

## Future Time Perspective and its Motivational Relevance in Different Educational Contexts

### Perspectiva de Tiempo Futuro y su relevancia motivacional en distintos contextos educativos

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## Summary

This study aims at systematizing and integrating research findings about Future Time Perspective (FTP) in Peruvian educational contexts. FTP is a motivational psychological variable that allows explaining the present behavior, considering goals set in the future. The construct demonstrated its theoretical and empirical strength in different contexts. During the second half of the XX<sup>th</sup> Century Nuttin and Lens (1985) applied the variable in different fields, especially the educational one. Their proposal considered the cognitive and motivational properties of FTP; its density, extension and level of realism was then reported. Empirical research has been conducted to date under this theoretical background; however, a decade ago this concept was redirected to a multidimensional proposal conceptualized as Future Orientation (FO) considering three components: motivational, cognitive and behavioral (Seginer, 2009). In Peru, longitudinal and cross-sectional studies were carried out since 1998. These studies consistently documented that adolescents and youngsters studying in different educational institutions, showed a short FTP, a low level of realism and a keen aspiration for becoming professionals. During the last years, FO measuring was reoriented considering the multidimensional feature of the concept. Recent research findings in Peruvian adolescents and youngsters indicate that there is a positive and intense relation between satisfaction with life and the motivational component of FO. Taking into account these results, researchers consider that it is important to develop this line of investigation, as the analysis of the youngster's motivation and FO will provide the guidelines for future social interventions in favor of their social insertion and well-being.

**Keywords:** Future Time Perspective; Motivation; Satisfaction with Life.

## Resumen

El presente artículo sistematiza e integra los hallazgos de investigaciones desarrolladas en Perú sobre Perspectiva de Tiempo Futuro (PTF) en contextos educativos. La PTF es una variable psicológica motivacional que permite explicar el comportamiento presente partiendo de metas establecidas en el futuro. El concepto demostró solidez teórica-empírica en distintas latitudes. Durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX, Nuttin y Lens (1985) aplicaron el concepto en diversos ámbitos, especialmente el educativo. Su propuesta consideró la condición cognitiva y motivacional de la variable reportándose su densidad, extensión y nivel de realismo. Se ha trabajado empíricamente con este supuesto hasta la actualidad, pero hace una década se amplió dicho concepto hacia una propuesta multidimensional conceptualizada como Orientación Futura (OF) la cual posee tres componentes: motivacional, cognitivo y comportamental (Seginer, 2009). En Perú, desde 1998 se implementó estudios longitudinales y transversales que corroboraron consistentemente que, en adolescentes y jóvenes de varias instituciones educativas, la PTF es corta, el nivel de realismo bajo y la aspiración por ser profesional constante. En los últimos años, se ha reorientado la medición resaltando la multidimensionalidad del concepto. Los recientes hallazgos muestran que la relación entre el bienestar y el componente motivacional de la OF tiende a ser positiva e intensa en el dominio de carrera profesional de los jóvenes evaluados. Es importante desarrollar esta línea de investigación porque el análisis de la motivación y OF juvenil brindará la pauta para futuras intervenciones a favor de su óptima inserción social y bienestar.

**Palabras clave:** Perspectiva de Tiempo Futuro; Motivación; Satisfacción con la vida.

## Introduction

Taking into consideration that from its origins psychological science is oriented to describe, explain and predict human behavior, and to favor from its findings the welfare of people, it is clear that the study of motivation has occupied a prominent place, because through this psychological variable, it can be understood why human beings perform different activities (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Herrera & Matos, 2009; Reeve, 2005). Diverse theoretical orientations have approached the study of motivation; nevertheless, in the present article, with the objective

of presenting the synthesis of the findings reported on FTP, there will only be considered the motivational relevance of the Future Tense Perspective that, when analyzed in different educational contexts, has allowed to develop a line of investigation at international level and particularly in Peru. For that reason, its theoretical contributions will be sustained in a first section; then its historical evolution will be detailed, as well as the international empirical evidences in the Peruvian context, to finally specify the conclusions and suggestions based on the investigations developed in our environment. This information demonstrates the validity of a concept that has managed to approach different educational environments to understand how to guide adolescents and young people towards achieving their personal goals.

