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Scientific research as a motivation strategy to publish an article

La investigación científica como estrategia de motivación para publicar un artículo

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Abstract

Scientific progress is essential for the development of any nation, and one way to contribute to this is through the publication of a scientific article. Therefore, the objective of the present study was to determine the relationship between the attitude towards scientific research and the motivation to publish a scientific article in students of a private university in the Peruvian highlands. Regarding the methodology, a quantitative approach was taken, with a non-experimental design and a correlational scope. 1162 subjects participated in the study. Regarding the technique used, there were two questionnaires that are responsible for measuring attitudes towards research and motivation to publish an article. The results indicate that undergraduate students present high levels of attitudes toward research and regarding motivation to publish an article, medium levels prevail. Likewise, a direct relationship between the study variables was confirmed (Spearman's $Rho = 0.640$ and $p - value = 0.000 < 0.05$). The research concludes by showing evidence about the importance of good attitudes towards research, since this leads students to be motivated and publish scientific articles.

Keywords: Motivation, attitude, scientific research, scientific article.

Resumen

El progreso científico es esencial para el desarrollo de cualquier nación, y una forma de contribuir es mediante la publicación de un artículo científico. El objetivo del presente estudio es determinar la relación entre la actitud hacia la investigación científica y la motivación para publicar un artículo científico en los estudiantes de una universidad privada del altiplano peruano. La metodología, tuvo un enfoque cuantitativo, con diseño no experimental y de alcance correlacional. Del estudio participaron 1162 sujetos. La técnica utilizada fueron dos cuestionarios que se encargan de medir las actitudes hacia la investigación y la motivación para publicar un artículo. Los resultados indican que los estudiantes de pregrado presentan niveles altos de actitudes hacia la investigación y referente a la motivación para publicar un artículo, prevalecen los niveles medios. Se confirmó una relación directa entre las variables de estudio (Rho de Spearman = 0,640 y $p - valor = 0,000 < 0,05$). La investigación concluye mostrando evidencias sobre la importancia de las buenas actitudes hacia la investigación, dado que encamina a los estudiantes a estar motivados y publicar artículos científicos.

Palabras clave: Motivación, actitud, investigación científica, artículo científico.

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Introduction

Scientific research is one of the main drivers of nations' economic, social, and technological development, as it promotes the generation of knowledge aimed at solving complex problems and fostering innovation (De la Cruz, 2013). In this context, universities play a strategic role by aligning scientific production with societal needs and promoting the development of research competencies that enable individuals to address current challenges in areas such as health, education, and sustainable development (Barja-Ore et al., 2019). Consequently, the training of researchers and the strengthening of a scientific culture at the undergraduate level are essential for consolidating higher education systems focused on the production of high-quality knowledge.

The importance of university research is also reflected in international scientific production indicators. According to the annual *Nature Index* rankings, China consolidated its global leadership in scientific publications in 2023, recording a 26% increase over the previous year and remaining ahead of the United States, which had historically topped the ranking (Woolston, 2023). In Latin America and the Caribbean, significant disparities in scientific output persist. Brazil accounts for 35.6% of publications in the social sciences (10,206 documents), followed by Mexico (14.3%), Chile (12.9%), Colombia (10.4%), Argentina (7.5%), and Peru (7.2%), with Peru ranking sixth in the region with 2,070 publications (SCImago Journal & Country Rank [SJR], 2023). These figures indicate that, although Peru's scientific output has experienced sustained growth, substantial gaps remain compared with the region's leading countries.

In the Peruvian context, scientific research should constitute a cross-cutting component of university education, promoting the progressive development of research-related attitudes, competencies, and skills that prepare students to generate knowledge with scientific rigor (Fernández & Villavicencio, 2017). Likewise, the publication of scientific articles is a fundamental indicator of academic productivity and contribution to the advancement of knowledge (Mayta-Tristán, 2016). However, a considerable proportion of the work produced by students and

faculty members fails to be published in indexed scientific journals, thereby limiting its visibility and academic impact (Castro et al., 2018). Among the main factors hindering this process are weaknesses in institutional research management, the insufficient availability of specialized research advisors, and low motivation toward scientific research (Carranza-Esteban et al., 2022a, 2022b; Mejía et al., 2022).

