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The mental health of public school students in the North: The impact of social inequalities and socio-emotional adversities on academic performance*The mental health of public-school students in the northern region: the impact of social inequalities and socio-emotional adversities on academic performance*

Renata Almeida da Cruz - Afya – São Lucas/PVH - psirenataalmeidac@gmail.com

João Vitor de Souza Oliveira - Afya – São Lucas/PVH jaovitorsouzovir@gmail.com

Jairo Maia France – Afya – São Lucas/PVH - jairo.franca@afya.com.br

ABSTRACT: This paper proposes a critical-conceptual analysis of the cycle of vulnerability that links socioeconomic inequalities to socioemotional adversities and its direct impact on the mental health and academic performance of public school students in the North Region of Brazil. The objective is to investigate how schools, immersed in this context, simultaneously act as a stage for and, at times, an agent of stigma reproduction. Using a qualitative literature review, the methodology employed was critical thematic analysis of the selected studies, seeking to establish an argumentative dialogue between the authors to construct the theoretical framework. The findings demonstrate that the structural fragility of public schools, as well as intra-school inequality, creates a scenario where systemic failure becomes individual failure, generating anxiety and low self-esteem exacerbated by traditional assessment models. Furthermore, the study identifies schools as a device of stigma, especially through the reproduction of heteronormativity, which imposes psychological suffering on students with gender nonconformity.

Keywords: student, mental health, social inequality and public school.

ABSTRACT: This study proposes a critical-conceptual analysis of the cycle of vulnerability that links socioeconomic inequalities to socio-emotional adversities and their direct impact on the mental health and academic performance of students in public schools in the Northern Region of Brazil. The objective is to investigate how the school, immersed in this context, functions simultaneously as a stage and, at times, as an agent in the reproduction of stigmas. Employing a qualitative bibliographic review, the methodology adopted was a critical thematic analysis of the selected studies, aiming to establish an argumentative dialogue among the authors for the construction of the theoretical framework. The findings reveal that the structural fragility of public schools, as well as intra-school inequality, creates a scenario in which systemic failure is converted into individual fault, generating anxiety and low self-esteem exacerbated by traditional evaluative models. Additionally, the study identifies the school as a stigmatizing device, particularly through the reproduction of heteronormativity, which imposes psychological suffering on students with sexual dissent.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The school, as a locus of integral education, goes beyond the function of mere transmission of knowledge, constituting a fundamental space for the human development in its cognitive, emotional, social and cultural dimensions. The authors Libâneo (2001) and Vygotsky (2007) discuss how the interface between socioeconomic inequalities, mental health and academic performance have been configured as a field of research of great relevance in the context of public education Brazilian. However, the conditions of social and economic vulnerability to which many students are exposed to daily reflections on their school career, compromising their learning, motivation and permanence.



According to Erikson (1976) and Piaget (2007), considering that adolescence is a phase marked by significant cognitive, emotional and social transformations, becomes pertinent to investigate how factors added to structural inequalities enhance the academic and emotional fragility of students. Bourdieu's perspective (1998), when addressing concepts such as *habitus* and cultural capital, allow us to understand how contexts socioeconomic factors shape dispositions, expectations and opportunities, interfering in educational experience. At the same time, authors such as Sen (2000) and organizations international institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) show that deprivation of access to basic services and the absence of effective social protection policies directly impact mental health and, consequently, academic performance.

Given this scenario, the present research aims to analyze the influence of social and economic inequalities, as well as the emotional issues faced in daily life, about learning and motivation of adolescents in public schools. It starts from hypothesis that the precariousness of living conditions and exposure to situations of vulnerability contribute to the increase in cases of demotivation, anxiety and depression, hindering the student's full development.

The relevance of this analysis is justified by the need to understand in a broader the interdependence between social, emotional and pedagogical factors, in order to subsidize educational practices of public policies that favor educational equity. In this sense, when problematizing the relationship between socioeconomic inequality, mental health, territoriality and school performance, it is intended to contribute to the construction of strategies that not only promote the permanence of adolescents in school, but also ensure learning conditions that contemplate the integral development of the subject.

