

Expectation and Reality: The Experience in the Graduate Studies in Management in Brazil

Expectativa e Realidade: A Vivência na Pós-Graduação em Administração no Brasil

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to analyze the differences between the expectations of *stricto sensu* graduate students in Management in Brazil and the proposition offered to them by Graduate Studies Programs, in light of CAPES evaluations. After all, do graduate students in Management in Brazil want the same thing that their programs and CAPES want for them? In our view, there is a misalignment between expectation and reality and, therefore, we point out propositions to minimize this apparent misalignment.
Keywords: postgraduate degree in administration; student profile; academic career, postgraduate programs.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste estudo é analisar as diferenças entre as expectativas dos estudantes de pós-graduação *stricto sensu* em Administração no Brasil e a proposição que lhes é oferecida pelos Programas de Pós-Graduação, diante das avaliações da CAPES. Afinal, querem os estudantes da pós-graduação em Administração no Brasil o mesmo que seus programas e a CAPES querem para eles? Em nossa visão, há um desalinhamento entre expectativa e realidade e, portanto, apontamos proposições para minimizar esse aparente desalinhamento.
Palavras-chave: pós-graduação em administração; perfil de estudantes; carreira acadêmica, programas de pós-graduação.

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Introduction

An academic career in the field of Management attracts a heterogeneous audience, composed of both students at the beginning of their professional trajectory and ex-

perienced professionals from the market. According to Freitas (2007), the motivations for entering this career vary between objective and subjective dimensions. While some entrants opt for teaching and research as their main professional activity, others seek in academia a sense of self-realization or the fulfillment of specific intellectual challenges.

Regardless of individual motivations, the academic trajectory in Management often converges towards *stricto sensu* postgraduate studies. The initial stage comprises approval in selection processes, a mandatory requirement for admission to a Postgraduate Program (PPG) linked to a higher education institution. Generally, the master's degree is the preliminary stage, although there are modalities for direct entry to a PhD.

After obtaining a master's degree, the natural progression occurs with the completion of a PhD. In the Brazilian context, the Brazilian Academy of Management (ANPAD), the main representative body of this area of study, brings together approximately 103 graduate programs, covering the areas of Public Administration, Business Administration, Accounting, and related fields (ANPAD, 2022).

During postgraduate studies, students are exposed to theoretical and methodological frameworks that aim to equip them for the dimensions of teaching, research, and outreach. However, empirical observations and stories from graduates suggest that the professional reality after the training period, marked by years of dedication and institutional uncertainties, may present a disadvantage compared to technical trajectories (in the public or private sectors) or those of an entrepreneurial nature (Costa & Oliveira, 2024). As a result, there is a growing difficulty for graduates to enter teaching or research positions, both in public and private institutions. This scenario stems from the mismatch between the high volume of qualified professionals and the limited supply of vacancies in the sector. According to the Brazilian Ministry of Education, in 2021 alone, 3,002 masters and 574 PhDs were awarded degrees in areas related to Management (GEOCAPES, 2023). Additionally, the data indicate that, from 1995 to 2021, approximately 13.6% of all master's and 11.2% of all PhDs trained in Brazil are trained in the areas of Applied Social Sciences. This panorama reveals the existence of a significant contingent of highly qualified academic professionals who do not necessarily find jobs equivalent to their training level in the teaching and research fields.

Furthermore, recent events, such as new educational policies and trends in the labor market, have provoked contextual changes in the teaching landscape in Brazilian higher education, and even in the very way individuals linked to postgraduate programs organize their professional desires and aspirations. This is the case with the Covid-19 pandemic, which not only modified the material working conditions (Calderari, Vianna, & Meneghetti, 2022), integrating new tools and technologies into the university environment, but also altered the physical and emotional conditions of scholars and students. Studies indicate an increase in recent years in the demand for new approaches and concepts related to the intersection between students and their social and cultural characteristics, educational institutions, and academia (Peinado, Vianna & Meneghetti, 2022). In other words, it can be said that there are new factors that affect the decision to pursue, or not, postgraduate studies.

In this context, another difficulty for *stricto sensu* postgraduate students is mobilizing the skills and knowledge acquired during their training, which in general can produce low connection and transfer of knowledge to other professional activities. A recent study by IPEA (Colombo, 2024) highlights a high rate of over-education among PhD holders, especially in non-educational sectors. According to the study, the growth of postgraduate studies in Brazil may not have been accompanied by the demand and opening of job positions for professionals with this kind of qualification.

Therefore, obstacles are evident in the transfer of skills developed in master's and PhD programs to non-academic environments, which frequently results in difficulties for recent graduates in entering selection processes at companies and other organizations. Consistent with this perspective, the study by the CGEE (2024) indicates that approximately 37.8% of master's degree holders and 72% of PhD degree holders with formal employment in Brazil work in the education sector. These indicators reinforce the hypothesis of low permeability of postgraduate knowledge and skills in other sectors of the economy.

