


PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND INITIAL TRAINING IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION BACHELOR'S DEGREE: THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE STUDENT INTERN

IDENTIDADE PROFISSIONAL E FORMAÇÃO INICIAL EM EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA BACHARELADO: A COMPREENSÃO DO ESTUDANTE-ESTAGIÁRIO 

IDENTIDAD PROFESIONAL Y FORMACIÓN INICIAL EN BACHILLERATO EN EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA: LA COMPRENSIÓN DEL ESTUDIANTE 

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Abstract: The study aimed to analyze how student interns understand the process of development of the professional identity in the initial training in bachelor's Physical Education. Thirty student interns joined focus group interviews in the qualitative descriptive research. The data were analyzed descriptively, performing content analysis procedure with the qualitative software Nvivo 10. The results highlight that the student interns recognize that the scope of the area increases the possibilities of intervention; picture a highly competitive labor market; realize there is little recognition and low remuneration in the field; indicate that the initial training of future professionals in the area should enable the interaction between theory and practice; and emphasize the need for a qualitative intervention in society to stimulate better recognition of Physical Education professionals.

Keywords: Physical Education. Professional Training. Personal Identity Information. Labor Market.

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1 INTRODUCTION¹

The constitution of Professional Identity (PI) in the initial training in bachelor's Physical Education starts from the personal and social interpretation of the profession itself and the relationship established by the subject in the social, cultural and professional spheres. It is worth noting that such a process cannot be considered something rigid and unchanging, on the contrary, it is transient and flexible, since it is based on conceptions about ourselves and professional socializations established along the professional trajectory (BRUHNS; MARINHO, 2011; ANVERSA *et al.*, 2020).

PI is defined as the socially recognized way in which individuals identify themselves in the field of work. Its characterization is inextricably linked to the professional representation and learning; to the practices and knowledge constituted throughout the trajectory of life, initial and continuing education; and professional development (MOITA LOPES, 2002; PIMENTA *et al.*, 2006; DUBAR, 2009).

According to the theory of professional representation (BLIN, 1997; SILVA, 2003), the PI's constitution is structured in different scopes: (a) **functional**, which addresses the objectives activated in the professional activity, encompassing the professional function in its knowledge, profile and the possibilities of intervention; (b) **contextual**, which is established from the organizational and institutional directions that enable the degree of social belonging and professional autonomy; (c) **identity**, linked to professional being, rescuing previous experiences, actions, attitudes, motivations, projects and professional competencies.

These areas can be fostered throughout the initial training, especially in pedagogical practices that bring future professionals closer to their field of work. Among these practices, the Professional Curricular Internship (PCI) stands out, a curricular component valued in the latest curricular reformulations indicated by the Curricular Guidelines - NCGs (BRASIL, 2018a), assigning to it a significant workload and with direct linkage within the possible future professional practices, positioning it as one of the means of insertion of the student intern in the professional world, providing an opportunity for contact with standards of norms, values, rules and behaviors, connecting them with their educational paths (formal, non-formal and informal), tasks, perspectives and relationships with others and with themselves (DUBAR, 2012).

However, considering the indications of Martins, Martins and Esteves (2021) and Gama and Schneider (2021), what can be noticed is that the bachelor's Physical Education courses maintain traditional models focused on the technical-scientific domain of the profession, aiming to ensure a solid base of knowledge about human movement and its possibilities of intervention (functional scope). However, it is noteworthy that they still lack formative strategies that foster the capacity for discussion, reflection, criticism, and evaluation of the programs developed. Such strategies can instigate students to build a knowledge base that transcends the technical domain of the area, leading them to incorporate this knowledge in their professional performance

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in order to meet current social demands, which aim at “health professionals committed to the promotion, prevention, protection and rehabilitation, at individual and collective levels, through integrated and continuous practical actions” (MARTINS; MARTINS; ESTEVES, 2021, p. 14).

These data highlight the fact that the implementation of actions focused on interdisciplinary practices, as well as their reflection in spaces and their limitations in favor of solving problem situations that bring services closer to communities, as advocated by the new NCGs of Physical Education (BRASIL, 2018a), may sharpen proactivity and motivations, reflecting in the increase of the rates of the contextual and identity spheres of training and, in particular, in the actions of the PCI.

Given this, the research conducted aimed to analyze how student interns understand the constitution of PI in the initial training for a bachelor's degree in Physical Education.

