

A classroom scene with a smartphone overlay showing a teacher on a video call. The background is a dimly lit classroom with students at desks. The smartphone screen shows a smiling woman with dark curly hair, wearing a brown sweater, in a video call interface. The interface includes a small circular profile picture of the same woman in the top right corner, a heart icon, a speech bubble icon with the text '40K', and a share icon with the text '9KOK'.

Teachtok and the new learning pathways



About Reglab

We are a private research center specializing in the media and technology sector, supporting companies, associations, and policymakers in making strategic decisions based on data and evidence.

Learn more at www.reglab.com.br.

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SUMMARY

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Executive Summary

This study investigates the emergence of “teachtokers” and how formal education is adapting to short-form video platforms. Based on an exploratory analysis and in-depth interviews with teacher content creators, Reglab examined how this form of edutainment (education + entertainment) is reshaping teaching practices.

The research explores the motivations that lead teachers to enter the digital environment, the strategies used to capture attention, and the tensions between the logic of the digital format and conceptual and pedagogical deepening.

Key Findings:

- **The Scroll Learning Phenomenon:** Learning on the platform occurs in an incidental and non-linear manner. Students do not necessarily enter the app with the intention of studying, but encounter educational content while seeking entertainment, creating a fluid and fragmented learning dynamic.
- **A New Didactics:** Traditional pedagogical techniques are being replaced or adapted. Content is structured around “hooks,” the simplification of complex concepts, and the use of viral trends—challenging depth but also generating interest and curiosity.
- **A Shift in the Teacher–Student Relationship:** In the digital environment, the relationship between teacher and student becomes closer and less formal. Teachers who were once seen as distant figures come to be perceived as more accessible and human, using humor and a more informal language to connect with students.
- **Professionalization and the Creator Economy:** For many teachers, being on TikTok goes beyond the desire to “simply teach.” It has become a way to strengthen their careers, gain professional visibility, and supplement their income, placing teachers within the market logic of the creator economy.

Introduction

Brazilian teachers are teaching on TikTok. Not as an experiment, not as a joke, but as a complementary practice to classroom work, reaching millions of views and fostering communities engaged with school-related content.

The platform has become a stage for ENEM exam review sessions, explanations from quantum physics to historical curiosities. **The phenomenon has a name: TeachTok. More than a trend or a hashtag, it constitutes a space for dialogue and innovation among educators** around the world, who exchange resources, ideas, and strategies through the sharing of short-form videos on the platform.

Educational TikTok in Numbers

Reach among Brazilian youth

55% of adolescents aged 13–14 use TikTok

62% of young people aged 15–17 are on the platform

(Data: Tic Kids Online 2024)

Educational use by students

72% use video channels/apps for school research

46% rely on social networks as a source of research

(Data: Tic Educação 2024)

Engagement with educational hashtags: (views)

#estudos

112,2 bi

#AprendaNoTikTok:

30,9 bi

#Edutok

199,9 bi

#TikTokeducacao

9,8 mi

(Data: Exolyt 2025)¹

¹ The data presented were extracted between December 29 and December 30, 2025, from the Exolyt platform, a social analytics and intelligence tool specialized in TikTok that provides resources for brands, influencers, and agencies to monitor and understand the performance of accounts, videos, trends, and hashtags on the platform.

TikTok initiatives in Brazil

Free prep classes

for ENEM in movie theaters featuring creators from the platform:

- **29.5 thousand free tickets** distributed over two days in the 2025 edition
- Screenings in **48 movie theaters across 32 Brazilian cities**, with presence in 100% of state capitals
- In 2025, there was a **6× increase in the number of posts and a 5.6× increase in views** of ENEM-related content.

Since 2021

special ENEM-focused project with a content hub

Feed STEM

Launch of the STEM feed (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), which functions as a second “For You” feed dedicated to educational content. This feature is automatically enabled for users aged 13 to 17.

The format of TikTok content can also foster the development of teachers' communicative skills. Short videos require synthesis and concision, which compels educators to distill key information in a limited amount of time, with greater objectivity. Features such as duets, reactions, green screen, and stitches² expand the possibilities for didactic creation and encourage interactions that challenge the traditional hierarchy between teacher and student (Vizcaíno-Verdú; Abidin, 2023).

This scenario aligns with pedagogical perspectives that emphasize the centrality of students' sociocultural contexts in educational processes, through a horizontal relationship between educator and learner. At the same time, it is important to note that the educational use of TikTok also presents challenges, such as the risk of prioritizing entertainment over genuinely educational content and the pressure to achieve virality (Sánchez-López; Roig-Vila; Salcedo, 2023; Vizcaíno-Verdú; Abidin, 2023).

Considering all this, several questions arise: how do these educators produce content? What motivates them? How do they balance pedagogical rigor and virality? What does this migration to the digital environment reveal about the limits and possibilities of contemporary education?

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative approach to **understand how Brazilian teachers in basic education and preparatory courses for university entrance exams use TikTok in their teaching practice**. The research sought to investigate how these educators create educational content on the platform and how they perceive issues related to engagement, visibility, and interaction with students.

Initially, a literature review was conducted on TeachTok and on the use of TikTok in education and by teachers. The references were selected through systematic searches in national and international academic databases, prioritizing recent and widely cited studies in the field.

In sequence, data collection was structured in two complementary stages. **The first consisted of an exploratory mapping of teacher profiles that produce educational content on TikTok**. This stage aimed to delineate the empirical universe of the research and to identify initial patterns of teaching practices on the platform. To this end, a systematic search for teacher profiles was conducted, with the recording of quantitative data such as teaching area, number of followers, and total number of likes. In total, 54 professionals were mapped.

² React (Reaction): A feature that allows a creator to select a user's comment on a post and respond to it through a video. Duet: When a user records a video that is displayed side by side with content previously published by another account. Green Screen: Refers to the ability to use another image or video as the background for one's own content. Stitch: A feature that allows users to clip and incorporate scenes from other users' videos into their own post.

The **second stage focused on conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a sample of seven professionals** who publish didactic content on TikTok and work in elementary education, secondary education, or university entrance exam preparatory courses, as shown in Table 1. The choice of this method was based on the understanding that the interview does not constitute a unidirectional mechanism for transmitting information, but rather a cooperative endeavor in which interviewer and interviewee jointly construct ideas and meanings, allowing for the exploration and development of different realities and perceptions (Gaskell, 2008).

