

Editorial themes of the Acta Paulista de Enfermagem journal: a bibliometric study (1988-2017)

Temáticas editoriais da Revista Acta Paulista de Enfermagem: um estudo bibliométrico (1988-2017)
Temáticas editoriales de la Revista Acta Paulista de Enfermería: un estudio bibliométrico (1988-2017)

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Descriptores

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Abstract

Objective: To analyze the editorial themes published in the Acta Paulista de Enfermagem journal throughout its first thirty years of existence.

Methods: Bibliometric study of editorials published between 1988 and 2017 using Health Descriptors and quantitative and qualitative analysis of specific terms and categories discussed from the perspective of Michel Foucault's genealogy of knowledge.

Results: In total, 129 editorials, 389 standardized terms and 706 categories were collected. The most frequent specific terms resulted in the triad of thematic trend in (1) Editing/Periodic publication, (2) Research and (3) Training/Specialty. In turn, the categories indicated the thematic trend in Public Health.

Conclusion: The terms and categories conveyed politically based ideas of valuing Nursing, an event that coincided with the struggle for the development of the National Health Service. This social interconnection demonstrates that the panoptic vision of editorials went beyond their academic and scientific functions.

Resumo

Objetivo: Analisar as temáticas editoriais publicadas na Revista Acta Paulista de Enfermagem ao longo de seus primeiros trinta anos de existência.

Métodos: Pesquisa bibliométrica dos editoriais publicados entre 1988 e 2017, com o uso dos Descritores em Saúde, com análise quanti-qualitativa de termos específicos e categorias, discutidas sob a ótica da genealogia do saber de Michel Foucault.

Resultados: Foram coletados 129 editoriais, 389 termos padronizados e 706 categorias. Os termos específicos mais frequentes resultaram na tríade de tendência temática em (1) Editoração / Publicação Periódica, (2) Pesquisa e (3) Capacitação / Especialidade. Por sua vez, as categorias apontaram a tendência temática em Saúde Pública.

Conclusão: Os termos e categorias transmitiram ideias de base política de valorização da Enfermagem, evento que coincidiu com a trajetória de luta pelo desenvolvimento do sistema de saúde universal. Essa interligação social demonstra que a visão panóptica dos editoriais foi além de suas funções acadêmicas e científicas.

Resumen

Objetivo: Analizar las temáticas editoriales publicadas en la Revista Acta Paulista de Enfermería a lo largo de sus primeros treinta años de existencia.

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Conflicts of interest: Although Balsanelli AP is the Editor-in-Chief of Acta Paulista de Enfermagem, as the author of this manuscript, he did not participate in the peer review process nor in editorial decisions registered on the ScholarOne electronic submission platform.

Métodos: Investigación bibliométrica de los editoriales publicados entre 1988 y 2017, con el uso de los Descriptores en Salud, con un análisis cuali-cuantitativo de términos específicos y de categorías, discutidas bajo la óptica de la genealogía del saber de Michel Foucault.

Resultados: Se recopilaron 129 editoriales, 389 términos estandarizados y 706 categorías para términos específicos más frecuentes resultaron en la tríada de tendencia temática en (1) Edición / Publicación Periódica, (2) Investigación y (3) Capacitación / Especialidad. Por su lado las categorías señalaron la tendencia temática en Salud Pública.

Conclusión: Los términos y categorías transmitieron ideas de base política de valoración de la Enfermería, evento que coincidió con la trayectoria de lucha por el desarrollo del sistema de salud universal. Esa interconexión social demuestra que la visión panóptica de los editoriales fue más allá de sus funciones académicas y científicas.

Introduction

Scientific journals, given their power of knowledge dissemination and exponential, rapid and collective promotion of development of scientific literature, are the main pillars for the construction of modern science.⁽¹⁾

Journals of the nursing field are currently the most cited document formats in the international literature, especially the titles in medical areas, followed by the area itself, especially those with a clinical approach. In turn, about 10% of citations in articles in nursing journals are from gray literature, while the last and least cited are book chapters.⁽²⁾

The massive presence of journals in the nursing literature highlights their acceptance in the social context of the scientific community formed by nurses. Thus, the mission of scientific journals is no longer just to convey information, but to establish the priority and ownership of ideas.⁽³⁾

It is possible to affirm that there is social control over research, science and technology. A researcher in a given area or a specific scientific community is responsible for overseeing the scientific discourse and prescribing the conditions in which knowledge can be considered scientific. These social actors present a social authority composed of an elite of few members who express authority, usually anchored in individual prestige and by the merit recognized by others, generally throughout a career.⁽⁴⁾

In this context, the Acta Paulista de Enfermagem journal was created in 1988 with the primary objective of publishing research findings and improving care practices in different health care contexts, and is part of the Internal Regulations of the Escola Paulista de Enfermagem.⁽⁵⁾

Given this sociological context, the question on which themes were addressed in the editorials of the

Acta Paulista de Enfermagem journal throughout its first thirty years of existence emerged.

