






# Subjective distress and educational uncertainty during the Covid-19 pandemic

## *Malestar subjetivo e incertidumbre educativa durante la pandemia por Covid-19*

-  **Denisse Espinosa-Valenzuela** is a professor at Universidad del Bío-Bío (Chile) ([daespinosa@ubiobio.cl](mailto:daespinosa@ubiobio.cl))  
(<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1486-7046>)
-  **Dr. Carlos Rodríguez-Garcés** is a professor at Universidad del Bío-Bío (Chile) ([carlosro@ubiobio.cl](mailto:carlosro@ubiobio.cl))  
(<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9346-0780>)
-  **Geraldo Padilla-Fuentes** is a professor at Universidad del Bío-Bío (Chile) ([gpadilla@ubiobio.cl](mailto:gpadilla@ubiobio.cl))  
(<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0882-1818>)

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### Abstract

The health crisis caused by Covid-19 has consequences that go beyond the strictly biomedical, having a differential impact on the labor market, economic and subjective well-being of the population, causing high vulnerability and prolonged uncertainty. The pandemic has produced events that escape the biomedical, impacting differentially on people's economic and subjective well-being. By means of contingency tables and Classification Trees, we analyze the perception, uncertainty and feelings that young people between 14 and 24 years old have about the pandemic and its effects, reported in the Covid-19 Youth survey. Of special interest are those who fear losing the school year due to the health crisis. The results highlight that young people recognize the seriousness of Covid-19, although they perceive that adults exaggerate the crisis and that young people are not infected; in addition, they report high levels of uncertainty due to the death of a family member or friend, family economic problems, and fear of losing the school year. Educational uncertainty is predominant among younger youth and is linked to high levels of worry, anxiety and fear; together with the manifestation of compulsive drinking and insomnia. The conclusions highlight the impacts that the pandemic has had on the subjective wellbeing of the young population; socioemotional deterioration related to the fear of death of close ones, family economic problems, and losing the school year. This problem raises the need for a multidimensional and extended approach beyond the end of the pandemic.

**Keywords:** Students, pandemic, education, mental health, psychological effects, social behavior.

### Resumen

La crisis sanitaria por la Covid-19 tiene secuelas que van más allá de los aspectos estrictamente biomédicos impactando diferencialmente sobre el mercado del trabajo, bienestar económico y subjetivo de la población, provocando una alta vulnerabilidad y una prolongada incertidumbre. Con datos de la Encuesta Jóvenes Covid-19 y mediante tablas de contingencia y árboles de clasificación, el objetivo de este artículo es analizar la percepción, incertidumbre y sentimientos que jóvenes entre 14 y 24 años tienen sobre la pandemia y sus efectos, con especial énfasis en quienes temen perder el año escolar por la crisis sanitaria. Los resultados destacan que los y las jóvenes reconocen la gravedad de la Covid-19, aunque perciben que los adultos exageran la crisis y que los jóvenes no se contagian; además, reportan altos niveles de incertidumbre por la muerte de algún familiar o amigo/a, problemas económicos familiares y temor a perder el año escolar. Incertidumbre educativa predominante en jóvenes de menor edad con altos niveles de preocupación, angustia y miedo, junto con la manifestación de ingesta compulsiva e insomnio. Las conclusiones remarcan los impactos que la pandemia ha tenido sobre el bienestar subjetivo de la población joven, deterioro socioemocional cimentado sobre un extendido miedo a la muerte de cercanos/as, los problemas económicos familiares y perder el año escolar; problemática que plantea la necesidad de un abordaje multidimensional y extendido más allá del término de la pandemia.

**Descriptores:** Estudiantes, pandemia, educación, salud mental, efectos psicológicos, comportamiento social.

## 1. Introduction

The health crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic (SARS-CoV-2) has had a direct impact on the health and social and economic life of people, collapsing the health, labor and education systems. Governments have faced unprecedented complications, where medical uncertainty was added to citizen demands for responses and measures to fight an invisible threat, whose high levels of basic reproduction even surpassed that found in the Influenza virus A subtype H1N1 of 2009 (Gutiérrez and Varona, 2020), presenting high mortality rates, mainly among older adults, in addition to a surprising mutation capacity. This required a rapid study to discover and apply effective forms of containment, immunization and/or eradication (Cortés, 2020; Pérez *et al.*, 2020; Saravia Bartra, 2020).

