desempeño se desarrolla en medio de los desafíos que se experimentan en el ejercicio de su función. Mediante un enfoque cualitativo y descriptivo-exploratorio, esta investigación tuvo como objetivo analizar los desafíos que enfrentan los coordinadores pedagógicos en el proceso de construcción de su identidad profesional dentro del entorno escolar. Tres coordinadores pedagógicos que trabajan en escuelas públicas del municipio de Vitória da Conquista (BA) participaron en el estudio. Los datos se recopilaron mediante observación y entrevistas narrativas. Posteriormente, los registros se organizaron y analizaron utilizando el análisis de contenido de Bardin (2011), que permitió la sistematización e interpretación de los significados presentes en las declaraciones y descripciones del diario de campo. Los resultados revelaron que la identidad profesional de los coordinadores se construye dentro del proceso de relaciones, basado en las percepciones que estos profesionales tienen de sí mismos y las concepciones que les atribuyen otros grupos presentes en la escuela. Este proceso es dinámico y está marcado por desafíos que ponen a prueba sus acciones. Al experimentar estas situaciones, los coordinadores pedagógicos afirman, transforman y reconstruyen su identidad en su entorno laboral.

Palabras clave: Coordinación pedagógica; identidad profesional; práctica escolar.



Introduction

The professional identity of pedagogical coordination refers to the characteristics, practices, values, and duties that coordinators build throughout their trajectory in the educational field. This identity is forged from experiences in the institutional environment and pedagogical guidelines. This process is dynamic and constantly undergoing transformations. Thus, this construction assumes endless characteristics, in which processes and changes are constant (Bauman, 2005).

When pedagogical coordinators, within their field of action, carry out their duties with confidence and clarity, the educational process is strengthened. This development enables the creation of a more collaborative environment, in which all groups present in this context, based on pedagogical guidelines and decisions, organize themselves toward the work that needs to be carried out.

However, in various school environments, the specificities of each reality and daily demands often hinder or even prevent the realization of these pedagogical practices. Coordinators face, in the exercise of their profession, challenges and difficulties that make their actions unviable and, consequently, compromise the development of their professional profile in the school environment.

The theme of this article addressed the challenges faced by pedagogical coordinators in the exercise of their profession, especially in the process of building their professional identity. According to Lemos and Morato (2021, p. 2), “identity must be understood as a collective category; furthermore, it corresponds to one’s values, beliefs, desire, and free will”. Also according to the authors, professional identity is a set of elements and characteristics under construction, which reflects lived moments and historical aspects of society. In line with this discussion, Dubar (2005) states that identity is the product of successive interactions.



In this scenario, and in the process of relationships, coordinators face demands and situations that arise and make a more effective performance impossible, such as substituting teachers in classrooms, organizing the arrival and departure of students at school, printing activities, and attending to various demands resulting from the complex school context. All these aspects, associated with the countless functions assigned to these professionals, end up disorienting them and, in many cases, generating identity crises.

In light of the above, this article proposed to investigate the following study question: what are the challenges experienced by pedagogical coordinators in the process of building their professional identity in the school environment? Coordinators need to be prepared to carry out their functions with confidence and clarity, and the school community must recognize the importance of this work for the proper functioning and quality of the institution's practices.

In view of this, this article aimed to analyze the challenges experienced by pedagogical coordinators in the process of building their professional identity in the school environment. This study was a phenomenological approach investigation (Bicudo, 2011), of a qualitative nature (Guerra et al., 2024), and of a descriptive-exploratory character (Gil, 2002).

To achieve the proposed objective, the following were used for data production: observation, based on Santos (2021), and the narrative interview, according to Muylaert (2014). Based on these steps, data were organized and analyzed from the perspective of Bardin (2011), through thematic analysis. Three pedagogical coordinators who work in state public schools in Vitória da Conquista (BA) participated in the investigation.

This work is structured into 5 sections: In the first, the introduction is presented with the contextualization of the topic, the study question, and the research objective. The second section is dedicated to a reflection on the challenges faced by pedagogical coordinators in building their professional identity. In the third section, the methodological approach, with the procedures and techniques adopted in conducting the research. The fourth section includes



the analysis and discussion of the produced data, as well as the contributions of the research. And, in the fifth section, the systematization of results and final considerations.

Challenges of pedagogical coordination in the process of building professional identity

The pedagogical coordinator, in the exercise of their functions, frequently encounters situations and demands that are not part of their legal duties. In many cases, these activities occupy so much of their time that pedagogical actions end up taking a back seat (Tendeiro; Oliveira 2018). This deviation of functions and the handling of daily situations hinder the development of their actions and, consequently, the constitution of their identity in the school environment.

