RESEARCH ARTICLES

Psychological Well-Being in First-Cycle Students at a Private University in Lima

Bienestar psicológico en estudiantes de primeros ciclos de una universidad privada de Lima

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Summary

The distance education modality, added to the demands of the university environment, can generate states of anxiety and uncertainty in students. Given this, an investigation was carried out whose objective was to describe the psychological well-being of first cycle university students. This is a descriptive case study, with a qualitative approach and phenomenological design. The research was carried out between March and August 2021 and was aimed at 20 students and 10 teachers from the Faculty of Health Sciences of a private university in Lima. For data collection, a focus group guide for teachers and a semi-structured interview guide for students were applied. Among the findings, the recognition of six central interrelated categories stands out: self-acceptance, purpose in life, autonomy, mastery of the environment, positive relationships, and personal growth. In general terms, the students' favorable state of psychological well-being was evidenced, related to a positive classroom climate, as well as a favorable self-perception. However, certain weaknesses were identified, such as the inability to take responsibility for their own actions, and the lack of short, medium, and long-term goals. In conclusion, the results have made it possible to describe the psychological well-being of the students who were part of the study sample, which has made it possible to identify the strengths and opportunities for improvement that should be considered for future studies, as well as the design of targeted proposals to improve the problem situation.

Keywords: Student welfare; Educational management; University education.

Resumen

La modalidad educativa a distancia, sumada a las exigencias propias del ámbito universitario, puede generar estados de ansiedad e incertidumbre en los estudiantes. Frente a ello, se realizó una investigación cuyo objetivo fue describir el bienestar psicológico de los estudiantes universitarios de primeros ciclos. Este es un estudio de caso descriptivo, con un enfoque cualitativo y diseño fenomenológico. La investigación se efectuó entre marzo y agosto de 2021, y estuvo dirigido a 20 estudiantes y 10 docentes de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Salud de una universidad privada de Lima. Para la recolección de datos, se aplicaron una guía de grupo focal dirigida a los docentes y una guía de entrevista semiestructurada dirigida a los estudiantes. Entre los hallazgos, destaca el reconocimiento de seis categorías centrales interrelacionadas: autoaceptación, propósito en la vida, autonomía, dominio del entorno, relaciones positivas y crecimiento personal. En términos generales, se evidenció el estado favorable de bienestar psicológico de los estudiantes, relacionado con un clima positivo del aula, así como una autopercepción favorable. No obstante, se identificaron ciertas debilidades, tales como la incapacidad de asumir la responsabilidad de sus propios actos, y la carencia de metas a corto, mediano y largo plazo. En conclusión, los resultados han permitido describir el bienestar psicológico del alumnado que formó parte de la muestra de estudio, lo cual ha posibilitado identificar las fortalezas y oportunidades de mejora que se debe tomar en cuenta para futuros estudios, así como el diseño de propuestas orientadas a mejorar la situación problemática.

Palabras claves: Bienestar del estudiante; Gestión de la educación; Enseñanza superior.

INTRODUCTION

The current context of distance education has caused not only health, social and economic problems worldwide but also educational ones. In the particular case of university students, as Barrera et al. (2019) and Matalinares et al. (2016) point out, they have always been subjected to potentially stressful situations, especially if we refer to the first study semesters, which is when this abrupt change from school to university occurs, representing multiple academic challenges as they have to adapt to a new way of life (Carranza et al., 2017; Rossi et al., 2019). Furthermore, as stated by Delgado and Tejeda (2020), young university students in the first study semesters often demonstrate high levels of anxiety, and their strategies to face such circumstances are not efficient enough, which can be reflected in the performance of their academic activities. In turn, in the face of such difficulties, students may decrease their academic performance, which increases their discomfort and develops negative attitudes towards learning. In this regard, several studies emphasize that such situations occur more noticeably in students of some particular degree programs such as Health Sciences (Mazo et al., 2013; Halgravez et al., 2016; Castro & Restrepo, 2017).

Indeed, several studies, such as the one conducted by Rossi et al. (2019), show that the rates of depressive disorders in university students are usually higher than those presented by the rest of the general population. In this regard, some risk factors considered are age, dissatisfaction with the degree program, and low-income status, among others. All this, obviously, can be aggravated by the situation of distance education, which involves various challenges related to the digital competence of students, the interaction they may establish with their professors and classmates, the technical conditions, and the need to apply self-study strategies, among others.

According to Sauleda (2017), a high level of psychological well-being results in developing the presence of positive emotions and the absence of negative emotions, in addition to achieving a better life quality and establishing positive interactions with others. Added to this is the possible relationship between psychological well-being and academic success that will allow young people to have a high level of motivation and effectively fulfill their goals (Téllez, 2020).

Based on the above, it is inferred that young university students should have adequate psychological well-being to achieve the proposed goals and thus obtain the satisfaction of having fulfilled them (Arroyo, 2020). This is why it is necessary to inquire more deeply into this topic to

establish more precisely how the psychological well-being of university students is, thus, to formulate proposals aimed at improving their emotional and affective conditions.

Psychological Well-Being Approaches

According to Barrera et al. (2019), it is possible to state that psychological well-being is the evaluation that an individual makes about his or her life in specific areas, which depends on the emotions involved in the experiences the individual had in them. Likewise, as Hernani et al. (2013) point out, such evaluation differs from one individual to another, besides being susceptible to daily variations in the same person. It is also important to mention that psychological well-being is formed while the individual's psychological development takes place, depending on how the individual copes with the diverse experiences the individual faces (Sandoval et al., 2017). Now, psychological well-being is sustained in a given sociocultural context, so, inevitably, such aspect is linked to the biological and social, and in which process personality plays an important role in regulating such interactions (Carrera, 2018).