To illustrate through an example the meaning of the Future Tense Perspective let us consider the following situation:

A teenager in the last year of high school aspires to be a professional and study at the university, but he thinks that he will not succeed because the competence in the entrance exam in a public university is very high; moreover, his grades are not high, and he considers that his family does not have enough money to support his studies in a private educational institution. Therefore, according to his personal judgments, the only option remaining for him is the technical higher education. Faced with this, it is highly probable that these thoughts will guide his present behavior. His fears may stop him from achieving his goal, and so by being afraid of failure, he avoids taking the admission exam. However, something totally different could happen; if the hope of becoming a professional allows him to maintain his future goal as a guide to behavior, he will probably go to great lengths to be prepared and take the admission exam at a public or private university (looking for scholarship options and the possibility of being exempted from payment). Although he knows that this is difficult, he will do his best to achieve this goal; he will work wherever he can to save money; and he will use different strategies not only to get into college, but also to stay there and graduate.

The example allows us to see that future goals guide our behavior, but according to our fears or hopes, we direct our actions in the present. However, this circumstance does not happen in every human being, because each person *travels* through time in a subjective way. Some people choose to orient themselves toward events of the past and constantly evoke behaviors or emotions of the past; the famous phrase *everything in the past was better* puts into evidence this type of temporal orientation. There is also the option of focusing on the present and not projecting oneself towards goals that take a distance from actions linked to immediate circumstances. Nonetheless, other people orient and set their goals towards the future, since the human mind possesses this possibility, and therefore it is viable to anticipate what can be achieved through organized plans and actions (Andre, van Vianen, Peetsma & Oort, 2018; Gilbert & Wilson, 2007).

Considering the extraordinary human condition of orienting oneself towards the future, the researchers have analyzed, from diverse theoretical angles, a construct that evidences the integration of the chronological future into the present and daily life of the human being (Lewin, 1942/1948; Lens, 1998). It is the concept of Future Time Perspective (FTP) or Future Orientation (FO) that, in its multidimensional condition, represents those images that people consciously and subjectively elaborate in relation to the future (Seginer & Lens, 2015; Seginer, 2009). It should be noted that both categories vary slightly in their content, but they highlight the cognitive and motivational condition of the variable and, therefore, in this article the two terms will be referred to as subjective images in relation to the future. These images are formulated as goals and they facilitate the organization of diverse plans to reach them. As a consequence of this psychological, centrally motivational possibility, the behaviors emitted in the present become sub goals or actions that instrumentally lead individuals to the achievement of their future plans and goals (Lens, et al., 2012; Locke & Latham, 2004; Seginer & Lens, 2015).

## Historical evolution of the concept of future time perspective

In order to know the evolution of the concept it is inevitable to refer to its origins and specifically to three authors who initially referred to the theme of Time Perspective; they are Israeli, Frank and Lewin. These three academics contributed remarkably to the development of the concept and made it possible to suggest its current multidimensionality (Husman & Lens, 1999; Seginer, 2009; Seginer & Lens, 2015). Among the aforementioned theoreticians, Lewin's contribution stands out as he conceptualized the Time Perspective as the integration that the individual has of his/her future and psychological past in a given moment. This author used the term *psychological future* as a mental image that impacts on the actions and mood of people in the present. With this proposal the idea of the motivational power of the psychological future was introduced, since it was possible to direct the behavior in the present through this condition (Lewin, 1942; Cartwright, 1951; Seginer, 2009). In addition, the scientific psychology of the time considered behavior as an intentionally goal-oriented action and this goal was considered as cognitive elaboration with motivational consequences (Eysenck, 1952; Herrera & Lens, 2009; Miller, Galanter & Pribram, 1960; Weiner, 1992).

