Research Interest-Related Factors of Undergraduate Students of Stomatology *

Factores relacionados con el interés investigativo de estudiantes de pregrado en Estomatología

Fatores relacionados ao interesse de pesquisa dos estudantes de graduação em Estomatologia

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ABSTRACT

Background: Despite various strategies to foster a research culture in undergraduate Dentistry/Stomatology programs, interest in research often remains limited. **Purpose**: To analyze factors related to research interest among undergraduate Stomatology students. **Methods**: A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted with a random sample of undergraduate Stomatology students from the Universidad Científica del Sur (Lima, Peru). Data were collected using a face-to-face survey with a questionnaire and a Likert scale that assessed interest in research, scientific writing, article publication, participation in scientific events, and future dedication. Frequencies and bivariate comparisons were analyzed. **Results**: A total of 195 students participated, 61 % of whom were women. Among men, 35.1 % (n=13) expressed agreement with having interest in scientific research, compared to 47.1 % (n=56) of women (p=0.041). Overall, 51.3 % (n=100) demonstrated moderate interest in research, followed by 25.1 % (n=49) with high interest and 23.6 % (n=46) with low interest. Across academic years, most students showed moderate interest in research (p=0.011). Regular students displayed a high level of interest (29 %; n=11). **Conclusions**: Most undergraduate Stomatology students exhibited moderate to high levels of interest in scientific research. Statistically significant differences were found between men and women, with women showing greater interest in scientific research (p=0.05).
Keywords: dental school; dentistry; Lima, Perú; motivation; research interest; research projects; scientific research; stomatology; students

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RESUMEN

Antecedentes: A pesar de diversas estrategias para fomentar la cultura investigativa en el pregrado de Odontología/Estomatología, en muchos casos, el interés por la investigación sigue siendo limitado. **Objetivo**: Analizar los factores relacionados con el interés investigativo en estudiantes de Estomatología. **Métodos**: Se realizó un estudio descriptivo de corte transversal con estudiantes de Estomatología de la Universidad Científica del Sur (Lima-Perú), seleccionados aleatoriamente. Se aplicó un cuestionario y una escala tipo Likert que evaluó: interés por la investigación, redacción y

publicación de artículos científicos, participación en eventos y dedicación futura. El análisis incluyó frecuencias y comparaciones bivariadas. Resultados: Se encuestaron 195 estudiantes, de los cuales el 61 % eran mujeres. El 35,1 % (n=13) de los hombres y el 47,1 % (n=56) de las mujeres mostraron interés en la investigación científica (p=0,041). Un 51,3 % (n=100) mostró interés medio, seguido de un 25,1 % (n=49) con interés alto y un 23,6 % (n=46) con interés bajo. En los diferentes años académicos predominó el interés medio (p=0,011). Los estudiantes regulares presentaron mayor interés alto (29 %; n=11). **Conclusiones**: La mayoría de los estudiantes de Estomatología presentó un nivel de interés por la investigación científica de medio a alto, con diferencias estadísticamente significativas entre hombres y mujeres. Las mujeres mostraron mayor interés por la investigación científica (p=0,05).
Palabras clave: escuela de odontología; estomatología; estudiantes; facultad de odontología; interés en la investigación; investigación científica; Lima, Perú; motivación; odontología; proyectos de investigación

RESUMO

Antecedentes: Apesar das diversas estratégias para promover uma cultura de investigação na graduação em Odontologia/Estomatologia, em muitos casos, o interesse pela investigação permanece limitado. **Objetivo**: Analisar os fatores relacionados ao interesse pela pesquisa em estudantes de Odontologia. **Métodos**: Foi realizado um estudo descritivo transversal com estudantes de Estomatologia da Universidade Científica do Sul (Lima-Peru) selecionados aleatoriamente. Foram aplicados questionário e escala tipo Likert que avaliaram: interesse em pesquisar, escrever e publicar artigos científicos, participação em eventos e dedicação futura. A análise incluiu frequências e comparações bivariadas. **Resultados**: foram pesquisados 195 estudantes, dos quais 61 % eram mulheres. 35,1 % (n=13) dos homens e 47,1 % (n=56) das mulheres demonstraram interesse pela pesquisa científica (p=0,041). 51,3 % (n=100) apresentaram interesse médio, seguido de 25,1 % (n=49) com interesse alto e 23,6 % (n=46) com interesse baixo. Nos diferentes anos letivos predominou o interesse médio (p=0,011). Os alunos regulares apresentaram maior interesse elevado (29 %; n=11). **Conclusões**: A maioria dos estudantes de Estomatologia apresentou um nível de interesse médio a elevado pela investigação científica, com diferenças estatisticamente significativas entre homens e mulheres. As mulheres demonstraram maior interesse pela pesquisa científica (p=0,05).
Palavras-chave: estomatologia; estudantes; faculdade de odontologia; interesse em pesquisa; Lima, Perú; pesquisa científica; motivação; odontologia; projetos de pesquisa