Still according to Tendeiro and Oliveira (2018), when pedagogical coordinators assume duties that distance themselves from their actual functions, it can lead to confusion or even an overlap of responsibilities with the school management, added to the demands of school dynamics. In the perspective of Placco and Almeida (2012, p. 4), “the daily routine of the pedagogical coordinator is marked by experiences and events that often lead them to a disorganized, anxious, short-sighted, and sometimes frantic performance.” In this context, pedagogical intentions end up being placed in the background, which can contribute to an identity crisis or the constitution of different conceptions in the exercise of their function.

In this process of reflection on the construction of identity and its different forms of manifestation, it is necessary to consider the conception of Zygmunt Bauman (2005). The author states that identity is not something solid or that can last for a lifetime; they are perceptions that are always undergoing transformations, can be negotiated or altered, and that decisions are essential elements in this formation and reformulation (Bauman, 2005).



Thus, personal choices and social relationships become fundamental in the construction and reconstruction of identity. The author discusses this theme based on an analysis of the history of the humanities, highlighting historical, cultural, and social moments and how various elements influenced the conception of each individual over time.

Identity, according to Bauman (2005), in modern societies, comes to be understood as something multiple and dynamic, since its constitution is in constant relationship with social, historical, and cultural aspects. If society undergoes constant changes, it is natural that the people who experience it seek new meanings for their representations. In dialogue with this interpretation, Erickson (1972) states that the constitution of identity is the result of a simultaneous process in which the individual constructs their conceptions based on their own judgments and the perceptions of others, taking into account what is important to them in their formation.

The pedagogical coordinator operates in this dynamic context that requires constant adaptations and negotiations. Thus, the identity of this professional is not fixed; it is marked by moments of construction and reconstruction in the face of changes and new demands of the educational context and of a society that transforms constantly. These transformations have a direct impact on the school environment and, consequently, on the performance of these professionals. These movements can contribute to adaptations and re-significations of pedagogical coordinators' conceptions, but they can also generate overload, precariousness of work, and identity conflicts.

Dubar (2005) emphasizes that a person's identity is essential in the identification process and that the loss of this identity means distancing oneself from one's own characteristics and references. When this happens in the context of pedagogical coordination, these professionals end up merely responding to and assuming the various demands directed by the various segments of the institutions.



In this scenario, understanding the professional identity of the pedagogical coordinator implies recognizing that these characteristics and aspects that identify these professionals are the result of social relationships and individual conceptions. This constitution is also marked by tensions, challenges, and conflicts that, at certain moments, can make this identification difficult, both for the coordinators and for the other groups present in the school.

Given this, the intentions, representations, and meanings of these professionals do not materialize or happen in a disorganized manner. This multifaceted perspective, the result of relationships, refers to the social roles that these professionals play in their work environment and how they are recognized by other groups; this “identity for the other” is called a relational process (Dubar, 2005).

In addition to collective characteristics, identities are also constituted by individual and subjective conceptions. These are life stories, experiences in various institutions, such as family, school, church, and workplace. This “identity for oneself,” according to Dubar (2005), is recognized as a biographical process. Both elements foster the constitution and identification of each person. In the case of pedagogical coordination, the professionals who work in this role are involved in this complex context of interactions, adapting their conceptions to the meanings and expectations of others and thus building their professional identity.

In this perspective, Souza and Mabelini (2025) highlight that coordinators need to assume their role as leaders of pedagogical processes and be prepared to face the challenges and contradictions that arise in the exercise of their profession. Still according to the authors, these professionals experience the great challenge of building their identity in environments strongly marked by the roots of teaching, which the authors call inherited identity, in addition to dealing with actions from the administration and other segments that often override pedagogical practices.



In this way, each person's workplace is a space that enables interactions, bringing together conditions that can contribute to the construction of individual and collective identity; they are places of socialization². However, depending on how these relationships take place, it can contribute both to a loss of these characteristics and to transformation or re-signification. In view of this, through relationships, each professional has access to the image that each individual has of themselves, associated with their own aspects.

Which reinforces the need for clarity on the part of these professionals and the entire school team regarding their role, their responsibilities, and the limits of their actions. According to Placco and Almeida (2012), the coordinator needs to make choices about their actions, as there is always a lot to be done; however, this work needs to be developed in a planned and organized manner so that the specificities of the collective are met.