The pandemic also has permeated the most intimate areas of personal and social life, highlighting the physiological and emotional vulnerability of individuals. While Covid-19 threatens the survival of older adults more severely, the psychological/emotional burden it generates on the rest of the population is no less relevant. The pandemic has increased feelings among young people such as fear, anxiety, discomfort and confusion, hindering identity development, family life and proper school progress.

### 1.1 Youth and Covid-19 in Chile

Concern about the state of the young population has been a constant fact during the Covid-19 pandemic in Chile. Not only referring to education and their migration to an online modality, but the interest also to know what young people do and think is important for contemporary public policies, especially the task of observing and shaping their opinions, feelings and general perception because of the crisis (Hinemphasi, 2020; Mendiola *et al.*, 2020; Salas *et al.*, 2020; UNICEF, 2020).

In general, this interest relies in four dimensions of the lives of young people during

the pandemic: health (objective and subjective well-being), education (study habits, performance, stress), social relations (distancing, anxiety, social networks) and family relations (shared time, house chores, types of communication). This segment of the population has transformed their lives, if not interrupted, being limited to prolonged and compulsory confinement, in addition to an increase in dependence on social networks (Gómez, 2020).

Among the phenomena mostly reported in young people is pandemic stress, psychological response to the crisis that produces feelings of fear, anxiety and uncertainty, which are linked to depressive symptoms, addictive behaviors and fear of the death of a beloved (Chacón Fuertes *et al.*, 2020). Likewise, confinement measures have changed the habits and routines of young people; the schedules for eating, sleeping, studying or having fun have changed, in addition to the increase of sedentary and/or solitary lifestyles due to social isolation. On top of that, measures to curb the pandemic have also sharpened the situation of those belonging to the most disadvantaged people, especially after the migration from a face-to-face educational modality to a virtual one and the consequent interruption of food, protection and services to recreation that they provided (UNICEF, 2020).

Moreover, the health crisis has also caused young people to interrupt their social life. Quarantine and lockdown measures have hindered the pre-crisis pace of life, for example, from being forced to stop attending school in person where they could socialize with peers and teachers to giving up parties or meetings with peers for entertainment. Although it is true that the crisis has intervened in the social life of all people in general, it is also true that this specific group faces it in a special way due to the life cycle they go through. Being in a maturation and conformation stage of identity, where experimentation, relationships with others and autonomy achieved inside and outside the home are essential to build their personality, it is not surprising



that when restricted show conflicts with family authority and negative behaviors such as stress, anxiety or irritability.

In addition to the above, the various impacts of the pandemic, its depth and repercussions, are managed by the segmentation of the Chilean society, especially regarding education. Considering the marked gap of resources that each family has according to its class origin, the possibilities of mitigating the problems derived from the crisis vary significantly, so that from the beginning those who do not have technological devices and Internet access at home cannot be part of an online education. In addition, each student has support because of the socio-educational capital of families, where the guidance, corrections and supervision they can receive depend on the education of their parents.

Despite their desire for independence, teenagers are not an isolated entity. Recent evidence has shown their empathy towards their peers and their concern about their possibility of getting and suffering the effects of Covid-19 (Chacón Fuertes *et al.*, 2020; Taylor, 2019; UNICEF, 2020). Although they have promoted transgressive events such as hidden parties widely reported by the media, their fear of infection is also a constant that reinforces the adoption and respect of quarantine measures.

This situation reports the need to know how young people in Chile feel, what they do and how they face the pandemic, inquiring about their anxieties, fears and uncertainty, particularly those related to the educational process whose dynamics have been abruptly interrupted.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Design

This work uses a quantitative perspective of statistical analysis from a transversal design. The perception of risk and uncertainties reported by young people regarding the current health crisis due to Covid-19 is examined through the calcu-

lation of indices and contrast tests of hypotheses, both in a bivariate and multivariate context. Proportions and estimates are analyzed at the bivariate level, which are complemented by the multivariate Segment Trees technique to model the decision itineraries and distinctive attributes when configuring risk perception.

