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RESEARCH ARTICLE

PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS AND VIRTUAL TEACHING IN CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION, IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FROM THE CITY OF LIMA

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the research was to establish the relationship between psychosocial factors and virtual teaching in conditions of social isolation, in university students in Lima. The research method was non-experimental, with a descriptive correlational design. For the statistical treatment of the data, the Pearson r correlation coefficient was applied. The study sample consisted of 80 university students of both sexes, between 18 and 25 years old. Two scales, elaborated by the authors, were applied to them, the same ones that were subjected to validation and reliability processes. The results indicated that there is a strong positive correlation between psychosocial aspects and virtual teaching, corroborated by an $r = 0.777$ obtained. It was concluded that in adequate psychosocial conditions, students adapt better to the virtual teaching modality in pandemic conditions by Covid 19.

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INTRODUCTION

The impact of the school, family and community on the intellectual and social development of students can occur in different ways depending on their origin and development. Among others, it is important to study the psychosocial aspects from the school environment because each aspect can be analyzed and determine which of them will produce positive impacts to strengthen and develop these aspects and, on the other hand, eliminate those that have a negative impact on the university environment. Arango (2003) establishes the field of the psychosocial as the field of personal and interpersonal experience, where, from the interaction and exchange of meanings between people, processes and objects are configured in relation to which it is possible to build subjectivity, identity, as well as the personal, social and cultural reality that are forming part of everyday life. The author assumes the psychosocial from a holistic perspective, such as psychological, social, cultural or historical processes, where both the individual and the social or cultural reality they are part of the same global process that, when taken into

account, facilitate access to the construction of a meaningful world. Several authors have tried to give some conceptual scope on psychosocial aspects. Cuevas (2013) states that "Psychosocial factors can be understood as all school conditions that are directly related to personal, academic, cognitive, family and social factors; which have the ability to affect the comprehensive development of the individual and the physical and mental health of people and belonging to a community" (cited in Varela and Osorio, 2014, p. 22). Here much emphasis is placed on the fact that psychosocial factors have two types of components: 1) the internal component closely linked to subjectivity and the psychobiological conditions of people and 2) the social environment in which people live. Both components are in interaction. These interactions extend to the educational field, that is, the psychological conditions that students have will interact with the considerations that arise in the academic environment. This interactive dynamic will determine or not the appearance of academic and personal risks.

In line with Valera and Osorio (2014), the term psychosocial presents an interactive dynamic between human behavior and its social-cultural environment and that shapes the psychosocial imaginary of each person, that is, a very peculiar way of perceiving and interpreting the things, events and other people. Higher Education faces great challenges derived from the demands of the external context that complicates educational tasks and actions in terms of learning, in addition to those demands related to the construction of knowledge and information, challenges that must be oriented to the development of lifestyles healthy and social skills that benefit students so that they can meet the demands that the school environment poses (Estupiñán, 2016). One way of interacting is related to university life in our country; indeed, university activity has been profoundly disrupted as a result of the Covid19 pandemic. The news around the world reported on the apparently uncontrolled expansion of infected people, deaths and the collapse of health systems to respond to this unknown, elusive and unpredictable disease. In this context of a pandemic, the Peruvian government decreed the suspension of activities that brought together many people in the same environment for being a source of contagion. One of these suspended activities was educational, face-to-face classes were postponed, including higher level ones. Shortly after, the government proposed that these activities should be developed under the distance modality, in other words, virtual teaching was launched as an alternative solution in order not to harm students of all educational levels. For the country's universities, moving from the face-to-face modality to the virtual modality was a challenge full of uncertainty, but it was also the opportunity to prove that it was possible to carry out this challenge successfully.

Virtual education has turned out to be one of the new teaching-learning methods that uses technology as the main tool to impart education remotely, breaking the barriers of time and space. According to Rivera, Viera and Pulgarón (2010) "Virtual education is a way of learning that is characterized by its dynamism and interactivity. It is based on a cooperative model where teachers and students participate despite being separated by a physical distance. Technology plays an important role, because through it facilities are made available that include the transmission of voice, video, data, graphics and printing" (p.147). From what Rivera, Viera and Pulgarón (2010) referred to, it can be deduced that virtual education not only focuses on the image of the teacher, but also on the role that the student plays within this educational modality by intervening as the protagonist of their own learning. This new pedagogical strategy modifies the role of the educator, now acting as a guide and mediator, providing the necessary support to students through counseling, individualized attention and through learning communities. In this sense, the incorporation of virtual teaching in the university context not only implied modifications in the programming of subjects, seminars and curricular units, but also coexisted with new health conditions and diversity of styles of clinging to life. Thus, the new demands, the speed of response that had to be given, developed a lot of creativity, skills and even great courage to overcome the difficulties that arose when making the relevant pedagogical adjustments (Rodríguez, Moreira and Hortegano, 2021). The results of the investigations around the Covid19 pandemic are disseminated quite frequently. However, the studies reported in relation to the psychological and social effects generated by this pandemic in people in conditions of social isolation and mandatory quarantine are

