The role of the teacher in distance education: A Qualitative Analysis of Training Management [1]

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ABSTRACT

Teachers, as stated by Libâneo (1994), are an integral part of the educational process. They are also of utmost importance for the formation of future generations, ensuring a globalized and educated society. This is because various reports, such as the Incheon Declaration (UNESCO, 2015), and the Global Education Report (UNESCO, 2021), highlight that professional involvement has repercussions on outcomes and consequences for education and the learner.

Keywords: Teachers, Educational process, Report documents.

1 INTRODUCTION

Teachers, as stated by Libâneo (1994), are an integral part of the educational process. They are also of utmost importance for the formation of future generations, ensuring a globalized and educated society. This is because various reports, such as the Incheon Declaration (UNESCO, 2015), and the Global Education Report (UNESCO, 2021), highlight that professional involvement has repercussions on outcomes and consequences for education and the learner.

In this regard, the Brazilian educational landscape has undergone numerous changes in recent times, and this includes Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (ASSIS, JUNIOR, and CALADO, 2020). It is also

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understood that this field has gained prominence and evolved in a different type of education: Distance Learning (DL) (NEUENFELDT 2021).

It becomes necessary to differentiate between the existing modes of education: traditional in-person teaching and DL. Traditional in-person teaching is the foundation of education. This modality is characterized by direct contact between the teacher and the students. The teacher's ability to communicate, encourage dialogue with students, and concern for student participation and interaction, both among themselves and with the teacher, are factors for success in this mode of education (BRASIL, 2002).

According to the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC) (2002), in traditional in-person teaching, students are grouped into classes, attend the same classroom, and their attendance must be recorded, which is not the case in DL. In DL, classes and activities are made available on a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) with predetermined start and end dates, allowing students to fulfill their responsibilities at any time and from anywhere. They can also attend classes and access a helpdesk without leaving their homes, facilitated by teacher-mediators (MAIA and MATTAR, 2007).

2 OBJECTIVE

Characterize the role of the teacher as an active individual in Distance Learning, through text search and analysis using the IRAMUTEQ software.

3 METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory qualitative research, where we conducted an extensive search on platforms. The data from the articles were refined and stored in a ".txt" document to be processed in the IRAMUTEQ software, which, in the end, were analyzed through word clouds and similarity analysis.

For the step-by-step of the search, we used the "RENOTE," "Google Scholar," and "Scielo" platforms for the primary search, which consisted of the keywords "Professor" and "Distance Learning." The search took into account publications from the last five years.

Table (1) below illustrates the quantity of articles found on each platform

Table 1: Number of articles found in each journal

	RENOTE	Scholar Google	Scielo
number of articles	12	23	10

Source: Prepared by the authors

In total, across the three platforms, a total of 45 articles were gathered, which were separated and refined through a careful reading of the title, abstract, and methodology. At this point, the exclusion criteria used were (1) articles that did not have the word "professor" or "teacher" in the title, (2) those that did not focus on the role of the professor, (3) those that did not focus on Distance Learning, (4) articles with a bibliographic research methodology, and (5) those that did not focus on higher education.

At the end of this stage, there were a total of 21 articles. All of them were compiled into a document to be analyzed by the IRAMUTEQ software, which conducted the analysis using "word clouds" and "similarity analysis." Both types of representations can provide clarity and transparency in the communication of ideas, revealing interesting patterns for further analysis (SURVEYGIZMO, 2017).

The Word Cloud (WC) is a graphical feature that represents the frequency of specific terms in hypertexts. They are images composed of words used in a text, where the font size of each word indicates its frequency or importance. Similarity Analysis (SA) is a graphical feature that presents fields and their branches. It is an image composed of the similarity of words in a specific context, which in this case is the role of the teacher in Distance Learning (SURVEYGIZMO, 2017).

4 DEVELOPMENT

The IRAMUTEQ software analyzed the document containing the abstracts of the 21 articles, totaling 2,666 words, with 505 of these words appearing only once. Referring to the three largest words and their hierarchical order, the terms that stand out are as follows: "Professor," which is the most frequently repeated word, appearing 49 times; "Formação" (Formation), with 33 appearances, is second in hierarchy, followed by "Pesquisa" (Research) in third place with 31 appearances, as exemplified by the Word Cloud (NP) indicated in the image below (Image 1).

