The autobiographical memory of teachers

ARTICLE

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Abstract

The Development of Autobiographical Memory addresses the importance of memory as a cultural and historical phenomenon, emphasising its role in the construction of individual and collective identities. Autobiographical memory, in particular, is explored as a uniquely human way of remembering past events, integrating perspectives, interpretations and evaluations that contribute to the formation of a personal narrative. The text discusses sociocultural models that explain the development of autobiographical memory, according to Andreano *et al.* (2019), Anderson *et al.* (1993), Bawer *et al.* (2003), Bertsen *et al.* (2019) and Cárdenas-Egúsguiza *et al.* (2023), emphasising the influence of social and cultural contexts, as well as the role of family interactions, especially the way mothers recall events with their children. The article also presents the Autobiographical Recall Test (ART), a psychometric tool developed to measure individual differences in the experience of autobiographical memories. The ART assesses seven interrelated components of autobiographical memory: Reliving, Clarity, Visual Images, Scene, Narrative Coherence, Rehearsal and Life Story. The test demonstrates high reliability and validity, making it useful for integrating research into autobiographical memory with areas such as health and personality psychology. The research applied the ART to a group of female teachers, with the aim of exploring how these professionals remember past events and how these memories relate to their identity and teaching practice. The results indicated that the Life Story component was the one most valued by the participants, suggesting that building a coherent narrative about one's own life is fundamental to personal and professional identity.

Keywords: Teachers. Autobiography. Memoir. Life story.

A memória autobiográfica de professoras

Resumo

O desenvolvimento da memória autobiográfica aborda a importância da memória como um fenômeno cultural e histórico, destacando seu papel na construção de

identidades individuais e coletivas. A memória autobiográfica, em particular, é explorada como uma forma exclusivamente humana de recordar eventos passados, integrando perspetivas, interpretações e avaliações que contribuem para a formação de uma narrativa pessoal. O texto discute modelos socioculturais que explicam o desenvolvimento da memória autobiográfica, conforme Andreano *et al.* (2019), Anderson *et al.* (1993), Bawer *et al.* (2003), Bertsen *et al.* (2019) e Cárdenas-Egúsguiza *et al.* (2023), enfatizando a influência de contextos sociais e culturais, bem como o papel das interações familiares, especialmente a forma como as mães relembram eventos com seus filhos. O artigo também apresenta o Teste de Recordação Autobiográfica (ART), uma ferramenta psicométrica desenvolvida para medir diferenças individuais na experiência de memórias autobiográficas. O ART avalia sete componentes inter-relacionados da memória autobiográfica: revivência, clareza, imagens visuais, cena, coerência narrativa, ensaio e história de vida. O teste demonstra alta confiabilidade e validade, sendo útil para integrar pesquisas sobre memória autobiográfica com áreas como psicologia da saúde e da personalidade. A pesquisa aplicou o ART a um grupo de professoras, com o objetivo de explorar como essas profissionais se lembram de eventos passados e como essas memórias se relacionam com sua identidade e prática docente. Os resultados indicaram que a componente "história de vida" foi a mais valorizada pelas participantes, sugerindo que a construção de uma narrativa coerente sobre a própria vida é fundamental para a identidade pessoal e profissional.

Palavras-chave: Professoras. Autobiografia. Memória. História de vida.

1 Introdução

Memory, both as a source and an object of knowledge, is characteristic of the social and human sciences—that is, the interpretive sciences such as anthropology, history, social psychology, sociology, ethnology, and oral history. This holds true whether these areas of knowledge are considered a supplement or a specific difference within history, such as the proximate genus, or as a totally autonomous epistemic domain that is, nonetheless, open to interdisciplinary influences. From this perspective, what distinguishes oral history from other social disciplines dedicated to the study of memory is its propensity to articulate a programmatically critical and problematizing discourse around memory, viewed both as a historical source and as a cultural phenomenon, marked by its own nature (Grama, 2008).

The phenomenon of memory is an important part of life, although it does not present itself as a necessary condition for mental activity. Memory is a way for people to construct their past through recollections, books, films, documents, ceremonies, and so on. In studies, memory emerges in various aspects—collective, social, cultural, genetic, and historical. The reason for claiming a "global memory age" is the critique of official versions of history, the return of memory to communities and peoples whose history was ignored, the activation of various memorial events, and much more. It is shown that a collective memory of social and cultural construction retains the authentic past as its version and serves as a means to achieve specific objectives (Ilin, 2020).

