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Social Networking Addiction and Social Skills in Secondary School Students

Adicción a las redes sociales y habilidades sociales en estudiantes de secundaria

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Summary

There is discussion about the possibility of predicting and controlling addictions by intervening in social skills; the results found before are contradictory. In this study, addiction to social networks and social skill were related in predictive terms. A non-probabilistic sample of 142 high school students residing in Tacna-Peru, aged 14 to 17, was used. They were given the social network addiction questionnaire and the Goldstein social skills questionnaire. A small negative correlation was found between the dimensions of both instruments; the regression analysis allowed to identify that obsession with social networks weakly predicted changes in communication skills, alternatives to violence and pro-friendliness; and that the pro-friendliness dimension exerts influence on obsession with social networks and lack of control; the comparative analysis found that those who use social networks more frequently are more likely to develop an addiction. On the other hand, in both the social media addiction questionnaire and the social skills questionnaire, men and women do not have differences, even when comparing the data by level of education. It is concluded that, at higher levels of addiction to social networks, there are lower social skills; and that the greater the amount of time spent using social networks, the greater the probability of addiction; the predictive analysis carried out shows weak effects. The data found can be used for the design of preventive programs.

Keywords: Behavioral addictions; Social network addiction; Social skills; Secondary school students.

Resumen

Existe discusión sobre la posibilidad de predecir y controlar las adicciones interviniendo las habilidades sociales, los resultados hallados antes son contradictorios, en este estudio, se relacionó adicción a redes sociales y habilidades sociales en términos predictivos. Se trabajó con una muestra no probabilística de 142 estudiantes de nivel secundario residentes en Tacna-Perú, de 14 a 17 años de edad, a quienes se les aplicaron el cuestionario de adicción a redes sociales y el cuestionario de habilidades sociales de Goldstein. Se encontró correlación negativa de tamaño pequeño entre las dimensiones de ambos instrumentos; el análisis de regresión permitió identificar que obsesión por las redes sociales predijo débilmente cambios en las habilidades de comunicación, alternativas a la violencia y proamicales; y que la dimensión de habilidades proamicales ejerce influencia sobre obsesión por las redes sociales y falta de control; el análisis comparativo encontró que quienes usan más frecuentemente las RS tienen más probabilidad de desarrollar una adicción; por otro lado, tanto en el cuestionario de adicción a redes sociales como en el de las habilidades sociales, hombres y mujeres no tienen diferencias, tampoco comparando los datos por el nivel de estudios. Se concluye que, a mayores niveles de adicción a redes sociales se encuentran menores habilidades sociales; y que a mayor cantidad de tiempo de uso de las redes sociales existe más probabilidad de adicción; el análisis predictivo realizado muestra efectos débiles. Los datos hallados pueden ser utilizados para el diseño de programas preventivos.

Palabras claves: Adicciones comportamentales; Adicción a redes sociales; Habilidades sociales; Estudiantes de secundaria.

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the century, the number of people who connect to the Internet and social networks [SNs] has increased significantly; among other reasons, because technological progress has made them more user-friendly and easier to access and, at the same time, they are more accessible to the population. According to Marciano et al. (2022), the pandemic has led to even more accelerated growth.

According to data published by Statista Research Department (2023), globally around 5.4 billion people use the Internet, of which 5,174 (97%) million use social networks [SNs]. The same source shows that in Latin America the countries with the highest use of SNs are Chile (77.4%), Antigua and Barbuda (77.2%), Costa Rica (73.8%) and Uruguay (73%); 69.7% of the Peruvian population uses SNs. As claimed by the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics [INEI] (2022), 77.3% of Peruvians over the age of six accessed the Internet in 2023, the largest users are young people aged 19 to 24 (95.3%), followed by 90.8% of 25 to 40 year olds and 89.8% of 12 to 18 year olds.

The reasons why they use the network are recreational and mostly use the smartphone (Salas-Blas, 2019; 2022), which facilitates anonymous access and generates intimacy, stimulation, while favoring the possibility of knowing in real time what is happening in the world, building a desired identity and increasing their network of contacts (Chóliz & Villanueva, 2011; Cueto et al., 2020; Gao et al., 2023).