### 2.2 Instrument

The database of the survey “National panorama of young people facing the health crisis of Covid-19”, hereinafter Young Covid-19, is used, which is carried out by the Under-Secretariat for Children of the Ministry of Social Development and Family (MDSF), an organization that aims to protect, promote and disseminate rights in children and adolescents.

The survey Young Covid-19 aims to know the feelings and behaviors caused by the pandemic to Chilean adolescents and young people. It is an official and nationally representative survey, conducted in 70 municipalities of Chile during April 2020, with the target population between 14 and 24 years.

This questionnaire is structured in a set of items that address, under categorical Likert type answers and multiple answer question, the perception of risk of the transmission of Covid-19, economic, family and personal effects of the pandemic, in addition to items related to mental health and academic uncertainty among young people.

### 2.3 Sample

The research article is limited to the young population that is studying in high school or university and corresponds to 367 subjects (Table 1), subsample that represents 61% of the total of respondents. The general sample was extracted using probabilistic procedures with stratification criteria to ensure representativeness at national level and enable the inferential extrapolation process.



Table 1

Description of the student sample ( $n = 367$ ).

	%
<b>Sex</b>	
• Male	45.8
• Female	54.2
<b>Do you work?</b>	
• Yes	13.6
• No	86.4
<b>Educational level</b>	
• High School	53.4
• University	46.6
<b>Age</b>	
• 14 to 17	39.5
• 18 to 21	24.0
• 22 to 24	36.5

Note. Own elaboration with data from the Youth Covid 19 (2020) survey.

In socio-demographic terms, the sample shows a predominance of female students (54.2%), adolescents between 14 and 17 years (39.5%), mostly belonging to middle school (53.4%) and where only a low percentage work and study (13.6%).

## 2.4 Procedure

An exploratory phase is carried out with the data of the survey Young Covid-19 in order to select the cases of the subsample previously established in the inclusion criteria; logical errors are corrected and the metric of the variables of interest is examined. Subsequently, the analytical processes were performed with the statistical treatment of the items and dimensions relevant to the object of study.

First, a descriptive analysis is performed made by calculating proportions of the categorical variables, whether these are nominal or ordinal metric, information that is represented through Tables. In this phase, the perceptions that students have regarding the severity of the Covid-19 crisis are modeled, as well as the uncertainties and feel-

ings that it causes, and the negative consequences that confinement generates in their daily lives, analyses that are segmented based on classificatory attributes considered significant, such as age and sex.

Secondly, a multivariate analysis was performed, specifically the Segmentation Trees or Classification technique. Indeed, in order to give greater analytical depth, the modeling of the profiles that structure the uncertainty of losing the academic year in the new educational scenario was performed using classification trees. A multivariate procedure allowed diagramming the hierarchical structure of the factors in branches and nodes with the greatest ability to discriminate and predict the modeled variable. The segmentation method based on Chi square maximizes the distances between groups, defines profiles and structure of routes (Gervilla and Palmer, 2009).

Along with the modeled variable Uncertainty about losing the school year, a set of attributes that the literature reports as relevant were used as predictors, all of which met the contrast criterion of categorical asymmetry 90/10.



Also, a three-level exclusion and the criterion of 50 cases for the parent node and 20 for the child node is established in order to avoid overfitting. The CHAID algorithm structured a tree of three predictors under these conditions and requirements [Age, Skepticism and Sex] with ten nodes, six of them terminal. This tree correctly classifies

75.5% of the cases, with a sensitivity level of 67.2% and specificity of 83.4%, grouping the smallest Node to 7.6% of the analyzed sample. These parameters were considered suitable for using the sorting tree technique.

