


## Higher Education in the 21st Century: Between Depression and the Longing for Joyle

Jesús Enrique Beltrán Virgüez

Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios, Colombia,  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3144-3720>

**Abstract:** This paper analyzes depression in university students as a natural reaction to a closure of the possibilities of encountering their own self. A philosophical analysis is carried out with that in mind, based on phenomenology, resorting to the notion of poverty presented by Martin Heidegger in his 1945 seminar and to the foundations of existential analysis, as well as Byung-Chul Han's proposal on the society of tiredness. A case study of university students using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-2) is then presented to contextualize the problem and the performed analysis. The results propose another perspective of depression from an existential point of view coming from the effect of facing the banality of contemporaneity, in which the current university, as an institution aligned with the world's technical availability, restricts man's possibility of a sublime relationship with that which surrounds him, rejecting the possibility of finding a meaning in life within an authentic relationship that is coherent with his original openness. Finally, it is concluded that universities need to focus their actions on a process aimed at individuals encountering their own being, as the most appropriate way to satisfy the yearning for joy of young vitality.

**Keywords:** Depression, poverty, university, phenomenology, banality

**Citation:** Beltrán Virgüez, J. E. (2023). Higher Education in the 21st Century: Between Depression and the Longing for Joyle. In M. Shelley, V. Akerson, & M. Unal (Eds.), *Proceedings of IConSES 2023-- International Conference on Social and Education Sciences* (pp. 109-124), Las Vegas, NV, USA. ISTES Organization.

### Introduction

“In our time, a large part of the people lives in a state of insensitivity and apathy. Delicate spirits painfully feel the impact of our ways of life and are inhibited in the face of actuality” - Hermann Hesse.

This work found its inspiration in Hermann Hesse's text, “On Little Joys.” There is the question of whether or not using the term “inspiration” is still lawful nowadays, given the course of this society thrown into immediacy (Vázquez & Mouján, 2016), into the masses (Ladevéze et al, 2022) and into technical calculation (Miranda, 2020). Being inspired involves a double academic sin, a matter that distances itself from the modern scientific paradigm, and to be inspired in literature, which is to say in art and the so-called sciences of the spirit that Dilthey (1944) once named. However, Hesse's words on joy, in contrast to the manifest sadness and depression in university classrooms and faculty lounges, call for an analysis that considers the situation students entering

universities face and the mediation they represent regarding their future. In this order, it is necessary to understand a structural background that makes students susceptible to depression, which, although it is a health problem, is above all a natural search for meaning in young spirits.

### **Depression**

Several authors agree on something that seems obvious at first glance: depression is a problem, whether a psychological (Baños-Chaparro 2023) or public health problem (Del Cid, 2021). It is well known that depression has become a recurrent diagnosis and been on the rise since the 1970s, when it was barely part of the inventory of mental illnesses (Obaid & Albagli, 2020), despite being considered one of the most significant and severe psychiatric disorders among the world's population (Korman & Sarudiansky, 2011). According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2017) 5% of the world's adult population suffers from depression. However, part of the problem is the very understanding of what has been considered and called depression, as well as the difficulty and alternatives for diagnosing it in different types of populations (Sanz & García-Vera, 2020).

The WHO (2017) refers to depression in plural terms, presenting it as depressive disorders characterized by sadness, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-esteem. It also includes sleep or appetite disorders, tiredness and lack of concentration. Along a line that is not radically different, the American Psychological Association's DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria Reference Guide (2014) focuses its points on very similar aspects. In short, depression includes, like any disorder, an abnormal process in the expected development of an individual's connection with their usual environment. According to the Eleventh revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) of the World Health Organization (2019), a mental disorder is defined as a clinically significant disturbance that can be observed in three aspects: cognition, behavioral and emotional regulation. This opens the spectrum in many directions, converging in an alteration, as a state of abnormality.

According to Castellanos-Meza et al. (2020), depression usually begins in adolescence, which is the time in which students transition between high school and university, and the environment for the presence of the disorder is fertile. This makes these conditions much more relevant during the first years of university (Obregón-Morales et al., 2020). University students experience depression, more so than one would like to acknowledge.

In accordance with Hart (2018), depression is more present in university students than in the general population. In terms of academic programs, greater emphasis has been placed on the presence of depression in medicine. However, it is also true that there are a greater number of studies on this population. In sum, depression is considerably present in universities, which requires attention and in-depth consideration (Alpi & Bechara, 2020).