still not enough, even less at the level of university students. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out studies that allow knowing and understanding the relationship between the variable's psychosocial aspects and virtual teaching in university students. Concern that led to the following research question: ¿What is the relationship between psychosocial aspects and virtual teaching in conditions of social isolation, in university students in Lima?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study had a quantitative approach and a descriptive correlational design. In this context of pandemic and social isolation, it was not possible to have a conformed population, so the selection of the sample had to be carried out under an intentional criterion, for convenience. Thus, as the students accepted their participation, the sample was formed until reaching the number of 80 people. They were university students, of both sexes, ages between 18 and 25 years. They were sent, through a virtual format, two scales: one to measure psychosocial aspects and another to measure virtual teaching, both scales were developed by the authors of the research. In the same way, informed consent was sent to protect ethical considerations, especially in relation to respect and the free decision to participate, the security of the confidentiality of the information, the purposes of the research, among other considerations.

RESULTS

According to Table 1, the Pearson correlation coefficient was $r = 0.777$, which indicates that there is a significant relationship between the variables psychosocial aspects and virtual teaching in conditions of social isolation, in university students from Lima, and that, according to Hernández, Fernández and Baptista (2014) corresponds to a strong positive correlation. Table 2 shows a Pearson correlation coefficient $r = 0.733$, so there is a significant relationship between the environmental setting and virtual teaching, in conditions of social isolation, in university students in Lima.

Table 1. Correlation between psychosocial aspects and virtual teaching

		Psychosocial aspects	Virtual teaching
Psychosocial aspects	Pearson correlation	.777(**)	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000	
	N	80	80
Virtual teaching	Pearson correlation	1	.777(**)
	Sig. (bilateral)		.000
	N	80	80

Table 2. Correlation between the environmental setting and teaching virtual

		Ambient environment	Virtual teaching
Ambient environment	Pearson correlation	.733(**)	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000	
	N	80	80
Virtual teaching	Pearson correlation	1	.733(**)
	Sig. (bilateral)		.000
	N	80	80

Consequently, it also corresponds to a strong positive correlation. Table 3 shows a Pearson correlation coefficient obtained from $r = 0.698$, indicating that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction with studies and virtual teaching, in conditions of social isolation, in university students in Lima. In this case, a medium or moderate positive correlation corresponds to it. It can be seen in Table 4 that the Pearson correlation coefficient was $r = 0.631$, which proves that there is a significant relationship between the organization and virtual teaching, in conditions of social isolation, in university students in Lima. Here too this result indicates a medium or moderate positive correlation.

Table 5 shows a Pearson correlation coefficient $r = 0.523$, a result that indicates that there is a significant relationship between skills and virtual teaching, in conditions of social isolation, in university students from Lima, which indicates a medium or moderate positive correlation. Table 6 presents a Pearson correlation coefficient $r = 0.543$, which determines that there is a significant relationship between the needs and virtual teaching, in conditions of social isolation, in university students from Lima, which according to Hernández, Fernández and Baptista (2014) are This is a medium or moderate positive correlation. Table 7 shows a Pearson correlation coefficient $r = 0.671$, here it is also established that there is a significant relationship between culture and virtual teaching, in conditions of social isolation, in university students from Lima, which corresponds to a correlation medium or moderate positive. Table 8 shows a Pearson correlation coefficient $r = 0.467$ that indicates a significant relationship between the personal situation and virtual teaching, in conditions of social isolation, in university students from Lima, that is, it is a positive average correlation or moderate.

Table 3. Correlation between study satisfaction and virtual teaching

		Satisfaction with studies	Virtual teaching
Satisfaction with studies	Pearson correlation	.698(**)	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000	
	N	80	80
Virtual teaching	Pearson correlation	1	.698(**)
	Sig. (bilateral)		.000
	N	80	80

Table 4. Correlation between organization and virtual teaching

		Organization	Virtual teaching
Organization	Pearson correlation	.631(**)	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000	
	N	80	80
Virtual teaching	Pearson correlation	1	.631(**)
	Sig. (bilateral)		.000
	N	80	80

Table 5. Correlation between capacities and virtual teaching

		Capacities	Virtual teaching
Capacities	Pearson correlation	.523(**)	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000	
	N	80	80
Virtual teaching	Pearson correlation	1	.523(**)
	Sig. (bilateral)		.000
	N	80	80

Table 6. Correlation between needs and virtual teaching.

