



Pleasure and suffering of professors in the post-graduation in nursing

Prazer e sofrimento de docentes na Pós-Graduação *stricto sensu* em enfermagem

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Objective: to understand the pleasure-suffering relationship in the work of professor of the Post-Graduation in nursing. **Methods:** this is a qualitative research, carried out in two post-graduate programs in nursing. Data were collected through interviews, guided by semi-structured script and documentary analysis. Twenty-one professors participated in the study. The data were analyzed through thematic content analysis. **Results:** the analysis revealed the interface of work organization and interpersonal relationships in the experiences of teacher pleasure and suffering. Two categories emerged: The professor suffering in the Post-Graduation course: reality is not everything we dream about and experiences of pleasure in the teaching work: I want to die doing it. **Conclusion:** the pleasure-suffering relationship of professors is influenced by external and internal conditions of the programs. Also, the experiences of pleasure and suffering come from interdependent experiences and coexist in the teaching work.

Descriptors: Nursing; Faculty; Work; Education, Nursing, Graduate; Pleasure.

Objetivo: compreender a relação prazer-sofrimento no trabalho de docentes, na Pós-Graduação *stricto sensu* em enfermagem. **Métodos:** pesquisa qualitativa, realizada em dois programas de Pós-Graduação *stricto sensu* em enfermagem. Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevistas, guiadas por roteiro semiestruturado e análise documental. Participaram do estudo 21 docentes. Os dados foram analisados por meio de Análise de Conteúdo Temática. **Resultados:** a análise revelou a interface da organização do trabalho e das relações interpessoais nas vivências de prazer-sofrimento docente. Emergiram duas categorias: Sofrimento docente na Pós-Graduação: a realidade não é tudo aquilo com que a gente sonha e Vivências de prazer no trabalho docente: eu quero morrer fazendo isso. **Conclusão:** a relação prazer-sofrimento de docentes é influenciada por condições externas e internas aos programas. Ademais, as vivências de prazer e sofrimento derivam de experiências interdependentes e coexistem no trabalho docente.

Descritores: Enfermagem; Docentes; Trabalho; Educação de Pós-Graduação em Enfermagem; Prazer.

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Introduction

The Brazilian Post-Graduation was structured to cooperate with the national development and there was a continuous growth of programs, degrees, and productions recorded⁽¹⁾. In this scenario, the Post-Graduation in nursing is in a quantitative and qualitative expansion, which is evidenced, for example, by the increase of scientific productivity in journals with an Impact Factor in the area⁽²⁻³⁾. Between 2013 and 2016, a relative growth of 77.0% in scientific production was identified compared to the previous evaluation carried out by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel⁽³⁾.

Despite the progress achieved, the current Post Graduation structure has negatively affected the teaching work and contributed to suffering experiences⁽⁴⁾. On the other hand, aspects that can be considered as empowering of pleasure are also observed⁽⁵⁾. Considering the duality presented, it was decided to base this study on the Work Psychodynamics theory⁽⁶⁾.

The Work Psychodynamics theory had the work psychopathology as its precursor. The work psychopathology was dedicated to analyzing the psychological suffering resulting from the confrontation between the worker and the work organization. On the other hand, the Work Psychodynamics aims at the inter-subjective processes caused by work situations and consists of a praxis, in which intelligence and ingenuity are exercised by the workers before they become aware of them. In this way, the analysis is extended, which starts to address not only suffering but also pleasure in work; not only man, but work; not only the organization of work but social situations and relationships at work⁽⁶⁻⁷⁾.

Considering the theoretical referential presented and that a critical view, directed to the micro and macro spaces can lead to transformations capable of softening the suffering and giving flow to the pleasure in the teaching work, it is questioned: How do the

experiences of pleasure and suffering in the professors' work are configured in the post-graduation in nursing?

Based on this, the objective of this study was to understand the experiences of pleasure and suffering in the work of professors, in the Post-Graduation in nursing.