Numerous challenges are faced by pedagogical coordinators in this process that directly influence the construction of their identity and their performance with their work team. In this scenario, the lack of definition of their duties stands out, both on the part of groups belonging to the school and by the coordinators themselves; added to this is the overload of activities, both in duties of the profession and in demands that are not part of their functions—which, to a large extent, occur precisely because of this lack of clarity and recognition regarding the actual duties of these professionals; moreover, there is the distance existing between initial training and the reality of activities developed in daily school life, the difficulty of reconciling work hours with continuing education courses, and interpersonal relationship conflicts that, to a large extent, result from a lack of understanding regarding the true role and relevance of this function (Araújo, 2019; Santos, 2021; Oliveira, 2019).

These struggles highlight how complex the work carried out by coordinators is and how it is developed in an environment full of representations. The pedagogical coordinator needs to carry out their duties in a dynamic space and reconcile the functions assigned to them with the conceptions assumed in



this context of relationships. These adverse situations can turn into obstacles in these constitutions or into possibilities for reflection on their practice.

According to Silva, Sena, and Lopes (2025), coordination has the role of working toward the development of pedagogical activities, acting as the connecting link between teachers, students, and the school community, with the purpose of a more effective pedagogical practice, seeking a more meaningful formation for all involved in this process. Thus, it is essential that coordinators have clarity regarding their role as leaders of pedagogical practices and assume a protagonist stance in these actions, relying on solid planning grounded in the principles that guide their function. The movement between experienced conflicts and actions that strengthen this function enables the reflection that being a pedagogical coordinator means being in constant construction and reconstruction.

Methodological approach

This article is qualitative in nature, and according to Guerra et al. (2024), this methodological scope is considered essential in scientific investigation, especially in studies seeking the understanding and interpretation of the presented phenomena. This approach enables the analysis of the investigated experiences, practices, and representations.

Regarding the objective, this research was characterized as descriptive-exploratory. Gil (2002) stresses that this type of study aims to describe the aspects of a given group; that is, it studies characteristics and conceptions with the purpose of not only identifying the existence of relationships, but also establishing the conditions of these relationships.

Three pedagogical coordinators who work in state public schools in the municipality of Vitória da Conquista (BA) participated in the research. Contact with the participating coordinators occurred via telephone call. Each coordinator was contacted individually to schedule a time to speak. During each



meeting, the research proposal was presented, the Informed Consent Form was delivered, and the signature of the document was requested.

Regarding the profile of the pedagogical coordinators, **CP1** holds a degree in History and Pedagogy; **CP2** has training in Elementary School Teaching (Magistério) and a degree in Pedagogy; and **CP3** holds a degree in Pedagogy. Regarding their professional trajectory, all of them worked as teachers before assuming the role of pedagogical coordination.

Given these premises, the operationalization of this study took place through field research, using the following instruments for data production: observation and narrative interview. According to Santos (2021), observation is a procedure used in methodological paths that, through the senses, enables obtaining reality. The narrative interview is a research instrument that favors the approximation of specific aspects, from which the interviewee is encouraged to narrate moments of a given event in their life. These are important moments that emerge from the interaction (Muylaert et al., 2014).

The observations began on April 7 and ended on May 15, 2025. During this period, the actions of these coordinators in their work environments were monitored daily. The schedule was organized as follows: Pedagogical Coordinator 1 (**CP1**) was accompanied in the morning shift, Pedagogical Coordinator 2 (**CP2**) in the afternoon shift, and Pedagogical Coordinator 3 (**CP3**) in the night shift. The perceptions of these moments were recorded in a field diary.

After the observation period, narrative interviews were scheduled. Each pedagogical coordinator suggested the most suitable day and time for the interview. During the interviews, guiding questions were used to favor the flow of the narratives while preserving the participants' freedom to recount part of their experiences. To ensure that all statements were recorded, audio recording of the interviews was requested. Each session with the coordinators lasted an average of one hour and fifteen minutes. Subsequently, the narratives were transcribed with great rigor and care through attentive listening and faithful recording of all statements.



Consequently, the produced data were analyzed with great attention. In this type of organization, it is fundamental to consider the specificities, senses, and meanings that are constituted and manifested in different ways, according to the expectations of the gaze situated in the historical time of their durations (Bicudo, 2011). In this perspective, the use of the phenomenological approach enabled a deeper understanding of the challenges experienced by pedagogical coordinators in the exercise of their function.

Contextually, data were organized and analyzed based on Bardin's (2011) content analysis. Furthermore, Valle (2025) justifies that this set of techniques seeks to understand the meanings presented by the research participants and has been considered one of the most widely used methods in education research.