Image 1: Word Cloud generated by IRAMUTEQ software
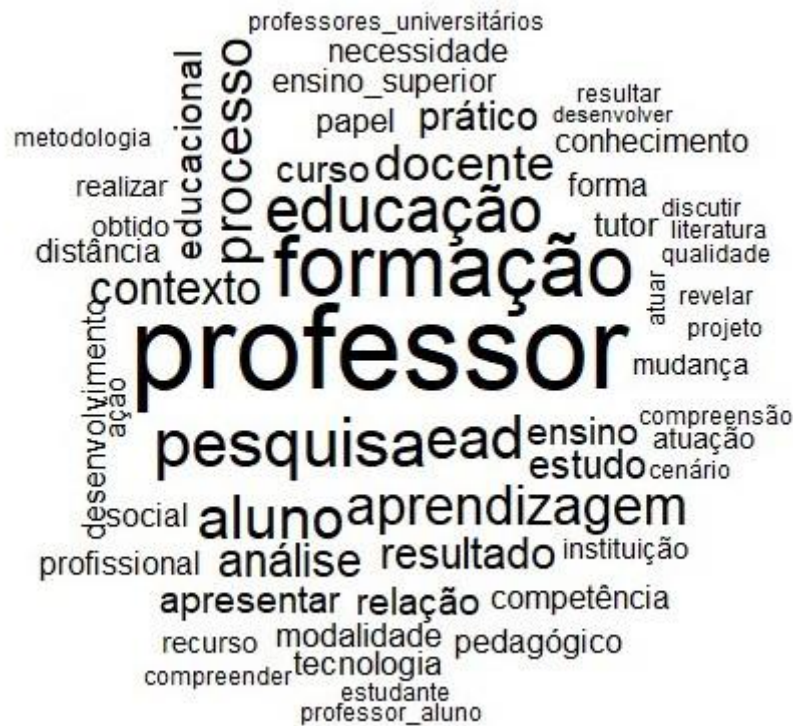
Source: Research data

From this image, it is possible to understand that some other words served as variables to compose the context and scenario of the link between teacher, training, and education. Among them, process, learning, and student stand out. This is because such terms and variables converge in promoting a learning environment that is capable of providing learning experiences with possibilities of engagement, involvement, and management (HATTIE, 2021).

In the result of the similarity analysis, it can be observed that the word "professor" forms a different branch from the word "training," but both are directly interconnected, as shown in image 2.