Methods

This is a qualitative research, developed in two post-graduate programs in nursing, located in the states of Minas Gerais and Santa Catarina, in the Southeast and Southern Regions of Brazil. The participants in the research were permanent professors who were not on leave or on vacation during the data collection and who had more than one year of work in the Post-graduate Course, considering the experience acquired. The data collection was interrupted following the saturation criterion. To meet this criterion, the interviews were transcribed by the researcher, after the performance, enabling the pre-analysis of the material.

At the time of the research, the programs had a total of 59 professors. Participants were selected by raffle. Due to the non-scheduling of some professors, the snowball strategy was also used to achieve the saturation of the data. Thus, 21 professors participated in the study.

Data collection took place between May 2017 and April 2018. The invitation to participate in the survey was sent by e-mail, highlighting the research objective, data collection instruments, and ethical precepts. Professors were also informed that the interview would be held in the universities and in a restricted area.

Two sources of data collection were used: guided interview by semi-structured script and documentary analysis. The semi-structured script contained questions related to the profile of the partici-

pants and the experiences of pleasure and suffering of professors in the Post-Graduation in nursing. The interviews were carried out by the researcher individually and recorded in two electronic devices. The duration of the interviews was on average, 28 minutes and 39 seconds. The time for transcription was approximately 41 hours. Regarding the documentary analysis, the records of the last four-year evaluation of the programs⁽³⁾ were used to corroborate the evidence of reports.

The data were analyzed through the Thematic Content Analysis⁽⁸⁾, respecting the three chronological poles: pre-analysis; exploitation of the material; and treatment, inference, and interpretation of results. The Atlas.ti 8 software was used as an operational tool for the analysis of interviews. This software allows the researcher to build semantic networks, performing sophisticated searches and creating graphical maps⁽⁹⁾.

The research was approved by the Federal University of Minas Gerais institutions (opinion 2.361.526) and the Federal University of Santa Catarina (opinion 2,390,974). It was developed in support of Resolution 466/2012 of the National Health Council. The Free and Informed Consent Term was signed in two copies, one for the participant and one for the researcher. The participants were identified by letters (DO), followed by the numbering established by the researcher to ensure their anonymity.

Results

Among the professors, 19 (90.5%) were female. The age ranged from 32 to 65 years old, most over 50 years old. The duration of the post-graduate course ranged from one year and a half to 23 years. From the results of the research, two categories emerged: The professor Suffering in Post-graduate Courses: the reality is not everything that we dream about and experiences of pleasure in the teaching work: I want to die doing it. The categories are presented in the organizational and interpersonal aspects.

The professor Suffering in Post-graduate Courses: the reality is not everything we dream about

When considering the suffering of professors in the Post-Graduation, aspects related to management, research funding, devaluation, work overload, and academic productivism were observed in the organizational aspect.

According to the participants, the management can cause anguish and dissatisfaction. *The post-graduate administrative activities are quite heavy. Sometimes there are situations not so pleasant because it is not at the personal level, it is at the level of ideas, it is at the institutional level, but we have very different people... this causes some anguish* (DO 13). *What is causing me dissatisfaction is the lack of time for me to be a professor. I'm not having a performance like I should have as a Post-Graduate Professor, as a researcher... this is a problem that I think is very serious within my academic life* (DO 6).

Regarding the suffering caused by the financing, the amount invested was highlighted, besides the activities developed, and the current reduction of resources for this purpose in the country. *I think the funding we get is very little because of what we do* (DO 19). *We have had a reduction in resources, which makes us a little upset, but we do not fail to do so* (DO 18).

Regarding the devaluation of the work, the professors mentioned the criticisms related to their production area and the evaluation criteria that do not consider the teacher in their singularities. *It is the devaluation, related to one or the other... I think it makes me suffer because I am extremely dedicated to my area, I love my area and I cannot understand how anyone thinks this as restricted* (DO 21). *Many times, the pain comes from a non-appreciation of some aspects that are its attributes, its qualities. The evaluation criteria, they tend to homogenize, they tend to classify people, rather than singling out the specificities of it. This, in particular, brings me discomfort* (DO 17).

