

University management: contributions for nurses who are faculty members and managers

Gestão universitária: contribuições para enfermeiros docentes gestores
Gestión universitaria: contribuciones para enfermeros docentes y gestores

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To comprehend how university management contributes on the performance of nurses who are professors and managers in a public university. **Method:** Qualitative research anchored on the Grounded Theory. The setting to collect the data was a public university in south Brazil and it happened between May and September of 2016. A total of 19 nurses took part in the study, all of them also faculty members and managers that were divided in two sample groups. **Results:** Two subcategories were created: the comprehension that university management improves the faculty performance; obtaining a wider view of the university. **Final considerations:** The contributions of university management for faculty nurses who are managers are mainly on the personal and professional satisfaction through the production and dissemination of knowledge, reflecting positively on the refinement of the teaching competences to train Nurses with knowledge, technical skills and cognitive abilities to answer society's needs. **Descriptors:** Education, Higher; Faculty, Nursing; Universities; Nurses; Nursing Administration Research.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Compreender como a gestão universitária contribui na atuação de enfermeiros docentes gestores de uma universidade pública. **Método:** Pesquisa qualitativa ancorada na Teoria Fundamentada nos Dados. O cenário de coleta de dados foi uma universidade pública do sul do Brasil e ocorreu entre maio e setembro de 2016. Participaram do estudo 19 enfermeiros docentes gestores divididos em dois grupos amostrais. **Resultados:** Elucidam duas subcategorias: compreender que a gestão universitária aperfeiçoa a atuação docente; obter uma visão ampliada da universidade. **Considerações finais:** As contribuições da gestão universitária para os enfermeiros docentes gestores encontram-se especialmente na satisfação profissional e pessoal através da produção e disseminação do conhecimento, repercutindo de forma positiva no aperfeiçoamento de competências docentes para a formação de Enfermeiros com conhecimentos, habilidades e aptidões técnicas e cognitivas para atender às necessidades da sociedade. **Descritores:** Educação Superior; Docentes de Enfermagem; Universidades; Enfermeiros e Enfermeiras; Pesquisa em Administração de Enfermagem.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Comprender cómo contribuye la gestión universitaria con la actuación de enfermeros docentes y gestores de una universidad pública. **Método:** Investigación cualitativa basada en la Teoría Fundamentada en los Datos. La recolección de datos se llevó a cabo en una universidad pública del sur de Brasil entre mayo y septiembre de 2016. Participaron del estudio 19 enfermeros docentes y gestores divididos en dos grupos de muestra. **Resultados:** El resultado mostró dos subcategorías: la comprensión de la gestión universitaria como perfeccionadora de la actuación docente; la obtención de una visión ampliada de la universidad. **Consideraciones finales:** Las contribuciones de la gestión universitaria para los enfermeros docentes y gestores se denotan, especialmente, en la satisfacción profesional y personal a través de la producción y disseminación del

conocimiento, repercutiendo de forma positiva en la mejoría de las competencias docentes para la formación de Enfermeros con conocimientos, habilidades, aptitudes técnicas y cognitivas para atender las necesidades de la sociedad.

Descritores: Educación Superior; Docentes de Enfermería; Universidades; Enfermeros y Enfermeras; Investigación en Administración de Enfermería.

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INTRODUCTION

Public universities are affected by political, economic, cultural and social aspects, diverging themselves from other higher education institutions due to their indissociability among teaching, researching and outreach activities⁽¹⁾. A public university's daily life is marked by challenges, technological advances, process and demands, with a strongly competitive context and expectations related to the quality of higher education⁽²⁾.

Under such perspective, in order to obtain high standards of quality in all systems that concern the complex organization that is a University, efficient and effective efforts in management must be highlighted. University management can be defined as an intellectual work that involves different organizational structures, by using available resources to plan, organize, lead and control the work and the behavior of the people and the groups that act in the University⁽³⁾.