		Needs	Virtual teaching
Needs	Pearson correlation	.543(**)	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000	
	N	80	80
Virtual teaching	Pearson correlation	1	.543(**)
	Sig. (bilateral)		.000
	N	80	80

Table 7. Correlation between culture and virtual teaching

		Culture	Virtual teaching
Culture	Pearson correlation	.671(**)	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000	
	N	80	80
Virtual teaching	Pearson correlation	1	.671(**)
	Sig. (bilateral)		.000
	N	80	80

Table 8. Correlation between personal situation and virtual teaching

		Personal situation	Virtual teaching
Personal situation	Pearson correlation	.467(**)	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000	
	N	80	80
Virtual teaching	Pearson correlation	1	.467(**)
	Sig. (bilateral)		.000
	N	80	80

DISCUSSION

The results obtained obey the hypotheses that were formulated and that are reflected in the corresponding tables. First, the analysis of the general hypothesis is presented, the result of which can be seen in Table 1. It was found that the relationship between psychosocial aspects and virtual teaching was significant and that it expresses a strong positive correlation. Then, based on this result, it can be interpreted that the adequate psychosocial conditions allow a better adaptation and perception to study in the virtual teaching modality; On the other hand, in inadequate psychosocial conditions, the adaptation and perception to study under the virtual teaching modality is not favorable. Presumably, the students in the sample have generated, in one way or another, positive socio-emotional mechanisms to adapt to the regular development of classes in the virtual modality. At the same time, this positive adaptation that the students showed allows us to deduce that there was no noticeable deterioration in their mental and psychological health, on the contrary, their adequate psychological adjustment to the conditions of social isolation due to the pandemic, has contributed to successfully coping moments full of stress and fear, fear of contagion, disease and death. These are people who in one way or another have been able to overcome their negative life contingencies, emerged afloat in the midst of apparently, apparently they are very resilient people. Thus, the results that are analyzed on the corroborated general hypothesis, lead to think that there has been an adequate adaptation of the students to the abrupt and even traumatic changes that have been experienced as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, regarding their studies in their professional training.

Several specific hypotheses were also formulated that tried to know the relationships between the various psychosocial aspects with the virtual teaching variable. Indeed, the psychosocial aspects studied in this research were dimensioned in external aspects: the environmental setting, organization, culture, and, in internal aspects: capacities, needs, satisfaction with studies and personal situation, each of these aspects was related to the virtual teaching variable. In this context, Table 2 shows the results obtained from the specific hypothesis 1, namely, the relationship between the environmental setting and virtual teaching in conditions of social isolation, was proven, a strong positive correlation was found. In other words, given an adequate environmental environment, there is also an adequate adaptation and reception of virtual teaching. Based on these results, it can be interpreted that there are adequate conditions at home, good relationships between family members, help from parents, concern about attending and carrying out academic activities; then, it can also be expected that students have good socio-emotional conditions to have a better disposition and reception of their classes in the virtual modality. This openness, this good availability to the new virtual teaching conditions also facilitates the achievement of programmed learning.

Consistent with this finding, Rivera, Viera, and Pulgaron (2010) maintain that the virtual educational modality fosters interactive learning, with considerable participation between teachers and students, even when they are far from each other. They add that the technological tools used during classes activate various mechanisms and psychological processes involved in the learning process. This virtual technology not only includes the stimulation of neuroreceptors that are activated when listening to classes or explanations, watching videos, data, graphics or other stimuli, but also includes gamifications and animations that keep students alert and motivated. Another study that obtained results close to the one discussed is the one carried out by Vargas (2020). This author found that the teaching-learning strategies under the virtual modality are effective for the acquisition of the skills of each subject, and that they favor quality teaching. It should be noted that this study was carried out in the midst of a pandemic, so it should be added that this result can be explained, to a certain extent, because the adequate psychosocial environment of the students was favorable and allowed good academic performance. It is worth mentioning that Expósito and Marsollier (2020) in their research similar to ours, found inequalities in the use of digital pedagogical technologies and resources that they related to the type of management, the educational level, the socioeconomic situation of the students, the academic performance and support from the student's family; showed the socio-educational inequalities of the students. Despite the fact that these authors investigated other psychosocial aspects, the determining role that these play in relation to the teaching-learning process can be highlighted. That is, in unfavorable psychosocial conditions, the teaching-learning process, in the virtual modality, does not facilitate learning; on the other hand, if these conditions are favorable, then learning is facilitated, as has been found in our research. Vázquez, Forty, Indacochea and Chara (2020) also found that the low economic solvency of the students led them to use their own cell phones during their classes, which is why, these researchers maintain, the students had the feeling that their learning left a lot to be desired in terms of quality, compared to the face-to-face modality. As the economic solvency of students perishes in these pandemic conditions and, in the