2 METHODS

The research adopted the qualitative method of descriptive type (BORTOLOZZI; BERTONCELLO, 2012), using the technique of Focus Group as a collection instrument. With this technique, it becomes possible to trace discussions in a small group of people to obtain information about the performance of activities developed and the perceptions of participants on the topics under discussion (SANTOS; MORETTI-PIRES, 2012; GATTI, 2012).

For data collection, three focus groups were organized, one for each Higher Education Institution (HEI) in the city of Maringá, Paraná, Brazil, which offer bachelor's degree in Physical Education and had graduating classes in the second semester of 2016, the year in which data collection was conducted. The invitation to participate in the collection was made to all student interns, regularly enrolled in the subject of Supervised Curricular Internship, during class time. In the previous contact with the course coordinators, the objective of the focus group was presented, as well as the day and time for its realization, highlighting that each group should consist of at least six and at most 12 participants (GATTI, 2012). Then, a list was passed to indicate those who were interested and available to participate, with ten student interns in each of the HEIs. To keep their identities and their respective HEIs confidential, the student interns were named from SI1 to SI30 (Chart 1).

Chart 1- Identification of participants.

HEI	Classification	Institution	Student interns
HEI1	University	Public	SI1 to SI10
HEI2	University	Private	SI11 to SI20
HEI3	University Center	Private	SI21 to SI30

Source: prepared by the authors.

The meetings of each group took place in a single session, lasting approximately 90 minutes, following a pre-established routine: introduction (mediator and observer;

research objective; focus group technique); discussions and interactions; closing of the discussions, and acknowledgement.

The reports presented in the sessions were recorded with the use of two digital audio recorders and one video recorder, with the authorization of the participants, and later transcribed. The recording location was a classroom lent by each HEI, accommodating everyone at the scheduled time.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively from the technical procedure of content analysis (MINAYO, 2007; BARDIN, 2011), supported by the phases of pre-analysis, material exploration, inference and interpretation. To better organize the data and present the results, three categories of analysis were established *a priori*: 1) perception as a future Physical Education professional; 2) specificities of the training area; 3) recognition of the Physical Education professional.

As a way to assist in the analysis of the collected content, we used the qualitative analysis software Qualitative Solutions Research Nvivo 10. Each Focus Group was inserted as a source. The data analysis was guided by the elements of socialization and dimensions of professional representation (DUBAR, 1997; SILVA 2003).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the research was approved by the Standing Committee on Ethics in Research with Human Beings of the State University of Maringá and all participants signed the Free and Informed Consent Form.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 PERCEPTION AS A FUTURE PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL

When analyzing the perception of the student intern as a future Physical Education professional, it was possible to verify three remarkable perceptions. The first refers to the perception of a professional prepared for the professional intervention in the area of the bachelor's degree in Physical Education, but with the need for insertion in a process of continued education. The second indicates the expectations about the process of insertion and maintenance in the labor market; and the third addresses the appreciation of the profession by professionals in the area and by society.

For the student interns, constant updating on the part of the professional is important for a qualified professional intervention, once the initial training does not fully meet the specificities of the area, since it is broad. They emphasize that by means of updating/specialization the professional increases the chances of social and professional recognition. The statements of the student interns SI5, SI15 and SI26 illustrate a positive feeling towards professional performance and the view that continued education is important for professional recognition:

I see myself prepared to work, but I have to specialize in something. When we see other health professionals, for example, the doctor, he is dedicated to one specialty [...]. Not us, we serve personal trainers, elderly, pregnant women [...] we cover several areas without having the proper knowledge and depth in any of them and this limits our action (SI5).

Undergraduate studies are a beginning, it is fundamental for the bachelor to do a specialization, he needs to give continuity. What is right today may not be so tomorrow (SI15).

I see that I am at the beginning of professional practice, there is still a lot to go after. I am prepared to intervene, but there are many things to improve [...] (SI26).

Society has been demanding specialized and qualified work from the professionals who serve it (DUBAR, 1997). In this perspective, it is necessary to have a delimited and extremely qualified focus for the professional service, however, without losing the expanded vision of the area to which the specialty is linked.

