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Attitude Towards Research In Nursing Students Of A Public University 2023 - 2024

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ABSTRACT
To improve professional practice and the quality of patient care, nursing research is essential. The present study sought to ascertain the prevailing attitudes towards research among nursing students at a public university, with the objective of identifying both strengths and weaknesses that could potentially influence their research training. A quantitative, descriptive, and cross-sectional design was employed, with a probabilistic sample of 196 nursing students. The "Attitude towards Research Scale" was employed as the data collection instrument, comprising 34 items and exhibiting a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.854. The results indicated that 92.9% of the students exhibited a moderately favorable behavioral attitude towards research, while 86.7% demonstrated a moderately favorable affective attitude. Regarding the cognitive dimension, 61.7% of the students exhibited a favorable attitude towards research. In conclusion, nursing students exhibited a moderately favorable attitude towards research, suggesting the necessity to promote more research training strategies to enhance their participation and skills in this field.

Keywords: *Attitude towards Research Scale, nursing students, training strategies.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Research constitutes a pivotal element within the educational paradigm, as it serves not only to generate knowledge but also to nurture learning. Furthermore, research facilitates the establishment of a direct link between the university and society (González et al., 2004). Diez Gutiérrez (2018) further asserts that the fundamental objective of universities is to generate and fortify the knowledge necessary to address the collective interests of society. Consequently, scientific research is recognized as a pivotal component of students' professional development.

It is noteworthy that, despite the fact that less than 1% of the global population is engaged in research, 72% of these researchers hail from China, the European Union, Japan, Russia, and the United States. In contrast, only 8% of researchers are based in Latin America, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015).

Addressing the issue of research competencies among university students, challenges related to scientific production in academic institutions persist. In the case of Peru, the SCImago Research Group ranking indicates a 24% increase in scientific production during the period 2014-2018. Nevertheless, Peru has yet to attain preeminence among Latin American nations in terms of scientific output, with Brazil, Spain, Portugal, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, and Colombia leading the field (De Moya et al., 2020).

Within the Peruvian context, the promotion of university research constitutes an integral component of national strategies aimed at enhancing educational standards and propelling the nation's development. National policy instruments underscore the necessity for universities to establish research centers, cultivate competent professionals and researchers, and address the needs of the national context (CONCYTEC, 2019; University Law No. 30220). The current University Law stipulates that research is an essential and mandatory function of universities, which must become academic communities oriented towards the generation of knowledge and the promotion of scientific activities, with the active participation of teachers, students, and graduates (University Law No. 30220, 2016).

The National System of Evaluation, Accreditation and Certification (SINEACE) evaluates the scientific competencies of universities (SINEACE, 2016). Indeed, a fundamental prerequisite for attaining institutional licensing is the demonstration of adequate research lines and mechanisms for research management (Sunedu, 2015). It is noteworthy that the advancement of research has been identified as a pivotal criterion for the renewal of institutional licenses, as stipulated in the 2023 III Biennial Report of the Sunedu.

UNESCO (2015) underscores the pivotal role of research in poverty reduction and achieving global development. Consequently, the onus falls on state policies to ensure investment in research, facilitating the generation of new knowledge and the resolution of problems in a rapidly evolving society (UNESCO, 2015).

The legal framework of the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos (UNMSM) stipulates that

"…the practice of scientific research and the utilization of knowledge derived from such research must invariably be oriented towards the enhancement of humanity's well-being, with a specific focus on the reduction of poverty, while upholding dignity and human rights, and safeguarding the planet's environment." Additionally, it is stipulated that "professors, undergraduate and graduate students, as well as graduates of the UNMSM, engage in research activities of the university, in accordance with the provisions of University Law No. 30220" (UNMSM, 2023).

The mission of the Professional School of Nursing at the UNMSM is articulated as follows: "To generate and disseminate scientific, technological, and humanistic knowledge, to train professionals, researchers, and leaders who embody values and respect for cultural diversity, to promote national identity based on a culture of quality and social responsibility, and to contribute to the sustainable development of the country and society" (UNMSM Faculty of Medicine, 2024).

Considering these objectives, it becomes imperative to assess the research disposition among nursing students. This assessment will facilitate the implementation of more efficacious strategies to enhance their research aptitudes. In this sense, the study states the objective of determining the attitude towards research in nursing students, so it is necessary to: i) identify the attitude towards research in the cognitive dimension in nursing students, ii) identify the attitude towards research in the affective dimension in nursing students, and iii) identify the attitude towards research in the behavioral dimension in nursing students.