Collective memory is constantly changing, which is nonlinear, irrational, and not always subject to logical analysis. New events and ideas affect the perception of the past, and patterns of interpreting the past determine the understanding of the present. The relationship between collective and individual memory appears as the relationship between memory and history. The main function of historical memory is to form an identity. The development of studies by Andreano *et al.* (2019), Anderson *et al.* (1993), Bawer *et al.* (2003), Bertsen *et al.* (2019), and Cárdenas-Egúsguiza (2023) on memory distinguishes political, functional, and cumulative memory, which uses the past to shape national identity.

The context of historical memory includes the concepts of "forgetting," "custom," and "tradition," which help to identify the decisive moments in history, as they are indicators of the emergence of a new society. Historical memory is a tool for using the past to achieve goals dictated by the current situation. The mobilization of memory and collective perceptions of the past has been an integral part of the political process in recent centuries (Lowenthal, 1993).

The construction of hegemonic narratives brings historical and political myths to the foreground. At this level, the link between social memory and the social imaginary proves to be very strong. Beyond the mythical structure of founding stories, the narrative configuration of social memory requires a careful distinction between what should and should not be told: between the elements of the past that will be part of the plot and those that will be silenced; between what is memorable and what is destined for oblivion. This is

how the connection between memory and power occurs—a recurrent theme in cultural studies dedicated to memory, whose corollary is the theme of forgetting as an effect of power. We know that history is written by the victors, but they are also the ones who prescribe the silences of history; and the silences of memory have a history of their own (Grama, 2008).

Autobiographical memory is that exclusively human form of memory that goes beyond the remembrance of lived events to integrate a perspective, interpretation, and evaluation between the self, the other, and time to create a personal history. In summary: according to Andreano *et al.* (2019), Anderson et al. (1993), Bawer *et al.* (2003), Bertsen *et al.* (2019), and Cárdenas-Egúsguiza *et al.* (2023), autobiographical memory is the memory of the self-interacting with others in service of short-term and long-term goals that define our being and our purpose in the world.

Sociocultural models of autobiographical memory development demonstrate that: a) autobiographical memory is a system that develops gradually throughout childhood and adolescence, dependent on the development of a sense of subjective self as continuous over time; b) autobiographical memory develops within specific social and cultural contexts that relate to individual, gender, and cultural differences in adults' autobiographical memories; and c) more specifically, mothers who recall events with their young children in an elaborate and evaluative manner have children who develop more detailed, coherent, and evaluative autobiographical memories (Fivush, 2011).

In the study of human memory, the terms "episode" and "event" are frequently used to refer to the knowledge corresponding to autobiographical memory. Although such terms define key structures in the theory, their psychological reality has rarely been researched, and their existence, content, and structure are often presupposed. Wheeler *et al.* (1997) point out that various evidence supports a preliminary theory of episodic recall which holds that the prefrontal cortex plays a critical, supervisory role in enabling healthy adults with autonoetic consciousness—that is, the ability to mentally represent and become aware of subjective experiences in the past, present, and future. When someone recalls and

mentally travels back in subjective time to relive their personal past, the result is an act of episodic memory retrieval.

According to the accounts of Conway and Pleydell-Pearce (2000), autobiographical memories are constructed from specific event knowledge, general events, and lifetime periods. Furthermore, they proposed that this construction occurs at the conjunction of the functional self with the autobiographical knowledge bases (the so-called self-memory system) and occurs when the complex goal system of the functional self, defined as a subset of working memory control processes organized into interconnected goal hierarchies that function to constrain cognition, modulates access to knowledge and memory construction.

Current studies suggest that the notion of "episodes" can be usefully introduced into the self-memory system model, according to Andreano et al. (2019), Anderson *et al.* (1993), Bawer *et al.* (2003), Bertsen *et al.* (2019), and Cárdenas-Egúsguiza *et al.* (2023), and that themes relating to lifetime periods may, in part, reflect the influence of the functioning personal goal system on the autobiographical memory knowledge base. Thus, episodes may be represented in the knowledge base largely by specific event knowledge, and an event can be a representation that links sets of specific event knowledge, perhaps by providing a cue that can be used to access parts of the specific event knowledge (Anderson; Conway, 1993).