The connection between mental health in the school environment, relationships socioeconomic, social, role of school psychology and the school psychologist in the context educational. Initially, the importance of mental health for the process of learning, highlighting emotional problems such as anxiety, stress and depression can compromise students' motivation, concentration and retention, especially in situations of social vulnerability. Then, the conditions are analyzed social, economic, cultural and territorial factors as determinants that influence the school performance, considering both access to material resources and the impact of social interactions in cognitive and emotional development.





2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Mental health in the school environment

Mental health is understood by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a state of well-being in which the subject develops personal skills, deals with problems of life, works productively and is able to live in society as well as contribute towards her. A healthy mental state is essential for students to fully experience what is provided by the school without being disturbed by problems such as anxiety, depression and stress, for example, which impair the ability to concentrate, motivate and engagement in school activities, which in socially vulnerable students are motivations latent, which can lead them to drop out of school (Patto, 2009).

The 1988 Federal Constitution establishes that education is the right of all and the duty of State and family, and must be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the subject, beyond academic training. In addition, must guarantee equal conditions for accessing and remaining in school. In order for them to be these rights being executed, it is necessary to consider the issues that may become a barrier to such. Mental health is a topic that has been increasingly discussed and its impact in the school environment is significant, aiming that the school also contributes to the emotional development and psychological of students and other actors in the educational system (Brazil, 1988).

Freire (2005) states that school cannot be limited to just transmitting knowledge. knowledge, but also become a place where reality is reflected in order to develop critical thinking capable of transforming society. It is through quality education that the school will prepare its students to face not only the job market, but yes, life in the collective, transforming them into individuals capable of acting authentically and critical, freeing oneself from alienation. According to Martín Baró (1998), it is observed that ideology develops an alienated “consciousness” in the dominated classes that prevents them from understanding in fact the reality experienced by the subjects, preventing them from experiencing it.

The lack of psychological well-being has become one of the obstacles to the process of student learning, considering the lack of preparation of education and family for basic mental health care for children and adolescents. For the carrying out psychoeducation, a multifaceted approach is required in the school environment that involves training educators and families in implementing tactics that promote socio-emotional learning (Tesch et al., 2024).





2.2 Socioeconomic and social relations

Socioeconomic and social relations play a crucial role in development of the learning process, considering factors such as family income, caregivers' education, housing conditions and access to educational resources that significantly influence school performance, as Maria Helena Souza Patto criticizes:

In these opinions, we do not find people: those evaluated, as a rule, do not belong to a social class; they are not found in an educational institution built in the within a society that determines it; they do not live in a divided society, unfair, prejudiced and violent; they do not have a family and school history; they do not have a life outside of school, they are not part of peer groups where they play, talk, propose, negotiate – in short, they have no life experience, reduced as they are to opinions and stereotypes embedded in school complaints. (PATTO, 2009 p. 407)

According to Patto (2017), economic inequality develops substantial barriers to learning for students from low-income families, as they often face challenges that students with better conditions do not face. The lack of resources materials, adequate food, transportation difficulties, especially in large cities and overcrowded home environments result in lower academic performance rates and higher risk of dropping out of school.

The context and social interaction in the school environment, including interpersonal relationships, can positively or negatively affect students' cognitive and emotional development. Lack of social support and exposure to violent environments impair the ability to concentration, thus the learning of these students. The family is an active collaborator in education of the subject, which may harm him, as there needs to be an interconnection between him and the school aiming to mitigate problems that interfere with the learning process. Lev Vygotsky: “The children's cognitive development is profoundly affected by social interactions and cultural context in which they are inserted” (Vygotsky, 1984, p. 56).

For Vygotsky (1984), social interactions provide possibilities for learning and internalizing new skills and knowledge, however, within this cultural context in which the person is inserted needs to be an environment that influences these developments in a healthy way, since cultural tools such as language and symbols mediate the development of thought and learning. It is a space valuable that must be respected even in the differences, because in a school social context there are several different cultural contexts.





2.3 School Psychology

Carvalho and Araújo (2009) assure that psychology in Brazil is beginning to spread during the period from the 19th century to the 20th century, as an area of study and research of Medicine and Pedagogy. From that moment on, a great search arose for professionalization and training in the area. As a result, in the 1950s, the undergraduate degree in Psychology and the regulation of the profession psychologist and School Psychology manifests itself as one of the areas of activity of this professional. Since its birth, Brazilian psychology has always been closely linked to Education, and the history of School Psychology reflects this transformation process in search of new theoretical and practical references. Historically, the field of School Psychology was seen as a branch of the clinical area and considered a secondary extension of Psychology. It was perceived as a relatively simple, which did not require great professional preparation in the school environment, which resulted undervalued and often perceived as a dispensable function.

