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QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG ELDERLY TRANS MEN DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: THEIR SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

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Resumo

As populações ao redor do mundo estão envelhecendo cada vez mais. No entanto, os estereótipos sobre a velhice permanecem, especialmente em relação aos idosos LGBT, como homens trans. Assim, esta pesquisa tem como objetivo conhecer as representações sociais sobre a velhice LGBTQIA+ e a qualidade de vida durante a pandemia de covid-19 entre homens trans idosos. No total, participaram 9 pessoas idosas e/ou de meia-idade com identidade masculina trans, com idade média de 53,8 anos (DP=3,01). A pesquisa é do tipo qualitativa, exploratória, descritiva, com dados transversais e amostra não-probabilística. Os dados foram coletados por meio de dois instrumentos: questionário sociodemográfico (analisado no SPSS for Windows, por meio das estatísticas descritivas de frequência; e uma entrevista semiestruturada, analisada no IRAMUTEQ por meio da Classificação Hierárquica Descendente. Os resultados mostraram que as representações estavam ligadas à necessidade de aspectos básicos da vida, como alimentação, renda e moradia; às consequências que a falta de afeto causa na vida dessas pessoas, gerando contextos de solidão; e como o preconceito é a principal limitação às oportunidades de sobrevivência e existência desses indivíduos. Com base nos achados, busca-se contribuir para a desmistificação de aspectos relacionados à vida das pessoas trans idosas, a exemplo da qualidade de vida. Espera-se contribuir para que este construto esteja cada vez mais presente na vida destas pessoas, por meio de sua busca, manutenção e vivência para além das questões básicas à vida humana, fazendo com que haja rede de apoio e inclusão para com o público estudado.

Palavras-chave: COVID-19; Idosos Trans; Qualidade de Vida; Representações Sociais; Velhice LGBT.

Abstract

Quality of life (QoL) is a fundamental construct for the social understanding of collective Populations around the world are increasingly aging. However, stereotypes about old age remain, especially about LGBT elderly people, such as trans men. Thus, this research aims to learn about the social representations of LGBTQIA+ old age and quality of life during the covid-19 pandemic among elderly trans men. In total, 9 elderly and/or middle-aged people of trans male identity participated, with a mean age of 53.8 years old (SD=3.01). This is a qualitative, exploratory, descriptive study with cross-sectional data and a non-probabilistic sample. Data was collected using two instruments: a sociodemographic questionnaire (analyzed in SPSS for Windows using descriptive frequency statistics) and a semi-structured interview, analyzed in IRAMUTEQ using the Descending Hierarchical Classification. The results showed that the representations were linked to the need for basic aspects of life, such as food, income and housing; the consequences that the lack of affection causes in the lives of these people, causing contexts of loneliness; and how prejudice is the main limitation of opportunities for survival and existence of these individuals. Based on the findings, the aim is to contribute to demystifying aspects related to the lives of elderly trans people, such as quality of life. It is hoped to help ensure that this construct is increasingly present in the lives of these people, by seeking, maintaining and living beyond the basic issues of human life, providing a network of support and inclusion for the public studied.

Keywords: COVID-19; LGBT Old Age; Quality of Life; Social Representations; Trans Elderly.

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, Quality of Life (QoL) has been studied more and more and there are a significant number of studies of various types and methodological designs on the subject. Whether in the form of a literature review or empirical, qualitative or quantitative, with or without measuring instruments, as well as more comprehensive and longitudinal or more specific studies, this construct has progressively gained notoriety in the scientific literature in a wide variety of countries around the world. In addition, it has also been included in the most diverse areas of knowledge, including the fields of health, education and the exact sciences.

QoL is a concept that encompasses various factors present in people's lives. It refers to the perception of wellbeing considering these aspects: physical and biological, psychological, socio-cultural, environmental and spiritual. Its definition is wide-ranging because it understands and considers the diversity of beings and their common and particular ways of life, where circumstances have their own delineations, with limitations and possibilities.

However, it is essential to point out that this more global and multidimensional definition has only emerged in recent decades, dating back no more than 50 years. Another important issue is that, previously, QoL was assessed by a third party, an evaluator or observer, disregarding the person's own understanding of themselves and the elements that make them up. This highlights the importance of including personal perception when studying QoL.

In this sense, in a qualitative way, it is possible to say that QoL is linked to someone's subjective satisfaction with their daily life, their life and the way they interpret what happens to them. Quantitatively speaking, it can also be said that QoL is a way of measuring the living conditions of someone or a certain community, based on an assessment of how the aspects mentioned above are, function or are expressed within that context.

As it has a broad definition, it should be emphasized that there is no single, definitive parameter for QoL. This means that it is necessary to consider the multiple forms and guises that biological, psychological, sociocultural, environmental and spiritual factors take on. Therefore, when thinking about QoL, it must be understood that ideas are plural, also bearing in mind that people's own assessments are based on different perspectives. This means that, just as aspects take on different expressions, personal perception of QoL is also varied and heterogeneous, even within a similar context.

Bearing in mind the structuring and basic ideas set out so far, it must also be made clear that, because it is something full of particularities, representations of QoL are also diverse. This means that it is also necessary to research how people from certain groups or populations conceive of QoL, since it is

something that, in theory, is present in everyone's life. Therefore, this work, in its design and justification, proposes to research Social Representations (SR) among the public of middle-aged or elderly trans men, due to their specificities of living and the stage of life they are in, such as the prejudice they suffer and the very low life expectancy that is present.

