

Entrepreneurial Learning in Nursing a Propulsive Strategy of New Spaces for Professional Performance

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Abstract

Objective: To know the contributions of the entrepreneurial learning developed by master and undergraduate nursing students, with a view to insertion into the autonomous job market.

Method: This is a qualitative and descriptive study carried out in the period between March and November of 2017, from the insertion of five master degree nursing students and 39 undergraduate nursing students in an activity related to the idealization of a nursing company, which were linked to the disciplines of "Innovative Technologies and Entrepreneurship in Nursing and Health" and "Organization and management in health and nursing", respectively.

Results: From the data coded by the content analysis, three categories emerged: Entrepreneurial learning environment-a creativity enhancer; Theoretical-practical artifice to transcend traditional practices; and empowering strategy of new possibilities of insertion into the job market.

Conclusion: It is concluded that entrepreneurial learning, capable of stimulating the protagonism and creativity of the student, constitutes a possibility for production and technological development in the nursing area, as well as a propulsive strategy for new spaces for professional performance.

Keywords: Nursing research; Professional autonomy; Nursing services; Aptitude; Learning; Employment

Introduction

In recent decades, the scientific and technological production has been stimulated, from strategic plans with actions proposing a new thinking and acting in the nursing area [1]. In this prospective process, entrepreneurship has become an emancipatory technology capable of inducing new opportunities and possibilities for professional intervention in different social spaces [2].

In Brazil, entrepreneurship has gained momentum since the 1990s with the boost of the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service, which focuses on economic development. Under this approach, entrepreneurship is not properly an academic discipline, but rather a strategy that promotes new approaches to social intervention, as well as a strategy to awaken the thinking autonomy of the individual and the full use of his rational and intuitive abilities [3].

In the health field, entrepreneurship is not a new phenomenon. It has been highlighted by the need to generate new spaces for insertion in the job market and, above all, as an imperative for the awakening of new approaches to conception and action in the perspective of health promotion, protection and education. In nursing, however, the entrepreneurial vision has assumed a connotation both of business, related to the creation or improvement of something to generate market as social benefits, which are associated with the ability to promote interactive and associative processes for the emancipation of individuals, families and communities as protagonisms of their own history [4,5].

In order to follow the scenario of continuous changes, nurses need to be able to recognize that, even with multiple competencies, they must dare to explore opportunities and visualize new intervention spaces, considering that being an entrepreneur is being able to generate

new fields and practices for professional activity [6,7]. A study shows that, although entrepreneurship has been little encouraged in nursing graduation, it can be activated from family and social influences, as well as by means of aggregating environments and potentiates of new ideas [8].

Another study shows that the business entrepreneurship initiatives of nurses are mostly concentrated in regions as São Paulo, where there are greater population concentration and greater commercial, industrial and service centers. Based on these and other findings, it is imperative to foster entrepreneurial initiatives in nursing, also in other states, in order to transcend traditional health care spaces, increase technological production and cause an impact in the knowledge society with quality, applicable, and changeable academic-scientific products [1].

Based on the above, it is questioned: How does the entrepreneurial learning developed by master and undergraduate nursing students under the entrepreneurial framework contribute to the insertion in the autonomous job market? Thus, in order to expand the entrepreneurial potential of nursing, the present study aimed to know the contributions of entrepreneurial learning developed by master and undergraduate

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nursing students, with a view of insertion into the autonomous job market.

Method

This is a qualitative and descriptive study carried out between March and November of 2017, from the insertion of students of the Professional Master degree in Maternal and Child Health and undergraduate students from the 7th semester of the nursing course of the Franciscan University - Unifra, located in the central region of the state of Rio Grande do Sul/Brazil, in an entrepreneurial activity linked to the disciplines of “Innovative Technologies and Entrepreneurship in Nursing and Health” and “Organization and management in health and nursing”, respectively.

The activity is associated to an entrepreneurial project, developed during the academic semester in which groups of four and/or five students were formed, under the mentorship of professors responsible for the disciplines mentioned above. Each working group was encouraged to idealize “Nursing Company”, from the tools of Strategic Planning and entrepreneurship references, previously discussed in class. At the end of the semester, the working groups were encouraged to participate in the Institutional Technology Event, where they presented the idealized company, and also presented it to a guest evaluator who, at the end of the event, awarded the best projects.

At the end of this activity, an intentional sample of the participants was carried out based on previously established inclusion criteria: being a Master's degree student or an undergraduate student from the 7th semester of the nursing course; participating actively in the idealization of the entrepreneurial project; participating in the Institutional Technology Event, characterized as an environment of knowledge and experiences exchange by the closeness of the relations between companies and academic community; and authorizing the use of evaluative testimonials for the study. Thus, data were collected with five Master's degree students and thirty nine undergraduates, based on testimonies recorded in a specific evaluative document, which were structured based on guiding questions that led to the analysis of potentialities, fragilities and perspectives of insertion in the autonomous market.