Salas (2018) highlights two theoretical orientations to well-being: the hedonic tradition, which is associated with subjective well-being, and the eudaimonic tradition based on the idea of the goal of the human being proposed by Aristotle, which is related to psychological well-being. The main difference lies in that the latter seeks personal growth and the development of the meaning of life (Rossi et al., 2019), which transcends subjective happiness, an essential feature of the hedonic approach. Thus, it is possible to state that the eudaimonic approach involves both the pursuit of happiness and the result itself (Alvarez, 2019).

In this regard, it is necessary to mention the main characteristics of psychological well-being proposed by Diener et al. (1991), namely, subjectivity, since it arises from the perceptions of the human subject who experiences it, the presence of positive indicators of reaction to the situations the human subject faces and, at the same time, the absence of negative factors, and the global valuation of life. Furthermore, as stated by Advíncula (2018), psychological well-being does not imply the exclusive experience of positive emotions, but the congruence of emotions based on their control. Now, psychological well-being in university students is related to the experience of positive emotions, the ability to establish kind bonds with others, in addition to a positive self-evaluation. This concept places a strong emphasis on the social well-being that young university students usually need (Advíncula, 2018).

Theoretical Perspective of Psychological Well-Being

The multidimensional explanatory model of psychological well-being proposed by Ryff (1989), which is the foundation of this research is still valid and is based on studies on optimal human development, as well as positive mental functioning (Salas, 2018). Ryff proposes six essential dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Firstly, self-acceptance involves the development of positive attitudes toward one's life, both present, and past. As stated by Alvarez (2019), this dimension is considered by the author as the central axis of mental health and maturity since it allows the self-assessment of one's strengths and the recognition of one's weaknesses that can be conceived as opportunities for improvement. Secondly, positive relationships with others include the ability to effectively interact with others by developing empathetic and caring attitudes, as well as the capacity to establish lasting bonds with others. Thirdly, autonomy implies the development of a sense of freedom sufficient to govern one's own life based on one's characteristics and potential. Thus, it encompasses the exercise of one's will with a defined purpose.

Fourthly, environmental mastery involves the ability to choose or change the environments that are most suitable to one's needs. In addition, it refers to the ability to influence their context and take responsibility for the decisions made that, in some way, impact the environment (Delgado & Tejeda, 2020). Fifthly, purpose in life means giving meaning to one's existence and, based on this, setting realistic goals. Thus, it is related to establishing a life project based on the academic and professional decisions made. Finally, personal growth is related to the need for continuous improvement, which, in turn, implies a constant openness to diverse learning experiences.

Another important theoretical model relating to psychological well-being is that proposed by Diener et al. (1991) who propose situational models aimed at understanding that people's satisfaction depends on circumstances considered as "happy" so that the role played by the environment to this end is fundamental. They also propose the existence of "personological" models that conceive well-being as a component of personality. From this perspective, well-being has permanent characteristics over time (Téllez, 2020).

It should be noted that several studies evidence that university students, especially first-semester students, usually show low or medium levels of psychological well-being (Carrera, 2018; Maldonado, 2018; Solórzano-Gonzales, 2019; Yarlequé et al., 2016). Regarding the factors associated with such results, Salvador (2016) classified them into cognitive factors related to the

valuation processes that the individual performs of his or her own life, and affective factors associated with emotions, mainly happiness, joy, fear, or sadness. Additionally, Rangel and Alonso (2010, as cited in Collas & Cuzcano, 2019) highlight biological factors, personality factors, factors associated with beliefs, and sociocultural factors, all of which might influence the level of psychological well-being that an individual reaches at a given time. For her part, Solórzano-Gonzales (2019) alludes to negative factors linked to addictions and situations of violence that might intervene in a person's state of well-being. Indeed, according to the study she conducted, she concluded that the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances influenced the low level obtained by a group of university students. Likewise, she identified that a significant percentage of these young people usually suffered psychological violence, which impacted their level of well-being.

Concerning certain sociodemographic and academic variables associated with psychological well-being, various research studies have also been conducted. Regarding age, Matalinares et al. (2016) demonstrated that the levels of psychological well-being and its dimensions related to positive relationships, environmental mastery, autonomy, and personal growth of university students are usually higher in the youngest. However, the studies conducted by Carrera (2018), Sandoval et al. (2017), and Soldati (2017) evidenced that, at older ages, the aspects related to environmental mastery and positive relationships are usually better developed in older students and, generally, in last semesters. The authors attribute this finding to the fact that as students become more involved in the academic and even pre-professional environment related to their degree program, their levels of anxiety, uncertainty, and low self-efficacy may decrease. Added to this is the level of maturity that, according to Carrera (2018), students reach as they advance in chronological age and study semesters. Such findings are also supplemented by those of Hernani et al. (2013) and Soldati (2017) who state that students who work show higher scores of psychological well-being. Despite this, studies such as that of Téllez (2020) have not identified significant differences in the levels of psychological well-being according to the age of the students

Demographic and socioeconomic variables have also been considered in some studies. Thus, Matalinares et al. (2016), as well as Yarlequé et al. (2016) determined in their studies that university students from the capital of Peru, Lima, obtained higher levels of psychological well-being, especially in the aspects of autonomy and personal growth than their peers from universities located in provinces.

