

MANAGEMENT TEACHING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO NURSES FORMATION: A PROFESSORS PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

The objective consisted of analyzing the perceptions of professors about nursing management teaching and its implications to a nurse's education. This is a descriptive, exploratory and qualitative study involving 13 nurse professors linked to undergraduate Nursing courses at three Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in the state of Paraná, Brazil. Data were collected by means of semi-structured interview, which was recorded and guided by the request: "Tell me about Nursing Management teaching and its implications to a nurse's education". The material transcribed from the speeches was subjected to Content Analysis, thematic modality. Results were summarized into three thematic categories. It was evidenced that management teaching has a direct implication to the job of future nurses and their assistance practice, being inseparable. However, the excessively fragmented undergraduate process disfavors the harmony in education between management and assistance dimensions, which could be improved with specific pedagogical strategies such as problem situations, portfolios, case studies and academic leagues, in addition to curriculum restructuration.

Keywords: Nursing administration research. Nursing Professors. College Education. Nursing Management.

INTRODUCTION

Inherited from historical movements, it is known that a nurse's work process should synergistically permeate caring/assisting, administrating/managing and researching/teaching dimensions⁽¹⁾. Though human care is the essence and elementary purpose of this profession, management reaffirms the importance of nurses, as it understands the rational formulation of strategies for the best conditions of nursing assistance and the work of its leaded team⁽¹⁻²⁾. Therefore, management can be understood as actions of indirect care⁽³⁾.

The managerial work of nurses is contingent and complex, comprehending the use of systematic means and instruments for it⁽⁴⁾ as well as the development of competences that favor decision-making processes⁽⁴⁻⁵⁾ and found the intuitive character that is common to management in any

segment of human knowledge, including nursing⁽⁶⁾. Thus, given its complexity, it is evident that nursing management is a phenomenon that is worth being seen with caution and thoroughly since the start of the making of a nurse^(3,5,7).

The formation of nurses in Brazil are tied to principles listed by the Brazilian National Curriculum Guidelines [Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais] (DCN) – that guide the education of health professionals – in the core of competences understood as managerial, like leadership, communication, ongoing education and decision making⁽⁷⁾. On the other hand, relevant flaws have been evidenced in the context of nursing management teaching such as: insufficient distribution of work hours for the full development of managerial competences/skills and for the strengthening of administrative thinking; distortion between content theory and practice; and inadequate formation of professionals to teach specific classes of managerial nature⁽⁸⁾.

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It is worth highlighting the importance of professors, including in the managerial formation of nurses, since learning process within this sphere requires that knowledge about theoretical conceptions that span health management, formation and enhancement of human resources and the strategic view of assistance are contemplated, a fact that demands continuous update and development for these actors of knowledge transformation⁽⁹⁾.

Assuming that nursing management teaching is elementary to the education of nurses and that the role of professors in this regard is fundamental it is believed that a better elucidation of the perceptions of this actor about the formative practice of a nurse's managerial dimension is capable of subsidizing improvement actions to his or her professional path, aiming mainly at the comprehensiveness and synergy between areas and specificities that are common to the education process. This will possibly result in the increment of consistency into a nurse's practice with regard to his or her professional identity. Therefore, this evidences the social and scientific relevance of studies addressing the issue above enunciated.

In the light of previous assumptions, here is the question: How do nursing professors perceive management teaching and its implications to a nurse's education? In order to answer such question, the objective of this study was to analyze the perceptions of professors about the teaching of Nursing Management and its implications to a nurse's education.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive, exploratory study of qualitative nature. It involved undergraduate Nursing courses of three Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in a pole city in Western Paraná, Brazil, which offer said course. They are a public university and two private institutions, represented as HEI-A, HEI-B and HEI-C, illustratively and respectively.