To these ends, the research background and antecedents must be considered, represented by the relevant studies that have addressed the topic of the attitude towards research in nursing students. These antecedents and theoretical background are presented in the next lines.

Research Background

At the international level the following authors have made contributions to the study topic. Rojas (2021) described "Attitude towards research in Mexican university students: an exploratory analysis," with the aim of determining the attitude towards research held by students from a Mexican public university. A total of 394 university students participated in the study, which was quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional, and correlational. The study revealed a regular-unfavorable attitude towards student research.

In a similar vein, Serje et al. (2021) presented "Attitudes towards science and research in the university population of Bogotá – Colombia," with the objective of ascertaining the attitudes towards science and research among a group of university members. This study adopted a descriptive approach, encompassing 524 participants, and yielded findings that indicated a favorable attitude towards science and research among all participant groups. However, the group exhibiting the least favorable attitudes were students. A comparison by sex revealed that men demonstrated a more favorable predisposition, while a comparison by field of study revealed more positive attitudes among engineering, social sciences, and health sciences students, and more negative attitudes among communication and gastronomy students.

Gálvez et al. (2019) investigated "Attitude towards Scientific Research at the End of the Nursing Career in Peru," Bolivia, with the aim of analyzing the factors and attitudes associated with the research of nursing interns. The study involved 80 interns and was quantitative, descriptive, and cross-sectional. The results indicated that 58.8% of nursing interns showed a negative attitude towards scientific research, while 41.3% showed a positive attitude.

At the national level, other authors like Benites and Blas (2023) conducted a study. They entitled it "Attitudes towards scientific research in human medicine students who are taking a thesis workshop at a university in northern Peru. The study's objectives were to determine the association between taking a thesis workshop and a positive attitude towards research. This analytical cross-sectional study was conducted on medical students from the National University of Santa participating in the 4th, 5th, and 6th year. The results of the study indicated that 84.6% of the students surveyed exhibited a positive attitude towards research, with an average score of 73.5 points on the EACIN-R scale. In the bivariate analysis, vocation for research, valuation of research, interest in research, and position on the modality of thesis degree were associated with a positive attitude towards research. However, in the multivariate analysis, the significance of the latter two was lost.

Muñoz (2022) described attitudes towards research in occupational therapy students of the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2021, which had the following objectives: to determine the attitudes towards research in Occupational Therapy

students of the UNMSM. This quantitative study had a non-experimental, descriptive, and cross-sectional design. The sample was made up of 121 students of the Occupational Therapy career at UNMSM. As a result, it was determined that 51.2% have a moderately favorable attitude towards research. According to the findings of Cruz et al. (2021), 1% of the participants exhibited an unfavorable attitude, while 6.6% demonstrated a favorable attitude. The objective of their study was to ascertain the attitudes of university students towards research. Utilizing a quantitative, non-experimental approach with a descriptive scope, the study encompassed a sample of 262 students, resulting in the conclusion that the attitude towards research among university students is neutral, irrespective of gender. This finding suggests that students may not be taking the subject matter as seriously.

A systematic review was conducted in 2021 to examine the attitudes toward research in Latin American universities. The objective was to identify the available scientific evidence on attitudes toward research. The systematic review method was employed for the selection of studies. Nine articles were reviewed, resulting in 50% of the study population having a favorable attitude toward research, 41.7% showing an unfavorable attitude, and only 8.3% moderately favorable. With respect to the components, it is appreciated that the cognitive component shows a positive category with 35.7%, on the other hand, the affective component presents a positive category with 21.4% compared to the negative category, which is in 14.2%. While the behavioral component shows a positive category with 21.4% in relation to the negative category that presented 7.1%.

Olivera's (2020) research, attitudes towards the research of bachelor's in administration and psychology of a Peruvian university, aimed to explore the attitudes towards research of bachelor in administration and psychology of a private university in Metropolitan Lima. The study involved the evaluation of 152 bachelors and employed a quantitative and descriptive approach. The findings revealed that psychology students exhibited a favorable attitude towards scientific research, while the Bachelor of Administration demonstrated an unfavorable attitude, primarily due to their academic training.