Student interns understand that initial training is the first step to knowing the spaces of professional intervention and that new demands of society, especially those related to physical activity and health, are constantly presented, requiring continuing education for innovation and improvement, a process that becomes the support of effective performance in a highly competitive labor market (SALLES; FARIAS; NASCIMENTO, 2015). The individuals who are in initial training show a predisposition to adapt to market needs, highlighting the importance of an entrepreneurial vision to innovate and reinvent themselves according to the niches of the local reality.

In this sense, when seeing themselves ready for professional practice, but assuming the need for continued education, the student interns attest that their PI can be considered unfinished and without a single characteristic, being configured through the link with the work and the requirement of specific professional training. Thus, broadening the search for new knowledge contributes to the construction of the PI, promoting changes in trajectories, and socialization with peers, among other factors that can be measured in the performance.

The second perception illustrates the fear of the student interns regarding the insertion and maintenance in the labor market. According to the reports of the student interns illustrated through the speech of SI12, the professional of the area faces low remuneration and recognition.

We hope to do well in our area. Many people graduate and end up not working in the area, because of the lack of opportunity and, mainly, because of the low pay (SI12).

It is observed that the student interns perceive the need for constant updating, but point out the lack of appreciation of the labor market, since it demands qualification and updating. However, in most cases, it does not give economic support for such a demand, generating, in a certain way, the search for parallel training during the initial training or even during the intervention for the understanding of survival in the career.

A study conducted by Salles, Farias and Nascimento (2015) also found that low remuneration is one of the main concerns of bachelor of Physical Education graduates, generating dissatisfaction at work. Farias *et al.* (2008) and Moreira *et al.* (2010) emphasize that, for the graduate, the remuneration received in the field is mostly incompatible with their perceived level of training, quality of service, reality and workload, and the incomes of professionals with higher education have been the target of studies that demarcate the degree as a potential for remuneration (PECORA; MENEZES-FILHO, 2014).

Martins and Figueiredo (2015) point out that the choice and maintenance in the locus of intervention are directly related to obtaining a remuneration closer to

satisfactory. However, currently, this remuneration has not been consistent, leading to a pulverization of work (acting in various places and/or functions), as well as multiple jobs, to be able to make a living. Also based on the authors, one can reflect that this work in multiple areas and places applies more to the bachelors in Physical Education since they still suffer from the lack of a more effective professional representation that can contribute politically to the valorization of the area, as is the case of the personal trainer (CALESCO, 2021).

In this sense, a remuneration that is not compatible with the work and/or with the qualification of the professional may reflect on the professional representation, especially in the identity scope, related to doing and being in the profession through projects, attitude, and personal/professional motivations. By feeling motivated, the person ends up developing feelings of competence, autonomy, and relationship. The absence of these feelings can lead the individual to stop setting goals, feeling less self-determined about daily tasks and difficulties (JONES; GEORGE, 2008).

Gradually, this new professional needs to present other qualities and skills beyond the fact of teaching the practice of sport, because they need to break with this paradigm embedded in society and demonstrate their depth and breadth of knowledge of man, the body, movement, society and everything that may cover their intervention with their students/clients. Based on Fonseca and Souza Neto (2015), it is understood that the area will take some time for this recognition and valorization, since it is important that professionals demonstrate knowledge and action strategies to occupy the niches indicated by the professional representation bodies and by the laws and resolutions of the area. Moreover, it is important to consider political, economic, legal, cultural, and social factors, to reach a fair remuneration.

Another highlighted perception in this theme refers to the fact that during the PCI the student interns are faced with professionals who do not value the category, assuming an individual posture to the detriment of the collective. Such a posture may generate a certain professional devaluation, resulting in a profession in which the care has low quality and/or presents flaws in the daily intervention.

Our area is the only course that you can work without having a degree. That's why there is this great devaluation of the professional in the market, we see many professionals in the area who [...] are not committed, they work, but without the proper attention and knowledge (SI5).

From the moment we become aware that a guy who studied Physical Education is different from a guy who never studied, things may improve. Someone who has done sports, played soccer his whole life is different from someone who has studied, this does not mean he has enough knowledge to teach, the guy has to have the minimum knowledge, the basics (SI16).

I hope to do well, to manage my profession. Because I believe that the management part is very flawed for our area, which ends up harming it. Teamwork is very negative, we should have more teamwork for the profession to be valued [...] the professional values the individual part, not the profession (SI26).