Thus, phenomenology guided the interpretative perspective, providing the theoretical-methodological framework and the grounding necessary to understand the representations and meanings attributed to the experiences lived by the research participants. Content analysis, in turn, was used as a technique for organizing and systematizing the produced data. Thus, Bardin's (2011) perspective enabled the structuring of records in a deeper and more contextualized process of interpretation of the investigated phenomena.

Under Bardin's (2011) perspective, the technique of content analysis follows a logical sequence of three steps: pre-analysis, material exploration, and treatment of results. In the first phase of this investigation, pre-analysis, the field diary records and the narrative interview transcriptions were organized, followed by a floating reading. This moment was important for the recognition of and familiarization with the produced materials. In the second stage, we carried out the exploration of the materials.

In this process, it was possible to categorize the data, identifying the analytical themes and recording units. In the third phase, we proceeded with data treatment and the interpretation of results. In this way, both perspectives were used in a complementary manner: Phenomenology enabled the understanding



of the presented phenomena, and Content Analysis contributed to organizing the analysis of the produced data, ensuring methodological rigor while valuing the participants' experiences.

From the organization, systematization, and interpretation of the interview statements and observation records, we arrived inductively at a major analytical category entitled “**Pedagogical coordination and the challenges that shape professional practice.**” In the next section, we present the discussion of the data produced during the research process, articulated with the theoretical foundations addressing these themes, in order to highlight how the challenges faced enable the construction of pedagogical coordinators' identity in the exercise of their profession.

These elements are essential for us to understand how the daily routine of these professionals influences their practice and the constitution of the meanings of this role. This research is part of a broader study in which all ethical guidelines related to research involving human subjects were observed. The project is approved by the Ethics Committee of the State University of Southwest Bahia (UESB), under approval number 7.054.423.

Pedagogical coordination and the challenges that shape professional practice

The work of the pedagogical coordinator is permeated by various representations and meanings. In the exercise of their functions, this professional carries out multiple activities that are fundamental to the development of the teaching and learning process. Their performance involves articulating and planning intervention actions, promoting collective activities, and mediating with teachers and other segments present in the school environment. These actions are constantly outlined and modified in the context of relationships, being, in many cases, determined by these interactions.

Coordinators have specific functions that are essential to the proper functioning of the school. Therefore, it is fundamental that these professionals



have clarity regarding these duties, so as not to lose focus in the exercise of their legal obligations. We start from the premise that the work environment of pedagogical coordinators is filled with activities that can hinder the execution of their true duties. From the perspective of Placco and Almeida (2012), one of the greatest challenges of pedagogical coordination is working amid all this diversity and set of needs.

The school, in order to serve the diversity of groups that inhabit it, needs to understand the specificities of education, especially concerning its social function of promoting student development and transformation toward the enhancement of citizenship, regarding the enjoyment of their rights and duties. A development and transformation that preserve the uniqueness of each subject by respecting their own rhythms, values, and beliefs stemming from their histories (Placco; Almeida, 2012, p. 102).

Thus, in addition to dealing with more general educational issues, which are broad, the school needs to think about clear objectives to meet the needs of each segment in this space. This context, marked by varied individual and collective representations, requires directed actions from the various groups present in the workplace and places the pedagogical coordinator in the position of a major mediator of these processes. It happens that, often, these professionals are not fully prepared to face certain situations, and depending on how they are handled, they can turn into major challenges.

This means that, at many moments, in addition to fulfilling their duties, coordinators are pressured to respond to demands that are not part of their responsibilities; that is, situations that, even while being part of the school context, are not part of their functions. This scenario can generate an accumulation of activities that disorganizes their practice.

Within this category of analysis, it was possible to identify the subcategory related to the central discussion of this section. Function overload, tasks assigned to coordinators that belong to other professionals, and interpersonal relationships constitute the main challenges experienced in the exercise of their functions in the school environment.



Overload, deviation of functions, and interpersonal relationships in pedagogical coordination

In the performance of their duties, the pedagogical coordinator constantly finds themselves pressured to assume activities that are not part of their functions, as previously noted, such as administrative and bureaucratic actions that present themselves in a context full of representations. In addition to the inherent responsibilities of the coordinator's work, which are already diverse and often overload these professionals, they also face emergency demands. Thus, there is work overload due to the number of functions already part of the pedagogical practice of coordinators, as well as the demands directed to them that are the responsibility of other professionals.

In this way, work that should consist of formative and planned practice becomes a constant exercise in problem-solving. In this regard, Cerqueira (2024) states that the challenge for the pedagogical coordinator is to build their professional profile amid so many demands and limit their scope of action. Regarding work overload, during the observation period, it was possible to perceive how this quantity of activities directed to pedagogical coordinators influences and even hinders the exercise of their function.