Barja (2019) described the study "Attitudes towards the research of rotating obstetrics interns in a hospital in Lima – Peru," which aimed to determine the attitudes of rotating obstetrics interns at the Sergio E. Bernales Hospital (HSEB) toward research. The study was conducted as a cross-sectional investigation, and its results indicated that 54.4% of interns exhibited a regular attitude toward scientific research, 24.6% exhibited a favorable attitude, and 21% exhibited an unfavorable attitude. In the context of an academic study, it was observed that a negligible proportion of interns expressed agreement or strong agreement with the notion that publication in a scientific journal contributes to the enhancement of clinical practice. However, a substantial proportion of the interns surveyed reported a sense of competence in the interpretation of scientific articles (68.4%) and a readiness to engage in career-related research (54.3%). Nevertheless, it was noted that a significant majority of the interns (94.7%) considered it essential for the successful execution of quality research at the university level to be equipped with fundamental physical and virtual tools. Moreover, it was emphasized that the scientific writing course should prioritize the instruction of article preparation (84.2%), while the majority expressed strong disagreement and disagreement with the option of graduating through an alternative modality other than the thesis (50.9%).

Theoretical background

According to Aldana (2016), research is defined as a process in which researchers aim to obtain scientific knowledge about natural and social facts through appropriate procedures. This process contributes to solving problems and expanding the frontiers of knowledge, which in turn improves people's living conditions and satisfies human needs to know and explain reality.

Hernández (2014) further elaborates that research is a reflective, systematic, truthful, critical process of discovering objective truths, new facts, relationships, dependencies on laws, general principles, and knowledge of the phenomena or objects that are studied. It is considered that using the scientific method is intended to reach answers to questions in various areas of study, because it is an attempt to increase the sum of what is known, usually referred to as a body of knowledge, by discovering new facts and relationships through a process of systematic and scientific inquiry.

As Tamayo (2003) contends, scientific research is a social activity through which individuals discover new phenomena, ascertain their properties, ascertain their relationships with other phenomena, ascertain their composition and the links between the elements that compose them, verify expected conclusions, or determine the need to modify these conclusions. Moreover, they ascertain ways to intervene in the development of natural and social processes to consequently alter their effects. Scientific research is a human activity of a social nature through which individuals discover the existence of new things, know their different properties, determine their relationships with other things, fix their composition and the links between the elements that compose them, verify the expected conclusions or find out the need to modify these conclusions, and, what is more important, they find ways to intervene in the development of natural and social processes, to consequently change their effects.

Scientific research is a process of discovery of knowledge and relationships, which is also important because its purpose is to know, discover, invent, modify; because it is a means to modify or reorient natural and social processes; and a means to

construct hypotheses, laws, theories and models, because only in this way is the construction of science possible.

Research constitutes a fundamental component of university education, as it fosters in students critical and reflective thinking capable of generating new knowledge, technology, and models of attention for the benefit of users at an intramural or extramural level.

The acquisition of professional competencies is a prerequisite for success in any career. These competencies are cultivated throughout the university curriculum, with the undergraduate stage serving as a foundational phase and the pre-professional stage facilitating the development of specialized skills. Consequently, academic institutions bear the responsibility of cultivating educational methodologies that facilitate the acquisition of the requisite competencies for both professional efficacy and personal growth in an effective and suitable manner (Martínez et al., 2019).

According to University Law 30220 (2016), the university is a community oriented to research and teaching (Art. 1), with the purpose of carrying out and promoting scientific, technological, humanistic research, intellectual and artistic creation (Art. 6). Consequently, the attainment of a bachelor's degree is contingent upon the successful completion of undergraduate studies, as well as the endorsement of a research endeavor. For the acquisition of a Professional Degree, the prerequisite is not only the attainment of a bachelor's degree, but also the endorsement of a thesis (Art. 45). This underscores the pivotal and obligatory nature of research within the university. The pursuit of research is driven by the aspiration to generate knowledge and develop technologies that address societal needs, with a particular focus on the nuances of national contexts. Teachers, students, and graduates participate in research activities within their respective institutions or through national or international research networks established by public or private university entities (Art. 48).

Definition of Attitudes

According to Aldana (2011), attitudes towards scientific research are defined as a lasting and persistent organization of beliefs towards it, by a collective.

Rodriguez (2006) defines attitude as a lasting organization of beliefs and cognitions in general of an affective charge in favor of or against a defined object, which predisposes to an action consistent with the cognitions and affects relative to that object. Attitudes are classified as intercurrent variables, as they are not directly observable but rather subject to observable inferences.

According to Myers, attitudes are observable responses of internal psychological states, which can be grouped into three major categories: affective (evaluative feelings and preferences), cognitive (opinions and beliefs), and conative or behavioral (manifest actions, intentions, or tendencies to action).