In the work overload, the professors affirmed that the work in the Post-Graduation never ends and is very intense. *The accumulation of work... it seems that you are always in debt and cannot do everything* (DO 8). *You do not have a perspective of limited hours of work in your daily life, you have perio-*

ds that you work 16 hours a day, to report what you have committed to do, produce articles, publications, and guidelines (DO 4).

The last factor of suffering is the in academic productivism. According to the participants, the collection of publications has implied in the teaching work, for valuing the quantitative over the qualitative, leaving aside professional training. *Often, you get that impetus to publish, much more by quantitative than by qualitative (DO 15). When we are converted into numbers, we forget that main role, which is the training of professionals... I think Post-Graduate is turning into this, comply with numbers and the grade is a competition between institutions. The biggest fight, it would to be by the production that we have for the impact on society, and not by the number of publications that we have (DO 5).*

The analysis of the average per capita production of authorship in articles, books and chapters of books of permanent professors of the program indicated that all of them obtained a weighted score in authorship equal or more than 500 (documentary analysis); the average of points per permanent professor, compared to the per capita score in articles was 433 in 2013, 341 in 2014, 343 in 2015 and 277 in 2016 (documentary analysis).

In terms of interpersonal relationships, the professors have associated suffering with students and peers. *The reality is not everything we dream about, the most difficult thing about teaching is relationships, human relationships in general. Because one hour is relationship with students, another time is relationship with professors (DO 5).*

Regarding specifically to students, the unpreparedness of some students to perform the work within the given deadline was mentioned. *There is a very heavy part of you to have a very big pressure. That work has to happen, sometimes the student enters without having a preparation and you have to turn around... I think it gets very heavy for the tutor and there are students that are problematic (DO 14). It is hard because sometimes you get a student, you have 4 years to take care in the doctorate, 2 years in the master's degree and sometimes things do not go well (DO 8).*

In the suffering caused by the pairs, the comparison, the competitiveness, and the solitary work were mentioned. *The production metrics are required, then, compari-*

sons between professors or even pupils towards their supervisors are sometimes unavoidable (DO 7). A place of vanity, a place of competitiveness, we will always have it, but I think that when this declines more to the negative side than to the positive side, there is the problem (DO 15). The solitary work, I relate to the few partnerships and also a little to the difficulty of collaboration in these productions. You often feel alone on this walk (DO 17).

Experiences of pleasure in the teaching work: I want to die doing this

On the organizational side, the teaching activities mentioned as sources of pleasure were the management, the classes, the research and the defense of dissertations/theses.

Management was mentioned as a pleasurable activity, capable of fostering learning. *I like these administrative issues... that's part of it. I learned many things and made my experience at university better (DO 11). I really like Post-Graduate Management, although it's a heavy thing (DO 13).*

Another factor recognized as a pleasure generator for professors was the class taught in the Post-Graduate Course, which allows critical thinking. *Post-Graduate teaching is different than teaching at a graduate school. There are critical thinking, thinking about the nurse, on the advanced practice of the nurse (DO 15). I find excellent the subject that I participate because you can dare more, you may want more of the student, you can force more than process of deepening, reflection. So I find it fascinating. I have lived this in the classroom several times, saying "Wow, I want to die doing it" (DO 14).*

Professor pleasure was also associated with the research, as it contributed to the teaching-learning process of the student and the professor. *What helps me to teach the student to think is to experiment with the research; without research, I would not be able to teach him, then I would go to convey information. So, I do not see my work without research and without writing, it's what gives me pleasure and it's what makes me grow in my career (DO 17). These surveys that we do in graduate school, these discussions, they are very important because they make you grow in that sense (DO 6).*

The last pleasure-generating factor identified in the organizational sphere was the defense of stu-

dents' theses and dissertations. For the participants, the defense consists of a moment of satisfaction and consecration of the work developed. *To complete a guiding work, a defense gives me satisfaction* (DO 19). *When the day of defense arrives, I think it may be the consecration of a work, of seeing the fruit of a work... I think it gives a lot of pleasure* (DO 18).

