

Academics' link with the university and the relevance of the spirituality and dentistry project during the covid-19 pandemic



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ABSTRACT

Abstract: The teaching project "Spirituality and Dentistry: A more humanized care", proposes to the students a broad and more humanized view of the patient as an integral being, as well as demonstrating the role of spirituality in the health-disease process. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the project needed to reformulate its methodology in the face of the reality of remote teaching and thus maintain the link between academics and the university. Thus, this study aimed to verify - through the application of an online questionnaire - whether the methodology employed was satisfactory for the students and whether it had a positive impact on their education and on their bond with the university. The result of the research showed that most students consider that participating in the project activities influenced them in a positive way, both in the personal sphere and in the student/patient relationship at the university. In addition, most students expressed the desire for these teaching activities to continue to take place. It is concluded that the project participants perceived positive differences both in the personal sphere and in the student/patient relationship during the pandemic, because they were involved in the Spirituality and Dentistry teaching project.

Keywords: Dentistry, spirituality, humanized care.

1 INTRODUCTION

Spirituality is understood by one of the divisions of the human being, a human constitutive dimension, subtlety of the transcendent and his personal experiences. There are several presentations and studies regarding the associations between spirituality and its benefits to the treatment of the patient. In the scientific and technical environment of Dentistry, the field of spirituality is little covered and fostered in studies (ASTROW, 2001).



A project based on spirituality and, consequently, related to social interrelations allied to Dentistry is established as a break of paradigms in what is proposed as a teaching project, which is routinely founded with the focus of technical knowledge, thus configuring an important tool for prospecting important knowledge that should form the professional profile (LEVIN, 1997).

Considering the holistic proposal of understanding the health-disease process, the biopsychosocial and spiritual model contradicts the mechanistic and technicist conception. In this sense, dental treatment should also cover the human being in its entirety and not only perform procedures that are minimal to specific techniques (ROCHA, 2018).

The present investigation is justified by the importance of verifying whether the methodology used by the project, remotely, was satisfactory for its listeners. In order to verify if it had a positive impact on their education and on their bond with the university. In addition, feedback from students about possible failures of the current format of the project "Spirituality and Dentistry: A more humanized care" is fundamental to improve the work of the project in the future. Therefore, because it is a topic little explored in scientific research, this study aimed to evaluate and elucidate the influence of the Spirituality and Dentistry project on the link of academics with the university in a remote way during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thus, the objective of this study was to evaluate the importance of the teaching project "Spirituality and Dentistry: A more humanized care" in the lives of dental students remotely.

2 METHODOLOGIES

2.1 MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a cross-sectional study with a qualitative approach, which was carried out after the approval of the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Dentistry of the Federal University of Pelotas, under registration CAAE: 50203221.9.0000.5318, located in the city of Pelotas, extreme south of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

The study was conducted in a virtual environment, by filling out an online questionnaire, and the School of Dentistry of the Federal University of Pelotas was the institution of origin of the research. The means chosen for the application of the form was the WhatsApp application, in which the group "Spirituality and Dentistry" was used with the participants of the project "Spirituality and Dentistry: A more humanized service".

This study included those listeners who were attending the remote seminars of the project "Spirituality and Dentistry: A more humanized service" and who participated in the WhatsApp group during the application of the questionnaire. Those who did not attend any of the remote seminars of the project and were not participating in the WhatsApp group entitled "Spirituality and Dentistry" during the application of the questionnaire were excluded.



The research took place through a virtual questionnaire made on the Google Forms platform. For data collection, a virtual questionnaire prepared by the researchers themselves was used, containing questions that qualitatively evaluated the personal experience of each participant of the project.

Attached to the questionnaire was the Free and Informed Consent Form - ICF. The individual's participation in the research only continued if he signed the option to accept his participation.

The virtual questionnaire was made available by the researchers through the WhatsApp group of the teaching project, with the objective that the participants of the project activities could answer the research questions.

