

Impacts of the pandemic on students of the bachelor of tourism at UT de la Costa

Impactos de la pandemia en estudiantes de la licenciatura en turismo de la UT de la Costa

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Abstract

The SARS-CoV-2 situation led to confinement due to the pandemic, which has generated various effects in all areas of society such as health, economics, education, among others. This research is about the impacts generated by the confinement of students of the Bachelor of Tourism at the Universidad Tecnológica de la Costa. For this, a quantitative exploratory study was carried out on a sample of 87 students through an online survey. Among the most outstanding results, it could be observed that the greatest impact generated by the pandemic is mainly focused on the psychological and academic aspects, where 80% of the respondents answered that the pandemic has affected their studies, and the same percentage expressed problems for sleep and 89% had stress due to the number of tasks assigned to them. In reference to the symptoms of psychological disorders, it is stated that 64% have suffered from stress and anxiety, 33% have depressive symptoms, 14% have eating problems, and 2.3% manifest the use of harmful substances and it is striking that a 17% have come to think of hurting themselves, being a really high percentage. Another really relevant data is that 67% of the students have stated that they have not respected the confinement, which also represents a high percentage of the needs to socialize and the lack of adaptation to the new normal.

SARS-CoV-2, Psychological and emotional impacts, Tourism business students

Resumen

La situación del SARS-CoV-2 derivó en el confinamiento por la pandemia, lo cual ha generado diversas afectaciones en todos los ámbitos de la sociedad tales como en la salud, en lo económico, lo educativo, entre otros. Esta investigación versa sobre los impactos generados por el confinamiento a los estudiantes de la carrera de Negocios Turísticos de la Universidad Tecnológica de la Costa. Para ello se llevó a cabo un estudio cuantitativo de carácter exploratorio a una muestra de 87 estudiantes a través de una encuesta en línea. Dentro de los resultados más destacados se pudo observar que el mayor impacto generado por la pandemia, se centra principalmente en los aspectos psicológicos y académicos, donde el 80% de los encuestados contestó que la pandemia ha afectado sus estudios asimismo un mismo porcentaje manifestó problemas para dormir y el 89% tuvo estrés por el número de tareas que se les ha asignado. En referencia a los síntomas de trastornos psicológicos se manifiesta que el 64% ha sufrido de estrés y ansiedad, el 33% tiene síntomas depresivos, el 14% problemas alimenticios, y el 2.3% manifiesta el uso de sustancias nocivas y llama la atención que un 17% ha llegado a pensar en hacerse daño, siendo un porcentaje realmente alto. Otro dato realmente relevante es que han manifestado los estudiantes en un 67% que no han respetado el confinamiento, lo cual también representa un porcentaje alto sobre las necesidades de socializar y la falta de adaptación para la nueva normalidad.

SARS-CoV-2, Impactos psicológicos y emocionales, Estudiantes de negocios turísticos

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Introduction

The World Health Organization through its director declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020, thus declaring a state of alarm for the management of the health crisis situation, whose objective was to protect health of citizenship, contain the progression of the disease and strengthen the public health system (Adhanom Ghebreyesus, 2020).

On March 24, 2020, phase 2 of the beginning of voluntary confinement was declared, which consisted in the community dispersal of the virus where person-to-person contagion occurs in the communities (Secretary of Health, 2020). Faced with the increase in infections and spread of the virus, the Ministry of Health continued with the reinforcement of basic hygiene measures and social distancing, preventive measures were intensified, consisting of: the suspension of classes at all educational levels, events and meetings with more than 50 participants, as well as all those actions that involve the displacement of people, including work, religious, entertainment and recreational activities, among others.

The health secretariat declared phase 3, on April 21, already considered as the stage of epidemic contagion, where the prevention, control and care measures of the pandemic were strengthened, implementing (in addition to the measures that had been established in the phase 2), the suspension of non-essential activities and the use of sanitary filters at the entrance of the buildings.