The people who are responsible for university management are mostly professors that divide their academic journey into activities of teaching, as a researcher or scientist, with the responsibility to manage various academic systems and subsystems. Such systems may be taken as the democratization of access, the breadth of teaching, producing and spreading the science, the internationalization of scientific and technological progress and the lack of resources, assessing and reassessing the relations that the university establishes with the State and society⁽⁴⁾.

Despite the magnitude of their duties, professors normally take on management positions with no preparation or previous experience to administer appropriate relations among the university structure, the people and the higher goals of the organization⁽⁵⁾. However, once they take on these positions, professors are forced to learn how to manage the university institution in practice, bringing repercussions to themselves and to all involved in the process. Therefore, the objective of this study is to comprehend how university management contributes on the formation of Nurses who are faculty members and managers in a public university.

METHODS

Ethical aspects

The development of this study answered to the ethical precepts of the Resolution n.466/2012 from the National Health Council in Brazil. The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee with Human Beings from the *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* (CEPSH/UFSC). The participants were explained about the study's objectives and signed the Consent Form (CF). In order to ensure secrecy and anonymity to the participants, the letter N was used, followed

by the correspondent number of the order in the interviews performance, to identify them (Ex.: N1, N2, N3...) and then by the indication of which sample group they belong to - first group (G1), second group (G2), resulting, for example, in the following identifications N1G1, N1G2.

Theoretical framework

The Grounded Theory was adopted as the theoretical framework; it seeks social phenomena's comprehension through the meaning of the relations and the interactions between the subjects⁽⁶⁾.

Type of study

This study is characterized as qualitative approach.

Methodological procedures

This study is the result of the master thesis entitled "University management: meanings to faculty members' nurses in public universities". For the purposes of this article, we choose to increase and deepen the discussion of the component "Consequence", inherent to the paradigmatic model proposed by the method, considering its importance and relevance to fully understand the "Articulating complexes masses through university management in order to improve the formation and qualification of new nurses".

Hypothesis

From the first sample group's interview, it was observed that the management process held by the professors is based in three distinct, but complementary, realities. It might be divided in department management (related to the Nursing's department), teaching management (that englobes activities from the Nursing course) and institutional management (related to the management structure and the teaching management as micromanagement, and the institutional management as macromanagement). This relation established from the first sample group's interviews made the following hypothesis emerge: the sum is that micromanagement is directly related to macromanagement, just as macromanagement is related to micromanagement, which makes both of them interrelated.

To confirm such hypothesis, we wanted to interview other manager-professors from the Nursing department that are directly related to the head of the teaching department, the course's coordinators, as the manager-nurses that once had took on positions in other universities' instances. The interview provoked the following question, which directed the interview of the second sample group: how do you experience the relation and the interaction of micromanagement of Nursing's course and the university's macromanagement as a manager?

Study's scenario

The research took place at the department of Nursing of a public university in south Brazil.

Data's source

A total of 19 nurses took part in the study, all of them also faculty members and managers that were divided in two sample groups. For the first sample group, 9 faculty members' nurses were chosen, all of them occupants of the head of their departments. The participants responded the following inclusion's criteria: being a full-time professor who worked at the Nursing department, professors who had had experience in university management positions or who have been occupying the position for at least six months.

The second aspect to consider was being a retired nursing's professor that once had occupied the position of university manager. The exclusion criteria adopted were the following: ex managers of the faculty on leave, by any sort of reason, during the period in which the data was collected; professors with no experience in management positions. The guided question was: How do you understand the university management held by faculty members' managers of the nursing department from this university?

The participants from the second sample group answered to the same inclusion and exclusion criteria from the first sample group. This group was composed by 10 professors, 8 of those occupying the positions of coordinators and sub coordinators of nursing's course and two nurses that worked in management positions in other areas inside the university. The initial question was: how do you experience the relation and the interaction between the micromanagement of nursing' course and the academic macromanagement, as a manager? After the analyses of the second sample group's interviews, it was clear that, although both managements are independent on their sphere of activity, both actions imply in consequence for the administration's scenarios, clarifying the relation of interdependence between them.