The considerations presented about working without proper initial or continuing education, as well as the lack of a collective look at the professional category, corroborate the reflections presented by Silva, Carvalho, and Aparício (2016), which

indicate that some categories are essential and interdependent for the affirmation and recognition of the socioprofessional group, highlighting: the initial and continuing education in order to ensure knowledge, skills, and professional development; the practical action perceived by the public; the existence of a network of professionals to structure strategies in favor of identity construction; communication and defense of collective interests of the profession; and affirmation of ethical and deontological principles.

Still in the perspective of professionalism and professional recognition, Freidson (1998, p. 206) points out that the intervention and the recognition of the professional category are strongly imbricated with the “social value of work and the dangers arising from its misuse”. Thus, it is of paramount importance that professionals assume a commitment to their peers, their profession, and their clients. In this category emerges the reflection that initial and continuing education, as well as the actions of the PCI, need to prepare the professional for the exercise of the profession, but also for the collective look and the valuation of the area.

In the specific case of the bachelor, it is noted that there is an absence of training related to entrepreneurship and sports management, a knowledge that fosters the participation and contribution of professionals to the society. Quinaud, Farias, and Nascimento (2018, p.1118) point out that although the courses are concerned with “forming professionals capable of performing management and marketing activities and with critical thoughts regarding the management of public policies in health, sport, and leisure [...] the movement in higher education institutions is still timid”. These indicatives show that knowledge about the reality of intervention becomes remarkable, especially when identifying the absences and concerns about knowing/being in the future profession, facts that are evidenced by student interns in the internship time in bachelor's degree courses (VILELA; BOTH, 2016), becoming preponderant for the constitution of the student's PI.

In view of the indicatives and reflections outlined, the constitution of the PI throughout the PCI is linked to the vision of initial and continuing education, the social recognition of the profession and the financial area. Moreover, issues related to professional practice (functional scope) are directly linked to the reflections and actions that consolidate the area as a professional category and the sharing of knowledge and objectives, establishing a direct relationship with the formative and interventional directions of the profession (contextual scope).

3.2 SPECIFICITIES OF THE TRAINING AREA

Initial training is a moment of learning specific and interventional knowledge in which feelings and actions inherent to the profession are incorporated. Throughout this process, reflections are fostered based on the relationships established between the professional and the profession, between the agents, and between these agents and society, which ultimately influences the PI, since, according to Dubar (2009), the PI depends on the period considered and the point of view adopted.

Reflecting on the specificity of Physical Education, it is noted that in recent years, initial education has undergone legal adjustments in search of the delimitation

of its fields of action and the PI, as well as the recognition of society (BRASIL *et al.*, 2015; BRASIL, 2018a). Such adjustments are reflected in the Courses' Pedagogical Projects, which follow the regulations in force, and in the sense of belonging (behavior, attitudes and opinions) of the subjects involved in the process, configuring the identity desired by the collective of teachers of the HEIs in each proposal (PIRES *et al.*, 2017).

About the structure of the undergraduate course in Physical Education currently recommended, the guidelines of the new NCGs of Physical Education are highlighted. This Resolution states that the initial training for this professional should have a reference workload of 3,200 hours for the development of academic actions, respecting the student's autonomy over his/her training path. The object of study in the Physical Education field is the "body movement culture, focusing on the different forms [...] of physical exercise, gymnastics, games, sports, fights and dance [...] in the field of health, education [...], culture, high-performance sports and leisure" (BRASIL, 2018a, p. 1). It is worth noting that the new NCGs bring the need for articulation between knowledge, skills, sensitivity and attitudes aimed at the future professional so that they are portrayed from two stages of initial training, namely: common stage (offered in the first two years of training, which brings general knowledge and identifiers of the area of Physical Education) and specific stage (offered from the third year, which portrays the knowledge and specific knowledge for the qualification in the area of bachelor's degree or licentiate).

In this sense, in order to identify how the student interns understand the specificities of the training area, it was found through the debates that this understanding is based on the identification with the health area strongly linked to its dictates and quality of life; on the initial training guidelines, established through the Courses' Pedagogical Projects, PCI fields, and curricular components, as well as on the understanding of the area from the demands and delimitations of the labor market.

The discussions indicate that the student interns recognize the bachelor as a professional responsible for improving the health and quality of life of the population and for developing interventional actions outside the school context. Their identification with the field of work is related to the preconception of the area, terminology, and concepts employed in the training courses, especially the fields of PCI addressed.

A bachelor's degree fits everything outside the school (SI11).