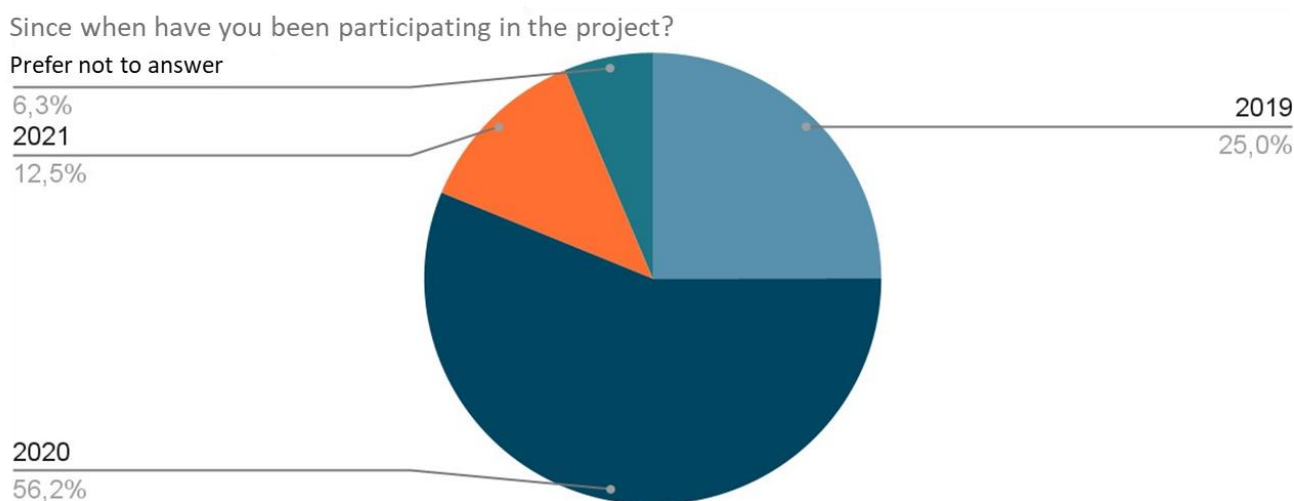
The answers were sent to the electronic address of a researcher, who included the answers in an electronic database and was responsible for the confidentiality of the information. After data collection, they were entered into an Excel spreadsheet, where each participant was identified with a number for control.

A descriptive analysis of the data found was performed with tabulation in an Excel spreadsheet. The data were presented in the form of figures and tables.

3 RESULTS FOUND

Of a total of 63 students enrolled in the WhatsApp groups of Spirituality and Dentistry: A more humanized service, 16 (25.4%) answered the evaluation form of remote activities. Of these 16, all participants stated that they agreed with the use of their answers for didactic and scientific purposes. Thus, the sample represented in this research is composed of 16 forms filled out properly. Regarding the year in which they started participating in the project, 25% (4) of the participants started participating in 2019, 56.3% (9) started in 2020, 12.5% (2) started in 2021 and only 6.3% (1) preferred not to answer (Graph 1).

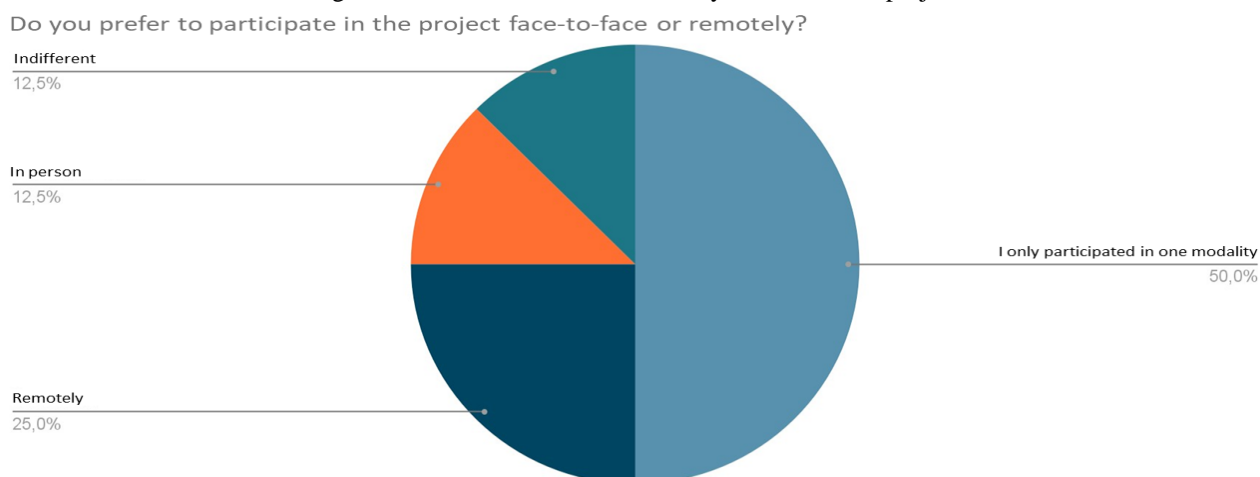
Figure 1. Questioning about the moment of beginning of participation in the project.