This study was conducted on Health Sciences students from a private university in Lima, Peru between March and August 2021. Its purpose was to describe the psychological well-being of students from the School of Health Sciences of a private university in Lima, Peru. This purpose arose from the question: How is the psychological well-being of university students from the School of Health Sciences of a private university in Lima, Peru?

The relevance of this study lies in its qualitative nature since studies aimed at examining the psychological well-being of students are mainly quantitative. Thus, from a qualitative approach, this study aims to delve into the perceptions of university students regarding this phenomenon. Furthermore, in line with the studies conducted by Pérez et al. (2002) and Malo et al. (2012), the perspective of other actors directly related to students, in this case, the professors, have been considered to triangulate the information declared by the students, so that it is corroborated with some of their actions in class.

METHOD

Type and Design

From a qualitative approach, the study follows a phenomenological case study design of a descriptive nature since it is aimed at exploring, describing and understanding students' psychological well-being from their ways of interpreting how their social and affective environment impacts their perceptions of themselves. In addition, it seeks to examine their perceptions to characterize the different categories linked to students' emotional well-being.

Participants

The population included 120 first- and second-semester students and ten professors from the School of Health Sciences of a private university in Lima. It was decided to work with students from this school since, as previously mentioned, Health Sciences is one of the degree programs in which students usually show more difficulties in their psychological well-being. From this universe, we worked with all the professors and a sample of 20 students from Medicine and Odontology degree programs for which a convenience non-probabilistic sampling was considered. It was decided to conduct the study with all the professors to have a more accurate

picture of the student's performance in the different subjects they take. It should be noted that their informed consent was requested before starting the fieldwork.

Information Collection Instruments

Firstly, a semi-structured interview guide was used and applied to the students (see Appendix 1). This instrument consists of 15 items formulated according to the evaluation needs of the six subcategories of psychological well-being. Questions 1 and 13 refer to self-acceptance; questions 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8 to life purpose; questions 3 and 4 to autonomy; question 9 to environmental; questions 10, 11, and 12 to positive relationships; and questions 14 and 15 to personal growth. In this case, the instrument was validated using the expert judgment method with the participation of five researchers. Likewise, the results of such evaluation were positive for its application.

Secondly, a focus group guide was prepared for professors (see Appendix 2). This instrument consists of 8 items related to the six subcategories of psychological well-being. In this case, questions 1 and 2 refer to autonomy; 3 to life purpose; 4 and 5 to self-acceptance; 6 to personal growth; 7 to positive relationships; and 8 to environmental mastery. Likewise, the focus group guide was also validated using the expert judgment method with the participation of five researchers. As a result of such evaluation, all the experts agreed that the items of the instrument were adequate and suggested their application.

Procedure

For the collection of information, permission was requested from the Director of Studies, who gave his consent for the application of the instruments to the students. Subsequently, meetings were scheduled via Zoom to conduct both the focus group with the professors and the interviews with the students. Thus, after explaining the study purpose and their informed consent to each of the informants, we applied the respective instruments.

After the application of the instruments was completed, the meeting recordings were transcribed, and the information found was analyzed. To this end, the statements of the informants were open-coded using the ATLAS.ti 8 analysis tool. From the analysis, the following categories were determined: self-acceptance, purpose in life, autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relationships, and personal growth. Subsequently, a triangulation of data was applied by

prioritizing the information from the students' interviews, and then supplemented by the professors' perceptions to detect similarities and differences in their conceptions. It should be noted that, for the professors' perceptions, only those in which the majority agreed, or that were directly associated, with the students' statements were considered. This was done to reaffirm the common aspects stated by the students, and to question possible differences evidenced between the students' statements and observable actions. Although most of the findings show agreement between the perceptions of both groups, there are a few opposing aspects that allow us to question the students' self-assessment of some components of their well-being. Nevertheless, the limitation of this triangulation process is that the professors do not know the students' performances in all areas of their lives, so all the information concerning the students' well-being provided by the professors is not necessarily precise and accurate. In any case, the analysis prioritized the perceptions provided by the students and considered those of the professors in a complementary or supportive manner.
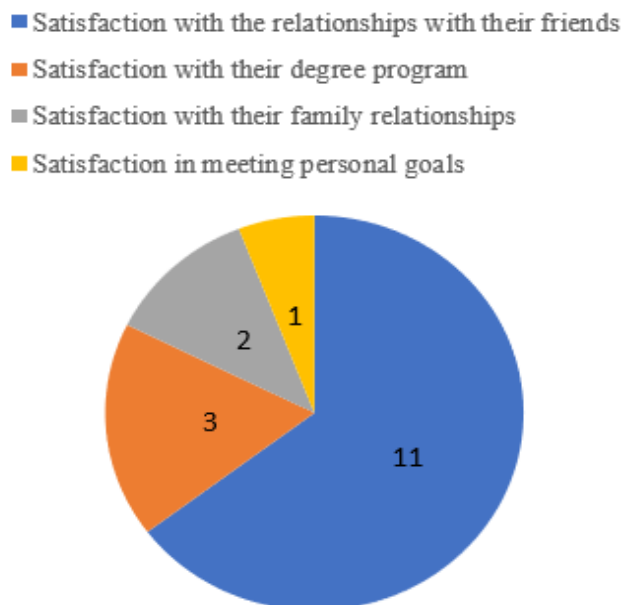
Information Analysis

We will show the results below with their respective analysis and, subsequently, the discussion, the result of the triangulation of the two instruments applied, and the comparison with the theoretical references. Each student will be identified with a number (E.1, E.2, E.3, E.4, E.5, E.6, E.7, E.8, E.9, E.10, E.11, E.12, E.13, E.14, E.15, E.16, E.17, E.18, E.19, E.20) to protect their confidentiality.