The classification tree modeling initially included a total of five predictors:

Table 2

*Multivariate Analysis Variables Listing*

Variable	Definition (Category structure)	Meaning and hierarchic position [symmetry]
Fear of losing the school year	A dichotomous variable that expresses one of the negative effects that young people fear for the future [0= No; 1= Yes].	Dependent [No= 51.0%; Yes= 49.0%]
Age	Ordinal variable ordered in three levels [14-17 years; 18-21 years; 22-24 years].	Significant First Level [14-17 years old= 39.5%; 18-21 years old= 24.0%; 22-24 years old= 36.5%]
Sex	Dichotomous variable (1= Male; 2= Female)	Significant Third Level [Male= 45.8%; Female= 54.2%]
Perceived risk of Covid-19	Dichotomous attribute constructed based on two items, having as reference (value=1) the conformity with 'adults exaggerate the crisis' and 'young people do not get infected with Covid-19'. Acquiring value=0 otherwise.	Significant Second Level [High perception= 47.3%; Low perception= 52.7%]
Level of education	Dichotomous variable [1= Incomplete High School; 2 = Higher Education]	Not significant [Incomplete High School = 53.4%; Higher Education = 46.6%]
Employment status	Dichotomous variable [1= Not working; 2= Working]	Not significant [Not working= 86.4%; Working= 13.6%]

*Note.* Own elaboration using the data from the Youth Covid-19 (2020) survey.

### 3. Results

The health crisis caused by Covid-19 has been a major challenge for all citizens, although its impacts and concerns vary due to the sociodemographic characteristics of the groups that make it up.

In the case of young people, the pandemic has involved in recent months a series of changes in their lifestyle, behaviors and expectations, especially among those who are studying, given the abrupt change that has meant migrating from a face-to-face modality to an online or distance

modality. In this regards, Table 3 shows that practically all students (97.3%) know that the coronavirus crisis is serious, hence, no significant differences between groups were found. Despite recognizing this seriousness, 46.1% think that adults exaggerate and 32.2% say that normally young people do not get infected, figures that are particularly high among middle school students, observing statistically significant differences in the contrast of hypotheses ( $p < 0.01$ ). Generally, 55.2% said they agree that ending the crisis relies on doctors and 72.0% said that it relies on the



government, particularly a high number of students in higher education [ $\chi^2=9,598$ ;  $p<0.05$ ].

Table 3

*Overview of the Covid-19 pandemic situation*

	Contrast academic level			
	General	High school	Higher Education	Chi2
Coronavirus crisis is serious	97,3	96.5	98.3	--
Adults exaggerate	46.1	49.7	42.2	19.136(**)
Young people do not get infected	32.2	41.0	22.6	15.947(**)
Ending the crisis relies on:				
-Government	72.0	69.1	75.0	9.598(*)
-Doctors	55.2	59.0	51.2	--

*Note.* Graduated response items in five levels, indicating proportions of agreement and very agreement; \*\* = significant at 0.01; \* = significant at 0.05; — = not significant.

Own elaboration with data from the Youth Covid-19 (2020) survey.

Among the uncertainties caused by the pandemic (Table 4), the fear of the death of a family member or friend stands out among young people (76.2%); equally relevant, although with a lower number, is the concern of economic problems that the crisis causes to the family (49.7%). The perception of risk is significantly more increased in female and higher education students.

In the same table 4, about 1 in 2 respondents (49.2%) expressed among their main con-

cerns the risk of losing the school year, a figure that is particularly high among middle school students (61.5%).

In order to determine the feelings and anxieties of students in terms of losing the school year, a contrast analysis has been performed at a bivariate level (table 5), complemented with an exploration of risk profiles through multivariate classification tree modeling (Figure 1).

Table 4

*Uncertainty about the consequences of the pandemic (%)*

	Sex		Academic level		General
	Female	Male	High school	Higher Education	
Losing the academic year	44.2	55.1	61.5	35.1	49.2
Things will never be the same	33.7	26.3	25.1	36.3	30.3
I might die	35.7	27.5	32.3	31.6	32.0
A beloved or friend may die	78.4	73.7	70.3	83.0	76.2
Serious family economic problems	53.3	45.5	47.7	52.0	49.7

*Note.* The values represent multiple response calculations based on the number of cases in each response category.

Own elaboration with data from the Youth Covid-19 (2020) survey.



Overall, as reported in Table 5, concern is the feeling that predominates among adolescents during the health crisis (68.1%), followed by distress (45.8%) and fear (30.2%). These feelings have the same configuration in order of importance within the subgroup that fears losing the school year, however, the proportions they

reach are slightly more increased (% column). For their part, the fear of losing the school year prevails among those who declare boredom or fear or anger (% row), with incidence of 62.3%, 60.4% and 58% respectively, otherwise statistically significant differences with respect to the comparison subgroup.