After being organized, the testimonials of the participants were submitted to the analysis of thematic content, which consists of discovering the nucleus of meaning that make up a particular communication. In the first stage, called pre-analysis, a thorough reading of the data was performed, followed by the organization of the material and the formulation of hypotheses. Subsequently, the exploration and codification of the raw data was continued. In the third and last step, the data were interpreted and delimited in thematic axes by the understanding of the meanings established [9].

The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee under the number 1,641,967. To maintain the anonymity of the deponents, the lines were identified by the letter “E”, relative to Student, followed by an Arabic numeral that corresponds to the order of the lines.

Results

From the data coded by the content analysis, three categories emerged: Entrepreneurial learning environment - a creativity enhancer; Theoretical-practical artifice to transcend traditional practices; and empowering strategy of new possibilities of insertion into the job market.

Entrepreneurial learning environment-a creativity enhancer

In their testimonies, students demonstrated that entrepreneurial learning is a stimulating and empowering space for personal and collective creativity. Although the theoretical conception about entrepreneurship is still under construction, students have already recognized the importance of the initiative to awaken creativity, so necessary in the exercise of leadership. *When classmates from the previous classes said that we would have to idealize a nursing company, I was pretty scared....I always thought I was no good for these things. While we were idealizing our nursing company, I was realizing that I was capable ... The ideas were born and, thus, we were creating our company. (E7) I never thought that one day I would idealize a nursing company ... I never believed in my own potential. Finally, when our company was awarded, I was speechless, without action. I never imagined...our company “Energizare” made a difference because it is aimed at the well-being of nursing and health workers. After this award (free incubation of the company in the Institutional Innovation Agency, for a year), we intend to launch it on the market (E13).*

In both testimonials, previously mentioned, it is noted that the nursing student, for many reasons, does not believe and/or rarely recognize their potential for creation and innovation. When entering the nursing course, most of the time, they only see the formal market already established, where they will be “employed”, with few chances for the (re) creation of new spaces. *While we were discussing and idealizing our nursing company, we realized that we managed to work with a diversity of things at the same time ... We were able to develop the floor plan of our company, we were able to size the physical structure, think about the marketing, documentation, costs ... We could create our business (E32).*

The idealized entrepreneurial project represented for students the possibility of challenging their own abilities and realizing that, when instigated, they were able to go beyond their own field of vision. Throughout the process, it was noticed that the creative and entrepreneurial potential of the students were gradually revealed, that is, as they were provoked in their thinking autonomy and out of their common place to see themselves as Entrepreneurial Nurses.

Theoretical-practical artifice to transcend traditional practices

The development of the nursing company represented the possibility of rethinking and transcending traditionally reproduced practices. The movement of comings and goings in search of the idealization of a company that differed in the market gave the students the visualization of new scenarios and contexts of insertion in the market, although uncertain and challenging. They recognized in this constructive proposition that the role of nurse is not limited to acting in hospitals and health units, but that they can go beyond and undertake to guarantee their own business. *In our group discussions we realized that the nurse could conceive and materialize his own company ... We cannot have a narrow vision, not only that hospital thing and health units... (E9). This activity made me to realize that I can think and do different things. Many professionals graduate and settle into that idea and have never stopped to think that they can undertake their own autonomous business (E25).*

For several students, the idealization of the company meant the awakening of dreams or the possibility of continuing to dream. They understood that in their profession of choice, their function is not limited to institutionalized work “as it always has been” but that it is

possible to continue to believe in and bet on personal dreams. In two lines, more specifically, it became evident that the idealization of the company constitutes an impulse to delineate new projects, soon after graduation, even recognizing that building the business itself requires determination, daring and persistence. *I always thought about doing a public nursing exam, just like it always was...During the discussions about entrepreneurship, I understood that nurse can go beyond that traditional thing. I am already thinking about putting up a Home Care Clinic right after I graduate. I know it will not be easy... (E11). Today I am more convinced and safe about what I want. We (Nurses) have conditions to do many things. We need to start thinking differently and leave that idea of hospital a little bit, where we work a lot with the disease (E33).*

The process of idealization and materialization of the company made it possible for the students to learn critically-reflexive, that is, to induce a rethinking of their own limits and possibilities. In this trajectory of uncertain and sometimes confused movements, they learned to negotiate, abstract, seek partnerships and, above all, to believe in their potential for innovation and transformation.

Empowering strategy for new possibilities of insertion into the job market

The proposal of teaching and entrepreneurial learning transcended the traditional theoretical constructions and made it possible for students to envisage new possibilities of insertion into the labor market. The idealization and presentation of their nursing company to the public, motivated the participants to empower themselves as “entrepreneurs” and, thus, to believe in the possibility of placing their company in the market. *I have never imagined that I would think about the idea of setting up a nursing company. We always think that it has no conditions and this type of thing is for other areas. Now I feel more confident and I know that I am capable of creating different and, why not say, bigger things. (E8) After these activities, we became stronger and more convinced...We began to see another nurse who was latent inside us. I am sure of what I want for myself...My Company will soon be on the market (E24).*

As a propulsive strategy for a new thinking, the idealization of the nursing company has also enabled discussions related to social spaces that can be addressed by nurses. In several lines, the students mentioned that Nursing has spaces, opportunities and unlimited possibilities, in social scope, but that most of the times are not recognized by the professionals...*We realized that Nursing has an infinite field of possibilities in the job market, but we still cannot see it... It is still easier to work as a hospital employee and we often do not want to challenge ourselves... (P25). The nurse needs to realize that they can have their own company and that they do not always have to depend on others. Who does know what it takes to awaken this ability in them? They cannot see themselves in entrepreneurship (P33).*

The lines denote that the entrepreneurial training is fundamental to transcend spaces and to idealize new possibilities of insertion in the market, as well as the awakening of interactive and associative technologies. Nurses, according to the lines, are still in the condition of “employees” and dependent on institutionalized services. The future professional needs to realize their potential through the stimuli that comes from the school, from the university, to think, going beyond the discourse, overcoming the simple fulfillment of tasks and spaces already instituted.

