



# EXPERIENCIAS DE LA PANDEMIA POR CORONAVIRUS EN ADOLESCENTES CHILENOS

## EXPERIENCES OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IN CHILEAN ADOLESCENTS

---

Por:  
Jaime Alfaro, PhD  
*Profesor Investigador, Facultad de Psicología.*



## INTRODUCCIÓN

La pandemia por Coronavirus (COVID-19) ha significado que toda la población se haya visto sometida a niveles de estrés significativamente mayores a los habituales (Liang, 2020). Estudios producidos a la fecha reportan influencias de este contexto, causando ansiedad, depresión y pánico (Holmes et al., 2020) relacionadas a la presencia de miedo a la infección, frustración y aburrimiento cotidiano, falta de información adecuada, falta de contacto personal con amigos y maestros, falta de espacio personal en el hogar y la pérdida financiera de la familia (Wang et al., 2020).

Asimismo, los reportes disponibles informan que en niños, niñas y adolescentes se presenta un aumento significativo en síntomas de depresión y ansiedad (Duan et al., 2020) y afirman que el cierre de los establecimientos educacionales podría impactar negativamente en su bienestar, debido a una combinación de la crisis de salud pública, aislamiento social, consecuencias económicas y los determinantes sociales de la salud (Golberstein et al., 2020).

Actualmente no hay suficiente investigación sobre el impacto que la inseguridad y la incertidumbre generada por el contexto actual tendrían específicamente en el funcionamiento psicológico en la infancia y adolescencia (Muratori & Ciacchini, 2020). Lo anterior es particularmente relevante respecto a la necesidad de contar con estrategias efectivas de prevención y mitigación de sus diversas consecuencias (Linhares & Enumo, 2020).

El presente reporte informa de la experiencia de cuarentena por COVID-19 en adolescentes chilenos y muestra resultados preliminares de las percepciones de niños, niñas y adolescentes acerca de su experiencia durante el periodo de pandemia.

## METODOLOGÍA

Los datos fueron recolectados entre octubre y diciembre del año 2020, con un total de 219 estudiantes (42,45% hombres, 57,55% mujeres, 5 'otros', excluidos de los análisis) entre los cursos de 1ero a 4to año medio (M=15.06 años; DE=1.21) de establecimientos educacionales de las regiones de Valparaíso (n=1), La Araucanía (n=1) y Metropolitana (n=1). Se utilizó el Cuestionario COVID elaborado ad hoc desarrollado para el presente estudio, que consta con secciones que tienen como objetivo explorar diferentes dimensiones de la experiencia de la pandemia, entre las que se incluyen: comunicaciones, espacio disponible, dimensión

## INTRODUCTION

*The Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has meant that the entire population has been subjected to significantly higher stress levels than usual (Liang, 2020). Studies produced to date report influences from this context, causing anxiety, depression, and panic (Holmes et al., 2020) related to the presence of fear of infection, frustration, daily boredom, lack of adequate information, lack of personal contact with friends, and teachers, lack of personal space at home, and financial loss of family (Wang et al., 2020).*

*Likewise, the available reports inform that in children and adolescents, there is a significant increase in symptoms of depression and anxiety (Duan et al., 2020) and affirm that the closure of educational establishments could negatively impact their well-being due to a combination of the public health crisis, social isolation, economic consequences, and the social determinants of health (Golberstein et al., 2020).*

*There is currently not enough research on the impact that insecurity and uncertainty generated by the current context would specifically have on psychological functioning in childhood and adolescence (Muratori & Ciacchini, 2020). The preceding is particularly relevant regarding effective prevention and mitigation strategies for various consequences (Linhares & Enumo, 2020).*

*This report reports on the quarantine experience by COVID-19 in Chilean adolescents and shows preliminary results of the perceptions of children and adolescents about their experience during the pandemic period.*

## METHODOLOGY

*The data were collected between October and December 2020, with 219 students (42.45% men, 57.55% women, 5 'others' excluded from the analyses) between the courses from 1st to 4th year. (M = 15.06 years; SD = 1.21) of educational establishments in the regions of Valparaíso (n = 1), La Araucanía (n = 1) and Metropolitana (n = 1). The ad hoc COVID Questionnaire developed for this study was used, consisting of sections that aim to explore different dimensions of the pandemic experience, including communications, available space, personal dimension, family life, peers, school activities, and experiences around the disease.*

personal, convivencia familiar, pares, actividades escolares y vivencia en torno a la enfermedad.

