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ENTREPRENEURIAL NURSES IN BRAZILIAN BUSINESSES: SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL PROFILE AND MOTIVATIONS TO UNDERTAKE

Enfermeiros empreendedores de negócios brasileiros: perfil socioprofissional e motivações para empreender
Enfermeros emprendedores en empresas brasileñas: perfil socioprofesional y motivaciones para emprender

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RESUMO

Objetivo: analisar as características socioprofissionais de enfermeiros empreendedores de negócios no Brasil e suas motivações para empreender. **Métodos:** estudo transversal, exploratório e descritivo, realizado com 185 enfermeiros empreendedores de negócios. A pesquisa ocorreu entre os meses de junho a dezembro de 2021. **Resultados:** o perfil predominante dos participantes é de mulheres brancas, na faixa etária entre 31 a 40 anos, com média de 11 anos de formação, e período de atuação empreendedora de até 12 meses, com renda bruta mensal de seus empreendimentos de até 4 salários mínimos, sem dedicação exclusiva aos seus negócios, que em sua maioria concentram-se na Região Sudeste. Cursos de marketing digital e de gestão de negócios obtiveram realce como complementares a formação dessas enfermeiras. **Conclusões:** é importante acompanhar os desdobramentos do perfil empreendedor do enfermeiro no Brasil, e de seus negócios. Assim, será possível identificar o impacto de suas atuações.

DESCRIPTORIOS: Enfermagem; Empreendedorismo; Empreendedorismo em saúde; Perfil profissional; Motivação.

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to analyze the socio-professional characteristics of business entrepreneur nurses in Brazil and their motivations to undertake. **Methods:** cross-sectional, exploratory and descriptive study, carried out with 185 business entrepreneur nurses. The research took place between June and December 2021. **Results:** the predominant profile of participants is white women, aged between 31 and 40 years old, with an average of 11 years of training, and a period of entrepreneurial activity of up to 12 months, with monthly gross income from their ventures of up to 4 months minimum, without exclusive dedication to its businesses, which are mostly concentrated in the Southeast Region. Digital marketing and business management courses were highlighted as complementing the training of these nurses. **Conclusions:** it is important to monitor the entrepreneurial profile of nurses in Brazil, and their businesses. Thus, it will be possible to identify the impact of their actions.

DESCRIPTORS: Nursing; Entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurship in health; Professional profile; Motivation.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: analizar las características socioprofesionales de los enfermeros empresarios de Brasil y sus motivaciones para emprender. **Métodos:** estudio transversal, exploratorio y descriptivo, realizado con 185 enfermeros empresarios. La investigación se realizó entre junio y diciembre de 2021, y el escenario fue Brasil. Los datos fueron analizados a partir del análisis estadístico descriptivo. **Resultados:** el perfil predominante de los participantes es el de mujeres blancas, con edades entre 31 y 40 años, con un promedio de 11 años de formación, y un período de actividad empresarial de hasta 12 meses, con ingresos brutos mensuales de sus emprendimientos de hasta 4 meses mínimo, sin dedicación exclusiva a sus negocios, que se concentran mayoritariamente en la Región Sudeste. Se destacaron los cursos de marketing digital y gestión empresarial como complemento a la formación de estos enfermeros. **Conclusiones:** es importante monitorear el perfil emprendedor de las enfermeras en Brasil y sus negocios. Así, será posible identificar el impacto de sus acciones.

DESCRIPTORES: Enfermería; Emprendimiento; Emprendimiento en salud; Perfil profesional; Motivación.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship appears on the world stage as a multi-systemic phenomenon capable of influencing different contexts, organizations and market spaces,¹ through its socio-economic and cultural relevance and its sustainable nature.²

From a strategic perspective, entrepreneurship can be recognized as a way of exploring opportunities³ and possibly creating new products, services and methods of action.⁴

In the nursing literature, there are three main classifications: social entrepreneurship, business entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship, with business entrepreneurship being the central typology of this study.