Table 5  
*Feelings and negative effects of the pandemic (%)*

	Fear of losing the school year		General
	% Column	% Row	
<i>Feelings</i>			
Concern	57.8	41.6	68.1
Fear	37.2	60.4	30.2
Anger	22.2	58.0	18.8
Boredom	18.3	62.3	14.4
Anguish	43.3	46.4	45.8
<i>Negative effects</i>			
Insomnia	53.4	48.1	49.7
Compulsive eating	77.3	56.3	61.5
Overuse of alcoholic drinks	14.7	66.7	9.9
Irritability	54.6	51.1	47.8

*Note.* The values correspond to multiple response calculations according to the number of cases in each category of response; % Row= corresponds to the number of students who are afraid of losing the school year; % Column= represents the feeling or negative effect, in terms of proportions, of those who fear losing the school year.

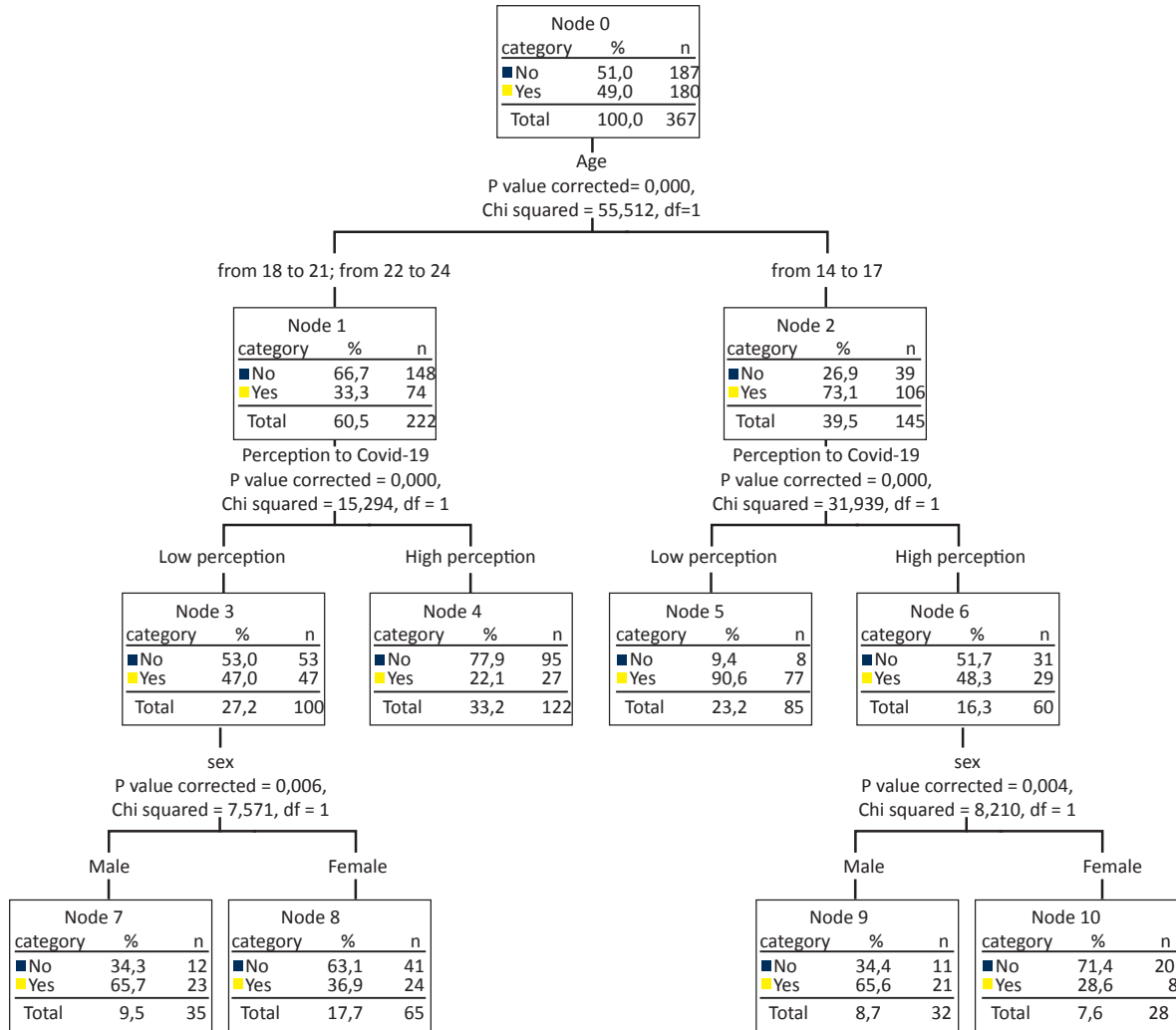
Own elaboration with data from the Youth Covid-19 (2020) survey.

