



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC LEAGUES IN THE HEALTH AREA FOR ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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#### ABSTRACT

This article is based on a cross-sectional and descriptive study with two methodological approaches – quantitative and qualitative, which aims to identify and evaluate the importance of academic leagues in the professional training of students in undergraduate courses that contemplate the area of health. Data were collected from December 9 to 15, 2019, through an electronic questionnaire applied to students and graduates who participated/participated in health leagues, totaling 90 responses. The information obtained was organized in a database by Word (Windows 2013) and descriptive statistical analysis was performed. The results showed the impact and benefits of the leagues in the expansion of technical-scientific knowledge for the research participants. Therefore, the insertion of students in the leagues contribute strategically in their teaching and academic learning, in the promotion of health and professional development for the labor market.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mastering any and all knowledge that is exposed to Higher Education students is a remarkable task. Having a notion of how to apply content in practice seems to be even more complex. In this context, curricular initiatives such as internships, always offered by the educational institution and extracurricular, such as student groups, can cite how Academic Leagues end up softening and solving this problem that occurs in any area of Higher Education (Queiroz, 2014). Academic Leagues (ALs) are composed of undergraduate students, having supervision and guidance from one or more professors linked to the Higher Education Institution (HEI) to which the league is related (Costa, 2009). They do not have a link with the mandatory curriculum of the HEIs, non-profit, does not have limited time of existence and depending on their organization, can be configured as uniprofessional or multiprofessional (Costa, 2009; Silva, 2018). They are governed by Statutes that describe their headquarters, constitution, objectives, activities, rights, duties, areas of expertise, functionality and management (Silva, 2015). The ALs aim to improve the knowledge of academics in a given area, develop critical sense and scientific reasoning, intermediate the maturation of relationships and group work.

In addition, it promotes the production of scientific papers, academic events and people management. In the area of health, academic leagues have a very important social role, because through them students come closer to clinical practice with a broad knowledge of attention, promotion, care and health care benefiting the population (Silva, 2018; Silva, 2015; Cavalcante, 2018). The first Academic League in the area of health in Brazil has its foundation dated in 1920 in the Oswaldo Cruz Academic Center, being entitled "League to Combat Syphilis" remaining active until the present day. It was created by a student of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of São Paulo with the objective of making medical interventions in the health problems of the community at the time (Queiroz, 2014; Costa *et al.*, 2009; Silva, 2018; Silva, 2015; Cavalcante, 2018; Hamamoto, 2011). During the military dictatorship in Brazil, there was a great expansion of The ALs due to students who challenged the methodology that universities used for teaching in the face of the scenario of social changes to which the country was going. They sought a larger space so that they could broaden their knowledge. With the consolidation of the Unified Health System (SUS) and changes in the curriculum of universities, this expansion continued in the late 1990s and early 2000s.- Despite the growth of academic leagues in the health area, the medical course has the higher number of aL formation, accompanied by psychology and nursing courses (Silva, 2015; Cavalcante, 2018).

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Currently, the existence of Academic Leagues in the faculties of Brazil is almost unanimous. With a narrow or broader purpose, Academic Leagues provide incalculable experiences ranging from training for the preparation of small articles to major events or scientific initiation projects depending only on the initiative and willingness of the members to know (Queiroz, 2014). The progress and management of the league is the full responsibility of the members. They may be from different periods of graduation, from the same course or not and seek to follow the university pillar of teaching, research and extension (Queiroz, 2014; Costa, 2009; Silva, 2018). In these terms we are guided by the objective of demonstrating the importance of the participation of students in Academic Leagues evaluating how this ticket will improve its academic and professional content, once inserted become participatory students, improving their performance in classes, more dedicated to studies improving their grades, which reflects in life professional, empowering him to work as a team, managing and leading people exercising their profession in a more humane and Safe. To keep in mind what an academic league is and to know the benefits it brings to an academic's life is of paramount importance throughout the course period, because it provides another look, contributing to professional training, growth and maturation of the Student.