Given the scenario described so far, this study aims to analyze the profile and aspirations of Management students, considering the motivations that guide their entry into postgraduate studies and the alignment of their expectations with the institutional requirements of the field. To achieve this purpose, a survey was conducted with 355 master's and PhD students from multiple regions of Brazil. Additionally, the research is based on the analysis of official documents that guide

the operation of postgraduate programs in the country. The results are discussed analytically in the subsequent sections, prioritizing the perspective of the student body. Finally, proposals are presented to the different actors in postgraduate studies in Management, such as CAPES, ANPAD, and the programs themselves, aiming to mitigate the asymmetries between students' expectations and the reality of the professional field.

The Plurality of Actors and Subjective Tensions in the *Stricto Sensu* Academic Space

Postgraduate studies constitute a complex ecosystem, configured as a space of interactions between multiple actors, such as students, scholars, university managers, and regulatory bodies, whose interests may not converge. The literature on the tensions inherent in *stricto sensu* has analyzed the relationships of these actors and the potential divergences from various perspectives. For example, one line of research deals with the tensions associated with the relationship between advisor and advisee. While advisors value the technical characteristics of students, students value interpersonal characteristics, such as affectivity, on the part of professors (Leite Filho & Martins, 2006).

Another approach focuses on work relationships. Recent research warns against the harmful consequences to the mental health of professors, describing the scenario as neurotic (Prata-Ferreira & Vasques-Menezes, 2021). There are concerns about the precariousness of work (Cancian et al., 2022), resulting from the accumulation of multiple roles and inappropriate working conditions (Guimarães & Chaves, 2015; Villar et al., 2019). Other studies have demonstrated the worsening of tensions in postgraduate studies as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. While students were skeptical about the benefits of remote learning (Peinado, Vianna & Meneghetti, 2022), professors reported on the insufficient conditions for remote teaching in a scenario of increased pressure from university leaders and regulators to maintain classes (Calderari, Vianna, & Meneghetti, 2022).

Another perspective investigates the tensions underlying the pressures exerted by regulatory bodies on other actors. Silva (2019) argues that academic

productivism in Brazil results from CAPES evaluation criteria and inappropriate university reward systems. Another associated argument deals with the unequal incentives for the expansion of postgraduate studies in Brazil (Rossi et al., 2025), which has spread at the expense of quality and homogeneity in programs' rankings (Oliveira, 2021).

This scenario shows that tensions in postgraduate studies go beyond individual action and should be mitigated by lucid actions that take into account the aspirations of students. The panorama of precariousness, productivism, and overload, aggravated by recent crises, has provoked a critical reassessment by students about the return and meaning of investing in an academic career. An example of this was a study, carried out in 2025, which revealed that Brazil may have a shortage of more than 235,000 university professors by 2040 (Teixeira, 2025).

It is concluded that there has been a significant transformation in the career aspirations of students. On the other hand, both the private sector and governments perceive postgraduate education as a strategic tool to improve the economic health of countries. For example, the need for more qualified personnel (with master's and doctoral degrees) indicates that the economy creates and maintains robust national research and development (R&D) agendas (McAlpine & Norton, 2006).

Mangematin (2000) suggests that students who wish to work in the private sector often seek research funding based on contracts whose modality (scholarships, grants, etc.) is precisely associated with the private sector. This is the case for applied research projects. Those who aspire to enter academia tend to seek research funding in university laboratories or funding agencies. According to the author, postgraduate students adapt their first professional experience as full-time researchers to their career plan, also shaping their research results accordingly. As Mangematin (2000) suggest, those who wish to pursue an academic career, for example, have a significantly higher number of publications than those who prefer to work in the private sector. Similarly, those planning to pursue a career in the private sector collaborate with the private sector from the beginning of their doctoral research and place less emphasis on publications. Thus, doctoral students can structure their training according to their career plans, adapting their behavior and the way they conduct their research during graduate studies to meet the recruitment criteria of their employers after graduation.

When it comes to students who aspire to pursue an academic career, authors such as Corcoran and Clark (1984) and Scott et al. (2022) argue that the perception of an academic career is constructed early on, with postgraduate studies as a fundamental stage of socialization. However, although teaching and research responsibilities during postgraduate studies can provide training opportunities for future faculty, roles performed through teaching and research assistantships may be structured more to meet institutional or faculty needs than to ensure a high-quality learning experience for postgraduate students (Austin, 2002). These elements reveal, once again, a scenario of tensions and disparate expectations among different actors in the postgraduate ecosystem.

