

THE FRESHMAN METAMORPHOSIS: A STUDY ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS FROM FIRST-YEAR MANAGEMENT STUDENTS

METAMORFOSE DO CALOURO: UM ESTUDO DA EVOLUÇÃO DAS EXPECTATIVAS ACADÊMICAS DE INGRESSANTES EM ADMINISTRAÇÃO

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ABSTRACT

Academic expectations are aspirations or dreams that secondary students have about their undergraduate education. Knowledge of academic expectations is important for a Higher Education Institution (HEI). It allows the identification of the gaps between expectations and reality and the implementation of acts that improve students' academic life. The aim of this research was to conduct a quantitative-descriptive research on management undergraduate students from 'Universidade Federal de Viçosa' – Campus Florestal (CGA/F), Brazil. The data was collected in March and October 2018. The Academic Perceptions: Version A - Expectations - Brazilian Version (QPA-E / B) questionnaire was used from a restricted longitudinal perspective. The result showed that contact with reality modifies students' academic expectations. In fact, not only have freshman students an unrealistic view of academic life - what is called the 'freshman myth' in the literature, but also, they elaborate a gradual transformation of the self, what was called in this paper, 'freshman metamorphosis'.

Keywords: Academic Expectations. Management Course. Freshman Metamorphosis.

RESUMO

Expectativas acadêmicas são definidas como aspirações ou sonhos que os estudantes têm com o ensino de graduação. O conhecimento das expectativas acadêmicas é importante para a Instituição de Ensino Superior (IES). Ele permite a identificação das discrepâncias entre as expectativas e a realidade e a implementação de ações que ajudem os estudantes a uma melhor adaptação à realidade da vida acadêmica. Esta pesquisa investigou as expectativas acadêmicas dos alunos ingressantes do Curso de Graduação em Administração da Universidade Federal de Viçosa – Campus Florestal (CGA/F) nos meses de março e outubro de 2018. Trata-se de um estudo quantitativo-descritivo com dados coletados por meio do Questionário de Percepções Acadêmicas: Versão A – Expectativas – Versão brasileira (QPA-E/B) em uma perspectiva longitudinal restrita. O resultado mostrou que o contato com a realidade altera as expectativas acadêmicas dos estudantes. Ficou evidente na pesquisa que acontece não apenas a visão irrealista dos estudantes quando ingressam na universidade – que ficou conhecido na literatura com o termo 'mito do calouro' - *freshman myth* – mas também uma transformação gradual deste estudante, o que aqui se denominou 'metamorfose do calouro'.

Palavras-chave: Expectativas Acadêmicas. Curso de Administração. Metamorfose do Calouro.

1 INTRODUCTION

Waking gives dreams
a reputation they don't deserve.
(Paul Valéry)

Being admitted to a Higher Education Institution is one of the main dreams of students who finish high school. According to data from the *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira* (INEP) - National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira -, in 2018, there were more than 5.5 million candidates enrolled in the National High School Exam (ENEM) in Brazil. According to the Ministry of Education (2015), ENEM is the second largest test of access to higher education in the world, behind only the *Gaokao* exam conducted in China.

However, those who achieve the admission dream soon face a set of difficulties due to unrealistic expectations related to academic life (SOARES et al., 2017). Thus, upon entering university, many students find a reality very different from the one they dreamed of, which can generate disappointment right at the beginning of academic attendance (OLIVEIRA, 2015). This dissonance between students' academic expectations and the reality found can be pointed out as one of the reasons that contribute to the high dropout rate in Higher Education (SOARES et al., 2017).

So that there is congruence between expectations and satisfaction of those entering a higher education course, HEIs must direct efforts in two ways: a) externally, towards society and the market, checking the environmental context in which students will apply the knowledge they acquire and, b) internally, aligning their pedagogical orientation to the expectations of new students and allocating the available resources for the full development of students' potential. All of which presupposes knowledge of the academic expectations of incoming students.

On July 8, 2010, the Teaching, Research and Extension Council (CEPE) of the '*Universidade Federal de Viçosa*' (UFV) authorized the offer of a Management Course in the city of *Florestal*, thereafter mentioned as MC/F, which started in the first semester of 2011. The course currently offers 60 entries per year in the evening period with an expected duration of 4 and a half years (*PROJETO PEDAGÓGICO DO CURSO DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO – CAMPUS FLORESTAL*, 2013). However, little is known about the expectations and dreams of students in the course. This paper questions: what are the

expectations of students entering this course? And how do these expectations change facing reality?