Professors of Nursing Undergraduate courses made up the study population from the mentioned HEI. The sample (n=13), of non-probabilistic type, was defined in consonance with the following inclusion criteria: being teaching the course for at least six months, holding a Nursing degree at undergraduate level, and teaching at least one

specific subject related to nursing education, based on the abovementioned nurse's work dimensions⁽¹⁾.

Participants were approached at their workplace (classrooms, course department and/or their own privative room) and invited to join the research, where the researcher informed about the objective of the investigations and its form of conduction. Upon informal acceptance by each participant, the latter was led to data collection after reading and signing an informed consent form, in two copies of equal content and equally signed by the researcher, or a moment and place were set for collection.

Data were collected during February to April of 2016 by means of semi-structured interviews recorded with the approval of each participant and guided by the following request: "*Tell me about Nursing Management teaching and its implications to a nurse's formation*". The number of interviews was established in consonance with the proposed objective, represented by successive repetition of the content of all speeches, at each institution. In addition to the interviews, whose average time was around 10 minutes, the nurse professors that accepted to participate in the study filled in a form for the characterization of demographic data, academic background and information related to teaching activities.

All content obtained with the recording of the interviews was fully transcribed on 2010 Microsoft Office Word. Afterwards, the empirical material was subjected to Content Analysis, thematic modality, in compliance with pre-analysis stages, material exploration, and data treatment, as recommended by the methodological framework chosen⁽¹⁰⁾.

Data were categorized by the sematic criterion of the content manifested in the interviews, that is, the testimonies/speeches/excerpts/texts were arranged according to the themes and/or subthemes that had similar sense(s)⁽¹⁰⁾. This phase followed the reading of the corpus (pre-analysis), with surveying of central ideas, which consist of words/expression repeated throughout the speeches⁽¹⁰⁾. Subsequently, nuclei of meanings emerged, through other successive readings of the empirical material and which were characterized as groupings of central ideas with similar meanings⁽¹⁰⁾. Finally, the nuclei of meanings enabled the systematization of thematic categories⁽¹⁰⁾.

The end of each excerpt was marked with the

letter “P”, for “Professor”, followed by Arabic numerals indicating the chronological conduction of the interviews. Besides, speech excerpts were edited for correction of grammar errors, as well as the addition of terms in brackets for a better understanding of the speeches to readers, procedures which did not change the essential content of the excerpts.

All ethical requirements involving researches with humans, set forth by Resolution 466/2012 of the Brazilian National Health Council, were complied with. Moreover, the project that fomented the study was submitted to and approved by the State University of Western Paraná Ethics and Research Committee, under protocol No 078856/2015.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the 13 interviewed professors, six were from HEI-A; three from HEI-B and four from HEI-C. About academic titles, three professors were specialists, three Masters and seven were PhDs.

It is known that professors selected through public tenders have greater employment stability and advantages as to assignment by academic titles, in addition to direct financial incentives so that this happens, that is, PhD professors (n=6) are more likely to work at public schools. This is ratified by the literature⁽¹¹⁾ that studied the profile of professors in undergraduate nursing courses between public and private universities in Minas Gerais and found positive statistical association between the PhD title and its higher frequency at state universities.

It is postulated that the private initiative, though it has evident interests in profit, should encourage the hiring of highly qualified professors because, although academic titles did not ensure a quality education, this may favor the allocation of human resources in a more rational manner according to areas of teaching enhancement areas to specialties of undergraduate nursing courses.

As for personal data, the professors were aged between 29 and 55 years old, were in the profession for two years at least and 21 years at most, revealing an experienced profile, which is positive for the analysis of their perceptions about the study object. Most of the interviewees

were females (n=12), an already expected piece of data, since human care is the core of the nursing profession⁽¹⁾, which, historically, was linked to the figure of women as the career of their families.

After thematic analysis of the interviews, content was apprehended for three categories, namely: Implications of care management teaching to a future nurse's job; Dichotomy in the managerial versus assistance education of nurses; and Professors' recommendations for an articulation in the teaching of nursing management and assistance.