**METHODOLOGY**

The research was carried out with a qualitative and quantitative methodological approach of exploratory character with application of a questionnaire using the electronic form (*Google Forms*). The choice of the qualitative and quantitative method was due to the fact that the researchers thought it was the most appropriate to achieve the objectives proposed in the study, since they could quantify the opinion of the sample about the importance of academic leagues in the area of health in academic development in undergraduate programs, in addition to ensuring the description of the activities developed by the participants, greater achievements within the academic league and the difficulties when entering the academic league. Data were collected through an electronic questionnaire containing 14 questions, with the main variables: general and professional data of the participants (gender, age, children, education, course, educational institution, internship, stay in the league among others) and information related to the evaluation of participants on the importance of academic leagues in the area of health in their academic development. The instrument was prepared by the researchers themselves and made available in an electronic form of Google forms in the period of December 2019 for 7 days. The study was conducted with academics and graduates in the area of health in the courses of Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Nursing, Nutrition, Biomedicine, Medicine, Dentistry, Social Work among others. Ninety participants collaborated with the research, 63 members of academic leagues and 23 former members. We did not obtain names or their initials or personal data from the participants.

As a criterion for inclusion of the participants of the research, it was necessary that they were members or former members of academic leagues in the health area and freely accepted to respond to the research. Those who did not participate in academic leagues and who were not in the health area were excluded.

After data collection, a database was structured through charts and tables in Word (Windows 2013) and descriptive statistical analysis was performed.

**RESULTS**

A mixed electronic questionnaire was used (objective and multiple choice), composed of 14 questions that allowed participants to select the options that best suited their opinion among those presented. The instrument applied aimed to cover the academic public in the health area in order to collect the information as to the reasons that motivated them to compose an Academic League among other aspects. From a total of 90 answers, we correlated the tables and graphs collected with the theoretical reference articles that broadly address the questions present in the research questionnaire to better support the data obtained and interpret the results, in addition to seeking to base the positioning of the target audience based on the analysis of authors linked to the proposed theme. In the Table 1 shows the questions applied in the questionnaire from the electronic form.

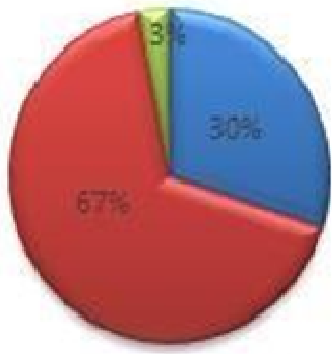
What's your sex?
What's your age group?
Do you have any children?
What's your background?
Are you currently working?
What's your course?
What is your educational institution?
What motivated you to join the Academic League?
What activities does the Academic League perform or have you done?
Do you think the activities in the Academic Leagues have/had an impact on your learning?
What are your greatest achievements within the Academic League?
Has the Academic League expanded its knowledge in certain academic areas?
Do you think the Academic League influenced/influenced the choice of your specialty within your training?
What difficulties have you encountered when joining the Academic League? Would you recommend other students participate in an Academic League?

**Table 2. Variables studied**

Variables	Values
Age group	49 (19 to 24years)
	34 (25 to 38years)
	5 (over 38 years)
Gender	2 (up to 18 years)
	66 (Feminine)
Works	24 (Masculine)
	57(Not)
Education	33(Yes)
	64 (Academics)
Higher Education Institution	26 (Graduates)
	Federal (18)
	State(10)
Children	Private(62)
	80(Not)
	10(Yes)

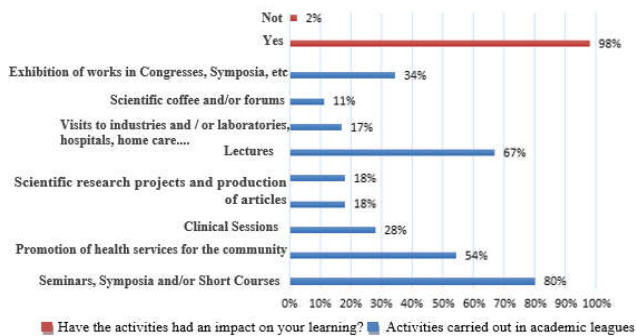
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In the Table 2 shows the data regarding the characteristics of the subjects (age group, gender, work, children, etc.). As described in Table 2, regarding the profile of students from academic leagues, 66 (73.3%) participants are female and 24 (26.7%) participants are male. Regarding age, 49 (54.4%) informants were between 19 and 24 years old, 34 (37.8) from 25 to 38 years, and 5 (5.6%) over 38 years and 2 (2.2%)