The objective of this work was, therefore, to describe and analyze students' academic expectations admitted at MC/F in 2018 and how these expectations were transformed from the first to the second term of the course. To achieve that, the Academic Perceptions Questionnaire: Version A – Expectations – Brazilian version (MARINHO-ARAÚJO et al., 2015) was applied.

It is considered important in the literature to know the expectations of those entering a course as it can contribute to the improvement of the teaching project, such as, for example, the diversification of pedagogical activities, the review of the subject offers and of other extracurricular activities. Students are also benefited, especially if they are offered feedback on the gaps between their initial expectations and the real possibilities the institution can offer. The adjustment between expectations and reality is an important factor as it also influences the future professional choices of undergraduates (LAGIOIA et al., 2007) and can help students adapt more successfully in the critical first weeks of their studies in the university (GONYEA et al., 2006).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Araújo and Almeida (2015) define academic expectations as objectives or aspirations students create for their attendance in Higher Education. Although expectations can be classified as optimistic or pessimistic (SHOWERS and RUBEN, 1990), thereafter, in this paper, we will consider academic expectations as optimistic.

Several authors (SOARES; ALMEIDA, 2001; GIL et al., 2013) recognize that academic expectations of first year students at the university are an important variable for academic adaptation and success. Tinto (1989) recognized that a surprisingly large number of students enroll in an HEI without having a clear idea of their choice. Many do not even reflect on which institution to choose, doing it in a haphazard manner, often based on insufficient information. Although, according to Gonyea et al. (2006), the transition to the University can be filled with confirmation of existing expectations, many students remain with unrealistic and even naive views about what life at the university is all about. Stern (1966) used the term 'freshman myth' - to describe these students' expectations, as they will have little correspondence with the students' experience in the university context. As knowledge of the

process unfolds, some of these students adapt, some transfer themselves to new institutions or programs and others may even abandon their studies permanently.

There is also, according to Crisp et al. (2009, p. 13), "a significant difference between students' expectations and the experience that the institutions are prepared to offer them". In the student's encounter with reality there are misunderstandings both related to students' misinformation about the characteristics of the institution and related to institutional failure of knowledge of students' expectations. According to Almeida et al. (2003), the university does not always work closely with students in order to clarify its characteristics and requirements, which would be extremely useful, especially during the first months of attending the University. The lack of correspondence between the student's expectations and the teaching context is a preview that the institution may not provide support for the student to accomplish what he designed. Mezirow (1991) uses the expression 'disorienting dilemma' to refer to the initial phase of adaptation. This situation has important consequences: little integration, less commitment from the student, regret for the choice or even the abandonment of the institution. (TINTO, 1989; SCHLEICH; POLYDORO; SANTOS, 2006; ARAÚJO; ALMEIDA, 2015). In this way, academic expectations are decisive for some consequences of life in higher education, especially regarding the continuity or abandonment of the course (SOARES et al., 2016).

The studies by Jackson et al. (2000) described students according to their initial expectations and characterized them in four distinct groups: **optimistic, prepared, fearful and complacent**. In summary, according to the author, the difference between the groups can be explained both "in terms of the intensity of positive and negative expectations that they tend to express, and in terms of their plans for how to get around the difficulties" (p. 2119). The authors' research concludes that students classified in the prepared group showed higher levels of adaptation at university in relation to other groups. A practical consequence of the study was the need to develop strategies to help students classified as fearful to deal with their anxiety. Araújo and Almeida (2015) note that both the fearful student and the one who does not give importance to their higher education and, still, those who see the pressure of the family as the main stimulus for their attendance, will have not enough motivation to face the challenges proposed by the university education.

This is because academic expectations and the actions arising from them are not merely mechanical. According to Soares et al. (2017) academic expectations are made up of

three factors: cognitive, affective and motivational. In other words, thinking and feeling are factors that drive action. Accordingly, Gil et al. (2013) would say that behavior is influenced by expectations, but only by those which are knowable to materialize. Thus, academic expectations have an impact on the adaptation, on academic performance and on the psychosocial development of students, in the face of the changes they need to challenge when entering university (MARINHO-ARAÚJO et al., 2015; PORTO; SOARES, 2017). According to Almeida et al. (2003), these changes occur at several levels: **academic**, for example, when referring to adaptations to new learning contexts and forms of assessment; **social**, related, for example, to the establishment of new ways of relationship with peers and teachers; **personal**, in the sense of gaining autonomy; and **vocational**, in the commitment to the professional objectives of the course.