Currently, it is understood that School Psychology is not just an area of application of Psychology, but a field of knowledge production, research and intervention according to with Carvalho and Araújo (2009). As a modality of professional action that has in the process of schooling its field of action, focusing on the school and the relationships established there, its performance is based on the knowledge produced by Educational Psychology, by other subareas of Psychology, as well as by several other areas of knowledge. Mitjans Martínez (2003) conceptualizes School Psychology as:

A field of professional activity for the psychologist (and eventually production scientific) characterized by the use of Psychology in the school context, with the aim to contribute to optimizing the educational process, understood as complex process of cultural transmission and space for the development of subjectivity. (MARTÍNEZ 2003, P.107).

For Antunes (2008), the school can be seen as an institution originated from needs of societies that, due to their growing complexity, began to demand a specific training of its members. However, access to school was not a right for everyone, but reserved for a privileged portion of the population, destined to perform functions specific aligned with the dominant interests of society. From this perspective, the school, as we conceive it today, aims to promote universal access to cultural goods produced by humanity, creating conditions for learning and development of all members of society.





2.4 Role of the school psychologist

The path of School Psychology in Brazil represents a historical scenario of transformations that accompany the country's social, cultural and educational changes. Initially, the field of School Psychology was seen as an extension of Clinical Psychology, with an action focused on identifying and correcting students' learning and behavioral difficulties. (ANDALÓ, 2012).

The 1970s were crucial for redefining the objectives of School Psychology, as Barbosa (2012) cites, when highlighting that in a context of military dictatorship, interventions psychological practices in schools were predominantly based on the behavioral approach, focused only on what was observable in external behavior, without considering consciousness and the feelings of individuals. In this scenario, the psychologist's main function was modify the behavior of children classified as problematic and, over the years 70, became responsible for intensifying the problematization among school subjects, with the aim of breaking institutionalized discourses.

Andaló (2012) focuses on the role of the school psychologist as an agent of transformation within the school institution, acting as a facilitator of reflections and a promoter of awareness among the different groups that make up the school. To this end, it is necessary for the professional to have broad and diversified training, with experience sufficient to deal with the complexity of a social institution resistant to change and that reflects the structure of society as a whole.

Andrada (2005) highlights that the student is no longer seen as someone who has isolated problems or separated from the relational system, becoming understood as relational subject. The school psychologist no longer assumes absolute truths about student's difficulties, nor does it take a neutral stance at school and in the relationships there. developed, considering that their presence alone already causes transformations in the system educational. The professional must work with students, faculty and management team, promoting awareness of the school reality. This includes encouraging reflections on the school's objectives, the educational concept in practice, the expectations in relation to students, the dynamics of the teacher-student relationship and the institutional organization as a whole.

3. METHODS





This study is characterized as a qualitative bibliographic review and exploratory, whose objective is to understand how social, territorial and cultural factors impact the mental health and academic performance of students in the public school system Northern region of Brazil. According to Gil (2008), this method consists of carrying out a survey, analysis and discussion of productions published elsewhere on certain topics, enabling the systematization of existing knowledge, as well as the identification of theoretical and methodological gaps.

The search for articles was carried out in scientific journals linked to institutions of higher education in the capitals of the North region that offer the Psychology course, since such journals concentrate publications directly related to mental health issues, education and Amazonian sociocultural contexts. The choice of this section is due to the relevance to analyze regional academic production, ensuring that specificities are addressed historical, cultural and territorial.

In the capital of Rondônia, Porto Velho, 2 articles were found in the periodicals of Aparício Carvalho University Center, 7 articles in the journals of the Federal University of Rondônia, 2 articles in the journals of Afya – São Lucas University Center and 1 article in periodicals of the Catholic Faculty of Rondônia. In the state of Amazonas, whose capital is Manaus, 3 articles were found in the journals of the Federal University of Amazonas. In the capital from the state of Tocantins, Palmas, no articles within the criteria were found. In Rio Branco, capital of the state of Acre, 4 articles were found in the University's journals Federal University of Acre - UFAC. In the respective capitals Macapá-AP, Belém-PA and Boa Vista-RR no article related to the topic of this work was found. In addition, 2 articles were found on the CAPES Journal Portal platform.