To better understand this context, we spoke with teachers who create educational content on TikTok, investigating how they produce their videos, how they interact with students and followers, their perceptions of the platform as a learning space, and their suggestions for strengthening the educational role of the network in Brazil.

General data



Anelize Vergara (@profanelize)

- Volunteers at a non-profit organization (NGO) in a College Preparatory Course;
- Previous experience in Middle and High School education;
- History teacher for 11 years (since 2014);
- Target audience consists of novice teachers.



Antônio (@profantoniogeografia)

- Teaches 9th grade (Middle School) and High School within the Santa Catarina State Public School System;
- Geography teacher for 16 years, with an interdisciplinary focus on History and Sociology;
- Audience consists of the school community and the general public (including lawyers, physicians, and policymakers).



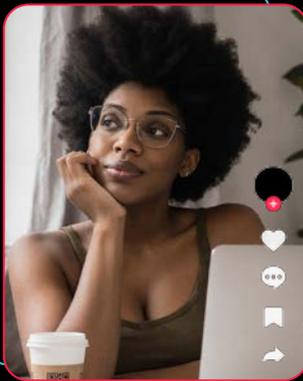
Daniel Almeida (prof.danielalmeida)

- Teaches High School and College Preparatory Courses within the Paraná State Public System, the Private Sector, and a University-affiliated program (UEL);
- History teacher for 8 years;
- Audience is composed of 80% college applicant and 20% adults/parents.



Jorge (@profjorgeabreu)

- Teaches Middle School (currently 6th and 7th grades) in the Private Sector, with experience in High School and Higher Education as needed;
- Mathematics teacher for 14 years;
- Audience consists of students and "math enthusiasts."



Josiane (@prof.josianearaujo)

- Teaches Elementary and Middle School (Early and Final Years) within the Municipal Public School System;
- Teacher for 5 years, specializing in English, Portuguese, and History;
- Audience is composed of undergraduate students and individuals interested in Literature and History.



Rafael (@purafisica)

- Teaches in College Preparatory Courses and Specialized Private Classes (Medical School Prep);
- Former High School teacher;
- Physics teacher for nearly 20 years;
- Audience consists of medical school applicants and young adults aged 24-34.



Victor Polilo (@professorvictorpolillo)

- Teaches Middle School (Final Years), High School, and College Preparatory Courses in the Private Sector;
- Mathematics teacher for 10 years;
- Audience consists of college applicants and young adults aged 19 to 29.

To analyze the interviews, we used thematic analysis, a qualitative research method that helps identify recurring patterns and themes in participants' statements. The process works as follows:

1. We carefully read the transcripts and highlighted the most relevant excerpts. When appropriate, we assigned each excerpt a descriptive label—short words or phrases summarizing what was being said. These are referred to as **codes**.
2. Next, we grouped these codes by similarity, creating broader groupings that function as **categories**.
3. Finally, we organized these categories into **themes**, which represent the most salient patterns identified and help structure the analysis.

This method ensures that our conclusions are consistently grounded in what the interviewees actually said, rather than in assumptions. **The full methodology can be consulted in the appendix to this report.**

1st Level of Coding (initial categorization)	2nd Level of Coding (grouping of codes)	3rd Level of Coding (Themes)
"my first degree is in Languages, Portuguese and English. Then I studied Pedagogy, then I studied History." (Josiane)	Teaching disciplines	
"I have been a teacher in the state public school system of Santa Catarina since 2015." (Antônio)	Private or public schools	
"I work with the final years of lower secondary education, eighth and ninth grades, and upper secondary education." (Victor)	Level of education taught	 General data
"The age group that follows me the most, with the highest percentage, is 24 to 34 years old." (Rafael)	Current audience	
"I taught for 11 years, from sixth grade through upper secondary education." (Anelize)	Years of classroom experience	
"I was actually trained as a teacher in high school. Something I never wanted—I never wanted to be a teacher, I never imagined it. But then destiny is tough." (Jorge)	The discovery of teaching	
"So, during the pandemic, the prep course students said, 'Teacher, record these classes for us.' And I said, 'Okay, but recording the class is heavy... I have to move it to the computer...' And then they said, 'No, you don't need to send it—create a YouTube channel and upload the classes there.'" (Victor)	The pandemic and entry into the digital space	 Trajectory

1st Level of Coding (initial categorization)	2nd Level of Coding (grouping of codes)	3rd Level of Coding (Themes)
<p>"I search for information, I find texts and rewrite them for myself, adapting them to the format I'm going to present. So yes, it's the entire production chain from beginning to end—I'm the one who takes care of it." (Antônio)</p>	<p>Creation process</p>	
<p>"Then I said, 'Guys, the other day I saw someone on TikTok talking about this, and it's an important point. Watch their video later.'" (Anelize)</p>	<p>Content used in the classroom</p>	 <p>Between the classroom and the digital environment</p>
<p>"When I see that the entire class didn't understand a topic, I think that surely more people didn't understand it either. And then I take that topic, at least as a tip." (Victor)</p>	<p>Onde surgem as ideias</p>	
<p>"All my work today is only with the internet, with teacher training, with social media online." (Anelize)</p>	<p>Visibilidade, conversão e sustentabilidade do trabalho docente no digital</p>	
<p>" "They see a lot of teachers as that annoying figure who's going to take their phone away and so on. And the TikTok teacher is a cooler teacher, so they can deal better with Josiane from TikTok than with Josiane in person." (Josiane)</p>	<p>Closer relationships with students</p>	
<p>"From the beginning, I saw TikTok as an environment that is favorable to education and that encourages it, because I've always been encouraged by the platform at various moments." (Antônio)</p>	<p>Can you learn on TikTok?</p>	 <p>Learning</p>
<p>"Today I think a lot about my classes, so they resemble a short video. I know I've got one minute, two minutes, three minutes of attention, so I try to tighten things up and make it attractive." (Josiane)</p>	<p>Learning outcomes from content production</p>	