Image 2: Similarity Analysis performed by IRAMUTEQ software
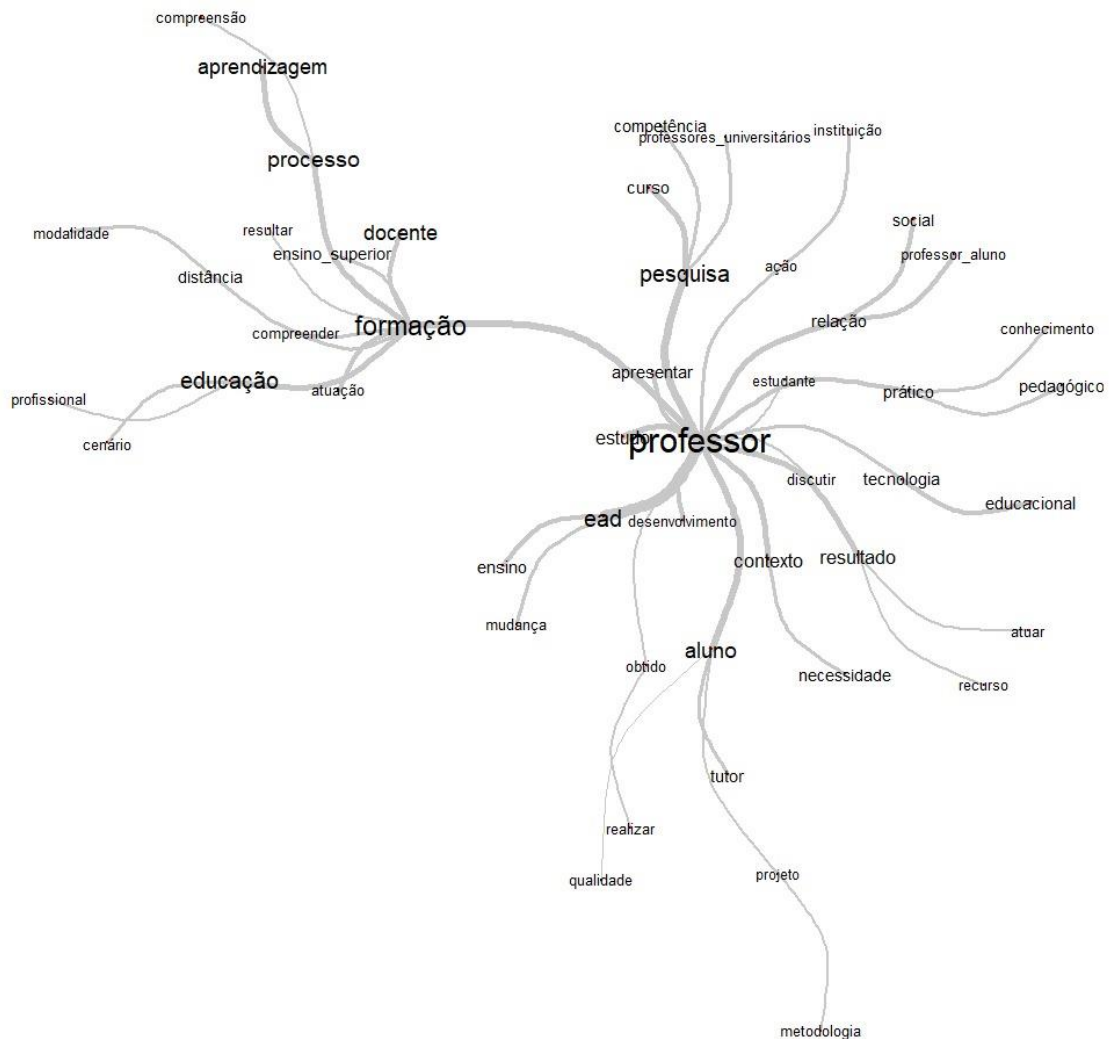
Source: Research data

When comparing these data, it is possible to observe that even though they form two different branches, "professor" and "formation" are interconnected, as presented by Nóvoa (2015), when he states that "formation is a continuous and permanent process aimed at the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for teaching."

In this same line of thought, Nóvoa presents the concepts of the words: "Professor," "Student," "Research," and "Distance Education (EaD)," which appear more frequently in the larger branch of our similarity analysis. Therefore, the table below presents the concepts of each of these variables according to Nóvoa (2015):

4.1 PROFESSOR

In the context of EAD, the professor is a professional who plays a fundamental role in the learning process. They must have a deep knowledge of the content they are teaching, as well as the skills and techniques required to teach effectively.

Student   The student is the individual who is learning. They should have an interest in the content they are learning, as well as motivation and perseverance to learn. The student should also be capable of working independently and collaboratively, as well as communicating and solving problems effectively.

Research   Research is an investigative process aimed at generating new knowledge. It can be conducted in a variety of contexts, including the educational context. Educational research can help improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing new insights into the learning process and best teaching practices.

4.2 EAD

(Distance Education) Distance education (EaD) is a form of education that allows students to learn outside the classroom using digital technologies. It can be a valuable tool for students who cannot attend in-person classes or who wish to learn at their own pace. This mode of teaching also enables the teacher to develop new skills, such as the ability to use digital technologies for teaching, the ability to create online learning environments, and the ability to interact with students remotely.