Thus, the objective of this study was to analyze the editorial themes published in the Acta Paulista de Enfermagem journal throughout its first thirty years of existence.

Methods

We chose a bibliometric study, an approach related to the production of published documents, in which the findings are socially applied to understand the flow of production, storage, dissemination, search and retrieval of information. Bibliometrics is currently one of the pillars for understanding the evolutionary models of science and technology.⁽⁶⁾

In Brazil, bibliometrics is recognized as a study design with an interest in investigating bibliometric variables related to time, place, theme and authorship, demonstrating an interdisciplinary movement of bibliometrics in the health field.^(7,8)

In the methodological path, editions of the Acta Paulista de Enfermagem journal from 1988 to 2017 available on its own page were accessed, comparing the themes in three subgroups of periods, covering the 30-year period of publication, which resulted in a document population of 129 different editorials.

The technical reading of the full text was performed, as well as the library indexing, which consists of assigning terms that represent the content of the text. A documentary language in the form of a thesaurus, known as Health Science Descriptors (DecS), maintained by the Virtual Health Library (VHL) was used. Whenever possible, we tried to assign three different terms to each text, as some editorials did not address different subjects.

Tables containing the simple terms or the terms indexed directly in the texts, corresponding to the three periods studied, were created. The simple terms collected in the tables and the simple standardized terms in the DeCS list of the VHL were compared. After this comparison, the most frequent terms were quantitatively compiled.

Next, we started with simple standardized terms, which have one or more categories associated in their descriptive structure, hierarchically broader structures in thematic domains. Thus, each simple term generated another table with categories corresponding to each period studied. Note that each simple term can generate more than one category, as it can simultaneously belong to different forms of knowledge that were fully considered given the diversity of associated concepts.

The compiled tables, one with simple terms and the other with thematic categories, were described and statistically analyzed in an absolute and relative way of the most frequent terms, or of those forming the first 50% of the citation of each table.

In addition to these numerical trends, editorials of the *Acta Paulista de Enfermagem* journal played the role of communication between scientists in the area, whose theoretical analysis can be performed through the genealogy of knowledge proposed by Michel Foucault.

This French researcher argued that power relations occur from the extremities and particularities that form knowledge, as in editorial texts of scientific journals, which can have an underestimated role in this genealogy in search of power.⁽⁹⁾

They seem to be just a stage for demonstrations of academic-scientific results or collective enterprise in the science of nursing, but communication media are also spaces to issue speeches about the profession and its position in society regarding political, historical and sociological aspects.⁽¹⁰⁾

For this understanding, the scientific journal, specifically editorial sections, was considered as a panoptic device, that is, as “inverted spectacle” devices, in which few individuals watch what happens to the crowd, produce homogeneous effects of power and create speeches. In this sense, the documents that capture, classify, qualify, quantify and fix re-

sults become real fields of social surveillance that go beyond the objectives of a scientific journal of only publishing the results of nurses’ research.⁽⁹⁾

Thus, according to Foucault’s thinking, the specificity and periphery of editorials in a scientific journal can contribute to the understanding of social and power relations between researchers and society.⁽¹¹⁾

Regarding ethical aspects, submission of the present research project to the Research Ethics Committee was not necessary, as data are publicly available for consultation.

Results

After library indexing of editorials, 390 non-standardized terms were chosen and, after comparison with simple terms and categories recommended by the DeCS VHL, they were quantitatively converted into terms described in table 1.

Table 1. Simple terms and categories extracted from editorials of the *Acta Paulista de Enfermagem* journal after comparative analysis with the Decs by decade

	1988-1997	1998-2007	2008-2017	Total
Editorials	25	39	65	129
Simple terms (different)	38	56	107	-
Simple terms (total)	75	117	197	389
Categories (different)	13	16	19	-
Categories (total)	123	229	354	706

In turn, the first thematic analysis, consisting of simple terms based on the terms indicated in the library indexing can be seen in table 2.

When observing the thematic frequency of the three periods, some frequent issues were noticed, such as: Periodic publication, Research, Professional training, Editing, Nursing specialties. In turn, when the levels of categories of specific terms were compared, Public Health was in the most comprehensive subjects (Table 3).