Business entrepreneurship in nursing can be defined by the opening and maintenance of businesses in the health sector, highlighting the autonomous and liberal nature of nurses, their skills and the potential of the subject for the country's economic growth.⁵ In times of post-health and economic crisis, wars and rumors of global confrontations, innovative activities and constructive proposals emerge as opportunities to transform adverse situations into possibilities.⁶

In this context, a study led by the scientific and technological policy department of the Institute of Geosciences at the University of Campinas, in São Paulo, pointed to entrepreneurship as a strategic trend for overcoming the post-pandemic economic

crisis,⁷ allowing for a prospect of progress on the subject in the country.

With regard to the entrepreneurial profile of Brazilian nursing, another national survey showed that Brazilian nurses have a significant presence in formal jobs, with 82.6% being represented in public authorities (three spheres of government), the private sector and philanthropy. In this context, entrepreneurial activity was somewhat timid, with only 2.4% representation.⁸ However, further studies are needed after the pandemic. Authors also point out that there is a limited research scenario on the subject in Brazil.⁹

Therefore, research that characterizes the professional profile of nurses is important, in order to provide specific, current and strategic content for opening new businesses, consolidating services and integrating policies that support the nursing entrepreneurial process, and that foster their performance in areas that are still little explored in the health context.

It is therefore opportune to get to know the profile of nurses who undertake business ventures, exploring their regionality, sociodemographic factors, motivations and aspects of their academic training as defining characteristics of this growing professional practice.

In a report, the regional forum for the advancement of nursing in Latin America also points to the need to propose new ways of responding to the challenges of public health

in the region, especially nurses as key players in advancing universal health.¹⁰

With this in mind, the research question was to investigate: what is the socio-professional profile of nurse business entrepreneurs in Brazil and their motivations for entrepreneurship? And the objective of the study: to analyze the socio-professional characteristics of nurse business entrepreneurs in Brazil and their motivations to undertake.

METHODS

This is a cross-sectional, exploratory and descriptive study. It presents findings from the research macro-project entitled “Nurses who are business entrepreneurs in Brazil: job market and training”, in partnership with five public higher education institutions in Brazil, and funded by the Santa Catarina Research and Innovation Support Foundation, in a call for proposals to encourage entrepreneurship.

The research took place between June and December 2021, and the setting was Brazil, seeking to represent the 26 Brazilian states and the Federal District.

The study population was made up of nurse business entrepreneurs, and the eligibility criteria were: being a nurse, and acting as a nurse business entrepreneur in Brazil. Nurses in entrepreneurial activities unrelated to nursing services were excluded, as were those who were not involved in entrepreneurial activities for any reason during the data collection period.

The sampling technique selected was non-probabilistic, for convenience, in which the participants selected were those most accessible to the researchers. Thus, the total number of participants in the survey was 185 nurse entrepreneurs.

The data collection instrument was a questionnaire constructed in three sections using SurveyMonkey software. The first section was the informed consent form, with an invitation letter containing fields for filling in e-mail addresses and WhatsApp numbers. In the second section, the nurse entrepreneurs answered sociodemographic questions (age, color/race, sex/gender). In the third and fourth sections, the participants were asked about their entrepreneurial practice (motivations, region of the country in which they work, main source of income, gross monthly income, length of time working as an entrepreneur, areas of activity) and academic background (degrees, complementary courses, length of professional training).

The main strategy for collecting data was to create an account on the Instagram platform. Through this, partnerships were

established with nurse entrepreneurs, with their participation in lives, and the creation of content on nursing entrepreneurship in the format of reels (short videos).

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. SurveyMonkey recorded and organized the answers obtained in the questionnaire in an Excel spreadsheet. The variables of interest were: age, gender, color/race, region of the country, capital of the state in which they work as an entrepreneur, professional training (degree), length of time working as a nurse, length of time working as an entrepreneur in nursing, professional entrepreneurial practice, entrepreneurial practice according to area of coverage, entrepreneurial practice as the main source of income, professional relationship, monthly income, workload, qualifications/courses, motivations, pandemic period.

The data from this spreadsheet was entered into the Bioestat 5.3 program, which analyzed the quantitative variables, presenting the results by absolute number, mean, median and standard deviation, while the categorical variables were described by absolute frequencies and percentage calculation.

The research is in accordance with the principles of National Health Council Resolution (CNS) No. 510/2016 and was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of the Santa Catarina State University (UDESC), filed under CAAE No. 38266720.1.0000.0118, Opinion Number: 5.440.353, on May 31, 2022.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that the majority of the 185 respondents in this survey were female, white, with an average age of 37.7 years (median 36 and standard deviation 8.3). It was also noted that the nurses are self-employed, liberal entrepreneurs and some do not yet have any income from their investment.