The general aim of this study is to understand the SRs about QoL among middle-aged and elderly trans men. As a theoretical demarcation, it is based on Moscovici's theory of Social Representations. As a method, it is a qualitative, exploratory, descriptive study with cross-sectional data and a non-probabilistic sample. The data was collected from an online platform containing the instruments which were duly answered and analyzed using two software packages (SPPS Statistics and IRAMUTEQ).

After this introduction, this study presents its research method, with details of the type, location, audience, instruments, data collection, data analysis and ethical issues. The results are then presented, with details of what was found from the data collection and analysis. At the same time, there is a discussion of the results, which includes notes and studies that support the results in the light of national and international science. Finally, the final considerations are presented, with some considerations, limitations and contributions of this study.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Rojas (2024) points out that the concept of Quality of Life (QoL) came as a preferential possibility to the idea of standard of living. The latter focuses on people's purchasing power, in the sense of acquiring goods, generating and raising economic income. However, as a way of encompassing more of the other components of life, QoL understands that the focus should not only be on the economic part, but also on evaluating it and various other aspects that can make life better, including health, socio-cultural and psychological policies, among others, aimed at common progress (SILVA, 2023).

This concept began to be better developed and improved in the mid-1970s, in an attempt to better understand how this idea is viewed and experienced by the most diverse contexts and cultures around the world (LIMA *et al*., 2024). Historically speaking, Ruizdiaz-Gómez and Cacante-Caballero (2021) discuss how this concept has been influenced by changes in social scenarios and epidemiological issues that have been better worked on and understood when looking at the health-disease process, for example.

Silva *et al*. (2022) state that, both scientifically and in terms of common sense, what is meant by QoL is directly related to socio-historical development and how societies have been organized up to the

present day. Verdugo and Schalock (2024) discuss how studies into QoL have helped this idea move from just a concept to a larger, more robust theory. This is reflected in a number of actions, such as a reformulation of the questions on which it is based, the development of operational models aimed at this field, greater expressiveness in the assessment of QoL, as well as the construction of scientific instruments to measure QoL indicators.

In this sense, and based on this idea, in addition to the factors already considered in the understanding of QoL, such as health in general and socio-cultural issues, the forms of social and interpersonal relationships and the concept of personal autonomy were also considered. In addition, people's well-being and satisfaction have also been taken into account, as well as how individuals themselves assess their quality of life (CIZICENO, 2022; GULLA *et al*., 2023).

The scientific literature shows that definitions of QoL have taken on different perspectives over time. Since the last century, we can see how some concepts focus on more specific issues and others try to encompass more elements (JORDAN, 2024). Investigations such as those by Rimmer *et al*. (2023) and Aquino *et al*. (2024), for example, show how the health aspect is extremely important for assessing QoL, especially throughout the development of life cycles. In addition, we can also see that the subjective dimension has been gaining more and more ground in the understanding of QoL, where it is related to people's understanding of the very elements that make it up, such as particular contextual issues. There is also a more multidimensional view, which encompasses a broader range of aspects to be considered within the understanding of QoL (POTLUKA, 2023; BOELHOUWER; NOLL, 2024; SANTACREU; FERNÁNDEZ-BALLESTEROS, 2024).

In conceptual terms, the most widely accepted and used definition today is that proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO, 1995), which states that QoL is “an individual's perception of their position in life, within the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns”. In this way, the focus on the person's particular subjective perception to assess QoL is clearly evident. This includes non-clinical issues (work, friends, family, beliefs, etc.) that are directly and constantly present in people's circumstances and lifestyles (WESZ, 2023).

Based on this understanding, another point to be highlighted is the fact that just one area of knowledge cannot encompass and deal with studying and understanding the nuances that QoL carries with it. In other words, with regard to the definition of QoL in its developmental history, with its characteristics, categories and perspectives, a joint study of different areas and disciplines of knowledge is necessary, seeking not to segment, but to integrate them and contribute in a transversal way (MARTÍNEZ-MARTÍNEZ, 2023).

A study by Branco *et al*. (2024) provides a better understanding of this multidimensional and heterogeneous characteristic of QoL. The authors state that the factors that make up QoL can basically be divided into two sets of different natures: internal and external. Internal issues include aspects specific to the individual, such as age, gender and genetic inheritance. The second group includes lifestyle choices, such as the presence or absence of physical activity, smoking or non-smoking habits, etc. In this group (extrinsic), it is also necessary to point out that psychosocial elements are influential in assessing QoL, such as circumstances like anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation or attempts which, whether associated or not, can contribute to a low QoL.

In addition, another point to be mentioned within this multidimensional perspective is the fact that sociocultural circumstances are diverse throughout the world. Here, it is also necessary to mention that, even within the same country, population plurality is notoriously present, encompassing various markers that characterize certain social groups and are strictly linked to QoL (DANTAS *et al*., 2023). Within this idea, one can cite the variety of panoramas of health, well-being, spirituality, psychological, economic, cultural and ethnic issues, etc (JOKHIO, 2023).

In this regard, we can also mention the singularities related to gender expressions and sexual orientations present in all regions of the planet. With regard to LGBTQIA+ populations, which are made up of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals, queers, intersexuals, asexuals, among others who are not heterosexual and cisgender, the qualitative aspect of life is very particular (CHAN *et al*., 2024). In Brazil, there is a very unique situation for such people, which tends to discriminate against these ways of being and existing, from the most basic and everyday aspects and situations to serious cases such as the high number of deaths and other illnesses.

Pinheiro (2024) points out that LGBTQIA+ people tend to suffer various types of prejudice that materialize in the most diverse ways possible. The author cites issues such as barriers to accessing basic services such as health, education and security, the particularities of mental health, since they are more susceptible to issues of psychological and emotional aggravation due to the stigmas suffered, as well as the risks of violence and lack of opportunities, which end up being reflected in financial vulnerability, food insecurity and, often, in the realities of risky work in order to survive (SANTOS *et al*., 2024; LIMA *et al*., 2024; MELO *et al*., 2024).