*Depression and Phenomenology*

Depression, as is well known, is a study and treatment subject, mainly in psychology, although it has background can be traced with similar characteristics from those of the contemporary description to those of ancient Greece. The interpretation of the phenomenon has been enriched by multiple perspectives, some of them with anthropological, sociological or political elements, expressed, for example, mundanely (Moreira, 2007), in which the concept of the world becomes fundamental in its understanding. The term has been recognized for its centrality and importance in the phenomenological tradition (Fink, 1957). However, not because they utilize the concept, the perspectives correspond to phenomenology in the traditional sense of the construction by Husserl (1900) in logical investigations.

Thus, different approaches to the phenomenon of depression are found in the literature, with important nuances related to phenomenology. Evidently, one of the authors who focused specifically on the approach to depression was Jaspers (1956), who, in his first edition of *General Psychopathology* in 1913, referred directly to the link between the phenomenological perspective and depression. In this book, Jasper focuses his efforts on characterizing the symptoms of depression, some of which are still characteristic in the understanding of the phenomenon, such as lack of interest, sadness and hopelessness. However, Jaspers makes a leap towards understanding depression as an existential reaction to the absence of meaning in life. This position defines depression as a complete loss of hope and assigns three causes: loss of meaning, loneliness and perceived worthlessness. In a strict sense, depression occurs as a negative perception of existence. Jaspers also develops indications on depression found in his correspondence with Hannah Arendt between 1926-1969 (Köhler & Saner, 1985)

at the end of the 1920s, in the field of the so-called existential phenomenology psychiatry. The studies of Professor Straus (1960) in his text “The Experience of Time in Endogenous Depression and in the Psychopathic Disorder” show an explanatory connection between time and depression as early as 1928, the date of its first publication, associating the experience of time as being particularly different in a depressed and a healthy individual. The relationship focused on the way the passing of time was experienced. The depressed individual felt incapable of perceiving the passage of time, assuming a time without present, past or future; a sort of stagnation.

Another primary reference in psychiatric phenomenology was Viktor E. von Gebattel (1952) in “Compulsive Thought Relating to Time in Melancholia,” first published also in 1928. In this position, he focuses on showing how depression is a relationship with time in which the individual falls into a condition of timelessness, very close to that which was proposed by Straus (1960). The depressed individual faces a relationship with time in which they feel imprisoned in a specific moment, freezing continuity, making them feel despair and a loss of patience and hope. For Gebattel, time is the interpretative key to depression.

Some of the most representative authors on depression with a phenomenological perspective are Binswanger (1975) and Medard Boss (1963), who particularly included a considerable influence from Martin Heidegger's phenomenology (Kahlmeyer-Mertens, 2022; Morgan, 2022), who will be one of the pillars of this work, in their positions. Binswanger and Medard Boss assumed the concept of being-in-the-world borrowed from Heidegger to contextualize depression. Binswanger (1975) defines depression as an impairment of the structure of meaning of being-in-the-world, as a person's experience of the world and others deteriorates. Deep down, it is a loss of meaning that overwhelms an individual's being. In order to develop his proposal, this author uses the concept of "vital space," understanding it as the space of an individual's existential relations with the world, which becomes narrower as the individual becomes depressed.

Along the same line, Medard Boss (1963) takes the concept of the world and the Heideggerian category of Dasein to sort the phenomenon of depression, identifying the existential character of depression with several factors in his study. The body and the notion of authenticity play a fundamental role in understanding depression. The body becomes a central element, to the extent that it displays another dimension to be considered in terms of depression, since depression manifests itself in the victim's body. This demonstrates the need to identify physiological aspects the affected individual experiences, such as tiredness, agitation, heaviness, and others. In turn, authenticity, which is considerably valuable for this work, manifests itself as a cause of depression.

In this sense, the lack of coordination between an individual's deepest feelings and the reality they experience has an impact in terms of a considerable impairment in affection. This perspective pursues a discovery of meaning and a resignification of a person's relationship with the world as an alternative way out of depression. In the phenomenological perspective, depression becomes a relation of being-in-the-world, primarily in a sense of how human beings relate to the world of life.