With regard to gross income from entrepreneurial activity, the results point to an income of more than two minimum wages, with a propensity to grow.

Still on Table 1 below, for the regionalization study, the regions in which nurses carry out their entrepreneurial activity were taken into account, rather than their place of birth. In this way, it was identified that the Southeast region has greater entrepreneurial engagement in terms of business typology. The data also showed that nurses' entrepreneurial activity is more prominent in the capitals and metropolitan regions of the states, and is heading towards growth in the digital business sector.

Table 1 - Sociodemographic characteristics and aspects of the entrepreneurial performance of nurses who are business entrepreneurs. Brazil, 2021 (n=185).

Features	n	%
Age (mean=37.7/ median 36/ standard deviation= 8.3)		
21-30	31	16.8
31-40	99	53.5
41-50	40	21.6
51-60	12	6.5
61-70	3	1.6
Gender		
Male	20	10.8
Female	162	87.6
Transgender man	2	1.1
Transgender woman	1	0.5
Skin color		
White	91	49.2
Black	24	13.0
Brown	69	37.3
Yellow	1	0.5
Region of the country		
Southeast	74	40
Northeast	47	25.4
North	31	16.8
South	22	11.9
Center-West	10	5.9
Not informed	01	0.5
Working in the capital/ interior/digital business		
Capital/Metropolitan Region	91	29.2
Inland	60	32.4
Various cities	16	8.6
Digital business	18	9.7
Entrepreneurship as main source of income		
Yes	65	35.1
No	91	49.5
No income yet	29	15.7
Gross monthly income		
Up to 1,045 reais	30	16.2
1.045 to 2.090 reais	18	9.7
2.090 to 4.180 reais	40	21.6
4,180 to 8,360 reais	31	16.8
Above 8,360 reais	25	13.5
No income yet	28	15.1
I prefer not to answer	13	7.0

n= quantitative %=percentage

With regard to aspects of academic and professional training, Table 2 shows nurses with a predominantly specialist profile and a slight involvement in teaching and research, through stricto sensu specialization, master's and doctoral degrees.

As for the length of professional training, the data shows that the nurse entrepreneurs have an average of 11.3 years of

nursing training (median=10/standard deviation=7.8) and an average of 28.5 months of entrepreneurial activity, starting after the pandemic.

With regard to additional training, technical procedures and those related to the nurse's area of expertise were the most requested for entrepreneurship.

Table 2 - Academic and professional background of nurse business entrepreneurs. Brazil, 2021 (n=185).

Academic background	N	%
Doctorate	10	5.4
Master's Degree	39	21.1
Lato sensu specialization	114	61.6
Residency	4	2.2
Degree in nursing	18	9.7
Additional courses		
Business management	52	28.1
Digital marketing	72	38.9
Finance	27	14.6
Project management	24	13.0
Active methodologies	18	9.7
Leadership	47	25.4
Communication	42	22.7
Techniques, procedures	88	47.6
Languages	16	8.6
Oratory	20	10.8
No courses	35	18.9
Length of training (years) (mean=11.3/ median=10/standard deviation=7.8)		
0 to 5 years	45	24.3
6 to 10 years	48	25.9
11 to 15 years	45	24.3
16 to 20 years	25	13.5
Over 20 years old	22	11.9
Entrepreneurial training time (months) (mean=28.5/ median=12/standard deviation=8)		
0 – 12	97	52.4
13 – 24	36	19.5
25 – 36	19	10.3
37 – 48	10	5.4
49 – 60	5	2.7
Over 60	18	9.7
Action began during the pandemic		
Yes	94	50.8
No	90	48.6
Area of Coverage COFEN Res. 0581/2018		
Area I - Collective Health; Child and Adolescent Health Adult Health Urgencies and Emergencies	125	67.6
Area II - Management	19	10.3
Area III - Teaching and research	38	20.5
Areas I and III	3	1.6

In addition, according to Table 3 below, motivational factors were identified that encouraged nurses to become entrepreneurs

in nursing: the need for personal fulfillment, and the demand for increased income and opportunity.