RESULTS

Results of the Application of the Semi-Structured Guide for Students

Regarding self-acceptance, most of the students (17) indicated that they were satisfied with their lives, while the minority (3) indicated that they were "moderately satisfied." Figure 1 shows the areas or aspects indicated by those who were completely satisfied:

Source: Elaborated by the author.

- Satisfaction with the relationships with their friends
- Satisfaction with their degree program
- Satisfaction with their family relationships
- Satisfaction in meeting personal goals

Figure 1.
Reasons for satisfaction with their own life

Based on the above, there is a greater emphasis on mainly extrinsic reasons linked to their immediate environment (especially friendships). Secondly, other academic-related factors are considered.

However, the students who reported being moderately satisfied with their lives based this perception on the failure to achieve their goals or the impossibility of carrying out exciting activities. Some of their responses were as follows: "I feel that I still do not achieve what I want" (E.1), "I am not very sure of my vocation" (E.2), "I do not have much time to do what I like" (E.3), "I feel tired all the time" (E.4), "I cannot go out with my friends as I used to" (E.5), among others.

Regarding the aspects they would change in their life, Figure 2 summarizes the main responses. Of the 19 students interviewed, only a student stated that he did not feel that he should change anything in his life.
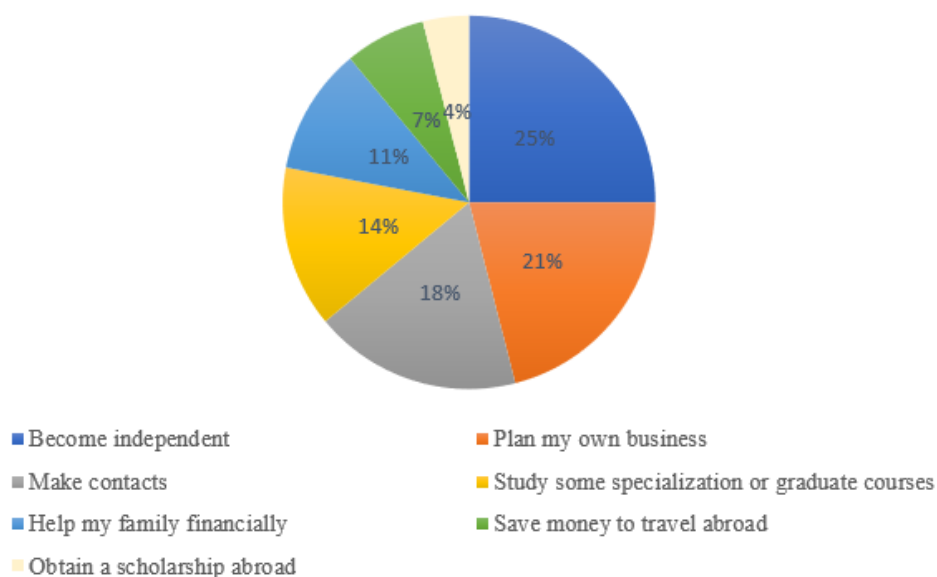
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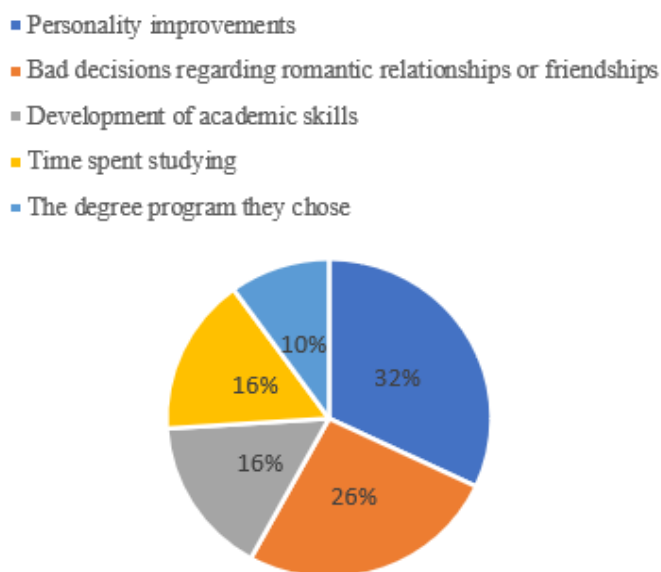
Figure 2.
Aspects they would change of their own life

It should be noted that 15 people interviewed said they were proud of the way they are. Some of their responses were the following: "I think that, although I have yet to achieve several things, I have been able to overcome many problems" (E.1), "I like the way I am despite my defects" (E.6), "I have learned to love myself as I am" (E.7), "I think that others like me" (E.8), among others.

Regarding their purpose in life, most of the interviewees (13) expressed that they felt some uncertainty about their future. They still do not project themselves with precision in a specific position or workplace or how they will continue to improve professionally. Nor were they sure about whether they wanted to start a family, in what time frame, or what their lifestyle would be. Some even stated that they had not yet thought about their future or that it was not one of their current priorities.