#### *The Present-day University and its Characteristics*

The current conditions of universities have left their past, which they have no intention of knowing, nor remembering, and let alone reflecting upon. Notions, such as Paideia, once expressed by the Greeks, as expressed by Heidegger himself (2004), are just nostalgia for a time that is already over. The same is true of Bildung, archived on the shelves of university libraries, far removed from the current animosity of "academia," which is governed by the technical needs and requirements of the productive apparatus. As Heidegger (2015) stated, "Now all possible and impossible tasks are foisted upon the university, and it is burdened by them. However, the task of education for knowledge, as the single and specific thing that belongs to this school, is only taken care of, if carried out at all, incidentally" (p. 106).

Some of the statements Heidegger makes about the German university have an intimate resonance with the reality of the Colombian university, although his sentences date back to the 1930s. The university's activity has been reduced to supplying the economic model and, thereby, the productive activities of diverse and qualified

workers, whether to perform science for production or to organize the production system more efficiently. Perhaps it is necessary, as Carbajales (2022) points out, to go back to the past for the university to still have something to say and offer. Such is the logic in which society and universities meet, in which influencers have a greater impact, are more widely recognized, and are drivers of more inspiration than those who used to be recognized as intellectuals (Cuadra, 2021).

The university is presented as a mechanism through which to achieve wealth and success, “to become someone in life.” The present day university is evidence of the abandonment of the notion of training in its traditional sense, and it has focused on instruction for economic work (De Sousa Santos, 2009), regardless of the academic program. Naturally, it has put more emphasis on some programs in the field of business, administration, economics and related fields. The criteria of wealth, success and prosperity are the driving forces of their existence. The crisis of education has been caused by this oblivion and distancing from the primary origin of education, which referred to a higher and sublime purpose, towards a primacy of immediacy (Rubio & Heredia, 2023).

## Method

The study focused on two methodological stages with a qualitative approach. It began with a hermeneutic phenomenological analysis of depression in university students, and a second stage that included a survey with 75 undergraduate students in business administration and related fields, who participated voluntarily in the study, applying a form that corresponded to the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-2). The survey was preceded by an informed consent form explaining how the information would be used, as well as the intention of the study and its management.

The phenomenological hermeneutic analysis begins from the interpretative contextualization of the phenomenon’s structure. In this order, it focuses on interpreting and understanding the meanings and underlying structures of the human experience (Fuster Guillen, D. E. 2019) of depression. In this sense, the aim is to find the fundamental structure of depression, to understand how it manifests itself in university students. With that in mind, it should facilitate an interpretation that reflects the characteristics of the phenomenon and the context in which it occurs. This interpretation is made taking into consideration the previous interpretations of the context and human reality by Heidegger and Byung-Chul Han in their proposals of analysis corresponding to the context of the phenomenon, as well as the forms assumed by the university institution and its guidelines.

The survey facilitates a preliminary contextualization of the presence of depression or some of its characteristics in the students who voluntarily agreed to participate in completing the form. The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-2) is a diagnostic tool designed to identify the severity of symptoms of depression in the adult and adolescent population (Maldonado-Avenidaño, et al. 2021).

The BDI-2 is comprised of 21 items that assess dimensions of depression, such as sadness, self-criticism, loss of interest, fatigue, difficulty sleeping and appetite. Each section is composed of a series of assertions each person must evaluate according to the frequency with which they experience the symptoms. Responses are scored on a scale of 0 to 3, depending on the severity of reported symptoms. The total score is obtained by adding each item's scores, which provides an overall score ranging from 0 to 63. Higher scores indicate a greater severity of symptoms of depression. (Sánchez-Villena & Cedrón 2019).

## Results

### Wealth and Poverty

Martin Heidegger, in 1945, after experiencing a series of unfortunate and catastrophic events that affected his life, that of his students, professors and millions of people. In addition, his concern was what would happen to him and the university with the end of the war, in the midst of a small group of students and professors who accompanied him and in the context of the defeat of the National Socialist party and its intentions to rule the destiny of the world. The controversial professor gave a seminar on poverty (Armut) when the war ended, perhaps as a sign of the thought of recognizing how the banality of the technical system eventually manages to bend even the most cautious genius.