Almeida et al. (2003) also draw attention to the factors that **precede** and **succeed** academic expectations. The preceding factors are related to pre-university personal characteristics of students, such as school trajectory, interests and aspirations that are shaped by the educational contexts of family, previous teachers and peers. Gonyea et al. (2006) add that freshmen arrive at university with a great deal of knowledge and expectations, coming from their life experience and from high school and that this background will be “the context through which these new students will interpret their university experience” (p. 3).

During the research to choose where to study, students form the first impressions of the social and intellectual characteristics of the institution. These impressions originate, in general, from the materials that the university makes available to the candidates, which also may contribute to the first expectations of the nature of academic life. These expectations end up influencing the quality of the first interactions established within the institution. Unrealistic or mistaken expectations can lead to initial disappointments or trigger a series of interactions that lead to desertion (TINTO, 1989).

Succeeding factors, among others, are understood as the level of effort and commitment to their own educational process. In this sense, expectations function as links between what was dreamed by the students and their behavior (SOARES et al., 2018).

Moreno and Soares (2014) note, from another perspective, that academic expectations are associated with issues strictly related to the course itself, which can be called direct expectations - such as disciplines and assessments - as well as with more indirect issues – as social and interpersonal relations, the study environment, the resources made available by the

HEI, etc. On the one hand, it is based on these direct academic expectations that students assume an environment appropriate to their competences; on the other hand, it is based on indirect academic expectations that they perceive themselves as social beings. As Soares et al. (2016) add, “the academic environment is full of interpersonal experiences, autonomy and freedom for the acquisition of knowledge” (p. 46).

To deepen the understanding of this process of transition and adaptation of students to higher education, Almeida et al. (2000) considered three groups of factors to be important: a) variables more directly associated with learning and academic performance, related to “the students themselves, the teacher, the curricular organization, the academic context and the multiple forms of interaction that derive from these relationships” (p. 191); b) variables more directly associated with the self and the psychosocial development of individuals, or which concern the “development of a strong sense of identity, the development of more mature interpersonal relations, ... as well as the establishment of a philosophy and plan of life” (p. 193); and c) variables more directly associated with the university context, including those that refer to the “physical spaces of the campus” (p. 195). These factors were the basis for the construction of the questionnaire used in this research and it was initially called the Academic Experiences Questionnaire (AEQ). Subsequently, the questionnaire was expanded and adapted to the Brazilian reality, as explained in the methodological part.

In summary, the concept of academic expectations is complex, and the literature reinforces that its understanding is important to overcome the difficulties encountered by certain students to integrate into the university environment and to develop their capacity to face the challenges of higher education.

3 METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a quantitative-descriptive approach and a restricted longitudinal perspective. The analysis unit comprised students entering the MC/ F in 2018. The quantitative approach was adopted to facilitate the approach to all individuals of the unit of analysis. With the distribution of a questionnaire, it was possible to obtain the perception of all incoming students in two different moments: at the beginning of the first term (1st application) and during the second term (2nd application). This made possible to understand the transformation of students' academic expectations from moment 1 to moment 2. The research objective is descriptive, that is, it aims only to observe, describe and analyze the

students' perceptions without manipulating or interfering with them (PRODANOV; FREITAS, 2013).

The time lapse of the research is considered to be longitudinal and restricted. The restricted quality was added here, by the authors, to highlight the short-term character of the longitudinal aspect of the research, which only took into account two moments of evaluation of students' academic expectations – the 1st and 2nd terms of the course. The justification for this procedure was that prolonging data collection beyond the second semester would fall into a nebulous zone between expectation and satisfaction, i.e., between students' expectations of what was yet to come in the course and the degree of satisfaction with what had already happened.

The data collection instrument used was the Academic Perceptions Questionnaire: Version A – Expectations – Brazilian version (APQ-E/B). The APQ-E/B is a questionnaire based on the Likert scale and was adapted to Brazilian context by Marinho-Araujo et al. (2015), based on the Portuguese version of Almeida et al. (2012). The studies that gave rise to the factors present in the questionnaire were developed well before, by Almeida and Ferreira (1977) and Almeida et al. (2000).

The APQ-E/B uses a six-point scale and was considered adequate for the intention of this research due to its ease of use, although much is discussed about the nature and the best way to build scales for measuring human feelings (DALMORO; VIEIRA, 2013; LUCIAN, 2016). The questionnaire is divided into seven factors and each factor is composed of several variables – between 5 to 13, that is, statements that refer to that factor. All variables are defined as positive, i.e., they refer to desirable expectations in a university experience. The description of the seven factors and the number of variables for each is summarized in Figure 1.