SNs are beneficial, although inappropriate use could carry risks (Chóliz, 2016; Dong et al., 2020; Malo-Cerrato et al., 2018; Matute, 2016). Among some reported risks are addictions, which have been associated with different problematic aspects, such as: loss of ability to reflect (Castro & de la Villa, 2017), inability to control impulses (Marciano et al., 2022; Zahrai et al., 2022), social inability (Arab & Diaz, 2015; Cabero et al., 2020; Fernandez et al., 2020; Valle, 2022), negative attitudes, problems in communication and in mnemonic capacity (Álvarez & Moral, 2020; Díaz-Vicario et al., 2019; Zegarra & Cuba, 2017), feelings of loneliness (Vieira, et al., 2022), problems interacting with the social environment, false identity (Echeburúa & De Corral, 2010; Miranda et al., 2022); and, with other problems of a more pathological nature such as depression and emotional control difficulties (Appel et al., 2020; Mairal et al., 2021; Pomalima, 2016).

These risks are maximized among minors, due to the conditions of their own development, little face-to-face interaction and the absence of adults to guide their proper use (Sharma & Sharma, 2018; Salas-Blas, 2019). Some researchers argue that the measures taken to control the pandemic limited people's direct interaction, even within the home, and increased the use of SNs for interaction and also as a recreational tool (Gómez, 2020; Lovón & Chegne, 2021; Lozano-Blasco et al., 2021; Marciano et al., 2022; Saggioro de Figueiredo et al., 2021; Tejada et al., 2019).

In the literature on the subject, there is discussion about behavioral addictions and specifically the Internet and SNs. Chóliz (2016) classifies two types of scholars on the subject: one group postulates that addiction to these technologies does not exist and that the characteristics of these phenomena do not coincide with those of substance addictions; an argument supported by the

absence of these pathologies in diagnostic manuals (DSM and ICD) (Carbonell & Oberts, 2015; Fernández, 2013; Matute, 2016). Conversely, another group argues that these addictions are real events and that the symptoms developed by those addicted to these events are similar to those found among substance addicts (although they have less magnitude), these characteristics can be observed at the behavioral and brain functioning level (Chóliz, 2016; Echeburúa & Requesens, 2012).

The characteristics that distinguish SNs addictions have to do with feelings, thoughts and behaviors of adolescents when they develop this activity, such as: they require more time to be connected to SNs; their emotional states are altered, especially when the use of SNs is interrupted; they develop interpersonal difficulties with their environment (friends and family); they deny that excessive use of them can generate harmful consequences for them and prioritize the connection to SNs over other activities (Fernandez, 2013; Jasso et al., 2017); they also have relapses when they try to stop using SNs; in addition, feelings of discomfort and symptoms related to anxiety, stress and depression; leading to a high psychopathological predisposition (Baños, 2020; Marciano et al., 2022).

Escurra and Salas (2014) constructed and validated the social network addiction questionnaire (SNA), used the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders [DSM-IV] indicators for substance addictions (American Psychological Association [APA], 2008); using factor analysis they found a three-factor internal structure: (a) obsession with SNs: constant thinking about them, mental engagement, anxiety when they do not have access to the network (b) lack of personal control in the use of SNs, impulsivity, neglect of homework and school activities, and, (c) excessive use of SNs which refers to the time of use and the inability to control the time they devote to these activities.

Among the results of the antecedents that compared SNA across gender, they are contradictory; some account that the biggest users and addicts of these technologies are males (Aznar-Díaz et al., 2020; Kirkaburun & Griffiths, 2018: Salas & Escurra, 2014); others reported that females use SNs more than males (Castillo & Ruiz-Olivares, 2019; Chóliz & Villanueva, 2011; Lechuga et al., 2017; Salas-Blas, 2019).

About what SNs are used for, some found that men use it to entertain themselves with video games (Vink et al., 2015), while women use it to interrelate. It has also been found that addiction levels are more frequent in adolescents (Chóliz & Villanueva, 2011; Kuss & Griffiths, 2017).