I think that the specificity of the area is heavily influenced by the names of our internships, for example, the adapted area, health, sports and leisure. I think the bachelor's degree fits into these four areas, working on the population's health and quality of life [...] (SI5).

The representations of the discussions brought by the speeches show that there is an immediate predisposition to understanding the PI in Physical Education, rigidly marked by the school and non-school field, reflecting the practical knowledge shared by the school, club, media, experiences in the street etc. (RIBEIRO, 2016; GAMA; SCHNEIDER, 2021). In addition, the concepts present in the curriculum are a clear mark in the process of identity constitution, since, in addition to directing the didactic and interventional actions, they end up establishing spaces of signification,

which results in projects and identity forms (NUNES; NEIRA, 2018; ANVERSA *et al.*, 2020).

From this perspective, considering the contents, actions and fields of PCI that have been addressed, since the speeches deal with a superficial or restricted configuration, there is a reflection on the vision of the Physical Education professional linked to the improvement of health and quality of life of the population, a vision that carries a generic conception, since it exposes the fragility and lack of clarity about the objectives of the service provided and about the PI of the area (FREIRE; VERENGUER; REIS, 2002). This can be revealed when addressing intervention processes, concerns, and formative experiences prior to internships, among other constituent factors of PI, which are revealing in the very time of PCIs (PIRES *et al.*, 2017).

Bauman (2005) alerts us that the community in which we live defines identity. The vision of Physical Education linked to health and quality of life is an identity constituted in and by society, since the healthy ideal has become a goal for individuals. In this way, Physical Education, especially the bachelor's degree, is molded to the interests of the current society, and may become whatever the market prefers, incorporating to the curricula new ideas and theories from liquid modernity and, consequently, new identities and communities of the area (LOPES; VIEIRA, 2017).

This generates a warning since the curricula of the courses need to be constituted with structural flexibility, dialoguing with daily life, but without being reduced to it, knowing the parts from the whole. In this case, it is necessary to know how to deal with the indeterminate, connecting knowledge in favor of ethical and moral reflections related to biosociocultural and economic issues, "it is necessary to replace disjunctive and reductive thinking with complex thinking" (MORIN, 2002, p. 88), putting into effect in the training the knowledge, skills, and feelings that are manifested in the student interns.

The author's statements lead us to reflect on the need for the curriculum to take a new pedagogical approach to the proposed actions, that is, to provide moments of interrelation between practical and theoretical knowledge throughout the training. One of the goals of this process is to foster autonomy, socialization, and relationships between what is studied in the classroom and the daily reality of the profession, in its multiple relationships and demands. The NCGs of Physical Education even bring as an orientation to think about this pedagogical praxis, the PCI and its workload reflects this. However, as there is a certain autonomy of each HEI and its faculty in structuring and designing the undergraduate course in Physical Education, it is noted how much this group of actors needs to align their curricular components to meet this process (praxis).

This relationship between curriculum and labor market is presented in the statements of the student interns. SI14 argues that the curriculum and the actions developed by the course need to be restructured in order to meet the profile of the regional market, while SI21 emphasizes that the course needs to present a range of options, but ensure opportunities for deepening in specific areas:

I think that the course has to verify what the market in the region needs and say 'Well, this bachelor will work here'. This will help direct the education, you will have much more foundation here to be able to work there (SI14).

Physical Education is very broad. We have to know a little of everything, but we have to choose an area and follow it and look for ways to deepen it (SI21).

Tojal (2004) points out that initial training needs to consider the distinct demands in order to guarantee subsidies for the professional to exercise multiple functions within their area of knowledge, but, for this, the preparation cannot be generalist and unfocused, nor highly specialized and segmented, seeking to guarantee a basic structuring of knowledge in the area that will give them the subsidy to intervene on behalf of human development in its physical and emotional conditions.

At this point, the importance of initial training ensuring interaction with the intervening context throughout the process (common and specific stages) is defended, through the Practices as a Curricular Component (PCC), since experience is the basis of learning and, when guided, facilitates the construction of knowledge, bringing the student closer to the reality experienced, establishing the relationship between education and the labor market. It is observed the need for a formation with knowledge in a spiral, that is, that the PCC guarantee experimentation (observe, feel, experience) and the PCI the experience and the deepening, giving subsidy to the choice of action, but without depriving the knowledge inherent to other areas of intervention.