1st Level of Coding (initial categorization)	2nd Level of Coding (grouping of codes)	3rd Level of Coding (Themes)
<p>"But my production process doesn't take one hour—it's much longer, so I don't have the available time, because I work 40 hours." (Antonio)</p>	<p>Challenges of the double workload</p>	
<p>"Many teachers don't have this media education, this literacy in things that seem obvious and very basic to us, but many teachers don't have it—from downloading an app to understanding how the platform dynamics work. I think there's a lack of training in this." (Anelize)</p>	<p>Learning on one's own to speak a new language</p>	
<p>"You just keep producing. It's shallow content—shallow content. Does it teach? It does, but it's temporary content. It goes into your head and soon it's gone." (Jorge)</p>	<p>The trap of superficiality</p>	 Challenges
<p>"I think today, more than seeing it as a legitimate learning space or not, we need to transform it into a learning space, because one thing is a fact: I lost my students to TikTok. I'm not more entertaining than TikTok." (Josiane)</p>	<p>The unequal battle for attention</p>	
<p>"Nowadays, on the internet, whoever has more followers is an authority." (Jorge)</p>	<p>When followers matter more than diplomas</p>	
<p>"One thing that held me back a lot was thinking, 'But there are so many people teaching this on the internet.' And then I discovered—and I heard this a few times—that yes, there are many people teaching, but not many teaching the way you teach." (Josiane)</p>	<p>Recommendations for teachers who want to produce content</p>	 Recommendations and future perspectives
<p>"I think there needs to be something more forceful, even at the algorithm level—like, 'these channels with this type of content, we're going to hack the algorithm and give them reach, whether short videos or long videos.'" (Rafael)</p>	<p>Institutional support from TikTok</p>	

1. Trajectory

The interviews reveal that the professional trajectories of the teachers interviewed are marked by **non-linear paths, both in their entry into teaching and in their adoption of TikTok as a space for producing educational content.**

- In general, teaching did not emerge for most participants as an initially planned career choice, but rather as an alternative that became consolidated through practice and identification with classroom work.
- A similar dynamic can be observed in their entry into the digital environment: the use of TikTok largely emerged as a response to contingent contexts—especially the pandemic—and was later incorporated more systematically into teaching practices.

For most interviewees, teaching emerged as a circumstantial possibility, linked to transitions, unemployment, or professional redirection. Direct contact with the classroom was decisive in re-signifying the profession, which shifted from a secondary option to a central place in their trajectories.

Josiane Araújo, an English and Portuguese teacher, began teaching simply to occupy her time, without any intention of pursuing a teaching career, but discovered an affinity with teaching through practice:



"So being a teacher was by no means my first choice. In fact, I never imagined myself as a teacher [...] I was unemployed, I had nothing to do, and then I started teaching English in a project just to occupy my time. And then I discovered that I really liked teaching."³

A similar process appears in the account of Jorge Abreu, a mathematics teacher, who describes initial resistance to teacher training, which was overcome during the mandatory internship, when he began to recognize himself in the role of teacher:



"I only started to like it after I began doing my internship [...] and I got really into it—you know, me in the classroom, being an authority.

³ In certain circumstances, specific linguistic adaptations were made to the quotations presented in this study to preserve the interviewees' original intent in the written transcription. The discursive register was preserved whenever possible, in accordance with the established methodological principles.

Other interviewees had trajectories oriented toward academic research but were redirected by opportunities to work in basic education. Anelize Vergara, a history teacher, although aspiring to an academic career, redefined her relationship with teaching after working in a school following her master's degree:



"My focus was always research. I wanted to be a university professor and all that, but then, when I defended my master's thesis [...] I got a teaching position at a school here in my city, and I ended up staying and really liking it."

Entry into TikTok was strongly associated **with contexts of forced adaptation, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic**. Social isolation and remote teaching acted as catalysts for experimentation with digital formats.

Rafael Irigoyen, a physics teacher, had been producing content on YouTube since 2012, but it was in 2020 that he redirected his efforts toward TikTok due to the platform's growth and the need to adapt his language:



"I started, let's say, to change the way I produced content—or at least the focus was 2020, the year of the pandemic."

Other interviewees saw TikTok as an opportunity for personal experimentation during social isolation. Antônio Ferreira, a geography teacher, reports that video production emerged as a way of coping with confinement, which eventually sparked an interest in audiovisual language and editing. In 2021, he was invited to participate in the platform's acceleration program.

Beyond the incentives offered by the company, migration to the digital environment also responded to the limitations of remote teaching models, especially regarding



"During the pandemic, we had the idea of continuing classes, but in a remote format. There was the possibility of uploading classes to a drive. But classes on a drive were much more restricted."

In some cases, the initiative came from the students themselves. Victor Polillo, a mathematics teacher, began recording classes at students' request during remote teaching. Although the initial suggestion was YouTube, TikTok proved to be a viable alternative, particularly because it offered financial incentives for educational content production:



"TikTok offered incentives, including financial ones, for us to produce more for that platform and precisely to shed this stigma of being just a dance platform."

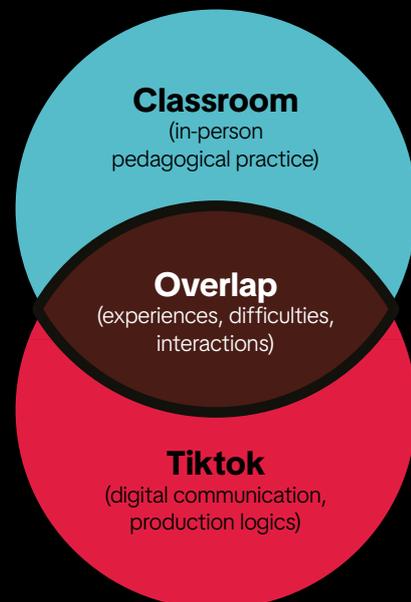
Entry into the platform was also related to specific moments in personal life. Josiane Araújo began producing content during maternity leave, motivated by the absence of her school routine and by a desire to maintain a connection with teaching:



"It was during my son's maternity leave [...] that I started to miss teaching [...] And then I kept thinking, what if I combined the useful with the pleasant at this moment when I'm not doing anything in my life and started recording some videos about it?"

2. The Classroom and the Digital Environment

The interviews show that teachers' engagement on TikTok is built through an ongoing relationship between their teaching practice in schools or preparatory courses and the digital environment. Far from operating as dissociated spheres, **the classroom and the social media platform mutually reinforce one another: everyday school experiences, challenges, and interactions inform content production, while the logic of short-form video and digital communication feeds back into in-person pedagogical practice.** In other words, participants describe a cyclical movement in which TikTok functions simultaneously as a space for pedagogical experimentation, a professional showcase, and a symbolic extension of the classroom.