Katz et al. (1985) proposed the theory of uses and gratifications, and considered five types of needs: cognitive needs: search and acquisition of information, knowledge and understanding; affective needs: search for emotion, pleasure and expression of feelings; personal needs for integration: search for credibility, stability and status; social needs for integration: search for interaction with family and friends; and, needs for tension release: escape (avoidance) and recreational behaviors, useful for fun or relaxation (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017; Martinez et al., 2013; Tarullo, 2020).

Social skills [SK] have no univocal definition; existing theories refer to behaviors, emotions and social behavior (Vived, 2011). Goldstein (1989) stated that they are habitual behaviors, used by

people to relate to each other; these behaviors are learned by social modeling and are socially accepted. Tomás and Lescano (2003) considered that social skills have eight dimensions: (a) stress skills: the ability to cope with environmental pressures; (b) communication skills: the ability to receive and transmit ideas accurately; (c) planning skills, the ability to anticipate events in an organized manner; (d) prosocial skills: consolidating relationships with the environment; (e) alternative skills to violence: avoid suffering or exercising violent actions; (f) skills related to feelings: allow the expression and understanding of the different states of mind of oneself and others; (g) pro-friendliness skills: related to the closest circles, such as friends; and (h) anxiety coping skills: they allow the control of feelings such as embarrassment, fear, contempt, etc.

Some research linking internet addiction and SNs with SK found that higher SNA scores were associated with greater difficulty in displaying socially skilled behaviors (Estrada et al., 2020; Estrada et al., 2021; Klimenko et al., 2021). Similarly, Perez et al. (2019), found that 75.4% of the participants in their study were alone when using networks and limited their interpersonal relationships with family and friends. Lozano-Blasco et al. (2021) during the context of COVID-19, found that there was an inverse relationship between SNs addiction and empathy capabilities, (an important element of SK), especially when it came to understanding other people's emotions.

This study is relevant because it allows us to discuss the value of SK in the prediction and control of SNs addictions, and the data could be used in the development of preventive and intervention programs for behavioral addictions. It also has social value, since both variables studied are related to important social problems in our current society.

We related SNs addiction and social skills among Tacna high school students in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic; specifically, we sought to compare the results of the SNs addiction and evaluation tools according to sex, level of studies and frequency of network use. We also sought to describe the means of connection used, the SNs used, the frequency of use, the number of contacts they knew in person, the type of data recorded in the SNs and the reasons for accessing them.

METHOD

Design

The study was cross-sectional, using the associative strategy and correlational predictive design, complemented by linear regression and non-causal comparative analysis (Ato et al., 2013).

Participants

Data were extracted from 142 high school students from the Tacna region, who were between the third and fifth years of high school, between the ages of 14 to 17 (M = 15.5, SD = 0.9), all of them stated that they used SNs; 52% were female, non-probabilistic convenience sampling was used (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018). The sample size was calculated with the G*Power version 3 program, an a priori analysis was performed, testing a bivariate correlational hypothesis (2-tailed), with significance of .05, statistical power of .95 (García-García et al., 2013), the mean value of the

results obtained in antecedent studies (-.313) was considered (Domínguez-Vergara & Ybañez-Carranza, 2016; Estrada et al., 2021; Mejía et al., 2014), which determined a minimum sample of 126 participants.

Instruments

Sociodemographic Data.

Information was collected on age, sex, social networks used, place where they used social networks, frequency of connection, number of contacts known in person, whether they gave real data in their profiles, and the reason for accessing them.

Social Networking Addiction Questionnaire (SNA).

Constructed and validated by Escurra and Salas-Blas (2014) with the purpose of evaluating the levels of addiction to social networks in young Peruvian college students, it has 24 Likert-type items, with a range of responses from 0 = never to 4 = always; its internal structure has three factors: 1) Obsession with SNs, (items 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 13, 15, 19, 22, 23); 2) Lack of personal control in the use of SNs, (items 4, 11, 12, 14, 20, 24); and, 3) Excessive use of SNs (items 1, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 21). The data were subjected to an exploratory factor analysis [EFA], then to a confirmatory factor analysis [CFA]; the three factors explained 57.49% of the total variance and correlated significantly. The reliability data found was adequate.