Data collection and organization

The data collection happened from May to September of 2016, through open and individual interviews, that took place on the participant's workplace and documented in vocal digital devices with average duration of 40 minutes. The NVIVO®s software was used to classify and organize the data.

Data analysis

There was simultaneous involvement on the data's collection and analysis. Through the repetition of information about the phenomena, there was lack of new relevant elements for the analyses and consolidation of the categories and subcategories in its configuration and dimensions, obtaining, then, theoretical saturation⁽⁶⁾.

The analyses' process followed the three steps presented by the method: open codification, axial codification and integration. The codes were grouped and emerged the categories and subcategories, defined and developed in terms of its properties and dimensions⁽⁶⁾. The analytical process was built according to the Paradigmatic Model⁽⁶⁾, composed of three components: (1) "condition" answers to matters of why, when and how certain

phenomena occurs, designed by an action; (2) "action-interaction" is the explicit answer to the events or situations, just as it moves through a meaning; (3) "consequence" expresses the outcomes and results, either the real ones or the expected ones⁽⁶⁾.

RESULTS

The component "Consequence" entitled "Improving the teaching work and being responsible with academic training" emerged from two subcategories that clarify the university management's contribution held by the teacher-manager for himself or herself and for the one involved on the process.

In the first subcategory, "Understanding that university management improves the process in teaching work", the participants evidenced that the experiences on university management's positions were positive, even with the demands and adversities from the taken activities, which, due to necessity of commitment and accountability, end up affecting directly the personal life of the people in charge of such positions. On the other hand, the position, not mentioning the experience in management, provides visibility to the professor-manager that inserts herself/himself in debate zones, benefiting professional acknowledgement:

The fact that you have a management position gives you more visibility, because you participate of much more meetings, and this work visibility is very important; not only it expands the perception of the entire course, it also emphasizes the management positions, not only mine, but all management positions, the higher ones. (N2G1)

Management activities allowed exchange of knowledge, experiences and opinions that are a result from the relations and interactions established with their partners, other students and people that act inside the academic scenario. Therefore, by identifying, articulating and relating the different dimensions of management on their daily work life, political and technical-management functions are executed to provide needed conditions for higher education's development and establishment:

It was a positive experience, I think it's always a very rewarding experience for the professional to locate their course inside a bigger and institutional context inside Brazilian education [...] one of those experiences that makes you leave your comfort zone and makes you realize the relations of what makes a management. (N16G2)

To me, it was fantastic; it was definitely a rewarding experience in terms of knowledge, relationships with other professors and with the students, expanding my view of the university, in terms of managing people and infrastructure [...]. (N7G1)

For that matter, university management was considered a transforming process, with positive implications for personal, professional and intellectual growth for the professor-manager, allowing his or her return for teaching activities with an expanded vision beyond the classroom and the teaching department.

University management's experience assists on the joint responsibility of teaching and on the university as a whole. The feeling of satisfaction was also mentioned, especially for contributing to the practicality of the work during the periods of management and, consequently, to the qualified training of future nurses:

University management qualifies your own teaching practices, because you can create your own notion of the whole thing. And once you come back to the classroom with that experience, you come back bringing this joint perspective, of commitment and responsibility with your course and with the entire university. (N6G1)

Practicing university management changes your capacity of thinking, changes your reflection, which might have been small before, might have been only about your space; it expands, you feel the need to look at the entire context [...] I appreciate even more the university's scenario's matter, of how it reflects on Nursing's course. You feel more responsible for the students education, the professors education, pedagogical or clinical. (N15G2)

On the second subcategory, "Obtaining an expanded view of the university", the participants pointed that university management carried by nursing faculty members focus on people, that is, on administrative technicians, professors, students and society, all actors involved on the process of academic education. On this perspective, an expanded view of the university is needed in order to realize the needs of administrative technicians to do their work, of professors and students relating to education, research and outreach, not to mention society, which will receive the product of all these relations and interactions:

To think of public university management is to think about the people that compose and need this process, is to think about qualified professional education, management from people to people [...] it's almost impossible not to think about education, research and the outreach projects, and the impact of those relations for the formation of professionals. (N5G1)

The participants understand the importance of the study, which was articulated and discussed among the people that represent university management's structures, divided in department management, teaching management and institutional management. The first and the second correspond to university's micromanagement and the latter to university's macromanagement. Those instances establish a relation of interdependence, once the actions executed inside each one of them influence directly one another, interfering on the quality and functionality of the university's structure.

On this context, the quality of work rebounds on the nurse's formations, which depends on the interaction of these instances and on the respect given to the specifications inside the Nursing's course, that differs from the other courses inside this structure:

This interrelation exists the entire time; while the department relies deeply on the university's macromanagement, the macromanagement process deeply relies on our actions inside the micro area, so that the university reaches its goal as a whole

[...] You can't do anything here if you don't have the support of the macro structure from the university, and the macro structure won't work properly if we don't do our part, we always need conversation channels, thinking about the collective. (N18G2)

Even if the infrastructure belongs to the head of department, I believe that this structure will be used by BA degree courses and Graduate programs, so dialogue is important. I believe these three instances can work if they are related and if they can work collectively so that the negotiation with the macromanagement is efficient. (N14G2)

The participants suggest debates about university management on the research groups and the university's laboratories, especially on the Nursing's department. They sustain that moments of debates are important to share contributions, experiences and to give information about university management for each one, making its objective sensible:

Debates inside the research groups would be very important, because we could take the information not only to the professors, but also for the students and everybody that participates on university management [...] we could talk about what is done to make everything get there, like the computers and the supplies. Those things didn't fall from the sky, it's important that everybody understands that. (N13G2)

These spaces may subsidize collective constructions in which all the parts get to know the whole without making their relations and interactions invisible, giving chance to clear knowledge and overcoming uncertainties, to improve the training of Nurses. It is important to point out that, through consistent constructions of collective projects on researches, when contemplated with financial support, it is possible to convert the acquired resources to inputs directly linked to the principal investigator teams on research and to the profit indirectly the work's process of the professor as an educator and an administrator.

DISCUSSION

On the literature regarding the research problem, the adversities from the professors in university management's positions stand out^(2,4,7-9). However, the current study brings a counterpoint by also presenting the positive aspects of its exercises by faculty members' administrators. Among them, it's highlighted the professor' professional visibility by inserting themselves in areas of debate and decision-making, what allowed knowledge exchange, experiences and shared responsibility by education. This contributes to the effectiveness of their work and it also impacts positively the context of nurses who work as university professors and university managers.

In a similar way, a study with the objective of understanding the meanings of university management for university administrators from the top management of a federal university noted that the professors, by university management, added positive values for their personal and academic life, expanding their knowledge to all of the university's areas⁽⁸⁾ without abandoning their teaching activities. Similar results

are mentioned on researches developed in Portugal, where the professors stay involved on their teaching, researching and outreach activities, even when they are using their management competences on such positions⁽¹⁰⁾.

On this line of thought, the results from a study that took place in the United States of America with Nursing' professor stands out. According to the participants, the managers' support is primordial to enable necessary conditions to the exercise of their academic activities and it also contributes to a bigger professional satisfaction⁽¹¹⁾.

Another important aspect on this study's context is the multiplicity of teaching activities on the Brazilian academic context, specially in public universities, where the professors' performances must contemplate activities of teaching, research and outreach. Linked to such activities, university management emerges as another way of action of a teacher that takes on a management position. Similar to this, a study held on a federal university on South of Brazil identified negative questions related to work overload and to the excess of duties that are consequences from the management's own demands on an undergraduate course and its interference by leaving in second place the personal plans related to teaching, researching and outreaching the community, besides family life⁽⁷⁾.