Implications of care management teaching to a future nurse's job

The words of the interviewed professors allowed observing that the latter understand the importance of teaching nursing management related to assistance, since nurses will not be, after graduating, only managers or “assistance nurses”, as they will need to articulate such dimensions for an efficient work, that is, management teaching has important implications to their future professional practice:

Students should be careful, attentive to these two sides [management and assistance], which interconnect things, you can't do this and not do that. (P5)

The other day a student came and said: but do we choose if we're going to be assistance nurses or managerial nurses? I said, no, you have to be both, regardless of being an assistance nurse, you'll manage assistance. (P13)

From the above written excerpts, it is possible to observe the need for nurses to understand the magnitude of the managerial dimension in the work process so that the existing dichotomy between assistance and nursing management is overcome^(3,12). This shows that the professors recognize important implications of management teaching, since P5's and P13's reports clearly evidence that nurses should perform managerial and assistance activities synergistically.

Management is a sub-process that corroborates with a number of other practices of nurses in their work routine, including when it comes to direct care, going beyond technicism and incorporating knowledge and rational, strategic and sensitive attitudes⁽⁹⁾. The following fragment reinforces such assertive:

For us [nurses], for a quality care, we need a scenario behind that, [...] and somehow, nursing management is an indirect care, because direct care is assistance, but management will help patients in an indirect way. It is vital to a professional's education and future. (P12)

It is worth stressing the importance of the above written excerpts as essentially laudable once it corroborates with the elementary assumption that management, in nursing context, is nothing more than the indirect care of a patient. It legitimates an ongoing exercise of planning, provision, control and evaluation of means so that care itself occurs in the best way, favoring a quality assistance^(1,3).

Fighting for a quality care, nurses are known to be actors that coordinate nursing service and the responsible ones for deciding on the assistance they provide. Therefore, this actually occurs, professionals need competences, knowledge, skills and attitudes that help them play their roles^(4-5,7). About that, it is possible to see that some professors take leadership as a competence necessary for the education of nurses so that professionals improve their managerial actions:

Nurses are leaders. They leave college graduated, knowing they'll be a team leader, that is, in a formal sense or not [...] if they don't have a notion of management during the course, they'll have trouble at work. (P4)

Nurses are managers, are bosses, should be leaders, but sometimes they are not. But, they have this leader role, they have to have that during the course too, and you can't dissociate that from your job. (P8)

The lack of clarity regarding on the role of manager or leader ends up limiting a nurse's managerial practice and, consequently, the rational handling of assistance, while proactive leadership has been considered as an indicator of quality in care management practice⁽²⁾. Thus, it is evidenced that the study participants legitimate leadership as a competence for nursing management, that is, they take them as a mechanism for future nurses to develop their actions in favor of assistance.

Assessing the formation of students regarding managerial practice, for the professors, has its importance due to the social responsibility of educating nurses prepared to meet demands at health services, therefore able to manage resources and elaborate strategies targeting individual or collective human care⁽¹²⁾. In this aspect, there is mention of implications of management teaching

to nursing care itself:

In my point of view, it's of great importance [nursing management teaching], because a nurse can't work anywhere without care management. (P10)

It is possible to observe the approach of nursing management teaching with greater emphasis on direct care in the job of future nurses, which, once again, is worth being seen as a laudable perception and necessary for a nurse's practice, due to his or her characteristic of care manager. Despite that, the professors denote that, in the teaching context, nursing management and assistance dimensions are poorly articulated.

