### THE NURSING STUDENT-WORKER: A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

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### **ABSTRACT**

In this study, the objective was to know and analyze the scientific production on the nursing student worker of higher education institutions in Brazil. For this, a bibliographic research of exploratory, descriptive and qualitative approach was carried out. The bibliographic survey was conducted in September 2018, comprising scientific articles, master's dissertations and doctoral theses. The data were analyzed from the analytical and interpretative readings. The profile of the nursing student worker, the motivations for entering and staying in the course and the aspects that hinder and facilitate the trajectory of these students were identified. Despite the small number of papers on the proposed theme, it was possible to identify the profile of thenursing student-worker in undergraduate courses and to approach their desires, difficulties and potentialities.

Keywords: Students Nursing. Workers. Employment.

### INTRODUCTION

To focus the student-worker in higher education demands achievement of some approaches to the educational context, regarding the increase in the number of places and policies facilitating the access of the popular classes to Higher Education Institutions (IES).

The most significant changes in higher education in Brazil occurred during the military government and later in the late 1990s, characterized by the opening to the private sector<sup>(1)</sup>.

It is worth noting the influence of international organizations, such as the World Bank, in educational policies in Latin America and, particularly in Brazil, with a focus on privatization and marketization of education<sup>(1)</sup>.

In terms of regulation and management, the search for new sources of resources in the private sector, applications of public resources in private institutions, elimination of expenses with compensatory policies and diversification of higher education, resulting in the expansion of the number of non-university institutions<sup>(1,2)</sup>.

Since 2002, with the change of government, there have been initiatives to strengthen public education, especially in federal universities. Among them: the implementation of new units, the hiring of teachers and employees, salary updating and actions to democratize access and student abidance in higher education<sup>(3)</sup>.

Despite this, Brazil, in relation to higher education, remains one third of the lowest coverage rate among

Latin American countries, although it occupies the 7th position in the economy (GDP - Gross Domestic Product) of the planet. This is due to the expressive social inequality, considered as the main factor of production of the elitist expansion of higher education, including undergraduate and postgraduate studies<sup>(4)</sup>.

The nursing area, inserted in the context of the expansion of vacancies in higher education, also suffered impacts in regarding to the number of vacancies in the last years, with expansion mainly in the private sector.

In 2013, the Area Report of the National Student Performance Examination (Enade) pointed out the predominance of private educational institutions that offered the nursing course. Of the 538 courses analyzed in this report, 444 were from the private sector, mainly concentrated in the South and Southeast regions<sup>(5)</sup>.

In the year 2018, up to the time of this bibliographic research, the number of nursing courses in the baccalaureate category offered by public higher education institutions was 143, while in the private higher education institutions it was 978.

With regard to vacancies, while 8,399 vacancies were offered annually for nursing students in the public higher education system, the private network totaled 240,408 vacancies<sup>(6)</sup> per year.

The facilitation of entry into higher education courses through programs of the Ministry of Education, such as the University for All Program (Prouni) and the Student Financing Program (Fies)<sup>(7)</sup>, and the expansion of private nursing colleges, especially in large urban centers and close to the periphery of large cities,

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demand to consider the increasing number of workers<sup>(8)</sup> and analyze the reality experienced by these students, as well as the challenges of the training process.

Therefore, in this study the objective was to know and analyze the scientific production on the nursing student-worker of higher education institutions in Brazil. In view of the objective outlined in this study, we tried to answer the following questions: How many studies in the nursing area that focus on discussing the insertion of workers in higher education? Are studies developed in what historical period? Under what perspective do these studies focus on the nursing student-worker?

### METHODOLOGICAL COURSE

This is an exploratory and descriptive bibliographic research<sup>(9)</sup>, with a qualitative approach. The bibliographical survey was carried out by the authors in September of 2018 in five databases and a data platform, namely: Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences (LILACS), Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), National Library of Medicine (PubMed), Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Scopus and the Web of Science platform.

After identifying the sources of search, the following keywords were defined: estudante de enfermagem, students nursing, graduação enfermagem, licenciatura em enfermagem, trabalhador, workers. Tofitthe LILACS database, the Health Sciences Descriptors (Decs) were identified: estudantes de enfermagem, bacharelado enfermagem, trabalhadores, trabalho and emprego. As for CINAHL, the titles students, nursing, graduate, baccalaureate, workand employment were used.

The bibliographic survey comprised scientific articles, master's dissertations and doctoral theses, whose main subject was the nursing student worker in Brazil. It was chosen the national scientific production because the author understood that there is a singularity in the social and economic aspects of the Brazilian student-worker.

It should be clarified that there was no delimitation of the time period of scientific publication, since a low scientific production on the subject was identified, and work was identified from 1992 to 2012. Studies on digital and/or physical access were included. In the matter of master's dissertations and doctoral theses.