However, it should be noted that although all the interviewees agreed on the importance of planning for the future, the responses to this question varied. Figure 3 shows the most relevant ones.

Source: Elaborated by the author

- Become independent
- Make contacts
- Help my family financially
- Obtain a scholarship abroad
- Plan my own business
- Study some specialization or graduate courses
- Save money to travel abroad

Figure 3.
Future Plans

Regarding their life goals, most students (14) stated that their main goal was to get a job that they liked and, at the same time, would generate a high income. Likewise, when asked what actions they were taking to achieve this goal, the answers were diverse. Some of them were the following: "to study a degree program in a prestigious university" (E.7), "to study so as not to fail any subjects" (E.2), "I think it is too early to think about that now. When I am in the last semesters, I will do professional internships to prepare myself better" (E.1), "I have not thought much about that" (E.9), "I think that when I am about to finish my degree program, I will think about that better" (E.10), among others.

It is relevant to highlight their responses related to the satisfaction they feel about the career they are studying. Figure 4 shows their responses in which it is evident that, although it is not the majority, a considerable percentage adopted an average position.

It is relevant to highlight their responses related to the satisfaction they feel about the degree program they are studying. Figure 4 shows their responses evidencing that, although it is not the majority, a significant percentage adopted an average position.

Source: Elaborated by the author
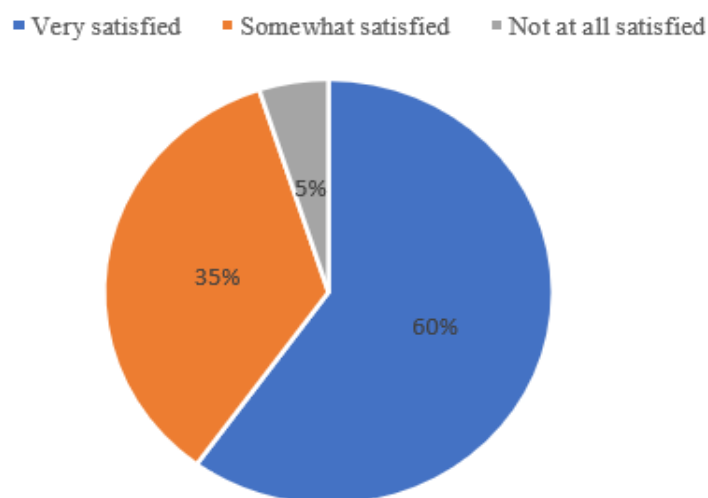
Figure 4.
Levels of satisfaction with the degree program

When asked about the negative aspects they have identified in their studies, the response of some of them (8) who are not satisfied with the remote learning modality under which they are currently studying stands out because "you do not learn in the same way" (E.2, E.3, E.7), "it is not the same" (E.9, E.10, E.11) or "there is not always a good communication with the professor" (E.12), "sometimes, the system crashes, and the class is not delivered in the same way" (E.13), among other reasons. To a lesser extent, other students pointed out that academic overload makes it difficult for them to study as they would like.

Regarding the positive aspects of the degree program, the characteristics of most professors stand out due to their "good character" (E.1, E.12), "dynamic classes" (E.3, E.4, E.5), "addressing of the topic" (E.13) or "openness to listen to them" (E.14). Among other issues, positive interactions with classmates, the design of specialized courses, the possibility of accessing additional university services, such as academic counseling or extracurricular activities, among others, stand out.

Regarding autonomy, all students agreed that they were responsible for their own decisions and did not feel any kind of coercion to act in one way or another. Nevertheless, 5 of the students interviewed expressed feeling affected by the opinions of others, especially when they are negative comments from their immediate environment, such as family or friends.

However, most students (17) stated that they felt free to express their opinions easily, either in the academic environment or in their daily interactions. In addition, three students stated that they sometimes felt insecure to do so although they accepted that the remote teaching modality facilitates expressing themselves because they feel more confident writing in the chat when they want to participate in class.

Regarding environmental mastery, it should be noted that 7 of the people interviewed reported feeling emotionally affected by the demands of everyday life. It refers not only to academic overload but also to family, economic, and health problems, among others, all of which would be causing negative effects on their physical and emotional health. In addition, some of the students stated that such aspects are external to them and did not show any evidence of taking any responsibility in such problematic situations. Figure 5 shows some of the consequences mentioned by these students as a result of their emotional affectation.

Source: Elaborated by the author
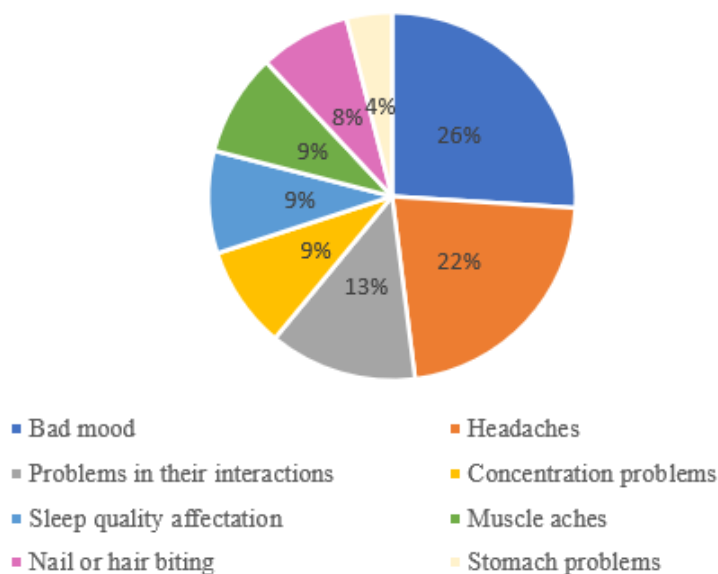
Figure 5.
Consequences of emotional affectation

Regarding relationships with others, most of the students interviewed (15) indicated that they maintain positive relationships with their classmates and that they have established effective relationships, although most of them have not interacted in person due to the remote learning modality under which they were studying at that time. Five of the students pointed out that they

can't express a real perception about their interactions with their classmates since they do not know them in person and that the virtuality makes it difficult for interactions to be "completely real and true" (E.15). In this sense, they stated that they do not trust their classmates much, even though they have not had any relevant problems with any of them.