In addition, among the negative effects that students attribute to the crisis are compulsive eating (61.5%), insomnia (49.7%) and irritability (47.8%). These figures are more prevalent among those who fear that they will lose the school year, particularly when it comes to overeating (77.3%). In the opposite sense, those who report alcohol abuse and compulsive eating are the ones with more fear of losing the school year (66.7% and 56.3%, respectively), with statistically significant differences compared to those who do not show such behaviors.

According to the findings provided by the classification tree (Figure 1), Age, Risk perception of Covid-19 and Sex are the variables that hierarchically outline the fear of losing the school year. Age is positioned as the attribute with the highest discriminatory capacity [ $\chi^2=55.512$ ;  $p=0.00$ ], where the youngest students, i.e., between 14 and 17 years, show a particularly high concern for their school year (73,1%; Node 2), proportion that is significantly lower than the one registered in students over 17 years (33.3%; Node 1).



Figure 1  
Uncertainty for losing the academic year



Note. Own elaboration with data from the Youth Covid-19 (2020) survey.

In a second segmentation level and for both preceding nodes, there is the variable Perception of risk to Covid-19 according to the intensity that they declare. For adolescents (Node 2), risk perception discriminates significantly [ $\chi^2=31.939$ ;  $p=0.00$ ], so that uncertainty increases in students who show low perception of the severity of Covid-19 (90.6%; Node 5). Adolescents with high-risk perception (Node

4) over 17 (22.1%) have the lowest uncertainty about losing the school year.

Sex arises among young people with low-risk perception (Node 3) and in a third hierarchical level [ $\chi^2=7.571$ ;  $p=0.01$ ] as a segmentation variable, being women who manifest less uncertainty (36.9%; Node 8). On the other hand, sex also has the capacity to discriminate among adolescents with high-risk perception (Node





5) [ $\chi^2=8.210$ ;  $p=0.00$ ], being men who express greater concern about losing the school year (65.6%; Node 9).

To summarize, it can be determined that the itinerary that defines the student that shows greater concern or uncertainty about losing the school year during the pandemic corresponds to adolescents between 14 and 17 years who manifest low perception of risk against Covid-19.

#### 4. Discussion

Most Chilean students think that the Covid-19 crisis is a serious issue, whose consequences are observed on various dimensions of their daily life, being particularly relevant those related to family and school. However, a high number consider that adults exaggerate, and that young people are highly immune, perceptions that are significantly higher among those in secondary education.

A self-perception of relative invulnerability against danger increases in adolescence and there is tolerance to physical and emotional risk, facts that are exacerbated in the relationship with others and the attempt to get their attention and recognition (Alvites, 2019). This perception is paradoxically set in one of the stages of special vulnerability, where family, neighborhood and socioeconomic factors can affect satisfactory growth and development (Di Segni, 2019).

Additional to this apparent contradiction between an adolescent attitude with high risk tolerance and a vital stage of vulnerability, there is the neurophysiological maturation process through which young people go through, which motivates behavioral, hormonal and psychological changes. In the complex relationship of these components appears the feeling of immunity, explaining risky behaviors as an extension of attempts to strengthen identity, improve social adaptation, capture the recognition of others and/or affirm autonomy (Suárez Relinque *et al.*, 2017). This phenomenon is widely reported in terms of research on teenage pregnancy, risky sexual practices, early sexual initiation and/or

alcohol and drug use (Alvites, 2019; Corona and Peralta, 2011).

