



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# SITUATIONAL MOTIVATION AND POST-COVID ACADEMIC SATISFACTION OF THE DENTAL STUDENT COMMUNITY

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to analyze the situational motivation and academic satisfaction of the students of the Dental Surgeon career, once they return to face-to-face classes after the pandemic generated by COVID-19. The four dimensions that make up situational motivation are analyzed; in addition to academic satisfaction. For the above, a quantitative investigation was carried out with a quasi-experimental descriptive design. The participants of this study were 366 university students of both sexes to whom two instruments were applied. Finally, it was evidenced that the students of the Dental Surgeon career generally have a high situational motivation and are academically satisfied despite adapting to the normality established to resume the face-to-face modality after the COVID-19 pandemic.

## INTRODUCTION

The health emergency generated by the spread of COVID-19 caused an unusual affectation in all aspects in the world. This forced the governments of all countries to take a position to take all sanitary measures to protect the population (UNESCO, 2020). As the COVID pandemic progressed on the different continents, it was necessary to attend to the different needs of society; education being an essential activity that could not be left aside. In this regard, the governments of the world decide to suspend face-to-face school activities following the guidelines of the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO), with the aim of trying to avoid contagion (UNESCO, 2020). The formative community in the face of this situation was resilient and showed bases to recover from this onslaught and this allowed it to establish strategies for recovery. One of the situations that this health crisis revealed was the motivation of the students to continue with their studies, as well as the academic satisfaction that they showed (United Nations, 2020). The term motivation has a broad spectrum. It encompasses several theories and must be understood as a set of actions related to activation, direction and tenacity in behavior aimed at achieving a goal and/or satisfying a need. In the educational context, motivation refers to the determination that the student has to learn. The author states that this type of motivation should not be confused with the activities or strategies that the teacher applies to stimulate and guide the attraction of the student towards academic tasks (Briseño, 2020). Motivation is not an affective situation in its entirety; it entails a degree of cognitive action since the individual develops knowledge that he requires and needs to know.

In addition, he tends to plan actions to obtain satisfaction that drives him to achieve his objectives and goals (Sellan, 2017). In this sense, A motivated student will obtain a better performance; This will positively impact their professional performance and the quality of their knowledge. That is why, the motivational elements are of the utmost importance in the control, organization and direction of the student's behavior before learning. These encourage the development of skills, overcome their limitations and focus their interests (Briceño, 2020). It should be noted that motivation is divided into levels: intrinsic motivation, external regulation, identified regulation and amotivation. The first refers to a subjective state by conviction with the ultimate goal of experiencing satisfaction. In the educational context, curiosity and interest are the main stimuli that the student has. As for external regulation, it is the obligatory way in which the individual must behave. This level is regulated by incentives for the student to comply with the specific behavior of the institution to which he belongs. The identified regulation is related to the behavior of the individual whose objective is to achieve a goal (Zenteno, 2019). In the educational system, the goals are recognition as a good student, good grades, etc. Regarding amotivation, it is characterized by the lack of behaviors and results of people. In the pedagogical scenario, the student does not show any reaction or interest in the studies and their results are generally very low (Azogue and Barrera, 2020). Regarding student satisfaction, this has been described as the relationship that exists between what is expected by the student and the final results in their learning process. Several studies indicate that academic satisfaction in higher education is closely related to high grades and increased intellectual capital. The authors assure that it has been verified that, for the most part, university students feel satisfied in their educational life and this has an impact on their overall quality of life and on the sense of belonging to the institution (Hernández et al., 2019).

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This study is quantitative with a quasi-experimental descriptive design since it is not limited to data collection, but rather to the prediction and identification of the relationships that exist between two or more variables.

**Participants:** The participants of this study were 366 university students of both sexes: The ages ranged from 17 to 30 years.

**Instruments:** Two instruments were used for this research. The first is called the Situational Motivation Scale (EMS) (Gay, et al., 2000). This questionnaire is made up of 16 items. These are rated according to a Likert scale, with the following values: (1) Totally disagree to (5) Totally agree. The second instrument corresponds to the Academic Satisfaction Scale (Sisto et al., 2008). It is one of the four scales of the original instrument. This is made up of 11 questions; which have the same Likert scale as the previous one.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research are presented descriptively. The instruments were applied to a total of 366 students. 25.95% are men and 74.04% are women.