Inclusion criteria involved articles published between 2020 and 2025, texts that dealt directly or indirectly with mental health, social inequalities, education and territory, empirical or theoretical productions that dialogue with the reality of the region North. Articles that addressed clinical contexts unrelated to the public, territorial educational environments with repetition on different bases.

The analysis of the selected texts was conducted based on a critical reading, seeking identify convergences, divergences and complementarities between the authors. This procedure allowed the organization of the theoretical framework into the following thematic axes: Social, educational and territorial inequalities, mental health from the perspective of intersectionality and raciality, identity, gender and sexuality in the school context and inclusive education, human rights and resistance strategies.





4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Inequality: Educational, territorial and social

Social and educational inequalities in Brazil are historically and cultural, directly impacting students in the public education system, especially in Northern region, where territorial and socioeconomic factors combine and intensify the processes of exclusion. Recent literature shows that public schools, far from being a space homogeneous, reflects and reproduces the logic of class divisions, which affects both the quality of teaching regarding students' mental health.

Fruoso and Maciel (2022) highlight that the differences between public schools do not reduce to the opposition between public and private, specifying that, within the system itself public, there is a reproduction of social inequalities expressed in the central-urban continuum periphery. The authors reflect that differences in public educational contexts are direct repercussions of a bourgeois state policy that puts the children of workers at margin, taking away their rights, especially those to a quality education. Observe- if with these statements the need to understand territorial factors such as location, infrastructure and resources, which contributes to the deepening of disparities.

Paludo (2024), when reviewing the work *The Time of Sad Passions* by François Dubet, argues that contemporary society lives under a system of multiple inequalities and individualized. Even with expanded access to school, new forms of exclusion emerge that fall on individuals, masked by meritocratic discourse. The logic of exclusion disguised emotionally burdens students, as school failure tends to be misinterpreted as an individual failure, when in reality it is a consequence of structural inequalities.

Understanding educational inequalities in Brazil requires attention to the dimension cultural and territorial, especially in the Amazonian context, where historical processes are concentrated of exclusion and silencing. Colares and Colares (2020) point out that the Amazon region is marked by intense social and cultural diversity, made up of indigenous people, riverside dwellers, migrants, blacks and caboclos, but which paradoxically finds itself subjected to curricula schoolchildren who have little dialogue with this plurality. The curriculum does not cover the challenges that reality has repercussions and, on many occasions, contributes to reducing the disparities already existing. Amazonian education, to a large extent, is linked to a model hegemonic that privileges Eurocentric standards, delegitimizing regional knowledge, being





thus, there is an invisibility of the local language, customs, as well as a lack of recognition of ways of life that exist here, and such pedagogical practice reinforces structural prejudice.

Regarding our practices in the Brazilian Amazon region, working with educators and students located on the geopolitical and social frontier, we must affirm that critical multiculturalism remains a banner of struggle and resistance to overcome the challenges of the border. In Rondônia, living alongside traditional Amazonian populations and experiencing the large influx of migrants from all regions of Brazil and various countries around the world, we study curricula that are poorly compatible with the challenges these realities pose, in primary and university schools, in both public and private education systems. We perceive the silenced culture of riverside peoples, of Brazilian Indigenous people, of foreigners, especially Bolivians from the border, and of the migrants who arrived in huge waves from the 1970s onward, led by militaristic governments that promised a new "El Dorado" in the north of the country. We have denounced these facts in our academic work and speeches, yet we are often blocked or ignored in our attempts to transform curricula within this reality. (Velanga et al, 2009, p. 28)

In this sense, Colares and Colares (2020) highlight that being unequal does not only refer to the precarious economic and infrastructural dimensions in schools, but it is also expressed as symbolic violence when students do not see themselves represented in the content studied. Cultural erasure weakens identities, generates feelings of exclusion and compromises the mental health of students, who internalize the idea that their knowledge and ways of life have no value. School, which should be a space for promoting citizenship and recognition of diversity, often becomes another environment of silencing and self-denial. Exclusionary practices are reflections of a process of colonization structured, which manifests itself through prejudices and discrimination and reinforces the need to understand educational inequalities as a socio-historical phenomenon, reproduced by public policies and by social organization itself.