The applied questionnaire did not contain the identification of the participant, in order to guarantee anonymity. The introductory part of the questionnaire asked for the following information: age, sex and working condition - whether they worked or not. Then, the student was asked to answer the questionnaire based on the following statement: 'Upon entering the Management course in UFV- Campus Florestal, I hope to ...'. The questionnaire then presented 61 statements, for instance: 'Take the opportunity I have to obtain training in higher education'. The response options consisted of a Likert scale composed of 6 alternatives numbered 1 to 6, in the following order: 1) Fully Disagree (fD), 2) Strongly Disagree (sD), 3)

Partially Disagree (pD), 4) Partially Agree (pA), 5) Strongly Agree (sA) and 6) Fully Agree (fA). A 6-point scale was chosen to avoid the neutral option because, according to Lucian (2016), research such as that of Guy and Norvell (1977) revealed that in the presence of the neutral point, respondents tend to flee from extremes and choose the midpoints. Bearing in mind that the Likert scale makes it possible to measure both direction and intensity, the intention was to force the respondent to adopt a position of compromise between agreeing or disagreeing and after that their degree of agreement or disagreement (OLIVEIRA, 2001; LUCIAN, 2015). Therefore, in this research, the directional factor was considered of greater importance rather than the intensity factor.

Figure 1 Description of the factors and corresponding numbers of variables

Factors	Description of Factors	Number of variables
Factor 1 - Quality Academic Education	Corresponds to obtaining a good preparation to exercise the profession.	12
Factor 2 - Social and Academic Commitment	Refers to the critical-reflexive attitude towards social problems, with a view to improving the quality of life in society.	13
Factor 3 - Expansion of Interpersonal Relations	Covers the opportunity to establish new networks of relationships and participation in extra-class activities.	8
Factor 4 - Internationalization and Exchange Opportunity	Refers to the experience and the opportunity to expand academic education in foreign institutions.	8
Factor 5 - Perspective of Professional Success	Possibility of obtaining a good job and stability in a profession valued by society.	5
Factor 6 - Concern with self-image	Imposition of not failing and of meeting the expectations of family and friends; yearning to guarantee a positive perception of yourself.	6
Factor 7 - Cross-cutting Skills Development	Development of the ability to mobilize resources to resolve unusual professional and personal situations.	9

Source: Based on Marinho-Araujo et al. (2015).

The questionnaire was applied by the first author to students present in the classroom in two moments: the first application of the questionnaire occurred in the second week of freshman classes – March 2018. In the previous week, the course coordinator had given a reception lecture for information about the course and the University (Pedagogical Project, School Didactics, Course Syllabus, etc.). This activity probably had an influence on the responses obtained, but it will not be possible to capture this interference in this research. During the questionnaire application, the objective of the research was explained, and the participants were asked to sign the Ethics Consent Form. An attendance list was issued to control who was present on the day. Of the fifty-eight students admitted to the course in the

first period, fifty-four were present in the room on the day of the first distribution. One student refused to answer the questionnaire, so fifty-three responses were collected.

The second distribution occurred in the middle of the second semester of the course – October 2018. Forty-five of the fifty students enrolled in the second period were present in the second distribution. The second application of the questionnaire occurred with the same procedures as the first one. To ensure that the participants in the second distribution were the same as in the previous one, a roll call was made, using the attendance list of the first distribution. After that, the questionnaires were distributed only to these participants. The questionnaire now contained one change. The sentence: ‘Upon entering the Management course in UFV- Florestal Campus, I hope to ...’ was changed to ‘Attending the Management course in UFV- Florestal Campus, I hope to ...’.

The average response time for the questionnaire was twenty minutes in both distributions. The questionnaire data were organized, tabulated and analyzed quantitatively using Microsoft Excel software, version 2016. The percentages of responses Agree (A%) and Disagree (D%) of both distributions (first and second) were calculated – each including the number of Partially, Strongly and Fully options. The variables were then arranged in descending order of the score obtained in the Agree column (A%). To show this ranking, a position column (Pos.) was added to the table. The arithmetic mean, the standard deviation and the difference between the percentage of Agree of the second and the first distributions were also calculated. This difference was called Percentage Variation. A positive difference in the variation represents an increase in expectation for that variable. A negative variation represents a decrease in expectation. This difference was considered a good indicator of the transformation that students’ academic expectations underwent.