The seminar, as is well known, begins with a sentence by Holderlin, which is always worth remembering: "Among us, everything is focused on that which is spiritual; we have become poor in order to become rich" (quoted in Heidegger, 2006. p. 93). Heidegger developed his seminar based on this sentence, focusing on the fundamental concepts to understand the indication: spirit, need, wealth and poverty. However, poverty has an almost immediate connection to joy. It is therefore interesting to identify the structural links between poverty and joy according to the perspectives presented by Heidegger.

The first necessary step to understand poverty in the perspective he presented comes back against the paradigms of science. The term spirit takes on a primary role in Heidegger's interpretative intention. The spirit is framed in a relationship between man and that which surrounds him. This is not just any relationship, but a sublime relationship (Heidegger, 2006). While it is not a primarily material relationship based on the utility and necessity of man in relation to the objects that surround him, the German thinker makes a clarification, indicating that it is not a subject - object relationship. That which is spiritual, or what concerns the spirit, is centered on the opening structure: "In that which is open, this relation of Being with the essence of man, we make the experience of the 'spirit' he is that which he governs from Being and, probably, for Being." (Heidegger, 2006, p. 105).

In paragraph 9 of Being and Time, Heidegger argues that "because Dasein is in each case essentially its own possibility, it can, in its very Being, 'choose' itself and win itself; it can also lose itself and never win itself; or only 'seem' to do so" (Heidegger, 1997, p.68). This indicates that Dasein is cast in the impropriety of average

everydayness and must be win or lose itself, in its everyday perspective, in which it is ontologically cast. Winning itself implies, on the contrary, that Dasein can appropriate itself in the midst of throwing itself away, in the immediate and regular form of “impropriety.” With respect to this point, it is necessary to more precisely contextualize the debate on the conceptual pair “propriety/impropriety.”

The reference to the essence of man's being is obviously important insofar as it is manifested as openness, as entire possibility, in terms of the primary way man is being-in-the-world. This orientation will be decisive for understanding the nature of the psychological, affective and emotional ailments of the contemporary man.

Heidegger (2006), after noticing the importance of spirituality, entered into a central notion regarding the meaning of poverty, being poor, and wealth and being rich. Poverty, in its common consideration, has been related to the absence of goods and things. In the end, a poor person is by definition one who lacks goods and wealth, and poverty includes the ownership of things in its definition (Trawny, 1999). Heidegger (2006) indicates that “In the usual sense (...) poverty is a not-having, or a lack of what is necessary. Wealth is a non-lacking of what is necessary, or a having beyond what is necessary” (p. 107). Poverty, then, is expressed in a privative, negative sense. However, the analysis requires another, more in-depth stage. It is clear that the center of poverty and wealth revolves around what is necessary and unnecessary. Therefore, as has been said, poverty refers to the sphere of that which is unnecessary and poor in its usual understanding is one who lacks that which is superfluous (Trawny, 1999).

Poverty, as expressed above, involves a way of being that does not pertain to what is complete, full and always available; in its structural sense, it has to do with what is possible and open - with finding. In wealth, there is an excess and abundance of that which is unnecessary and superficial. Everything is generally defined; the being-there as an unfolding of possibility. Availability is found in wealth. Therefore, the relationship with the world is defined, there is no discovery, no appropriation, and there is a certain resistance to its original structure of openness. In this sense, poverty corresponds to an existential dimension of discovery based on dwelling in non-necessity; he who is not filled with abundance still has space for himself.

In Spanish, the Spanish Royal Academy (2023) defines poor under six meanings, 1. adj. Needy, of not having what is necessary to live. 2. adj. Scarce, insufficient. 3. adj. Humble, of little value or entity. 4. adj. Unhappy, miserable and sad. 5. adj. Peaceful, quiet and of a good temper and intention. 6. adj. Short of morale and spirit. Only the end of the last definition includes an orientation towards the spirit. In this sense, as has been pointed out, poverty has an evident connotation towards a lack of objects. However, the definition of poor also speaks of unhappiness, misery and sadness, in natural consonance with the absence of belongings.

In short, poverty has two dimensions of analysis: on one hand is poverty in its usual understanding of the material order, which represents a serious economic problem in which people have minimal material difficulties to survive. On the other hand is another form of poverty that has to do with the existential sense. It becomes a virtue to the extent it remains outside the full occupation of the abundance that generates a complete

consummation of man in the possibility of having a more sublime relationship that highlights his ownership and appropriation of that which is fundamental (Sanchez Hernandez, 2019).