To mitigate such gaps, Austin (2002) suggests five recommendations to improve the experience of postgraduate students: (1) more attention to regular mentoring, guidance, and feedback; (2) structured opportunities to observe, meet, and chat with colleagues; (3) diverse and development-oriented teaching opportunities; (4) information and guidance on the full range of faculty responsibilities; (5) regular and guided reflection.

These recommendations shed light on a rapidly changing landscape regarding how students evaluate their postgraduate experience and what they aspire to for the future. Trevisol and Balsanello (2022) found that most students work during postgraduate studies and do not have scholarships or other funding mechanisms. In addition, only 63.1% of the students participating in the research saw a positive impact on their remuneration after completing their studies, with 61.3% working in public institutions. In Brazil, these numbers indicate that returning to university after completing studies results from the lack of appreciation for master's and PhD degree holders in the job market and constitutes a major challenge for the absorption of graduates into the non-formal academic market (Andrade, 2018).

Methodology

DATABASE AND SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

This study uses an analytical-expository approach to articulate two complementary perspectives on the phenomenon: CAPES policies and regulations on graduate pro-

grams and the student's view from a logic of training and social and professional return. The first refers to a critical perspective of the literature and empirical debates that focus on the process of implementing public policies aimed at *stricto sensu* graduate programs. The second view is interpretative, with the purpose of understanding how students experience graduate programs and manage their individual objectives. To this end, this study uses secondary data, including reports and public policy documents, which are used to illustrate and contextualize the analytical argument, as well as primary data, based on a survey conducted with students on the subject.

DATA COLLECTION

The data collection conducted in this study is based on two complementary sources of evidence: primary data collection through a survey study and consultation of secondary data. In this study, official documents were analyzed, especially CAPES evaluation reports and policies related to postgraduate studies in Management, used to contextualize and substantiate the institutional framework in which postgraduate programs operate.

The primary research was developed collaboratively within the scope of the Academic Division of Innovation, Technology and Entrepreneurship (ITE) of ANPAD. The design of the data collection instrument was organized into macro-dimensions: a) socioeconomic and demographic profile; b) training and internship upon completion of the postgraduate course; c) experience with scientific publication; d) professional insertion and performance during postgraduate studies; e) career expectations after graduation; f) perceptions about the learning process; and g) skills developed. The 71 questions include multiple-choice items, open-ended questions, and Likert scales. Appendix A provides a summary of the dimensions explored in the survey with postgraduate students, as well as an indication of the sources consulted for the preparation of the questions. The items were formulated based on the indicated literature and submitted to semantic validation and pre-testing (n=12) before application.

Data were collected in 2021 through an online form, distributed across multiple channels linked to the academic community of the ANPAD ITE Division: dissemination on social networks (Instagram and WhatsApp groups), email delivery to the ANPAD mailing list, and direct contact with PPG coordinators and secretariats.

The research participants included students linked to graduate programs in Brazil, without restriction to the ANPAD Division to which they were associated, or to the type of PPG (academic or professional). Therefore, the sample is characterized as non-probabilistic, by convenience and accessibility, resulting in 355 valid responses from master's students (56.6% of respondents) and PhD students (43.4% of respondents) from various regions of Brazil. To illustrate the diversity of the sample collected, regarding the ANPAD Divisions, the study areas with the highest frequency of participants were Innovation, Technology and Entrepreneurship (ITE - 15.9%), Public Administration (APB - 13.9%), Marketing (MKT - 11.3%) and Strategy (ESO - 10.8%).

DATA ANALYSIS

The critical analysis strategy is based on conceptual and theoretical integration and interpretive synthesis, built upon the theoretical framework, document analysis, field survey data, and the researchers' experiences. Literature is used to structure documentary evidence and empirical patterns that guide the actions of CAPES (Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education) and graduate programs. In this sense, this work does not seek statistical inference, causal modeling, or empirical validation. Instead, primary data were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics. The findings were triangulated with document analysis to provide recommendations on the topic. This design may contain conflicts with the individual dimension, expressed in the figure of the students; therefore, the data collected in the questionnaire are analyzed from an interpretive and descriptive perspective, in contextual support, contributing to the definition of student profiles and expectations.

Results

AN OVERVIEW OF THE DATA COLLECTED FROM GRADUATE STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT

This section begins by presenting the data collected from 355 graduate students in Management in Brazil affiliated with ANPAD in 2021. Part of the questions asked aimed to understand the aspirations and expectations of these students re-

garding the training they receive and what their intentions would be regarding their professional careers.

A multidimensional approach was adopted to encompass socioeconomic conditions, academic trajectory, research line, impressions about the graduate program, and professional perspectives, in order to capture impressions and experiences, as well as generate profiles through the qualification of the respondents' experiences.