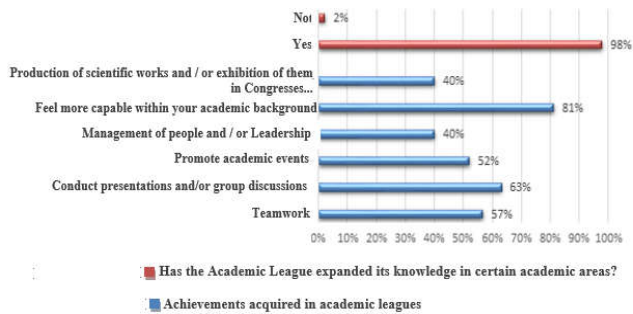


Graph 1. Reasons to join academic league

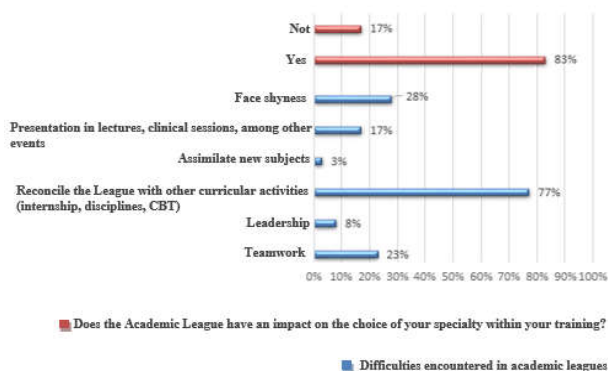
Graph 2. Activities in Academic Leagues



Graph 3. Achievements in academic league



Graph 4. Difficulties in Academic League



Until 18 years old. 80 (88,9%) people reported not having children and 10 (11.1%) had children. Regarding the formation of informants, 60 (66.7%) people were academics from 6 to 10 semester, 23 (25.6%) were graduated and 7 (7.7%) people were academics from the 1 to 5 semester. 59 (65,6%) participants report being from a private educational institution, 17 (18.9%) in a federal institution and 14 (15.6%) in a state institution. In the Graphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 show the academic information of the participants of the present study.

As shown in graph 1 below, regarding the student's interest when joining the Academic League 60 (67%) said that the reason he joined the league was to add knowledge outside the classroom environment, followed by 27 (30%) to expand the professional curriculum and 2 (3%) to promote academic events. As shown in graph 2 below, regarding the question of the activities performed by the informants, the answer was multiple choice and 9 options were given: 72 (80%) Seminars, Symposia and/or Short Courses; 60 (67%) Lectures; 49 (54%) Promotion of health services for the community (pressure measurement, capillary glycemia, consultations, guidance in health campaigns, among others); 31 (34%) Exhibition of works in Congresses, Symposia, Forums, etc.; 25 (28%) Clinical Sessions; 16 (18%) Scientific research projects and production of articles; 15 (17%) Visits to industries and/or laboratories, hospitals, home care, among others to learn the routine of the site; 10 (11%) Scientific coffee and/or forums. 88 (98%) of the people reported that the activities in the Academic Leagues impacted on her learning and 2 (2%) reported nothaving impacted on learning. As shown in graph 3 below, in relation to the greatest achievements of participants within the Academic League, several items were made available for multiple choice being: 73 (81%) Feel more capable within your academic background; 57 (63%) Conduct presentations and/or group discussions; 51 (57%) Teamwork; 47 (52%) Promote academic events; and 36 (40%) Management of people and / or Leadership and Production of scientific works and / or exhibition of them in Congresses, Symposia, Seminars among others. With regard to the fact that the Academic League has expanded knowledge in certain academic areas, 88 (98%) said yes and 2 (2%) they said no. As shown in graph 4 below, the question about the difficulties encountered when joining the Academic League was multiple choice: 69 (77%) Reconcile the League with other curricular activities (internship, disciplines, CBT); 25 (28%) Face shyness; 21 (23%) Teamwork; 15 (17%) Presentation in lectures, clinical sessions, among other events; 7 (8%) Leadership; 3 (3%) Assimilate new subjects. Regarding the influence of the Academic League on the choice of specialty within the formation, 75 (83%) informants said that the alloy influences and 15 (17%) does not influence.