Autobiographical memory encompasses memories of personally experienced events, and collective autobiographical memory refers to the notion that people can experience the same events (disasters, celebrations, commemorations, sporting events, initiation rites, etc.) together and at the same time. Furthermore, these events can come to have the characteristics of a collective memory—memories held in common with implications for group identity and memory (Halbwachs, 2013). Group members can discuss the event together and reach a consensus about the meaning and importance of the event being remembered. This involves the selective recollection of certain aspects of the event "to be remembered," with the loss of other aspects of memory. Collective memory

necessarily requires memory conformity (or memory alignment), which can happen as a result of group deliberation.

Each individual has a unique past, but some individuals seem to remember their past better than others. Some claim to have very clear autobiographical memories and frequently engage in autobiographical recollection; others claim their memories are vague and that they rarely think about their past. These common-sense suggestions of stable individual differences in autobiographical memory find scientific support.

Studies have demonstrated gender differences in autobiographical memory. Women generally show better recollection of personal events than men, especially emotional events or emotional aspects of events, for example (Andreano; Cahill, 2009; Bauer *et al.*, 2003). Other studies have shown age differences, with subjective ratings of autobiographical memory qualities enhancing with increasing age (Rubin; Berntsen, 2009).

According to Leport et al. (2012), a small group of individuals demonstrates "Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory" (HSAM), showing seemingly effortless access to detailed memories of almost any event in their lives, while others show "Severely Deficient Autobiographical Memory" (SDAM), claiming an inability to have vivid recollections of their past (Palombo *et al.*, 2015).

The objective of the present work is to begin to fill this gap by introducing a test of individual differences, the Autobiographical Recollection Test (ART) (Berntsen et al., 2019), which measures how well people think they remember events from their past. Individuals with higher scores on the ART are more inclined to think they remember their past well. The focus of the ART is on the reminiscent experience, not the accuracy of autobiographical memories.

Thus, observing people's intuition about their own personal memories is important because there is evidence that people act according to this intuition, for example, when distinguishing between personally experienced events and imagined events and/or identifying the source of their memory (Johnson et al., 1993). More broadly, self-reports of recollective experiences are used in many autobiographical memory studies (Congleton;

Berntsen, 2018) and also in diagnostic tests for mental disorders, as well as in forensic settings, underscoring their theoretical and applied relevance.

Therefore, it is important to emphasize that these individual differences appear to be specific to autobiographical memory, in the sense that they do not directly parallel similar differences in more standard laboratory memory tasks. This underscores the relevance of developing tests that specifically target individual differences in autobiographical memory.

2 Methodology

Currently, there is a lack of tests that investigate individual differences related to the general characteristics of autobiographical memory (Berntsen *et al*., 2019). Most studies examine memories for individual events, or theoretically motivated selections of events, and ignore individual differences and more stable tendencies in memory for past events. Thus, some studies have used average scores from different memories to examine individual trends in the subjective qualities of memories, as well as their stability over time (Rubin *et al*., 2004). However, the field lacks a psychometric test of individual differences in the experience of autobiographical memories.

The Autobiographical Recollection Test (ART) is used to examine individual differences in how well people think they remember personal events. The ART comprises seven interrelated, theoretically motivated, and empirically supported aspects of autobiographical memory recollection: clarity, coherence, reliving, rehearsal, scene, visual imagery, and life story. The desirable psychometric properties of the ART are established by confirmatory factor analyses, demonstrating that the items probing each of the seven components form well-defined, though highly correlated, factors that are indicators of a single underlying second-order factor.

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These components are conceived as different aspects of the way individuals experience their autobiographical memories. Each is well motivated by the autobiographical memory literature. Reliving and clarity are part of most philosophical accounts of what distinguishes autobiographical memory from other memory types and are central to autonoetic consciousness and the feeling of mental time travel—a defining criterion for episodic memory (Wheeler *et al.*, 1997).

In this study of different sensory components, visual imagery is shown to be more strongly associated with other features of autobiographical recollection, such as reliving. Remembering the spatial layout in terms of a scene is also a key component of having an event memory. Narrative is central to autobiographical recollection from developmental, clinical, social, and personality viewpoints (Rubin; Umanath, 2015). The ART includes ratings of both the narrative coherence of individual memories and the life story relevance of memories in the context of the overall lived and narrated life. Finally, rehearsing autobiographical memories in social communication or in silence is a common characteristic of autobiographical recollection that systematically varies with other features of the memories.

