Intervening factors in the quality of life...



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTERVENING FACTORS IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF NURSING STUDENT FATORES INTERVENIENTES NA QUALIDADE DE VIDA DO ESTUDANTE DE ENFERMAGEM FACTORES INTERVINIENTES EN LA CALIDAD DE VIDA DEL ESTUDIANTE DE ENFERMERÍA

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to evaluate the degree of quality of life of nursing graduating students at a private university about the factors considered stressful. Method: quantitative study attended by 60 students of the nursing course, using as a collecting tool the scale of quality of life of Flanagan. Results: most interviewees were female, aged between 23 and 27 years. The QOL of these students according to the dimensions of the questionnaire was classified as medium to low. Conclusion: the levels of QOL of these students are considered worrying, since the QOL implies directly in academic performance and emotional condition of the patient, causing problems in his/her mental health. These findings can contribute to the development of measures to reduce the stress caused in this environment and, thus, promote the improvement of the QOL of university students. Descriptors: Students; Nursing; Quality of Life; Mental Health; Psychological Stress;

RESUMO

Objetivo: avaliar o grau de qualidade de vida dos estudantes concluintes do curso de enfermagem de uma universidade privada acerca dos fatores considerados estressantes. Método: trata-se de estudo quantitativo em que participaram 60 graduandos do curso de enfermagem e que utilizou como instrumento de coleta a Escala de Qualidade de Vida de Flanagan. Resultados: observou-se que a maioria entrevistada é do sexo feminino, com idade entre 23 e 27 anos. Constatou-se que a QV destes alunos conforme as dimensões do questionário foi classificada como média a baixa. Conclusão: os níveis de QV desses alunos são considerados preocupantes, uma vez que a QV implica diretamente no desempenho acadêmico e emocional do indivíduo, ocasionando problemas na sua saúde mental. Esses achados podem contribuir para o desenvolvimento de medidas que diminuam o estresse provocado neste ambiente e, assim, promover a melhora da QV de universitários. Descritores: Estudantes; Enfermagem; Qualidade de Vida; Saúde Mental; Estresse Psicológico; Ansiedade.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: evaluar el grado de calidad de vida de los estudiantes egresados del curso de enfermería en una universidad privada sobre los factores estresantes. Método: estudio cuantitativo al que asistieron 60 estudiantes del curso de enfermería, utilizandóse como una herramienta para recolectar la escala de calidad de vida de Flanagan. Resultados: se observó que la mayoría de los entrevistados es de sexo femenino, de edades comprendidas entre los 23 y los 27 años. Se observó que la CDV de estos estudiantes en función de las dimensiones del cuestionario fue clasificada como de media a baja. Conclusión: los niveles de CDV de estos estudiantes fueron considerados preocupantes, ya que el CDV implica directamente en el rendimiento académico y el estado emocional del paciente, causando problemas en su salud mental. Estos hallazgos pueden contribuir al desarrollo de las medidas para reducir el estrés causado en este entorno y, por lo tanto, promover la mejora de la CDV de los estudiantes universitarios. Descriptores: Estudiantes; Enfermería; Calidad de Vida; Salud Mental; Estrés Psicológico; Ansiedad.

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education imposes to students a series of challenges such as the establishment of new affective bonds, the change in the study methodology, the autonomy in the process of construction of new knowledges and, to a significant proportion of these youngsters, the distancing from family and friends. The mission of the university is much greater than training or producing good professionals; it is the main responsible for generating and organizing knowledge and preserving culture.¹

In the academic environment, for the student, the university experience becomes a moment of transition to adulthood, subject to cultural changes, new expectations, goals and concerns. It is when the student will develop both professionally as personally. In this new phase, the student faces a new reality and new demands, which are often outside his/her comfort zone, which will require a new attitude and behavioral change and, therefore, can provide the experience of numerous conflicts.¹

The transition from the academic term into professional life involves important personal decisions, such as facing a big city, starting a job, creating one's own independence, constituting the family, assuming financial liability. Thus, leaving the protected academic environment and facing new challenges are crucial decisions in the life of these individuals.²

In academic practice, in the view of the students, the university is the entrance door to the professional life, or the prerogative to keep their jobs. Many of them, with the purpose of obtaining a promotion, follow a double journey: work and university. This journey, as a consequence, limits the free time for personal life and for leisure, thus reducing the possibility of increasing the level of physical activity and thus compromising the quality of life.