This point is a necessity indicated by the student interns themselves (SI4, SI11, SI27). When questioned about other components that provided practical moments in the professional practice space, they reported that there were few of them, often consisting of practices applied to their colleagues:

There were subjects that we intervened in, applied activities, but with ourselves (SI4).

I think we should have more experience in the field of action throughout college (SI11).

Ah, there are the visits throughout the course, the final events of some courses and the practices that we apply to ourselves (SI27).

The importance of experiencing the routines of the profession is discussed in the literature as a strategy for the student intern to constitute a clearer view of the profession, relating classroom knowledge to everyday actions, increasing the chance of organizing themselves more securely in the PCI and making learning more effective (NASCIMENTO *et al.*, 2009; MARCON, 2011; REID, 2011; TEIXEIRA *et al.*, 2017). In the case of bachelor's Physical Education courses, Awad, Stolarski and Both (2019) point out that the PCC aim to strengthen academic training through theoretical and practical reflections from different professional contexts in which they can act, but still lack the involvement of HEI teachers, organizations of the Courses' Pedagogical Projects and planning and structuring of proposals. An alternative that can be articulated to this idea of PCC is university extension, since undergraduate courses throughout Brazil are adapting to Resolution CNE/CES n. 07/2018 (BRASIL, 2018b), by incorporating

in their curricula ways to offer this academic pillar in order to value and curricularize extension. Thus, if in the development of curricular components the student interns are led to experiential learning with increasing complexity (MOON, 2004; JARVIS, 2004; 2007; MARCON, 2011) through the PCC, they will build throughout the process a base structure of knowledge about the area and, when they reach the PCI, they will be able to choose in which field they want to perform their experience.

The choice of the PCI field will possibly influence the professional performance of the student interns and their knowledge. In this perspective, such a choice legitimizes their identity dimension, since it is based on the ability to present ideas and discuss occurrences dominating work situations.

3.3 THE RECOGNITION OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL

Considering the discussions presented above, it is noted that there is an influence of the labor market in the preconceptions about the field of Physical Education and in the self-regulation of the identity process, since the identity constitution establishes relations with what is reflected by society to the professional exercise, varying according to the time and place. This process leads the subjects to question themselves about who they are, the place they occupy, what they know and what they can do to solve conflicts and problem situations presented, leading them to a symbolic dimension linked to the realization of themselves and their social recognition (DUBAR, 2012).

In this dimension, the collective assumes unity, thus creating a social imaginary that institutes to the individual and to the profession, from the group's performance in the world of work, social representations that interfere in the construction of the PI, in the curriculum of higher education courses, and in the profile built by society (MAFFESOLI, 2000; NUNES; NEIRA, 2018).

The discussions established in the focus groups corroborate this theme mentioned above. The speech of the student intern 10 illustrates this feeling of lack of recognition by society regarding the service provided by the Physical Education professional:

You spend four or five years studying, to tell the guy that this is important and he doesn't understand. Then the doctor goes there and tells him in five minutes: 'Look, you have to treat your heart problem by doing physical activity'. Then the guy says: 'So, physical activity will save me!' Do you understand? This is the problem, recognition (SI10).

Given the perception presented and the reflections outlined, the subjects only realize that the profession has respect if it is valued in society from their social relations. The fact of not having access to the professional and social recognition that was expected is one of the elements that trigger the PI crisis, since the professional no longer recognizes himself in the profession (DUBAR, 2009; 2012).

Physical Education faces a social resistance towards the recognition of its importance because it carries with it a professional representation built by a formative process of society, which assigned it different goals, based on human movement, but dictated by outside interests and directed to the biological and aesthetic body

(MAROUN; VIEIRA, 2007). This fact is evidenced by Calesco (2021), who, when pointing out the expectations in the career of professionals with a bachelor's degree, highlights that professional appreciation is desired since the beginning of the career, and may decrease according to the maladjustments of the market, as well as aspects related to their survival, which may reflect in positive or negative traits for the PI. To gain its relevant and/or confident social meaning, the area needs, through its pedagogical and formative actions,

[...] to contribute so that individuals can know, choose, experience, transform, plan and be able to judge the values associated with the practice of physical activity, and not just to practices without understanding this practice, simply adhering (or not) to the fad of physical activity (MAROUN; VIEIRA, 2007, p.222).