In this study, the reliability was found to have adequate values, between 0.83 and 0.86, and the reliability of the total scale was 0.90.

Goldstein's Social Skills Questionnaire - Adapted in Peru by Tomás and Lescano.

Developed by Goldstein in 1989 and adapted for Peruvian adolescents by Tomás and Lescano (2003); it is composed of 47 items distributed in eight dimensions: 1) stress coping skills, (items 27, 32, 36, 37, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44), 2) communication skills, (items 1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 22), 3) planning skills (items 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49), 4) prosocial skills, (items 13, 23, 24, 33), 5) alternative skills to violence (items 25, 26, 28, 29, 29, 30, 31), 6) skills related to feelings (items 15, 16, 17, 18, 19), 7) pro-friendliness skills (items 2, 3, 6, 7, 8), and, 8) anxiety coping skills (items 20, 34, 35). The responses are distributed on a Likert-type scale, with never = 0 and always = 7. The authors of the Peruvian adaptation subjected the data to a Principal Component Analysis with Promax diagonal rotation to control the effect of multicollinearity, considering only those factor weights greater than 0.40 and with significant communality. In addition, a second-order principal axis factor analysis was performed, which determined the exclusion of the Self-Assertiveness Skills scale because it had a factor weight of less than 0.40 and a low communality. The reliability of the data found was adequate.

Reliability was calculated, reporting an alpha value of .91 for the total scale, the reliability levels of the subscales ranged between 0.7 and 0.8, acceptable values taking into consideration the

minimum score of 0.7 (Caycho-Rodriguez, 2017); the scale of skills in the face of anxiety obtained a coefficient of 0.62, considered low, so it was not considered for the analysis in this study.

Procedure

Ethical procedures and standards were followed in this research; authorization was obtained from the authors of the instruments who authorized their use. Likewise, the project was approved by the Ethics Subcommittee of the School of Health Sciences of the Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas. In addition, we had the authorization of the educational institution where the data were obtained, the informed consent of the parents, and the consent of the students themselves who agreed to answer the survey. Only those who decided to collaborate, accessed the form on the Google Forms platform and responded.

Data Analysis

Jamovi version 2.3.2 was used to analyze and report the reliability coefficients of the instruments used; the Shapiro Wilk test was used for the distribution of the data, taking into account a significance value of .05 (Manterola & Pineda, 2008), which determined the correlational analysis through Spearman's Rho test. Comparisons of two independent samples were made through the Mann Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis test for more than two samples (Molina & Rodrigo, 2014). The interpretation of the magnitude of the correlations and differences was performed according to the values of Cohen's d and according to the criteria proposed by Caycho et al. (2016) who propose that values lower than .20 reveal no effect size; values between .21 and .49 reveal a small effect; values between .50 and .79 indicate a moderate effect and values higher than .80, a large effect.

Linear regression analysis was carried out with the idea of taking a step further towards explanation. This analysis allowed us to see the influence of one variable (IV) on another (DV), but as there were no antecedents with this type of analysis, an analysis was made exchanging these roles between the research variables. The p-values derived from the ANOVA test were taken into consideration, and they determined the significant predictive forces to be taken into account.

Finally, the description of the students' main means of connection, the social networks to which they mostly resort, the frequency of use, the number of contacts known in person, real data in the profiles and the main reason for their use were supported by frequency and percentage measures.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of the relationships between the variables, which had negative values, but not all the relationships between the dimensions had statistically significant values. the relationships that reached the level of significance, although with a small size, included: obsession with SNs with communication skills (r = -.23, p = .005), prosocial skills (r = -.19,, p = .025), alternative skills to violence (r = -.25, p = .003) and pro-friendliness skills (r = -.26, p = .002); the factor lack of personal control in the use of SNs was negatively and significantly related to communication skills (r = -.19, p = .026), alternative skills to violence (r= -0,23, p = 0,007) and pro-friendliness skills (r = -.22, p = .008); the magnitude of the relationships is small. The factor excessive use of SNs, correlated negatively with alternative skills to violence (r = -.20, p = .020), with a small size.