Some situations, characteristics professional training, can be considered stressful. Some examples are the contexts of practice, the differences between theory and its application in reality, completion of an extensive weekly course load and distributed in shifts, among others. In addition, the student is adviced to participate in other activities for improving his/her curriculum as groups of research, extension projects, monitoring, events, in addition to attending refresher courses.3

The association of the aforementioned factors can result in physical and mental

Intervening factors in the quality of life...

stress to the nursing student, significantly changing his/her quality of life. Studies state that the concept of quality of life is being researched in different areas of knowledge. It was first used as a descriptor of acquisition of goods. Throughout years, it was expanded and, currently, reached subjective aspects, being composed by numerous powers and dimensions: environmental, physical, psychological, spiritual, among others.¹

The quality of life consists in the individual's perception of his/her position in life, in accordance with his/her culture, values, goals, standards of living, physical and environmental conditions, relationships and religious and spiritual aspects. In the vision focused on quality of life in health, its centrality is the ability to live without diseases and overcome the difficulties of states or conditions of morbidity. For a better attainment of the level of quality of life, healthy components need to prevail in individuals' daily life, such as the practice of regular physical activities that are appropriate to his/her lifestyle.⁴

The nursing course requires personal interaction in its central object of work while establishing an effective relationship to take care of the other - and is permeated by several social, cognitive and affective processes, expressing itself through feelings and emotions whether in conflict overcoming situations, it is undeniable that the proximity with the human suffering and death are present and interfere in students' actions. These issues are reflected in the way students prepare to take care of their patients, as well as in the consolidation of their personal and professional relations.5

Initially, the scope of this study was the nursing student from all semesters, in order to assess the quality of life present in each semester of the college. From the obtained results, the focus changed for the second phase of the study: graduating students of the course. Because we understand that the last semester of college is the most critical, where the student faces a demanding course load and other factors that affects quality of life. During internship, students have feelings of uncertainty and insecurity while performing the clinical practice, in addition to being in contact with the suffering, feeling unable to control the relationship with the patient, being the main sources of stress for graduating students of the course.6

The trajectory of the nursing student is based on several challenges, which imply the Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQOL) of this student, being the last year of the course

his/her most critical phase, in which the increased academic assignments with the course completion work, expectations regarding graduation, the feeling of inability, uncertainty about the future and the confrontation of the labor market may justify the prejudice in the HRQOL of students of this period.⁷

Comprehensively, nursing students do not practice physical activity regularly, and use the computer for an extended period. The sedentary lifestyle, associated with little time to rest and the load of extracurricular activities, contribute to the emergence of health aggravations.⁸

In the last semestre of the nursing course, students may be apprehensive about their professional future, their insertion in the labor market and demonstrate insecurity about their training, which makes them sources of stress to the individual. Furthermore, they realize that, in the next step, they will be charged as professionals, getting soon greater responsibility than an academic in a field internship, which may demonstrate feelings of fear and insecurity.9

In this context, young people experience, in the last year of their graduation, the transition from student life into the labor market, together with increased tasks with a high degree of demand and responsibilities, raising tensions and anxiety. In the last year, the hourly load of studies and internship places the student in a condition of greater vulnerability. One of the reasons for concern of students of the last year can be feeling unprepared to face the labor market, because they are practically professionals and may feel afraid to act alone, soon, without the support of their professor.²

In view of these considerations, the following research question emerged: What are the factors that affect the quality of life of the university student?

The objective proposed for the study is the quality of life of nursing student. The scenario used for data collection and implementation of the research was a private university located in the western zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the degree of quality of life for graduating students of the nursing course of a private university on the factors considered stressful.
- To identify the levels of stress in students according to the scale of Flanagan.

Intervening factors in the quality of life...

- To analyze the factors that lead students to stress.
- To propose a new strategy that is easily accepting and suitability for your day to day routine and that reflects in the improvement of the quality of life of the students.

METHOD

This is a quantitative, field study. As inclusion criterion, we listed the presence of students of the 10th semester, who were not in any type of leave at the time of data collection, who agreed to participate in the study and signed the Informed Consent Form (ICF).

Applied in graduating students of the course of a private university in the Werstern Zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro, from the 10th semester of the college, the Quality of Life Scale of Flanagan conceptualizes quality of life from five dimensions measured by 15 items. It is a Likert-type ordinal scale with seven levels to score: very dissatisfied; dissatisfied. little dissatisfied: indifferent: little satisfied; satisfied; very satisfied. It consists of 15 items, grouped into five dimensions, namely: physical and material well-being; relations with other people; community and civic activities; social, development and fulfilment; personal recreation. It also includes a portion to characterize the subjects (gender, current semester and shift); and some objective questions. It also allows including open questions, which open space for personal and unique expressions of the subjects.