Accounts indicate that the production of educational content on TikTok is carried out by the teachers themselves, who handle all stages of the process: research, planning, recording, and editing. **This individual model—referred to as a "me-team" (eu-quipe)—demands time and effort to adapt complex content to short, dynamic formats aligned with the platform's circulation logic.**

The pursuit of naturalness is central and is linked to **attempts to reproduce, in the digital environment, communicative strategies already consolidated in the classroom**. Josiane, for example, avoids formal scripts and prefers spontaneous communication similar to her in-person teaching style:



"I don't use a script because I can't follow a script. I can't memorize a script. If I put it on a teleprompter, I get lost... the little jokes I make in the classroom are the same little jokes I make in the videos." (Josiane)

Antônio highlights the impossibility of delegating stages of the creative process, emphasizing that **decisions about language, framing, and editing are part of an individual pedagogical reasoning**:



"I can't delegate any part of my process. Because it's me who has to think through how I'm going to move the camera, or which images I'm going to use, what I'm going to say." (Antônio)

Anelize, in turn, associates autonomous production with TikTok's very identity, stressing that **a less polished aesthetic is perceived as part of the platform's communicative value**:



"On TikTok it's precisely this naturalness—something more organic, even in terms of video editing. So, for example, I edit it myself, and I'm not too worried about it being something aesthetically perfect." (Anelize)

In addition to producing content for the platform, the interviewed teachers report **using TikTok as a pedagogical resource in the classroom**, either by sharing their own videos with students or by curating content from other creators.

Rafael describes the direct incorporation of his videos into the school routine, especially as complementary support material:



"There on WhatsApp, I send it to the students so they can see the images and everything. So TikTok content is inside my classroom." (Rafael)

Anelize also highlights the curatorial and exchange dimension with students, noting that references drawn from the platform itself help bring school content closer to students' cultural repertoires:



*"Guys, the other day I saw someone on TikTok talking about this, and it's an important point. Watch their video later... I'd recommend it, or they would bring things from their own bubble."
(Anelize)*

The in-person classroom plays a central role in defining video topics. Recurrent doubts and students' learning difficulties are transformed into prompts for digital content production, reinforcing the idea of **TikTok as an extension of teaching practice** and enabling pedagogical issues to be reworked for broader audiences.

Examples abound across all interviewees. Victor identifies gaps in students' understanding as opportunities to broaden the reach of explanations beyond the school setting:



"When I see that the entire class didn't understand a topic, I think that surely more people didn't understand it either. So I take that topic, at least as a tip."

Rafael describes a more systematized process for recording these ideas, integrating his teaching routine into his digital production workflow:



"Today I already have a production system—I have a Trello... when something comes up, sometimes when I'm actually teaching in my course, I think, 'this would be good to turn into a video.'" (Rafael)

This active listening can also be systematized through community tools. Daniel Almeida, for instance, uses WhatsApp groups so that students themselves define video topics, ensuring that the content responds to real needs:



"I managed to align their interests with my own benefit. (...) When they find something, they send it to the community and that helps me. (...) So basically, my video scripts are produced by my students."

Finally, **TikTok also functions as a tool for professional visibility, serving as a gateway to courses, mentoring programs, and educational products outside the platform.** In general, direct monetization through views is considered limited, with audience conversion being the primary strategic objective.

Daniel describes TikTok as a discovery channel for his products:



"My monetization from this work comes from students I get through the community—people who want mentoring and who want the study program."

Anelize reports conversion experiences even without structured paid traffic strategies:



"I've also made sales through TikTok—not a lot, because I still haven't done paid traffic or anything, but I've made quite a few sales."

The interviews reveal distinct trajectories regarding the financial sustainability of digital work. Some teachers have consolidated a predominantly online practice, while others view the income as complementary or unstable.

Jorge highlights the autonomy achieved through digital production:



"I'm recording my course... and living off the internet. As I'm already managing to live from it, right? I'm not rich yet, but I'm already managing to live."

In contrast, Rafael underscores the unpredictability of this model:



"I don't monetize the content itself in the sense that it doesn't give me enough income to live off it. [...] It's very up and down."

Overall, the testimonies indicate that while TikTok expands opportunities for visibility and conversion, the consolidation of digital platforms as the primary source of teachers' income remains contingent on individual factors and on the platform's dynamics.

3. Learning

The interviews reveal that discussions about learning on TikTok are not organized solely around content transmission; they also **involve affective, relational, and contextual dimensions that permeate the educational experience**. For teachers, the platform operates as an environment of proximity and encounter with knowledge, in which learning is often indirect, fragmented, and situated.

Teaching presence on digital platforms is perceived as relevant for pedagogical proximity and classroom engagement. Being on TikTok is understood as a **way of acknowledging students' cultural repertoires and building bridges between the digital sphere and the school**. As Victor puts it:



"The artist has to go where the audience is, right? The idea is the same for me."

By occupying the same digital space as students, teachers report a **reduction in the symbolic distance associated with the traditional figure of the teacher**. Activity on TikTok contributes to **a more accessible and relatable image, contrasting with the formal authority of the classroom**. Although it does not replace structured pedagogical practices, this proximity is perceived as a factor that creates more favorable conditions for engagement and knowledge circulation.

Josiane describes this shift by comparing students' perceptions of the in-person teacher and their digital version:



"They really see the teacher as that boring figure... And the TikTok teacher is a cooler teacher."

This proximity is associated, by the interviewees, with positive effects on student engagement. Even though it is not understood as a guarantee of learning, the creation of affective bonds is seen as facilitating the pedagogical process.



"This does create a sense of closeness between the student and the teacher. It doesn't necessarily turn into interest in the class, but it helps." (Victor)

For Daniel Almeida, this digital presence alters students' perception of authority, making it more accessible:



"Now, when I'm there in person, they keep some distance. But if I have a digital presence... they humanize me much more. (...) I arrive in the classroom and the student is already a bit more familiar." (Daniel)

On the other hand, despite recognizing its educational potential, the platform is still seen as a space of incidental learning, in which knowledge emerges from casual encounters with educational content during everyday platform use.



"They end up having the chance to come across content that is really focused on their education." (Antônio)



"It's a space for learning, but not a deliberate one." (Rafael)

Anelize simultaneously acknowledges the platform's educational potential and the risks associated with it, especially regarding the possibility of the circulation of content that demands contextualization and deepening:



"It's a very important tool for education. At the same time, there's a lot of clickbait and a lot of misinformation."

The experience of producing educational content for TikTok is also formative for the teachers themselves. The short-video format requires the development of skills related to synthesis, communicative clarity, and attention management—skills that are incorporated into face-to-face teaching practice:



"I believe I learned how to speak better, to express myself better." (Antônio)



"The short-video script taught me to be much more concise with the most relevant information." (Rafael)



"Today I think a lot about designing my classes to be similar to a short video." (Josiane)

4. Tips and Messages from the "Teachtokers"

The interviews show that teachers view TikTok as a space to strengthen teaching and learning, pointing to ways of expanding the presence of educational content on the platform.