### *Wealth and the Burnout Society*

The burnout society described by Han (2022) is the product of a tendency stemming from performance, which leads, as is only natural, to an “overabundance of positivity.” The abundance of activity, always beyond what is necessary and in excess; a society with a wealth of activities, where there is always something to do and always a goal to accomplish. Burnout has a characteristic that Marx (1967) had already observed in, for example, the 1870 letter addressed to Siegfried Meyer and Augustus Vogt, indicating how one of the mechanisms for maintaining bourgeois power is to make sure workers see each other as competition, which ends in loneliness. “The fatigue of the performance society is a fatigue you bear alone (Alleinmüdigkeit), which isolates and divides” (Han, 2022).

This fatigue is a reflection of the insatiable search for efficiency under the promise of a prosperous life and greater wealth, in order to achieve non-necessity. The burnout society is a society of the promise of value, which has been extended in business terms and transferred intravenously to individuals in contemporary societies, fed by the University. This burnout has a particular structure. It is not a fatigue of negativity, but of positivity (Han, 2022), a fatigue that is full. Far from the fundamental fatigue that would somehow lead to the fundamental boredom described by Heidegger (2007), to a possibility of openness in light of the propriety of man's being in view of his calling. Burnout in contemporary society is positively articulated to a complex management system, as one more gear that includes amusements, hobbies, and vacations, all keeping the being trapped within inauthenticity (Baltar, 2020).

Wealth is the basis that sustains the burnout society, as abundance, as a fullness of activities and occupations, as a promise that motivates availability as an occupation. The university plays a very important role here, to the extent, in most cases, it represents the transit towards an immersion with no return into work life and the role of a productive individual, fully entering performance and the race for fortune that never ends (Han, 2018). In this context, poverty becomes an individual's greatest fear: in the described distance, there is something that deeply unites human beings in today's society - the struggle against poverty, in which they detach themselves from any possibility of achieving their own relationship with the world around them.

### *The Surveyed Panorama*

The situation surveyed with a group of 75 students yielded results worth compiling and considering. In that sense, the consolidated responses obtained from the instrument are presented to understand the degree of concern the collected elements may raise.

One of the first elements worth highlighting is that 22.7% of the students who completed the form identified



with the statement of being sad most of the time, followed by an equal percentage of 2.7% for the statements of feeling sad all the time and feeling so unhappy and sad that they cannot stand it. Overall, the percentage of students in the group approached shows that 28% of the students feel some degree of sadness.

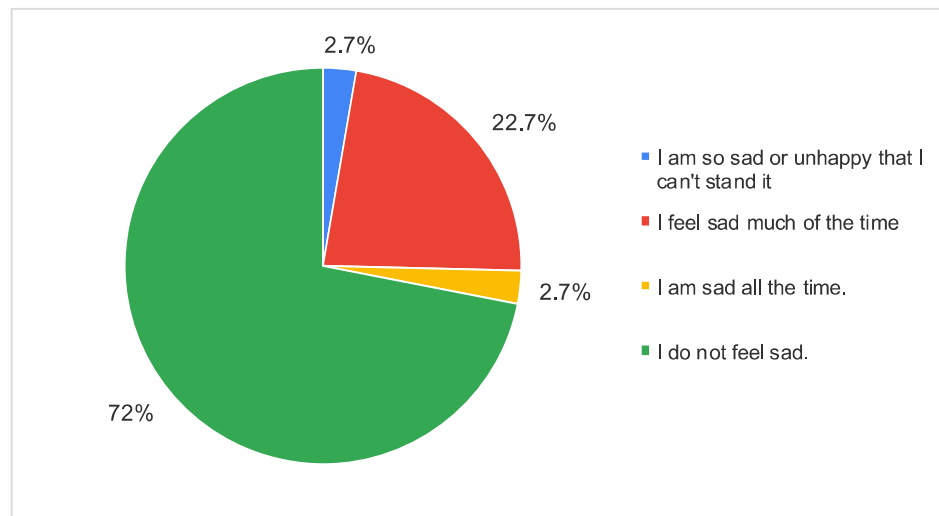


Figure 1. Answers on the scope of sadness

With respect to the other dimensions, there are some disturbing values. With respect to pessimism, another interesting element to analyze is that 37.3% of the students stated they feel more discouraged than they used to feel about their future. Additionally, 6.7% identified with the statement “I don't expect things to work out for me,” while only 1.3% indicated that “there is no hope.” It is worth noting that almost 45% expressed some degree of pessimism.