From the approach of the target audience, statistical calculations were used for reading and interpreting these data. In this way, these students' profile and the average quality of life in question were defined.

The calculation of the research sample was developed in accordance with the formula of the finite population. This calculation was made based on a sampling error of 5% and a confidence level of 99%, thereby arriving at a result of 60 students, corresponding to 100% of interviewees in order to ensure the desired confidence to research.

The research was authorized by the **Ethics** Committee evaluation of the Plataforma Brasil (Platform Brazil) by ESCOLA DE MEDICINA SOUZA MARQUES - FUND.TÉC.EDUC.SOUZA (Souza Margues Medical School -Educ. Tech. Found. Souza) recorded bν CAAE 61994316.6.0000.5239 and opinion number 1.840.298.

RESULTS

Sixty nursing students from the 10th semester of the college were interviewed. After data collection, the students' profile was formed from the following information: gender, age and shift.

Intervening factors in the quality of life...

For accounting and statistics of the age in relevance of the study, 5-year age intervals were created, with minimum age of 23 years and maximum of 42 years. The predominant age group was in the range from 23 to 27 years with a percentage of 48%, as shown in figure 1.

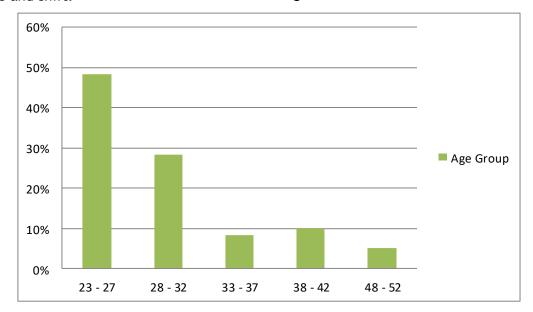


Figure 1. Age range of the interviwed students. Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil, 2017.

The female gender predominated in the research, with 86.6%, totaling 52 women and 13.3% representing eight men. A feature of this course is the discrepancy of genders, in

which, in most cases, the female gender predominates in the amount of students, as shown in figure 2.

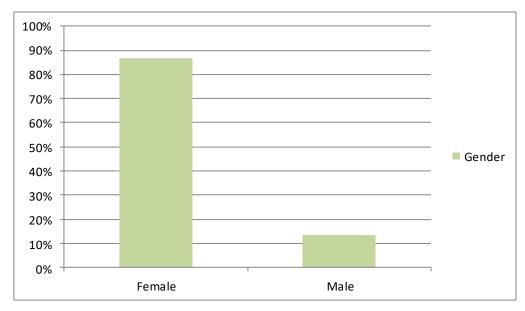


Figure 2. Division by gender of the interviewees. Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil, 2017.

The designed profile also showed a greater amount of students that study in the morning shift, with a percentage of 70%, which can be observed in figure 3 below. During internships and last disciplines, the interaction between both shifts normally occurs. It is when the chances of many students from the morning and night shifts meeting and attending

disciplines together increase. During data collection, the researchers were attentive to seek graduating students from both shifts, without an estimated amount for this topic. Therefore, in the environment lived and observed by the authors of the study, there was a greater amount of students from the morning shift.

Intervening factors in the quality of life...

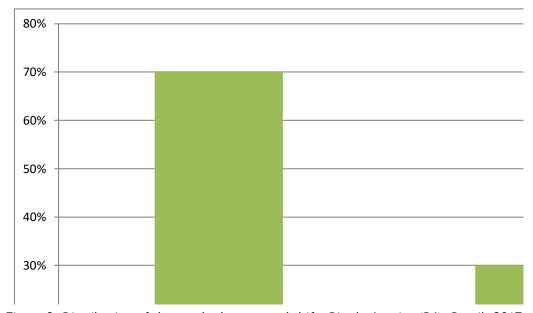


Figure 3. Distribution of the results by assessed shift. Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil, 2017.

The scale of Flanagan consists of 5 dimensions, which correspond to 15 items to be answered. The dimensions are:

- 1- Physical and material well-being: items1 e 2;
- 2- Relations with other people: items 3, 4, 5 e 6;
- 3- Social, community and civic activities: items 7 e 8:
- 4- Personal development and fulfillment: items 9, 10, 11 e 12;
 - 5- Recreation: items 13, 14 e 15.