The ART shows high test-retest reliability over average delays of three weeks and correlates significantly with a test of different memory categories. Overall, the findings document that autobiographical recollection is a dimension that varies across individuals. The ART constitutes a reliable and easily administered test of autobiographical memory that will help integrate autobiographical memory research with fields generally concerned with individual differences, such as health and personality psychology (Berntsen et al., 2019).

Thus, Gehrt *et al.* (2022) examined whether the ART correlates with people's specific autobiographical memory characteristics in a trial with 475 participants who

completed questionnaires and rated recollection qualities of autobiographical memories cued by words (Study 1), by positive and negative emotional valence (Study 2), and by future and past temporal direction (Study 3). The findings of the three studies demonstrate that people's general experience with their autobiographical memory, as measured by the ART, is reliably related to how specific autobiographical memories are recalled and future events are imagined.

The correlations with the ART were quite consistent across memories and future thoughts, different recollection qualities, memories cued in various ways, and events retrieved with and without delay. The findings support the construct validity of the ART. Demonstrating the ART as a reliable indicator of how individuals experience their autobiographical memory can help integrate autobiographical memory into research fields generally concerned with individual differences (Berntsen *et al.*, 2019).

2.1. The Research Instrument

The research instrument presented here initially addresses the Informed Consent Form (ICF), with the following text: "*You are being invited to participate, as a volunteer, in the study/research entitled "Eliane Dayse Furtado: The Woman Professor, Memories, Histories, and Forgetfulness in the Trajectories of the Processes of Construction and Formation of Society (1991 to 2023)," submitted to the Postgraduate Program in Education – UFC, conducted by Prof. Aline Soares Campos and supervised by Prof. Dr. José Gerardo Vasconcelos. The instrument aims to apply the Autobiographical Recollection Test (ART), which is used to examine individual differences in how well people think they remember personal events. I declare that I understood the objectives, risks, and benefits of my participation in the research, and that I agree to participate. The respondent population was characterized by women teachers and/or faculty—whose profile aligned with the main topic of the doctoral research by one of the study's authors*".

The thematic questionnaire addresses the seven interrelated aspects of autobiographical memory recollection, with three repetitions of each item, totaling 21 questions, to analyze the degree of consistency in the responses. In the completion instructions, a Likert-type scale was used, which is a psychometric instrument widely employed to measure attitudes, opinions, or perceptions in research contexts. The Likert scale presents respondents with a series of statements accompanied by symmetrical response options, typically structured on a five-point scale ranging from "Totally Disagree" to "Totally Agree." In this way, each point on the scale represents a gradation of agreement or feeling, allowing researchers to transform subjective responses into quantifiable data for statistical analysis and interpretation (Koo; Yang, 2025).

In this regard, respondents were asked to indicate for each item, on a scale of 1 to 5, how much the description applies to the way: "You remember events from your past. Please consider how you remember past events and answer the questions honestly and sincerely, choosing a number between 1 (totally disagree) and 5 (totally agree)" (Table 1).

Table 1 - Thematic questionnaire addressing the seven interrelated aspects of autobiographical memory recollection

Scale Items	Components
1. My memories of past events are full of details.	Clarity
2. My recollections of past events come to mind like good stories or descriptions.	Coherence
3. When I recall past events, it is as if I am reliving them.	Reliving
4. I often think about past events and think or talk about them.	Rehearsal
5. In my memories of past events, I remember where the actions, objects, and people are located in the events.	Scene
6. When I recall past events, I can see them in my mind.	Visual Imagery
7. My memories of past events are a central part of my life story.	Life Story
8. My recollections of past events are vivid.	Clarity
9. My memories of past events are coherent and connected, not a collection of isolated and disconnected fragments.	Coherence
10. When I recall past events, it is as if I am mentally traveling back to the time when they occurred.	Reliving
11. My recollections of past events often spring to mind on their own—without me consciously trying to remember them.	Rehearsal

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12. In my memories of past events, I remember where I am in relation to the individual things in the event.	Scene
13. When I recall past events, I can see what happened with my mind's eye.	Visual Imagery
14. My recollections of past events are part of my identity.	Life Story
15. My memories of past events are clear, not confused or blurred.	Clarity
16. My memories of past events come to me whole, not in pieces with missing parts.	Coherence
17. When I recall past events, it is as if I am experiencing the same general atmosphere again.	Reliving
18. After an event happens, I often think about it voluntarily and deliberately and try to remember it.	Rehearsal
19. In my memories of past events, I remember the setup of the broader scene where the events are situated.	Scene
20. My memories of past events possess clear visual details.	Visual Imagery
21. My recollections of past events are a reference for how I understand myself and the world.	Life Story

Source: Berntsen *et al.*, 2019.