Table 1.
Spearman's Rho coefficients between SNA Factors and SK Factors.

	SNs obsession	Lack of Personal Control in the Use of SNs	Excessive use of SNs
Stress Coping Skills	-.05	-.01	-.04
Communication skills	-.23**	-.19	-.15
Planning skills	-.11	-.01	-.05
Prosocial skills	-.19*	-.14	-.14
Alternative skills to violence	-.25**	-.23**	-.2*
Skill related to feelings	-.14	-.08	-.09
Pro-friendliness skills	-.26**	-.22**	-.16

Note. *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Complementarily, a linear regression analysis was performed, taking SNA as the independent variable [IV] and SK as the dependent variable [DV]. It was found that only the effect of obsession with SNs on communication skills was reported to be significant, greater than .05 ($F_{(1, 140)}$ = 7,43, p = .007), alternative skills to violence ($F_{(1, 140)}$ = 9,43, p = .003) and pro-friendliness skills ($F_{(1, 140)}$ = 10,9, p = .001). In this analysis, the R2 values were .04; .05; and .06, respectively, indicating that 4%, 5%, and 6% of the change in social skills can be explained by the regression model. The regression equation for the case of communication skills was 41.95 + -.35; for alternative skills to violence. to violence, it was 27.02 + -.31; and pro-friendliness skills were 32.38 + -.33, all implying that SK scores decrease as scores on the obsession factor of the SNA increase. Although the strength of prediction is weak.

The same was done, considering SK as IV and SNA as DV, it was found that the pro-friendliness skills dimension influences the obsession with SNs factor ($F_{(1, 138)}$ = 6,76, p = .010) and the lack of control in the use of SNs ($F_{(1,138)}$ = 4,17, p = .043). In this analysis, the R2 value was .1 and .05 respectively; indicating that 10% and 5% of the score variation in those SNA factors can be explained by the SK regression model. The regression equation for the case of the obsession with SNs factor was 19.65 + -.23, and for the lack of control factor in the use of SNs was 12.72 +-.140, implying that SNA scores decrease when pro-friendliness skill scores increase even though the predictive strength is weak.

Likewise, significant values were found between the effect of SK alternatives to violence on the obsession with SNs dimensions, ($F_{(1, 138)}$ = 5,80, p = .017) and lack of control in the use of the SNs ($F_{(1, 138)}$ = 4,09, p = .045). The R2 values were 0.1 and .05, respectively, indicating that 10% and 5% of the variation in the scores on these SNA factors can be explained by the SK regression model; the regression equation for the obsession with SNs factor was 19.65 + -.19, and for the lack of control factor in the use of SNs was 12.72 +-.121; which implies that SNA scores decrease when scores on alternative social skills to violence increase, despite the fact that the predictive power is weak.

When comparing the SNA scores according to sex, no significant differences were found, nor by educational level; the same occurred with the dimensions of the SK questionnaire. The SNA scores were also compared according to the frequency of use of the SNs, and it was found that the

highest scores corresponded to those who used the application more frequently and for a longer period of time, as shown in Table 2, which presents a post-hoc analysis.

Table 2.
Post-Hoc Analysis of SNA Scores by Frequency of Use

Dimensions		***W***	***p***
Obsession with Social Networks			
One to three times per week	One to seven times per day	2.91	.099
One to three times per week	I am online all the time	5.19	<.001
One to seven times per day	I am online all the time	5.01	.001
Lack of Control in the Use of Social Networks			
One to three times per week	One to seven times per day	3.00	.085
One to three times per week	I am online all the time	4.38	.006
One to seven times per day	I am online all the time	3.87	.017
Excessive Use of Social Networks			
One to three times per week	One to seven times per day	4.04	.012
One to three times per week	I am online all the time	5.15	<.001
One to seven times per day	I am online all the time	4.70	.003

Note. n = 142. p < .05.