INTRODUCTION

One of the aims of university institutions is the conduct and promotion of scientific, technological, and humanistic research, as well as intellectual and artistic creation (1). In undergraduate studies (referred to as "pregrado" in the Peruvian context), this goal is achieved through research and cultural activities such as the preparation of academic papers, participation in competitions, involvement in research groups and student research clusters, thesis development, and attendance at seminars, lectures, workshops, and conferences, among other activities (2).

The reality of the Peruvian university context presents unique conditions, particularly regarding research training, where students face challenges in completing academic work, formulating problems, setting objectives, crafting scientific questions, and proposing hypotheses (3). Other studies reveal that students lack interest in research activities, do not consider them important, and fail to perceive their relevance to clinical practice (4,5). Consequently, this lack of understanding and creativity in identifying research topics within the health field hinders the proper development of their skills (6). These findings point to a concerning issue regarding research interest, which is notable given the expectation that health sciences students should be able to utilize scientific evidence in their clinical practice. Thus, a greater interest in research would logically be anticipated among these students (7).

Research interest is defined as the motivation and enthusiasm an individual exhibits to develop a research project or engage in activities aimed at understanding problems in a biophysical and social environment (8). Being interested in research entails being motivated to contribute to society through the knowledge one seeks to generate. At the undergraduate level, students are expected to engage in research activities in a cross-disciplinary manner (referred to as formative research), enabling them to

begin acquiring research competencies that will be useful for completing academic work and pursuing postgraduate studies.

This interest becomes evident when students engage in research activities, participate in academic events, join research groups, get involved in research networks or student societies, successfully complete academic projects and theses, or demonstrate motivation to pursue postgraduate studies. Factors influencing this interest include individual commitment, the educational institution of origin (private institutions often promote research actively), and membership in research groups during university life. Studies suggest that universities can foster this interest by establishing research networks and introducing students to small-scale research on simple topics, gradually increasing complexity as they progress through their academic programs (9,10).

Studies have evaluated research interest among students, such as the work of Castro-Rodríguez and Grados-Pomarino (11), which found that less than two-thirds of Peruvian Dentistry/Stomatology students are interested in scientific research. Arellano-Sacramento, et al. (12) observed that half of Dentistry students demonstrated a moderate attitude towards research, while slightly more than a quarter exhibited a poor attitude. Alfaro-Carballido, *et al*. (13) noted that 28 % of postgraduate Dentistry students reported prior research experience, and 56 % recognized the need for methodology courses to design their studies, as 57 % admitted lacking research skills. These findings may be influenced by the prevailing research culture and educational model. In Dentistry, the typical focus is on teaching clinical and technical skills, with less emphasis on scientific abilities. However, research competencies are essential for generating new knowledge, critically assessing technological advancements in treatment, and understanding oral health problems. Thus, it is crucial that the graduate profile includes skills and competencies related to research.

Studying research interest provides insights into the elements valued by students and whether appropriate levels exist for the preparation of academic work. The novelty lies in recognizing that this information is scarce in the Peruvian dental context. Considering that research activities were altered due to the COVID-19 pandemic—many studies and clinical trials had to be adapted to laboratory work or survey-based studies to ensure progress (14)—research interest may also have been impacted, leaving students potentially unmotivated or uninterested. This raises the question of which factors are associated with research interest among undergraduate students.

