

## CONDITIONS THAT LEAD TEACHERS TO ASSUME UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT POSITIONS CONDIÇÕES QUE LEVAM DOCENTES ENFERMEIROS A ASSUMIR CARGOS DE GESTÃO UNIVERSITÁRIA CONDICIONES QUE LLEVAN A QUE ENFERMEROS DOCENTES ASUMAN PUESTOS DE DIRECCIÓN UNIVERSITARIA

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To understand the conditions that lead the teaching nurses of a public university to assume the roles of university management. **Method:** This is a qualitative research with theoretical-methodological contribution from Grounded Theory. The study scenario was a federal public university, and the data collection took place between May and September 2016, with the theoretical sample with 19 participants divided into two sample groups. **Results:** The data evidenced that the professors assume roles of university management by commitment with the collective and for having management competences. The motivation of the professors to assume these positions due to previous experiences in the management of private universities and/or health services is highlighted. **Conclusion:** The professors of a university unit assume management positions by the commitment to the collective and domains, by accumulated experiences.

**Keywords:** Faculty, Nursing; Universities; Education, Higher; Nursing Administration Research.

### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** compreender as condições que levam os enfermeiros docentes de uma universidade pública a assumirem os cargos de gestão universitária. **Método:** pesquisa qualitativa com aporte teórico-metodológico na teoria fundamentada nos dados. O cenário do estudo foi uma universidade pública federal e a coleta de dados ocorreu entre maio e setembro de 2016, compondo a amostragem teórica 19 participantes distribuídos em dois grupos amostrais. **Resultados:** os dados evidenciaram que os docentes assumem cargos de gestão universitária por compromisso com o coletivo e por possuírem competências de gestão. Destacou-se a motivação dos docentes para assumirem esses cargos devido a experiências anteriores na gestão de universidades privadas e/ou serviços de saúde. **Conclusão:** os docentes de uma unidade universitária assumem cargos de gestão pelo compromisso com o coletivo e domínios, por experiências acumuladas.

**Palavras-chave:** Docentes de Enfermagem; Universidades; Educação Superior; Pesquisa em Administração de Enfermagem.

### RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** entender las condiciones que llevan a que enfermeros docentes de una universidad pública asuman puestos de dirección universitaria. **Método:** investigación cualitativa con aporte teórico-metodológico en la Teoría Fundamentada en los Datos. El escenario del estudio fue una universidad pública federal; la recogida de datos fue realizada entre mayo y septiembre de 2016; el muestreo teórico estuvo compuesto de 19 participantes divididos en dos grupos. **Resultados:** los datos indicaron que los docentes asumen puestos de dirección universitaria por compromiso con el colectivo y por sus competencias en gestión. Se realiza la motivación de los docentes para asumir dichos cargos debido a experiencias anteriores en la dirección de universidades privadas y/o de servicios de salud. **Conclusión:** los docentes de una unidad universitaria asumen puestos de dirección por su compromiso con el colectivo y dominios, por experiencia acumulada.

**Palabras clave:** Docentes de Enfermería; Universidades; Educación Superior; Investigación en Administración de Enfermería.

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## INTRODUCTION

Public universities are multidisciplinary institutions that supported by the integration of teaching, research and extension, aim at the training of qualified higher education professionals who can contribute to the construction and development of society.<sup>1-3</sup>

Considering the complexity of public universities and their legislation, there is nothing more intrinsic than the management positions within these organizations be also occupied by teachers, who have an understanding of the educational context in which they are inserted.<sup>2,4</sup>

Public university management activities in Brazil and in some other countries are inherent to teaching<sup>5</sup>. However, even with the current legislation, the literature shows that Brazilian teachers have not always been prepared to assume university management positions.<sup>3,6-8</sup> Like other university teachers, teaching nurses are not trained to hold these positions since the post-graduate courses in Nursing are based on teacher training and scientific research, not addressing management issues of the services that permeate and dispose of these teaching practices.<sup>9,10</sup>

The teaching manager's career has multiple functions to foster, encourage and manage the organizational process and organizational development of the university while articulating activities linked to the teaching, research and extension. Since these activities are essential in his career, besides the technical and scientific training, the teaching manager also needs the conditions for the development of managerial competences, given the specificities of the teaching and management attributions required for the academic domain and effectiveness of his mission in the university.<sup>11</sup>

Given this context, this study aimed to understand the conditions that lead the teaching nurses of a public university to assume the positions of university management.