Upon arriving at the school, I went straight to the coordination room. The pedagogical coordinator was involved in the fee exemption requests for 3rd-year students. The coordinator called students one by one and provided individualized guidance. A large portion of the students had already requested the exemption following an awareness effort conducted in the classroom by the coordinator in partnership with class leaders. During this guidance process, many people entered and left the coordination room to resolve various situations: printing materials, requesting the classroom air conditioner remote control, picking up games like UNO and dominoes (Field Diary, April 24, 2025) (CP1).

In a short period of observation, it was possible to notice the number of people who entered the coordination room, either to ask questions or to bring emergency situations. At one point, there were 4 people around the coordinator requesting something. After these emergency demands



and arising situations, the principal arrived for a meeting (Field Diary, April 22, 2025) (CP2).

On this day, it was possible to observe the coordinator performing some management functions. They needed to walk through the school courtyard, checking on and reprimanding students who were outside the classroom. A group of students was even reprimanded by the coordinator. At the same moment, a student appeared with a nosebleed. The student was brought to the coordinator, who welcomed them and administered first aid with the help of some students. Another observed situation involved the coordinator organizing the class schedule, as some teachers were absent. After this organization, the coordinator entered a classroom to speak with the class and address student indiscipline, as the class was disrespecting the lesson (Field Diary, April 15, 2025) (CP3).

The various functions performed by the research participants do not merely represent an increase in developed activities. They evidence a process of redefining professional identity, marked by the incorporation of functions that go far beyond the pedagogical field. At a certain point, one of the professionals even reported that the activities planned for that specific day were not carried out due to the various demands that emerged (Field Diary, April 15, 2025) CP3.

In this dynamic, we observe a tension between the identity constructed by the coordinator themselves and the one assigned by other school actors, drawing close to Dubar's (2005) conception regarding the permanent negotiation between identity for self and identity for other. These individual perceptions and collective conceptions are essential in the formation and construction of professional identity (Dubar, 2005). When the elements defining this function are disorganized or presented in a confusing manner, coordinators end up merely responding to demands as they arise in their daily context. This causes an overload of functions, leaving the actions of pedagogical coordination in a secondary position. Some issues deserve attention regarding these observation records, which we describe below.

It was a Complementary Activity (AC)³ day and, according to the legal document detailing the duties of pedagogical coordinators (Bahia, 2002), these professionals should have been participating in and monitoring the teachers' planning session. However, we observed that they were solving other daily



school tasks. This movement reveals an expansion of demands directed to the pedagogical coordinator, generating tensions between the institutionally expected role and the one effectively performed. This situation draws attention because, as Placco and Almeida (2012, p. 39) state, “peer interaction and the exchange of knowledge need to be the foundation upon which the coordinator develops their action in the school from the perspective of contributing to teacher education.”

In the state of Bahia, the Statute of Public Basic and Secondary Education Teachers, Law No. 8,261 of May 29, 2002, outlines in Article 8 the duties of pedagogical coordinators. Among these duties is the function of organizing and monitoring Complementary Activity hours (Bahia, 2002). These moments are fundamental for continuing teacher education and collective planning.

The absence of the pedagogical coordinator during AC significantly weakens this collective space, while also hindering interaction, knowledge exchange, guidance, and intervention proposals regarding teachers’ pedagogical practices. Furthermore, it compromises formative moments, which lose momentum without systematic, organized, and continuous monitoring. The coordinator’s detachment from their core functions weakens the pedagogical work that needs to be performed, leading to the formation of a fragmented profile focused on responding to emergency demands rather than pre-organized planning.

Another observed issue concerned games stored in the coordination room, along with the classroom air conditioner remote controls (Field Diary, April 24, 2025) CP1. Could these objects not be under someone else’s responsibility? Why are all these demands consistently directed to the coordination room? The overload placed on the pedagogical coordinator hinders their work and, in many cases, prevents their real functions—such as pedagogical monitoring and formative sessions—from occurring, which can ultimately compromise student development in the educational process.



When analyzing these records, we realize that coordinators frequently had to set aside their own work to handle tasks that could be assigned to other staff members. Emergency actions and the expectations of different school groups often place them in administrative, disciplinary, and bureaucratic roles. This scenario highlights the tension between identity for self and identity for other, as discussed by Dubar (2005).

In the specific case of one institution, the absence of an assistant principal severely compromised the coordination's work on many occasions. The coordinator even stated that they were aware that many tasks being performed were not part of their duties, "but I am alone, I cannot see things happening and do nothing" (Field Diary, April 15, 2025) CP3.