Dichotomy in the managerial and assistance formation of nurses

For being one of the main responsible actors for administrative matters at health institutions, nurses often end up detaching themselves from direct contact, reproducing the technical division of their job^(2,6). With this premise, it can be observed that such a division starts soon during the formation of the professional, since most of the subjects approached during undergraduate courses, according to the professors participating in this study, have a merely "managerial" character:

We're always seeing assistance, being with patients, providing care, and management seems to be another thing, so simple, staying behind of a desk, as they say. (P13)

We prepare students for assistance. The undergraduate course prepares nurses for assistance and, when faced with their profession, management is heavily demanded from them. (P8)

Seeking an articulation between the theory and practice of "assistance" and "managerial" subjects, the professors end up ratifying the difficulties students have in connecting them, since nurses have care as the center of their job, but so the best quality is achieved it must be managed^(1,2). In this aspect, such difficulty is evidenced in the words of the participants:

It's hard for students to transform nursing care into nursing management because they go straight to patients and want to take care of them. So, I see it's really hard for us to change this reality. (P8)

In the teaching practice, we see a division. Of course, this doesn't depend individually on the

subject [student] but there is this gap between discourse and practice. (P6)

It is worth pointing out the role of students in T8's and T6's speeches when they manifest the difficulty these subjects have in transposing the anachronistic paradigm between nursing management and assistance. Such a fact corroborates with a study⁽³⁾ conducted in the state of São Paulo, which found that undergraduate nursing students tend to see management linked basically to the coordination of work units/sectors, being poorly articulated with direct assistance to users/patients.

Dichotomy between a nurse's managerial and assistance dimensions, in their education context, is favored by the job market itself, when students encounter "managerial" and "assistance" posts during the course in their field of practice:

They [students] experience the models we see in society: the assistance nurses and the administrative nurses. No, they need to be the whole, that's what we expect. (P9)

Some institutions created the managerial nurse and assistance nurse model. You can't have this fragmentation here inside this education institution, but it happens anyway. (P10)

The complexity of a nurse's job, his or her responsibility for both care and the nursing team and, not rarely, other professional categories, and heavy workload, are perhaps factors that contribute to the visualization of posts occupied by professionals detached from direct assistance. In this regard, within the teaching context, the role of professors in clarifying the need for students to take into account and develop all dimensions involving their future profession, reaffirming the magnitude and relevance of health and nursing management⁽⁹⁾, a fact that certainly does not exclude the need for a full development of knowledge that surrounds direct care.

All this therefore evidences the impact of undergraduate teaching on the comprehensiveness and quality of a nurse's formation. However, the very systematic organization of undergraduate nursing courses, within the investigated context, seems to contribute to the fragmentation of the synergic construction of knowledge between management and assistance:

Something I try not to do in the subject I teach is this: to dissociate one thing from the other, but the

subject is fragmented already, [...] but, you want it or not, the student ends up acquiring this fragmented idea. (P4)

Despite the apparent effort of the abovementioned professor to revert the anachronistic panorama of teaching, it is clear that fragmentation derives from the very process of undergraduate courses, contributing to a dissociation between the dimensions that deserved to be harmonious and complementary. Therefore, it is known that nursing teaching should comply with the National Curriculum Guidelines (DCN) that define minimum formation based on competences that, most of the times, are linked to interpersonal relationships to the detriment of technical knowledge^(7,13), which, as P4 interprets, remains as a difficulty to be overcome.

Despite the eminent need for nurses to articulate the dimensions that rule their job, teaching is still fragmented, contributing to the existence of a dichotomy found in the formation of management and assistance. However, regardless of all recognized difficulties, the professors point at some perspectives of change.

Professors' recommendations for an articulation in the teaching of nursing management and assistance.

Universities are expected to be committed to education, providing academic qualification as much as possible, in addition to enabling the overcoming of knowledge fragmentation⁽¹⁴⁾. Thus, the professors participating in this study stated that there are ways to improve the articulation (or harmony) between the managerial and assistance dimensions in nursing, with the emergence of means so that this happens, in both theory and practice:

You can't have theory only, you need this theory-practice articulation so that this managerial knowledge is established and the student understands how that is experienced routinely. (P1)

The excerpt above states that teaching between management and assistance could be more harmonious if students had more opportunities to learn based on problems encountered in the work routine of a nurse, that is, in practice. This is relevant and, though not tied especially to university education, corroborates with Ongoing Health Education principles, whose goal comprehends the search for professional and personal competences aimed at the application of

necessary changes, seen in the light of daily labor practice⁽¹⁵⁾.