Regarding the comparative results between the dimensions of SKS and the frequency of use of social networks, no significant differences were found.

A descriptive percentage analysis of some behavioral patterns related to the use of SNs was also performed; it was found that the main means of connection used by students is the mobile device, that the most used SNs are WhatsApp and Facebook (76%), that 69% connect between one to twelve times per day; 22% are connected all the time and 9% connect one to three times per week; that 40% of the students know in person more than 70% of their contacts in social networks; and that 37% of the sample does not have their real data in their social profiles.

About the main reason for using SNs, it was found that 44% used it for social needs of integration, 38% due to release tensions and 13% were motivated by cognitive needs of obtaining information.

DISCUSSION

All the relationships between the dimensions of the two measures had inverse directions, even though the strength of the correlation between some of them was very weak and did not reach levels of statistical significance. From this perspective, it can be affirmed that the main hypothesis that predicts that the higher the addiction, the lower the SK or vice versa, is confirmed and coincides with the antecedents, (Estrada et al., 2021; Estrada et al., 2020; Klimenko et al., 2021; Zegarra & Cuba, 2017) who also found inverse correlations between the variables.

This implies that the addictive use of SNs by young people promotes affective distancing from their environment and limits the deployment of mediating features for social interaction: face reading, emotion recognition, empathy, development of the information received, and the regulated response given (García del Castillo et al., 2019); situation that affects socialization and the development of social and assertive skills. Virtuality isolates people and generates communication problems and makes it difficult to understand the environment (Cabero et al., 2020; Estrada, 2019; Valle, 2022; Zegarra & Cuba, 2017).

It was shown that the higher the SNA scores, the lower the alternative skills to violence; this is consistent with data reported by Estrada et al. (2020) and shows how the limited possibility of social and experiential interaction interferes with the ability to regulate affect and emotions; by increasing levels of impulsivity and immediate reaction, it promotes reactive and aggressive action (Álvarez & Moral, 2020; Zahrai et al., 2022). Similarly, the higher the SNA scores, the lower the scores on pro-friendliness skills, data similar to those found by Fernández et al. (2020), who allude that the implications of excessive use of SNs revolve around distancing from friendship circles, promoting feelings of loneliness, a tendency to withdraw (Mairal et al., 2021) and to stop sharing quality time with people who are meaningful to them (Fernández et al., 2020).

The found prediction of the effect of pro-friendliness skills and alternatives to violence on obsession with SNs and lack of control in the use of SNs, could give indications of the effect that SK possesses on the management of addictive behaviors (Klimenko et al., 2018). From these data it can be considered that the targeted work of social skills can have an impact on the decrease in the addictive use of SNs; this is consistent with the proposal of Mojarro et al. (2017) who argue that socioemotional skills comprised within life skills, function as protective factors against the development of addictive behaviors. In this regard, working on improving behavioral repertoires such as listening skills, comprehension and expression, emotional regulation, decision making, problem-solving, and working with support networks, can be useful for the treatment of addictive behavior problems among adolescents, as it provides them with control, management and coping tools (Klimenko et al., 2018).

In the comparison of the data by sex, no differences were found in the SNA, which are contradictory to the antecedents; some argue that males have higher scores (Cobis & Viloria, 2022), others found that females have higher scores (Varchetta et al., 2020) and others, as in this study, do not differentiate the SNA by sex (Romero et al., 2021). These contradictory data could make some sense and deserve to be studied with a more detailed analysis of the literature. A tentative explanation of the results of this study could be that SNs consumption increased during pandemic isolation, the use of smartphones was essential for both sexes (Ochoa & Barragán, 2022), and because in recent years, women have conquered many rights and activities that they did not have before.

Nor were differences found when comparing SNA by grade level, a result similar to that found by Malo-Cerrato et al. (2018); it is likely that the needs posed by isolation and the demands of communicability posed by the school have equalized this entire group in the use of SNs (Cueto et al., 2020).