The interviewed teachers encourage their peers to **produce content without striving for technical perfection or exclusive topics**. Authenticity and one's own didactic style are seen as key differentiators for building connections with the audience.



"There are a lot of people teaching, but there aren't many people teaching the way you teach." (Josiane)



"Teachers are sometimes missing the opportunity to be closer to their students in the classroom by not using what students already consume." (Anelize)



"In the process, it gives me a lot of pleasure, because I am learning." (Antônio)

Participants emphasize that **the consolidation of TikTok as a learning space depends on institutional recognition and valuation of educational content**. Teachers identify structural difficulties for education to gain organic visibility in a platform dominated by entertainment and positively assess previous platform initiatives aimed at encouraging educational production, such as support programs and financial incentives.



"It is very difficult for education to compete with entertainment within the algorithm (...) if TikTok wants to become an educational space, it needs to embrace education in a more institutional way."
(Rafael)

5. Challenges

Despite TikTok's potential as a space for the circulation of educational content, the interviewed teachers point to a series of challenges associated with content production on the platform. These challenges stem both from the **material conditions of teaching work and from the dynamics inherent to the digital environment**, which is shaped by the logic of attention, the centrality of engagement, and automated curation.

The perceptions gathered indicate tensions between teaching, producing content in a sustainable way, and adapting to the platform's different implicit norms.

One of the main challenges identified is the **workload associated with producing digital content**, which is particularly common among public school teachers. Creating TikTok videos adds unpaid hours to an already demanding teaching routine. Research, recording, editing, and publishing take up time that overlaps with professional and personal responsibilities.



"But my production process doesn't take one hour, right? It's quite long, so I don't have enough time, because I work 40 hours." (Antônio)



"I work 30 hours for the municipal government, I have two young children, so I have difficulty finding time to record." (Josiane)

Another challenge is **the lack of training for the pedagogical use of social media**. Schools and education departments do not provide technical or pedagogical training for digital content production. As a result, professionals learn on their own, through trial and error, which increases inequalities among teachers and limits the educational use of the platform.



"Many teachers don't have this kind of media education, this literacy [...] from downloading an app to understanding how the platform dynamics work." (Anelize)



"There is no training in media education [...] everything was very empirical." (Josiane)

The interviewees highlight characteristics inherent to the short-form video format, which pose challenges for addressing more complex content. While they acknowledge TikTok's potential as an entry point for sparking students' interest, there is consensus that the platform plays a complementary role, rather than replacing pedagogical practices aimed at deeper engagement and the consolidation of learning.

Victor expresses concern about the illusion of learning promoted by condensed content.



"I don't try to teach mathematics to anyone. I simply give a tip about something, present a curiosity... the idea of 'learn quadratic equations in one and a half minutes' is very seductive."

This view is reinforced by Rafael, who explicitly recognizes the limits of the short-video format and distances himself from any claim of depth comparable to classroom teaching:



"It's superficial. I'm fully aware that what I explore in that short time span is something superficial. You can't have the pretension of being deeply in-depth like in a classroom."

Teachers also report **difficulties in adapting traditional teaching formats to the platform's environment**. Longer or lecture-style video lessons tend to perform poorly in the feed:



"If you just post that traditional video-lesson format, someone who is scrolling through the feed, swiping videos up, is not interested in a physics video lesson [...] This kind of classroom-style video content has a lot of difficulty penetrating this short format." (Rafael)

There is also concern about the effects of continuous short-video consumption on students' ability to concentrate, especially in contexts that require sustained periods of focus:



"This short-video format engages too much and interferes with the ability to concentrate, to maintain focus for some periods of time. This is something I struggle with a lot and discuss with them, because they are preparing for medical school, so they need long periods of focus." (Rafael)

his concern is also related to competition for attention with entertainment videos that demand less cognitive effort and tend to generate higher engagement, an asymmetry that disadvantages teachers on the platform.



"I lost my students to TikTok. I'm not more entertaining than TikTok." (Josiane)

Finally, teachers point **to the inversion of authority criteria in the digital environment as a significant challenge**. On TikTok, follower count often outweighs academic training as an indicator of legitimacy, exposing qualified teachers to questioning and attacks.



"Nowadays, on the internet, whoever has more followers is the authority. The guy may have nothing, may not even have graduated, but if he has more followers than you, he has more authority than you." (Jorge)



"What bothers me is seeing a large audience questioning what I'm saying." (Antônio)



"The number of times I've been corrected when I wasn't wrong is impressive." (Rafael)

6. Analysis and Comments

Considering the perspectives shared in interviews with teachers who create educational content on TikTok, this study seeks to understand how these experiences dialogue with research on technology-mediated learning and with dynamics specific to digital platforms. In qualitative research, recurring consensuses may reflect both shared structural experiences and effects of visibility and discursive circulation inherent to digital environments. Thus, the guiding question of this analysis is: **do teachers' perceptions of TeachTok find support in empirical and theoretical studies on education within platform-based contexts?**

The analysis below focuses on three points of convergence among the interviewees: **(i)** the reconfiguration of teaching authority and professional identity; **(ii)** TikTok as a space for discovery-based learning and teacher–student proximity; and **(iii)** the structural limits of the short-video format for learning.

6.1. Reconfiguration of teaching identity and authority

Teachers' accounts indicate **a transformation in how teaching authority is constructed in digital environments**. Rather than relying exclusively on the institutional position of the school, authority becomes negotiated through language, cultural identification, and continuous presence on the platform. This perception is supported by Vizcaíno-Verdú and Abidin's (2023) definition of TeachTok as a digital subculture marked by processes of teacher microcelebrification.

Drawing on studies by Barber (2014), Nuruddin-Hidayat et al. (2020), Camas-Garrido et al. (2021), Eriksson-Krutrök (2021), and Grillo and Kier (2021) to understand how

teachers engage with social media in relation to teaching and microcelebrification, Vizcaíno-Verdú and Abidin (2023) argue that teachers operating on TikTok construct their public identities around four pillars:

- responsibility - the demonstration of pedagogical competence and ethical commitment to disseminating knowledge in an accessible and reliable manner;
- commitment - dedication to planning and content production, including time management to address topics that go beyond the strictly academic curriculum;
- authority - the construction of legitimacy that is not hierarchical but relational, established through the ability to foster identification, empathy, and pedagogical usefulness for followers;
- recognition - validation expressed by audiences through praise, criticism, and engagement, which affirms the relevance of teachers' work on the platform.