Freitas *et al*. (2025) point out that, even with some advances in improvements for these populations in recent years, issues of discrimination and violence against LGBTQIA+ people still remain significant. This is reflected in figures such as those exposed by the 2023 Atlas of Violence, which shows that in Brazil there were more than 8,300 cases of aggression against LGBTQIA+ people in 2021 alone. This figure also highlights the progressive and significant increase in attacks and

prejudiced actions aimed at these people, who experience these and other types of suffering in their lives on a daily basis (CERQUEIRA; BUENO, 2023).

Other figures show that over a 20-year period (2002-2022), there were more than 5,600 deaths due to discrimination against these people. An interesting fact is that, specifically in 2022, people aged between 20 and 29 accounted for more than 33% of these deaths. In addition, the figures show that the populations most affected by deaths are transvestites and transsexuals, with a percentage of over 61%, most of them by murder (83.52%) and suicide (10.99%) (FRAGA *et al.*, 2023).

Gualberto Júnior *et al*. (2025) show that, worldwide, the number of people who identify as trans reaches 4.6 per 100,000 people. Within this figure, the number of women is higher, reaching 6.8 per 100,000. Meanwhile, the number of trans men is 2.6 per 100,000. When it comes to Brazil, it is estimated that around 3 million Brazilians identify as trans, with younger people making up the largest proportion of this total.

With regard to transvestites/trans people, compared to other groups, they show higher rates of psychological suffering, for example. This includes suicide ideation and attempts, due to the constant exclusion and marginalization they suffer on a daily basis. In addition, other health issues that have a direct impact on their QoL can also be mentioned, such as bodily changes resulting from attempts to demarcate themselves as they identify. In addition to these and other factors, something that is common among trans men and women is the very low life expectancy, where, in Brazil, it is below 40 years for these beings (LÔNDERO *et al*., 2024; MIRANDA; TONELLA, 2024).

A systematic review carried out by Swan *et al*. (2022) brought some results that show something very peculiar about this population. In this study, just over fifty articles were included and, in the findings, taking gender affirmation surgery into account, levels of suicide attempts, depression, anxiety and other related symptoms were reduced. In addition, issues such as happiness and QoL after surgery increased.

In this sense, it is possible to gauge that the lives and experiences of trans people in Brazil are complex to say the least, and full of daily challenges that continually add up and intertwine. This means that, in addition to issues of gender and sexual orientation, one must also take into account aspects of health (physical and mental), socio-economic circumstances, spirituality, skin color, expressions of culture and leisure, as well as age and the stage of the life cycle to which they belong. From this perspective, it can be seen that the QoL of this population is constantly damaged and compromised, which is directly expressed in situations of lack of employability, difficulties in health services, social vulnerability, housing, financial, food, as well as other forms of dignified existence (BATISTA; SILVA; BARROS, 2024).

Historically, some previous studies have shown that the QoL of trans people has been worse than that of cisgender people. This can be seen when, in comparison, trans people suffer discrimination and identity suffering on a daily basis. As a result, they suffer physical and psychological stress and impairment, and their well-being and QoL are also negatively affected. However, as a way of minimizing this situation, hormone therapy treatments for gender reaffirmation, having stable relationships, as well as a job and education can contribute positively to the quality of life of these people (NOBILI *et al*., 2018; NEWFIELD *et al*., 2006; BAŞAR *et al*., 2016; SILVA *et al*., 2021).

The perspective we want to establish here is that of intersectionality. Da Silva Domingues *et al*. (2023) state that the obstacles faced by trans people permeate all stages of life: they begin in childhood, continue into adolescence and adulthood and, when they have the opportunity to reach old age or at least close to it, the attitudes of marginalization do not end. When talking about human development in trans people, it is necessary to understand that there are very particular issues within this theme and this public, mainly focused on insecurities, uncertainties, issues of violence and vulnerability, as well as the physical and emotional marks of trans bodies and ageism (ANTRA, 2022; RUIZ, 2021).

From this perspective, trans old age is something that cannot be neglected, let alone silenced as a phenomenon that exists, even with barriers, in society. There is a scarcity of studies aimed at this audience, since transphobia and ageism are also reflected in the world of scientific literature (ARRUDA *et al*., 2025). In addition, issues such as educational gaps, high levels of violence and the state's lack of support for elderly trans people contribute to a greater loss of QoL. It is therefore necessary to give space to better identify and understand the scenarios in which these people find themselves, also bearing in mind the contextual particularities within the trans group, which is not homogeneous. In addition, we need to hear from them what they perceive about themselves, their lives, the place where they live, and how they perceive certain issues in their daily lives (BATISTA; SILVA; BARROS, 2024, 2024).

Therefore, the aim of this study is precisely to counter discriminatory and exclusionary practices that negatively affect the QoL of middle-aged and elderly trans people. In this case, the male audience was chosen in view of the particularities they face, such as personal and family issues and other relationships, including institutional ones. Studying QoL among a given population is necessary because, even with some cases of longevity, living longer doesn't necessarily mean living better. The dynamics of places and jobs, the varied cultural and economic forms, health development, among others, end up influencing the qualitative aspect of people's lives (SILVA, 2023).