Currently, UNESCO (2020) estimates that 1,725 million students around the world have been affected by their learning process due to health measures, a figure that corresponds to about 90% of young people and children on the planet. Regarding this, the OECD, (2020) warns us of the risks involved in the suspension of face-to-face classes, social distancing and confinement in the child population, especially in children from vulnerable families. These measures have a negative impact on various dimensions of life, such as diet, family life, physical and mental health, and cognitive and social-emotional development.

In the educational field, De la Fuente Arias & Lozano Díaz, (2010)) converge, in that the virtual space became the new educational environment where the student body must put into operation all their cognitive, affective and motivational strategies to self-regulate their learning in the most successful way possible.

Brooks et al., (2020) determined that the conditions that accompany a pandemic include different sources of stress for people such as changing eating habits, irregular sleep, sedentary lifestyle and the increase in the use of technology, which it generates physical problems and psychological impacts that cause a certain fear of being infected by the virus, frustration, boredom and in addition to these feelings, the lack of worth due to not being able to cover basic needs and not having clear information.

And finally Wang et al., (2020) point out that the factors that have most affected the physical and psychological well-being of people during confinement are the loss of habits, routines and psychosocial stress, this according to the first study that analyzes the psychological impact of the COVID-19 quarantine in China.

Therefore, in the present investigation, valuable and scientific information could be obtained on the emotional and behavioral alterations of the students of the tourism career, as well as their family context and the experiences during confinement, which will undoubtedly allow the be able to contribute to the development of improvement actions aimed mainly at students with greater vulnerability and affected by the pandemic.

Theoretical framework

Background of the psychological effects generated by confinement as a result of COVID-19 worldwide

According to the study by (Sprang & Silman, 2013), the population that has lived through quarantine during pandemic diseases is more likely to present acute stress disorder and adjustment and pain (30% with criteria of post-traumatic stress disorder).

To this day, since the pandemic began, there is little scientific information on the effects or psychological impacts caused by the confinement caused by COVID-19, the little evidence found is from studies carried out mainly in some cities in China.

Wang et al., (2020) were the first to apply a survey to 1,210 people in which 53% valued the psychological impact of the situation as moderate-severe, 16% referred moderate or severe depressive symptoms, 28% moderate or severe anxiety symptoms and 8% moderate or severe stress levels. For the majority, the main concern (75%) was that their relatives would be infected with coronavirus.

A second study by Liu et al., (2020) a month after the COVID-19 outbreak was declared to residents of Wuhan and nearby cities, showed a prevalence of PTSD symptoms of 7%.

According to Cai et al., (2020), they conducted a third study with the same group and with a larger sample of 2,091 people, belonging to mainland China, and found a prevalence of acute post-traumatic stress symptoms one month after the outbreak. COVID-19 4.6%.

In another study in China according to (Pate et al., 2017), the emotional impact of quarantine on children and adolescents in Italy and Spain was examined, where 1,143 parents of children and adolescents between 3 and 18 years old participated, it was observed that 85.7% of parents perceived in their children symptoms such as difficulty concentrating in 76.6%, boredom with 52%, irritability with 39%, restlessness with 38.8%, among others, while Spanish parents manifested more symptoms than Italian parents. According to Orgilés et al., (2020) the study suggests detecting children and adolescents with emotional and behavioral problems early in order to improve their psychological well-being.

For their part, in Spain, Oliver et al. (2020) evaluated four areas related to the pandemic to the general population taking into account: social contact behavior, financial impact, employment situation and health status. In that evaluation, they found that more than 18% of those surveyed reported having had close contact with someone infected with the coronavirus.

With regard to the degree of affectation, women were generally more vulnerable. 15% of small business workers said they were bankrupt and more than 19% had lost a significant portion of their savings, some to the point of not being able to pay their mortgage or buy food. The number of teleworking was lower than in other countries. 19% of those who tested positive (not being healthcare workers) had had close contact with a client who had coronavirus.

Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., (2020) developed an investigation in order to determine the levels of stress, anxiety and depression in the first phase of the Covid-19 outbreak with a population made up of 976 citizens of northern Spain; These researchers detected that the youngest groups of the study population (18-25 years) presented higher averages in stress, anxiety and depression compared to the groups of 26-60 years and older than 60. They also pointed out that there was a greater psychological impact on those people who manifested symptoms of chronic diseases.