This function overload directed at coordinators, often caused by a lack of sufficient staff to cover school demands, directly compromises their performance. How can time, space, and recognition for pedagogical work be enabled for coordinators in an environment that overburdens them with duties that should belong to a larger staff?

CP3 points out in their statement how much the absence of specific staff for each role harms the flow of school actions. When this occurs, daily activities fall onto coordinators, turning them into multifunctional workers. The various actions carried out by pedagogical coordination reveal that professional identity does not assume a stable character, but is in constant reconstruction. This understanding aligns with Dubar's (2005) conception of professional identity as a result of socialization processes, and dialogues with Bauman (2005), who highlights that identities are frequently constructed and reconstructed in the face of social changes.

The actions of CP3 in reprimanding students in the courtyard, attending to sick students, and organizing class schedules due to teacher absences confirm that staff shortages are not merely an administrative issue, but a factor that disorganizes the work of the pedagogical coordinator. In this context, CP2 states that "we do not have enough staff to handle administrative tasks, and



often this administrative side invades pedagogical coordination.” Regarding these multiple demands, CP1 states that “we just try to resolve whatever comes our way.”

In this scenario, as Prado and Ferraz (2026, p. 21) highlight, “many coordinators face a professional reality that distances itself from their academic background.” This divergence among theoretical knowledge, the duties of pedagogical coordination, and what is actually put into practice ends up compromising these professionals’ work.

When the coordinator performs multiple functions, their operational time becomes divided, and the development of the educational process—which should be their main area of focus—is weakened. In this sense, Cerqueira (2024, p. 153) states that “the coordinator is a trainer, and it is necessary to occupy this place by offering training to teachers; what should be at the center of their functions as an articulator is often relegated to a second priority due to lack of time.”

Furthermore, it is possible to perceive from the analyzed narratives a lack of clarity regarding the coordinator’s workspace. The classroom is a place where permission is requested to enter or leave. However, the same does not happen in the coordination room, where, according to research participants, people enter and leave, grab items, and interrupt ongoing work. Such a situation demonstrates fragile understanding regarding the true role and workspace of these professionals, reflecting a view that ignores the complexity of the work that needs to be carried out by pedagogical coordinators in the school environment.

In addition to function overload and multiple demands passed to coordinators by other school segments, another challenge faced in pedagogical coordination, according to research participants, relates to interpersonal relationships. Dubar (2005) states that professional identity results from interactions established in the work context and that representations constructed by different groups enable this constitution. In this sense, understanding how



these relationships occur implies recognizing how these representational processes are formed, transformed, and re-signified. It is in this context, rich in meaning, that the challenges narrated by research participants emerge.

Interpersonal relationships. The biggest challenge is interpersonal relationships. Generally speaking, you need to have good relationships with everyone. But you are human with everyone. You have things that hurt you just like anyone else. You have things that offend your principles, but you must have tact. For example, I don't leave school upset when a process didn't happen; I won't leave school devastated. Now, if the institutional climate, to speak in more technical terms—if you don't have a good institutional climate, if you have trouble getting along, that weighs heavily. I think it is truly the hardest part because you deal with many people, people of many natures, of many ways of being. Every person is a whole world, right? (**CP1**).

Certain temperaments, dealing with certain temperaments inside the school, the attitude of some teachers—because I don't live in paradise, there is no use sugarcoating things, right? We have teachers who do have behaviors, including pedagogical stances, that are not ideal and that we do not agree with. We point it out, we show another path, but colleagues remain on that path, in that direction (**CP2**).

The statements of the participants corroborate the discussion of this research, demonstrating that the actions of these professionals are traversed by challenges that hinder their practice. **CP1** highlights that one of the greatest challenges in executing their duties is interpersonal relationships. In addition to receiving various demands during these interactions, as discussed in previous paragraphs, coordinators must navigate emotionally taxing situations, which underscores the complexity of developing skills to handle differences.

Dubar (2005) emphasizes that professional identity, not being fixed, is produced in workplace social interactions and, again, results from the confrontation between identity for self (how the subject sees themselves) and identity for other (how one is recognized, required, and tensioned). Thus, these situations are negotiated, can enter into conflict, and are constantly re-signified.

The presented statements highlight the interactions, tensions, and need for negotiation that constitute the exact elements pointed out by Dubar (2005). When **CP1** states that some things hurt, but one must have “tact,” the



conflict between personal values (identity for self) and institutional/relational requirements (identity for other) appears, and it is in this confrontation that professional identity reconstructs itself. When mentioning “tact,” they present an identity strategy to maintain recognition within their institutional group. This institutional climate means that the professional identity of coordination depends on social recognition, and this recognition is mediated by relationships and the work group’s climate.