**Intrinsic Motivation:** This stage evaluates the performance of activities of one's own free will, with the intention of experiencing satisfaction, pleasure, and fulfillment when performing them. In figure 1, it is possible to observe that most of the students have a very good level of intrinsic motivation.

In other words, most of them feel very comfortable in the degree they are studying. On the other hand, there are very few students who for some reason do not feel satisfied in their studies. In agreement with Aguilar et, al. (2016); indicated that in their study, the conclusive variable was the one that indicated that the students were motivated in the correct career.

**Identified Regulation:** This phase refers to voluntary behaviors that are used by people as a means to achieve an objective. Figure 2 shows that the level of regulation identified is high. The grouping of the data was mostly to the right, which indicates that the level of the students is good as expected. Therefore, most of the students are studying what they want and their performance reflects good results. In this sense, what was said by De Sixte et al. (2010); they indicate that, with this regulation, people get involved in a job or task because it is personally important and relevant to them.

**External Regulation:** This regulation is governed by incentives to avoid negative results. In figure 3, a very similar trend is observed at the extremes of the graph, this indicates that there are people who are probably not where they would like to be or are doing activities they do not want to do. In this line and in accordance with what was stated by Rosselli (2016), this regulation is essential in all individual or group academic activity, since its principles are anchored in collaborative learning and it is necessary to guarantee meaningful learning.

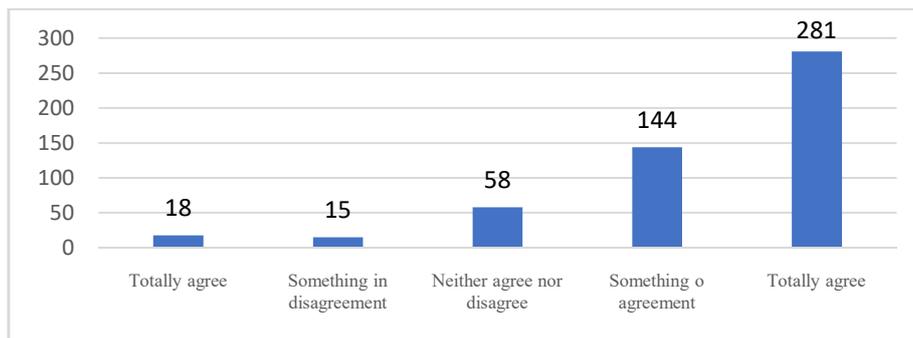


Figure 1. Level of Intrinsic Motivation of Dental Surgeon students

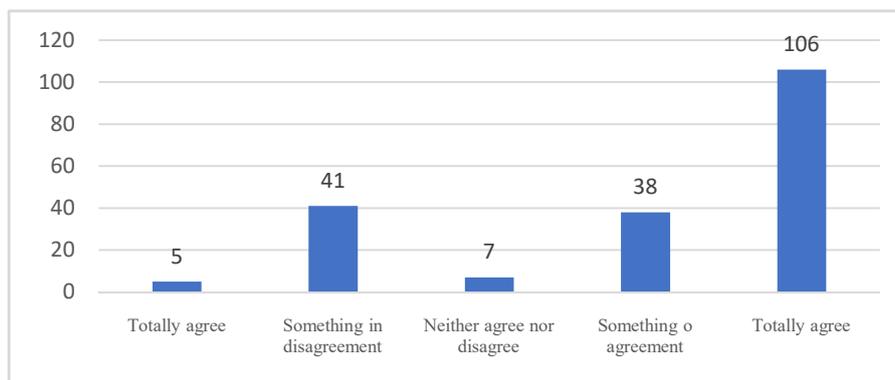


Figure 2. Level of Identified Regulation of Dentistry students. Own Elaboration

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the academic satisfaction scale

Item	Half	Standard deviation	Asymmetry	kurtosis
The classes interest me	9.4	13.39	1.45	1.17
I feel motivated with the course	9.4	9.15	0.31	-2.84
I like my teachers	9.4	12.58	1.81	3.50
I like the classes	9.4	12.82	1.68	2.71
The course meets my expectations	9.4	8.88	0.23	-2.61
I am satisfied with the course	9.4	9.86	0.49	-3.01
Teachers are open to dialogue	9.4	10.24	0.53	-3.17
I feel that the contents of the classes correspond to those of my profession	9.4	12.05	0.97	-1.18