Huarcaya-Victoria, (2020) revealed that during the confinement by COVID-19, in the initial phase of the pandemic, the presence of anxiety, depression and reaction to stress in individuals, families and society was frequent.

According to the research carried out at the Public University of Peru by Apaza P. et al., (2020), psychosocial factors such as stress, depression and anxiety were identified during confinement by COVID-19. Within the findings found according to the information obtained from the sample of 296 students between April and May of this year, it was possible to know that the presence of stress, depression and anxiety in university students in a confinement situation derived from the pandemic situation due to the presence of COVID-19, with a higher incidence in women than in men; and, where fatigue and insomnia were the most significant symptoms in students with a prevalence of stress, depression and anxiety.

Where stress was present in 37.8% of the students, the most significant physical, psychological and behavioral symptoms and reactions were: tiredness or fatigue most of the time, even after sleeping (10.8%); feel that their own resources are insufficient to face difficult situations (10.5%); sleep disorders such as nightmares or insomnia (9.5%); lack of motivation to undertake academic or work tasks (9.8%); headache or headache (7.4%); feeling of lack of energy when performing daily tasks (7.1%); excessive sensitivity to everyday events (7.1%); and focused on negative aspects of the future or the past (7.1%) during the last 30 days in a situation of confinement due to COVID-19.

Depression, of the total number of students, 45.9% was located in the condition of mild depression. Of these, 30.1% are women and 15.9% are men. 48% in moderate depression, of these 31.4% women and 16.6% men. Meanwhile, 4.1% in severe depression, the largest amount of data being distributed between mild and moderate depression; and, with a higher incidence of mild to severe depression in women than in men. The most significant somatic and cognitive symptoms associated with depression were: feeling of hope for the future (43.2%), insomnia (23.3%), (18.9%) reported eating the same as before mandatory confinement, one (15.9%) said they felt that they still enjoyed the things they used to do before, and one (15.5%) said that they felt more irritated than normal. In addition, (55.1%) reported that they have never or very rarely noticed weight loss and (31.1%) that they have never or very few times had a clear mind. Among the psychomotor symptoms, it was easy for them to do everything they used to do before (11.8%) and restlessness (9.1%).

And with regard to anxiety, 65.2% reported having moderate anxiety. Of these, 40.9% are women and 24.3% are men. 26.4% were found in the condition of anxiety with severe intensity, of these 18.2% are women and 8.1% are men. 8.1% reported total anxiety, of which 7.1% were women and 1% were men. From the data analyzed, it is revealed that women tend to present greater intensity of anxiety in a confinement situation than men. The most significant signs and symptoms related to the prevalence of psychic anxiety were insomnia (15.9%), fatigue (10.5%), depressed mood (10.1%) and feeling anxious with worries or fear that the worst happens (8.8%).

For the prevalence of somatic anxiety, they were the presence of somatic sensory symptoms such as ringing in the ears, blurred vision (9.5%), somatic muscle symptoms such as muscle aches, cramps (6.8%) and symptoms of the autonomic nervous system such as dry mouth, headache, hairy erectism (goose bumps) in (6.8%).

In Mexico, González Jaimes et al., (2020), carried out an investigation to evaluate the levels of anxiety, depression, stress and the perception of the state of health of Mexican university students during 7 weeks of confinement due to the Covid-19 pandemic a 644 students. Among the results that were obtained, it could be determined that symptoms (moderate to severe) of stress were found in 31.92%, psychosomatic with 5.9%, sleep problems with 36.3%, social dysfunction in daily activity of 9.5% and depressed with 4.9%, especially in the group of women and in the youngest students (18-25 years). In this last group, anxiety was also detected in 40.3% of the university population with higher levels in men.

Psychological and emotional factors in university students

The World Health Organization identifies one of the main psychological factors and defines it as the set of physiological reactions that prepares the body for action. For Sweeney, (2013) it is a non-specific reaction of the organism to any change generated in it, due to positive or negative events.