Understanding students' motivation toward research interest is crucial, especially as institutional research demands grow, often handled by a select few, with students serving as support in the research process. This is particularly important given the challenge of fostering commitment among some students who do not see research as viable or useful and fail to connect it with current clinical development. Thus, it is essential to understand students' perceptions and their genuine interests. For this reason, the objective of this article was to analyze the factors associated with research interest among undergraduate students in the Dentistry program at Universidad Científica del Sur.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Type of Study and Design

An observational study with a descriptive cross-sectional design was conducted using a survey technique aimed at collecting quantifiable data through descriptive and inferential statistical analyses (15).

Population and Sample

The analyzed population included undergraduate students enrolled in the Stomatology program during the second semester of 2023, totaling 635 participants. The sample size was calculated considering a precision of 3 %, an expected proportion of 0.5, and a 95 % confidence level, resulting in a minimum required sample size of 181 students, including an expected 15 % loss. Stratified probabilistic sampling was employed, using the list of enrolled students as the sampling frame. Based on this, the number of students per academic year was determined, and the sample size was calculated according to the corresponding proportion.

Variables

The main variable was research interest, defined as the student's motivation and enthusiasm for developing a research project, operationalized into five dimensions and 14 scale-type indicators. Related factors were grouped into three categories: personal (family responsibilities and individual student characteristics), occupational (including whether the student works and the type of work schedule), and academic (considering the student's performance in the academic-university setting). Both variables were measured using a scale and a questionnaire.

Data Collection Techniques

The survey technique was employed using a questionnaire and a scale as instruments. The questionnaire assessed personal, academic, and occupational factors. Personal factors were recorded through five questions related to age, sex, school of origin, and family status. Academic factors were evaluated with eleven questions addressing aspects such as regularity and continuity of studies, previous education, academic performance, repetition of courses, membership in a research group, the academic year being pursued, research experience, and publication experience. Regarding occupational factors, the questionnaire inquired whether the student was employed; if so, it determined the type of work schedule (part-time or full-time) and the nature of the work activity.

Two researchers conducted the survey in person by approaching each student. Prior to this, they received training in administering the survey, provided by a third researcher.

Data Collection Instruments

The questions related to research interest were assessed using a scale comprising 14 items, based on the study by Castro-Rodríguez, *et al.* (9). In that study, the survey was validated with a group of 156 dentistry students in Peru. Validation was performed through expert judgment and an Aiken's analysis, which yielded a value of 0.94. Additionally, the internal metric properties of the instrument were evaluated, revealing a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.88. This prior validation served as a reference for the present study.

The questions on the scale were organized into five dimensions. The first dimension, interest in research itself, included two questions. The second dimension, the importance of scientific article writing, consisted of three questions. The third dimension, scientific article publication, also had three questions. The fourth dimension, participation in scientific events, included three questions. Finally, the fifth dimension, dedicated to future projection as a researcher, comprised one question. All questions were formulated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Data Analysis

The association between research interest (polytomous ordinal scale) and related variables (polytomous) was assessed using Fisher's exact test, ensuring the assumptions of expected and observed frequencies were met. To compare a numerical variable with a categorical one, the Chi-square test was used. When statistical significance was found, a correspondence analysis was performed. Categories on the scale were assigned values: "strongly disagree" received a value of 1, and "strongly agree" received a value of 5. The total score was used to classify research interest into three levels: low (scores equal to or less than 20), medium (scores from 21 to 40), and high (scores above 40). A significance level of 0.05 was established.

Ethical Considerations

This research was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee of Universidad Científica del Sur (PRE-8-2022-00620). The survey was conducted in person, with participants being informed of its voluntary nature, the estimated duration of 10 to 15 minutes, and their freedom to express themselves openly. Ethical principles of beneficence, autonomy, confidentiality, and privacy of the collected information were upheld. The researchers had no direct relationship with the students, and sociodemographic data were kept confidential, with participants identified solely through codes.

RESULTADOS

A total of 195 students were surveyed, with an average age of 22.86 ± 3.12 years (range: 18–37). Of the participants, 61 % were women (n=119), and 95.9 % reported not being married or having children (n=187). Additionally, 68 % of participants attended private schools (n=134). Regarding research experience, 58.5 % stated they had no prior experience in research (n=114), and 85.1 % indicated they had not published scientific articles (Table 1).