Table 3 - Motivations of nurse business entrepreneurs. Brazil, 2021 (n=185)

Motivations	n	%
Employability/need	46	24.9
Opportunity	92	49.7
Increased income	108	58.4
Personal satisfaction	149	80.5
Social responsibility	9	4.9
Sense of purpose	45	24.3
Autonomy/Independence	87	47.0

n= quantitative %=percentage

DISCUSSION

The socio-professional profile of business nurses in Brazil is in line with some studies, for example: the COFEN profile survey⁸ and the global entrepreneurship monitor.¹¹

The latter showed that the majority of participants were white adult women. In this context, age is investigated as an important element in identifying the entrepreneurial propensity of individuals,¹² data that is similar to the results of another Brazilian survey, in which women predominate in the 31 to 40 age group.¹³

The majority of participants considered themselves to be white, followed by brown and black people. These data corroborate both the results of the Profile of Nursing in Brazil survey,¹⁴ and the profile of nursing graduates.¹⁵

With regard to entrepreneurial activity, the Southeast is the most prominent region, as the largest number of nursing professionals is concentrated there, with around 885,093 professionals who are part of the nursing team having their birthplace registered in the Southeast,⁸ which increases the possibilities of working in various segments in an entrepreneurial career, given that the Southeast has one of the largest populations in Brazil, with almost 47,000 inhabitants¹⁶ (IBGE, 2022), a fact that favors networking and access to information.

It can therefore be understood that the national economic context, demographic aspects and the entrepreneur's own motivations have an influence on determining the way they work, their time commitment, the type of venture they choose and where they start their entrepreneurial activity.

Another aspect related to the entrepreneurial activity of nurses is the way in which their professional activity is characterized as autonomous, with services provided to individuals. However, their main source of income is not related to entrepreneurial practice, as the majority of nurses work for other health organizations.

The study¹² puts into context that entrepreneurs only dedicate themselves exclusively to their businesses as their

ventures progress, which reinforces the behavior of novice entrepreneurs, who maintain their employment relationships in other health institutions until they are sure of the profitability of their entrepreneurial activities.

Thus, it can be understood that the gross income of nurse entrepreneurs may be associated with the amount of time they dedicate to their ventures, since these professionals work between 8 and 20 hours a week maintaining their businesses, and have a profile of earning between 2,080 and 4,180 reais a month. A study shows that adequate remuneration for this category is still a global problem.¹⁷

Despite the understanding that entrepreneurship means taking risks, concentrating efforts and dedicating time to creating or consolidating one's own business, it is necessary to take calculated risks so as not to frustrate the chances of building a profitable enterprise. To this end, one possible strategy for those who have other connections is to join a partnership in order to mitigate the initial risks and increase the chances of business expansion.¹²

Moving on to a profile of the training of nurse entrepreneurs, the study participants are mostly specialists, with a strong presence in complementary courses of a technical and care nature, revealing a professional mentality focused on offering care centered on the person and their health needs.

In this scenario, a specialized entrepreneurial profile in nursing contributes to the achievement of expanded health care, which addresses the public health problems in the country in a resolute manner, based on the use of the skills acquired during their training. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) presents investing in the development of leadership and the qualification of nursing practices as strategic points for advances in nursing, in addition to formal training.¹⁰

Internationally, entrepreneurship in nursing is seen as a strategy for addressing global health needs, reinforcing the culture of patient safety, and enhancing the potential for excellence in health care and expanding universal access.¹⁰

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ However, research shows that nurses still do not sufficiently exploit entrepreneurial opportunities.¹⁹⁻²⁰

It is also worth considering that, despite the discreet involvement of entrepreneurs in strictu sensu specializations, with adequate encouragement and an increase in graduates in this modality, this initiative can contribute to their intellectual growth, and encourage the development of research that strengthens entrepreneurial nursing, either by breaking new ground, overcoming barriers, demystifying the entrepreneurial performance of professional nurses, or by encouraging other nurses and nursing students to consciously enter the entrepreneurial world.