However, as for their interactions with their circles of friends, they all agreed that they are positive, even though they can no longer meet in person as often as before. Despite this, they stated that they maintain fluid communication with them through social networks. Regarding the level of trust, 14 of the students stated that they trust them "completely" or "much", while the rest trust them "somewhat" or "a little". Some of the reasons noted by the latter group were as follows: "I have been let down by some friends from the past" (E.3, E14), "I have had some bad experiences" (E.16, E.18), "I do not feel that I know my friends at all" (E.19), among others.

As for the contributions from their friends, they can be classified into three levels. The first level refers to the possibility of sharing recreational activities in common, such as video games, music, and movies, among others. Nine of the students interviewed are located at this level. The second level is linked to the possibility of being a source of companionship and listening to the problems or dilemmas they may face. Eight of the students interviewed are located at this level. Finally, the last level is linked to the ability to contribute to the improvement of one's personality by pointing out the successes or mistakes in their daily behaviors or attitudes. Only 2 of the students interviewed were at this level. It should be noted that one of the students interviewed stated that he did not know for sure what his close friends contribute to him and that "it is he, rather, who is always helping them" (S.20).

Finally, regarding personal growth, most of the students interviewed (16) indicated that they feel they have improved as a person over the years. Among some aspects that they feel they have improved, they highlight the development of positive attitudes in their interactions, the clarification of their life goals, their reactions to negative experiences, and their relationships with their family, among others. However, four of the students interviewed perceive that, although they feel that there has been some progress in their personal development, they would like to improve more, especially in their interactions with others and in habits that allow them to become better students.

Results of the Application of the Focus Group Guide for Professors

Regarding self-acceptance, the professors stated that their students stand out for their ease of establishing friendly relationships among classmates and their ability to express themselves fluently in front of others. However, all professors agreed that two students had a behavior that they described as "antisocial." After making follow-up questions as to what they meant by this, the professors indicated that the students were very shy and refused the possibility of making work teams. This, however, did not affect their performance significantly, although the professors considered that this antisocial behavior was not convenient for their professional development and was not aligned with the institution's graduate profile.

Similarly, all professors mentioned that it was difficult for students to accept their mistakes and/or difficulties immediately, although this attitude was reversed after a few sessions. According to the professors, these situations occurred every time a new topic was included. In this sense, it was pointed out that the students' ability to work as a team mostly helped them solve their cognitive difficulties; thus, after some activities, the students' discomfort disappeared. In any case, the professors pointed out that this recurrent difficulty in adequately facing new learning challenges in young people generated a notable concern to them and that they did not know how to deal with it after trying what was within their possibilities.

Regarding purpose in life, the professors considered that even though students were able to eventually solve the learning challenges, they did not seem to have a defined professional or life goal. The general perception was that the students were very immature and that many did not seem to have chosen the degree program of their own free will. However, the professors indicated that this is common among first-semester students and that it is not very worrying if they consider that the dropout rate is not high. In any case, the professors warned that although students do not drop out of the degree program, they will engage in health risk behaviors, such as alcoholism, drug addiction, and eating disorders, among others, in the future semesters.

Regarding autonomy, all the professors perceive that most of the students have a high level of class participation because they are very socially active. They usually communicate their learning needs regularly, which helps the professors assist them promptly. However, most of the professors indicate that, although it is very positive that teamwork contributes to better student performance, it has been detected that there are leading figures classified as "strong" in the classrooms. All the professors consider that there are students who have a strong leadership role,

leading to decision-making on learning and professor actions to be taken is mainly influenced by them.

Regarding environmental mastery, most of the professors think that the students do not take full responsibility for their actions, at least not individually. Since there are strong leading figures in the classrooms, and decisions are made based on their influence, the taking of responsibility is usually expressed through expressions such as, as the professors quote, "the feeling of the classroom." In other words, when the professors take a survey on how learning is going or what needs to be known, classroom leaders take the floor and express "the feeling of the classroom or the group." Likewise, the professors state that when they try to personalize communication, i.e., ask direct questions to the participants about their understanding of the topics or performance, they usually agree with what is stated by the collective represented in the leaders.

Regarding positive relationships, the professors point out that they have perceived that, in general, there is an adequate classroom climate and that, despite the difficulties inherent to social distancing and the consequent virtuality of the classes, the students bond with each other without any problems, except for the two students mentioned above, who have expressly requested not to have a relationship with their classmates. When questioned about the reasons for such behavior, according to the professors, the students stated that there are people who dominate the behavior of the others and that this does not seem right to them. However, the professors point out that this attitude is a product of the students' age and that it could be due to some interpersonal difference that occurred previously because at the beginning the students did work as a team with their classmates.