Another important element that needs to be thought within the field of Physical Education, starting from the initial training courses, is its scientific making as a beacon movement of changes in the image of the professional of the area. Such a process can be a way to highlight that, in addition to a practical characteristic, this professional is not an uncritical agent; on the contrary, for having characteristics of a professional-researcher, he/she thinks about the problems (individual and/or collective) that go through our society nowadays and seeks meaningful solutions consistent with reality. Bossle and Fraga (2016) point out that this process of scientificization of Physical Education in the undergraduate curricula of this professional, throughout history, has always been a powerful weapon to combat the little merit assigned to the subjects who work in this area.

Thus, it is important that the area reconstruct its social imaginary and its function from basic education, so that when it is extended to other areas of intervention, it has its professional value established. For this, the area must provoke the construction of a new social imaginary through qualified and useful actions for society. However, one must have patience and persistence in this construction, for it takes time to change something that has been long rooted in the culture.

Another perceived obstacle is in the regulation of the area, since most Physical Education professionals still face a lack of recognition in the non-formal market, especially in actions directed to prevention and health promotion, since the professional practice in the area is still linked to the teacher's view and, as indicated by Tracz *et al.* (2022), the training of the bachelor in Physical Education is still far from the growth that the area has shown in the field of public health, lacking specific subjects, integrated actions with other health courses and theoretical and practical experiences, especially in the context of the Unified Health System (UHS).

In this second area that I am in, which is more focused on health, the Physical Education professional has to conquer their space, you know? People prefer physical therapists because they think they are more serious than Physical Education professionals. When I am working with sports, I do not see this (SI18).

Bachelor's Physical Education still tries to seek its credibility in the market, because people as a bachelor are relatively new. We have to impose ourselves as a professional, and no longer as a teacher (SI21).

The speeches of SI18 and SI21 reiterate the identity constitution from the vision and recognition of society. In a way, slowly, society links the action of the Physical Education professional as belonging to the health field, however, it does not show an appreciation of the field itself. The intervention of the professionals in this field is still linked to the school context and the biomedical precepts and/or the sportivization precepts, showing a certain precariousness in dealing with the culture of prevention and health promotion. Perhaps, this distancing and weaknesses of the educational process will be alleviated with the restructuring of curricula based on the indications of the new NCGs of Physical Education, which mention that the education of the bachelor in Physical Education must contemplate a) health policies and programs; b) basic, secondary and tertiary health care, collective health, UHS, biological, psychological, sociological, cultural and pedagogical dimensions and implications of health; c) integration of teaching, service and community; d) health management; e) objectives, content, methods and evaluation of projects and programs of Physical Education in health (BRASIL, 2018a).

This context ends up pointing to the need to value the Physical Education professional and their actions towards prevention and health promotion in order to overcome this precarious identity, and the health area is an ally in the professional's performance, such as working in gyms and as a personal trainer (CALESCO, 2021). According to the speech of SI9, this need to value the professional and the actions proposed by them is also perceived in the PCI process.

Many students came to me and said that unfortunately they were disappointed with the course and the area during the mandatory internship. Because you arrive, especially in the gym, you try to expose knowledge acquired in college and the person does not care, she has the opinion that you are her psychologist. You try to instruct her on the most appropriate but she does not want to do it (SI9).

This obstacle can be due to the lack of recognition of the student intern in the intervening field. As Silva Junior, Both and Oliveira (2018) point out, student interns generally face resistance from teachers (supervisors) and students (clients), since they are already used to a culturally established practice and see the intern as someone who is just passing through.

This confrontation generates a professional relationship different from the idealized model, characterized by the dignity of the profession and its symbolic valuation coming from the initial training. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the student intern has recognition and identification with their actions, especially by the supervising teacher, especially in front of the students/clients (DUBAR, 2009; 2012).

Thus, having understood the student intern's view on society's recognition of their professional performance, the need for actions to value their work is highlighted. One of the paths perceived through the participants' discussions is through the curriculum and its relations with public health, the activities of insertion of the professional in the market during the PCC and the PCI, especially in the different areas, hours of intervention and the knowledge of the intervening field that comes from them.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The constitution of the PI in initial training in Physical Education lacks attention in the area, for being a recent theme, and, at the same time, it highlights the need for continuous analysis and research, considering its non-linear dynamics and constant update in face of new trends, innovations, and transformations in professional training and performance, an action that is currently configured, since undergraduate courses in Physical Education (despite understanding and criticizing the weaknesses presented in the document) are restructuring their curricula following the guidelines of the new NCGs of Physical Education.