Despite the impossibility of inferring conclusive repercussions from this dataset, the descriptive statistical analyses presented here help visualize possible misalignments between students' expectations and the training incentives offered by graduate programs. The argument of this study is developed around this issue.

Table 1 presents the social and economic dimension of the data collected. In general, the database used is composed of the following frequencies: gender (50.1% female, 49.6% male and 0.3% non-binary); race/color (1.4% Asian, 72% White, 18.7% Mixed, 5.4% Black and 2.5% no declaration); age (22.1% between 21 and 29 years, 42.5% between 30 and 40 years and 35.4% between 41 and 66 years); marital status (40.2% single, 53% married, 6.7% other); children (57.2% have no children, 42.8% have at least one child); household income (12.2% from 1 to 3 minimum wages, 36.3% from 3 to 8 minimum wages and 51.6% with 8 minimum wages or more). With regard to special cases, 2.3% of participants self-identified as people with disabilities (PwD), and 7.6% participated in affirmative action programs.

Table 1. Social and economic profile of respondents.

Category	Alternatives	Percentage of responses
Gender	Male	50,1%
	Female	49,6%
	Non binary	0,3%
Race/color	Asian	1,4%
	White	72%
	Mixed	18,7%
	Black	5,4%
	No declaration	2,5%

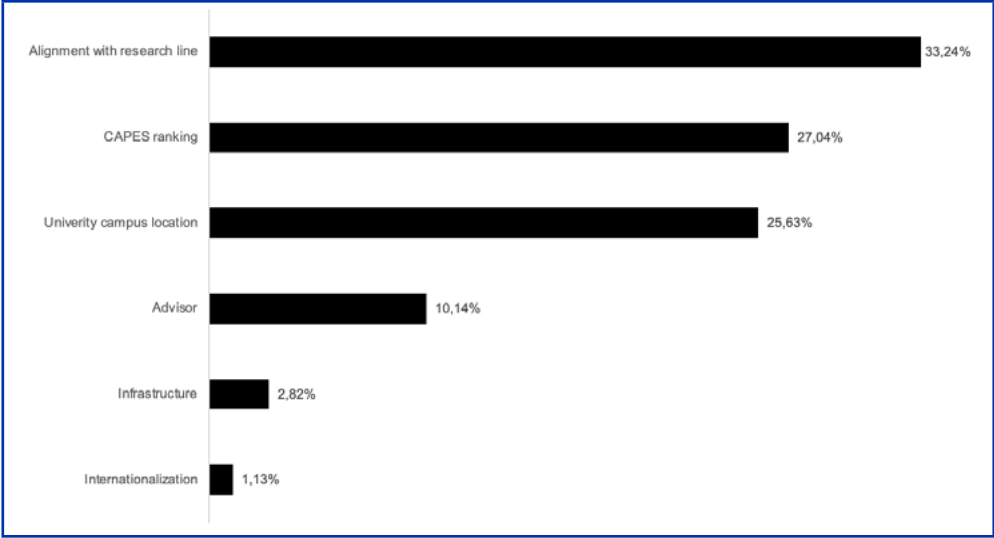
Age	Between 21 and 29 years old	22,1%
	Between 30 and 40 years old	42,5%
	Between 41 and 66 years old	35,4%
Marital status	Single	40,2%
	Married	53%
	Other	6,7%
Children	Has at least one child	42,8%
	No children	57,2%
Household income	From 1 to 3 minimum wages	12,2%
	From 3 to 8 minimum wages	36,3%
	8 minimum wages or more	51,6%

Regarding the professional dimension and their projection for the future, 61.8% of respondents chose to pursue postgraduate studies based on their academic profile. Furthermore, upon completing their postgraduate studies, 68.8% of participants expect to continue on this same path. These data corroborate the 79% who stated that they acquired skills to work as a professor during the postgraduate program.

In relation to employment status, 62.6% of respondents have full-time or part-time employment. Additionally, 45.3% of them receive some type of assistance from their employer, whether financial benefits or through work flexibility agreements.

Participants were also asked about the criteria for choosing and joining the postgraduate program, as shown in Figure 1. Regarding the justifications for choosing the program, most cited reasons are: research line (33.24%), CAPES ranking (27.04%), and the location of the university campus (25.63%). Furthermore, approximately 80% are enrolled in academic programs, and 54.1% are linked to programs rated 3 or 4 by CAPES. In terms of funding, 46.7% of participants reported receiving or having received scholarships from funding agencies (CAPES, CNPq, FAPs, etc.).

Figure 1. Reason for choosing a postgraduate program.