Finally, regarding personal growth, the professors consider that few students try to know more given that the topics addressed in class are usually complicated enough for the students. Even so, all the professors agree that the two most introverted students are the ones who have shown the greatest interest in continuing to learn beyond the contents of the subjects. This has been corroborated by the special request for additional bibliography or questions about authors not included in the syllabus.

DISCUSSION

Regarding self-acceptance, most of the participants are satisfied with their lives. This state is especially related to the relationships established with their immediate environment, as pointed

out by the students and corroborated by the professors. The latter stated the students' ability to work in teams, which allowed them to overcome certain cognitive deficiencies. However, although almost all the students accepted making mistakes and stated that, if they could, they would change certain aspects of their lives, the professors perceived the opposite. Thus, most of the professors stated that it was difficult for students to accept their mistakes immediately. As Ryff (1989) points out, positive attitudes toward one's own life contributes to achieving better self-acceptance, and developing the ability to relate optimally to the experiences one is facing (Sandoval et al., 2017). In that sense, the self-acceptance of the students who were part of the sample is not yet fully developed since the acceptance of one's mistakes and the application of coping strategies as part of learning is necessary.

Regarding the purpose in life, it was evidenced that, despite agreeing on the importance of making future plans, most of them have feelings of uncertainty regarding their future, both personal and professional. Likewise, the goals declared by the majority are mainly related to aspects of economic comfort or pleasure in work, but without a clear projection of their future. Such perceptions are related to those expressed by all the professors who stated that the immaturity of their students makes it difficult for them to set clear goals, which is related to the studies conducted by Carrera (2018), Hernani et al. (2013), and Soldati (2017). They even manifested the lack of vocation for the career that many of the students seem to evidence. This finding is worrying because, as Arroyo (2020) and Téllez (2020) state, the setting of goals and the effective fulfillment of these goals is associated with the psychological well-being of students and, therefore, with their academic success that is necessary in a Health Sciences career because of the time required for study and the relevance of the subjects studied. Moreover, it is noteworthy that some of the students were not satisfied with the remote teaching modality, which influences their psychological well-being as they feel that their learning is not the most adequate or that they do not receive sufficient guidance from their professor. For their part, all the professors stated that the degree of student dissatisfaction is common in the first semesters, which is consistent with the results of various studies conducted in this regard (Carrera, 2018; Maldonado, 2018; Solórzano-Gonzales, 2019; Yarlequé et al., 2016). Despite this, they indicated that it is possible that, if they do not overcome their negative attitudes, they may engage in certain risk behaviors, which is corroborated by the study of Solórzano- Gonzales (2019) evidencing the relationship between addictions and low psychological well-being of students.

Regarding autonomy, most students reported feeling free to give their opinions without any qualms, which is consistent with the perception of the professors and the various studies

conducted in this regard (Mazo et al., 2013; Halgravez et al., 2016; Yarlequé et al., 2016; Carranza et al., 2017). Such a finding may be due to sociocultural factors in which students with better economic levels usually have more self-confidence (Carrera, 2018). Despite this, all the professors reported the presence of certain leaders who inevitably influence the behaviors of their classmates.

Regarding the environmental mastery, some students expressed feeling academic and personal overload that influences their emotional state. In addition, as a consequence, they have certain mild self-injurious behaviors and difficulties in performing their academic tasks and in their interactions. Such information is supplemented by the perception of the professors who point out that the students are not yet able to take responsibility for their actions, which could be influencing this feeling of emotional affectation since they have not acquired the necessary capacity to intervene in their context and lessen the factors that may be affecting their well-being (Delgado & Tejeda, 2020).

Regarding positive relationships, there is a direct relationship with the self-acceptance category in which optimal interactions with others have an evident influence. From the students' perspective, interactions with their classmates are mainly positive, which agrees mostly with the vision of all the professors. Such finding is corroborated by studies conducted by Carrera (2018), Matalinares et al. (2016), Sandoval et al. (2017), and Soldati (2017) who showed that younger students usually establish positive relationships. The exception lies in two students who do not evidence positive interactions with others as they expressed their disagreement with the leadership exercised by certain students. Despite this, it is possible to affirm the existence of a positive classroom climate where effective interactions take place.

Finally, regarding personal growth, most of the students perceived an improvement in themselves over the years, especially in their interactions and reactions to negative experiences. However, the latter contradicts the perception of almost all the professors who affirmed the students' limited ability to recognize their mistakes and employ effective strategies to remedy them. In contrast with the students' self-perception, the professors stated that most of the students were unwilling to learn more, so they consider that the students still need to develop this aspect. Such finding opposes the study conducted by Matalinares et al. (2016) who state that younger students usually evidence higher levels of personal growth, even though, as Carrera (2018), Sandoval et al. (2017) and Soldati (2017) point out, older students who work have usually developed more the different categories associated with psychological well-being.