TABLE 1
Personal, Academic and Work Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	n	%
Sex		
Male	76	39
Female	119	61
Total	195	100
Married or with children		
Yes	8	4.1
No	187	95.9
School of origin		
National	59	30.3
Private	134	68.7
Other	2	1
Academic year		
First year	36	18.5
Second year	31	15.9
Third year	43	22.1
Fourth year	36	18.5
Fifth year	49	25.1

Condition of regularity*		
Yes	145	74.4
No	50	25.6
Courses from different years		
Yes	103	52.8
No	92	47.2
Do you work?		
Yes	37	19
No	158	81
Employment regime		
Part-time	29	78.4
Full-time	6	16.2
Exclusive	2	5.4
No work	158	81
Work related to Dentistry		
Yes	18	48.6
No	19	51.4

* Refers to the student's continuous enrollment without interruptions or dropouts

Regarding the frequency of responses on research interest, 39.5 % (n=77) agreed on being interested in scientific research. Additionally, 49.7 % agreed that students should be more committed to research, while 46.2 % expressed interest in correctly drafting a research paper. Furthermore, 43.6 % strongly agreed that good writing is essential in a scientific article. However, 31.3 % were indifferent to the idea of pursuing work related to research (Table 2).

TABLE 2
Frequency of Responses on the Research Interest of Respondents

Questions	**SD**		**D**		**N**		**A**		**SA**	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. I am interested in scientific research	21	10.8	12	6.2	52	26.7	77	39.5	33	16.9
2. I would like to get more involved in research	12	6.2	11	5.6	43	22.1	97	49.7	32	16.4
3. I would like to write a research paper correctly	9	4.6	12	6.2	31	15.9	90	46.2	53	27.2
4. I think that good writing is especially important in an article	10	5.1	9	4.6	21	10.8	70	35.9	85	43.6
5. I would like to participate in courses that teach how to write better	10	5.1	5	2.6	42	21.5	79	40.5	59	30.3
6. I would like to be part of a research group	15	7.7	15	7.7	41	21	94	48.2	30	15.4
7. I would like to attend a medical student conference	17	8.7	16	8.2	24	12.3	80	41	58	29.7
8. I would like to participate in a scientific conference with research	8	4.1	11	5.6	32	16.4	83	42.6	61	31.3
9. I am interested in publishing a scientific article	8	4.1	9	4.6	32	16.4	94	48.2	52	26.7
10. I would love to publish a research article	9	4.6	5	2.6	29	14.9	90	46.2	62	31.8
11. I think that publishing articles is important	8	4.1	6	3.1	13	6.7	58	29.7	11	56.4
12. I plan to dedicate myself professionally to a job related to research	24	12.3	20	10.3	61	31.3	50	25.6	40	20.5

SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree

The scores related to interest in research showed an average of 3.55 ± 0.9, while the importance attributed to scientific writing reached an average of 3.94 ± 0.97. Regarding participation in scientific events, the average scores were 4.10 ± 0.91, and future dedication as a researcher presented an average of 3.32 ± 1.26 (Table 3).

TABLE 3
Average Scores of Research Interest According to Dimensions

Dimensions	Average	S.D.
Interest in research itself	3.55	0.99
Importance of writing	3.94	0.97
Publication of articles	3.74	0.96
Participation in events	4.10	0.91
Dedication to the future	3.32	1.26
Total	3.44	0.85

S.D. Standard deviation

Regarding the scores of personal and occupational characteristics based on the level of interest in research, 52.6 % (n=40) of men and 50.4 % (n=60) of women demonstrated a moderate interest in scientific research (p = 0.012). Among students who were unmarried and without children, 50.8 % (n=95) expressed moderate interest in research (p = 0.312). Additionally, 53 % of students from private schools and 45.8 % of those from public schools also showed moderate interest. Most respondents across different academic years exhibited moderate interest in research (p = 0.011). Furthermore, regular students stood out with a high interest in research (29 %, n=42) (Table 4).

