

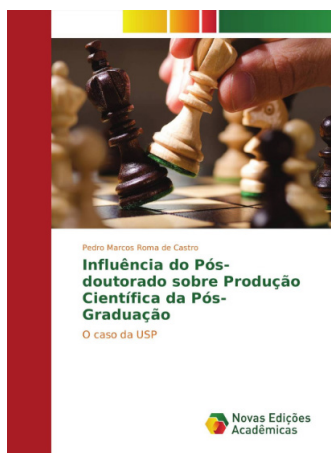
Review of the book “Influence of the post-doctorate on the scientific production in graduate programs: the case of the University of São Paulo — USP”

Resenha do livro “Influência do pós-doutorado sobre produção científica da pós-graduação: o caso da USP”

Reseña del libro “Influencia del posdoctorado en la producción científica de estudios de posgrado: el caso de la USP”

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CASTRO, P. M. R. **Influência do pós-doutorado sobre produção científica da pós-graduação: o caso da USP.** Saarbrücken: Editora Omniscriptum; Novas Edições Acadêmicas, 2017. 80p. ISBN 978-3-330-75305-1

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Palabras clave: Formación docente. Postgrado. Pasantía postdoctoral.

An intense book: the contents of the work *Influência do Pós-doutorado sobre Produção Científica da Pós-graduação – o caso da USP* could be summarized in this way. Basically, the book consists of questions that touch on qualifying professors, an evaluation of higher education, the contexts of graduate practice, the nuances of scientific production, knowledge management and the post-doctoral scenario that University of São Paulo (USP) professors experience.

While unpretentiously browsing through online bookshops and the Amazon website, I came across the launch of a book that caught my eye, in principle due to a plausible inference, not only due to my observance, on account of my position as a researcher, but also because the content of this work attracts the attention of the academic audience involved in graduates studies – the university professors, Master`s and doctorate students and a wide range of actors linked to the evaluation, administration and conduct of higher education as a whole.

From the original motivation, continuing on to focus on the work, the reader has access to a solid and very interesting book, challenging, from the operational perspective of its conduct, and extremely reflective, with respect to its findings. In one of the sections, there is an addendum, which is still very rare in academic practice: the author lists all the scientific articles that have been published, as a general rule, in prestigious journals with a high score on CAPES Qualis (CASTRO and PORTO, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2016a; CASTRO, PORTO and KANNEBLEY JUNIOR, 2013), resulting from research, demonstrating, to a certain extent, that the book is a compendium, in that it collates various contents in a single place. However, the book is not just that.

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Divided into five chapters, the first three cover the aspects of preparing investigative work. The first chapter outlines the general aspects involved in post-doctoral study, especially because it is a research stage following completion of a doctorate that practically did not exist in Brazilian academia before the 1990s. However, today, aware of the need for continuous improvement – increasingly present in academia – brings pressure for encouragement and resources, to design an **unbalanced evolution** of seeking (demand) and awarding (provision) scholarships to conduct post-doctoral research.

The second chapter introduces the theoretical points of Knowledge Management in organizations, contextualizes the university under analysis (USP), with its main characteristics as a large university institution, and presents the reader with a greater panorama of national graduate studies, since its creation with the Sucupira Report in the 1960s, until the current day, a scenario in which post-doctoral study is considered an element to add to Brazilian graduate studies. In line with Knowledge Management principles, (NONAKA and TAKEUCHI, 1997), post-doctorates as a community of practice constitute an academic qualification that act through socialization among researchers, aiming, *a posteriori*, to also externalize this knowledge, so that it may be shared among peers.

The third chapter deals with method. The author worked with the perspective that a post-doctorate is, above all, a face-to-face socialization (not at a distance and/or via the web); however, it cannot conclude with socialization among researchers. The method was then structured – through a series of ratings – to score the panorama *before* and *after* the post-doctorate conducted, to verify if there was any variation in how the following aspects of economic production were configured in: books, chapters of books, scientific articles published in journals, works published in the annals of events, prefaces, afterwords, translations of works, and other relevant productions that were listed by researchers in their Lattes curricula.