Taking these contributions into consideration, the concept of *psychological time* was qualified as a mental and subjective representation that contains, in an integrated way, images of the present, past and future (Trommsdorff & Lamm, 1975). Nuttin and Lens (1985) elaborated in a deeper way the proposal on psychological time, and they remarked that the cognitive representation of the present, past and future possessed a spatial-temporal location in the mind of individuals; such location would regulate the behavior of people in the present. From these proposals, there emerged certain conceptualizations about future thinking, among which the following formulations stand out: it is primarily a matter of the tendency to orientate oneself towards the future (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999); it is a personality trait (Gjesme, 1983; Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999); it is a cognitive-motivational construct (Nuttin & Lens, 1985; Seginer & Lens, 2015); it represents a multidimensional concept (motivational-cognitive-behavioral (Seginer, et al., 1991); it implies possible future selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). It is important to point out that the diverse definitions that reflect future thinking are connected to the theoretical foundation from which they emerge; therefore, they are not equivalent.

The multiple conceptualizations elaborated by different researchers have been organized into three theoretical approaches; specifically Future Tense Perspective (FTP); Future Orientation (FO) and Possible selves (PS). FTP is a motivational approach that emphasizes the integration of the anticipated future in the psychological present (De Volder & Lens, 1982; Husman & Lens, 1999; Lens, 1998; Nuttin & Lens, 1985; Seginer & Lens, 2015). It is clearly assumed that the images elaborated in relation to future events provide the basis to establish individual future goals. Similarly, the Future Orientation (FO) alludes to images that human beings produce regarding their future; these images are consciously represented and self-reported; they are articulated to the hopes and fears that people have regarding their future, by highlighting the interaction of the three components that are part of the theoretical model, specifically the motivational, cognitive, and behavioral components (Seginer & Lens, 2015; Trommsdorff & Lamm, 1975). Finally, the approximation of the Possible Selves (PS) indicates that people tend to elaborate ideas regarding what they would like to become or also what frightens them. These ideas encourage future individual behavior (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The conceptualizations already mentioned reflect the existing theoretical diversity in the research linked to future thinking (Emmons, 1986; Strathman, Gleicher, Boninger & Edwards, 1994; Snyder, et al., 1991). Each of these approaches suggests different measurement instruments, and this has generated some controversy when approaching the concept of FTP or FO.

Seginer (2009) has proposed a classification of the different approaches in relation to future thinking and she has organized the theoretical proposals according to the thematic or athematic perspective. The first one prioritizes the content of the goals or images that people elaborate with respect to the future, considering the domains of life that are related to the

prioritized contents. In the case of adolescents or young adults the domains of life are career/work or family/marriage. The second perspective, i.e. the thematic one, considers that people may have a general tendency to think about the future and anticipate it, but without a clear content. Studies that will be presented as empirical evidence of FTP and FO in the Peruvian context are ascribed to the thematic perspective.

### **FTP/FO empirical evidence. Studies developed in Peru 1998-2018.**

In the present systematic review of the FTP/FO concept in educational contexts, theoretical arguments and results of empirical studies developed internationally and in Peru have been considered. For this purpose, sources published in psychology scientific journals have been reviewed. The FTP concept has a long history, mainly in Europe, where after approximately fifty years of research, it was possible to specify, from empirical studies, that people cognitively transform their motivations and/or needs into specific motivational goals, plans and projects. Goals and plans are articulated to a life domain (in adolescence to the educational/labor or family domain) and their contents are organized according to the evolutionary or developmental level of people (Lens, 1986; Nuttin & Lens, 1985; Herrera & Lens, 2009). These goals are temporarily located along a continuum that extends from short-term goals to distant goals. The greater the knowledge about which the viable or realistic options for future goals are, the greater the basis for orienting behavior toward their fulfillment (Cantor, Norem, Niedenthal, Langston, & Brower, 1987; Husman & Lens, 1999; Lens, 1986; Markus & Nurius, 1987; Nurmi, 199; Trommsdorff, 1994).