People may be aware of the risks, but awareness does not prevent or inhibit certain behaviors. The search for rewards or pleasant sensations, which usually involve the presence of significant others, causes the feeling of invulnerability that takes everything, over which parental control is clearly uncomfortable, if not pernicious (Alonso Stuyck and Aliaga, 2017). This could explain the high number of young people who believe that adults exaggerate (46.1%), despite having an idea of the severity of the crisis.

Despite the fact that the media have repeatedly warned about the seriousness of the pandemic, adolescents continue to doubt its scope and impact. There is a number of students influenced by conspiracy theories who believe that the virus is a laboratory creation, a common cold that as a result of global information manipulation exacerbates its dangerousness as a means of social control, although there are adults who also believe on it (Bisso Andrade, 2019; Trujillo, 2020).

Indeed, the coincidence observed between the perception that young people do not get infected and that adults exaggerate refers to a reduced, if not distorted, perception of risk, recurrent from the age stage they go through, which can violate their health or that of the family members by contravening the security and social distancing measures ordered by the health authority. Although in strict terms this negligent behavior is also observed among the adult population, so it would be unfair to attribute it as a distinctive and exclusive feature of young people, it is not less true that these behaviors are presented more frequently in adolescents.

The spread of Covid-19 led to the immediate closure of schools, so that students had to be confined to their homes, leading to a loss of autonomy and greater parental control of which they have sought to gradually detach. Parents now can monitor and supervise their behaviors, establish more rules regarding outings and com-



panies, causing conflict with the emancipation of adolescents, hence perceiving that adults exaggerate the risks of the pandemic.

Despite the sense of invulnerability described above, young people are aware of the danger that Covid-19 poses to the health, life and economic and emotional well-being of themselves and their significant environment, where the fear of death stands out, especially of a family member or friend, is a present idea, particularly in female students and those pursuing higher education; likewise, concerns remain that things will not be as they were before in about a third of the student population. The spread of Covid-19 has led to serious economic impacts on the family and represents a threat to health, increasing a set of negative feelings among which the fear of death, some of which will surely continue after overcoming this crisis.

After the pandemic, many young people could prolong habits and routines acquired by confinement and not attending face-to-face classes, such as sedentary lifestyles, excessive food consumption, overexposure to the computer and irregular sleep patterns. These are unhealthy behaviors that affect physical and psychological health and have increased during the pandemic (Bartlett *et al.*, 2020).

The duration of the physical and psychological consequences of the pandemic will depend on the nature and severity of the experiences lived. Traumatic events such as job loss, infection, hospitalization or death of a loved one generate high levels of stress. These problems are lived by other experiences that can be categorized as subjective but not less relevant, such as fear of contagion, feelings of vulnerability, uncertainty and pessimism for the future (Espada *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, it is difficult to estimate how long its effects on well-being will last.

Not only traumatic experiences but also simple forced and prolonged confinement can be distressing for young people, generating depression, stress and/or anger (Alvites Huamani, 2020). It can get worse by the participation in social networks, the main means of information among

the young population, where there is many fake news, reaching a vast group of netizens, bet on the discrediting of official sources and promote wrong perspectives on reality, its problems and solutions (González, 2019; Huarcaya, 2020).

This socio-emotional deterioration affects family relationships and the motivational willingness towards education. The presence of stressors harms some cognitive functions in the area of memory processing and executive function, essential for learning, and the online modality stresses the adaptation, learning processes and school performance (Cortés, 2020).

Additionally, the fear of losing the school year emerged. A major concern is expressed by 1 out of 2 young people (49.2%) and is more marked among those in secondary education (61.5%). Studies are not only the basis on which personal projects will be founded as an engine of social mobility and human development (Gilbert, 2012), but also is the activity that requires more time, planning and efforts. The social, family and personal pressure that falls on young people regarding the importance of educational progress would explain the emergence of feelings such as worry, anguish and fear of stagnating in their formative process and/or losing the school year, even more so among those who are close to graduation.