In data analysis, the methodology applied in this category was the use of the arithmetic average for each item, i.e., the sum of the scores of the Likert-type ordinal scale of each item divided by the total value of respondents (n=60), thus obtaining the value of the arithmetic average per item. The same procedure was done in order to obtain the average per dimension, and the division was made by the number of corresponding items for each of the 5 dimensions.

Table 1 shows the average predominant in each dimension of the proposed scale. The used criterion shows that the quality of life of most students varies from low to average quality of life, once the averages are compared to the value of the Likert scale of

satisfaction, in which 3 means "little satisfied" and 4 "indifferent".

When analyzing the means per dimension, dimension 5, which is the participation in activities involving the area of leisure and recreation of these students, showed the lowest score. That is, in the field of activities involving recreation, leisure, such as programs they enjoy doing, which provide distraction from the study environment, the interviewees are classified, according to the Likert scale, as little unsatified. This average was the lowest score once, when attending the last semester, the student has a more demanding course load, consisting of mandatory internship, course completion works and other factors, providing little time for other recreational activities.

Intervening factors in the quality of life...

Table 1. Statistics of the quantitative of quality of life based on the dimensions of the scale of Flanagan. Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brazil, 2017.

Dimensions	Items	Means	Means per dimension
1- Physical and	1	4.16	
material well-	2	3.83	3.99
being			
	3	4.0	
	4	4.76	
2- Relation with other people	5	4.0	4.35
	6	4.66	
3- Social,	7	5.16	
community and	8	4.16	4.66
civic activities			
	9	3.3	
4- Personal development and fulfillment	10	5.33	
	11	5.8	4.71
	12	4.33	
	13	3.0	
5-Recreation	14	2.83	3.49
	15	2.5	

DISCUSSION

From the information gathered in the authors found that respondents (83.3%) were women, between 23 and 27 years, from both shifts and night). A very common characteristic in the nursing course is the predominance of women in relation to men. Many institutions have shown this peculiarity for many years. Several studies show that, as the research "Quality of life of nursing students", which also in women predominated, with 82.4%.¹⁰

According to shifts, we observed that most students study in the morning. However, in the last semester, especially in internships, these classes mix, so that students study in both shifts or reconcile their grid according to their routine, in the morning or afternoon. This result is similar to a study on nursing students, which showed that, between the extremes of the course, most entrants course two shifts and the graduates attend only one shift.¹¹

This result showed a predominance of students in the morning shift because most students have a double journey, combining the night work with academic activities during the day.

As for the table of dimensions, it reflects that students lack recreation, resulting from the extensive hourly loads and lack of time to perform other activities. This result aligns with a study on the same theme, which shows that the QOL of nursing students is located in a undefined region, being influenced particularly by marital status and number of children in each one. The authors used other data collection instrument, but, when compared to the scale of the present study,

they resemble in some points, as the areas "Environment" and "Psychological". In these areas, the students were more affected in relation to others, possibly as a result of difficulties faced during the graduation.¹²

One study evaluated the stress present among nursing students and showed that 14% of students are in the exhaustion phase, which suggests that there may be some type of physical illness, manifested or not. If there is no resolution of the stressful situation or if nothing is done to relieve tension, the body will be increasingly exhausted and without energy.¹³

ln addition to these feelings occupational anxiety and tiredness, the daily habits are equally important to maintain the quality of life. The choice of unhealthy habits, lack of physical exercise, smoking and alcoholism are factors that are involved with the low quality of life, as well as triggering factors for certain diseases. A survey on the behavior of university students from Bogotá concluded that the habits established during adolescence and early adulthood can have a significant impact when growing older. As part of this population group, students are more easily exposed to these behaviors, once the university, for youngsters, means independence, freedom, maturity.¹⁴

The Nursing student must keep a healthy life-style, because his/her profession requires his/her own well-being to take care of the other, stimulating other individuals to achieve a better life. 12 If the student is not able to achieve a good state of mental and physical health, he/she will not be able to perform his/her tasks effectively, thus not reaching his/her professional goal.