The findings demonstrate that people who generally consider their autobiographical memories to be vivid, detailed, relevant, and coherent report a greater tendency to engage in various forms of spontaneous cognition, including positive constructive daydreaming, spontaneous mind-wandering, involuntary mental time travel, and vivid, engaging fantasy. We discuss these findings in terms of the role that autobiographical memory plays in spontaneous thoughts (Cárdenas-Egúsquiza; Berntsen, 2023).

3 Results and Discussion

The Google Forms survey was activated online from 2/15/2025 to 2/24/2025 and distributed via WhatsApp in various groups, resulting in a total of 88 responses over 10 days of research. It is important to note that the survey was directed only at the female audience consisting of teachers in basic education and higher education, as the thesis topic focuses on women educators. Regarding the characterization of the respondents, the average age of the group was 45 years, divided among the 5 available age ranges (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Percentage of the age range of the female teachers who participated in the survey
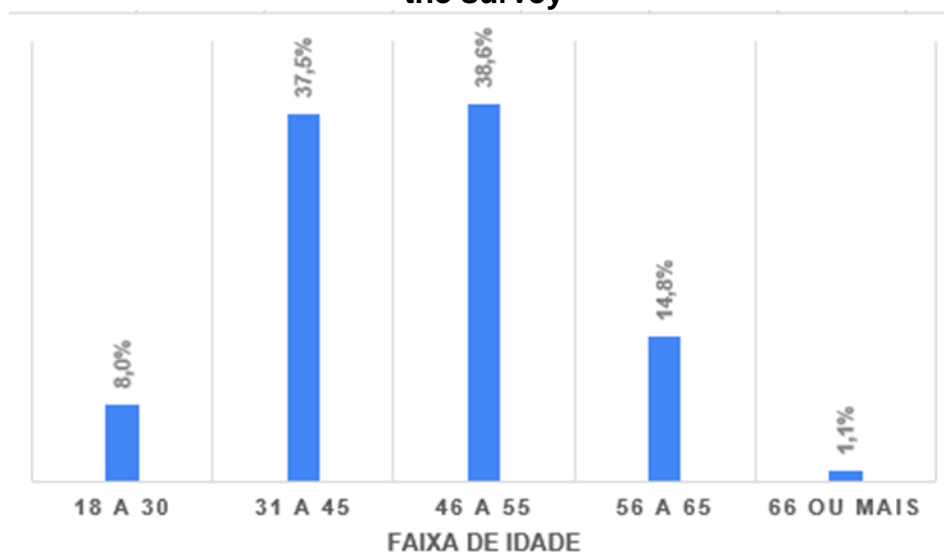
Source: The authors, 2025.

According to Huberman (2000), the concept of professional development is presented with various definitions, and most of them can be understood as a process that enhances teachers' knowledge and competencies, granting them a permanent attitude of researchers who seek, through questioning, solutions to their problems. The main purpose and objective of these actions are the improvement of their educational practice and, consequently, the improvement of their students' learning. In this sense, the author distinguishes four phases that mark the process of evolution in the teaching profession, which are: career entry, stabilization, experimentation or diversification, and preparation for retirement.

The initial phase of teaching, represented by 8% of the participants, is characterized by young women beginning and stabilizing their careers, with work experience between 3 and 10 years. The second period of teachers' careers involves the age ranges between 31 and 55, a phase in which the teacher diversifies her activities, and which can last from 7 to 25 years. The lower limit of this interval corresponds to the woman's entry into middle age, when many women achieve maturity, self-knowledge, and high self-esteem, being the phase where one begins to know what she likes and what she dislikes. The subsequent

phases correspond to the period of menopause, whose average age is around 51, but it can arrive in her 40s or happen years later. In parallel, preparation for retirement begins, a moment when the teacher starts to disinvest in her career, a process that, as a rule, occurs after 35 to 40 years of professional practice (Huberman, 2000).

Historically, female identity has been marked by discrimination, given that socially valued competencies are predominantly associated with the masculine domain, which systematically distances women from spheres of power and social influence. While the productive sphere was reserved for men, the reproductive sphere remained for women. This dichotomy creates and reproduces inequalities in roles and functions in society. Even though achievements have occurred regarding the role of women in society, especially in the 20th century, it cannot yet be said that gender inequality has ended.