The study is based on Moscovici's theory of Social Representations (SR), which are constituted as something shared between a certain group or social context, through a collective construction (MOSCOVICI, 2012). It's important to note that Durkheim's collective representations had a significant

influence on the development of Moscovici's theory of Social Representations (SR), since he uses them as a basis. In this sense, Moscovici seeks to work with a social psychology focused on facts through a sociocultural lens, since phenomena have an objective and visible character (POWER *et al*., 2023; MARKOVÁ, 2023; MONACO; RATEAU, 2025). In this way, through SRs, people can construct ideas and thoughts loaded with meaning through mutual influence (SOUSA; ARAÚJO, 2024).

In addition, it is necessary to clarify that, for this theory, a representation is not something totally faithful to an aspect or construct within that objective reality. Since it is a collective construction, it can constantly change. In addition, RS have the function of guiding behavior and mediating communication between people, in a way that is based on the interactions of time and space that are experienced by individuals (MOSCOVICI, 2012).

Denise Jodelet is also a name of great importance within this theory, which has contributed to its dissemination, application and endorsement. For her, SRs, in their definition and application, are "a form of knowledge, socially elaborated and shared, having a practical intention and contributing to the construction of a reality common to a social group" (JODELET, 2001, p. 71). According to the author, it is through SRs that people are able to identify everyday situations and aspects that are common to their social reality, helping them to interpret and share the information and ideas that are being constructed through observable social phenomena. Thus, SRs materialize through attitudes, such as thoughts, speech and behavior, in order to collaborate in the production of collective meanings (JODELET, 2018).

METHOD

Type of Research

This is a qualitative, exploratory and descriptive research, with cross-sectional data and a non-probability convenience sample. Qualitative research seeks to delve deeper into a particular fact or social construct, understanding the dialogicity and plurality and complexity that phenomena can have as a characteristic and also how they are inserted into certain research contexts (TUZZO *et al*., 2024; BHANGU *et al*., 2023). As for the exploratory nature, this type of research is characterized by seeking to study issues by asking questions and identifying realities that have not yet been explored scientifically (HAILE, 2023). In addition, it is also descriptive because it aims to describe the occurrence of a particular event or fact, providing important and enlightening information about something (AYTON, 2023). A cross-sectional study means that it is a type of investigation that collected data from a certain interested public at a specific time or period (MAIER *et al*., 2023). Finally, non-probabilistic by

convenience because it selects individuals or a given profile based on specific criteria that are part of the research design, being for convenience and voluntary because people answered the instruments according to their will and dedication without receiving any payment (STRATTON, 2023).

Participants

The study had the participation of 9 transgender people of male identity in Brazil. Due to the difficulty in the sample, we decided to include people over 50 years of age in the research. In this way, we had a broader participation in the study. They have a mean age of 53.8 years old (SD=3.01) and are mostly single (66.7%). Their monthly income is up to 1 minimum wage (55.6%), they are not religious (44.4%), they are heterosexual (66.7%), they have elementary (44.4%) or high school (33 .3%) complete, they are white (44.4%) or brown (33.3%), and they live in states in the Midwest region (55.6%). They do not have their own house (44.4%), they work informally (55.6%), they do not have children (66.7%), they have comorbidities (66.7%) and, received some type of assistance during the pandemic (55.6%).

Instruments

To carry out the study, three instruments were used. These instruments are presented in an online form. The first was a sociodemographic questionnaire with data regarding age, sexual orientation, marital status, education, number of children, housing conditions, ethnicity, income and religion. The second was the FWAT (Free Word Association Test) based on the inducing words “Quality of Life” Finally, a semi-structured interview with 6 open questions aimed at understanding the perceptions of the participants about LGBTQIA+ old age and quality of life during the pandemic, based on the studys of Silva *et al*. (2024) and Sousa *et al*. (2024). This research received approval from the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of a Federal University in Brazil (opinion document number 1.755.790). Thus, the Informed Consent Form was ensured to the participants, as well as their proper signature, with clarifications about the study, implications and risks with participation.

Data Collection and Analysis

In data collection, research participants had to answer the sociodemographic questionnaire, the Free Word Association Test (FWAT) and the semi-structured interview. The estimate for the total application time was 10 to 15 minutes.

Sociodemographic data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for Windows version 26, with the aim of characterizing the study sample. This software performs, among other features, the analysis of descriptive statistics that was used for this characterization (FIELD, 2024). The Interface de R Pour Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires (IRaMuTeQ) software was also used, which allows statistical analysis of textual data (MENNANI; ATTAK, 2024).

As for the analyses, the FWAT (Free Word Association Test) was carried out, with the aim of identifying more central and peripheral words and/or expressions for people in that specific context and the procedure of Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) that points out the lexical classes resulting from the division of speeches, based on frequency and chi-square (x2), thus forming a dendrogram (SOUZA *et al*., 2018; SOUZA *et al*., 2023; SILVA *et al*., 2024).