According to the academic profile of the sample, 48.2% of the participants have a degree in Business Administration. It is noteworthy that 74.1% did not participate in scientific initiation programs during their undergraduate studies. In parallel, 34.8% of those interviewed are not integrated into research groups. Regarding participation in academic events and scientific production, the data indicate that 59.2% of those interviewed have already participated in national academic conferences by presenting papers, contrasting with 58.1% who have never participated in international conferences. Concerning the publication of articles, 35.4% of the participants have no published articles, 43.4% have between 1 and 3 published articles, and 21.2% have four or more published articles. However, only 33.9% have published or submitted articles to international journals.

TENSIONS BETWEEN STUDENTS, GRADUATE PROGRAMS, AND CAPES

It is necessary to discuss ways to reconcile the students’ trajectories with the demands of the national evaluation system. Although it is a central issue, this adjustment of expectations demands closer attention from graduate programs and CAPES, given the relevance of this body in maintaining the quality standard of master’s and doctoral courses in the country.

It is common for students to enter *stricto sensu* programs without a full understanding of the evaluation criteria that govern their programs. Suddenly to them, it becomes necessary to assimilate a complex repertoire that includes concepts such as impact factor, predatory journals, and the social impact of research. Added to this conceptual challenge, graduate students need to reconcile personal demands with the development of professional skills, facing uncertainties about the “rules of the game”. In fact, this institutional arrangement not only guides the self-evaluation of teaching activity (Silva, 2019), but also shapes professors’ expectations regarding students performance, especially with regard to research and knowledge production (Melo & Serva, 2014).

From this perspective, the premise that university life resembles the practice of a profession is discussed by Coulon (2017) through the concept of affiliation, in which students are expected to develop the so-called “student craft”. This perspective dialogues with the thesis of the docility of bodies (Foucault, 1987), in which power relations condition individuals to certain behavioral patterns, consolidating graduate programs as instances of shaping conduct. In light of this, it is worth questioning to what extent students have been effectively prepared to understand the institutional dynamics of graduate studies, especially with regard to the CAPES evaluation system.

The evaluation system for master’s and PhD courses in Brazil occurs in four-year cycles, resulting in the assignment of grades and the issuance of reports with guidelines for the 49 areas of knowledge. As pointed out by Backes et al. (2022), the CAPES Quadrennial Evaluation exerts significant institutional pressure on graduate programs, which begin to orient their management primarily towards maintaining or raising their scores. Favorable performance not only confers prestige and institutional status but also facilitates access to resources and research funding. Conversely, programs with unsatisfactory evaluations face loss of visibility, due diligences, and the risk of discrediting. Given this coercive nature, graduate programs adopt deliberate strategies to ensure competitiveness in the national scenario.

It is argued in this reflection that quality maintenance strategies tend to be fruitless when they ignore the expectations of graduate students. For this reason, the alignment between the profile of students and the objectives of graduate programs should be treated with greater rigor and attention by the evaluation bodies.

Master’s and PhD programs in Public and Business Administration are part of CAPES Area 27, along with the areas of Accounting Sciences and Tourism. Within

the scope of this study, the most recent Quadrennial Evaluation Report (CAPES, 2021), covering the period 2017-2020, was analyzed to identify how the agency addresses the student body as a stakeholder in the evaluation process. As anticipated, most references to postgraduate students are limited to treating them as metric variables or performance criteria. In the evaluation form, for example, student attendance is frequently reduced to the following terms:

- a. Computer lab (with printing capabilities) for student use;
- b. Study room(s) for students;
- c. Recognition of prior experience in student supervision;
- d. Supervision or co-supervision of graduate students by foreign professors;
- e. Strategic planning of the program, also considering connections with the institution's strategic planning, with a view to managing its future development, adapting and improving infrastructure, and enhancing the training of its students;
- f. Attracting students from different regions of the country for academic training.

Analysis of these indicators reveals that the student's role in CAPES' evaluation is predominantly instrumental. The focus on infrastructure and the number of supervisions highlights a critical gap: the neglect of students' subjective aspirations and professional dilemmas. This scenario constitutes a structural problem of asymmetry, in which the "student's role" is assessed using rigorous metrics, but without the support of planning that considers the real trajectories and expectations of those who experience the system. This disconnection between the norm and student reality compromises not only the well-being of graduate students, but also the effectiveness of graduate programs themselves.

Discussion

PROFILE OF GRADUATE STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT (*STRICTO SENSU*)

Although not probabilistic in nature, the survey reveals the distinctive profile of graduate students in Management in the Brazilian context. In general, it can be said

that the average student profile is that of a white person, around 37 years old, married and with children. The student begins their *stricto sensu* graduate studies with approximately 10 years of professional experience and seeks, primarily, salary increases and greater recognition in the organization where they work. The time dedicated to the master's or PhD courses is part-time, since their work schedule is 40 hours per week. It should be noted that, in the private sector, full-time dedication to studies is rarely a possibility for students.