It should be pointed out that, according to contemporary theories on motivation (among which the theory of self-determination stands out), behaviors that are activated from future goals are extrinsically motivated and, therefore, could be qualified as actions generated from motivation of lower quality (contrary to the high motivational quality implied by the existence of intrinsic motivation). Notwithstanding, taking into account empirical research carried out in recent years, it is clear that there are different types of extrinsic motivation, and each has different qualities (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Lens, Paixao, Herrera & Grobler, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2017). It is therefore relevant to analyze the content of goals (intrinsic vs. extrinsic), because, although there are different types of extrinsic motivation, goals with intrinsic content create higher quality motivation.

An empirical evidence of how the content of the goal affects the quality of motivation was presented through an experimental study developed in physical education classes for Belgian intermediate level students. When goals were set in intrinsic terms (physical activity as healthy) the quality of motivation was high; effort and persistence were higher and even active membership in sports clubs was sought. The opposite occurred when goals were extrinsic (physical activity focused on image or attractiveness) (Vansteenkiste, Simons, Soenen & Lens, 2004). Other experimental studies in the same Belgian educational context reported similar results (Vansteenkiste, Matos, Lens & Soenens, 2007). It follows from this research that in order to motivate students to learn in the classroom and at the present time, it is important to refer to future goals of intrinsic content (Vansteenkiste, Timmermans, Lens, Soenens & Van den Broeck, 2008).

Taking into consideration the contributions of the psychological science and the studies developed in other continents, in Peru, FTP has been measured and its content has been analyzed in different educational levels. Since 1998 several investigations have been implemented and 2988 students have participated in them. The first study approached the analysis of the social insertion of secondary level students in public schools of Lima. This research was longitudinal (1998-2002), and the Motivational Induction Method was used as an instrument to measure FTP in three different moments. (Herrera, 2002) Research started with 321 participants and culminated with 174, out of which 163 aspired to be trained professionally at the University. After analyzing the corresponding content, it was found that there were differences between the two socioeconomic levels analyzed (low and medium). The frequency of responses that revealed goals

which expressed general self-realization was higher in the low socioeconomic level (41%) versus (33%) in the medium level ( $\chi^2(N=163) = 27.27, p < .00$ ).

This result was not surprising, as the participants were fifth graders at the moment the first measurement was done, and it was foreseeable that they would report the aspirations and desires linked to self-realization. It is important to point out that the groups of low (10.71%) and medium (14.85%) socioeconomic level that were evaluated also reported goals oriented to the mastery of educational life; both groups presented answers oriented to complete a career and to be successful professionals ( $\chi^2(N=163) = 10.71; p < .00$ ). However, those in the middle socio-economic sector, despite expressing a higher percentage of responses aimed at being successful professionals, they were the ones who presented the most responses that demonstrated their desire to successfully complete their secondary education and take the admission exam. It should be noted that the students in the aforementioned longitudinal research do not provide very frequent responses related to technical education after completing their schooling; nor do they express, with high frequency, goals related to employment. From the answers issued, it could be inferred that students at lower levels have a longer FTP than those in the middle sector, since they plan to successfully complete a career and do not mention their desire to finish with appropriate grades the fifth year of secondary school with the same intensity as those in the middle sector. (Herrera, 2002; Herrera & Lens, 2009).