A study on social entrepreneurial training complements the urgent need for interprofessional discussions on the subject, as well as impact assessment studies on the influence of the national nursing curriculum guidelines on theoretical and practical teaching and learning on the subject, so that future nurses can also prospectively contribute to improving the social and health conditions of the population.¹⁹

The professional profile of the nurses in this study portrays an education dedicated to technical improvement, in which other elements of complementary training, such as courses in digital marketing and business management, are associated with the entrepreneurial curriculum. There is a clear awareness that good promotion strategies and the power of satisfactory management are essential components for the success of ventures.

The GEM survey¹² presented the obstacles to the development of entrepreneurship in the national and international context, and one of the points made was the need for financial support for entrepreneurs, followed by the need for government policies and programs, and the promotion of entrepreneurial education as strategies to support professional practices. In this way, the development of courses on the subject of entrepreneurship, right from basic education, adds to the strategy of encouraging the construction of an entrepreneurial profile.

With regard to the aspects of length of professional training, the study showed professionals with an average of 11 years of academic training, estimating that they have considerable technical experience, in addition to experiencing a stage of life whose choices can be guided towards achieving personal satisfaction, also adding the possibilities of financial return. However, despite the length of professional training, the period of entrepreneurial activity is recent, up to twelve months, in line with the GEM report.¹²

In terms of nurses' entrepreneurial activities, the area covered by COFEN Resolution 581/2018 with the greatest number of nursing services was Area I, i.e. activities related to the direct care of age groups, with actions that contribute to their health, safety and well-being.

Looking at the panorama of entrepreneurial activities above, there is evidence of significant activity in the area of specialized care, focused on understanding and minimizing the health needs of individuals. Therefore, the science of nursing, based on identifying and solving the individual's biopsychosocial needs, favours the training of professionals with a vision of care in its multiple dimensions and meanings, who despite the contradiction with the curative model, their care actions introduce the strong holistic and humanized reading necessary to positively impact health demands, allowing the expansion of entrepreneurial areas.

The study also analyzed intrinsic aspects of the entrepreneurial reality in Brazilian nursing, initially guided by reflections on the motives that drove nurses to undertake, identifying the following as the main ones: personal satisfaction; the search for increased income; and increased autonomy.

Thus, job satisfaction is a sensitive and subjective element, as it relates to the values and feelings experienced by the professional in the workplace.²¹

In Brazil, aspects such as lack of autonomy, professional appreciation, low pay, multiple working hours, hours dedicated to organizational problems, overload of activities, disunity and competitive spirit are the main reasons that lead to dissatisfaction among nurses, influencing their personal lives and performance.²¹ However, these situations are also mapped in other countries.¹⁷

In summary, nurse entrepreneurs present the need for personal satisfaction, seeking an increase in income and the opportunity to undertake as motivational factors for entering into entrepreneurial activities. A study aimed at exploring the factors that influence nurses' entrepreneurial intentions reinforces the influence of attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, entrepreneurial orientation and the need for entrepreneurial education as the most important variables.²²

It is hoped from these findings that other nurses, in addition to the profiles described above, will see business entrepreneurship as a potential opportunity in their practice, and that encouragement will come from their training. It is also important for studies to continue this investigation, and to monitor the development of nurses' entrepreneurial profiles, their work processes and the consequences of their actions, with prospects for impacting on the future of entrepreneurial nursing.

CONCLUSION

When analyzing the characteristics of nurse business entrepreneurs, a predominant picture was identified of white nurse entrepreneurs, aged between 31 and 40, with a gross monthly income from their businesses of up to four minimum

wages, without exclusive dedication, and with a concentration of their businesses in the Southeast.

These are professionals who have a good deal of professional training, who are specialized, and who seek support in digital marketing and business management as complementary courses. There was evidence of a group of novice entrepreneurs, especially focused on care ventures, whose area of expertise encompasses the entire life cycle of the individual.

The motivations that drive nurses to become entrepreneurs are related to the search for personal satisfaction, increased income and the opportunity to achieve better working conditions and personal well-being.

The research has limitations in terms of the representativeness of the desired universe and the sampling technique, since convenience sampling was used. However, it was the technique most compatible with reality, since there is no exact number of the target population registered.

The study will make it possible to design processes and flows that meet the needs of professionals in terms of training and work, and to formulate public policies that respect the socio-professional characteristics and experiences of entrepreneurs. In addition, it will provide an insight into a subject that is still little explored, and will boost entrepreneurship in national nursing.

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