Another predominant characteristic is that students do not have a history of research-related activities, such as experience in undergraduate scientific initiation. It can be assumed that, because of this, the motivation to access graduate studies is less linked to training for research and teaching and more oriented towards personal satisfaction. Leveraging knowledge for new businesses is a more recent but also present goal among students. However, there is low involvement with *stricto sensu* academic research, resulting in incipient scientific production in terms of participation in conferences and publications in journals.

Through a profile analysis, three typical personas can be identified, although they do not exhaust or reduce the diversity of Brazilian postgraduate students in Management. However, the creation of profiles is useful for proposing strategies capable of promoting greater alignment of interests among the actors in the postgraduate ecosystem in the area. The first profile comprises academics who envision postgraduate studies as their main occupation, often supported by scholarships and research grants under senior supervision. This profile is a predominantly young stratum, having graduated in the short to medium term. The second group consists of professionals seeking qualification for strategic positions in the public or private sectors, generally over 40 years of age and with solid market experience. Finally, the third identified profile encompasses those aiming for teaching positions in educational institutions. This last group proves to be more eclectic, including young adults as well as experienced professionals in career transition. A summary of these typologies is systematized in Table 2.

Other student profiles can be extracted from the analyzed dataset. As highlighted, this survey is non-probabilistic in nature. Thus, although the analysis allows for the grouping of similar profiles (clusters), the study does not aim to establish statistical measures of replicability based on the response patterns obtained.

Table 2. Profiles of graduate students in Administration.

Profile	Main features	Expectations
Profile 1 - Traditional student	• Younger students • They want academia to be their main occupation.	• High-level academic training • Access to funding sources for research
Profile 2 - Specialized technician	• Students in their 40s • With accumulated professional experience	• Professional training for career advancement
Profile 3 - Perspective shift	• Young adults and senior professionals • Interested in enhancing their CV	• Career transition to teaching in higher education

It is observed that each incoming student profile presents distinct expectations regarding postgraduate studies. For one segment, the master's or PhD degree aims at acquiring knowledge or maintaining academic activity while seeking satisfactory professional insertion. Another group, already established in the market, expects postgraduate studies to boost their ascension to new positions, either in the current organization or in other institutions. The third group understands the master's and PhD degrees as fundamental steps in the training to become a scholar. Their expectation, therefore, lies in mastering the state of the art in their area, conducting studies with the methodological rigor demanded by peers, and developing teaching skills.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS: PROPOSING BASIC ACTIONS TO ALIGN EXPECTATIONS IN GRADUATE STUDIES

The comparison between student expectations and the CAPES evaluation report for the Management area indicates a mismatch between student aspirations and the reality of the programs. While graduate students seek knowledge that enhances their employability and prepares them for the job market, graduate programs prioritize compliance with institutional norms to secure or raise their scores in the four-year evaluations. Therefore, an incompatibility between these incentive systems is evident.

In this context, graduate programs should systematically inform the student body about the evaluation dynamics in effect since the 2021 cycle. This awareness-raising emphasizes both conventional impact metrics and CAPES' methodological innovations, which prioritize qualitative over quantitative analysis and the monitoring of graduates. On the other hand, it is essential that the coordinating bodies and faculty align themselves with the professional expectations of the students, offering support so that academic training effectively meets the identified career aspirations.

In addition, there is a possible misunderstanding regarding the nature of *stricto sensu* postgraduate studies in Management on the part of some students. Notably, profile 2 indicates a search for immediate professional training for the corporate environment. However, it can be inferred that students with agendas intensely focused on organizational routines face greater obstacles in reconciling studies with research and scientific production. In this sense, Bertero, Caldas and Wood Jr. (1999, p. 173) warn that “people fundamentally involved with professionalizing activities and with deep executive or consulting ties with diverse organizations may lose the critical distance indispensable to the researcher and producer of scientific knowledge”. From this perspective, it is possible that some of the entrants seek in *stricto sensu* a solution misaligned with their current career aspirations. It is therefore essential that the choice of program be guided by clarity of objectives, aiming at the development of skills consistent with each student's professional project.

It is worth highlighting the difference between *stricto sensu* and *lato sensu* postgraduate studies. Morosini (2009, p. 130) observed that “*stricto sensu* postgraduate studies are defined as regular courses that overlap with undergraduate studies, systematically organized, with the objective of developing and deepening the scientific or cultural training acquired within the scope of undergraduate studies”. On the other hand, the same author explained that the goal of *lato sensu* postgraduate studies is “the scientific and technical mastery of a certain and limited area of knowledge or profession, to train a specialized professional. It can be occasional, has a practical-professional purpose and grants a certificate” (p. 132). Thus, it is suggested that postgraduate candidates seeking greater professional training to perform technical and applied activities in the context of organizations seek courses at the *lato sensu* postgraduate level. This distinction is often misunderstood by candidates when choosing their education and defining their career goals. Howe-

ver, it is important to highlight the existence of professional master's and doctoral programs (*stricto sensu*). This type of training, "recognized as a necessity and an alternative training route, vis-à-vis *stricto sensu* training for teaching and research, is an attempt to orient teaching towards application" (Fischer, 2005, p. 24). In this context, professional-oriented programs can integrate professionals from the market into their faculty, whose experiences enrich curricular practices and enhance student employability.