In the perspective of pleasure, related to interpersonal relationships, the professor showed the relationship with the student. *I love this professor-student relationship, I love teaching and it is something that is inherent in myself, my way of being* (DO 10). *The students definitely, I stay for them, every time I do something is for them if I am preparing myself, if I am in the post-graduation, it is for them. My choice was always by the student and not by the status* (DO 5).

In this context of the professor-student relationship, advisory has been recognized as an activity that provides pleasure, since it allows identifying the students' growth during their trajectory. *Guiding and seeing them as they were and how they are and the possibility of what they will be. So it is my greatest pleasure* (DO 21). *In advise, we can see the student's growth... the advances he has for being able to make his own syntheses, from what is available knowledge, and it is not a very easy thing* (DO 2).

Discussion

The study shows the method employed as a limitation since it does not allow statistical generalization. Thus, it is suggested that new research be developed, broadening the understanding about the pleasure-suffering relationship in the work of professors in the Post-Graduation in nursing.

Regarding the professor suffering in the Nursing Post-Graduation, a critique referring to the political conception of the management in the Post-Graduation were seen in the organizational aspect, which involves people with different interests and perceptions. In this context, the current conjuncture of the programs can provide a game of power, comparison, and exclusion.

Management as a source of suffering was also cited by professors from two post-graduate programs

that integrate the area of Human Sciences. For these professors, administrative functions favor the accumulation of tasks and hinder the development of creative activities⁽⁵⁾, since this overload can occupy a time that would be destined for teaching and research.

Besides to the work overload caused by management, professors also mentioned the accumulation of activities listed in different functions: classroom, orientation, writing of manuscripts, evaluation of articles for journals, among others⁽¹⁰⁾. Thus, it is considered that the worker is subject to deleterious factors, which can affect the quality of life at work, such as pressure, collection, and workload, which can lead to physical and mental fatigue and illness⁽¹¹⁾.

In the academic context, coupled with the need to comply with the goals imposed considering the evaluation criteria to which undergraduate courses are submitted, the overload has negatively influenced the teaching practice, since it limits the time allocated for investigative inquiry and the discussions for the advancement of knowledge⁽¹²⁾.

Through documentary analysis, although the evaluation of programs is qualitative and quantitative, the information available in the reports has a strong numerical content, with emphasis on productions/goals. Given this, the quantitative becomes questionable, given the contribution it can offer to society, that is, the social impact that is expected to be achieved with the research developed⁽¹¹⁾.

Another aspect of suffering mentioned was the search for funding in the Post-Graduate Program. Despite the growth of Nursing Post-Graduation in Brazil⁽³⁾, the participants' testimonies revealed dissatisfaction with the availability of resources. This reality may be related to the current situation in the country, a fact that reinforces the sense of concern in professors and, at the same time, it poses challenges for management.

Finally, on the organizational side, the devaluation of work was recognized as a source of suffering, considering that the professor is not always valued in the expression of their subjectivities and singularities, but because of their productivity and classificatory

parameters. In this way, there is a sometimes insurmountable distance between the prescribed and the real, since the prescriptive work is presents preponderantly.

The remuneration expected by the worker is fundamentally symbolic and integrates the recognition of the individual contribution and the gratitude for the contribution to the work organization. Recognized work brings benefits to identity, to subjective expectations, and to self-performance. In cases where recognition is not present, the worker starts experiencing suffering and can reach psychic illness⁽⁶⁾.

From the point of view of interpersonal relationships, on the suffering generated by the students, pressure was identified on the professor; considering the obligation to have to guide a student, even if the student is not prepared. Regarding pairs, the data revealed that suffering can be influenced by comparison, by competitiveness and by solitary work.