During the access to the bibliographic materials, the exploratory reading and the selective reading were

carried out by the authors<sup>(9)</sup>. In the exploratory reading, a summary, introduction, preface, cover page, indexes of the bibliography and conclusions were made when referring to theses and dissertations. In the case of articles, the title and abstract were read. In the selective reading, a more in-depth reading of these parts was done, so that the researcher could identify whether the material would be used or not in the research, in view of the objective.

From the total of seven studies selected for analysis, four were scientific papers and three, master's dissertations. Subsequent to the compilation of the selected studies, the data was systematized.

After this step, the analytical reading of all the material was carried out, aiming to order and summarize the information in the studies. Are stages in this process: whole reading of the work, identification of key ideas, hierarchy and ideassynthesis<sup>(9)</sup>.

From the analytical reading, the studies, object of analysis, were organized and systematized in the framework (Chart 1) and identified by letters, while the rest of the references that make up this article are identified by numbers. Later, interpretive reading was performed, when the data were organized into themes to be specified in the results and discussion. At this stage, we sought to give a broader meaning to the data obtained, relating them to the significant knowledge from other researches in search of answers to the research objective<sup>(9)</sup>.

It should be clarified that the entire process of bibliographic search and data analysis was carried out by the authors of this article.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the analytical reading of the selected studies, they were organized as shown in Chart 1. By organizing the studies analyzed in chronological order, it is possible to identify that, except for the first study<sup>(a)</sup>, produced in 1992, all others<sup>(b-g)</sup> were produced from 2002, concentrating between 2002 and 2012. In 2002, private sector participation accounted for 70% of undergraduate enrollments as a result of the federal government's opening of higher education to the private sector<sup>(10)</sup>.

Although only in some studies was it clear that the participants were enrolled in undergraduate courses in private IES<sup>(a,b,g)</sup>, the process of expansion of higher education and consequent openness to the possibility of workers entering through privatization was also addressed in other studies<sup>(c,f)</sup>.

As for the demographic region in which the studies on the nursing student-worker were concentrated, it is observed that all the institutions are from the state of São Paulo, and a study was carried out in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. These data agree with the process of expanding nursing education unevenly across the country, concentrating on the South and Southeast regions<sup>(8)</sup>.

**Chart 1.** Description of the studies analyzed, according to title, authors, type of study and approach, place and year of publication. Ribeirão Preto, 2018.

Title	Authors	Type and approach of study	Place of publication	Year
The nursing student-worker:	Maria Lucia Alves de	Master's Dissertation	Escola de Enfermagem da	1992
unveiling this new reality(a)	Sousa Costa	Qualitative Approach	Universidade de São Paulo	
Quality of life of students-	Rosana Battagini Iglesias	Master's Dissertation	Escola de Enfermagem da	2002
workers who attend graduation in		Quantitative	Universidade de São Paulo	
Nursing <sup>(b)</sup>		Approach		
The search for nursing graduation	Neuma Vital Julca	Scientific Article	Revista da Escola de	2003
as an option for technicians and	Medina e Regina Toshie	Qualitative approach	Enfermagem da	
nursing assistants <sup>(c)</sup>	Takahashi		Universidade de São Paulo	
The meaning of nursing	Janet de Fátima Antunes	Professional	Escola Paulista de Medicina	2008
graduation under the prism of	Caetano de Souza	Master's Dissertation	da Universidade Federal de	
another view: nursing assistants		Qualitative and	São Paulo	
and technicians <sup>(d)</sup>		quantitative		
		Approach		
Being a nurse having been a	Maria Lucia Alves de	Scientific Article	Acta Paulista de	2008
nursing student-worker: a focus of	Sousa Costa, Miriam	Qualitative approach	Enfermagem	
social phenomenology <sup>(e)</sup>	Aparecida Barbosa			
	Merighi e Maria Cristina			
	Pinto de Jesus			
Studying and working:	Rosane Teresinha	Scientific Article	Revista da Escola Anna Nery	2011
perceptions of nursing technicians	Fontana e Lariane Brigo	Qualitative approach		
about this choice <sup>(f)</sup>				
Sleep pattern and drowsiness of	Luciane Ruiz Carmona	Scientific Article	Revista da Escola de	2012
nursing student-worker <sup>(g)</sup>	Ferreira e Milva Maria	Qualitative approach	Enfermagem da	
	Figueiredo de Matino		Universidade de São Paulo	

**Source:** The authors.

### Profile of the nursing student-worker and motivations for admission and stay in the course

Although not all the studies analyzed aimed to characterize the nursing student-worker, as to their socioeconomic profile, the subject was approached in most of the studies found. In these studies, the nursing student-worker is characterized as being female, with an age range between 26 and 58 years old, single, without children, who already worked as a nurse technician and/or assistant, with a professional experience up to five years and current working hours varying between afternoon, full-time or night<sup>(ab,d,g)</sup>.