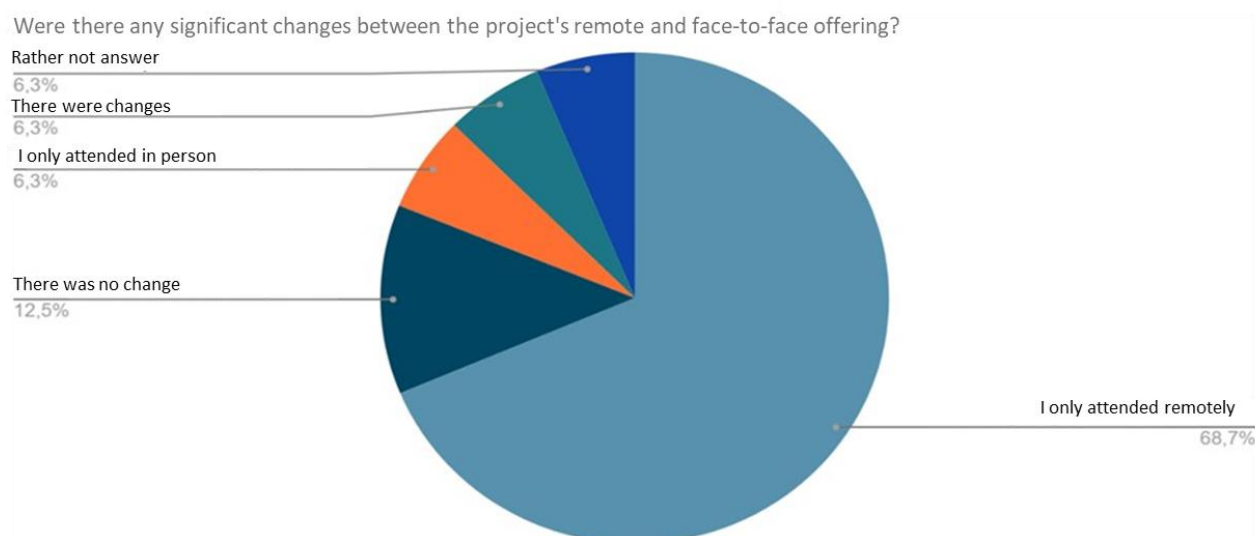
As for whether they prefer the project offered in person or at a distance, 50% (8) participated in the project only in one modality, 25% (4) prefer the distance, 12.5% (2) prefer face-to-face and 12.5% (2) were indifferent (Graph 2).

Figure 2. Preference as to the modality of offer of the project.



In addition, 68.8% (11) of the sample answered that they participated only remotely when asked if there was any significant change between the project offered in person and remotely, 12.5% (2) answered that there was no change, 6.3% (1) answered that they participated only in person, 6.3% (1) answered that there were changes yes, but they do not compromise the learning with the project and 6.3% (1) preferred not to answer (Graph 3).

Figure 3. Changes regarding the remote and face-to-face offer of the project.