Duarte (2025) emphasizes that blaming the school, teachers and students for educational failure constitutes an ideological form of displacement of responsibilities from State and public policies. This logic is most pronounced in policies for the most needy populations, whose living conditions are marked by social vulnerabilities, which directly affects mental health and school retention. Its argument dialogues with Silva and Machado (2021) who, when analyzing the relationship between work, education and culture, highlight the process of dehumanization generated by the emptying of meaning of education in a market-driven society. For the authors, the alienation of material and cultural conditions degrade the formative function of the school, reducing it to a space of reproduction of inequalities.





In the context of transconstitutionalism, which, although it does not directly address the school, brings relevant reflections on the relationship between inequalities and fundamental rights. Braz, Ferreira and Campos (2020), when analyzing the transconstitutional impacts in Brazil, point out that the reduction of social and gender inequalities is part of the country's commitments within the scope of the UN 2030 Agenda. In Brazil, there is interest and action in promoting dialogues with international organizations in order to promote the achievement of equality of gender and reduction of inequalities.

The impact of these inequalities on students in the North region is even greater accentuated, considering the distance from urbanized central regions, the precariousness of resources and the socioeconomic vulnerability of families, as well as precariousness in the provision of services health in general, especially mental health with a shortage of psychologists, psychiatrists and effective public policies as well as access to quality education, which is not limited to only to the content offered in the disciplines, but also in terms of access conditions territorial. These factors translate into learning barriers, difficulties in school retention and psychological distress. At the same time that the educational system tends to naturalize the lack of resources, demands from students performance equivalent to that of contexts more favored, generating frustration and feelings of incapacity. This systemic fragility is dramatically amplified when confronted with geographic specifics and socioeconomic. which presents itself in the vulnerability of riverside students or those who live in a context of extreme poverty in the Amazon takes on unique contours, where adversities are not only invisible, but also physical and deeply stigmatizing. In this context, Almeida and Nunes (2020) discuss the case of girls and women victims of scalping, resulting from frequent accidents with engines vessels in the region, as an extreme example of how the lack of infrastructure and security becomes permanent and limiting social and educational marks.

I've heard many stories of girls who returned to school and pulled out their handkerchiefs of the head and the person is devastated. Sis, school is horrible. The principal can't help it, teacher is no good. Especially the public school! (SERINGUEIRA *apud* ALMEIDA; NUNES, 2020, p. 825).

It is found that there is a failure in the educational institution's protective and inclusive role, becoming a space for the reproduction of discriminatory attitudes, which have a double social impact. Firstly, it exposes the student to serious health risks due to precariousness, and then this return to the school environment that is immersed in its own vulnerabilities, unable to mitigate the resulting social stigma, culminating





in serious harm to mental health and school retention. It is observed that the problem central is not the individual capacity of the student, but the capacity of the structure to offer material, social and emotional security. The direct impact can be observed by analyzing the evaluation processes in the school context, according to Silva, Sena and Rodrigues (2024), when highlight the ambivalent role with its demands and pressures, which often result in embarrassment and emotional exposure of the student, with serious consequences for self-esteem and learning.

4.2 Intersectionality and raciality as determinants of mental health

There are multiple social markers that permeate mental health issues among students from a northern public school, where inequalities are historic and manifest themselves in more intensely compared to some other regions. Intersectionality allows greater understanding of how factors such as race, gender, social class and territory interact complement the worsening of situations of vulnerability and produce concrete effects on psychological well-being of students. Meira et al. (2025) highlight that the term is a indispensable tool for understanding the challenges related to mental health, which include stigmas, difficulty of access and the need to develop approaches that are based on the culture existing in that specific situation and that appear competent.

The stigma surrounding mental health is heightened when it is combined with racial profiling, according to Meira et al. (2025), the somatics of mental health to the raciality of black people worsen the structural exclusion that still persists in Brazil. In the Amazonian reality, a large part of students belong to historically marginalized ethnic-racial groups, and it is observed that segregation they suffer, whether explicit or veiled, translates into feelings of inferiority, social isolation and helplessness which, in turn, develop learning difficulties.