Thus, it has been noticed in the reports that Post-Graduation is marked by games of power, competition, and symbolic disputes, revealing a diversity of factors that may or may not favor the professor's psychic-emotional balance^(5,7). A similar result was observed in two other studies carried out with professors, in which participants showed conflicts and competitions as reasons for dissatisfaction in the work environment^(10,13). In this way, it is considered that socio-professional relationships increase suffering at work and signal a state of alert, which requires immediate measures of the programs, so fear and loneliness do not materialize as a permanent feature of work^(7,13).

In the pleasure, within the organizational framework, the participants mentioned the management, which may be tied to the nurse's own training, which includes the development of managerial skills, essential in the work process. It is worth mentioning that management allows the creation of strategies and stimulates the worker's creativity⁽¹⁴⁾. This fact may explain the duality identified in professors' testimonies, which considered management also as a source of suffering.

Another aspect recognized as a generator of pleasure was the classes taught. At the moment of teaching a lesson, the professor experiences autonomy and creates his own rules, being able to explore his skills, face challenges, expand his knowledge, instigate students to think and, as a result, recognize as a fundamental figure in the training of professionals. This adjustment of the work organization increases the possibility of the professor experiencing pleasure, because, when programming and teaching a lesson, there are innumerable possibilities that allow one to put into practice one's desires, needs and individuality, contributing to the transformation of oneself and of professional doing⁽¹⁰⁾.

From the perspective of pleasure, the participants also mentioned the research. The positive feeling provided by this work was underscored in a study developed with 25 professors from a university in the Northern Region of Brazil. For them, research is considered the final activity of teaching work and, because it is useful to society, it contributes to professional satisfaction⁽¹⁵⁾. Through the research, the professor can identify the concretization of his work in a real way; and as a consequence, he recognizes his growth and the value of his work.

The practice of research related to the dimension of professional satisfaction was pointed out in a research that approached the work and the subjectivity of the professor. This activity generates pleasure because it has an intellectual dimension that allows the mobilization of the creative and inventive dimension, allowing the confrontation of the challenges at work⁽⁵⁾.

In the interpersonal relationship, pleasure was related to the students. Similar result was exposed by other researchers, who dedicated to analyze the pleasure and the suffering in the teaching work. It was noticed that there is a weak relationship between professors/professors and strengthened among professors/students, due to the recognition of the work produced⁽⁵⁾.

Research developed at a federal public university corroborates this study since it reveals that the professor considered the accomplishment of the advisory work as something satisfactory, because it allows the visualization of the product, and can be useful for the society⁽¹⁵⁾. This experience of pleasure has a link with the free organization of work and reinforces the pleasure-suffering duality since the relationship with the students has also been recognized as a potential for suffering.

As the reference person of the student, the advisor assumes an important role in the construction of relationship networks, in the insertion of the student in the academic community and in the conduction of the teaching-learning process⁽¹⁶⁻¹⁷⁾. In this panorama, it can be inferred that the relationship with the students causes experiences of pleasure because it allows the professor to dribble the prescribed work, the norms, and the goals.

This study can subsidize strategies capable of mitigating the experiences of professor suffering in the Post-Graduate Program. Such actions should foster the creation of listening spaces for valuing individuality and community, as well as enhancing the experiences of pleasure at work.

Conclusion

Based on these reflections, anchored in the contributions of the Work Psychodynamics, the results of this study revealed that the pleasure-suffering relationship of professors in the Post-Graduation in nursing is influenced by external and internal conditions to the programs, and the experiences can be produced by the interface of work organization and interpersonal relationships. Also, the situations of pleasure and suffering come from interdependent experiences and coexist in the work of the professors.

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Collaborations

Moreira DA and Brito MJM contributed with the conception and design, analysis and interpretation of the data, essay writing and critical review of the intellectual content and approval of the final version to be published. Tibães HBB contributed with the analysis and interpretation of the data, article writing and critical review of the relevant intellectual content and approval of the final version to be published.

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