Table 1, as follows, shows the analysis of factor 1 – Quality Academic Education, as an example of the analysis made:

In an arbitrary way, only the percentage differences (positive or negative) that were above ten percent were considered *significant* for this analysis. Significance here has no statistical meaning, being used only for practical purposes, in order to highlight the biggest differences found between the first and the second distribution. For example, in Table 1, the variables “Have a group of peers interested and involved in classes and study activities” and “Be able to participate in research projects of my professors” are considered significant.

Table 1 Factor 1 – Quality Academic Education

Variable	1st Distribution					2nd Distribution				Variation (%)
	Pos.	A (%)	D (%)	\bar{x}	σ	A (%)	D (%)	\bar{x}	σ	
• Take the opportunity I have to obtain training in higher education.	1º	100.0	0.0	5.83	0.465	97.8	2.2	5.67	0.843	-2.2
• Learning to solve problems in a creative and innovative way.	2º	100.0	0.0	5.66	0.613	97.8	2.2	5.51	0.687	-2.2
• Have specific and updated training in my course area.	3º	100.0	0.0	5.66	0.613	91.1	8.9	5.31	1.112	-8.9
• Deepen knowledge in my course area.	4º	100.0	0.0	5.64	0.586	100.0	0.0	5.60	0.611	0.0
• Gain confidence in my potential.	5º	100.0	0.0	5.64	0.703	97.8	2.2	5.58	0.715	-2.2
• Have competent teachers who encourage me to deepen the knowledge of the course.	6º	98.1	1.9	5.77	0.571	95.6	4.4	5.51	1.003	-2.5
• Have the necessary preparation to exercise the profession I desire.	7º	98.1	1.9	5.74	0.588	95.6	4.4	5.53	1.046	-2.5
• Get a good academic education according to my interests.	8º	98.1	1.9	5.74	0.649	97.8	2.2	5.69	0.661	-0.3
• Develop an optimistic outlook for the future.	9º	96.2	3.8	5.42	1.017	100.0	0.0	5.51	0.654	3.8
• Have a group of peers interested and involved in classes and study activities.	10º	96.2	3.8	5.09	0.976	75.6	24.4	4.58	1.468	-20.6
• Get internships that help enter the job market.	11º	94.3	5.7	5.32	1.256	93.3	6.7	5.11	1.251	-1.0
• Be able to participate in research projects of my professors.	12º	94.3	5.7	5.17	1.041	80.0	20.0	4.56	1.707	-14.3

Source: Research data.

Some studies have compared academic expectations. Research with a similar methodology, but with a slightly different purpose was carried out by Almeida et al. (2003), in which they analyze the results of academic expectations in two moments of the first year students, according to some variables of the sample (gender, option of course, educational

level of parents). Other authors used a comparison between freshmen and seniors (PORTO; SOARES, 2017); according to gender (COSTA et al., 2014); between students of different nationalities – Portuguese and Spanish (ARAÚJO et al., 2015) or between students from the same course but from different terms (FERREIRA, QUINTANA; MACHADO, 2018).

4 PRESENTATION OF DATA AND DISCUSSION

Before presenting and discussing the factors, the characteristics of the research participants in the first and second distributions are presented below.

Table 2 Characteristics of the participants

Characteristics	1st Distribution		2nd Distribution	
	f	f%	f	f%
Total of participants	53	100	45	100
Gender:				
• Masculine	23	43	19	42
• Feminine	30	57	26	58
Work Situation:				
• Work	29	55	32	71
• Do not work	24	45	13	29

Source: Research data.

The age of the research participants ranged from 17 to 42 years old in the first distribution and from 18 to 43 years old in the second distribution. The average age of the participants in the first distribution was 20 years old and 21 in the second distribution. The table with the values of factor 1 was presented previously. Due to space restrictions, the statistical tables with the values of the variables of factors 2 to 7 will not be presented. They follow the same structure of table 1.

4.1 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FACTOR 1: QUALITY ACADEMIC EDUCATION

What first called attention to factor 1 was the high degree of agreement A (%) of the students. Five of the twelve variables of factor 1 obtained 100% agreement in the responses of the first distribution. The averages of these five variables were between 5.31 and 5.83, that is, an average between Strongly Agree (sA) and Fully Agree (fA) in both distributions. In addition, all the other seven factor 1 variables had a degree of agreement above 94% in the first distribution.

Only one variable had an increase in expectations between the two distributions – ‘Develop an optimistic outlook for the future’ – although, according to the criterion adopted, this variation was considered not significant (3.8%). Two variables had a significant variation, both with decreased expectations: ‘Have a group of peers interested and involved in classes and study activities’ (-20.6%) and ‘Be able to participate in research projects of my professors’ (-14.3%). These are also the variables that had the lowest averages and the largest standard deviations.