Discussion

The power to conquer spaces and social recognition described in simple terms and thematic categories

Table 2. Simple terms extracted from editorials of the Acta Paulista de Enfermagem journal by decade

1988 a 1997	n(%)	1998 a 2007	n(%)	2008 a 2017	n(%)
Professional competence	9(12)	Periodic publication	11(9)	Quality management	19(10)
Periodic publication	6(8)	Research	9(8)	Organization and administration	10(5)
Communication	5(7)	Editing	8(7)	Periodic publication	10(5)
Research	5(7)	Databases as subject	6(5)	Research	7(4)
History	4(5)	Quality management	6(5)	History	5(3)
Professional training	3(4)	Professional competence	5(4)	Journal article	4(2)
Editing	3(4)	Nursing specialties	4(3)	Postgraduate education	4(2)
Nursing specialties	3(4)	Professional training	3(3)	Nursing specialties	4(2)
Women	3(4)	Methods	3(3)	Patient safety	4(2)
Other terms	34(45)	Organization and administration	3(3)	Databases as subject	3(2)
Total	75(100)	Public health	3(3)	Professional training	3(2)
		Other terms	56(48)	Editing	3(2)
		Total	117(100)	Methods	3(2)
				Health care models	3(2)
				Professional practice	3(2)
				Science and technology information networks	3(2)
				Communication technologies	3(2)
				Transplant	3(2)
				Other terms	103(52)
				Total	197(100)

Table 3. Thematic categories extracted from editorials of the Acta Paulista de Enfermagem journal by decade

1988 a 1997	n(%)	1998 a 2007	n(%)	2008 a 2017	n(%)
Public health	33(27)	Public health	63(28)	Public health	108(30)
Anthrop., Educ., Sociol. and Social Phen.*	14(11)	Health care	33(14)	Health care	60(17)
Characteristics of publications	12(10)	Disciplines and occupations	26(11)	Anthrop., Educ., Sociol. and Social Phen.	29(8)
Disciplines and occupations	12(10)				
Other categories	52(42)	Other categories	107(47)	Other categories	157(44)

*Anthrop., Educ., Sociol. and Social Phen. - Anthropology, Education, Sociology and Social Phenomena

helped to understand the association of scientific knowledge under Foucault’s genealogical point of view: truth does not exist without or outside power, imbued in discourses that legitimize it. The forms of power are not restricted, as imagined, only to state verticality, but to social relations, in the most diverse ramifications and multidirectional, exemplified by researchers and editors of scientific journals, a group that seeks to legitimize the power of their actions and does so by means of constructed and disseminated knowledge.^(11,12)

From this perspective, the increase in number of editorials published over the three periods justifies that the phenomenon of nursing knowledge production ensures the demand for scientific communication media, editions, issues and virtual spaces necessary for the establishment of this social power.⁽¹³⁾

When accessing the 41 Brazilian titles and nursing subdivisions in the Virtual Health Library, 31

of them were created within the time frame of this study, with 12 new titles between 1988 and 1997, ten between 1998 and 2007 and nine between 2008 and 2017. Although the number of journal titles created over the decades remained practically unchanged, the amount of issues and editions expanded, which seemed necessary to meet the demand of academia and publication of the expanding amount of research results. This situation was observed in the journal under study, which led to the creation of the modality of issues focused on specific themes initiated in 1996 and repeated in 1998, 2000, 2008, 2009 and 2012.

Furthermore, the increase in the number of editorials provided the increase of simple terms and thematic categories, which expanded the debates and areas of knowledge that became more eclectic and inclusive. This results from the fact that nursing presents a vast area of knowledge historical-

ly shaped, and an analysis of the social context of its work helps to understand this need to expand issues, consequently exerting influence on professional practice.⁽¹⁴⁾

Since this is a scientific communication medium, the authors of editorials developed their texts on issues related to journal publication and editing, notably valuing the need for this information format, which was already expected in the present study.

In relation to the other face detected in the analysis, scientific research configured the second aspect of editorial discourses. Nowadays, the support from Latin American universities in favor of the availability of material and technological resources, internal favorable factors to the production and publication of scientific media, is recognized. With this academic support, journals can create goals involving the increasingly expanding scientific and editorial quality.^(15,16)

Over the years, the policy of evaluating journals by statistical and bibliometric data has been associated and even confused with scientific production in the academic world, thereby generating a growing need for research and publication of results in serial editions. This made the doctoral programs start to value these document formats as a fundamental basis for valuing scientific research.^(17,18)

A third aspect detected, professional training and nursing specialties, also stood out in terms of professional valuation, a less expected aspect in editorial discourses that is initially aimed at the scientification of knowledge.⁽¹⁹⁾ The need to socially praise the work of nursing has the change of professional identity in its historical bases; previously focused on the religious or military issue and currently on the scientific development.⁽²⁰⁾

From this aspect, the genealogy of knowledge embedded in scientific discourses of editorial authors is better understood. This recognition has been constantly developed with other professions in the health area and, at times, motivated by jurisdictional disputes for the enhancement of autonomy, colliding with corporatist interests often based on economic and technological aspects.^(21,22)

The symbiosis between the political discourse of professional valuation and the discourse of scientific

development seems evident in editorials in the studied communication medium, which is disseminated and appointed as the best reference for nurses both in academia and in health institutions. Thus, science and the recognized profession came closer together in a complementary way, as seen in the themes addressed in editorials, a reflection beyond the Mertonian social relations centered on scientific work.