Empirical evidence shows that both research competencies and motivation to conduct research vary across different university contexts. In Spain, Rubio et al. (2018) identified moderate to high levels of research competencies among university students, highlighting particular strengths in scientific writing and data analysis, although weaknesses remained in literature review, academic citation, and quantitative research techniques. Similarly, Quezada-Berumen et al. (2019), in a sample of 392 Mexican university students, found favorable attitudes toward research and a strong intention to pursue scientific activities in the future. In contrast, studies conducted in Peru have reported less encouraging results. Estrada-Aráoz et al. (2021) found predominantly negative attitudes toward scientific research among students at a teacher training institute in Madre de Dios, emphasizing the need to strengthen research competencies among both students and instructors responsible for research courses. Likewise, Mercado (2019) observed that the affective and cognitive dimensions of attitudes toward research reached satisfactory levels, particularly among women, suggesting that findings remain inconsistent across university populations.

Several studies agree that motivation is one of the principal factors driving participation in research activities and scientific production. Bastidas and Benites (2016) argue that motivation promotes the development of research-oriented strategies, finding that financial incentives (21.8%) and academic prestige (20.4%) were the primary reasons motivating university faculty to publish, followed by career advancement, knowledge acquisition, job stability, and time availability. Similarly, Asencio et al. (2018) emphasize that continuing education and professional development strengthen faculty research competencies, thereby increasing the likelihood of

producing and publishing higher-quality scientific research.

Despite the growing interest in strengthening university research, the existing literature has focused primarily on examining research competencies or attitudes toward research independently, whereas few studies have explored their relationship with motivation to publish scientific articles, particularly among undergraduate students in the Peruvian context. This limitation restricts the understanding of the factors that promote scientific production from the early stages of university education. Accordingly, the objective of the present study was to determine the relationship between attitudes toward scientific research and motivation to publish scientific articles among students at a private university in the Peruvian highlands.

Methodology

The present study was applied research, as it was aimed at generating knowledge with potential practical application to understand the relationship between the study variables (Ramos, 2023). A quantitative approach was adopted because the analysis was based on statistical procedures that enabled the examination of the variables' behavior and the testing of the proposed hypotheses (Loayza, 2020). In addition, a non-experimental, cross-sectional design was employed, since the variables were observed in their natural setting without deliberate manipulation, and data were collected at a single point in time (Ato et al., 2013). The study had a correlational scope, as its objective was to determine the degree of association between attitudes toward research and motivation to publish scientific articles (Osada & Salvador-Carrillo, 2021).

The study population consisted of approximately 6,000 undergraduate students enrolled at the Universidad Peruana Unión, Juliaca campus. Participants were selected using non-probability convenience sampling, resulting in a sample of 1,162 students who voluntarily completed the online questionnaire. Regarding the sample characteristics, 52.6% were female and 47.4% were male. With respect to academic programs, the largest proportion of participants were Business Administration students

(44.6%), followed by Accounting students (17.0%), while the remaining participants were distributed among the other degree programs included in the study.

Attitudes toward research were assessed using the Research Attitude Scale (EACIN-R), validated in a Peruvian university population by Hidalgo et al. (2023). The instrument consists of 28 items distributed across three dimensions and uses a four-point response scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. During the validation process, a three-factor structure was confirmed with satisfactory model fit indices ($\chi^2 = 690.222$; GFI = 0.94; AGFI = 0.93; RMR = 0.05; NFI = 0.92; RFI = 0.915), as well as high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.898$), supporting its psychometric properties for use with Peruvian university students.

Motivation to publish scientific articles was measured using the Motivation to Publish Scientific Articles Scale (EMP-AC), developed and validated by Mamani-Benito et al. (2023) in a sample of 653 students from three regions of Peru. The instrument comprises 13 items organized into three dimensions and employs a five-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Validation demonstrated satisfactory model fit indices ($\chi^2(167) = 276.93$; $p < 0.001$; CFI = 0.95; TLI = 0.93; RMSEA = 0.07; SRMR = 0.06), together with high reliability coefficients for its three dimensions ($\omega = 0.88$, $\omega = 0.90$, and $\omega = 0.94$), indicating adequate validity and internal consistency for assessing motivation toward scientific publication.