This framework helps explain why interviewees associate their presence on TikTok with increased proximity to students and the strengthening of classroom relationships.

Finally, the frequent use of humor, storytelling, and contemporary cultural references—widely mentioned in the interviews—reinforces this symbolic reconstruction of relational authority. As noted by Vizcaíno-Verdú and Abidin (2023), **these strategies contribute to reducing the symbolic distance between educator and learner without eliminating the inherent asymmetry of the pedagogical relationship.** Authority does not disappear; rather, it is reconfigured on more horizontal, proximate, and empathetic grounds, aligning with Freirean pedagogical perspectives that value dialogue, cultural mediation, and the shared construction of meaning.

6.2. Scroll learning, edutainment, and teacher–student proximity

Most interviewees understand TikTok as a space for **informal and spontaneous learning**, where educational content is encountered incidentally amid streams of entertainment. This dynamic, emerging from continuous movement through the feed, can be understood as a form of **scroll learning**, in which contact with knowledge occurs while users navigate the platform without an explicit educational intention. This perception resonates with TikTok's own self-definition as "a global entertainment platform that enables brands to connect meaningfully with people at scale."

Scroll Learning

In this study, scroll learning describes a form of informal learning on TikTok that occurs outside formal educational settings and combines intentional and incidental dimensions (Kumar; Nanda, 2024). Unlike active searching, scroll learning emerges from continuous navigation through the feed, where contact with educational content happens in a fragmented and spontaneous manner. Entertainment functions as a gateway to discovery, expanding repertoires and sparking curiosity.

TikTok's architecture favors this dynamic. As Turvy (2025) notes, the platform operates with a **low barrier to entry** for creators and users alike. This allows teachers to produce educational videos using simple resources, such as a smartphone and native editing tools. At the same time, students can access this content without actively seeking it, through the "For You" feed, which sustains curiosity-driven forms of learning.

Within this environment, **edutainment** practices are consolidated, integrating information with playful elements (Seligman; Bona, 2024). School-related content is thus translated into the platform's languages—humor, brief narratives, and cultural references—expanding circulation without replacing formal educational spaces.

The interviews indicate that this communicational arrangement also fosters **closer relationships between teachers and students**. By sharing cultural codes and media environments similar to those of their students, teachers reduce symbolic distances and facilitate communication. This proximity stems not only from individual teaching styles, but also from the way the platform structures visibility, interaction, and engagement.

In addition, features such as comments, video replies, and duets encourage direct exchanges. According to Turvy (2025) and Jerasa and Ura (2025), these tools help transform the educational process into a more participatory and responsive experience, in which students feel authorized to ask questions, react, and co-construct meaning.

Teachers demonstrate awareness of the limits of this dynamic. Informality and proximity on the platform are pedagogical and cultural mediation resources, not substitutes for the school relationship. Learning on TikTok functions as an entry point and a means of expanding repertoires, but it depends on pedagogical mediation for the consolidation of knowledge within its formal context.

6.3. The paradox between fostering learning and TikTok's code

Despite recognizing the platform's pedagogical potential, interviewees **recurrently express concern about the limits imposed by the short-video format**. The need to condense complex concepts into a few minutes is associated with the challenges related to conceptual deepening, a perception particularly present among teachers in STEM fields.

This tension does not invalidate the pedagogical uses described in the previous sections, but rather makes explicit a structural paradox of the platform: the same features that promote initial engagement and closer relationships with students also impose constraints on the depth of explanation.

Ramos and Oliveira (2024), drawing on Lessig (2006), argue that platform code functions as implicit rules (the code is law) that shape behavior. On TikTok, short videos, dynamic editing, and rapid responses demand messages that are direct, visual, and easily assimilated. Content requiring lengthy explanations or sustained attention faces engagement challenges, whereas narratives aligned with the platform's language tend to perform better.

Most of the accounts from the interviewed teachers nonetheless indicate a clear awareness of this dilemma. Far from attributing to TikTok the role of replacing formal educational spaces, interviewees describe the platform as a device for initial engagement, curiosity, and cultural mediation. **Thus, the platform's pedagogical value lies less in the consolidation of learning and more in its capacity to activate interest, reduce symbolic barriers, and create conditions for school-related content to circulate and acquire meaning** across different educational times and spaces.

6.4. Implications for Educational Public Policies

The findings of this study must be understood within a context where the digital environment is progressively recognized as a structural dimension of education. Data from TIC Kids 2024 and TIC Educação 2024 indicate that more than half of Brazilian adolescents aged 13 to 17 use TikTok, while a significant portion of students rely on videos and social networks as sources for school research. This scenario reinforces the fact that learning occurs in hybrid ecosystems, where formal and informal environments intersect. Recent educational public policies in Brazil, such as the [incorporation of digital culture into the National Common Curricular Base \(BNCC\)](#) and the recognition of digital education as a right, provide a relevant framework for understanding and enhancing these dynamics.

The enactment of the [National Digital Education Policy \(PNED\)](#) in 2023 and the implementation of the [National Connected Schools Strategy \(ENEC\)](#) indicate an institutional effort to integrate connectivity, teacher training, and media literacy into educational systems. However, the accounts of the interviewed teachers suggest that the production of educational content on digital platforms like TikTok, as well as its use for pedagogical practices in the classroom, still occurs mostly individually, remains largely non-institutionalized, and receives limited formal recognition. In this sense, the study's findings point to the possibility of expanding the scope of these policies to more explicitly include the responsible creation of educational content and scientific communication on digital platforms widely used by students.

Beyond training, the results highlight the importance of material and structural conditions for these practices to develop sustainably. Initiatives such as the [Connected Education Innovation Program](#), which has already secured funding for tens of thousands of schools, advance the dimensions of infrastructure and access; however, reports indicate that teachers continue to individually bear the costs of equipment, software, and labor time.

Finally, the findings dialogue with recent initiatives focused on media literacy and the conscious use of technology, such as the [Brazilian Media Education Strategy](#) and the guidelines associated with [Law No. 15,100/2025](#). By highlighting both the pedagogical potential and the limitations of TikTok as an informal learning space, the study suggests that public policies can benefit from integrated approaches that also promote teacher training and the valuation of educational content. Recognizing the digital realm as a pedagogical territory implies strengthening responsible teaching practices and the dissemination of knowledge in environments that are already central to the daily lives of children and youth.