TABLE 4
Personal and Work Characteristics According to the Degree of Research Interest

Personal and Work Characteristics	Research Interest *			*p*
	Low	Medium	High	
Sex				
Male	20(26.3)	40(52.6)	16(21.1)	0.012**
Female	26(21.8)	60(50.4)	33(27.7)	
Married or with children				
Yes	1(12.5)	5(62.5)	2(25.0)	0.312
No	45(24.1)	95(50.8)	47(25.1)	
School of origin				
National	9(15.3)	27(45.80)	23(39)	0.423
Private	37(27.6)	71(53)	26(19.4)	
Other	0(0)	2(100)	0(0)	
Academic year				
First	6(16.7)	22(61.1)	8(22.2)	0.011**
Second	4(12.9)	25(80.6)	2(6.5)	
Third	18(41.9)	15(34.9)	10(23.3)	
Fourth	7(19.4)	15(41.7)	14(38.9)	
Fifth	11(22.4)	23(46.9)	15(30.6)	
Regular student				
Yes	35(24.1)	68(46.9)	42(29)	0.542
No	11(22)	32(64)	7(14)	
Courses from different years				0.245
Yes	19(18.4)	53(51.5)	31(30.1)	
No	27(29.3)	47(51.1)	18(19.6)	
Do you work?				
Yes	7(18.9)	19(51.4)	11(29.7)	0.923
No	39(24.7)	81(51.3)	38(24.1)	
Work related to Dentistry				
Yes	6(33.30)	10(55.60)	2(11.10)	0.246
No	1(5.30)	9(47.40)	9(47.40)	
Do not work	39(24.70)	81(51.30)	38(24.10)	

* n(%). ** Chi square of homogeneity.

High levels of interest in research were found in 37 % (n=30) of students with research experience, compared to 16.7 % (n=19) of those without prior experience in this field. Additionally, 44.8 % of students with experience in publishing articles reported high levels of interest in scientific research. Moreover, 57.9 % (n=11) of students participating in university research groups demonstrated a high level of interest in research (Table 5).

TABLE 5
Academic Characteristics and Research Experiences of Respondents According to the Degree of Interest

Academic characteristics and research experiences	Research Interest *			*p*
	Low	Medium	High	
Experience in research projects				0.312**
Yes	20(24.7)	31(38.3)	30(37)	
No	26(22.8)	69(60.5)	19(16.7)	
Experience in publishing articles or research				0.312**
Yes	8(27.6)	8(27.6)	13(44.8)	
No	38(22.9)	92(60.5)	36(16.7)	
Belongs to a research group at the university				0.312**
Yes	4(21.1)	4(21.1)	11(57.9)	
No	42(23.9) %	96(54.5)	38(21.6)	
Admission to the Dentistry program				0.052
Regular admission	33(25)	77(58.3)	22(16.7)	
Transfer from another university	12(20.3)	20(33.9)	27(45.8)	
Transfer from another program	1(25)	3(75)	0(0)	
Do you enroll every semester or reserve your enrollment?				0.812
All semesters	38(25.5)	75(50.3)	36(24.2)	
Reserve	8(17.4)	25(54.3)	13(28.3)	
Previous studies in Dentistry?				0.154
Yes	5(15.6)	17(53.1)	10(31.3)	
No	41(25.2)	83(50.9)	39(23.9)	
If you answered "Yes," what type of studies do you have?				0.068
Technical	3(27.3)	4(36.4)	4(36.4)	
University	2(9.5)	13(61.9)	6(28.6)	
Does not present	41(25.2)	83(50.9)	39(23.9)	
Conducting thesis				0.027**
Yes	15(21.7)	34(49.3)	20(29)	
No	31(24.60)	66(52.4)	29(23)	
If you are doing your thesis, how is your relationship with your advisor?				0.045**
I am not doing the thesis	33(24.8)	71(53.4)	29(21.8)	
Good	13(21)	29(46.8)	20(32.3)	
Bad	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	
Are you in the top third/fifth/tenth of your class?				0.032**
I do not belong to any of them	28(25.2)	60(54.1)	23(20.7)	
Yes	18(21.4)	40(47.6)	26(31)	
No	28(25.2)	60(54.1)	23(20.7)	
If you answered "Yes," which group do you belong to?				0.089
I do not belong to any of them	28(25.2)	60(54.1)	23(20.7)	
Top third	25(25.9)	24(41.4)	19(32.8)	
Top fifth	3(14.3)	13(61.9)	5(23.8)	
Top tenth	0(0)	3(60)	2(23.8)	
Do you regularly pass your courses?				0.488
Yes	38(25)	69(45.4)	45(29.6)	
No	8(18.6)	31(72.1)	4(9.3)	

* n(%). ** Chi square of homogeneity.