Discussion

Results from a recent study revealed that the autonomous practice

in nursing is an expanding process, although a slow and with a greater number of enterprises in the State of São Paulo. The same study highlights the registration of 170 nursing companies in the last decade, and this increase may be associated with job dissatisfaction, the need for better earnings and/or the search for new perspectives associated with the development of an entrepreneurial profile [6].

Although the advances in the nursing training process, induced by the National Curricular Guidelines, by the National Council of Scientific and Technological Development and by the Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel and others, are considered, a study shows that the educational process does not guarantee by itself, the training of critical and reflexive professionals, with potential to evolve in production and technological development in the area [10]. It is necessary, in addition to the inductive policies, to awaken the thinking autonomy of the student, in order to break with established cultural paradigms and to idealize new possibilities of social insertion [11]. However, nursing schools often focus on training for the demands of the formal labor market, sometimes taking the policies of government as their axis of formation. Little is invested in identifying and carrying out new projects for the area [5].

When considering the historical process, it is necessary to recognize that the tradition of nursing has for decades focused on training “good employees” for the formal labor market, with little incentive to innovation and recreation of insertion strategies into the market. In the logic of entrepreneurship it is necessary to go beyond the idea of training a “good employee” or “perfect professional” to just fulfill and demand orders. Under this approach, the production of knowledge cannot be limited “to the classroom” and to predefined concepts centered on traditional methods. The acquisition of critical-reflexive skills and competences should focus on active learning methodologies, such as entrepreneurial learning, with the purpose of stimulating the autonomy of students and protagonism as the main proponent of knowledge and not merely as recipients of information advocated by reproductive methods of teaching [12].

Emancipatory technologies drive high quality learning. There is promising evidence that they are promoted from meaningful learning environments, problem solving methodologies, self-critical and self-reflective processes capable of instigating global thinking and local action, based on the formulation of good questions rather than giving ready answers. Little is known, however, about the necessary theoretical apprehensions for the development of such skills [13].

Changing exponents were born of critical awareness and world view, of innovative strategies, of proposers of new ideas, and of ventures that generate value to society [11,14].

Based on the framework of complexity, the thinker reinforces the need for a paradigm shift in the way of producing knowledge. The pertinent knowledge in this regard is what is able to situate any information in its real context, considering that this progresses not so much by sophistication, formalization and abstraction, but by the ability to contextualize, globalize, innovate and transform reality from their own thinking [15].

Nursing requires multiple skills and has a broad and socially recognized field of action, above all, in primary health care. However, they need to dare, in order to explore opportunities and lead new possibilities for intervention, focusing on health promotion and education, as well as questioning and acting in a proactive manner in public health policies. To undertake is, therefore, to have the capacity

to imagine, to develop and to realize visions, in which the concepts of self, synergy, leadership and system of relations/interactions are fundamental elements [16].

Based on the entrepreneurial activities carried out, the students recognized that the nurse has a wide range of entrepreneurial possibilities, which need to be explored and strengthened. Developing an entrepreneurial culture in nursing is the result of a dynamic and gradual process, in which postures, values, perceptions, collective skills, and other elements are inserted [17]. It means that, even if nursing has potential and entrepreneurial possibilities, the development of an “entrepreneurial culture” *becomes fundamental, in the sense of expanding interactive strategies through partnerships and networks of solidarity*. This thinking reinforces the idea that entrepreneurial actions develop in a network, since the plurality of divergent components and functions can only remain coherent in an interactive network [17,18].

Some weaknesses were found in the conduction of this study, among which, the scarcity of studies focused on the area, that is, referrals focused on entrepreneurship in nursing training. Favorable aspects include the receptivity and the commitment of the students to carry out the proposed activities. With this study, we hope to contribute to the advancement of nursing science in what concerns the development of entrepreneurial learning, capable of awakening entrepreneurial skills and potential in the professional training process.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the entrepreneurial learning, capable of stimulating the protagonism and the creativity of the student, constitutes a possibility for the production and technological development in the nursing area, in addition to propulsive strategy of new spaces of professional performance.

The results show that academia plays a key role in leveraging entrepreneurial training processes. Therefore, it is necessary to value and enhance student initiatives; indicate that in the nursing area there are other opportunities for professional action that go beyond formal work in hospitals, health units and demonstrate that nurses have the potential to expand the possibilities of intervention in the job market by implementing their own enterprise.

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