In a recent study, it was concluded that the nursing team is composed mostly of women (84%). However, a progressive process of entry of male professionals has been observed since the beginning of the 1990s<sup>(10)</sup>. The predominance of women in the nursing team is a phenomenon called feminization in the professional qualification of Brazilian nursing<sup>(11)</sup>.

In the analyzed studies, it was evident the motivation

of working women to enter the course. These motivations included expectations regarding possible changes in the quality of life and socioeconomic conditions, professional and social growth; professional qualification; influence of the previous profession, since they already worked in the health field; view of the nurse as a model of work developed with quality and vocational discovery<sup>(a)</sup>.

Regarding expectations aimed at improving socioeconomic conditions, the professional and social ascendancy commented on by the participating studentswere directly to improving the quality of life for themselves and their families

Specifically, in one of the studies analyzed<sup>(d)</sup>, 91% of the participants stated that they chose the nursing profession to have fewer jobs, even mentioning that the nurses' salary is twice the nursing assistant's<sup>(d)</sup>.

In national research, it was identified that of the 3.5 million health workers, 50% are professionals in the nursingarea. Of these 50% of nursing professionals, 80% are technicians and nursing assistants. As for monthly

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income, 1.8% of these professionals -27,000 people received less than one salary a month, and 16.8% of the participants declared having a monthly income of up to 1,000 reais<sup>(10)</sup>.

Although student-workers show positive perspectives regarding the profession market, after the academic training, research shows that nursing has been showing worrying rates of unemployment.

In 2013, 10.1% of nursing professionals reported experiencing unemployment in the last 12 months, with an aggravated situation among registered nurses, when this percentage reached 12.4%, that is, 51 thousand nurses reported experiencing unemployment in the last 12 months. Still, of the 121 thousand nursing professionals who reported being unemployed, 66.7% reported having had problems finding work in the area<sup>(12)</sup>.

As to the influence of the previous profession as a motivation for admission and stay in the undergraduate course, 89.4% of participants in one of the studies analyzed were already active in the health area. Among them, 86.9% already worked in hospitals and 74.3% were nursing assistants or technicians<sup>(b)</sup>.

In another study analyzed, 87% of the participants reported that experience and skill in the practice of nursing care favored the coping of the difficulties to be experienced in graduation<sup>(d)</sup>.

Still in the same study, the professional improvement was understood by the totality of the interviewees as a strong influence on the motivation to carry out the course<sup>(d)</sup>.

The desire for professional qualification was also identified, in a recent study, at the national level, between technicians and nursing assistants, with 34.3% reporting being in the course or already having a higher education<sup>(10)</sup>.

In another study, the authors described the motivations for the entry of student-workers in the undergraduate course, relating them to the influence of the nurse's role as a model of care and management practice<sup>(c)</sup>.

It is thus understood that the workers who already work in the health area have proximity to the nurse's work and, probably, this is a facilitator of the construction of their professional identity as a nurse, throughout the graduation.

### Aspects that hinder and facilitate the academic and personal trajectory of the nursing student-worker

The difficult aspects of the academic and personal trajectory of student-workers are described in the seven

studies analyzed<sup>(ag)</sup> and include: academic difficulties generated by late enrollment in higher education, financial aspects, difficulties to conciliate study and work, poor quality of life andunsatisfactory income and academic performance.

The author of one of the studies analyzed commented that limiting the time and financial resources to invest in the studies led the participants to opt for private higher education institutions because they offered more vacancies and part-time courses, allowing the student to continue to work<sup>(b)</sup>.

In a study carried out with students of federal IES in 2013, there was a trend in which students from public schools carried out higher education, in most cases in private institutions, while students attending private institutions in high school generally attended education in public IES<sup>(5)</sup>.

Reflecting on access to higher education and school history, there is inequality of access to higher education, built continuously in the candidates' school history. A significant number of high school students have a low degree of information about university entrance examination and University training<sup>(13)</sup>.

Despite the broader access to public education, the measures adopted to improve the quality of education are still below the desired level, because they run up against social and political aspects that hinder this process, such as the guarantee of support materials, the valuation of the teaching staff and the absence of educational opportunities differentiated from the students<sup>(13)</sup>.

Financial difficulties directly related to the need to conciliate work and study were also pointed out in the studies analyzed<sup>(a,b,d)</sup>.

In a study developed for the discussion of the health workforce in Brazil, the authors reflected on how the female identity of the health professional categories leads to wage devaluation. Although the country undergoes a process of change in the profile of the economically active population, with greater female participation, professions understood as female, such as nursing, participate in a hierarchy of professions and experience low wage growth<sup>(13)</sup>.