## METHOD

This is a qualitative research based in the data theory (DT). DT seeks to understand social phenomena from the meanings of relationships and interactions between people and guided by a systematic analysis of the data so, the structure and process are integrated and enable the creation of a theory.<sup>12</sup> The scenario studied was the nursing department of a public university in the south of Brazil. The participants were invited to participate in the study via e-mail, with all interviews previously scheduled and performed at their workplace, after reading the Free and Informed Consent Form and accepted to participate in the study. Data collection was performed by one of the researchers from May to September 2016 through open and individual interviews recorded in voice digital audio recording with an average duration of 40 minutes.

The theoretical sample of this study had 19 participants distributed in two sample groups. The first group, which was inten-

tionally chosen, had teaching nurses who occupied departmental activities. The guiding question to these participants was: what do you explain the university management carried out by full management professors in the nursing department of this university?

From the interviews and analysis of the data of the first sample group, new questions were asked to the participants, emerging the following hypothesis: micromanagement is directly related to macromanagement, and vice-versa, both of which are interdependent. According to the data and analysis performed, micromanagement is departmental management (related to the nursing department) and teaching management (which encompasses activities of the Nursing course); and macromanagement is the institutional management (linked to the organizational structures of the university as a whole).

It was necessary to interview other nursing managers to confirm this hypothesis. Thus, the second sample group was formed by teaching nurses, who were in charge of coordinators and subcoordinators of the Nursing course and teaching nurses who were working in management positions in other spaces within the university. The guiding question to the participants was: "How do you explain the university management carried out by teaching managers who are working in the nursing department of this university?" And "How do you experience the relationship and interaction of micromanagement of the Nursing course and university macromanagement as a manager?" After analyzing the interviews of this second sample group, it was revealed that although both managements are independent in their spheres of action, certain actions imply consequences for both management scenarios, explaining the relationship of interdependence between them.

The inclusion criteria for both groups were: university teaching nurses working in the nursing department with exclusive work regime, who have already held university management positions or who have been at least six months in those positions and university teaching staff retired and who have already been in university management positions. The exclusion criteria were: teacher managers or former managers away from work, for any reason, during the period of data collection.

Memos and diagrams were developed during data analysis,<sup>12</sup> which relate to the records and insights of the researchers in the process of constructing the theory. NVIVO® software was used to organize data during the comparative analysis and data coding phase. The analysis process followed open coding, axial coding, and integration.<sup>12</sup> In the open coding, the data were analyzed line by line, in order to identify each incident. Codes were generated that, after grouping, promoted the elaboration of the concepts. In the axial coding, the data were regrouped, aiming to obtain a clearer and more complete explanation about the phenomenon, relating categories to their subcategories by a systematic analytical process of comparison and connection

guided by the paradigmatic model of three components of the updated version of this strand.<sup>12</sup> "Condition" answers questions about why, when and how a given phenomenon happens, designated by an action; "Action-interaction" is the express answer to events or situations, as well as people moving from one meaning; and "consequence" expresses expected or actual outcomes and results<sup>11</sup>. Finally, in the integration phase, the categories and subcategories found were compared, analyzed and refined,<sup>12</sup> emerging the phenomenon entitled "Articulating complex collectives through university management for qualified training of new nurses". The theoretical saturation of the data was obtained from the repetition of the information brought by the participants about the phenomenon and the absence of new elements relevant to the objective of the study.

It was chosen to broaden and deepen the discussion of the component "conditions", inherent to the paradigmatic model proposed by the method, considering that the inductor movement promotes the understanding of the central phenomenon. The ethical precepts of Resolution nº 466/2012 of the National Health Council were respected. The project was approved by the Committee of Ethics in Research with Human Beings of the Federal University of Santa Catarina, under opinion number 1,468,660 and Certificate of Presentation for Ethical Appreciation nº 54254116.1.0000.0121., the letter E followed by the number corresponding to the order of the interviews to designate them (E1, E2 ...) and the indication of the sample group - first group (G1) and second group (G2) were used as follows: (E1G1); (E1G2), to guarantee the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

## RESULTS

The theoretical sample had 19 participants and was composed of nine teaching nurses who occupied departmental activities, who participated in the first sample group, and 10 teaching staff nurses, eight of whom were coordinators and sub-coordinators of the Nursing and two were working in management positions in other management spaces within the university and that were added the second sample group.

From the process of systematic and comparative analysis of the data of the **conditions** component, two subcategories emerged with inductive movements that allowed the teaching nurses of a public university to assume positions of university management: *assuming the university management by commitment with the collective and management competences, and being motivated to assume university management position due to previous experiences.*

The first subcategory revealed that, in general, there is resistance by the teachers regarding the occupation of management positions within the public university; because it is an assignment they did not have previous formal preparation. However,

they understand that at some point in the academic carrier; there will need to develop university management activities.