There is no way to dissociate mental health and school performance from inequalities structural in the public education network, recognizing that, although ideally the school is a place of equalization, works in practice as a reproductive reflection of pre-existing social fissures. existing. The historical-critical perspective challenges the simplistic view that inequality educational system lies solely in the dichotomy between the public and private systems. As argue Frutuoso and Maciel (2022), it is essential to examine the disparities that occur in within the public education network itself, especially with regard to organization school in the urban center-periphery continuum. This internal stratification reflects the division of society into classes, allocating public schools to the subordinate classes of the social structure, the





that imposes barriers to the full cognitive and emotional development of students. Access universal does not translate into permanence or integral quality, but rather into an aggregation of small inequalities that, together, persist in excluding the most disadvantaged. This In this way, public schools not only welcome vulnerable students, but also internalize and institutionalizes this vulnerability.

4.3 Identity, gender and sexuality in the school context

The school environment is an extremely privileged space for the construction of identities, However, it can also be a place where gender-related stigmas and exclusions are reinforced. and sexuality. The invisibility of discussions on diversity and the prevalence of curricula biologists and heteronormatives have a direct impact on the emotional well-being of students.

Souza, Rocha and Silva (2023), when investigating sexual education practices in schools, show that approaches continue to be determined by silencing and resistance. The authors highlight that gaps in teacher training, combined with the lack of recognition of multiple identities and differences in the school context, added to the predominance of traditional family models based on patriarchal and heteronormative values, create a limiting factor for the construction of a broader sociocultural approach to the issues of sexuality and gender.

Along the same lines, Stribel, Barreto and Dionisio (2024), when verifying workshops with LGBTI+ students in public schools, showed how gender normativity and sexuality acts as a factor of exclusion. The authors emphasize that the spread of stigmas social issues in the school environment highlight the urgent need to rethink strategies resistance in everyday educational life, in order to deconstruct naturalization and standardization of the supposed superiority of heteronorms.

The development of identity in adolescence, in turn, is crossed by intense personal conflicts. Fernandes et al. (2025) point out that this phase is marked by search for belonging and facing social influences in the formation of identity of gender. As the authors report, young people experience the complex challenge of building one's own identity, explore sexuality and deal with the personal conflicts that emerge in this process. When the school does not offer support and recognition, this reality can be recorded, intensifying feelings of loneliness and psychological suffering.





Adding to this debate, Pimentel (2023) brings a historical and decolonial observation about LGBTQIAPN+ identities, arguing that society needs to overcome the reference heterosexual as an identity marker. The author argues that the subject, in order to be able to showing and assuming oneself without reservations or needing to justify one's sexual orientation, is indispensable to overcome the heterosexual reference as an identity parameter. This thought reveals the importance of understanding school as a space in which diversity must be recognized and valued, rather than denied.

Considering this, discussions about identity, gender and sexuality are central for understanding mental health in the school context. When invisible or treated only from a biological perspective, they reinforce exclusions that affect performance and student retention, especially in the North region, where these issues still face strong social resistance.

4.4 Inclusive education, human rights and resistance strategies

If, on the one hand, structural inequalities, as well as stigmas related to gender, race and sexuality, produce negative impacts on the trajectory of students, for other, experiences of resistance and pedagogical initiatives oriented towards inclusion emerge and for the promotion of human rights in schools.

Renders and Barbosa (2020) observed collaborative teaching as a strategy for benefit the inclusion of students with disabilities. The results showed that the practice will beyond simple cooperation between teachers, comprising a process that involves school community as a whole. The authors point out that collaborative teaching is not determines the joint action between the regular education teacher and the teacher of Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE), but involves other elements that, articulated, configure their didactics. This understanding shows that school inclusion must be developed as a collective and systemic process, capable of inspiring practices aimed at also for other forms of diversity present in the school environment.

Stribel, Barreto and Dionisio (2024) highlight that human rights education constitutes a fundamental strategy for tackling inequalities and for strengthening student resistance. Through projects carried out in public schools, authors point out that spaces for dialogue have the potential to contribute to the advancement of LGBTQIAPN+ issues in society. This perspective highlights that, even in contexts marked by vulnerabilities, the school can assume a role of social transformation.