The issue of gender in the teaching career is a topic that involves specific inequalities, challenges, and dynamics within the educational environment. Although teaching, especially in the initial levels of education, is historically associated with women, the male and female presence varies according to the level of schooling and the area of knowledge. In our research, when questioned about gender, 93.2% of the respondents identified as cisgender women, 5.7% as other genders, and 1.1% as non-binary gender. In our view, gender in the teaching career is about the conception of being a teacher and is permeated by the way educators understand themselves as women or otherwise.

The improvement in the quality of online surveys generally aims to increase the response rate. To achieve this, efforts are concentrated in at least four crucial areas. The first and most important among the stages of web research has been the focus on its development (such as how to format the questionnaire for better usability) and its delivery (for example, the best strategies for contacting interviewees) (Fan; Yan, 2010). Regarding the location of employment, basic education teaching predominates with 87.5%, followed by a double shift of teachers lecturing in both basic education and higher education with 8%, and only 4.5% in higher education. This result was already expected, as the interviewees contacted in our study were part of the authors' work circle, consisting of basic education teachers working in the public department of education in Ceará, in high schools,

and in the municipal department of education, in elementary schools. This premise is reinforced by the workplace statistics, with 81.8% in the public sector, 4.5% in both the public and private sectors, and 13.6% in the private sector only.

The second part of the questionnaire presents a series of questions, asking the teachers to indicate how much the statement in each item applies to the way they remember events from their past*: "Therefore, consider how you remember past events and answer the questions honestly and sincerely, choosing a number between scores 1 to 5, where 1) strongly disagree; 2) disagree; 3) indifferent; 4) agree; and 5) strongly agree."*

Autobiographical memory is the type of memory that allows us to consciously remember and re-experience memories from our past. It is a complex form of memory consisting of various cognitive and emotional components that must be combined in the construction of individual memories and which can be influenced by other factors, such as clinical and personality disorders. This memory supports our sense of identity, as it contributes to the development and maintenance of social relationships, problem-solving, and the formation of ideas about the future. Despite its central importance, researchers know little about individual differences in the experience of autobiographical memories. People often claim that their memory for past events is better or worse than that of other people, but the field lacks a standardized test of such individual differences in the experience of autobiographical memory (Berntsen *et al.*, 2019).

In autobiographical memory, which is the memory of personal experiences that help us build our identity, various components help organize and give meaning to recollections, which in our case happens through the scoring of questions associated with the different components of memory. Within this context, the components help structure and understand how these memories are formed, stored, and retrieved. Let's explore each of these components:

- Vividness: It refers to the emotional and sensory intensity of a memory. Vivid memories are those that evoke strong feelings and rich details, such as colors, smells, sounds, or textures. This component is often related to the emotional impact of the recorded

event. Example: clearly remembering the sensation of the wind on your face on the day of a major achievement.

- Coherence: It refers to the logic and organization of memories within a consistent narrative. A coherent memory makes sense in relation to other recollections and the individual's personal identity, creating an integrated "life story." Example: A person can remember choosing a profession because they liked science since childhood.

- Reliving: It is the ability to "relive" the moment as if it were happening again. It includes the feeling of being back in the place and time the experience occurred, often with great vividness. Example: feeling transported back to the classroom when remembering an important presentation made in childhood.

- Rehearsal: It refers to the repetition and recounting of a memory over time, which can reinforce or modify certain details. Rehearsal is common in stories we frequently share with others or mentally review. Example: repeatedly recounting the wedding day to friends and family, which keeps the memory alive.

- Scena: It refers to the repetition and recounting of a memory over time, which can reinforce or modify certain details. Rehearsal is common in stories we frequently share with others or mentally review. Example: repeatedly recounting the wedding day to friends and family, which keeps the memory alive.

- Visual imagery: It emphasizes the imagistic and detailed aspects of the memory. This component overlaps with "Scene" but focuses on the richness of the visual details that the individual can recall. Example: Recalling the colors of a dress or the arrangement of furniture in a childhood bedroom.

- Life story: It is the set of autobiographical memories organized into a coherent narrative that defines who we are. It includes the most significant and structuring experiences, linking them to the development of identity. Example: Someone might see themselves as "a resilient person" based on memories of overcoming challenges.