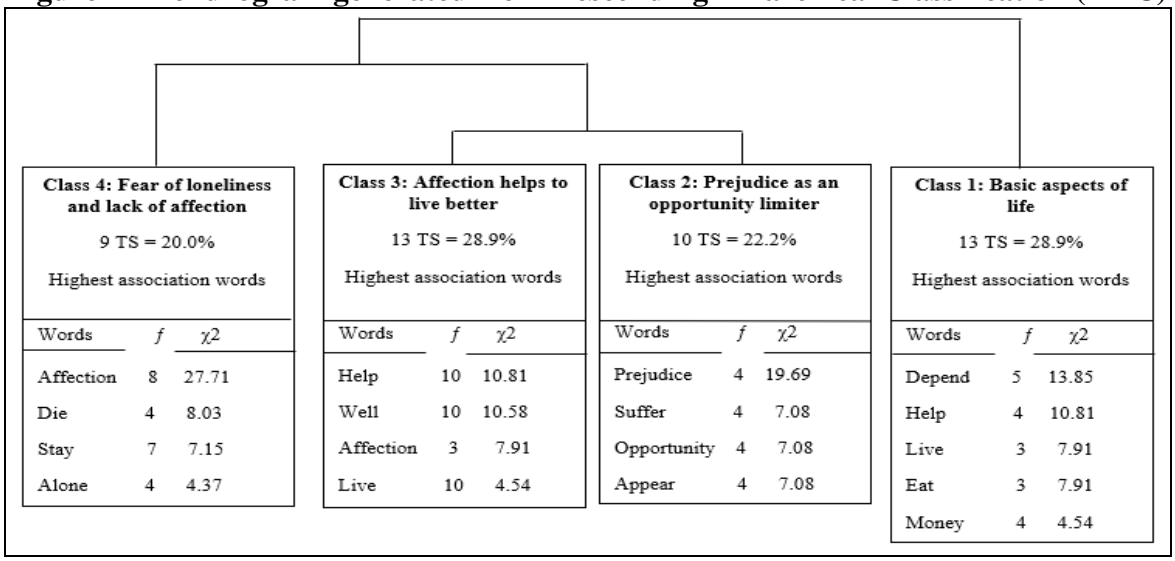
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a product of DHC, a dendrogram was generated (Figure 1). For a better visualization of the subcorpus and classes present in it, it was structured in a more organized way from the answers, with the relationship of the words of each class established from the chi -square test, taking into account its significance. This means that the words that proved to be significant were organized into different classes according to their semantic character through the analysis. Next, the dendrogram is illustrated.

The general corpus consisted of 9 texts (interviews), distributed in 61 text segments (TS), with use of 45 TS (73.77%). 2297 occurrences (words) emerged, 346 of which were distinct, so that of these, 68 were mentioned only once. The categorization of all content occurred from four classes: class 1, with 13 TS (28.9%); class 2, with 10 TS (22.2%); class 3, with 13 TS (28.9%); and class 4, with 9 TS (20.0%). Finally, the main corpus was divided into two branches.

Subcorpus A, named *Essentials for living*, is formed by class 1 (Basic aspects of life), which is one of the most significant, and showed representations about the importance of meeting the basic needs of human beings for their survival. Subcorpus B, named *The importance of affection*, is made up of class 4 (Fear of loneliness and lack of affection) and showed ideas about how essential it is, for a good quality of life, for a person to feel loved and belonging to a group. Subcorpus C, named *Affection to overcome prejudice*, made up of class 2 (Prejudice as an opportunity limiter) and class 3 (Affection helps to live better), shows with how the lack of affection and support links towards LGBTQIA+ elderly translate into prejudiced attitudes that limit opportunities for these groups.

Figure 1 - Dendrogram generated from Descending Hirarchical Classification (DHC)



Source: Self elaboration.

For a better understanding and clarity, it was decided to divide the discussion by class and by the central theme contained therein. Classes 3 and 4 will be discussed together, following the same criterion. Thus, this section will follow this sequence: class 1, classes 3 and 4 and, finally, class 2.

Class 1: Basic Aspects of Life

In this class, considering the words in the already exposed dendrogram and based on the context in which they appear in the interviews, it can be noted that the central representation is linked to a concern with maintaining some basic aspects of human life. For example, there is food, housing and income necessary to ensure that these elements are present, thus, allowing the individual to have access to fundamental rights that every person needs to survive. Kalume and Itabohary (2016) discuss how Brazil is a country that has as one of its characteristics the population stratification that reflects in the most diverse existing social inequalities. As a reflection of this fact, it can be noted that there is negligence with regard to access to basic rights by some groups considered to be minorities and who suffer from this situation. Within these groups, some markers, not infrequently, end up intersecting, which may reinforce the inequality, such as issues of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, social class and age.

In this sense, it can be understood that such a social phenomenon ends up generating situations and contexts of the most diverse forms of existing vulnerabilities, since social marginalization is a product of this fact.) To analyze issues of vulnerability, a broad and detailed look at the facts is necessary, based on the fact that it brings with it a series of intermediaries that must be considered based

on the interaction between them, such as biopsychosocial aspects, relationships in the community environment, issues related to the field of work or the lack of it and the effectiveness of compliance with public policies (ALMEIDA; MAHMUD; GOLDIM, 2021; SOUSA; ARAÚJO, 2024).

Limiting the discussion to LGBTQIA+ elderly groups, it is necessary to consider that, from the outset; they are doubly marginalized, taking into account the issue of sexuality and age (BEZERRA *et al*., 2020). In the meantime, the concern brought by this class is understandable, since all human beings need elements such as housing, food and some income to survive in society today. This means that, in the absence of these aspects, it is understood that there is a micropolitics linked to the marginalization caused to these populations that puts them in this place of constant struggle to ensure their survival.

Calou (2019) points out that micropolitics are configured as a set of forces that interfere uninterruptedly in the conditions of poverty of some people, in order to prevent them from leaving situations that make them vulnerable and marginalize in the most varied ways. In addition, these micropolitics still influence collective thinking and attitudes, in order to always reinforce and delimit what kind of social, economic, nutritional, financial places, among others, some groups, such as LGBTQIA+ elderly people, may occupy, resulting in constant suffering and concern from the basic issues, through an excluding collective asymmetry.

Such ideas confirm to the characterization of the sample in the present study, when most participants claimed to have an income of up to one minimum wage and did not have their own house, for example. As for trans people, it is noted that they are in places, including economic and social, that place them in a situation of vulnerability that prevents them from being recognized as legitimate existences in their expressions of existence and ways of life. Discourses that try to position these bodies and subjectivities in marginalized contexts based on a transphobic perspective are common (BONASSI *et al.*, 2015).