Se analizan medias y desviaciones estándares de hombres, mujeres y total de las diversas variables cuantitativas utilizadas. En la evaluación de las percepciones previas y posteriores al inicio de la pandemia, se utilizó comparación de medias de muestras relacionadas y se obtuvo el tamaño del efecto de la evaluación pre-post a través de la d de Cohen.

## RESULTADOS: PERCEPCIÓN DE APOYO DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DURANTE EL PERÍODO DE PANDEMIA

La percepción de apoyo de los estudiantes durante el período de pandemia (Tabla 1) presenta valores de un nivel medio-alto en el apoyo a nivel familiar (M=3.3) y de amistades (M=3.1), especialmente en el grupo de hombres, presentando características similares respecto a cómo los alumnos perciben el apoyo por parte de los profesores (M=2.9). Estos niveles de apoyo decrecen significativamente respecto a los centros educativos (M=2.5), siendo especialmente bajo en la percepción de apoyo por parte de los propios compañeros de clases (M=2.3), no existiendo diferencias significativas en la percepción global entre ambos géneros (p>0.05).

Tal como se observa en la tabla 2, los estudiantes perciben niveles medios en cuanto a lo bien que han podido realizar sus tareas en este período (M=3.1, DE=1.2, n=181), no existiendo diferencias significativas entre género (t(181)= 0.25, p=0.804). Adicionalmente, destaca de forma transversal el nivel de agobio y/o sensación de sentirse sobrepasados por las tareas solicitadas por los centros educativos (M= 3.8, DE=1.2, n=181), junto con altos niveles de desmotivación en relación a los estudios durante este año (M=4.0, DE=1.2, n=181), no existiendo diferencias estadísticamente significativas en ambas variables analizadas según género (p>0.05).

*Means and standard deviations of men, women, and the various quantitative variables used are analyzed. In evaluating perceptions before and after the pandemic onset, a comparison of means of related samples was used. The effect size of the pre-post evaluation was obtained through Cohen's d.*

## RESULTS: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF SUPPORT DURING THE PANDEMIC PERIOD

*The students' perception of support during the pandemic period (Table 1) presents values of a medium-high level in support at the family level (M = 3.3) and friends (M = 3.1), especially in the group of men, presenting similar characteristics regarding how students perceive support from teachers (M = 2.9). These levels of support decrease significantly concerning educational centers (M = 2.5), being deficient in the perception of support from their classmates (M = 2.3), with no significant differences in the overall perception between both genders (p> 0.05).*

*As can be seen in Table 2, students perceive average levels in terms of how well they have been able to perform their tasks in this period (M = 3.1, SD = 1.2, n = 181), with no significant differences between gender (t (181) = 0.25, p = 0.804). Additionally, the level of overwhelm and feeling of feeling overwhelmed by the tasks requested by the educational centers stands out in a transversal way (M = 3.8, SD = 1.2, n = 181), together with high levels of demotivation concerning studies during this year (M = 4.0, SD = 1.2, n = 181), there were no statistically significant differences in both variables analyzed according to gender (p> 0.05).*

**TABLA 1. PERCEPCIÓN DE APOYO DURANTE LA PANDEMIA POR PARTE DE ADOLESCENTES CHILENOS**  
**TABLE 1. PERCEPTION OF SUPPORT DURING THE PANDEMIC BY CHILEAN ADOLESCENTS**

VARIABLE	WOMAN	MAN	TOTAL
<b>HOW OFTEN HAVE I FELT SUPPORTED BY...?</b>			
My family	3.3	3.5	3.3
My friends	3.0	3.2	3.1
My classmates from school / high school	2.2	2.4	2.3
My teachers	3.0	2.9	2.9
My school / high school in general	2.5	2.4	2.5

**Notes: Response scale: 1 = Never; 2 = sometimes; 3 = almost always; 4 = Always; \*: p <.05; \*\*: p <.01; \*\*\*: p <.001**