Figure 6 shows some relationships identified among the main categories detected, in addition to some supplementary emerging subcategories. Thus, it was evidenced that purpose in life is associated with the feelings of uncertainty expressed by the students regarding their future, which make it difficult for them to set clear goals. In addition, self-acceptance generates positive relationships and personal growth as a consequence. In turn, it was observed that the students' level of autonomy is a product of sociocultural factors, among which the economic level stands out. Finally, environmental mastery is linked to students' academic and personal overload, conceived as a series of external elements for which they do not assume responsibility.
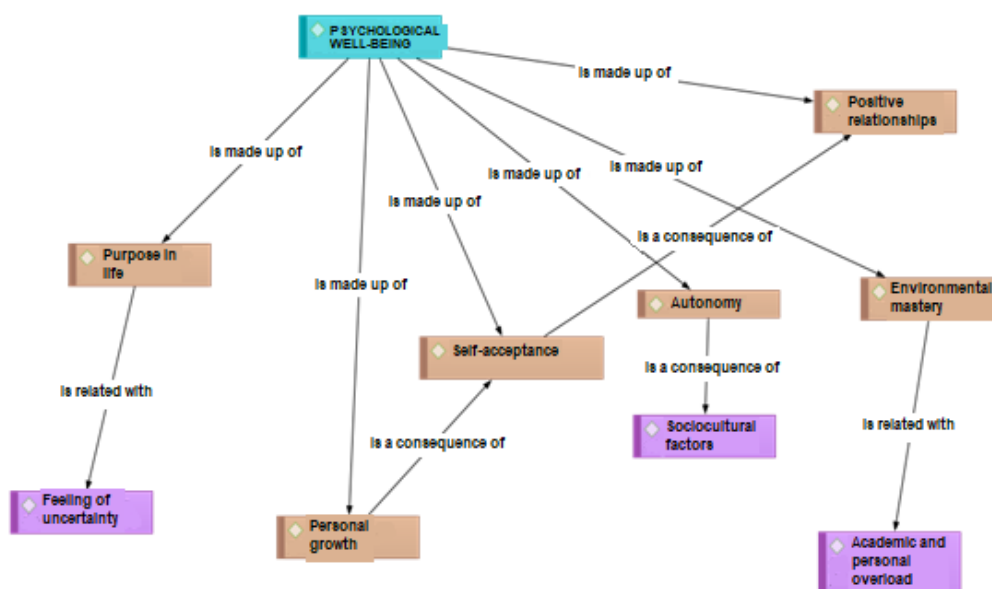
Source: Elaborated by the author

Figure 6.

Interrelationships among the categories of psychological well-being

In conclusion, based on the findings, six categories associated with students' psychological well-being were recognized, namely, self-acceptance, purpose in life, autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relationships, and personal growth. Some additional emerging categories were feelings of uncertainty, sociocultural factors, and academic and professional overload, which, in turn, are interrelated. Thus, self-acceptance is achieved to the extent that positive relationships with others are established. Likewise, personal growth is also linked to self-acceptance since the recognition of mistakes leads to greater satisfaction with oneself.

Among the most outstanding results, it was possible to identify, in general terms, a favorable state of psychological well-being of the students associated with a positive classroom climate, a positive level of satisfaction with their lives, and the freedom to give their opinions. However, it is necessary to develop certain aspects that will make them improve and last in time such as the ability to take responsibility for their actions, the setting of realistic goals in the short, medium, and long term, and the application of strategies to successfully face very demanding tasks that may cause the feeling of academic and personal overload.

Conversely, the remote teaching modality represented a factor that affected some aspects related to psychological well-being. Thus, the lack of direct interaction with the professors and their classmates causes students a feeling of uncertainty as they feel a lack of guidance in their learning process and shortcomings in achieving learning goals. Added to this is the overload perceived by the students who resort to self-injurious behaviors that harm them physically and mentally. Thus, there is evidence of a dynamic between the psychological, individual, and social scopes. Consequently, the influence of the context associated with few opportunities for in-person interaction impacted the students' psychological well-being. Such a finding may lay the foundations for future studies to identify the links between the intersubjective and social scopes.

Among the limitations of this study, since it is a case study, it is possible to mention that the results cannot be generalized. However, they can lay the foundations for future research on the topic because, as mentioned above, there are few qualitative studies aimed at describing students' psychological well-being. This type of research is relevant since it deepens the participants' perception of their psychological well-being so that proposals can be designed to prevent and improve the different factors associated with the problematic situations evidenced. Likewise, the study contributes to the body of knowledge in which a theoretical gap has been evidenced regarding psychological well-being manifested in a remote teaching modality setting.

Acknowledgments:

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Appendix 1.
Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Students

Objective: To identify students' self-perception of their psychological well-being.

1. Are you satisfied with your life? What aspects of your life would you change?
2. How do you feel about the future?
3. Do you think that you are concerned about the opinion others have of you?
4. Do you usually express your opinions easily, or do you find it hard to do so?
5. What are your goals in life?
6. Do you usually plan the actions you take to accomplish your goals?
7. What do you like most about your studies? What do you like least about your studies?
8. Are you satisfied with the degree program you are studying?
9. Are you usually emotionally affected by the demands of everyday life?
10. How do you get along with your classmates?
11. What do your friends bring to your life?
12. Do you trust your friends completely?
13. Are you proud of the way you are?
14. Do you think you have improved as a person?
15. What aspects of life do you feel you have learned over time?

Appendix 2.
Focus Group Guide for Professors

Objective: To identify the professors' perceptions of the psychological well-being of their students.

1. Do your students usually to express their opinions easily? In what circumstances do you consider that they do it better?
2. Do you consider that students usually get carried away by the opinions of others? In what circumstances have you been able to identify this type of behavior?
3. Do you consider that the students have well-defined goals?
4. What qualities have you noticed in your group of students?
5. Do you think that your students can accept their mistakes?
6. Do you think that your students are interested in learning more?
7. How would you define the classroom climate?
8. Do you think your students take responsibility for their decisions?