Thus, within this context, it is understood that the sexual-age facets, in addition to several others, are, in most cases, submitted rules that regulate the ways of life that people who are within such groups can lead. That is, conditions that subordinate the importance of these lives and that, for a long time, have caused an intimate relationship between vulnerability and suffering. Therefore, since there is fear of lack of basics, how can one think, at least, about a quality of life for these people and what kind of quality of life do they have? (RESENDE, 2015).

Corroborating these findings, a study carried out with trans people by Gomes *et al*. (2023) showed that approximately 70% of the participants lived in conditions of food insecurity and, of these, just over 20% had serious food problems. Another study by Drydakis (2024), which is also in line with what has been seen here, showed that trans people, compared to non-trans people, have greater obstacles

in terms of living in poverty and not having housing for themselves. In the meantime, Jain (2024) also discusses how transphobia impacts on causing or, at the very least, influencing vulnerable socio-economic aspects in trans people, such as basic protection rights.

FWAT, through prototypical analysis, with the expression *Trans Old Age* (Table 1), certifies and reinforces the ideas brought up to this point, taking into account, especially, the words of its central nucleus that show the predominant representations:

Table 1 - Central core, primary periphery, constrast zone and secondary periphery of the expression trans old age

AOE<=2.73			AOE>2.73	
Frequency Average	CENTRAL CORE Evocations	*f* AOE	PRIMARY PERIPHERY Evocations	*f* AOE
>=2.76	Difficulty	6 6.67	Prejudice	2 4.44
	Money	6 6.67	Exclusion	2 4.44
Frequency Average	CONSTRAST ZONE Evocations	*f* AOE	SECONDARY PERIPHERY Evocations	*f* AOE
<2.76	Sadness	2 4.44	Identity	2 2.67
	Acceptance	2 4.44	Change	2 2.67

Source: Self elaboration.

One of the statements by one of the study participants helps to better visualize the ideas shown here:

> It's difficult, because to reach old age you need several basic things like having some income or knowing how to do something to earn money and I couldn't finish school completely, so it was difficult and I had to manage because nobody gave me an opportunity and I still have a child that I had to raise. We are people who also need to be respected in society and be entitled to the same things as other people so as not to die early as happens all over the place and not live hungry or living on the street, it is a very difficult life for those who sometimes don't have almost anything. (João Nery, 54 years old – fictitious name given in honor of the first trans man to undergo surgeries in Brazil, in 1977, when these were still prohibited by law).

Class 3: Affection helps to live better and Class 4: Fear of loneliness and lack of affection

In these classes, it is evident how much the representations revolve around the importance of having at least a support that makes the person feel important, loved and welcomed, considering that the human being needs to receive affection as a basic premise for maintaining good mental and physical health. This means that loneliness or similar feelings have negative consequences for the lives of people who experience such feelings, such as, for example, non-cisgender and/or non-heterosexual elderly people, often even influencing their way of existing. Oliveira *et al*. (2021) point out that, in Brazilian society, the figure of the LGBTQIA+ elderly is associated with stigmas of little or no use, without a productive character and linked to a being that does not fit into a desirable aesthetic. Thus, this idea has as a product marginalizing attitudes of these populations, often causing situations of loneliness and

exclusion of these people based on an erroneous logic of non-deserving, prohibitionist, inferiority or non-dignity.

This is related to the fact that the trans and/or homosexual aging process is configured as highly adverse, leading the person who identifies as trans and/or homosexual not to recognize their place of belonging in the environment in which they live. This has also been reinforced by his life trajectory built among a generation of people who had their orientation or gender identity repressed by prejudice, fear or guilt (SOUSA *et al*., 2023; PEREIRA, 2002).

In general, when there is a support network for LGBTQIA+ seniors, it comes from family members, friends, neighbors and/or community environments such as shelters. However, for many of these people, these bonds are fragile, difficult or even non-existent, given that people close to them often commit prejudice. To prove this fact, studies from the beginning of the century have already shown that trans and/or homosexual elderly people live, most of the time, alone, without the presence of any partner, children or other close family members (ALVES *et al*., 2020; CAHILL *et al*., 2000; SHANKLE *et al*., 2003).

This fact corroborates the present study, in which most participants claimed to be single and not have children. Braz *et al*., (2020) point out that, with regard to the trans population, these people carry histories and episodes of discrimination and exclusion that contribute to a lonely and socially marginalized life. Even in the family space, it is common for this to be one of the first areas of prejudice experienced by these people.

From all of what is exposed in this section, it is noted that the lack of affection causes direct and serious consequences in the life, health and subjective existence of LGBTQIA+ elderly people, since discrimination creates a barrier to even living with these people. Because of this fact, physical, emotional and psychological disorders can be generated, such as, for example, serious cases of suicidal ideation and attempt. This is a reflection of the stigmatization they suffer, as these populations live in conditions of abandonment or affective absence, transformation of identities and existence, in addition to difficulties in maintaining the quality of life and in social or institutional relationships (LEAL; MENDES, 2017; LEMOS, 2018).

Therefore, the idea is clear that the lack of affective support towards LGBTQIA+ elderly people is a major challenge in their aging and old age processes, taking into account that discrimination reflects a place of non-relationship with others and places these groups in spaces (physical and subjective) of fears and guilt. In this way, heterosexual non-cis elderly people have lived their lives with limitations that normalize and impose a context of rejection, exclusion and contempt, especially when taking into account the intersectionality factor of social intermediaries (CAMPOS *et al*., 2024).