**TABLA 2. EXPERIENCIA ESCOLAR DURANTE LA PANDEMIA**  
**TABLE 2. SCHOOL EXPERIENCE DURING THE PANDEMIC**

VARIABLE	WOMAN		MAN		TOTAL	
	M	DE	M	DE	M	DE
I have been able to perform my taskswell during the COVID period	3.1	1.3	3.1	1.1	3.1	1.2
I have felt overwhelmed (overwhelmed) by the tasks that are asked of me by the school in the COVID period	3.8	1.2	3.9	1.0	3.8	1.2
I have felt unmotivated with my studies during the COVID period	3.9	1.3	4.1	1.1	4.0	1.2

Notes: Response scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree; \*:  $p < .05$ ; \*\*:  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*:  $p < .001$

**TABLA 3. PROMEDIOS Y DESVIACIONES ESTÁNDAR DE LOS NIVELES PREVIOS Y DURANTE LA PANDEMIA**  
**TABLE 3. AVERAGES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF LEVELS BEFORE AND DURING THE PANDEMIC**

VARIABLE	MUJERES		HOMBRES		TOTAL		
	M	DE	M	DE	T	P	D
Frequency of activities carried out before and during the pandemic:							
- Visit relatives	2.04	0.80	1.63	0.64	7.70	0.000	0.56
- Visit friends	2.2	1.04	1.52	0.69	9.42	0.000	0.77
- Do sport	2.38	1.11	2.18	1.14	2.63	0.009	0.17
State of mind before and during the pandemic. When doing your daily activities you felt:							
- With energy	5.36	1.27	3.45	1.68	13.89	0.000	1.28
- Happy	5.34	1.22	3.87	1.51	12.66	0.000	1.07
- Nervous	2.84	1.52	4.01	1.73	-8.40	0.000	-0.71
- Confident	4.88	1.49	3.92	1.55	7.49	0.000	0.57
Frequency of family life activities before and during the pandemic. In my family:							
- There were conflicts (fights, arguments)	1.9	0.77	2.04	0.86	-3.23	0.001	-0.17
- We did entertainment activities (watch series, play board games)	2.19	0.92	2.14	0.91	0.82	0.413	0.05
- We talked about our worries	2.32	0.89	2.40	0.96	-1.67	0.096	-0.08
- I collaborated with the house chores (washing, crockery, sweeping, etc.)	2.9	0.82	3.14	0.89	-4.24	0.000	-0.28
Frequency of activities with friends before and during the pandemic. With my friends:							
- We would see each other in person (we would get together)	2.94	0.92	1.71	0.82	17.06	0.000	1.41
- We had contact through social networks (WhatsApp, Instagram)	3.35	0.83	3.0	0.93	3.97	0.000	0.39
- We talked about our worries	2.86	0.93	2.52	1.00	5.28	0.000	0.35

Notes: Activity Frequency Response Scale: 1= Never; 2= sometimes; 3= almost always; 4= Always; Mood response scale: 1= Never; 7= Always

**EFFECTO DE LA PANDEMIA EN EL ESTADO DEL ÁNIMO Y DESARROLLO DE ACTIVIDADES**

En la tabla 3 se muestra la comparación de los niveles previos y durante la pandemia de diversas variables evaluadas de manera ad hoc a través de la aplicación de la prueba t de Student para muestras relacionadas y la medición del tamaño del efecto con el uso de la d de Cohen. Se puede observar que dentro de las actividades realizadas durante la pandemia se presentan frecuencias menores en las visitas a familiares ( $t(186) = 7.07, p < .001, d = 0.56$ ) y amigos ( $t(186) = 9.42, p < .001, d = 0.77$ ), donde además se evidencian niveles menores de actividad física ( $t(186) = 263, p = .009, d = 0.17$ ).

En cuanto al estado de ánimo, se observa que hubo una disminución significativa en el nivel de energía ( $t(182) = 13.89, p < .001, d = 1.28$ ), felicidad ( $t(182) = 12.66, p < .001, d = 1.07$ ) y confianza ( $t(180) = 7.49, p < .001, d = 0.57$ ) durante la pandemia, con un importante aumento de los niveles de nerviosismo en el grupo de estudiantes ( $t(180) = -8.40, p < .001, d = -0.71$ ). En relación a las actividades y vida familiar, se evidencia durante la pandemia un aumento importante de los conflictos ( $t(202) = -3.23, p = .001, d = -0.17$ ), tales como peleas y discusiones.