They have certain advantage over other individuals, once they have greater knowledge

about diseases and their prevention, acquired during their course. Nevertheless, many of them do not bother or seek to adopt these habits that will improve their quality of life. A study on health promoting behaviors showed that, although many students had this specific knowledge, they did not have the self-efficacy to develop this healthy behavior or simply had no interest in doing so.¹⁵

Still on the importance of adopting good habits in these students' routine, the maintenance of sleep is essential. A study proves that, beyond the overload of curricular and extracurricular activities, the tiredness referred to by students may be related to the short time available to sleep. Students indicate that they slept late and woke up early on working days, causing a deficit in the sleep and, as a consequence, presented difficulties to keep attention during lessons, directly affecting the QOL and the learning. ¹⁶

From the beginning of college until graduation, discomfort and all the feelings related to their professional future are commonly present. Many feel they cannot achieve certain expectations, causing feelings of frustration and anxiety. These factors are decisive to decrease the quality of life, and, if added to external problems, may impair their academic performance and affect their physical and mental health.

The burnout syndrome is a syndrome that refers to the feeling of exhaustion and occupational stress of an individual, which can significantly decrease his/her quality of life. When associated to to students from nursing last semester, the graduates showed higher average in emotional exhaustion, smaller in disbelief and larger professional efficacy when compared to students from the seventh semester. These results were expected by the authors and lined up with this study, once, for being closer to the course completion, they are under pressure, with greater demand from professors in final internships, the completion and submission of completion work and by anxiety to receive the diploma. At the same time, these students are unsure due to the competitiveness of the labor market and with expectations generated about their career. 17

This result also aligns with a research done by students in Costa Rica, which found burnout syndrome potentialities at two extremes: when beginning college and graduating. In the first case, the syndrome is related to the change from high school to higher education and, in the second case, to graduating students, who had the greatest potential to develop the syndrome. This results from the fact that these graduates

Intervening factors in the quality of life...

pass through more stressful moments because they are just a few steps from their professional career, in addition to exposing themselves to greater academic pressures, as stated by the author. The quality of life of the interviewed students is significantly lower when compared with the newly enrolled students or who are at the half of the course. There was also a negative impact in the well-being perception, which is greater in students from the last year of the course in relation to students from previous years. (6-18)

CONCLUSION

studv allowed identifying throughout the nursing course, students face various moments and situations, which may or may not be favorable to the promotion of their quality of life. Graduation is a remarkable moment in the student's life, because this stage defines him/her as a person and professional. The academic environment allows students to improve their knowledge, exchange experiences professors and students, increase their social life, making new friendships, besides being a door that leads to the labor market. All these factors directly influence their lifestyle, and the charging to devote themselves in classes, jobs and tests, if not balanced with leisure activities, which serve as a distraction for students, decrease significantly their quality of life.

In the surveyed university, the levels of quality of life of the students are low and the degree of satisfaction of the moment lived by them is medium. These results are alarming, once most students refer state of fatigue and mental/physical stress as a result of past experiences in the academic environment, together with the various feelings connected to the end of the university phase and beginning of life as a professional.

This theme is an issue that still needs to be studied systematically, with more participants and also an instrument to assess the mental health of these students, in order to allow investigating their health conditions and quality of life.

This result was expected by the researchers, because, as students of the institution, they routinely observe various stressful factors in the students' routine, such as the excessive dedication to work, the difficulty when using public transport, the working day of some students, among others. The sum of all of these factors with the course obligations often consume all the student's weekly time, leaving no time available for relaxation, distraction and leisure activities,

which are essential for the health of any human being.

Thus, some strategies are proposed for students to insert into their routine, in order not to affect their yield during the graduation, but that are able to promote relaxation and distraction from academic activities, outlined below:

• Physical activities

Practicing physical exercises during the week reduces the levels of accumulated stress and promotes distraction for occurring at a different environment.

• Organization

Organizing the academic obligations correctly, prioritizing the most hard-working and with less time for delivery. Thus, the student will not accumulate tasks and will have more time to perform other activities. This strategy is crucial for a student who reconciles the academic course load with a job.

• Making friends in the university environment

Social interaction is fundamental to the human being, the university is not different. Meeting new people and making friends makes it easier and more enjoyable the student's journey, because they share the same experience, as well as serves as a help and encouragement to one another.

• Separating some free time

When organizing academic tasks, the student can reserve a free time after finnishing his/her obligations as he/she wishes, because he/she will be taking a moment to distract and relax as he/she wishes, such as reading a book, watching a movie, meeting friends, doing an exercise, among others.

Being interested in the area he/she studies

Of all strategies, this is the most important, according to the authors of this study. The student must have the certainty that he/she wants to study this course, because studying a subject of interest makes all the work more enjoyable, since the student will want to deepen more on that particular subject. Therefore, feeling a connection with the subject or theme, being interested in the ranges the course provides and dedicating to a good result are fundamental.

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