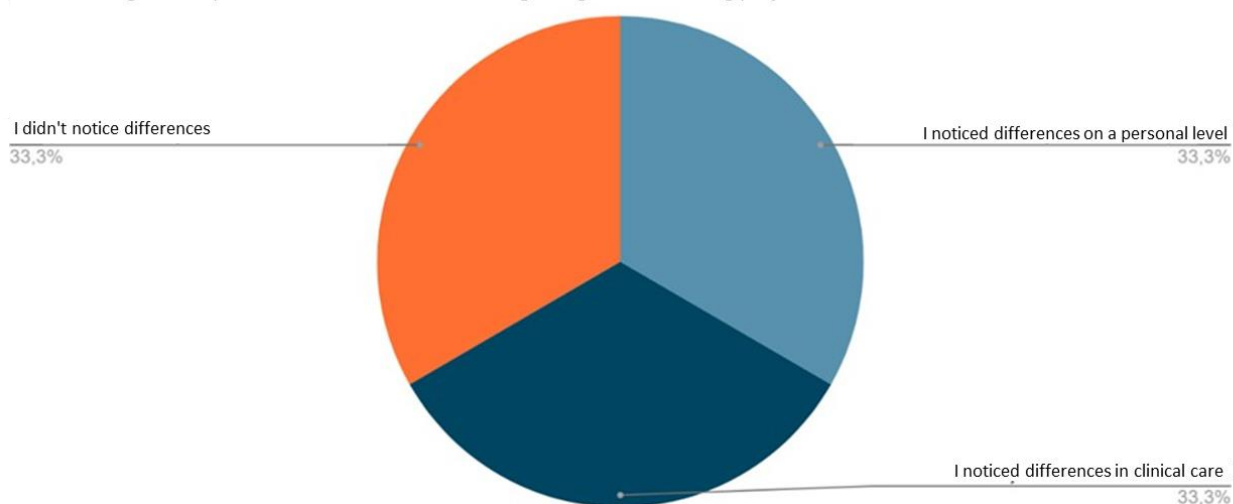




Regarding the significant personal differences from the entry into the project Spirituality and Dentistry: A more humanized care, the majority 75% (12) answered yes, who perceived differences both in the personal sphere and in the student/patient relationship, 12.3% (2) answered yes, they perceived differences only in the personal scope, 6.3% (1) answered yes, they perceived differences only during clinical care and 6.3% (1) answered that they did not perceive differences (Graph 4).

Figure 4. Differences in the personal scope due to the project.

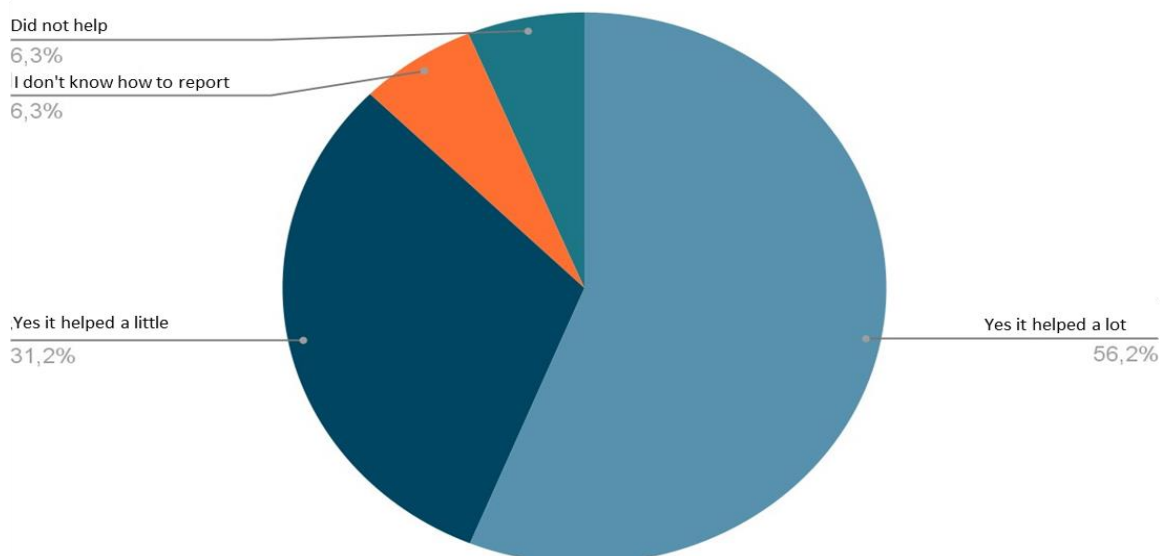
As for the significant personal differences from the beginning of the teaching project



As for whether, in any way, the project helped to face the moment of distancing from the university, 56.3% (9) of the participants reported that yes, it helped a lot, 31.3%(5) of them reported that yes, it helped a little, 6.3%(1) of them do not know how to report and 6.3% (1), reported that it did not help (Graph 5).