Attitudes are defined as acquired dispositions characterized by a complex interplay of sensations, emotions, feelings, and evaluative judgments. These attitudes are further classified into various categories based on their evaluative nature, elective nature, behavioral tendencies, affective responses, and cognitive responses. Attitude analysis is primarily facilitated through observational studies and the examination of pre-behavioral dispositions. In contrast, Aigner (2015) posits that attitudes can be classified as either directional (favorable or unfavorable, positive or negative) or intensive (high or low). According to Olson (1993), attitudes are distinguished by accessibility, strength, and ambivalence.

Since Aldana and Joya's seminal 2011 study, the construct of attitudes towards scientific research has been defined as a lasting and persistent organization of beliefs, feelings, and dispositions regarding research by a collective. In this case, the collective is the academic community of higher education institutions (HEIs), comprising academic directors, teachers, undergraduate and graduate students, and graduates.

Attitude towards research

The impetus for conducting research stems from a concern to address a specific problem, thereby precipitating numerous paradigm shifts within society. As articulated by Acón Hernández, Fonseca Artavia, Artavia Chávez, & Galán Rodas (2015), research constitutes an intentional process of generating novel knowledge and concepts, thereby catalyzing societal transformation, resulting in the enhancement of visibility and the strategic positioning of the affiliated institution, researcher, and the nation.

Classification of attitudes

According to Eysenck (cited by Quispe M., 2015), Attitudes, as defined by Quispe (2015), can be classified, measured, or assessed in the following manner:

- Favorable: This category encompasses "agreeing with what is done," indicating a propensity to approach the object in question. It is commonly associated with sentiments of support, stimulation, assistance, and understanding, which in turn fosters communication and human interaction.
- Unfavorable: It is characterized by a tendency to avoid the object, driven by reasons such as suspicion, distrust, and in some cases, aggression and frustration. This tendency often leads to a state of constant tension.

- A moderately favorable state is characterized by a sense of apathy, where the subject neither accepts nor rejects the object, and disinterest, routine, and, in some cases, boredom prevail.

Method

This study was developed under a quantitative approach, with a descriptive and cross-sectional design. The objective was to ascertain the attitude towards research in nursing students at a public university in the period 2023-2024, with the aim of obtaining a comprehensive perspective on the affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of this attitude. The methodology applied is detailed below.

The research design employed was quantitative, as it sought to measure and analyze the attitudes towards research by collecting numerical data and subsequently conducting statistical analysis. A descriptive design was employed, enabling the characterization of the students' attitudes without the imposition of external interventions on their behaviors. Given that data collection occurred at a single point in time, the design was characterized as cross-sectional.

The study population comprised students pursuing a career in nursing at the National University of San Marcos (UNMSM) during the 2023–2024 academic period. The total enrollment in the faculty during this period amounted to 401 students. To ensure a representative sample, a simple random probability sampling method was employed, thereby ensuring that each student had an equal probability of being included in the study.

The sample was calculated with the formula for finite populations (Eq. 1), made up of 196 nursing students, the sampling was of a simple random probabilistic type (Otzen & Manterola, 2017), with a reliability level of 95% and a 5% margin of error.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 PQN}{E^2(N-1) + Z^2 PQ} \quad (1)$$

N = 401 (population)

Z = 1.96 (95% confidence interval)

E = 0.05 (margin of error 5%)

P = 0.5 (proportion of units that possess the attribute of interest)

Q = 0.5 (arithmetic remainder of P)

n = 196 (Research Sample)

The sample selection was made by simple random procedure, 196 are drawn from the 401 by lottery, using the enrolled nursing students, who provide informed consent for the application of the student.

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The instrument previously underwent validation with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.854, thereby ensuring the reliability of the measurements. The content validity was confirmed through a review by expert judges in the fields of educational and health research, who evaluated the relevance and clarity of the items.

In order to ensure the accessibility of the study to all participants, the data collection process was conducted virtually, taking into account the constraints imposed by spatial and temporal limitations. Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, participants were requested to sign the informed consent form, thereby ensuring their comprehension of the study's objective, their right to confidentiality, and the voluntariness of their participation.

The distribution of the questionnaire was conducted electronically, using institutional platforms, and a two-week response period was stipulated. During this period, the students completed the scale online, thus ensuring that the information was

collected anonymously, and that the data was not disclosed to anyone outside the research team.