In this context, the undergraduate Physical Education student interns in this study, based on their perceptions about the constitution of PI, presented important findings and reflections in the discussions promoted in the focus groups, in order to allow the following conclusions:

- a. the scope of the bachelor's degree in Physical Education expands the possibilities of intervention, but at the same time this is a factor that can make the professional's job more precarious;
- b. the highly competitive labor market in the area of the bachelor's degree in Physical Education demands a professional who is attentive to innovations and predisposed to constant updates and continued education;
- c. Physical Education professionals face low remuneration and less recognition by society than other health areas;
- d. professionals tend to pursue more individual interests than collective causes, which weakens the valorization of the professional and the area;
- e. the initial training of future Physical Education professionals must enable the interaction of the theoretical basis with the context of intervention, in order to recognize the specificities of the area in the practical field and enrich the training process;
- f. it is necessary to work together with society for greater recognition of the area and of Physical Education professionals.

Although the aspects mentioned above are notorious to the emerging needs and have a direct impact on the constitution of the PI in initial training in bachelor's Physical Education, it is important to consider that adjustments and transformations require collective work with professionals and society, continuously and with emphasis on awareness of Physical Education as a health area. This process demands effective strategies and persistence for the transformation of a long-established culture, which has repercussions on training, performance and the status of the profession in society.

The conclusions presented in this research are limited to the perceptions and opinions of undergraduate Physical Education student interns. It is suggested that further research be conducted to broaden the focus and to enable the participation of other people (teacher trainers, professionals, and customers, among others).

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Resumo: O estudo objetivou analisar como os estudantes-estagiários compreendem a constituição da identidade profissional na formação inicial em Educação Física bacharelado. Participaram da pesquisa qualitativa do tipo descritiva 30 estudantes-estagiários na realização de grupos focais. Os dados coletados foram analisados de forma descritiva a partir do procedimento técnico da análise de conteúdo e com o auxílio do software de análise qualitativa Nvivo10. Os resultados apresentados destacam que os estudantes-estagiários reconhecem que a abrangência da área amplia as possibilidades de intervenção; visualizam o mercado de trabalho altamente competitivo; percebem a área com pouco reconhecimento e baixa remuneração; indicam que a formação inicial do futuro profissional da área deve possibilitar a interação entre a teoria e a prática; e enfatizam a necessidade de um trabalho qualificado junto à sociedade para estimular o reconhecimento da área e do profissional de Educação Física.

Palavras-chave: Educação Física. Capacitação Profissional. Informação de Identidade Pessoal. Mercado de trabalho

Resumen: El estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar cómo comprenden los estudiantes en práctica la constitución de la identidad profesional en la formación en Bachillerato en Educación Física. Treinta estudiantes en práctica participaron en la investigación cualitativa de tipo descriptiva a través de la realización de grupos focales. Los datos recolectados fueron analizados en forma descriptiva a partir del procedimiento técnico de análisis de contenido y con la ayuda del software de análisis cualitativo Nvivo10. Los resultados presentados destacan que los estudiantes en práctica reconocen que el alcance del área amplía las posibilidades de intervención; visualizan al mercado laboral como altamente competitivo; ven el área con poco reconocimiento y baja remuneración; indican que la formación inicial del futuro profesional del área debe posibilitar la interacción entre la teoría y la práctica; enfatizan la necesidad de un trabajo calificado junto a la sociedad para estimular el reconocimiento del área y del profesional de Educación Física.

Palabras clave: Educación Física. Capacitación Profesional. Información de Identidad Personal. Mercado de Trabajo.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that this work involves no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Ana Luiza Barbosa Anversa: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, research, methodology, writing – original draft, writing – proofreading and editing.

Patric Paludett Flores: data curation, formal analysis, research, writing – proofreading and editing.

Arestides Pereira da Silva Junior: data curation, formal analysis, research, writing – proofreading and editing.

Vânia de Fátima Matias de Souza: methodology, project management, supervision, visualization, writing – proofreading and editing.

Gelcemar Oliveira Farias: methodology, supervision, visualization, writing – proofreading and editing.

Amauri Aparecido Bássoli de Oliveira: conceptualization, methodology, visualization, writing – original draft, writing – proofreading and editing.

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EDITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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