As a coping strategy, Alves *et al*. (2023) bring that the reception and the existence of bonds that function as support, even without parental connections, can be positive elements for a better trans and/or homosexual old age. For the referred authors, this provides the person with a conviction of the existence of affections and valuable companies that provide expressions of affection, well-being and care, directly contributing to acceptance and self-love, causing this person to have a better existential and subjective quality of life.

In this sense, a study by Lobo *et al*. (2023) pointed out that transphobia has a direct impact on internal and external issues in men who suffer this type of prejudice, causing loneliness. The results of this study showed that, in addition to other scenarios, this type of exclusionary and violating attitude ends up causing ruptures in a wide variety of areas, such as a shattering or break with the family, school and public spaces, as well as a greater closure to new relationships for fear of the situation repeating itself.

Another study by Hajek *et al*. (2023) brought results that also corroborate the findings of this research. According to this study, there was a high prevalence of perceived loneliness among trans people when compared to cisgender people. In addition, according to the same study, trans people with low levels of schooling and who are not married are more likely to live in scenarios where this fact is present to a greater extent.

As in the previous section, the FWAT was carried out, through prototypical analysis, with the word *Aging* (Table 2). Expressions were identified that also corroborate what has been exposed so far, taking into account, especially, in the predominant representations that appear in the central nucleus:

Table 2 - Central core, primary periphery, constrast zone and secondary periphery of the expression aging

AOE<=2.75			AOE>2.75	
Frequency Average	CENTRAL CORE evocations	*f* AOE	PRIMARY PERIPHERY evocations	*f* AOE
>=2.86	Life	5 11.11	Support	2 4.44
	Loneliness	3 6.67	Family	2 4.44
	Alone	3 6.67	Children	2 4.44
Frequency Average	CONSTRAST ZONE evocations	*f* AOE	SECONDARY PERIPHERY evocations	*f* AOE
<2.86	Affection	2 4.44	Destiny	2 4.44
	Love	2 4.44	Well-being	2 4.44

Source: Self elaboration.

To better elucidate the topics discussed here, we have the speech of one of the participants:

> . . . people have always rejected me since I was 14, because I was always different from other people, then nobody wanted to be around me and other parents said that to their children and mine also beat and fought me, so I am alone in my aging. For me it was very complicated, because I had no support from my family or anyone else and I had to fend for myself from a very

> early age. . . (Michael Dillon, 58 years old – fictitious name given in honor of the first trans man to undergo hormone treatment and a phalloplasty).

Class 2: Prejudice as an Opportunity Limiter

In this class, it is evident, through the words evoked in it and their respective contexts in the interviews, how prejudice hinders and even prevents the appearance of opportunities, mainly work, in the lives of LGBTQIA+ elderly people. This means that discriminatory attitudes towards these people directly reflect on their ways of life and reinforce a restriction of access, coexistence and socioeconomic conditions that the social imaginary has towards these populations. Machado (2018) states that, analyzing the entire social structure and its constituent facets, such as the family, the community environment and the field of work, for example, it is still possible to notice that people who are not framed in a cisheterosexual and young perspective, are treated with contempt. In this way, it is clear that this translates into a reduction or blockage of opportunities for the social and effective participation of these people from the basic issues, as previously discussed.

Still, for the same author, it is necessary to understand that society has a plural and diverse character, which is important to think about how LGBTQIA+ elderly people are distributed and positioned within the social spheres and their respective spaces. In this same perspective, another basic aspect is the recognition of the common and particular rights of vulnerable groups, such as the trans/homosexual elderly, so that access to opportunities has its basis strengthened and contributes, more and more, to an improvement in the quality of life for these populations.

Even with some achievements such as same-sex marriage and the right to adoption (QUIRINO, 2018), many LGBTQIA+ people are in a situation of abandonment, such as, for example, when they are in old age, taking into account view of the life trajectory marked by prejudices. In the meantime, it is possible to imagine that, from a very early age, many of these people are placed in situations of extreme vulnerability. This reflects in the reduction or total absence of opportunities for them, such as, for example, when they suffer discrimination in the family and school spaces.

Thus, we can think about what kind of quality of life exists in the lives of LGBTQIA+ elderly people who were often expelled or had conflicts at home, were abused at school and, consequently, were unable to access the formal job market because they sometimes did not have the necessary qualification. In addition, even when they achieve such access, In addition, even when they obtain this access, they are generally discriminated in their workspace (IRIGARAY, 2010; SOUZA, 2020).

Studies show that, however, this work environment reproduces attitudes of the social environment in which it is inserted. It is noted, for example, situations of homophobic humor, attempts

to annul diversity, heterosexual and cisgender social normalization and several other behaviors towards the LGBTQIA+ person, and this is reinforced when this person is in the old age stage, making it hostile to the market and the environment work of these people (PASCHOAL, 2017; SANTOS; MACHADO, 2024)

For a more stratified and broader understanding, it is necessary to analyze the whole situation from the populations present in the acronym that represents them. In relation to lesbians, gays and bisexuals, for example, the adversities found revolve more around preservation and stability in this space, which does not nullify a prejudiced situation. As for transvestites or transsexuals, the context is more aggravating in most cases, as these people are often prevented from entering this area, which means that they have to resort to informality to survive, corroborating the present study in the characterization of your sample (BENTO, 2017).

Thus, it is necessary to reflect and intervene on what conditions LGBTQIA+ elderly people are in with regard to the opportunities that appear in their lives and that are the cause of social transformation. Therefore, we can think about the importance of effectively complying with social benefits that the elderly people are entitled to, such as retirement, in an attempt to provide stability and security so that they have at least what is fundamental for survival.