It is legitimate to expect that graduate programs will result in practical applications, which is currently defined by the metric of the impact of scientific production. Observing international models helps in understanding how to align the incentives of graduate programs and students with regard to these practices. In the North American scenario, for example, Agarwal and Hoetker (2007) highlight that the debate on the relevance of research in Management has been central since the mid-20th century. The wide dissemination of institutional evaluations in that country has driven a reconfiguration of business schools, reflected in the diversification of the faculty, the approach to related social sciences, and the reformulation of the curricular structure of PhD programs.

Thus, the analysis of the divergences between student expectations and the Brazilian academic reality reveals two parallel lines of action. Firstly, the student's role in defining their professional project stands out, requiring an active stance in the pursuit of skills aligned with their purposes. In parallel, the importance of student mobilization within institutional spheres is emphasized. The collective articulation of students presents itself as a mechanism to guide decisions and activities in central bodies in the field of Management, such as program coordinators, ANPAD, and CAPES.

Considering the arguments presented so far, it is understood that increasing the alignment between students' expectations and the reality found in postgraduate studies should be a shared responsibility among the different actors mentioned. Each actor, whether CAPES, ANPAD, PPGs, faculty, or students, can adjust their responsibilities to contribute to the construction of a postgraduate program that produces knowledge with the necessary scientific rigor and relevance to organizations and society, while also considering the achievement of satisfactory professional trajectories for the individuals involved, particularly academic careers.

As examples of practical actions, CAPES should expand the dissemination of information about the purpose of *stricto sensu* postgraduate studies in the country, in addition to promoting structural flexibility and interaction between programs. Within the scope of ANPAD, measures to align expectations and reality include encouraging training and Paper Development Workshops (PDW), as well as strengthening dialogue with the market to identify new skills and research challenges. Regarding graduate programs, it is recommended to detail academic expectations during the selection processes to mitigate future misalignments. Additionally, programs should explicitly state the responsibility of graduates, given the five-year monitoring established by CAPES evaluation, and encourage periodic meetings and frequent publications within research groups. Finally, students should actively participate in Coordinating Committees and Academic Divisions of ANPAD or related associations, especially in proposing events and training focused on the education of graduate students.

Final Reflections

The objective of this article was to analyze the profile and aspirations of Management students based on the motivations that guide their entry into postgraduate studies and the alignment of their expectations with the institutional requirements of the area. The study proposes the identification of at least three profiles of postgraduate students based on a non-probabilistic survey conducted with 355 master's and PhD students throughout Brazil. The delimitation of these profiles allowed for an understanding of student expectations regarding postgraduate studies. Complementarily, the Quadrennial Evaluation Report of the Public and Business Administration, Accounting and Tourism Area (Area 27) published by CAPES in 2021 was used to analyze how the student body is considered in the evaluation processes.

In short, a misalignment between expectation and reality is observed from the perspective of students in *stricto sensu* postgraduate programs in Management in Brazil. It is noted that some students enter master's or PhD programs with imprecise motivations, possibly due to a limited understanding of the academic function of this training. On the other hand, the bodies responsible for postgraduate studies of-

ten disregard students' aspirations for a satisfactory academic trajectory. Therefore, there is a lack of strategically coordinated actions in the country to fulfill the purpose of this community: the production of knowledge relevant to society and, specifically, to professionals in the corporate sector (Vizeu & Lara, 2023).

Making a project with this purpose viable requires the adoption of specific measures. It is noticeable that graduate programs have a strong link to institutional norms, which makes it difficult, especially for academic programs ranked number three and four by CAPES, to exercise a protagonism that diverges from the standards expected by the evaluation process. It is recommended that the coordinators define strategies to broaden the impact of their research, aiming at attracting resources and consequently attracting students interested in high-impact academic careers. This reasoning extends to other bodies in the area, such as ANPAD and CAPES.

It is also worth highlighting that proficiency in the English language is a limiting factor for graduate students to be able to participate in international research networks (Irigaray et al., 2023). The data collected show that approximately 60% of respondents have never participated in international conferences. This information reinforces the fact that language is still a barrier to the advancement of research and scientific development in the field of Management in Brazil. There are arguments for increasing Brazilian production and publication in Portuguese as a way to avoid "global provincialism" and "epistemic colonialism" (Alcadipani, 2017; Rossoni, 2018). However, the need to increase the presence of Brazilian management research in international research networks through greater global integration cannot be ruled out either (Oliveira Junior, 2018).