This concern increased as the school year progressed in an online modality through virtual platforms, which was more the result of an innovation forced by the conditions of the pandemic than a planned and efficient proposal by school institutions. The different members of the educational communities not only manifested problems of accessibility and management of platforms to organize and conduct classes or distribute study courses, but communication between students, teachers and parents was also hindered (Cáceres Muñoz *et al.*, 2020; Leiva Guerrero *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, evaluation policies changed, where the conventional paper tests that focused on the acquisition of knowledge became obsolete and impractical; this fueled



the uncertainty regarding the policy of school promotion.

Both contents and evaluations on online education were condensed and changed the approach, acquiring evaluative factors not always considered by the traditional modality, such as attendance and participation in classes or the delivery of guides and works. In addition to this great improvisation that was deployed during 2020 to overcome the school year, the uncertainties inherent in the pandemic, its direct and indirect effects on the young population increase the fear of remaining at the same level for another year.

On the other hand, the emergence of the online modality meant uprooting young people from their routines to install new ones that required competencies not necessarily developed. The greater autonomy derived from distance education requires proper and responsible time management, procrastination being a particularly risky behavior. Indeed, the habit of postponing academic assignments or commitments became a recurrent practice that deepened the anguish and uncertainty about the successful completion of the school year. An event was accepted by parents because they assumed that losing the school year in this situation of health crisis was not the real problem.

Both the importance attributed to the educational process and the risk behaviors towards re-approval also promoted socio-affective conditions such as compulsive eating, irritability and insomnia, facts that, being part of the range of responses of young people in the context of pandemic, deepen among those who fear losing the school year. This feeling is set, according to the tree multivariate classification technique, preferably among young people who have low perception of risk against Covid-19, either because they consider that adults exaggerate or believe that they cannot be infected.

## 5. Conclusions

The situation of young Chileans during the pandemic has been characterized by a multidimensional and widespread concern. Not only is there a risk that they or their family and friends will suffer from Covid-19, but they are also exposed to the experience of negative feelings, new routines and lifestyles and heightened uncertainty about the future, especially what will happen with their school year.

According to data from the Covid-19 Youth Survey, a high number of this population group recognizes that the health crisis is serious, a view that coexists with the perception that they cannot be infected and that adults exaggerate both the magnitude of the threat and precautionary measures. The health emergency established routines and disrupted activities that are particularly important for young people in terms of leisure, recreation and meeting with peers. Confinement not only forced adolescents to stay at home, but also reactivated a capacity for parental guardianship which, due to the transition to adulthood, they believed to be relatively emancipated, a regression that causes family problems.

Young people also report high levels of uncertainty as a result of the pandemic. In general terms, a varied range of feelings affecting well-being is evident, especially the fear of the death of a family member or friend, a concern based on the unexpected mortality recorded by the coronavirus among population at risk, which daily floods traditional media and social networks. Moreover, due to the lack of definitive measures to counter the advance of Covid-19 to date, this fear becomes latent and inevitable, forcing the state of constant alert, an issue that wears down and increases reactivity.

Although the pandemic generates a state of generalized uncertainty, the fear of losing the school year becomes relevant, a feeling present among young people under 18 with a low perception of risk to Covid-19. This situation worsens feelings of worry, anguish and fear, socio-af-



fective states that are linked to compulsive eating, insomnia and increased irritability.

Adolescents are in a phase of change in their educational cycle, they have relatively less autonomy and are more inexperienced than their older peers, factors that increase the sense of vulnerability and uncertainty regarding their educational process given the forced emergence of an educational model characterized by virtuality and new protocols for school evaluation. This scenario is complemented by the policy of content condensation in schools and the risk implicit in procrastination that would lead to more educational autonomy, all of which has effects on the levels of curricular appropriation and development of academic competences, eventually compromising the success of future educational processes.

In short, the health crisis of Covid-19 not only puts at risk the health of young people and the well-being of their family but causes negative feelings such as anguish, fear and worry, states of uncertainty that go beyond the family and influence the educational level, whose effects can extend even beyond the end of the pandemic. Hence the need, on the one hand, to design and carry out socio-educational interventions at the end of the process in order to face the difficulties and consequences of the pandemic. On the other hand, it is necessary to conduct in the future data surveys to explore the negative effects after the pandemic, particularly its impact on the subjective welfare state, school coexistence and learning conditions.

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