In this factor there is a subtle break in the structure of the nature of the variables when analyzed by the Position column, especially when the last four are considered. In particular, the following three: ‘Get internships that help enter the job market’, ‘Be able to participate in research projects of my professors’ and ‘Have a group of peers interested and involved in classes and study activities’ require extra-class activities. The partial hypothesis raised here is simple: as this is an evening course, a significant group of the respondents works during the day, which, probably, makes variables such as ‘internships to help enter job market’ and ‘participation in research projects’ least relevant to them. This is also supported by the statistics on the percentage of students who has a job at the time of the first and second distribution. In the first distribution, the percentage of students who worked was 55% and, in the second distribution, this percentage increased to 71%, that is, the higher the percentage number of students who work, the lower the importance of these variables. An uninspiring assumption, especially with regard to participation in research projects, would be “the perception that activities developed within the university would not be of value for the training of administrators or would not be of interest to employers” (OLIVEIRA et al., 2011, p. 258).

With regard to the quality of academic education, the results showed that students have high expectations that the university will guarantee them a good academic education, demonstrated by the highest percentage of agreement (A%) among all factors in table 3, (Mean of Factors). This result converges with the study carried out at the University of Brasília by Bisinoto et al. (2016), in which this factor also had the highest expectations index. A similar result was obtained by Almeida, Araújo and Martins (2016) who found that students had higher expectations in the fields related to training for a job, career development and quality of education.

4.2 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FACTOR 2: SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC COMMITMENT

Unlike Factor 1 in which there was a predominance of negative variation (decrease in expectation) in the Variation column, factor 2 presented four variables with positive variation (increase in expectation). The most relevant, with a variation of 9.4%, was 'Graduate as a citizen committed to the problems of today's society'. The other three variables with positive variation were 'Contribute to the improvement of the human condition or well-being of people' (3.5%), 'Be able to discuss the political, economic and social life of the country and the world' (1.3 %) and 'Understand how I can contribute to improving the world and society' (0.8%).

Once again here, the variables that require participation or involvement outside the classroom scored lower than those activities that can be developed individually or in the classroom. For example, the variable with the lowest percentage of agreement in both distributions is 'Participate in student organization/representation in higher education (associations, academic centers, etc.)' (75.5% and 64.4% respectively). The negative variation of this variable also draws attention (-11.1%).

Although the result of the research shows a high expectation of students in this factor, the literature warns of a mistaken and limited understanding of the commitment and social responsibilities in students' formation by institutions. Pinto, Silva and Freitas (2010) highlighted that the knowledge obtained by students in this context "does not originate in the classroom, but rather in common sense or based on what is conveyed by the media" (p. 47). The problem, according to the authors, stems from "increase in publications of articles in magazines and newspapers aimed at the general public, mentioning issues related to the theme, often without theoretical basis ..." (p. 47). Furthermore, the authors reinforce the importance of a discussion involving educational guidelines developers and courses coordinators and also the need to develop a more social and responsible attitude of students in undergraduate courses. Oliveira et al. (2011) add that "the role of the university stands out as a determining agent for the construction of a broader view of the role of the professional" (p. 259).

4.3 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FACTOR 3: EXPANSION OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Factor 3 – Expansion of Interpersonal Relations - holds very different characteristics from the two previous factors. The degree of responses in the Disagree column grows significantly, decreasing, consequently, the degree of responses in the Agree column. The variable 'Participate regularly in parties with peers' receives the lowest percentage of agreement in the entire survey, both in the first and in the second distribution.

All variations in expectations on this factor are negative, with two variables showing significant variations: 'Have friends who help me overcome possible personal difficulties' (-22.0%) and 'Meet and relate to different people' (-11.8%), signaling a frustration of expectations regarding social life.

In table 3 (Average of Factors), factor 3 – 'Expansion of Social Relations' is the sixth place – the penultimate - in the descending order of the Agree column (A%). Although the index of agreement can be considered high (82.8%) in the first distribution, this factor had the greatest negative variation (-9.7%), representing, therefore, the factor with the greatest decrease in the academic expectations of respondents across the search. This result is worrisome because, according to Soares et al. (2017), "the university becomes more significant for the student who develops bonds of friendship with their peers" (p. 85). Almeida, Araújo and Martins (2016) suggest that the cause of the lowest score in the expectations of "domains of social interaction and social pressure is due to the trust in the existing support networks of friends and family, which removes the anxiety of these students in the face of pressure to its realization " (p.154). Despite that, Soares, Poubel and Mello (2009) affirm that the HEI should promote programs for the development of interpersonal relationships, as this tends to favor students' involvement and minimize conflicts.