From this perspective, Placco and Almeida (2017, p. 153) reiterate that “interpersonal relationships stand out among the main tensions and concerns experienced by coordinators. Group formation involves various factors, including trust.” Thus, the institutional climate influences the coordinators’ practice and directs how activities are conducted.

CP2’s account reflects conflicts with teachers and meanings attached to their work. When realizing that some teachers hold unhelpful pedagogical stances and that another path must be pointed out, an identity struggle is at play, as the coordinator acts as a mediator and trainer (identity for self), but encounters resistance that questions the position they assume (identity for other), and even after pointing out the way, teachers persist in the same stance. This generates conflicts that can force the coordinator to re-signify their role and practice.

Relational processes do not only influence the coordinator’s daily routine and pedagogical actions; they also contribute to constructing their professional identity. The coordinator needs others to build their field of action, and in this process, the positions assumed by these professionals enable identity formation (Woodward, 2014).

Further in this analytical path, **CP2** adds that the school environment is complex and full of situations that, in some cases, do not align with general educational guidelines. Some professionals, despite knowing the school reality and pressing needs, do not work for the collective good. This hinders the flow of activities, placing the coordinator—as mediator of these interactions—in a



position where they must simultaneously understand these specificities and search for ways to overcome these challenges. Although different groups present individual demands, collective aspects must be prioritized. Recognition of roles, and especially actions related to each function, not only directs and organizes school work, but also strengthens identity conceptions. **CP1** reinforces the importance and challenges of organizing and executing collective work:

I usually say that one of the challenges of coordination is this: our work depends on everyone. Having experienced both roles, my classroom experience was—despite all difficulties, whether a student’s lack of interest—about you and your student, your work and your class. In pedagogical coordination, it is different: your work depends on the teacher’s relationship with their profession, their professionalism, and management’s commitment to management-specific processes. So, I realize that our work depends on all of this (**CP1**).

Work conducted by pedagogical coordination depends on the collective; therefore, its actions must be grounded in the duties underpinning the profession, while also attending to the needs of each school segment. It must be a democratic and participatory action where interdependence among different groups enables professional formation and organizes their field of practice, while also opening paths for tension when clarity regarding their true role in the school environment is lacking.

As Dubar (2005) states, professional identity is the result of a relational construction. When **CP1** notes that coordination work “depends on everyone,” it becomes clear that professional identity is constructed in relationships and in the interdependence among actors in the workplace context. The greater the dependence, the more intense the identity negotiation. Thus, experiencing coordination is more challenging than classroom teaching. There is an identity rupture between who they were as a teacher and who they are now as a coordinator. Upon assuming this role, this professional needs recognition from other segments—something that, in their view as a teacher, was not as necessary. Their current performance as a coordinator is conditioned on relationships established with other segments.



However, when boundaries between functions are not enforced or respected, responsibility overload occurs. In this scenario, varied demands tend to be directed to coordinators because they are the professionals in the educational space responsible for articulating among various groups. This does not mean it is the best direction, but a lack of understanding regarding their true role leads coordinators to assume actions emerging from relational contexts.

Thus, pedagogical coordinators must organize their tasks through routines and planning derived from pedagogical proposals and the school's actual needs. The educational context can overwhelm these professionals if clear definitions are lacking. Without this organization, as Pereira (2004) argues, the coordinator risks being "overrun" by daily school demands.

Sousa (2010) states that the pedagogical coordinator must understand the school's reality and reflect on actual needs before seeking intervention strategies alongside teachers. That is, they must assume their role as leaders of pedagogical action. However, observation records reveal that daily routines hinder or prevent this organization. Pimenta and Lima (2004) stress that a pedagogical coordinator's identity is constructed over their professional trajectory, drawing from life experiences and social relations. However, this construction can become confusing, as these professionals work in contexts marked by unpredictable situations and tensions between what is planned and what is implemented.

Therefore, the work of the pedagogical coordinator is marked by indeterminacy, the impossibility of closing tasks, and constant urgencies. This results in unfinished work and the feeling that nothing directly related to their core function was accomplished, directly impacting their professional identity.