These components interact to form memories that are more or less rich, emotionally charged, and significant for the construction of personal identity. Together, they help explain how autobiographical memories are formed, maintained, and retrieved. They

interact in complex ways to create a rich tapestry of past experiences that define our identity and our understanding of the world.

The questionnaire developed in the Autobiographical Recollection Test (ART) uses questions that represent the various components in triplicate form, randomly distributed throughout the entire survey to test the consistency of the choices. Similarly, we used the Likert scale without repeating the order of options 1 to 5 (sometimes descending, sometimes ascending, and sometimes shuffled) to force the respondent to carefully consider their choice. In the analysis of this data, we considered the sum of scores 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree) to identify the options of greatest preference. The "Life Story" component showed the highest index of responses, corresponding to 80.5% of the teachers' preference, being 57% higher than the average value of the responses for the rest of the other components analyzed.

This component refers to the global narrative we construct about our lives. The Life Story is an integration of various autobiographical memories that form a coherent and meaningful narrative about who we are. It includes key events, important transitions, and recurring themes that define our identity and sense of self.

The less preferred components show average values between 47.1% and 55.2%, with a mean of 51.3% and a standard deviation of 3.14%, meaning that the majority of responses correspond to indifferent scores or those that disagree with the alternatives (Table 2).

Table 2 – Results of the preference evaluation of the autobiographical memory components

Escore	Clareza	Coerência	Reviver	Ensaio	Cena	Visual	História de vida
1	1,1%	0,0%	2,3%	1,1%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
2	11,5%	13,8%	13,8%	9,2%	16,1%	13,8%	4,6%
3	35,6%	39,1%	32,2%	34,5%	35,6%	32,2%	14,9%
4	39,1%	36,8%	42,5%	46,0%	41,4%	40,2%	47,1%
5	12,6%	10,3%	9,2%	9,2%	6,9%	13,8%	33,3%
4 + 5	51,7%	47,1%	51,7%	55,2%	48,3%	54,0%	**80,5%**

Source: The authors, 2025.

The coefficient of variation (CV) is an indicator of the variability of a data set, and its measure corresponds to the percentage ratio between the standard deviation and the mean of the data. Since this measure is expressed as a percentage, it can be used to compare the variability of distinct data sets involving different magnitudes. Thus, we can say that the coefficient of variation is a way to express the variability of the data by excluding the influence of the variable's order of magnitude. The CV ranged between 19.9 for Life Story and 25.7 for the Vividness component, with a small mean variation of 2.2. The interpretation of the CV indicates that values below 10% represent: low variability (data are more homogeneous); between 10% and 30%: moderate variability, and; above 30%: high variability (data are more dispersed in relation to the mean). The analysis of the distributions shows practically the same pattern, with moderate variability across the various components of the research.

Correlation is a statistical method used to assess a possible linear association between two continuous variables. In statistical terms, correlation is a method of assessing a possible two-way linear association between two continuous variables. Correlation is measured by a statistic called the correlation coefficient, which represents the strength of the presumed linear association between the variables in question. It is a dimensionless quantity that takes a value in the range of -1 to +1. A correlation coefficient of zero indicates that no linear relationship exists between two continuous variables, and a correlation coefficient of -1 or +1 indicates a perfect linear relationship. The strength of the relationship can be anywhere between -1 and +1. The stronger the correlation, the closer the correlation coefficient gets to $\pm$1. If the coefficient is a positive number, the variables are directly related (i.e., as the value of one variable increases, the value of the other also tends to increase). If, on the other hand, the coefficient is a negative number, the variables are inversely related (i.e., as the value of one variable increases, the value of the other tends to decrease). To calculate the correlation between the variables, we used Pearson's correlation coefficient, which measures the linear relationship between two variables, and with this same method, we prepared the correlation matrix between the variables (Table 3).