7. Conclusions

What did we seek to answer with this study?

We investigated how Brazilian teachers from elementary and secondary education, as well as from college-preparatory courses, have been using TikTok as a complementary practice to their pedagogical work. They explore short videos to produce and circulate school-related content, engage in dialogue with students, and experiment with new forms of educational mediation. Drawing on the experiences of teachers active in TeachTok, we sought to understand how these contents are produced, what motivates teachers' presence on the platform, how they balance pedagogical rigor with the platform's logics of visibility, and how TikTok is perceived as a space for learning and for building closer relationships with students.

And what did we find?

The interviews reveal that TeachTok operates as a space of cultural mediation, where teachers articulate school content through the platform's languages, expanding the reach of educational materials among young audiences.

Their accounts point to a reconfiguration of teaching authority in the digital environment. Authority becomes relational, grounded in cultural identification, recurring presence, and the perceived usefulness of content. This reduces symbolic distance between teachers and students and strengthens classroom bonds.

The study also shows that TikTok functions as a **space for scroll learning, in which contact with educational content occurs spontaneously within entertainment flows**. In this sense, the platform's architecture favors **edutainment, allowing school-related content to dialogue with students' cultural references without replacing formal spaces for deeper learning**.

Although not explicitly named, media literacy emerges as a transversal practice. By producing content, dealing with TikTok's operational logics, adapting language, and reflecting on engagement and the limitations of their productions, teachers develop competencies related to understanding digital platforms and to the responsible production of content.

Finally, interviewees recognize TikTok's structural limits. The short-video format imposes constraints to the level of deepening of the content. This perception indicates a clear understanding: TikTok is mobilized as a device for initial engagement, curiosity, and cultural mediation—something that can complement, rather than replace, formal educational processes.

And why does it matter?

By listening to teachers from basic education and college-preparatory courses, this study contributes to a more qualified debate on digital platforms in education. The analysis suggests that TikTok's pedagogical value lies in its ability to bring actors closer together, activate interests, and expand repertoires, provided that its limits are acknowledged and its use is articulated with broader pedagogical practices. TeachTok thus emerges as a field of experimentation that reflects both the tensions and the possibilities of learning in digital environments.

In this context, the findings also align with Brazil's recent digital education agenda, suggesting that the recognition of the digital environment as a complementary learning space could benefit from public policies that prioritize teacher mediation, media literacy, and the responsible production of educational content on digital platforms.

8. Direction for future studies

This exploratory qualitative study brought together seven active teachers on TikTok to understand their perceptions of the platform, their digital pedagogical practices, and the challenges involved in content production. The central objective was to foreground teachers' voices in a context of increasing use of digital platforms in education, fostering a space for qualified listening and reflection on the role of TeachTok within the Brazilian educational ecosystem.

Although the interviews identified relevant trends, points of consensus, and tensions, the findings do not exhaust the debate. There remains ample room for future research to further explore the relationship between digital technologies, pedagogical practices, and platform-mediated learning.

Among the possible directions for future studies, the following stand out:

Students' perspectives on learning on TikTok: The present study focused exclusively on teachers' perceptions and practices, without incorporating students' viewpoints. Future research could investigate how students perceive, consume, and engage with educational content on the platform, exploring their usage habits, curation strategies, perceptions of teacher credibility in the digital environment, and the actual impacts of such content on their learning processes.

Content analysis and pedagogical formats in videos: This study relied on self-reported accounts of production practices, without direct analysis of the videos published by teachers. Future work could conduct systematic analyses of educational content circulating within Brazilian TeachTok, examining discursive strategies, visual and sound resources, pedagogical adequacy of formats, conceptual accuracy, and alignment with official curricula

Quantitative studies of reach and engagement: Given the small sample and qualitative nature of this research, future studies adopting quantitative approaches could map, on a larger scale, the population of Brazilian teachers producing educational content. Such studies could analyze metrics of reach and engagement, audience profiles, and patterns of virality, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the scope and effects of TeachTok in the national context.

Actual impacts on formal learning: While this study explored perceptions of learning, it did not measure direct impacts on students' educational outcomes. Future research employing experimental or quasi-experimental designs could investigate the extent to which the use of TikTok content as a complementary pedagogical resource influences performance indicators, knowledge retention, motivation to study, and classroom engagement.

Longitudinal studies of digital teaching trajectories: Data were collected within a specific time frame, reflecting a particular moment in the relationship between teachers and the platform. Longitudinal studies could follow teachers' trajectories over time, examining how their practices, perceptions, and production strategies evolve, as well as the effects of algorithmic changes, platform policies, and broader educational contexts.

Taken together, these directions underscore the need to deepen dialogue among teachers, students, digital platforms, and educational institutions, consolidating an empirical foundation that supports the development of informed, ethical, and learning-oriented digital pedagogical practices.

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10. Methodology Annex

Title	Swipe Up and Learn! Teaching Practices and Learning on TikTok
Research question	How do elementary, secondary, and pre-university preparatory course teachers use TikTok to produce educational content, promoting media literacy practices and engagement among young students?
Methodological summary	<p>This study adopted a qualitative approach aimed at understanding how Brazilian teachers from basic education and pre-university preparatory courses use TikTok in their pedagogical practices. The research examined the production of educational content, engagement, and visibility on the platform.</p> <p>Data collection was structured in two stages: (1) an exploratory mapping of teacher profiles producing educational content on TikTok, with the recording of quantitative data; and (2) semi-structured, in-depth interviews with eight teachers.</p> <p>Data analysis was conducted through content analysis, with thematic categorization of the interviews based on their transcriptions.</p>
Data collection	<p>For the exploratory mapping of profiles, a systematic search was conducted using TikTok's search tab with the terms "teacher of [subject]," "class on [subject]," and "tips for [subject]," covering the following areas: Portuguese, English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, geography, history, literature, sociology, and philosophy. Additionally, the keywords "classroom," "video lesson," and "teacher" were used to broaden the scope of the search.</p> <p>The sample was composed following criteria of diversity and representativeness. The established selection criteria were: (1) teachers who work in basic education classrooms or pre-university preparatory courses; and (2) profiles that disseminate educational, instructional, or informational content related to their teaching subjects.</p> <p>Participant selection combined active searching on the TikTok platform as the primary strategy, complemented by convenience sampling. Contact was made through social media channels made available by the teachers on their profiles (Instagram, email, or direct message on TikTok). Of the 54 individuals mapped and contacted, eight agreed to participate in the research and were interviewed between November 4, 2025, and January 12, 2026. Of the eight interviews conducted, one was discarded for not meeting the criterion of simultaneously teaching in a classroom and producing content for TikTok.</p> <p>Interviews were conducted online, with an average duration of 45 minutes, and addressed topics related to pedagogical strategies adopted on the platform, content production processes, relationships with students, and perceptions of teaching, visibility, and engagement in the digital environment. The interviews were conducted by the Reglab research team and audio-recorded with the participants' explicit authorization through informed consent forms. All recordings were fully transcribed and stored.</p> <p>The interview dynamics followed a semi-structured guide, combining broad engagement-related questions with more specific inquiries on the following topics: pedagogical strategies used in content production, creative and technical video production processes, relationships with students and followers on the platform, perceptions of TikTok's educational role, challenges related to visibility and engagement, and the impacts of digital presence on in-person teaching practice.</p>