Figure 5. Question related to the project's help at a time of pandemic distancing.

Did the project help you in any way to face the moment of distancing from the university?

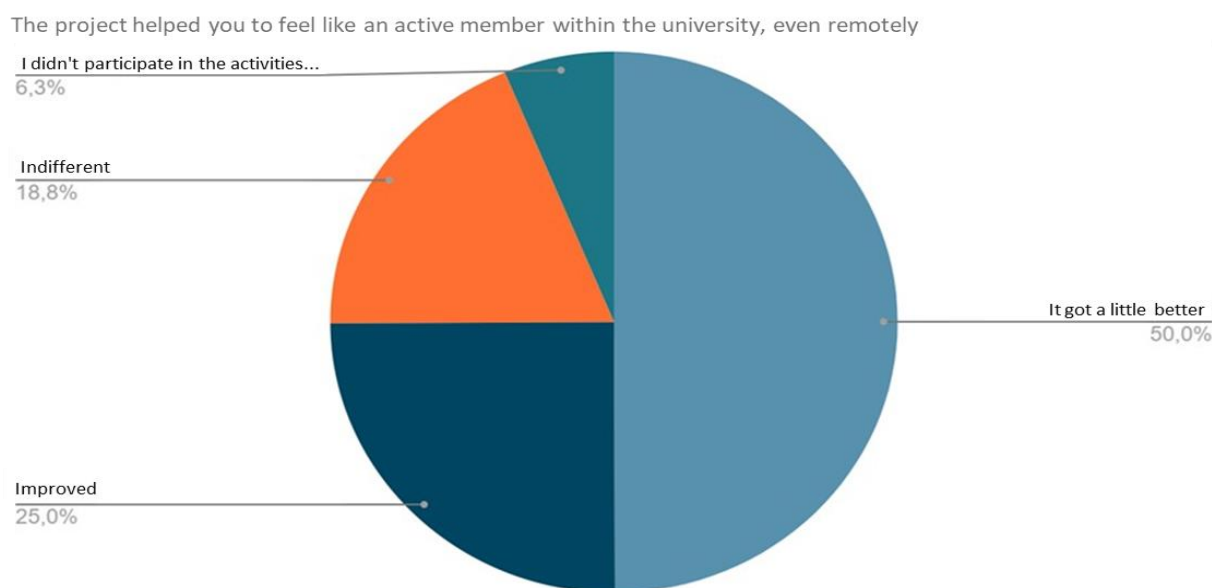




In addition, 100% (16) of the participants considered that participating in the project activities positively influenced them. Regarding the participation in the project to influence the clinical care to patients, 50% (8) of the participants reported that yes, it helped a lot, 31.3% (5) of them reported that yes, it helped a little, 6.3% (1) of them prefer not to report and 12.5% (2) reported that it did not help.

When the participants were asked if the project helped them to feel like an active member within the university even when it was remotely, 50% (8) felt that the bond with the university improved somewhat, 25% (4) felt that the bond with the university improved, 18.8% (3) felt that it was indifferent and 6.3% (1) did not participate in the remote activities of the project, only of face-to-face activities. Regarding the continuation of the project activities, 93.8% (15) of the participants reported that yes, they would like the activities to continue and 6.3% (1) preferred not to respond (Graph 6).

Figure 6. Project collaboration for the feeling of activity at the university during the pandemic.



Thus, it was asked if the activities continue, in what way they would like them to be and 43.8% (7) would like the activities to be only remote, 43.8% (7) would like them to be face-to-face and remote and 12.5% (2) of the participants would like them to be only face-to-face. The suggestions for the project were: more lectures (either in remote or face-to-face format), maintain remote activities, continue to seek innovations and that more meetings were held.

7 statements were received, 100% (7) of them were extremely positive, demonstrating how the project can influence professional and personal career (chart 1):



Table 1. Student testimonials about the project.