Table 3 – Heat map of the correlation between variables
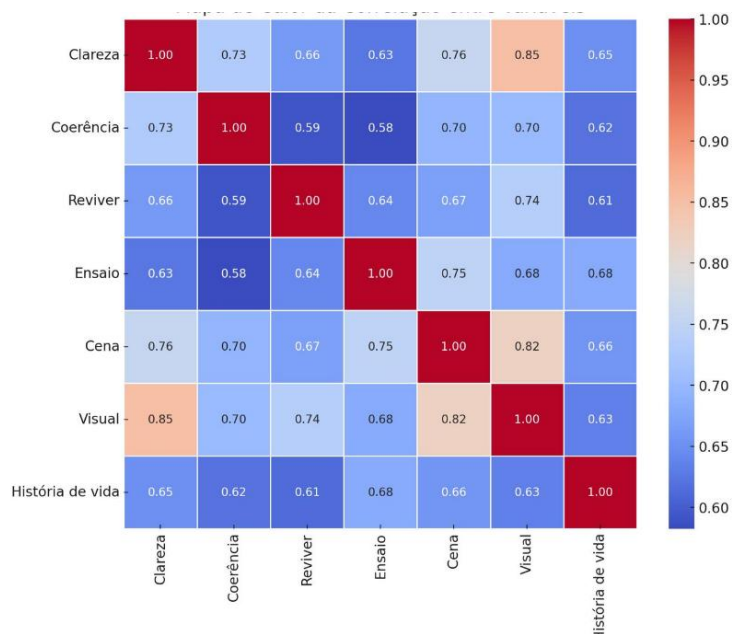
Source: The authors, 2025.

For the analysis of correlation coefficients, Hinkle et al. (2003) presented a rule of thumb for interpreting the size of a correlation coefficient. In interpreting the matrix, all correlation values on the main diagonal are 1.00, as each variable has a perfect correlation with itself. This is expected and does not provide relevant information for the analysis. The values off the diagonal show the correlation between pairs of variables. Some patterns stand out: negligible correlations (values close to 0); low correlation (values between 0.3 and 0.5); moderate correlation (values 0.5 to 0.7); high correlation (values 0.7 to 0.9); very high correlation (values 0.9 to 1.0).

The "Visual Imagery" variable showed the highest correlation coefficients, 0.85, with the "Vividness" and "Scene" components, and around 0.7 with the "Coherence" and "Reliving" components, but all classified as high correlation. "Vividness" and "Coherence" also show a high correlation. At the other extreme is the "Life Story" component, which presents only a moderate correlation with the rest of the variables.

In summary, correlation coefficients are used to assess the strength and direction of linear relationships between pairs of variables; when both variables are normally

distributed, Pearson's correlation coefficient is used. Correlation coefficients do not communicate information about whether one variable moves in response to another, and there is no attempt to establish one variable as dependent and the other as independent. Thus, relationships identified using correlation coefficients should be interpreted for what they are: associations, not causal relationships.

With this study, we intend to test a new psychometric scale, called the Autobiographical Recollection Test (ART), which measures how well people think they remember events in their past. Statistical analyses of the questionnaire application results showed desirable psychometric properties, high test-retest reliability, and significant correlations with other memory measures. By providing a robust and easy-to-administer test of autobiographical memory, the ART will help integrate research on autobiographical memory with areas that typically deal with individual differences, such as oral history.

4 Final Considerations

Autobiographical memory plays a central role in the formation of individual and collective identity. It not only allows for the recollection of past events but also contributes to the construction of a personal narrative that gives meaning to life and lived experiences. Autobiographical memory is influenced by social, cultural, and emotional factors, and its development is a continuous process throughout life. The study highlights that there are significant differences in how people experience and recall their autobiographical memories. These differences can be influenced by factors such as gender, age, and cultural contexts. The ART proved to be an effective tool for measuring these differences, offering valuable insights into how people perceive and organize their memories.

The Autobiographical Recollection Test (ART) can be widely used in psychological, educational, and clinical research. It allows for the assessment of how autobiographical memories influence mental health, personality, and social behavior. Furthermore, the ART can be useful in educational contexts, helping to understand how teachers' memories influence their pedagogical practice and professional development. In the context of

research with female teachers, the "Life Story" component emerged as the most relevant, indicating that the construction of a coherent narrative about one's own trajectory is fundamental to professional identity. This suggests that interventions promoting reflection on one's life story may be beneficial for the professional and personal development of educators.

Although the ART demonstrated high reliability and validity, the study was limited to a specific group of female teachers. Future research could expand the application of the test to other population groups and cultural contexts, in order to explore how individual and cultural differences influence the experience of autobiographical memory.

The development of autobiographical memory is a complex and multifaceted process, influenced by individual, social, and cultural factors. The ART proved to be a valuable tool for measuring individual differences in the experience of autobiographical memories, offering new perspectives for research in psychology, education, and health. Understanding how people recall and interpret their memories can contribute to the development of interventions that promote psychological well-being and personal and professional growth.

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