De igual forma, se evidencia un incremento de los niveles de ayuda y colaboración por parte de los estudiantes en las tareas del hogar ( $t(202) = -4.24, p < .001, d = -0.28$ ). Es importante destacar que se presentan niveles medios-bajos en las actividades de entretenimiento realizadas en familia de manera previa ( $M = 2.19, DE = 0.92, n = 182$ ) y durante la pandemia ( $M = 2.14, DE = 0.91, n = 182$ ), no existiendo diferencias significativas ( $t(182) = , p = 0.82, d = 0.05$ ). Asimismo, si bien los niveles reportados de conversación a nivel familiar de los propios problemas presentan un leve aumento, éste no resulta estadísticamente significativo ( $t(181) = -1.67, p = 0.096, d = -0.08$ ).

En relación a la frecuencia de actividades con amigos, se observa que existe una disminución importante no solo en los niveles previos y posteriores de contacto presencial ( $t(181) = 17.06, p < .001, d = 1.41$ ) y conversación de las propias preocupaciones ( $t(181) = 5.28, p < .001, d = 0.35$ ), sino también en el contacto a través de redes sociales electrónicas ( $t(181) = 3.97, p < .001, d = 0.39$ ), tales como Instagram, Facebook y Whatsapp.



**EFFECT OF THE PANDEMIC ON MOOD AND DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVITIES**

Table 3 shows the comparison of the levels before and during the pandemic of various variables evaluated in an ad hoc manner by applying the Student's t-test for related samples and the measurement of the effect size using the Cohen's d. It can be observed that within the activities carried out during the pandemic, there are lower frequencies in visits to relatives ( $t(186) = 7.07, p < .001, d = 0.56$ ) and friends ( $t(186) = 9.42, p < .001, d = 0.77$ ), where lower levels of physical activity are also evidenced ( $t(186) = 263, p = .009, d = 0.17$ ).

Regarding mood, it is observed that there was a significant decrease in the energy level ( $t(182) = 13.89, p < .001, d = 1.28$ ), happiness ( $t(182) = 12.66, p < .001, d = 1.07$ ) and confidence ( $t(180) = 7.49, p < .001, d = 0.57$ ) during the pandemic, with a significant increase in nervousness levels in the group of students ( $t(180) = -8.40, p < .001, d = -0.71$ ). In relation to activities and family life, during the pandemic there is a significant increase in conflicts ( $t(202) = -3.23, p = .001, d = -0.17$ ), such as fights and arguments.

Similarly, there is an increase in the levels of help and collaboration by the students in the household tasks ( $t(202) = -4.24, p < .001, d = -0.28$ ). It is important to highlight that there are medium-low levels in entertainment activities carried out as a family previously ( $M = 2.19, SD = 0.92, n = 182$ ) and during the pandemic ( $M = 2.14, SD = 0.91, n = 182$ ), with no significant differences ( $t(182) = , p = 0.82, d = 0.05$ ). Likewise, although the reported levels of conversation at the family level of the problems themselves show a slight increase, this is not statistically significant ( $t(181) = -1.67, p = 0.096, d = -0.08$ ).

In relation to the frequency of activities with friends, it is observed that there is a significant decrease not only in the previous and subsequent levels of face-to-face contact ( $t(181) = 17.06, p < .001, d = 1.41$ ) and conversation of their own concerns ( $t(181) = 5.28, p < .001, d = 0.35$ ), but also in contact through electronic social networks ( $t(181) = 3.97, p < .001, d = 0.39$ ), such as Instagram, Facebook and Whatsapp.

# The mood is seriously affected during this period, drastically decreasing energy levels, happiness, and confidence, accompanied by an increase in nervousness.

## CONCLUSIONES

Se observan diferencias significativas entre estudiantes hombres y mujeres en la experiencia, donde las mujeres presentan mayores índices de estrés y tristeza, mientras que los hombres perciben un mayor nivel de tranquilidad. A su vez, si bien durante este periodo los alumnos perciben un apoyo medio-alto por parte de familiares, amigos y profesores, estos niveles son considerablemente menores en relación a compañeros de curso y el propio centro educacional, lo que podría estar determinado en parte por la falta de contacto presencial y cotidiano con la comunidad educativa.