The inclusive perspective, therefore, should not be understood only as care to students with disabilities, but as an educational principle that values diversity in its multiple dimensions. In the context of the North region, marked by profound inequalities social and cultural, the articulation between inclusive education and human rights is configured as fundamental axis for promoting mental health and improving academic performance. The creation of spaces for listening, participation and recognition contributes to strengthening students' self-esteem and acts as a protective factor in the face of adversity socioemotional.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By relating social and territorial inequalities to the school experience, it is evident- It is known that such conditions not only affect academic performance, but also affect the students' mental health. The naturalization of precariousness and individual responsibility for failure contribute to anxiety, low self-esteem, and hopelessness. It is in this scenario that makes it urgent to think about public policies that consider the specificities of Northern region and structurally address the multiple inequalities that permeate life school.

The discussions developed throughout this work allow us to understand that mental health in the school environment is a complex and multi-determined phenomenon, crossed by dimensions historical, social, cultural and economic factors that cannot be dissociated from the process educational. By resuming the concept of mental health advocated by the World Health Organization Health (WHO) and associate with the contributions of authors such as Patto (2009, 2017), Freire (2005) and Martín-Baró (1998) demonstrates that the obstacles experienced by students are not restricted to individual factors, but arise from structural inequalities and practices institutional that often reinforce alienation and psychological suffering.

This study addressed in the Brazilian context, and especially in the North region, how social markers of difference - race, class, gender, territory and sexuality - play a determining role in the way the school seeks strategies to make the school environment a space of inclusion or exclusion. This article showed that vulnerabilities socioeconomic and territorial, associated with the precariousness of public policies, have repercussions on learning inequalities and difficulties in remaining in school.

From this perspective, the public school, although constitutionally conceived as a space for the democratization of knowledge and the promotion of equality, it reveals itself, in





practice, as a space for the reproduction of historical inequalities. The investigation of practices pedagogical points out that, often, methodologies continue to be based on a matrix Eurocentric that makes local knowledge and identities invisible, as Colares and Colares (2020). This cultural erasure not only weakens students' identity, but also compromises their mental health, as they internalize the feeling that their experiences and knowledge has no social value.

This study highlighted another relevant point related to identity issues, gender and sexuality in the school environment. The maintenance of biological curricula and heteronormative pedagogical practices, as discussed by Souza, Rocha and Silva (2023) and Stribel, Barreto and Dionísio (2024), reinforces exclusion and worsens the psychological suffering of students who do not fit the normative standard. The invisibility of diversity generates feelings of not belonging, impacting school performance and retention, especially in contexts already marked by vulnerabilities. In this way, the school, instead of fulfilling a role of welcoming and integral formation of the subject, it can become another space of silencing and perpetuating stigmas.

In this scenario, School Psychology presents itself as a fundamental field in implementation of intervention planning within the school space. Since its inception, linked to education, the area has been transforming from a secondary and clinical place to a space for the production of knowledge, research and critical practice, as highlighted by Carvalho and Araújo (2009) and Mitjás Martínez (2003). The role of the school psychologist, according to argue Andaló (2012) and Andrada (2005), is not limited to identifying difficulties individual, but involves an active stance of problematizing school relationships and mediation between subjects, institutions, and communities. The school psychologist, therefore, must act as an agent of social transformation, capable of fostering reflections on the meanings of education, on institutional mechanisms of exclusion and on strategies to confront inequalities.

Despite the numerous challenges, this article also presents possible paths for building more inclusive and emancipatory practices. Teaching experiences collaborative, discussed by Renders and Barbosa (2020), and rights education initiatives humans, highlighted by Stribel, Barreto and Dionísio (2024), demonstrate that it is possible constitute a school space of resistance and social transformation. These practices suggest that inclusion must be understood as a fundamental educational principle, which goes beyond mere insertion of students with disabilities and achieves the appreciation of diversity in its multiple forms dimensions.





It is therefore concluded that the promotion of mental health in the school context requires a expanded and critical understanding of educational reality. It is not just about ensuring the formal permanence of students, but to create material, symbolic and pedagogical conditions that favor their integral development. This implies articulating public policies intersectoral initiatives between health, education and social assistance, in addition to investing in curricula culturally sensitive and in pedagogical practices that recognize and value plurality.

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