The instrument, "Scale of Attitudes towards Research (EACIN)," was subjected to content validation in Colombia by expert judges, who evaluated its relevance, coherence, and clarity. The Likert scale was initially administered to a pilot group of 30 participants and subsequently to 190 subjects from various educational institutions. However, three participants were excluded from the analysis, resulting in a final sample of 187. The participants were drawn from various academic backgrounds, including 88 undergraduate students, 11 graduate students, 61 professors, and 27 administrative staff.

2. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The results were initially compiled in the Microsoft Excel 2022 program, then processed using the SPSS Statistics 27 statistical program. Descriptive analysis was conducted by employing a frequency and percentage table.

This study was conducted with the voluntary participation of students from the Professional Academic School of Nursing at the National University of San Marcos, who completed virtual questionnaires. The following content shows the results, beginning with the results in Table 1 about the dimensions of the topic.

Table 1 :Dimensions of the Attitude towards Research in Nursing Students of a Public University

Dimensions	n	%
Affective		
Favorable attitude towards research	18	9,2
Moderately favorable attitude towards research	170	86,7
Unfavorable attitude towards research	8	4,1
Cognitive		
Favorable attitude towards research	121	61,7
Moderately favorable attitude towards research	74	37,8
Unfavorable attitude towards research	1	0,5
Behavioral		
Favorable attitude towards research	13	6,6
Moderately favorable attitude towards research	182	92,9
Unfavorable attitude towards research	1	0,5

The highest percentage is 92.9% who have a moderately favorable attitude towards research, corresponding to the behavioral dimension, while the lowest percentage is 0.5% with an unfavorable attitude towards research corresponding to the cognitive and behavioral dimension.

In Table 2, of the total of 196 students, 89.3% have a moderately favorable attitude towards research and 10.7% have a favorable attitude towards research.

Table 2: Attitude towards research in Nursing Students of a Public University

Application	**n**	**%**
Favorable attitude towards research	21	10,7

Moderately favorable attitude towards research	175	89,3
Total	196	100,0

3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A subsequent analysis of the study's outcomes revealed that 89.3% of the students exhibited a moderately favorable attitude towards research, a finding that aligns closely with the results of the study by Muñoz, E. (2022). In that study, 51.2% of occupational therapy students at a public university in Peru demonstrated a moderately favorable attitude towards research. Conversely, the study by Benites and Blas (2023) reported an even higher percentage of 84.6% of human medicine students at a public university in Peru have a positive attitude towards research, which contradicts the findings of the study by Gálvez et al. (2019), which reported that 58.8% of nursing interns in Peru have a negative attitude towards scientific research.

Conversely, 92.9% of nursing students exhibited a moderately favorable behavioral inclination towards research. In contrast, Huaillani (2020) reported that 76% of resident physicians demonstrated an unfavorable affective attitude towards research.

The results obtained in the study on attitudes towards research in nursing students at a public university reveal several significant findings. First, the study found that most students exhibited a moderately favorable attitude towards research, particularly in the behavioral and affective domains, with 92.9% and 86.7%, respectively. This observation indicates that, while students recognize the significance of research, their propensity to actively engage in research practices and their enthusiasm for the subject matter could be further cultivated. In the cognitive dimension, 61.7% exhibited a favorable attitude towards research, suggesting an interest in understanding and applying research knowledge, though this attitude is less pronounced compared to the other dimensions. This underscores the necessity for enhanced theoretical and methodological instruction on research within academic nursing programs. The findings further reveal an imbalance in the dimensions of attitudes toward research, with the cognitive dimension exhibiting a higher percentage compared to the affective and behavioral dimensions. This suggests that while students possess adequate theoretical knowledge about research, they often struggle to translate this knowledge into positive behavioral attitudes, such as active engagement in research projects. This underscores the importance of fostering learning environments that not only promote the practical application of research but also actively encourage more engaged student participation.

The findings also underscore the significance of institutional and cultural factors in shaping attitudes towards research, emphasizing the pivotal role of universities in promoting research. The necessity to bolster infrastructure, resources, and institutional support to facilitate student involvement in research activities is also highlighted. In this regard, it is imperative to foster a scientific culture within academic institutions that value and encourages research at all levels of the educational process.

Declaration statements

Neither the submitted paper nor its substantial parts were published in or submitted to another journal, collection of papers, conference proceedings or book

Conflicts of interest

All authors – none to declare.

Data availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, upon reasonable request.

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