Data collection was conducted between February and April 2024 using an electronic questionnaire created in Google Forms. The survey link was distributed through institutional email and WhatsApp groups for university students. Before completing the questionnaire, all participants provided informed consent, which explained the purpose of the study, assured the confidentiality of the information, emphasized the voluntary nature of participation, and informed participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

The collected data were subsequently cleaned and initially organized in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

Statistical processing and analysis were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Descriptive statistics were used to characterize the sample and the study variables, while inferential statistics were employed to test the proposed hypotheses.

Results

The distribution of the sample's sociodemographic characteristics is presented in Table 1. A slight predominance of female participants was observed (52.6%), compared with male participants (47.4%). Regarding academic programs, the largest proportion of participants were Business Administration students (44.6%), followed by accounting (17.0%), while the remaining participants were distributed among the other degree programs included in the study.

As shown in Table 2, most students exhibited a high level of attitude toward scientific research (81.0%), followed by those with a moderate level (18.0%). In contrast, only a small proportion of participants demonstrated low (0.9%) or very low (0.1%) levels, indicating a strong tendency toward favorable attitudes toward research.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample.

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	551	47.4
	Female	611	52.6
Degree Program	Psychology	128	11.0
	Environmental Engineering	50	4.3
	Business Administration	518	44.6
	Civil Engineering	94	8.1
	Accounting	197	17.0
	Systems Engineering	34	2.9
	Nursing	63	5.4
	Food Engineering	21	1.8
	Early Childhood Education	22	1.9
	Architecture	22	1.9
	Primary Education	13	1.1

As shown in Table 3, the largest proportion of students exhibited a moderate level of motivation to publish scientific articles (51.4%), followed by those

with a high level (45.7%). In contrast, only 2.9% demonstrated a low level of motivation, suggesting that most participants reported moderate to high motivation to engage in scientific publication.

Table 2. Levels of Attitude Toward Research Among University Students.

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Very low	1	0.1%
Low	11	0.9%
Moderate	209	18.0%
High	941	81.0%
Total	1,162	100%

Table 3. Description and Levels of Motivation to Publish Research Articles among University Students.

Levels	Frequency	Percentage
Low level	34	2.9%
Moderate level	597	51.4%
High level	531	45.7%
Total	1,162	100%

Table 4 presents the results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test of normality, which was selected due to the sample size. For all variables analyzed, the level of significance was below 0.05 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the data do not follow a normal distribution. Consequently, nonparametric statistics were used, and Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was employed to assess the relationship between the study variables.

Table 4. Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test of Normality for the Study Variables.

Variables	Statistic	df	p-value
Attitude toward Scientific Research	0.112	1,162	0.000
Research Vocation	0.075	1,162	0.000
Interest in Research	0.102	1,162	0.000
Perceived Value of Research	0.147	1,162	0.000
Motivation to Publish a Scientific Article	0.077	1,162	0.000
Commitment to Research	0.143	1,162	0.000
Behavior	0.087	1,162	0.000
Intentional State	0.113	1,162	0.000

Table 5 presents the results of the correlation analysis, which reveal a positive and statistically significant relationship between attitude toward scientific research

and motivation to publish a scientific article (Spearman's $\rho = 0.640$; $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that, as students exhibit more favorable attitudes toward research, they also tend to demonstrate higher levels of motivation to publish scientific articles.

Table 5. Correlation with Attitude toward Research.

Attitude toward Research	Statistic	df	p-value
Motivation to Publish a Scientific Article	0.640	1,162	0.000
Commitment to Research Behavior	0.579	1,162	0.000
Intentional State	0.523	1,162	0.000
	0.618	1,162	0.000

Table 6 presents the results of the correlation analysis between motivation to publish a scientific article and the dimensions of attitude toward research. A positive and statistically significant relationship was found with research vocation (Spearman's $\rho = 0.713$; $p < 0.001$), interest in research (Spearman's $\rho = 0.553$; $p < 0.001$), and perceived value of research (Spearman's $\rho = 0.601$; $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that higher levels in each dimension of attitude toward research are associated with greater motivation to publish scientific articles.

Table 6. Correlation with Motivation to Publish a Scientific Article.