Since the 1960s, researchers in the sociology of science have questioned the neutrality and disinterest of researchers and their research by stating that there could be anomalies, revolutions and crises supporting the externalist view of the making of science, which is visible in the editorials studied.⁽²³⁾

This external and influential perspective may occur due to the social determinations of scientific knowledge, supported by economic and productive aspects of scientists in their choices, practices and determinations of collaboration between peers, institutions and society.⁽²⁴⁾

This finding can be observed in another more general thematic analysis: the discourse in favor of primary, collective and public health as the focus of the broader thematic categories embedded in editorials, constant in all studied decades.

To meet the new demands of the National Health Service (Brazilian SUS) and follow the changes in Brazilian demography and epidemiology, health training gained new educational contours. The nursing graduation saw itself attached to basic and professionalizing disciplines with a focus on specialization, on practices centered on the hospital and outpatient context, with a care profile for patients in acute situations, based on Flexnerian teaching.⁽²⁵⁾

The growing specialization of nursing in family health and Family Health Strategy (FHS) teams in the public context, and until recently, in the corporate and private context, influenced the opening of new undergraduate courses with challenges to incorporate disciplines from the social sciences and humanities in the curricula, in addition to making nurses more capable to see the population's health under political, cultural and economic aspects, which would require the formation of a more criti-

cal nurse and different from the model centered on the hospital and medical orders.^(25,26)

Public health is directly related to social policies that in turn, are the result of antagonistic struggles between different social classes mediated by capital and labor, in which the State assumes its role as leader of the productive force. This values a different nursing from that developed in the hospital and private settings: more autonomous, responsible for consultations and even prescriptions of medications and exams.^(26,27) This facet is essential to understand the professional appreciation and expand nurses' field of work.

Thus, protecting and strengthening the model of this nurse means fighting to maintain the Brazilian SUS as a point of change for gains in professional appreciation that are neither permanent nor cumulative, as this public health system is the target of constant attempts of dismantle through agendas and ideological or political commitments.⁽²⁸⁾

In this social sense, the encouragement of technical, bibliometric and editorial strengthening made the journal "stronger and more dynamic" as a development strategy, since its inception, which supports the panoptic reference of the nursing profession in Brazil, inversely proportional to the idea of artisanal work or great scientific dependence on other areas of knowledge, a mirror of the freedom not only of scientific production, but also of nurses' actions.^(29,30)

Although the editorials of the Acta Paulista de Enfermagem journal apparently represent a peripheral aspect of the nursing profession in Brazil, it is precisely in this very specific look that Foucault defends the study of power relations, through small webs of social relations, often routine and apparently without direct connection with social conflicts.^(10,11)

Conclusion

The editorials of the Acta Paulista de Enfermagem journal brought numerous contributions from authors, the editorial board and the Escola Paulista de Enfermagem at the Universidade Federal de São Paulo to the development of the profession in Brazil. This occurred through speeches highlight-

ed in the periodic communication medium, in Brazilian scientific research and in the appreciation of nursing in Brazil, especially in political aspects of public health, a fact that coincided with the trajectory of the consolidation of the struggle for the development of the Brazilian SUS. The fact that editorials convey both scientific and professional development ideas was noteworthy, forming a political basis for valuing nursing. The greater production of articles published in the journal was accompanied by the need to monitor the professional insertion and achievement in this context, in line with the gain in market spaces and social recognition. Journals, seen as social documents, were part of the surveillance field of researchers and the editorial board, which, in turn, formed the panoptic devices that monitored the development of science in nursing aligned with the objectives and interests of groups and institutions. This legitimized ideology exposed the necessary elements to establish scientific power and, thus, strengthen nursing in relation to other professional categories associated with science and positively recognized by society. These still preliminary findings can be deepened or challenged from other studies. For example, people who are part of the editorial board are active agents in this process of political-social establishment of the academy, as well as in the panoptic dynamics of observing and influencing. The oral testimonies of these social agents can reinforce the existence of the political influence of Science in the national context. In addition, other national nursing media in force in the same period studied could be analyzed from the same point of view and, thus, establish the link between the academic institution and editorials, addressing similarities and divergences with discourses of the Acta Paulista de Enfermagem journal.

Collaborations

Vieira RQ, Neves VR and Balsanelli AP contributed to the project design, data analysis and interpretation, article writing, relevant critical review of the intellectual content and final approval of the version to be published.

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