Testimonials of the students participating in the Teaching Project Spirituality and Dentistry: A humanized care
1. "With Welcoming, Humanization and Psychosocial Care to Patients."
2. "Humanizing dental care and hospitality, based on in-depth multifaceted knowledge."
3. "Look at the patient in a more human way, with delicacy and empathy ... differentiate themselves from professionals who only see the mouth and not the human being in the chair."
4. "Understand that every human being needs care and attention"
5. "Make the professional more sensitive to understand the patient."
6. "Reflecting on issues beyond common sense."
7. "Helping Yourself and Others"

In view of the above, many listeners reported influencing the welcoming, humanization, care and psychosocial attention, thus making the professional more sensitive to understand the patient, reflecting on the issues beyond common sense. There have been reports that the project can influence the help of oneself and others, in a more human way, with delicacy and empathy. Thus, through these reports, it is evident that there was relevance of the project in the bond of the academics with the university, since the students did not have more face-to-face meetings during this period and thus, they could continue to follow and show their ideas through the online meetings.

4 DISCUSSIONS

In addition to the teaching project "Spirituality and Dentistry: a more humanized care" has a pioneering theme in the dental environment, it also contributes to the understanding of the space that exists between humanized treatment and spirituality in the academic environment. Thus, it provides students with a better understanding of these subjects, to be able to treat them with due importance, in the search for the promotion of knowledge in different areas of health, since the lack of evidence-based scientific proof of the correlation between spirituality and dentistry is notorious (CRUZ et al., 2020).

In this sense, the teaching project Spirituality and Dentistry: A more humanized service, exercises its teaching activities since 2018. However, in 2020, the project had to change, moving from the in-person to the remote model, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, even in the face of limitations, the projects offered remotely establish between students and university institution a form of bond and brings students closer to extracurricular activities that are of paramount importance for academic training (PINTO et al., 2020).

In this way, the use of technologies contributes effectively to the improvement of students. Since distance education has been growing in Brazilian education and in the world, connecting people from different places and promoting opportunities for access to knowledge for many individuals (ALVES, 2011). In this perspective, technology was fundamental in the development of teaching actions, so that the project Spirituality and Dentistry: A more humanized care maintained its activities remotely in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.



During the pandemic period, the Teaching Spirituality and Dentistry Project provided the academic community with 8 remote seminars, with the following themes: "Dynamics of Friend's Day"; "Emotion, Health and Pandemic"; "Fear of dentist: Understand and learn to deal with it"; "Mindfulness: being present, here and now"; "I-you: Developing healthier relationships in the different contexts of life"; "From fear to laughter: humanization and comfort in surgical procedures"; "Self-Care: Focusing on Self" and "Far Living and Spirituality."

In addition, the remote activities of the project "Spirituality and Dentistry: A more humanized service", were considered excellent in the training of the students who accompanied it and can still be watched by the YouTube channel from any location and at the time of the listener's choice, without the need for financial investments or displacement. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that this study was based on the answers given by the participants and each answer is a personal interpretation, where one's own individuality can interfere in the understanding and interpretation of each question.

In addition, the projects offered remotely establish between students and the university institution a form of bond and bring students closer to extracurricular activities that are of paramount importance for academic training (PINTO et al., 2020). Thus, despite health courses encountering difficulties in the period of social isolation due to COVID-19 (HASSAN, M.; HASSAN, R., 2021), the project continued working through teaching and research actions so that in the future we have more studies addressing the impacts that spirituality can bring in clinical practice and in professional and academic performance in Dentistry (CRUZ et al., 2020).

In view of the above, distance education has been growing in Brazilian education and in the world, connecting people from different places and promoting opportunities for access to knowledge for many individuals (ALVES, 2011). Therefore, the remote activities of the project "Spirituality and Dentistry: A more humanized service", were considered excellent in the training of the students who accompanied it and can still be watched by the YouTube channel from any location and at the time of the listener's choice, without the need for financial investments or displacement.

5 CONCLUSIONS

It was noticed that most participants considered that participating in the project activities influenced them in a positive way and was important at the time of social distancing, demonstrated by the reports and positive responses in the questionnaire. In addition, the vast majority of listeners reported that they would like the activities to continue. The students also suggested several themes for the activities of the next semester, whether in person or remotely. Therefore, it could be concluded that the participants of Spirituality and Dentistry: A more humanized care were interested in the continuation of the project, because they perceived positive differences both in the personal sphere and in the student/patient relationship.



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