DISCUSSION

In biomedical education, academic work is often required to obtain professional or academic degrees, particularly in Peru and much of Latin America. For instance, the preparation and approval of a thesis are necessary to earn degrees such as medical doctor (16), dentist, or nurse (17), among others. Preparing such work demands that students possess knowledge of research methodology, academic writing skills, research experience, and a genuine interest in these activities. When this interest is limited or absent, motivation for research declines, leading to tensions and difficulties in completing academic work. This study assessed the levels of research interest and related factors among students in the field of Stomatology.

Most students showed a moderate to high interest in research, reflected in attitudes ranging from partial agreement to neutrality toward research activities. This finding contrasts with the study by Wedemire, *et al.* (18), in which graduates from a nutrition program exhibited lower interest in research, and with the study by King, *et al.* (19), where 87.9 % of students reported being interested or very interested in research. Conversely, a study conducted with medical students revealed limited understanding of research (20). Similarly, Kyaw, *et al.* (21) found that 83.3 % of respondents exhibited a modest attitude toward research. These results may be influenced by the context and specific academic demands of each program. For instance, the research culture in medical programs might foster greater interest in research (20), while the sample size surveyed could also affect the outcomes reported in other studies (18,19).

Interest in research is an integral component of evidence-based practice, a critical competency for health sciences students. This interest serves as a key strategy to enhance patient safety and ensure high-quality clinical outcomes. Greater interest in research is associated with improved understanding of evidence-based practice, the ability to interpret scientific studies, develop clinical practice guidelines, and actively participate in research or initiatives aimed at improving care quality (22).

This study identified a relationship between certain academic factors and research interest, although no significant associations were found with personal factors. The results indicated that students with research experience are more likely to exhibit a high level of interest in scientific research compared to those without such experience. Specifically, 37 % of students with research experience demonstrated high interest, compared to 16.7 % of students without prior experience. These findings align with previous studies highlighting how research experience fosters greater understanding and appreciation of scientific inquiry (23). Participation in research activities allows students to become familiar with research methods and processes and collaborate with experienced researchers (5,6,24), contributing to the development of a deeper interest in this field.

Students with research experience, such as participating in projects or completing a thesis, showed higher levels of interest in research. This finding aligns with Osman's study (25), which emphasizes how such experiences enable students to better understand the impact of research on medicine. Additionally, these experiences help develop inductive and deductive reasoning skills, foster logic, and enrich professional trajectories by facilitating connections with other researchers. The importance of involving dental students in research during their training has been widely discussed (26,27). Exposure to research activities during undergraduate years is associated with a better understanding of medical and academic concepts, the development of transferable skills, and enhanced academic and clinical prospects for postgraduate studies (28).

The results can be understood within the context of the research culture prevalent at the institution. When academic programs promote a culture that integrates academic work, includes research-oriented faculty, and fosters formative research across various courses, students are immersed in an environment where research becomes a routine and stimulating activity. Previous studies have shown that strategic planning that incorporates research activities into the curriculum increases awareness and interest among dental students. Similarly, the data from this study indicate that 83 % of respondents recognized the relevance of research to dentistry (29).

Despite differences in enrollment years, most respondents agreed that exposure to research activities is an essential element of the curriculum, significantly contributing to professional and personal development throughout life (29). For this reason, curriculum design should facilitate and support student participation in research activities. It is crucial to thoroughly explain the concept of evidence-based dentistry, enabling students to understand the importance of integrating research courses into their education. This approach not only enhances their learning experience but also proves to be invaluable during their clinical practice.

This study presented several limitations, including the challenge of achieving a homogeneous distribution of participants across academic years, as many students were reluctant to participate. Additionally, ensuring reliable responses proved difficult, as some respondents tended to answer based on what they believed the researchers expected rather than providing genuine information. Furthermore, a lack of knowledge about the topic among some students, coupled with a general disinterest in research, may have influenced the quality and accuracy of the responses obtained.

CONCLUSIONS

Various factors are associated with research interest among a group of dentistry students. Students with experience in publishing and project development demonstrated a greater interest in research. Significant differences were also observed between male and female students, with women showing a higher interest in scientific research. This outcome could be influenced by the lack of stratification in sampling, which should be considered in future studies. Additionally, second-year students, coinciding with the introduction of research courses in the curriculum, and fifth-year students, when they begin and focus on their thesis work, exhibited a higher interest in participating in research projects.

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