*As they are positions that are occupied by teachers, at some point we have to commit ourselves to some management activity, as in the department head or course coordination. I never thought I would take any management position, but when I decided to take on, it was mainly by commitment to the group and university (E01 G1).*

As mentioned by the participants, the university teaching nurses can take up activities in different spaces within the institution, such as Pro-rectors, departments, sectors, and areas of knowledge, governed by legislation, regiments and administrative structure regulations. In order to take up management positions in each area, the teachers comply with nomination processes or electoral disputes. Specifically, the positions of department heads and coordination of the Nursing course are necessarily occupied by nurses, according to the Nursing Professional Exercise Law.

*For a management of the training of nurses in university higher education, there is no doubt that it should be performed by nurses. Nurses who are leaders and reference in the profession. [...] this is fundamental because they understand the needs of the category for their formation, which allows forming new leadership for the profession (E03 G1).*

Besides to the legislation, the participants believe that these managers should be nurses, since they understand the particularities of the profession and the needs in the nurses' education, effectively contributing to the teaching, research and extension process, which includes besides the activities technical-administrative inherent in management positions, the political articulations of the profession.

*In a position of management training, it has to be a professional who has the knowledge of nursing, certainly cannot be someone who does not have nursing mastery [...] In these spaces do not only happen referrals, the technical-administrative referral can be done by a chief of administrative file. Now, the political articulation of the discipline and its nuances is the responsibility of the head of the department with the course coordinator, in these cases nurses (E06 G1).*

The participants were unanimous in reporting that they were not prepared to act in university management. However, they valued the knowledge acquired in the training of nurses on administrative and managerial aspects, present in the curriculum of the course. The interface that the training of nurses

es has with the management has given more control over the management tools that can be applied in the university reality and contributed to develop the activities in these positions.

*I realized that the nurse has a much easier way of doing public health management than other professionals, precisely because of his training tools. Management is a very strong thing in nursing and, regardless of the differences and peculiarities of each service, the nurse is formed with a basis to make, besides the care, also the management and these can also be applied in different organizations (E13 G2).*

*It is very important that he [teacher manager] master the tools of general management, knowledge in management [...] I think he has to have skills in management tools, know how to manage, an organization... If we take our area of management, competence moves these dimensions, the theoretical and scientific knowledge, to know how to apply that knowledge in practice and at the same time have appropriate attitudes so it can do this "thing" [management], make the organization run efficiently. So I think these management skills are fundamental and possible to apply in university reality (E03G1)*

Although university management has its specificities, management in general, mainly related to conflict management, people management, infrastructure, and materials, among other aspects, are taught to the nurse, enabling the performance of these professionals in the different levels of management in health and also management of higher education.

The second subcategory emphasized through the reports that the motivation to assume the management positions within the university is in the experiences previous to the academy, mainly within health institutions and for wanting to effectively contribute with the political-pedagogical process of the graduation course in Nursing, reflecting on student training.

*I was encouraged by my peers to take up management position due to my previous management experience in a health secretariat (E02 G1).*

*I wanted to give my contribution to the Nursing course, contributing to the political-pedagogical process [...] as I had already assumed health management position, I felt more motivated and safe to assume now in the university (E14 G2).*

As reported by the participants, most of the teachers have held hospital management positions, such as the management of clinical units, management of nursing services, among oth-

ers. These experiences have given experience in managerial activities and the tools available for the development of the work.

*I had management experience before assuming university management position, I knew what the basics were and knew what kind of management I would identify myself to develop my job (E09 G2).*

*That management of nursing board at the university hospital instrumentalized me and gave me a baggage of very great experience to take on university management teaching (E04 G1).*

Experiences in management positions outside the university, especially in health institutions, facilitated the understanding of how to develop plans, goals, evaluations of results, the ways of managing, interpersonal relationships, among other administrative aspects inherent in these positions, besides awakening the interests related to the functioning of the university.

*I always worked in the management area. Then I was already a professor in the area of management in health and nursing. I have made this conversion easier for the university, how to apply these management tools in that context, how to make a work plan, how to do a strategic plan, how to do a results evaluation, how to set goals, how to manage people, how important it is to work with people in teamwork, participatory at university (E03 G1).*

Another aspect evidenced by the participants was previous experiences in management positions in private education institutions. They reported that although there are differences between managing private and public institutions, these experiences provided higher education management grants, which made them feel motivated and more confident to take on the public university management position.