In the context of changes, nursing teaching has been marked for years by a constant implementation of curriculum transformation in undergraduate courses in order to improve the teaching-learning process⁽¹⁴⁾. Consonantly with such premise, some professors believe that changes in the curriculum of courses are an alternative for the best articulation in the teaching of nursing assistance and its management:

Reconsidering not only the curriculum matter but also some specificities that need to be included in the course. (P2)

So maybe we should change it from the beginning. I don't know what the solution would be but maybe this [articulation between subjects] could be part of the curriculum. (P4)

It is worth reflecting that, though the professors recognize that changes in the curriculum are an opportunity to increase the dynamism in management and assistance teaching, they do not clearly show how this could be effected. This possibly reflects that the previous formation of such participants also reproduces the herein described dichotomy; therefore, it is inferred that said paradigm is perhaps common to nursing in Brazil, once based on previous national researches about the conception of nursing management in different contexts, which corroborate such problem^(2-3,12).

In addition to changes that can be made to the curriculum developed at institutions, the professors' postulate that the way students are inserted into the work process during the course, as active participants, is a means that enables a less fragmented understanding of a nurse's labor context, not only providing assistance or developing management individually:

I believe that there should be this connection between service management at the unit versus the nurse's practice with the effective participation of students in this process. (P2)

Articulation is the key point to build this bridge between theory and practice, the dialogue with professionals that are working with primary attention, at hospitals, to see this thing of management itself. (P1)

The speeches show that the practice of students inserted actively into a nurse's labor context is a

means to found the best articulation for the teaching of nursing care management. It is believed that this corroborates with the legitimate learning process, that is, the apprehension of actual contents, which possibly means the overcoming of this dichotomy between theory and practice as a pedagogical strategy. In management context, this needs to be very well planned by professors, since it is common, as the participants themselves reported, to identify management as an action disconnected from practical care.

Other more specific strategies were mentioned by the professors, such as the use of case studies, portfolios and problem situations, being taken as means to lead students to retrieve pieces of knowledge acquired during the course and condensing them into a better-articulated knowledge construct in the core of management and direct care:

A way we've been trying, but don't have it here yet, is to try to work with academic leagues or clinical studies. We provide students clinical cases, so they connect all contents, gradually of course, inside their academic learning. (P13)

I really like students working with portfolios. With the portfolio, you end up working on a problem situation and then you see the managerial and assistance aspects at the same time. (P4)

P13's and P4's excerpts signal pedagogical alternatives for a more comprehensive and harmonious nursing teaching with respect to their managerial and assistance formation. In this aspect, the use of strategies emerges, such as leagues, case studies and portfolios, aiming at overcoming the dichotomy in nursing practice because, according to the participants, such strategies enable a broader view of the care process, comprehending the managerial dimension, which is known to have an intangible and subjective character^(4,6), unlike contents related to techniques for the exercise of the profession.

A teaching based on problem situations, case studies, development of critical thinking, as expressed by P13 and P4, may contribute to a learning based on evidence, that is, the critical incorporation of scientific evidence linked to knowledge. In this aspect, a Norwegian literature review⁽¹⁶⁾, aiming to analyze pedagogical strategies for the teaching of an evidence-based nursing practice, argue that, although students have trouble developing skills related to scientific findings,

professors should make use of clinical situations as strategies in order to build up knowledge supported by evidence.