Table 1. Conceptualization of words, according to Nóvoa's (2015) perspective

Professor	In the context of EAD, the professor is a professional who plays a fundamental role in the learning process. They must have a deep knowledge of the content they are teaching, as well as the skills and techniques required to teach effectively.
Student	The student is the individual who is learning. They should have an interest in the content they are learning, as well as motivation and perseverance to learn. The student should also be capable of working independently and collaboratively, as well as communicating and solving problems effectively.
Research	Research is an investigative process aimed at generating new knowledge. It can be conducted in a variety of contexts, including the educational context. Educational research can help improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing new insights into the learning process and best teaching practices.
EaD (Distance Education)	Distance education (EaD) is a form of education that allows students to learn outside the classroom using digital technologies. It can be a valuable tool for students who cannot attend in-person classes or who wish to learn at their own pace. This mode of teaching also enables the teacher to develop new skills, such as the ability to use digital technologies for teaching, the ability to create online learning environments, and the ability to interact with students remotely.

Source: Research data

The relationship between the teacher and the student in the context of distance education (EAD) is mediated by technology. This means that teachers and students are not physically present in the same classroom but communicate through technological resources such as e-learning platforms, chat, forums, and email (NEUENFELDT, 2021).

Despite the physical distance, authors Maia and Mattar (2007) emphasize that establishing a relationship of trust and respect between the teacher and the student is essential. This is crucial for the success of the learning process. Teachers should be available to answer students' questions and provide support when needed. Students, on the other hand, should be committed to learning and actively participate in proposed activities.

The teacher-student relationship in EAD can be as productive as or even more productive than the traditional classroom relationship. This is because teachers and students have more freedom and flexibility to organize themselves. Students can study at their own pace and on their own schedule, while teachers can adapt content and activities to individual student needs. These activities can include research, which is the primary and fundamental source of study for any type of teaching, both for teachers and students (NEUENFELDT, 2021).

Furthermore, according to the same author mentioned above, the teacher-student relationship in EAD is a challenging but also very rewarding one. With the use of technology, teachers and students can create a learning environment that is engaging, collaborative, and effective.

In the other, smaller but no less important branch of our similarity analysis, we can see that the most frequent words are "Formation," "Education," and "Learning."

We define "formation" as a continuous process aimed at developing the competencies necessary for the teaching profession. It includes acquiring knowledge about the content to be taught, teaching methodologies, and learning theories (NÓVOA, 2013).

Learning is an active process based on each individual's prior knowledge, which, according to Cheng (2014), is known as "tacit knowledge" because it is intrinsic to the individual, with minimal teaching capacity. Based on this knowledge, the learner constructs new ideas about a concept, transforming it into something new through their cognitive structure.

This "something new" created from tacit knowledge is known as explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is easily transferable, tangible, and can be standardized. Explicit knowledge is our form of education. However, tacit knowledge should not be disregarded because one does not exist without the other (CHENG, 2014).

Formation is a lifelong process, known and explained by Nóvoa (2015) as the process of developing the capacity to apprehend and learn.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In light of the above, we can say that the teacher in distance education plays a crucial role in the success and effectiveness of the learning process for students in this modality (LIBÂNEO, 1994). Distance education can also be an important tool for the development of professional pedagogical knowledge, allowing teachers to acquire new skills, such as the ability to use digital technologies for teaching, create online learning environments, and interact with students remotely.

It is also concluded that research is an essential activity for the development of professional pedagogical knowledge. It enables teachers to better understand the learning processes, different learning styles, and various teaching strategies. Research also allows teachers to develop new teaching methodologies and assessment methods. The development of professional pedagogical knowledge is essential for the teaching profession, as it enables teachers to improve their teaching practices and contribute to student learning.

Nóvoa (2009) suggests in his book "Professors: Images of the Present and Future" five characteristics of a good teacher: Knowledge, Professional Culture, Pedagogical Sensitivity, Teamwork, and Social Commitment. What we see in our results is that the teacher is directly connected to the premise that being a teacher means understanding the purposes of the educational institution, integrating into the teaching profession, learning from more experienced colleagues, and, above all, knowing and learning from students. It is essential to know how to guide others toward knowledge (Nóvoa, 2009).

In this sense, our word cloud and similarity analysis still include less frequent words that are part of their composition, but they serve as a range of possibilities for new themes, allowing for the continuation of this research with the necessary perspectives to clarify further information.

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