It was found in this study, when making the three measurements during the years 1998-2000, that there was a gap between the educational plans reported at the end of secondary school and the actions issued by the adolescents evaluated. Most of the 174 students who participated in the research in the thirty consecutive months did not actually take the admission exam, which means they did not implement their explicitly reported plans to become successful professionals. Theoretically, the needs and motives of adolescents (expressed through their future goals) could be translated through more specific and realistic goals. If they wished to end a career, they would have to study at a university institution, and in order to do so the entrance exam is indispensable. The empirical evidence (for over two years) of the limited number of university students enrolled in these institutions (5% out of 174) showed that the adolescents had unrealistic plans. It is highly probable that, considering Locke and Latham's (2004) proposal, their goals were not specific enough to guide the behaviors required to become successful professionals. According to the findings, it was not important for the students analyzed to complete a career despite having explicitly declared it at the end of their secondary studies (Herrera & Lens, 2009).

Subsequently the FTP content of adolescents and young people who were in different levels and types of educational institutions (secondary schools; universities, technical institutions and pre-university academies) was analyzed in four cross-sectional studies carried out in Lima-Peru between 2002-2006. Each of these four studies focused on one type of educational institution and they were developed annually with the support of the University of Lima and the Catholic University of Louvain (Herrera, 2009). The goals of the 1608 participants were recorded, as in the aforementioned longitudinal study, using the Motivational Induction Method (Nuttin & Lens, 1985). It was confirmed again that the most frequently expressed goals were those linked to self-realization contents, which was foreseeable due to the age of the participants. Additionally, goals related to the mastery of educational and working life were reported. These data also ratified what was expected, since the students evaluated were in educational entities that prepared them to be inserted in other formative institutions or oriented them to the world of employment. It is important to point out that the students who were already studying at the university were those who, compared to the other students of the aforementioned institutions, reported the highest frequency of goals linked to successfully completing university studies (19.6%); however, it is important to note that in the selected sample, the students of the last year of secondary school presented their aspirations to complete a successful career, with a response volume of (8.22%;  $\chi^2(3, N=1608) = 1717.18; p < .00$ ).

On the other hand, students who were enrolled in pre-university academies only reported 7.25% of their responses in this category, thus showing significant differences. However, their aspirations and desires elaborated and proposed through future goals that indicated their expectations to pass the admission exam, were higher than those of the students from other institutions, reaching 18.59% of their total responses. It is worth mentioning that, in the other institutions under study, specifically in the educational centers of secondary level, the desire to pass the admission exam was also explicitly reported, but the volume of responses in these cases was low; 6.83%; at universities it was extremely .01% as well as in the technical institutions .18% ( $\chi^2$  (3, N=1608) =3454.88,  $p < .00$ ). Perhaps, although the responses submitted were very low in frequency, their existence (i.e. the explicit report of wanting to pass the admission exam) could indicate that the interest or aspiration to study another career is still present both in university students (even though they are already inserted in the study of a career) and in students of technical institutions, either by starting the admission process again and re-entering the university or by completing technical studies and then applying to the university institution. It is important to mention that, as expected, students from technical institutes reported the highest frequency of responses related to successfully completing the technical career (14.01%) and getting a job (5.47%) (Herrera & Lens, 2009; Lens, Paixao, Herrera & Grobler, 2012).

The findings obtained maintained the scientific interest of knowing the psychological distinctiveness of Peruvian adolescents and young people whose ages range from 14 to 29 years and who represent 36.7% of the population (INEI, 2018). According to the empirical research developed, it can be inferred that many adolescents and young people in Lima do not transform their future motivational goals into actions. Many aspire to become successful professionals, but they do not implement their plans. This assertion was confirmed through another study also carried out in Peru. Martínez (2009) described the future time perspective in a group of adolescents in Lima and analyzed the possible differences between the time perspective of adolescents and young people. He reported that the goals of both groups were very similar, as it was found that they do not change substantially. It was indicated through this research that it is in the adult period where notable changes are observed; this was articulated with the findings of previous studies in which the Future Temporal Perspective and Satisfaction with life throughout the life cycle were analyzed (Martínez, 2004).