Regarding the course, 35 (38.9%) participants reported attending or having studied Pharmacy, 28 (31.1%) Nursing, 16 (17.8%) Veterinary Medicine, 6 (6.7%) Dentistry, 4 (4.4%) Medicine, and 1 (1.1%) Nutrition. Regarding the length of stay of the participant in the Academic League, 29 (32.2%) reported having remained for 6 months, 24 (26.7) for 1 year, 17 (18.9%) for 1 year and 6 months, 13 (14.4%) over 2 years and 7 (7.8) for 2 years. Regarding the occupation of a position on the Board of The Academic League, 38 (42.2%) reported not having held any positions, 30 (33.3%) holds a position and 22 (24.4%) has already held a position. Finally, 89 (98.9%) of the participants said that they would recommend that other students participate in an Academic League and only 1 (1.1%) said not to recommend participation in a League.

## DISCUSSION

According to the results, there was a predominance of female students. The data found in the questionnaire applied are in accordance with academic research regarding the predominance of the female public in undergraduate courses in the health area.

The study also showed that most of the participants were young, which shows how increasingly the young academic public is seeking to expand their knowledge and seek in the Academic Leagues this opportunity. More than half of the informants are academics from 6 to 10 semesters, demonstrating that after completing 50% of the curriculum the academic realizes how deficient the grid is and start seeking extracurricular activities. In this context, we observe how much educational institutions need to reformulate the curriculum so that there are no gaps in the education of academics and make them competent and qualified professionals. The present study observed the predominance of three health courses: Pharmacy, Nursing and Veterinary Medicine. Data on Academic Leagues of Pharmacy and Veterinary Medicine are not much described in the literature, with a predominance of medical school. The study showed us that most academic leagues belonged to private educational institutions. This data is of great relevance because in academic research regarding the educational institutions that the Leagues belong there is a prevalence in federal and state universities, indicating the expansion that the Leagues are achieving.

The search for more knowledge is the motivating element for entering Academic Leagues. In the applied research, it was observed that 66.7% of the students sought to add extra-class knowledge, since often the knowledge transmitted in the classroom is limited and systematic. As a means, 86.7% of the participants reported that their objectives as members were to expand their technical-scientific knowledge. Thus, it can be perceived that the league contributes to the student's performance throughout his undergraduate course and stimulates the student's participation in the classroom. In academic leagues that participate in the area of scientific research, a significant increase in critical vision, reflection capacity and resolution of daily problems in their future professional life is expected.<sup>1</sup> Of the various opportunities that arise within a League, the occupation of board positions can offer an additional learning in the areas of administrative management, treasury and people leadership. More than 50% of the interviewees claimed to occupy or have already held a position on the board. Because we deal with people we also create expectations that are often not matched, because of this arise the difficulties in the groups. Therefore, it is necessary that the participants of the league be proactive, aiming to solve the problem as soon as possible so that it can continue the activities. The most recurring difficulties are sometimes teamwork, leadership, assimilating new issues, time management, presentations, and other responsibilities. Thus, 76.7% of the interviewees reported that the greatest difficulty is to reconcile personal activities with those required in the Academic League. At a level well below, but with similar percentages in the face of the rest of the questions are the difficulty with shyness with 27.8% followed by teamwork with 23.3%. By creating a parallel of the difficulties encountered with the length of stay of these students, it is perceived that 32.2% of them leave the League at 6 months and 26.7% with 1 year. These results demonstrate that the difficulties reported may be important justifications for the premature departure of the student. Even with the difficulties, 98.9% of the interviewees recommended that other students join an Academic League. Based on this high percentage of recommendation, it is observed that despite the difficulties and short period of stay, 81.1% of these members claimed to be

more qualified within their area of training proving the importance of an Academic League in the higher education.

### Final Considerations

Based on the results presented, it is noted how important it is the entry of a student in an Academic League. It is a unique activity in the development of extension activities always articulated with the curriculum of the course aimed at improving the general education of this student.<sup>9</sup> The newly graduated student having in his curriculum the participation of a league, has a league, has important experiences that will contribute to better performance in your daily life and professional advancement (Son, 2011). The experience and resolutions of difficulties experienced within an Academic League are of great importance for the maturation and training of a proactive and empathic professional, besides helping in communication and teamwork that is fundamental to the professional in the health area, as it will help him to behave in a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary team.

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