Los niveles son relativamente altos en la percepción de estar realizando de manera correcta las tareas educativas, y el índice de agobio y desmotivación por los estudios durante este período es elevado, aspecto que también ha sido descrito a nivel internacional. La frecuencia de actividades como visitar a amigos, familia o realizar deportes se vio afectada negativamente por la pandemia, evidenciándose además un aumento de conflictos familiares.

Se muestra gravemente afectado durante este período el estado anímico, disminuyendo drásticamente los niveles de energía, felicidad y confianza, acompañados de un incremento de la sensación de nerviosismo. En relación a las amistades, no solo se revela una caída significativa en el contacto presencial y conversaciones en torno a problemáticas personales, sino que incluso se ve disminuida a través de medios digitales de redes sociales.

En conclusión, la presente investigación evidenció los principales indicadores de bienestar, la experiencia y el efecto durante el actual período de pandemia. Resulta imperativo el desarrollo de nuevos estudios que evalúen este impacto a nivel nacional, incluyendo aspectos longitudinales en el período post-pandemia, junto con el desarrollo de intervenciones preventivas y de promoción del bienestar y salud mental en los estudiantes del país.

## CONCLUSIONS

*Significant differences are observed between male and female students in the experience, where women have higher rates of stress and sadness, while men perceive a higher level of tranquility. Although the students perceive medium-high support from family, friends, and teachers during this period, these levels are considerably lower concerning classmates and the educational center itself, which could be partly determined due to the lack of face-to-face and daily contact with the educational community.*

*The levels are relatively high in the perception of correctly performing educational tasks. The rate of overwhelm and demotivation due to studies during this period is high, an aspect that has also been described internationally. The frequency of activities such as visiting friends, family or playing sports was negatively affected by the pandemic, showing an increase in family conflicts.*

*The mood is seriously affected during this period, drastically decreasing energy levels, happiness, and confidence, accompanied by an increase in nervousness. In regards to friendships, not only is a significant drop in face-to-face contact and conversations about personal problems revealed, but it is even diminished through digital media on social networks.*

*In conclusion, this research evidenced the leading indicators of well-being, the experience, and the effect during the current pandemic period. It is imperative to develop new studies that evaluate this impact at the national level, including longitudinal aspects in the post-pandemic period, the development of preventive interventions, and the promotion of well-being and mental health in the country's students.*

## BIBLIOGRAFÍA

- Duan, L., Shao, X., Wang, Y., Huang, Y., Miao, J., Yang, X., & Zhu, G. (2020). An investigation of mental health status of children and adolescents in china during the outbreak of COVID-19. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 275, 112-118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2020.06.029>
- Golberstein, E., Wen, H., & Miller, B. F. (2020). Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and Mental Health for Children and Adolescents. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 174(9), 819. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2020.1456>
- Holmes, E. A., O'Connor, R. C., Perry, V. H., Tracey, I., Wessely, S., Arseneault, L., .... Bullmore, E. (2020). Multidisciplinary research priorities for the COVID-19 pandemic: a call for action for mental health science. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 15, 1-14. doi:10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30168-1
- Liang, T. (2020). Zhejiang University School of Medicine. Handbook of COVID-19: prevention and treatment. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://www.zju.edu.cn/english/2020/0323/c19573a1987520/page.htm>
- Linhares, M. B. M., & Enumo, S. R. F. (2020). Reflexões baseadas na Psicologia sobre efeitos da pandemia COVID-19 no desenvolvimento infantil. *Estudos de Psicologia (Campinas)*, 37, e200089. doi:10.1590/1982-0275202037e200089
- Muratori, P., & Ciacchini, R. (2020). Children and the COVID-19 transition: Psychological reflections and suggestions on adapting to the emergency. *Clin. Neuropsychiatry*, 131-134.
- Wang, G., Zhang, Y., Zhao, J., Zhang, J., & Jiang, F. (2020). Mitigate the effects of home confinement on children during the COVID-19 outbreak. *The Lancet*, 395(10228), 945-947. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30547-X