In order to contrast this information with data reported in other countries, new cross-sectional studies were conducted with adolescents and youngsters from Costa Rica and the USA. The two studies recorded local data and the results were submitted in the period (2007-2015). In the aforementioned cross-sectional studies, the variable FTP (content and extent) was associated with risk (only comparing 411 students from private and public educational centers in Peru and Costa Rica) (Herrera, 2009);  $\gamma$  satisfaction was associated with life (in a comparison of 648 students from Perú Costa Rica and the USA) (Herrera, Matos, Martínez & Lens, 2015) When analyzing the FTP and risk variables, it was possible to verify once again that the 411 students in secondary schools reported a high number of responses that alluded to self-realization, but were not as general categories as those registered in previous studies. The study showed that self-realization or "happiness" would be achieved through certain specific mechanisms. For example, "I hope to achieve happiness when I have enough money to support myself" or "I intensely desire to be happy and I will achieve it when I am a professional". In addition, it was found that women and men from the different countries (both private and public schools) reported this category with a relative frequency that stood out when compared to the volume of the categories that reflected other responses (11.37% and 8.79% in men vs. 10.49 and 10.37% in women;  $\chi^2$  (3, N=411) =9.04,  $p < .03$ ). When analyzing the responses that represented the desire to become professionals, it was women who reported the highest number of such responses (7.71% and 7.20% vs. 6.71% and 3.83%;  $\chi^2$  (3, N=411) =32.87,  $p < .00$ ). They were also the ones who reported a higher frequency of responses linked to the admission exam, but the percentage of responses was not high (3.90%). The empirical observation that it is women who aspire with greater intensity to achieve higher education is highly relevant, since on certain occasions it is pointed out, based on a stereotypical elaboration that women do not always wish to go into higher education spaces.

Additionally, it is important to point out that when analyzing the extent of FTP it is observed that there are very few responses that report distant future goals; it is women, both from public and private schools, who present the highest frequency of responses in the intermediate category and it is men from public schools who show a short FTP. It is highly probable that the limited socioeconomic situation of a particular group will orient students towards very immediate goals that are not projected beyond the school period. However, if future goals guide behavior, a choice of educational training (technical or professional) requires more distant and realistic goals. Several additional analyses were conducted to establish how the extent of TFP was associated with the risk trend reported by adolescents. ANOVA ( $F = 7.22$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) showed significant differences in the interaction between country and type of school (private/public) in terms of the tendency to risk contracting diseases generated by an inadequate lifestyle. Peruvian students in private schools tended to be more at risk than those in Costa Rica; but students in public schools in Costa Rica tended to be more at risk than Peruvians in the same type of school (public). In addition, it was found that the longer the TFP, the lower the tendency to risk and vice versa (Herrera & Lens, 2009). The latest research developed in Peru with the motivational induction method, but in its revised version that included as a life domain the area of the *self* in addition to the domains of educational and family life (Herrera, Martinez, Lens, 2010; Herrera, Matos, Martinez & Lens, 2015) compared the FTP of young university students, Peruvians, Costa Ricans and Americans associating it with subjective well-being (satisfaction with life). The selected sample consisted of 648 university students from three countries in the Americas: Peru ( $n=217$ ); Costa Rica ( $n=202$ ); and the United States ( $n=229$ ). The relationship between FTP (content of goals/extension) and satisfaction with life was studied. The reason for analyzing the relationship between these two variables was not only based on the motivational relevance of the FTP but also on the empirical verification of its positive relationship, of its length/extension with positive results. It has been observed that the greater the extension, the greater the school's commitment, an efficient time management as a learning strategy, a greater persistence, less procrastination and a high satisfaction when studying (De Bilde, Vansteenkiste & Lens, 2011; Harber, Zimbardo, & Boyd, 2003; Horstmanshof & Zimitat, 2007; Jackson, Fritch, Nagasaka, & Pope, 2003; Peetsma, 1994; Zaleski, 1987). The results of the content analysis and extent of FTP show that, when applying an ANOVA to observe whether there are differences among the countries, a significant effect was evident ( $F(2, 642) = 5,634$ ;  $p = .004$ ). Peruvian students showed a longer FTP ( $M=32.39$ ;  $SD=11.20$ ) than U.S. students. ( $M=28.26$ ;  $SD=11.21$ ) and Costa Rica students ( $M=29.49$ ;  $SD=11.49$ ). Responses linked to content were ranked in the three countries and presented in the following order: education (successful completion of a career), work and family. In addition, there were responses related to *self*, among which the use of free time and interpersonal relationships stood out.