On average, Brazilians enter very young for the job market, combining study and work at the same time<sup>(14)</sup>. This has repercussions on the continuity of studies. The 10% of Brazilian workers with lower income have only about 3.3 years of education, and the 10% with higher income, on the contrary, have, in average, 10.8 years as time of educação<sup>(14)</sup>.

In one of the studies analyzed the participants' reports showed that the hours dedicated to the study and to the college had interfered in the time dedicated to the work, leading to delays and committedlunch time. It is important to consider, in this context, that the student-worker must conciliate his/her daily time not only between work and study in the classroom, but also between his personal, family and social needs, besides other activities the classroom, such as academic and studies.

In this sense, the expansion of higher education positions, predominantly in the private sector, associated with strategies for facilitating entry through scholarships and offering courses in varied shifts, allows the entry of lower-income groups that require the self-support in the training process.

However, it is questionable whether, despite the aforementioned strategies, IES will favor the student's permanence and completion of the course, considering their particularities and demands as a worker, since the reality of the nursingstudent-worker reflects the constant struggle between what the student would like to do and what can be done, generating discomfort and personal dissatisfaction with the activities performed<sup>(f)</sup>.

All the difficulties previously mentioned compromise the quality of life of the student-worker, thematic shows the studies analyzed  $^{\text{(a-d,f,g)}}$ .

Aspects related to leisure deprivation due to lack of time and a non-favorable daily routine were understood as a challenge to survival in the way of being, thinking and maintaining biological, psychological and social well-being. In one of the studies analyzed, it was pointed

out that the student-worker is a vulnerable subject to illness due to work and double daily journey<sup>(c)</sup>.

Although the student-worker presents important difficulties in relation to his academic performance, quality of life and personal satisfaction, highlighted as facilitators in the training process<sup>(a,d)</sup>.

Positive self-image, about the satisfaction of facing the challenge of articulating work and study, was pointed out by participants of a study<sup>(a)</sup> as motivating aspect in their trajectories.

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Despite of the small number of articles, dissertations and theses that focus about the student-worker in undergraduate nursing courses, it was possible to carry out this study, reaching the proposed objective, from the identification of the student-worker profile of nursing undergraduate courses and make an approximation to their wishes, difficulties and potentialities.

Some significant nuances about the student-worker experience in nursing undergraduate courses at IES show the relevance of this topic, as well as its complexity, as it is related to some tensions: current policy of expanding vacancies, mainly in the

private, and probable fragility of political proposals of maintenance of the student in the university; limits on the concrete condition of life and personal satisfaction for the effort expended in favor of a professional and personal project.

# O TRABALHADOR-ESTUDANTE DE ENFERMAGEM: UM ESTUDO BIBLIOGRÁFICO RESUMO

No presente estudo o objetivo foi conhecer e analisar a produção científica sobre o trabalhador-estudante de enfermagem de instituições de ensino superior no Brasil. Para isso, foi realizada pesquisa bibliográfica, de natureza exploratória e descritiva e abordagem qualitativa. O levantamento bibliográfico foi realizado em setembro de 2018, abrangendo artigos científicos, dissertações de mestrado e teses de doutorado. Os dados foram analisados a partir das leituras analítica e interpretativa. Foram identificados o perfil do trabalhador-estudante de enfermagem, as motivações para o ingresso e permanência no curso e os aspectos que dificultam e facilitam a trajetória desses estudantes. Apesar do número pequeno de trabalhos sobre a temática proposta, foi possível identificar o perfil do estudante-trabalhador de enfermagem em cursos de graduação e realizar uma aproximação a seus anseios, dificuldades e potencialidades.

Palavras-chave: Estudante de enfermagem. Trabalhador. Emprego.

## EL TRABAJADOR-ESTUDIANTE DE ENFERMERÍA: UN ESTUDIO BIBLIOGRÁFICO RESUMEN

En el presente estudio el objetivo fue conocer y analizar la producción científica sobre el trabajador-estudiante de enfermería de instituciones de enseñanza superior en Brasil. Para ello, fue realizada una investigación bibliográfica, de naturaleza exploratoria y descriptiva y abordaje cualitativo. La búsqueda bibliográfica fue realizada en septiembre de 2018, abarcando artículos científicos, disertaciones de maestría y tesis doctoral. Los datos fueron analizados a partir de las lecturas analítica e interpretativa. Fueron identificados el perfil del trabajador-estudiante de enfermería, las motivaciones para el ingreso y permanencia en el curso y los aspectos que dificultan y facilitan la trayectoria de estos estudiantes. Pese el número pequeño

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de trabajos sobre la temática propuesta, fue posible identificar el perfil del estudiante-trabajador de enfermería en cursos de pregrado y realizar una evaluación de sus deseos, dificultades y potencialidades.

Palabras clave: Estudiante de enfermería. Trabajador. Empleo.

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