virtual modality of studies, it is a permanent problem that affects learning. It is also interesting to comment that in the national universities of the country, where this study was carried out, the majority of young people show economic resources that are not so solvent; however, unlike what was found by Expósito and Marsollier (2020) and Vázquez, Forty, Indacochea and Chara (2020), economic and similar aspects did not have a negative impact on the dynamics of their studies, via the virtual modality, perhaps due to because some of these students work and study at the same time or because their parents and close relatives are informal merchants, without fixed working hours, but with a family burden that they must attend to as it may, above all, with the hope of seeing to their children made with a profession. On the one hand, it seems contradictory, since according to official figures from the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) of Peru, 78.2% of employment is informal, without health insurance, without job stability, or guarantees for workers (Gestión, 2021). However, despite these socioeconomic conditions, the students in the sample and their families have been able to cope with the crisis and moved forward.

On the other hand, this contradiction found could be explained by resorting to a psychological event known as resilience, that is, they are very resilient people who, despite adversity, successfully faced problems. The results of the other specific hypotheses formulated can be seen in tables 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, respectively). Indeed, following the listed order of these specific hypotheses, it was found that satisfaction with studies, organization, skills, needs, culture and personal situation of students were significantly related to virtual teaching, which means that the correlations found were medium or moderate positive, according to the scale of Hernández, Fernández and Baptista (2014, p. 305).

These correlations found indicate how important it is to know the dynamics presented by the psychosocial aspects that are manifested in the experiential and experiential environment of the students in relation to the virtual teaching modality. So, it seems desirable that the aforementioned psychosocial aspects work in harmony so that students can perform adequately when studying in virtual conditions. For example, it is possible that the predominance of internal aspects (skills, needs, satisfaction with studies and personal situation) of students over external aspects (environmental setting, organization, culture), can have consequences that do not facilitate learning and do not promote good dispositions and satisfaction in studies. This opens up new questions that should be investigated: ¿how are internal psychosocial aspects related to virtual teaching? How are external aspects related to virtual teaching? By clarifying these relationships with greater precision, we would have the appropriate information to propose more objective and reliable measures in the teaching-learning processes through virtual means. The same could be inferred for the virtual teaching variable since its dimensions have not been worked on in this study; Therefore, it is necessary to undertake research that can provide answers to some questions: ¿what type of learning material should be designed in relation to the psychosocial environment that predominates in university students? What is the role of the teacher in relation to an adverse psychosocial environment of university students? What are the effects of the teacher's virtual teaching methods in unfavorable psychosocial conditions for university students? But also, the variables studied here could be investigated with other related ones, for example:

psychosocial aspects and resilience, psychosocial aspects and emotional intelligence or virtual teaching and resilience, virtual teaching and effective personality, compare the study of these variables mentioned with diverse populations of university students from the country and from other countries. In short, this study has not only proven the importance of studying the psychosocial aspects in relation to virtual teaching in these moments of social isolation due to the Covis19 pandemic, but also promotes ideas to open up new lines of research that allow counting with knowledge studied from our educational reality and, as a consequence, make decisions on university educational and mental health policies with just scientific cause. This would be a way to put an effective quota in the promotion and implementation of a quality university educational service in the virtual modality.

CONCLUSION

- This study found that favorable psychosocial conditions facilitate a better adaptation and perception of the virtual teaching modality in university students.
- Even when the students in the sample belong to a medium and low socioeconomic level, they have been able to overcome the demands and challenges posed by the new virtual educational modality: investment in digital tools, training in the use of these digital tools, permanent access to the Internet, positive family environment, ability to overcome adversity and adaptation to change.
- The information found can be helpful in proposing programs and strategies to understand and take into account the psychosocial conditions that prevail in students in order to improve communication and academic performance of students and teachers in the virtual teaching modality.

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Interest conflict: None to declare

Key points

- It was found that even when the economic, labor and socio-emotional psychosocial aspects were negatively affected by the pandemic, the students and their families adapted and overcame the health and educational crisis they experienced.
- The results obtained motivate new ideas to promote new research with other variables of interest in the pedagogical and psychosocial field in university students, variables such as: resilience, emotional intelligence, effective personality, pedagogical tact or sensitivity, collaborative learning, among others.

- This study provided relevant information to develop policies and strategies to prevent and promote, not only favorable living conditions, but also to design and strengthen national mental and psychological health programs to successfully deal with similar contingencies.

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