These categories ratify the findings of previous studies and again it can be inferred that their presence is associated with the level of development of the participants (the great majority of them are adolescents and young people). Continuing with the analysis, the association between the categories (FTP content) and subjective well-being (satisfaction with life) was clarified. It is observed that the variables *country* and *education* were significant predictors of satisfaction with life. The *country* variable explained 42.7% of the variance. By adding the *education* variable into the equation, it only added the extra 1.4% of the variance. Therefore, considering that the *country* was a predictor of satisfaction with life, an ANOVA was applied to evaluate the differences between the groups evaluated. The results of the post hoc analyses showed that Costa Rica had the highest average ( $M=5.58$ ) and Peru the lowest when evaluating life satisfaction ( $F(2, 373) = 151.00$ ,  $p < .000$ ).

The research has continued in the Peruvian context and from 2016 to date, the multidimensional Future Orientation model has been implemented. The instrument proposed by Seginer (2009) has been validated in samples of university students. Reliability has been analyzed and a test is currently available under optimal psychometric conditions. Recent studies with psychology students from private universities indicate that there is a close relationship between expectations as part of the motivational component ( $r = .53^{**}$ ) and satisfaction with life. With this



new basis, the research line approaches a clearly quantitative analysis space that, despite not distancing itself from the initial FTP proposal that supports its analysis from a motivational cognitive perspective, it relies on a multidimensional view in which the motivational, cognitive and behavioral components are represented in a different analysis model.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Psychological science and research in the motivational field is ascribed to the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly (2011) in which it is specified that the search for happiness represents a central human objective, and therefore becomes a universal aspiration that needs to be included in the public policies of the countries. Empirical studies, carried out in groups of Peruvian adolescents and young people and also in some other countries of the American continent, indicate that to become a successful professional is one of the desires that has been explicitly and prioritized stated. However, the projection of distant future goals is not constant. Most students project their goals in the short term. Given the socioeconomic status of the evaluated participants (basically from middle and low levels), perhaps the length of the short FTP is an adaptive resource. The permanent verification of these results allows this inference to be made, since it is evident that the post-secondary education category is relevant for the group of approximately 3000 students analyzed in the last 20 years. The research effort carried out to articulate FTP, risk tendency and satisfaction with life has reported that the content of the goals and extent of FTP are associated with these variables. Notwithstanding, reorienting the conceptual proposal toward a multidimensional Future Orientation model may provide new insights in the area of motivational psychological research.

The measurement of the Future Orientation variable has evolved allowing it to be expanded to a three-component multidimensional model. Validating the instrument proposed by Seginer (2009) does not rule out the option of measuring the construct through the Motivational Induction Method (Nuttin & Lens, 1985), but reorients the proposal towards a clearly quantitative space, articulating three components (motivational, cognitive and behavioral). This variation will allow the designing of research proposals that articulate diverse quantitative variables among which the measurement of satisfaction with life and happiness would occupy a central place.

Future research is required to analyze the relationship between Future Orientation, subjective or psychological well-being and other self-variables. This will allow not only describing and explaining behavior, but also predicting it in favor of future educational interventions in different moments of the life cycle that, representing different evolutionary and developmental moments, also propose different developmental tasks. According to what has been submitted in the present paper it is considered of vital importance to go deeper into this line of research in order to establish new scientific inferences and clear proposals for intervention in different educational contexts.

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