It is important to mention that there are other ways for organizing and specializing the teaching's work in other countries. Differently from what happens in the Brazilian context, professors may be hired in different working regimens, according to titles and professional experiences in places like the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands, for example, for the development of specific activities in teaching, research or university management⁽¹²⁾.

As it seeks to describe the management competences of coordinators of the Nursing graduation's program, the study confirms the importance of participative management of good interpersonal relations, with contributions to the undergraduate students and the development of leading's ability for the management in Nursing's undergraduate course⁽¹³⁾.

The leading's ability is aimed mainly at reaching the organization's goals, developing, initiating and monitoring the services management. On the identification of needs from the administrative technician, the professor, the students and society, it's the manager's duty to promote actions that influence positively the behavior of people, motivating them on a joint responsibility's perspective on the management's processes and seeking quality for the academic training⁽¹⁴⁾.

On this perspective, the effectiveness from the actions of the university's managers is linked to the settlement in horizontal relations based on dialogue, respect and on understanding the role of each one involved on the process of learning and teaching. That also includes the reinforcement of commitment that is accepted in the training spaces where the construction of joint knowledge must be built between professor and students, engaging a critic and reflexive view about the reality in which they are inserted⁽¹⁵⁾.

A qualified academic training is the product of all efforts spent by teacher-manager's nurses. The primary source of universities is the formation of citizens with technical and scientific knowledge

to assure the production of new knowledge and to guarantee the quality on the activities performed, where the management's processes' performed by the professors are fundamental⁽⁹⁾.

The dissemination of knowledge's responsibility is shared among professionals and researchers, involving a larger number of people on a collective and dynamic process that integrates information and communication's technologies, as it occurs on the groups and on research laboratories, intern sectors of public universities⁽¹⁶⁻¹⁷⁾. Those areas count with the participation of teachers and students⁽¹⁸⁾, favoring the construction of identity of all involved and the complementary formation. In this sense, debates and collective constructions are encouraged on the process of sharing experiences, not only on research and outreach, but also on university management, seeking to test, absorb and incorporate new practices^(16,19).

Still on those spaces, it emerges the teacher-managers' involvement on the rescue of financial resources for research projects, rebounding on the organization of the groups, of the laboratories and consequently of the institution on making knowledge. A review study about university-industries' relations emphasized the public investment and private partnerships on the development of researches, stressing that these practices are intimately aligned to the traditional activities on academic research, impacting various academic activities and emphasizing research's productivity and organizations support for the institutions⁽²⁰⁾.

Thus, the repercussions of the movements that the relations and interrelations in management's activities organized by faculty nurses may promote for herself or himself and for all the involved ones are about the conditions to improve professionally and personally the recognition of talents and potentialities. Besides that, through this process, the manager can understand the needs of the collective to perform his/her function focusing on the formation of qualified, ethic professionals for Nursing.

Limitations of the study

The data collection for this study was limited to only one academic scenario. Besides that, the lack of national and international literature was also a limitation found once it was necessary to compare the data of this research with similar ones. The results contribute to the reflections and discussions of professor-managers, as this study identified some of the challenges and the repercussions of university management held by faculty members' nurses from various academic backgrounds.

Contributions to nursing

This study may contribute with subsidies for the practice of nurses who are professors and managers by instigating reflections around the importance of university management. Conducting researches and new investigations on this area of knowledge is important in not only similar contexts, but also exploring other realities, such as in private universities.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Through this study, it was possible to understand that the contributions in universities management's held by nurses

who worked as managers in the Nursing's undergraduate course inside the context of public university are related to the professional and personal satisfaction, and disseminating knowledge. It was also emphasized, with positive aspects,

discussions and exchanges of experiences on the groups and research laboratories which aimed at improving the teaching skills and management abilities, in order to train responsible professionals to deal with society's demands.

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