Therefore it follows that stress and emotional disorders affect people at different stages of life. In the particular case of young students, Bedoya-Lau et al., (2014) affirm that stress is considered an important problem worldwide, which can be reflected in psychological, physical and behavioral reactions.

Domínguez et al, cited by Rivas Acuña et al., (2014) classify environmental, family, and work and interpersonal aspects as sources of stress; These sources, which, in the event of a pandemic, can be combined showing multi-causal explanations in an individual or confined family.

According to Rivas Acuña et al. (2014), students have stressful reactions very frequently, these reactions are drowsiness, restlessness and increase or decrease in food consumption. Beery & Kaufer, (2015) point out that every day we interact with stress, and our social behavior changes, emphasizing that the virus has affected on a psychological level, those who struggle to survive, those who stay at home during quarantine, the economically disadvantaged, and those who have lost their jobs; Under these circumstances, the presence of stressors for families is evident.

Mukhtar, (2020) points out that the psychological factor of anxiety comes from the perception of uncontrollable events, before which it is suggested to carry out controllable activities such as taking care of hygiene, eating healthy, exercising, dancing, reading books, among others. In the case of social isolation, Takur and Jain (2020) state that it induces a lot of anxiety in many citizens of different countries, highlighting the authors that the most vulnerable are those with mental health problems (depression), and older adults who live in solitude and isolation; alluding to having extreme suicidal thoughts.

To the above, depression is added, which is defined by the authors Li et al., (2015) as a mental and emotional disorder that, according to Ellis et al., (2017) arises from an interaction of biological factors, psychological and social; and it constitutes a risk factor in people over 65 years of age, who assume loneliness as a permanent psychosocial risk factor in them.

The psychosocial factors according to Saldaña Orozco et al., (2019), are present from the individuality of the human being, being vulnerable in the family, work and social spheres. Exceeding the capacities of people producing exhaustion, depression or work stress, represents important psychosocial risks that affect health. Therefore, Tsutsumi (2004) states that it is essential to propose methods to assess, prevent and control work-related stress and its effects on health. Therefore, and according to Pizarro Ruz et al., (2019), health and work are fundamental human rights, so the loss of one of them in the exercise of the other is unacceptable.

Methodology

The methodology implemented in this research was of a quantitative and exploratory approach. The sample was determined according to the total population of students of business careers in tourism considering a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, so the survey was applied to 87 students of different degrees through the Google drive online application within 1 week.

The survey was made up of 4 different items in addition to the identification and control section, seeking to identify their academic impairments, personal changes, change in habits and behaviors, and the relationship with the pandemic, conformed as follows:

Sociodemographic data (5 items)	Age, sex, marital status, educational level and monthly income.
Academic Activity (8 items)	Impact of confinement on school performance, adaptation conditions in virtual education and personal conciliation with academic routines. A scale of Totally agree, Agree, Indifferent, Disagree and Totally disagree was used.
Perception of personal changes (27 items)	List of psychological affectations expressed by symptoms according to positive or negative changes in the following aspects: concentration, uncertainty, anxiety, worry, mood, guilt, autolytic ideation, fears, feeling of loneliness, irritability, mood changes, problems of sleep and somatic symptoms. A scale of Totally agree, Agree, Indifferent, Disagree and Totally disagree was used.
Habits and behavior changes (10 items)	Habits and behavior changes regarding the consumption of tobacco, cannabis, alcohol, drugs, high calorie foods, television, social networks, video games and physical activity. A scale of Increased a lot, Increased a little was used; Indifferent; It decreased a little; It decreased a lot.