No differences were found with respect to SK according to sex, a result that contradicts the findings of Sosa and Salas-Blas (2020). Nor were differences found by educational level, which is similar to what was reported by Estrada (2019) and Esteves et al. (2020); In this case, it could be considered that the absence of differences by sex and level of education has to do with the context of isolation in which adolescents have developed, which limited socialization with their peers indistinctly to males and females, as well as to those of different ages (López de Ayala et al., 2020); In this regard, Goldstein et al. (1989) mentions that it is necessary for adolescents to have spaces that allow them to put into practice the skills they are acquiring, becoming aware of the mediating elements in contact with other people; the fact of not having this interaction has not allowed them to develop their skills, nor to clearly differentiate themselves among the aforementioned groups.

In relation to the use of SNs, it was found that the main means of connection used by students was the mobile device (Smartphone generally), which agrees with the findings of Alvarez and Moral (2020) and Salas-Blas (2022) and is due to the facilities for connecting to networks, which are due to portable equipment, for individual use, very private and fast connection to the network via Wi-Fi.

Regarding the most used SNs, it was found that students made greater use of WhatsApp in addition to Facebook, this is consistent with what was reported by Kuss and Griffiths (2017) and Salas-Blas (2019). The main reasons why these SNs are used have to do with the purpose of chatting, reading statuses, posting photos, interacting with people, sharing content, playing games, expressing feelings and keeping updated on the latest news (Fernández-Rovira, 2022; Peñalba & Imaz, 2019).

On the frequency of use of social networks, 69% reported connecting up to 12 times per day and 22% remained connected all the time, the remaining 9% reported that they connected between one to three times per week. In addition, taking into account the frequency of use, the SNA scores were compared, revealing that those who connected more had higher scores in the SNA dimensions, which is consistent with the findings of García et al. (2020), Salas-Blas (2022) and Zaharai et al. (2022). These results show the impact of the excessive use of social networks on the generation of dependency relationships in relation to consumption. As mentioned by Echeburúa and Requesens (2012), the excessive use of social networks, impulsivity and lack of control over their use are predisposing factors for the development of addiction (Echeburúa & Requesens, 2012; Escurra & Salas, 2014).

Another sociodemographic variable reported in relation to the use of social networks was the number of contacts that the students knew in person, finding that only 40% of adolescents knew more than 70% of their contacts in person, a fact that is related to that found by Jasso et al. (2017) and Salas-Blas (2022) who reported that many adolescents accepted strangers among their contacts, a fact that is dangerous in times of violence in which we live (Martínez et al., 2013; Salas-Blas, 2022).

Finally, regarding the data that adolescents enter in their SNs profiles, it was found that 63% of students use their real data and 37% of adolescents use false data; Martínez et al. (2013), identified that adolescents used false profiles to gain admission and integration within groups in the

preferred SNs, as well as to contact profiles of famous people. Likewise, González et al. (2020) and Salas-Blas (2019, 2022), found that a similar percentage used fake profiles to perform actions that they would not dare to perform with their real data, and, in order to appear unreal identities. Kuss and Griffiths (2017) identified that among the reasons for creating fake profiles were, in the male population, the possibility of accessing online gaming spaces, and, among women, to make themselves known and connect emotionally.

Among some limitations that should be considered in this study are the lack of capacity to generalize the results found; the type of sampling used, and the size of the sample do not allow it. In addition, the virtual collection of data did not allow adequate follow-up of the conditions under which the data were collected, nor did it allow information on some doubts that could lead to errors in the responses. Moreover, the use of questionnaires could generate possible biases in the research.

The implications of this study are essentially of a practical nature; the data found may provide the basis for prevention and intervention programs to address the social problem of inappropriate use of SNs.

It is suggested to conduct studies with larger samples that provide more conclusive data, to develop systematic review studies to better understand the contradictory results that have been reported; it would also be advisable to conduct studies with experimental methodology to better verify the effect of the evaluation tools on addition to social networks. In addition, studies can be carried out with other variables that have the potential to mediate between the variables under study.

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