Seeking to integrate theory and practice, service and teaching, it is necessary to reconsider methodological proposals used in the formation of nursing professionals, encouraging actions that overcome the traditionalist teaching, as the professors recommended. Nevertheless, this change is not easy as it requires a break with proposed teaching models grounded on Cartesianism, that is, on the fragmentation of knowledge⁽¹⁷⁾. This denotes the difficulties professors face to improve the quality of teaching, even with their recommendations.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study evidenced that management teaching is an elementary factor to the job of future nurses, being inseparable from assistance practice.

However, the undergraduate process itself, which is fragmented, disfavors the harmonious apprehension between the management and assistance dimensions, which could be overcome with measures that permeate curriculum restructuration and more active pedagogical strategies, such as the use of case studies, academic leagues and portfolios, aiming at a comprehensive education.

The limitations of this study are evidently related to the impossibility of generalization of its results and the employment of single interviews. Despite that, it is believed that the research greatly contributed to nursing teaching as it revealed that management based on care is a factor that deserves attention in the formation of nurses for the consolidation of their profession as a science, in addition to providing perspectives for the operationalization of a more innovative teaching practice.

ENSINO DO GERENCIAMENTO E SUAS IMPLICAÇÕES À FORMAÇÃO DO ENFERMEIRO: PERSPECTIVAS DE DOCENTES

RESUMO

Objetivou-se analisar as percepções de docentes quanto ao ensino do gerenciamento em enfermagem e suas implicações à formação do enfermeiro. Fez-se um estudo descritivo-exploratório, qualitativo, com a participação de 13 docentes enfermeiros vinculados aos cursos de graduação em Enfermagem de três Instituições de Ensino Superior (IES) do interior do Paraná, Brasil. Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevista semiestruturada, gravada, e norteada pela questão: "Fale-me sobre o ensino do Gerenciamento em Enfermagem e suas implicações na formação do enfermeiro". Ao material transcrito dos depoimentos, empregou-se Análise de Conteúdo na modalidade temática. Os resultados foram sumarizados em três categorias temáticas. Evidenciou-se que o ensino do gerenciamento implica diretamente ao labor do futuro enfermeiro e a sua prática assistencial, sendo indissociáveis. Contudo, o processo de graduação demasiadamente fragmentado desfavorece a harmonia na formação entre as dimensões de gerência e assistência, o que poderia ser melhorado com estratégias pedagógicas pontuais, como situações-problema, portfólios, estudos de caso e ligas acadêmicas, além da reestruturação curricular.

Palavras-chave: Pesquisa em administração de enfermagem. Docentes de enfermagem. Educação superior. Gerência. Enfermagem.

ENSEÑANZA DE GESTIÓN Y SUS IMPLICACIONES A LA FORMACIÓN DEL ENFERMERO: PERSPECTIVAS DE DOCENTES

RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar las percepciones de los docentes en cuanto a la enseñanza de la gestión en enfermería y sus implicaciones para la formación del enfermero. Se realizó un estudio descriptivo-exploratorio, cualitativo, con la participación de 13 docentes enfermeros vinculados a los cursos de pregrado en Enfermería de tres Instituciones de Educación Superior del interior de Paraná, Brasil. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de entrevista semiestructurada, grabada, y guiada por la cuestión: "Hábleme acerca de la enseñanza de Gestión en Enfermería y sus implicaciones en la formación del enfermero." Al material transcrito de los relatos, se utilizó el Análisis de Contenido en la modalidad temática. Los resultados se resumen en tres categorías temáticas. Se evidenció que la enseñanza de la gestión implica directamente al trabajo de los futuros enfermeros y sus prácticas de cuidado, siendo inseparables. Sin embargo, el proceso de pregrado excesivamente fragmentado desfavorece la armonía en la formación entre las dimensiones de gestión y cuidado, lo que podría ser mejorado con estrategias pedagógicas específicas, tales como situaciones problemáticas, portafolios, estudios de casos y ligas académicas, así como la reestructuración curricular.

Palabras clave: Investigación en administración de enfermería. Docentes de enfermería. Educación superior. Gerencia. Enfermería.

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