<p>Situation in relation to the pandemic (34 items)</p>	<p>This variable sought information on the student's relationship with COVID-19, specifically whether he belonged to risk groups, coexistence with people at risk, with people exposed to the coronavirus, as well as the presence of symptoms or a positive diagnosis of the virus either in the student, in people with whom he lives and in close friends. Dichotomous answers of YES or No. Regarding the fear of one's own contagion, of infecting others, of one's own death or of relatives, of job loss and financial difficulties. A scale of High Fear, Medium Fear, and Low Fear was used. Regarding the level of information regarding forms of transmission, symptoms, mortality and forms of prevention of COVID-19, dichotomous responses of YES or No. were used. Aspects of confinement compliance, possible derived conflicts, the need and request for psychological help during confinement were also taken into account.</p>
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Table 1 Study variables

Source: Own elaboration, (2021)

Results

This research was carried out seeking to weave a follow-up line and to be able to determine if the experiences that are now marking this generation of students of business careers in tourism could influence their entrepreneurial and business development. In relation to the perception that the pandemic has affected their studies, 80% of the students consider that it has affected them, however, 80% of the students have been able to continue their studies without problem and, in contrast, 11% indicate that they have simple to severe problems to continue studying, there is even 21% of students who indicate that they have been able to improve their study and this derived that this modality helps them in concentration, a variable with which it has a significant correlation of 0.737, and within 80% of the problems generated by the new academic model show sleep problems and 89% show stress due to the number of tasks assigned to them, and these two variables also show a direct significant correlation.

Regarding personal changes, it is reflected that 82% have perceived significant changes of a personal nature, among the most significant 88% of those surveyed express problems concentrating, 82% indicate that they are afraid of losing their loved ones, 71% also manifest depressive, pessimistic or hopeless feelings, in terms of their regular mood, 78% indicate that they normally feel angry and upset, and 77% have had constant mood swings, it is striking that a 17% have come to think of hurting themselves, being a really high percentage.

Approximately 60% of the students manifest in different items that they feel lonely, guilty and depressed, finding a significant correlation of these feelings in the statistical study.

In the change of habits that they have manifested in general, they indicate that they have remained the same in the consumption of alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco, however, there is an important growth in the consumption of high-calorie foods, the use of social networks, and exercise is relevant as they also show a significant decrease in the use of television.

With regard to their relationship with the pandemic, until the time of the application of this survey in October 2021, students have not really experienced direct contact with the SAR-COV-2 virus either on their person, or with their relatives since less than 10% have known someone with the virus.

In reference to the symptoms of psychological disorders, it is stated that 64% have suffered from stress and anxiety, 33% have depressive symptoms, 14% have eating problems, and 2.3% manifest the use of harmful substances.

A relevant point is that 67% of the students have stated that they have not generally respected the confinement, when going out for both permitted and prohibited activities. And only 21% have respected the confinement.

In the sense of the effects shown in all citizens, it is worth mentioning that the students of the Bachelor of Tourism, in addition to being a young sector that is relatively safe from the effects of the SARS-COV-2 virus, has manifested specific problems due to the pandemic control policies, specifically those related to social isolation, after 7 months of isolation, the results are manifested and consistent with those found by authors such as Apaza P. et al., (2020); González Jaimes et al., (2020); and Wang et al., (2020), since as you can see the problems of anxiety, stress, loneliness, depression have manifested in the people studied.

What could also be observed is that this specific sector has not strictly complied with the official confinement, and they have had more social interaction than expected by the authorities, and perhaps because of this the levels of psychological disorders are not as high as those manifested by other authors.

Other important affectations are manifested in their academic development, knowing that they are affected and with little growth in their development.

The very relevant and perhaps it would be necessary to study in depth to cross it with data from the teachers goes in relation to the effectiveness of distance learning models, since students manifest constant stress due to the quantity and programming of tasks on the platforms.

The most relevant fears they have expressed are in relation to the loss of family and loved ones, even higher than their own illness.

An explanation for this feeling and the lack of compliance in the confinement is manifested in the fact of not having experienced the diseases generated by the SARS-COV-2 virus.

An additional point to continue studying to know, is the decrease in the use of television and substitution by social networks, a phenomenon that had already been seen but that perhaps this pandemic has accelerated.

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Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic has generated compulsory isolation, which has undoubtedly had an impact on students, mainly because it is inherently related to the presence of psychological and emotional factors such as anxiety, stress, loss of sleep and depression.

Undoubtedly, these results will help us to develop prevention and treatment programs for these disorders, in addition to having a comparative parameter to continue studying other sectors of society, finally to monitor the business development of these tourism business students and learn about if the effects influence other aspects of direct impact on the economy.

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