4.4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FACTOR 4: INTERNATIONALIZATION AND EXCHANGE OPPORTUNITY

In factor 4 – Internationalization and Exchange Opportunity – the variation column also presents all variables with negative variation, signaling a reduction in students' expectations regarding this factor.

In this factor, there are three variables with significant reduction in expectations: 'Feel that I am in a Higher Education Institution that favors student exchange' (-16.5%), 'Participate in a student exchange while spending some time in the course in another country' (-15.7%)

and 'Participate in university student exchange programs (Science without Borders, for example)' (-12.5%). In the average of the factors – Table 3 –, a decrease in the expectations of the respondents in this factor – Variation of -7.8% – can be perceived between the first and the second distribution.

Despite the decrease in expectations, Oliveira et al. (2011) demonstrated that the glamor of foreign institutions makes students plan to study or work abroad, since this is perceived as something that would bring them “prestige, distinction, and would increase their chances of obtaining an important position in a large international organization” (p. 258). Reschke and Bido (2017) also recognize the importance of internationalization and exchange programs, as these experiences expand the life and education perspectives of their participants. However, most students are unable to fulfill these expectations without institutional support. In this sense, Oliveira et al. (2011) highlight the importance of the HEI in publicizing the opportunities available and the forms of assistance, since at the beginning of the course students know little about these possibilities.

4.5 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FACTOR 5: PERSPECTIVE OF PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

In this factor, there was no significant variation between the first and the second distribution. The greatest variation is negative in the variable ‘Increase the possibility of stable employment in the future’ (-4.4%). Despite having an index of agreement of 96.2% in the first distribution and 93.3% in the second, the variable that emphasizes the social value of the profession “Achieve a socially valued profession” was ranked last, behind variables that represent professional success and stable employment, for example.

For Moreno and Soares (2014), personal and professional fulfillment is based on “the personal and professional return that a career can give (status)” (p. 119). In this respect, according to Freitas (2000), “career or professional status becomes the organizing element of personal life, which that provides it with meaning, self-image, recognition, and the only referent that allows the expression of success and personal achievement” (p. 12).

When analyzing students' expectations regarding the perspective of professional success, the results of this research confirm that students have a very optimistic expectation related to professional success that the higher education program can offer. This result confirms studies by Oliveira et al. (2011), in which the authors affirm that the freshmen have

expectations that the HEI will be able to provide them a desired career profile and a professional identity that will give them the status of “super qualified administrator” (p. 256).

4.6 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FACTOR 6: CONCERN WITH SELF-IMAGE

Except for the variable 'not delay completion of the course in order not to increase the financial costs of my education', all the others had an average below 5 – between Partially Agree (pA) and Strongly Agree (sA), and standard deviation above 1.4. This represents the lowest expectation index among the seven factors – and a high dispersion from the average. The variable ‘Participate in study activities so as not to be excluded by peers’ stands out with a reduction in expectation of 26.9% among participants.

Oliveira (2015) notes that some young people enter higher education with indefinite motivations or even without any, simply because they are fulfilling the wishes of the family or of a sponsor. For the HEI, the perception of this factor is relevant because, as quoted by Araújo and Almeida (2015), the student whose “attendance is essentially the result of pressure from their family, may not spend enough effort to face the academic and social challenges proposed by Higher Education ” (p.18).

In this factor, the variable 'not delay completion of the course in order not to increase the financial costs of my education' was the main concern of the students interviewed in both distributions, which may be related to the student's desire to acquire personal independence, either in relation to parents and guardians or in relation to the professional activities that they currently perform (CRISP et al., 2009).

4.7 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FACTOR 7: CROSS-CUTTING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The lack of cross-cutting skills, that is, “the skills to lead, convince, disagree, ... express negative feelings, deal with criticism, question, negotiate decisions and solve problems” (GOMES; SOARES, 2013, p. 781) have a negative effect on learning, as it is expected that students perform group work, make oral presentations in the classroom and seek to resolve conflict situations that normally happen. Furthermore, the job market demands not only theoretical and technical knowledge, but also a set of cross-cutting skills that will serve as a basis for linking technical knowledge and practice in the profession (PEREIRA; RODRIGUES, 2013).