Data analysis	<p>In this study, we adopted the reflexive thematic analysis approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), a method suitable for exploratory qualitative investigations in highly complex contexts. This method prioritizes situated interpretation of data rather than rigid and exhaustive coding, favoring flexible and recursive analytical strategies.</p> <p>The interviews were initially analyzed by two researchers, who identified the most common and recurring themes across the full set of transcriptions, validating them with the support of the NotebookLM tool. Once defined, coding proceeded based on these initial themes, resulting in the analytical topics presented in this research.</p> <p>The full interview transcripts were processed and coded using Atlas.ti software. The codes were reviewed by the two researchers responsible for the study, ensuring interpretive consistency and reliability, as well as adherence to the original empirical corpus.</p> <p>The analysis phase was conducted between December 12, 2025, and December 18, 2025.</p>
Bias reduction procedures	<p>Consolidated theoretical-methodological references: The data collection and analysis techniques adopted in this study followed established practices in academic literature. The methodological approach was discussed internally before and after the interviews, allowing the incorporation of critiques and suggestions into the final research design prior to the analysis phase.</p> <p>Complementary verification tool: Although initial data coding was conducted by the research team, an analytical support software (NotebookLM) was used as a cross-checking tool to validate the consistency of identified categories and detect potential interpretive gaps.</p> <p>Method triangulation: In the analysis and discussion section, empirical findings were contrasted with documentary analysis of secondary sources to compare, validate, and reinforce the consistency of interpretations derived from the interviews. These references were explicitly cited throughout the text.</p> <p>Independent double analysis: Two researchers independently reviewed the full set of codes and themes, reducing individual bias. Final theme definitions were discussed collectively with two additional members of the Reglab research team, ensuring multiple perspectives and bias control in data interpretation.</p> <p>Methodological transparency and documentation: All stages of the analytical process were documented, including successive versions of writing files. This practice ensures traceability of the methodological pathway, in accordance with Reglab guidelines for transparency and replicability.</p>

Other methodological limitations

Dependence on external tools: Part of the analytical process relied on proprietary software, which may limit replicability in different contexts.

Qualitative scope and exploratory nature: Findings derive from seven in-depth interviews with teachers producing educational content on TikTok. While offering analytical depth and interpretive richness, the results do not claim statistical representativeness.

Response rate and small sample size: Of the 54 individuals contacted, only eight agreed to participate (approximately a 13% response rate), with one interview excluded due to inclusion criteria. This low response rate and small sample size may have introduced bias, as non-participating teachers may hold different perspectives, experiences, and motivations.

Lack of primary data triangulation: The study relied exclusively on interviews, without complementary analysis of teachers' videos, direct observation of pedagogical practices, or consultation of other primary data sources that could enrich or validate the collected narratives.

Reliance on self-reports: Data were obtained through teachers' narratives about their practices, perceptions, and experiences, without direct observation of classroom teaching or analysis of students' actual engagement with produced content. This may have introduced social desirability or recall biases.

Absence of students' perspectives: The study did not include interviews or other data collection methods involving students, limiting understanding of how learners perceive and engage with their teachers' educational content on TikTok, as well as its effects on learning processes.

Temporal scope: Data were collected between November and December 2025, reflecting a specific moment in platform use and pedagogical practices. Given the rapid evolution of digital platforms and technology-mediated education, findings reflect the context of that period and may have limited temporal validity in future analyses.

Software use

The following software tools were used in the development of this study:

MS Office Suite for text editing, spreadsheets, and charts;

Adobe Creative Suite for layout and finalization of graphics and illustrations;

Atlas.ti for organization, coding, and qualitative data analysis;

Microsoft Teams and **Cockatoo** for audio transcription of focus group dynamics;

ChatGPT 5o for brainstorming, information systematization, grammatical review (spelling, grammar, and synonym search), language refinement, and adaptation to the Reglab Style Manual;

Notion AI for research organization and timeline structuring;

Exolyt for collecting data on hashtag view counts on TikTok.

Ethical guidelines

Research funding: This publication was sponsored by TikTok Brazil (BYTEDANCE BRASIL TECNOLOGIA LTDA.). Although commissioned, Reglab retained full editorial and methodological control over the project, independently defining methodology, analysis, and writing. The authors maintained full professional independence and assume full responsibility for the content and conclusions presented.

Personal data processing: The study involved the processing of personal data only during data collection and analysis stages, in a limited and proportional manner, in compliance with Brazil's General Data Protection Law (Law No. 13.709/2018 – LGPD).

Legal basis: All participants formally authorized their participation by signing informed consent forms, acknowledging the research objectives and data use.

Purpose limitation and adequacy: Data were used exclusively for the purposes of this research, in accordance with obtained consent.

Data minimization and anonymization: Personally identifiable information not relevant to the study objectives was anonymized in transcripts and excluded from the active dataset.

Confidentiality and data protection: In presenting results, data were kept confidential, and quotations were adjusted when necessary to protect source anonymity. Only a limited number of researchers directly involved in the project had access to personal data and original documents.

Information security and storage: Files were stored under password-protected access, in accordance with Reglab's internal information security policies.

Data retention and disposal: Data will be stored for up to 12 months solely for methodological auditing and potential replication, after which they will be securely deleted.

Responsible use of public data: Although some analyzed data were public, their use was conducted ethically and exclusively for independent research purposes.

Methodological transparency: The research methodology was described in detail to ensure transparency and replicability, supporting scientific integrity and independent validation of results.

Non-discrimination and respect for diversity: The research was conducted in a manner that respects diversity and avoids any form of discrimination.



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