These aspects of bibliographic production, common in an academic career, were used with the goal of comparing not only the before and after for this researcher, but also to correlate their production with a comparable peer (with the same career timespan and working in the same area of knowledge), verifying if there were any differences in performance among staff with an without a post-doctorate qualification.

The fourth chapter includes a wealth of data and results, the majority against the common sense of a post-doctorate, listing the non-corroboration of various hypotheses among the main items (CASTRO, 2017, p. 50). One of these would sound “obvious” to any layperson on the subject: the magnitude of the rating variation would be different if it referred to the researcher’s area of knowledge/activity. To the contrary, the study finds a result with an average impact, but common to all the areas of the university investigated, without any expressive differences.

Further significant results are highlighted below:

- I. The existence of a break between completing a doctorate and conducting post-doctoral research (called an interstice between qualifications) may be beneficial. For the results, the longer the break, the greater the tendency of the post-doctorate producing positive results for scientific production;
- II. A post-doctoral research contributes towards moderately increasing production in journals indexed at the Qualis ‘A’ level;
- III. Through a counterfactual study with a strong empirical weighting, it was confirmed that senior researchers tend to benefit more by conducting post-doctoral study.

There are critical considerations in the final chapters, the author’s analyses of post-doctorates, the references used and a chapter in which the author lists all the scientific articles that have been published, related to this work. Organized in this way, with an addendum (of previous work that provide a base for this study), the book presents mapping that is extremely beneficial for a micro understanding of the post-doctorate situation and its output.

In addition, by correlating the addendum that provides various articles published on the subject (CASTRO and PORTO, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2016a; CASTRO, PORTO and KANNEBLEY JUNIOR, 2013) and the contents of the book, it is clearly observed that this results in a more pleasurable read (for example, with less framework/formal language, compared to articles), a tone that makes its understanding more enjoyable for the general public, facilitating reading, although it introduces a controversial issue that has not yet been achieved: a consensus within academia.

In its content, the book puts forward (CASTRO, 2017, p. 34) the suggestion of a new inter-area scoring for Qualis. It explains how the scoring that is known to all arose (score of zero to 100, from B5 to A1, at the various levels) and indicates that

Administration was the first area to adopt the idea of “scores”, followed by Education. This scoring increased in such a way that it came to configure the current Qualis score tables, which are now used by all areas of knowledge.

It is comprehensive work, which indicates the need for reflection on the various components involved – also highlighting the need for a broader view, not restricted to the production of articles in journals, but also considering, in the various evaluations, other criteria that may be much broader, such as those listed in Castro and Porto (2016b), based on the following academic reflection: What do we want in graduate studies: “Nothing more than education and research?”

For Science, Technology and Innovation Management, the book contributes by providing resources for managerial decision-making, indicating administrative paths and strategies, in terms of higher education institutions` internal practices and policies (which, apparently should be reconsidered due to the results found), and also contributing to the advancement of knowledge on post-doctorates, by bringing a topic that has not yet been considered to the field of research, and providing greater visibility and credibility to the system, as the basis for fundraising.

In general, it should be highlighted that it is unlikely that a professional involved in higher education would be unaffected by its content. This is the highest point of the work. The book provokes, instigates and constantly leads the reader to (re)think, from a cognitive point of view, various topics that are not restricted to post-graduate study, since it goes beyond this, and breaks taboos. It is counterfactual, countercultural and against “sacred loci”, through the force of current use and common place – politically correct phrases, such as “the faster and most accelerated the qualification, the better”, are questioned. A break could be very good! This is what the study indicates through exhaustive research, strongly founded on empirical data collected at the largest public institution in the country, of a recognized quality and indicates that academic praxis certainly (also) needs to be researched, evaluated and, especially, constantly reviewed and reconsidered, with a view to improving the academic and social results expected.

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