Motivation to Publish a Scientific Article	Statistic	df	p-value
Research Vocation	0.713	1,162	0.000
Interest in Research	0.553	1,162	0.000
Perceived Value of Research	0.601	1,162	0.000

Discussion

The descriptive results indicate that the majority of students exhibited high levels of attitude toward scientific research (81.0%), while a smaller proportion demonstrated moderate levels (18.0%). These findings are consistent with those reported by Mercado (2019), who found favorable levels across the affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of attitudes toward research among Peruvian university students. Likewise, Loayza-Rivas (2021) identified predominantly positive attitudes toward research, particularly in dimensions related to scientific training, interest in research, and the role of research-oriented faculty. Although Arellano-Sacramento et al. (2017)

reported a higher proportion of students with moderate attitudes, their findings also revealed the presence of a substantial group with favorable attitudes. Collectively, these studies suggest that positive attitudes constitute an essential component in promoting student participation in research activities and strengthening their engagement with scientific production (Cruz et al., 2021).

Regarding motivation to publish scientific articles, the moderate level predominated (51.4%), followed by the high level (45.7%), indicating that although students demonstrate a favorable disposition toward scientific publishing, there remain areas that could be strengthened. These findings are consistent with those reported by Álvarez-Hernández et al. (2022), who identified limitations in university students' knowledge related to scientific publishing. Similarly, Ganga et al. (2016) argue that limited familiarity with scientific journals, the inadequate methodological quality of some research projects, and a weak culture of scientific publication constitute common barriers to scientific productivity in higher education. Consequently, strengthening institutional strategies focused on scientific writing and editorial processes may contribute to increasing students' motivation to publish.

The principal finding of this study demonstrates a positive and statistically significant relationship between attitude toward scientific research and motivation to publish scientific articles (Spearman's $\rho = 0.640$; $p < 0.001$). This result suggests that students with more favorable attitudes toward research tend to exhibit higher levels of motivation to disseminate their research findings through scientific publications. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Cangalaya (2020), who emphasizes that commitment to research is a key factor in strengthening scientific productivity and fostering students' academic and professional development. From this perspective, attitude toward research can be understood as a resource that promotes both the interest and the willingness to engage in more complex scientific activities, including the publication of research articles.

More specifically, the dimensions of attitude toward research also showed significant associations with motivation to publish. Research vocation exhibited the strongest correlation (Spearman's $\rho = 0.713$; $p < 0.001$), followed by perceived value of research (Spearman's $\rho = 0.601$; $p < 0.001$) and interest in research (Spearman's $\rho = 0.553$; $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that motivation to publish depends not only on an occasional interest in conducting research but also on recognizing the value of scientific research and developing a genuine research vocation. In this regard, Rubio-Rodríguez et al. (2020) argue that students' interest in research is strengthened when they recognize the contribution of knowledge generation to addressing social, technological, and scientific challenges, thereby increasing their commitment to research activities.

Overall, these findings suggest that promoting positive attitudes toward research is an important component in strengthening students' motivation to engage in scientific publishing. Although the correlational nature of the study does not allow causal inferences to be drawn, the magnitude of the observed associations suggests that universities should implement strategies aimed at fostering a strong research culture from the early stages of professional education. Such strategies include strengthening methodological training, encouraging participation in undergraduate research groups, providing faculty mentoring throughout the research process, and offering training in scientific writing and scholarly publishing. Together, these initiatives may promote greater student involvement in the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge.

Author contributions

Santiago David Rojas Quispe: Responsible for the study's methodological design, data processing and statistical analysis, interpretation of the results, preparation of the discussion and conclusions, and final review of the manuscript (santiagorojas@upeu.edu.pe).

Mariné Estefa Huayta Meza: Responsible for the conceptualization of the study, formulation of the research problem, literature review, and development

of the theoretical framework (marinehuayta@upeu.edu.pe).

Data availability statement

The data supporting the findings of this study that are not subject to restrictions arising from confidentiality agreements or regulatory provisions are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request via email at: santiagorojas@upeu.edu.pe

Peer review comments

This article underwent a double-anonymous peer review process in accordance with the journal's editorial transparency policy. The reviewers, who participated anonymously in the evaluation process, consented to the publication of the comments provided during the review.

Reviewer Comment 1: A comprehensive revision of the writing, style, and organization of the manuscript is required to improve the clarity and flow of the text. Detailed comments are attached, and resubmission for further review is recommended.

Reviewer Comment 2: The manuscript addresses a topic of unquestionable interest and relevance to the field of study. However, to meet the quality standards required for publication, it should undergo a comprehensive revision to strengthen the consistency across its sections and improve the formal presentation of the data. Detailed suggestions are provided in the attached review document.

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