Consequently, identity construction for these professionals develops in an environment full of tensions, conflicts, and multiple determinants. The coordinator operates in a space of uncertainty and workload overload, living through moments of flexibility and negotiation (Bauman, 2005). On the other hand, they also establish identity strategies, gain recognition for their work,



recognize their limits, and build self-awareness. All of this re-signifies the professional identity of coordinators and positions them in their functions. In this sense, identity is not permanent, but marked by transformations in response to changing realities and new needs. Referencing Bauman (2005) again, we present his position on identity:

Belonging and identity do not have the solidity of a rock, are not guaranteed for life, are highly negotiable and revocable, and the decisions that the individual himself takes, the paths he treads, the way he acts and the determination to hold fast to all that are crucial factors for both belonging and identity (Bauman, 2005, p. 17).

Thus, we can affirm that the paths taken by coordinators are essential in their formation. In the perspective of Placco and Almeida (2012, p. 59), “the coordinator becomes a pedagogical coordinator also in relation to their work environment in a singular and very specific way.” In this view, Dubar (2005) considers that professional identity takes shape through social interaction at work.

If a person’s professional identity is formed continuously within their work environment, and if that space is disorganized and fails to recognize the functions of involved groups, the construction of representations and meanings for pedagogical coordinators will be impacted accordingly. Thus, the construction of professional identity for pedagogical coordinators is deeply tied to their work environment and relationships established with different school groups. Investing in function clarity, knowledge and recognition of their role, and social interactions becomes essential for these professionals to fulfill their duties.

Final considerations

This study revealed that the challenges experienced by pedagogical coordinators in the school environment are elements that contribute to the construction of their professional identity. Although these obstacles, in many cases, hinder the execution of their actual duties, they also promote moments of



reflection, reconfiguration, and re-signification of practice. In the development of their functions, coordinators come to recognize their scope of action, as well as the aspects and characteristics that define their performance.

The pedagogical coordinator operates in a context that requires constant adaptations and new configurations. Given this, identity is not fixed; on the contrary, it is marked by moments of construction and reconstruction in the face of changes and new demands of the educational context. Society transforms constantly, and these changes directly impact the school and, consequently, the performance of these professionals. These movements contribute to adaptations and the development of new conceptions.

We also found that this construction can become confusing, as these professionals' context is marked by unpredictable situations and tensions between what is organized and planned, and what is actually put into practice. The analyzed data revealed that, although there is a structuring of pedagogical actions and an understanding among research participants regarding their duties, these professionals' daily routine is traversed by activities arriving in the coordination room that make planned actions unviable.

In this study, we noticed that the identity construction of coordinators develops in an environment full of tensions, conflicts, and multiple determinants. Thus, the coordinator operates in a space of uncertainty and workload overload that, at many moments, leads these professionals to merely respond to these daily demands. This influences the formation and transformation of their conceptions. In this sense, identity is not permanent, but marked by changes in the face of realities and new needs.

Therefore, professional identity is strengthened in the actions performed, in the recognition of functions, and in the meanings attributed by coordinators and other groups present in the school. It is a construction that takes shape and transforms through experiences within the workplace context. Thus, we understand that the challenges experienced by coordinators in the exercise of their profession are elements that sometimes favor the formation and



recognition of the characteristics of this role, and at other times hinder these understandings, while simultaneously enabling reflection on their duties and what is actually being implemented in practice.

In this way, the professional identity of coordinators is constructed through the process of relationships, based on the perceptions these professionals have of themselves and the conceptions attributed by other groups present in the school. It is a dynamic process, marked by challenges that create tension and strengthen their practice. By going through all these experiences, pedagogical coordinators affirm, transform, and reconstruct their identity in the workplace environment.

The results of this research reinforce the importance of coordination in organizing pedagogical work in the school environment. They also highlight the need for continuing education policies that contribute to strengthening professional identity and helping coordinators recognize themselves in their role. Furthermore, the research offers subsidies for future studies in the field of Education. We conclude this study by reiterating the importance of the work carried out by pedagogical coordinators and the need for their recognition and appreciation, aiming to strengthen their practice and consolidate an increasingly meaningful performance in the school context.

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Notes

- 1 Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence – Gemini, an artificial intelligence tool developed by Google, was used to assist in translating this article into English. The translated version was fully reviewed and adjusted by the editorial team to ensure fidelity to the original text, terminological accuracy, and compliance with the journal's editorial standards. The tool was not used to generate the article's arguments, analyses, or academic content.
- 2 According to Dubar (2005), socialization is the integration of individuals into the lived world, a place of symbols and cultural diversity. A immersion into knowledge and understandings provided by group relationships.



- 3 The Organization of Complementary Activity (AC) Hours is determined by the State Secretariat of Education, distributed across three days (Tuesday – Human Sciences; Wednesday – Languages; Thursday – Natural Sciences and Mathematics). The School Programming Manual presents the designated day for AC by knowledge area or technological track (Bahia, 2025).



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