Herdy (2020) points out that retirement or receiving other social benefits do not represent the end of life or an inactivity, but a valuable factor for maintaining the quality of life of those who lived facing challenges and lack of opportunities. These conceptions are directly related to the sample of this research, mainly with regard to schooling and work data, since most of the participants answered that they had only completed primary or secondary education and were in informal work contexts. show that educational spaces, such as schools, as well as other social environments, reinforce the spread of heteronormative cis attitudes, trying to prevent the existence of those who are outside this socially imposed standard, as happens with transgender people (DIAS; MELO; 2017; MENESES *et al*., 2024)

Regarding occupation, the National Association of Transvestite and Transsexuals of Brazil (Associação Nacional de Travestis e Transexuais [ANTRA], 2020), in its bulletin number 05 of 2020, points out that a large part of this population uses prostitution as their main source of income. Unfortunately, this says a lot about the places and conditions these people live in, making it necessary to break stereotypes that always place them in the same places or situations. This means that they can and should occupy jobs and positions that go beyond informality or beauty and aesthetic services, such as teaching at universities, creating projects for civil engineering works, medical training, etc.

Research by Khan *et al*. (2024) brings up something that directly relates to this section. According to this study, because of the high rates of poverty and vulnerability among trans people,

many of them are forced to get involved in risky occupations or occupations that put them in situations of greater susceptibility to fragility and lack of protection, such as prostitution. This is precisely as a result of the lack of opportunities that these people experience every day, including the countless cases of expulsion from home and being forced to leave school because of their different gender expression.

Corroborating this idea, a study by Cruz *et al*. (2025) found that discrimination in the workplace directly and significantly limits job opportunities and stability, making it necessary to look for other alternatives, which are not always safe. Another study by Baptista *et al*. (2023) showed that trans people, compared to those who don't identify as such, experience a very different reality: unemployment and job insecurity rates are much higher among the non-cisgender public.

As in the other sections of the discussion, the TALP and its respective prototypical analysis were carried out with the expression *Quality of life*, (Table 3) in which words appeared that also reinforce the themes brought here, essentially in the central nucleus that is constituted by the predominant representations:

Table 3 - Central core, primary periphery, constrast zone and secondary periphery of the expression quality of life

AOE<=2.76			AOE>2.76	
Frequency Average	CENTRAL CORE evocations	*f* AOE	PRIMARY PERIPHERY evocations	*f* AOE
>=3.09	Wage	8 17.80	Happiness	3 6.67
	Job	7 15.56	Family	2 4.44
	Work	7 15.56		
Frequency Average	CONSTRAST ZONE evocations	*f* AOE	SECONDARY PERIPHERY evocations	*f* AOE
<3.09	Leisure	2 4.44	Company	2 4.44
	Age	2 4.44	Health	2 4.44
	Accessibility	2 4.44	Support	2 4.44

Source: Self elaboration.

With the aim of exemplifying what has been exposed so far, there is a statement from one of the participants:

> Having quality of life means being able to have leisure, health, and access to the places that everyone needs, like a hospital, without being looked down upon and having some way of living and paying the bills having the basics to survive, which is already a lot these days for a lot of people. . . (Cris Macfer, 52 years old – fictitious name given in honor of the only trans MMA fighter in Brazil).

FINAL REMARKS

The present study is considered as something that carries with it an important factor of academic and social relevance, as it intends, among other things, to favor that the studied populations have space

and voice within the academic environment and, consequently, in the social environment. The research still had some limitations that had a direct impact on its development and interpretation. Among these limitations are: the difficulty of finding people who fit the sample, since the life expectancy of transgender people in Brazil does not exceed 40 years old, beyond the context pandemic that restricted the form of data collection and, the direct access to elderly trans men and the non-recommendation of the generalization of the data or results obtained, in view of the entire scope of the research already discussed.

In addition, it is necessary to highlight some points in order to reiterate and explain the importance of the research. The first point concerns the need to carry out studies and interventions based on the perception of the people or groups studied, such as the LGBTQIA+ elderly, which reinforces the importance of theories such as Social Representations, as it allows direct contact with the everyday ideas and understandings arising from groups or social media in a given context. Linked to this fact, the second point deals with how essential it is to listen to these people themselves about their experiences, desires and needs, since only they can say about the facts and realities they live, not neglecting the place of speech that must be respected. This means that real and effective theoretical-practical issues can only be thought of through faithful knowledge of the reality in which the beings or groups studied live so that it does not become something merely to be done, but that it fulfills the real role that it proposes.

The third question refers to the context experienced by LGBTQIA+ elderly people, represented by the words and respective themes, showing the scenario of constant prejudice experienced and reinforced by the present factors, mainly being old and LGBTQIA+ (which can be linked to several others) and the way that it reverberates in their realities. In this study, it can be seen that discrimination affects basic and elementary aspects of life, such as the lack of physical and/or affective resources, which denotes the need to take some actions, such as the creation and effective fulfillment of public policies aimed at these groups that work to promote equity and ensure social rights. The last point, there are some resources that work as important means that help in the survival of LGBTQIA+ elderly groups, such as, for example, the social benefits/retirement. That is, these resources are to ensure that the essential factors of life are at least preserved, such as income, food and housing. Even if, in some cases, receiving these benefits is not enough to provide quality of life, either because of the insufficient amount, the nature of the benefit or other unique issues involved in this situation.

This means that, in more practical and objective terms, it is necessary for the field of public policies to be more open to these populations, taking into account the urgency of greater social participation of these people. And, in this sense, to provide opportunities for spaces that break with any limiting stereotype that causes the same conventional paths to be imposed and standardized, so that

LGBTQIA+ elderly people are present in the most diverse social facets, including occupying prominent places.

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