**Amotivation:** This stage addresses the absence of motivation to activate a conduct or behavior in the subjects when they are performing an activity. Figure 4 shows that the level of amotivation generally remained within the scale, with a low score. The foregoing shows that the lack of motivation does not represent a serious alarm factor. However, one must not lose sight of the fact that the levels must drop even more; since the parameter by regular group must be positioned mostly in the options totally disagree and somewhat disagree. In the same way as Zenteno (2019), the results obtained indicate that the level of motivation is low; that is to say, most of the students are motivated doing activities that they are passionate about.

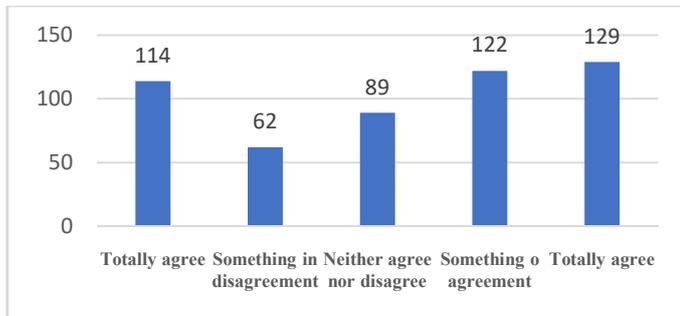


Figure 3. Level of post-pandemic external regulation of the students of the Dental Surgeon career. Own elaboration

**Academic satisfaction:** For the academic satisfaction topic, the descriptive statistics of the mean and standard deviation of the items were calculated (Table 1). In addition, the skewness and kurtosis indices were obtained to analyze the normality of the distributions.

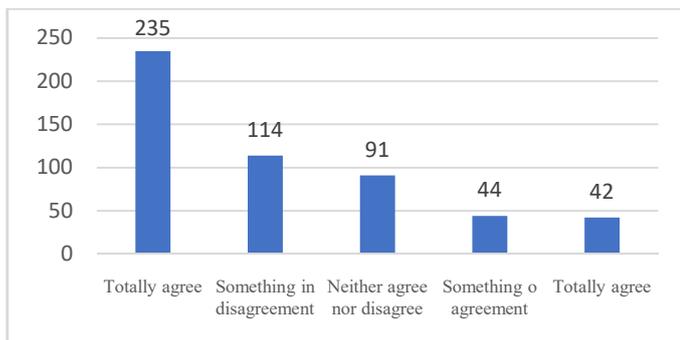


Figure 4. Level of post-pandemic motivation of dental students (it is read from left to right). Own elaboration

The table above shows the asymmetry parameters that oscillate between -2.85 and 1.81. The kurtosis index is  $-1.41$  and the type of kurtosis is *platicurtic*; that is, the concentration of the results is in the low average. In statistics, asymmetry is a data that shows the degree of symmetry or not, in a distribution with respect to its mean (Córdova, 2003). In this case, the asymmetry is positive since there are a greater number of values to the right of the mean. The results show that the students of the Dentistry Academic Unit, in general, are academically satisfied. These data coincide with Hernández et al. (2018); they demonstrated that their students had academic satisfaction and that this is positively correlated with academic performance.

## CONCLUSION

Regarding intrinsic motivation, it is possible to conclude that most students have a high level in this area. This represents that they are in the career they like and enjoy it.

In the identified regulation, it is conclusive that the majority of students have a high level of this regulation. This means that students are clear that it is an important activity and has benefits for their future; In addition, they made the decision to be studying this degree. The results of the external regulation of dental students after the pandemic allow us to infer that 37% of students (especially those of 1st and 2nd year) have serious doubts about this in the right career for them. Regarding the level of motivation, it is possible to conclude that in general the students of the Dentist Surgeon career are motivated in regards to their student life. However, it is important not to neglect this item in order to reduce the opinions that are on the right side of the graph. Finally, academic satisfaction has established to be a construct of enormous significance to understand the behavior of students. It is in this sense that, although the results were satisfactory, some psycho-emotional aspects must be considered in order to guarantee that they are not temporary responses due to the return to post-pandemic academic normality.

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