This work has limitations. The analytical-expository approach and the use of a convenience sample prevent the generalization of the results to all graduate students in Management. The empirical material, therefore, does not aim to test hypotheses, but to provide a basis for analytical reflection on perceptions that are often neglected in academic debate. In addition, the focus on the Brazilian context of the field of Management limits the direct transfer of conclusions to other scenarios, even though the discussion is relevant to areas subject to similar evaluation regimes.

As suggestions for future research, it is recommended that the survey be reapplied to update the student profile, as well as the expansion of the sample to

other areas of knowledge. Such advances would allow for a comprehensive view of Brazilian graduate studies, assisting in the projection of institutional changes and the creation of incentives for the insertion of qualified professionals into the job market. Although it does not exhaust the nuances of experiences in graduate studies, it is hoped that this work will stimulate debate on how to make research in Management more effective, both for experienced researchers and for those in training.

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SUMMARY OF DIMENSIONS EXPLORED IN THE SURVEY WITH GRADUATE STUDENTS

Thematic dimension	Aspect investigated	Items	Examples of items	Question format	Guiding references
1. Academic profile	Characterization of the institutional link and area of activity	Q1–Q8	"Select the option that best describes your current academic situation" (Q1)	Multiple choice	Ferreira et al. (2016), Miranda et al. (2014), Monteiro e Leite (2019)
			"What is the main area of your Graduate Program?" (Q5) "What is your Main Division at ANPAD?" (Q6)		
2. Funding and work	Living conditions and dedication to the course	Q9–Q11	"Did you receive or are you receiving any scholarships during your postgraduate studies?" (Q9)	Multiple choice	Ferreira et al. (2016), Miranda et al. (2014), Monteiro e Leite (2019)
			"Which of the following statements best describes your work situation during your postgraduate studies?" (Q10)		

3. Educational trajectory	Previous academic history	Q12–Q18	"What was your undergraduate course of study?" (Q12) "Did you participate in a scientific initiation program during your undergraduate studies?" (Q15) "At which institution are you pursuing your doctorate?" (Q18)	Multiple choice; Open (HEI name)	Ferreira et al. (2016), Miranda et al. (2014), Monteiro e Leite (2019)
	Reasons for joining and perceived returns	Q19–Q21	"What motivated you most to enroll in the Master's/Doctorate program?" (Q19) What was the main reason you chose your University? (Q20) Check the repercussions that completing the course provides(s) for you(or) (Q21)	Multiple choice (multiple answers)	Ferreira et al. (2016), Monteiro e Leite (2019)
	Participation in academic activities and productivity	Q22–Q28	"Do you work as a professor at any higher education institution?" (Q22) "Which of the following statements best describes your experience participating in research groups?" (Q23) "Which of the following statements best describes your experience publishing articles in journals?" (Q27)	Multiple choice; Ordinal scale	Ferreira et al. (2016), Miranda et al. (2014)

6. Gaps and intentions after training	Perceptions about disabilities and future plans	Q29–Q30	"What did you miss most about graduate school?" (Q29) "What do you plan to do after finishing graduate school?" (Q30)	Open (Q29); Multiple choice - multiple answers (Q30)	Ferreira et al. (2016), Miranda et al. (2014), Monteiro e Leite (2019)
	Perception of the environment, structure, and suitability of the graduate program.	Q31–Q42	"There is strong integration between students and faculty in my graduate program" (Q31) "The program reflects market needs" (Q38) "Overall, expectations regarding graduate studies were met" (Q42)	5-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)	
7. Program evaluation					Ferreira et al. (2016), Monteiro e Leite (2019)
8. Enjoyable and critical aspects of training.	Positive and negative experiences in graduate school.	Q43–Q44	"What are the most enjoyable aspects of postgraduate studies?" (Q43) "What are the least enjoyable aspects of postgraduate studies?" (Q44)	Open (free text)	Miranda et al. (2020), Silva e Bardagi (2015)
	Self-perception regarding skills acquired during training	Q45–Q62	"The course allowed me to develop communication skills" (Q45) "...critical-analytical capacity" (Q46) "...ability to recognize myself as a scholar" (Q62)	5-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)	
9. Competences developed					Valadão e Rodrigues (2012) e Kruger et al. (2013)
10. Sociodemographic profile	Personal and socioeconomic characteristics	Q63–Q71	"Which gender do you identify with?" (Q64) "What is your race/color, according to IBGE categories?" (Q65) "What is your family income?" (Q71)	Multiple choice; Open (Q63); Numerical (Q67)	Ferreira et al. (2016), Miranda et al. (2014), Monteiro e Leite (2019)