*In this machinery of the university, I come from a private university, from a management position of a private university and the opportunity to make management in different context and space, also, in different institutions, allowed me to perceive and recognize the importance of university management carried out by teaching manager (E06 G1).*

Thus, the participants of this study, throughout the exercise of their competences, build and perfect their role as manager in the university context, permeated by commitment and, consequently, motivated for their teaching practice in this complex social space of training future nurses.

## DISCUSSION

In general, the results of this study were highlighted by unveiling the conditions that led the teaching nurses to assume university management positions. In fact, as presented in the literature,<sup>7,8,13</sup> from characteristics of teaching managers at any level or area of universities, the difficulties are mainly due to the lack of training for management. Because management is an important tool in organizations, management should not be developed in an empirical way or in attempts to make mistakes and to correct them, which, through lack of training, ultimately marks the decision-making, responsibilities, and achievement of results.<sup>6,8</sup>

Vulnerability through the scarcity of training for management compromises the performance of these teachers in teaching, research, and extension because due to the workload often exclusive to management, it implies the activities of the teacher in their area of activity. These factors may explain in part the teachers' resistance to occupying management positions within the public university. Even in cases of positions that are necessarily occupied by nurses, such as coordinating courses or nursing departments,<sup>14</sup> the training offered by Nursing undergraduates does not include training for university management, a complex scenario, marked by personal and relational policies.

However, even if training is incipient for university management, the curriculum of the nursing undergraduate course includes administrative and managerial aspects that corroborate the manager's profile of the nurse. A study carried out in 11 higher education institutions highlighted in the Nursing Administration teaching process opportunities for knowledge related to administrative issues such as care management, health service management, problem-solving of the reality from different types (planning strategic-situational, strategic-participative and hypothetical), encompassing human resources and the profile of the population, putting into practice situations that will face in the future professional performance.<sup>15</sup> In this sense, the profile of the nurse confers a manager profile which assists in performance, motivation, and commitment to administrative functions.

The commitment to management activities is based on the commitment made to the university, emphasizing the need to have a comprehensive vision, capacity for articulation and strategic proposals that exceed the routines of the position,<sup>16</sup> in this sense, motivation plays a prominent role.

The stimulation by the peers is among the aspects that motivated many of the teaching nurses to assume management positions, besides the own interest of some, due to the previous experience in management positions, in health services as in educational institutions. National and international studies highlight the role of nurses in management positions as a frequent practice in health institutions.<sup>17-20</sup> Nurses' managers are fundamental in guaranteeing a practice of excellence

and good organizational performance and encouraging leadership,<sup>17</sup> aspects that can be applied to the university context.

Besides the responsibilities inherent to the position, management skills include aspects of leadership, people management, conflict management, and the ability to manage resources, materials, and infrastructure. While management is a position occupied by the teaching nurse, leadership is a competence that presupposes the development of professional and personal skills, considering commitment and responsibility with the organization, effective decision making, communication and management skills,<sup>21</sup> providing quality education in the search for the training of nurses who can act according to the needs of society.

In addition to being a leader, the teaching nurse manager tends to be, above all, a mediator of the performance, participation, and involvement of others involved in university management, with the ability to listen and accept criticism and suggestions and, nevertheless, to encounter conflicting situations management and peer relationships.<sup>22</sup>

Also, the teaching nurse manager leader can boost the work efficiency of the entire teaching staff and the satisfaction of all those involved in the university management process, motivating other teachers and encouraging quality university education.<sup>21</sup>

Understanding factors related to motivation, satisfaction or not with management activities can contribute to the formulation of more effective management strategies in commitment to peers and to the institutional objectives of university higher education.<sup>23</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Throughout their teaching career at a public university, the participants of this study assume university management positions by commitment to the collective and management skills acquired in training as a professional nurse, as well as domains by accumulated experiences of management of higher education. Therefore, nurses have the conditions that lead them to assume university management.

This is an important practice for the academic area and the accomplishment of the mission of the university in its structure, performance, and expressiveness as an educational institution that generates science and technology, training of highly qualified professionals and impacts produced in society.

This study was limited to only one specific university management scenario, focusing exclusively on a public higher education institution. The gap of scientific knowledge for the discussion of the results of this study is also highlighted as a limitation found by the authors.

The results of this study can contribute to the practice of Nursing in the area of university management by promoting reflections on the conditions that lead the teaching nurses to

take up or not management positions within the universities. Also, the need to carry out new studies in similar contexts is reinforced, in the search for strengthening of this knowledge gap and the improvement of the teaching nurse manager, as well as the training process of future nurses.

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