In this research, respondents recognize this importance, assigning a 97.1% index of agreement in the first distribution, which remained constant in the second. The analysis of factor 7 variables shows a stability between the first and the second distribution. None of the variables showed a significant variation (above 10%). All variables showed an average above 5 points – between Strongly Agree (sA) and Fully Agree (fA), in the first as well as in the second distribution, keeping a high degree of expectation of all students in this factor.

4.8 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE AVERAGE OF FACTORS

The following table shows the result of the seven factors together. The construction of this table follows the same criteria presented previously. The factors are placed in descending order according to the percentage of responses Agree (A%) (fully, strongly and partially) grouped, obtained in the first distribution.

Table 3 Average of factors

Factors	1st Distribution					2nd Distribution				Variation (%)
	Pos.	A (%)	D (%)	\bar{x}	σ	A (%)	D (%)	\bar{x}	σ	
• Factor 1: Quality Academic Education	1º	98.0	2.0	5.55	0.827	93.5	6.5	5.35	1.104	-4.5
• Factor 5: Perspective of Professional Success	2º	97.7	2.3	5.61	0.765	96.0	4.0	5.55	0.908	-1.7
• Factor 7: Cross-cutting Skills Development	3º	97.1	2.9	5.54	0.881	97.0	2.96	5.49	0.904	0.1
• Factor 2: Social and Academic Commitment	4º	92.2	7.8	5.16	1.158	89.7	10.3	4.99	1.275	-2.5
• Factor 4: Internationalization and Exchange Opportunity	5º	90.6	9.4	5.01	1.348	82.8	17.2	4.78	1.449	-7.8
• Factor 3: Expansion of Interpersonal Relations	6º	82.8	17.2	4.53	1.447	73.1	26.9	4.31	1.671	-9.7
• Factor 6: Concern with self-image	7º	76.7	23.3	4.46	1.583	68.9	31.1	4.23	1.676	-7.8

Source: Research data.

It is possible to see that table 3 points to a general trend of decreasing expectations of students in the course from the first to the second semester. However, no factor had a significant variation (greater than 10%). The most relevant drop occurred in factor 3 ‘Expansion of Interpersonal Relations’ (-9.7%). However, this only shows that a global analysis of factors masks significantly variations in academic expectations when analyzed thoroughly, as seen in the analysis of individual factors.

Table 3 also indicates that whereas students' academic expectations decrease, the dispersion of responses increases. For example, in the first distribution, only two factors obtained an average below 5 points – factor 3 and factor 6. In the second distribution, there are four factors with an average below 5 points. In the second distribution, all means decrease and all standard deviations increase.

5 CONCLUSIONS

As the philosopher Paul Valéry warns, 'waking gives dreams a reputation they don't deserve', i.e., contact with reality distorts our dreams. The research showed the optimistic, but unrealistic view of students when they enter university. The results showed that students arrived at the MC/F with a high degree of expectation in all the factors studied. It was noted, however, that from the first to the second term, the levels of students' academic expectations suffered several variations, and six of the seven factors surveyed reduced expectations index. The others remained stable. The research results confirm, therefore, the assumption of Moreno and Soares (2014) who suggest that academic expectations change throughout undergraduate course, some maintained, some modified, while others perish. It should be noted, though, that analyses of academic expectations through a single indicator mask the transformative effect of the experience. Only when analyzed internally, do the factors show their intrinsic characteristics. This signals the need for HEI to pay attention to the various aspects of academic expectations and not just to results that present an overall value of the factors; and if possible, reaching the level of the individual, so that students and institutions, through a dialogue, may balance each other's expectations.

The result of the research also reinforces that it is possible to speak not only about the 'freshman myth' (STERN, 1966) but also to infer that students, during the journey, will make a long and significant transformation in their knowledge background, their personality traces and their perception of reality. This transformation is called in this research the 'freshman metamorphosis'. In the research it was possible to glimpse only the first phase of this metamorphosis. Longer longitudinal studies would be important to deepen the different stages of development of the student's relation with their study course.

It is suggested that qualitative research be carried out to expand and deepen the results obtained here. Specific academic expectations may not have been achieved by the APQ-E/B spectrum. It should also be noted that, although the APQ-E/B questionnaire has a broad

configuration, i.e., it is not directed at any specific course, its applicability is better understood when a relation between the specific situation of the students and their course is made. To conclude, we emphasize that the proper use of the results of research on academic expectations may avoid wasting institutional resources, interpersonal conflicts and students suffering. In summary, this can help universities to fulfill one of their roles: to make students' expectations and dreams come true.

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