On the other hand, the trend is maintained with respect to the third item, failure, in which 66.7% of the students stated they do not feel like failures. On the other hand, the following value is represented by 17.3% of those who consider they have failed more than they should have, followed by 13.3%, who identify themselves with the expression “when I look back, I see many failures.” Again, a considerable percentage of students have disturbing feelings regarding failure.

Continuing with the order of the items, the statements on pleasure had even more worrying figures, since the responses that show some kind of decrease in obtained pleasure exceeded 50%. 37.3% stated they do not enjoy things as much as they used to. 16% indicated they get very little pleasure from the things they used to enjoy. This evidently shows that a significant part of the consulted population does not enjoy what they do.

With respect to the feeling of guilt, the collected information indicates that 56% of those consulted said they feel guilty about various things they have done or should have done. This is a considerable figure added to the fact that 6.7% feel quite guilty most of the time.

Another element to highlight is associated with dissatisfaction with oneself, which demonstrates a considerable loss of confidence from the students in themselves. 32% identify with having lost confidence in themselves, and 6.7% feel disappointed with themselves. The above can be connected with self-criticism, which reflects some interesting figures once again. 46.7% indicate being more critical of themselves than they used to be, followed by 17% who stated they criticize themselves for all their mistakes.

When it comes to suicidal desires, the figures fall off somewhat. Only 28% of them have thought about killing themselves, but would not do so, and only 2% indicated they wanted to kill themselves. With respect to crying, the findings reveal a more worrisome picture in that 35% of the students stated they cry more than they used to, followed by a worrying 15% who stated they want to cry but are unable to do so, and another 9% who stated they cry for any little thing.

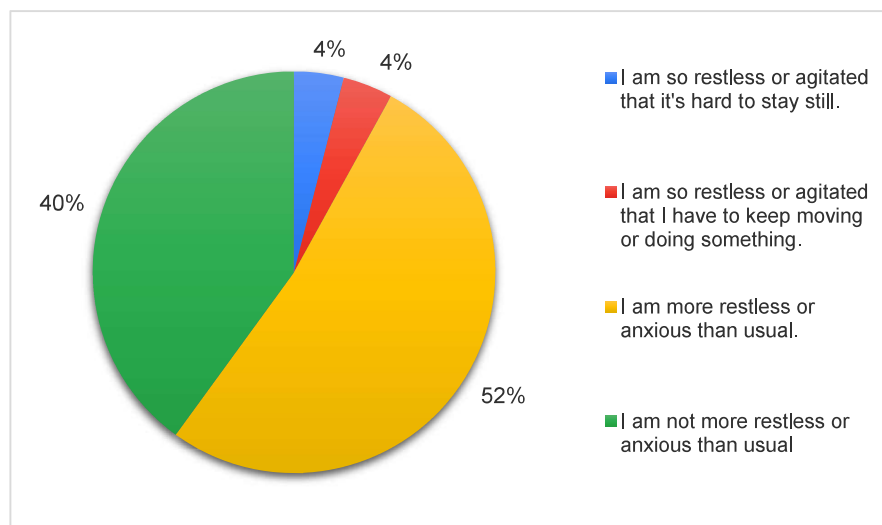


Figure 2. Answers on the scope of agitation

As shown in Figure 2, students perceive themselves as being more restless, tense and agitated. Regarding loss of interest, which had similar figures, 48% of students indicated they are less interested than before in other people or things, followed by 16% who consider they have lost almost all interest in other people or things.

Another element worth highlighting is associated with energy loss. 55% of students reported having less energy than they used to, and 23% reported not having enough energy to do very much. This element is of considerable value in performance analysis, which requires more and more energy consumption every day. This is evidently confirmed by the responses on burnout and fatigue, in which 56% of students stated they get tired and fatigued much more than usual, followed by 11% who stated they are too tired or fatigued to do things they used to do.

As observed, irritability is another significant issue worth paying attention to in terms of what should be considered a factor that can generate multiple behaviors inside and outside of the classroom.

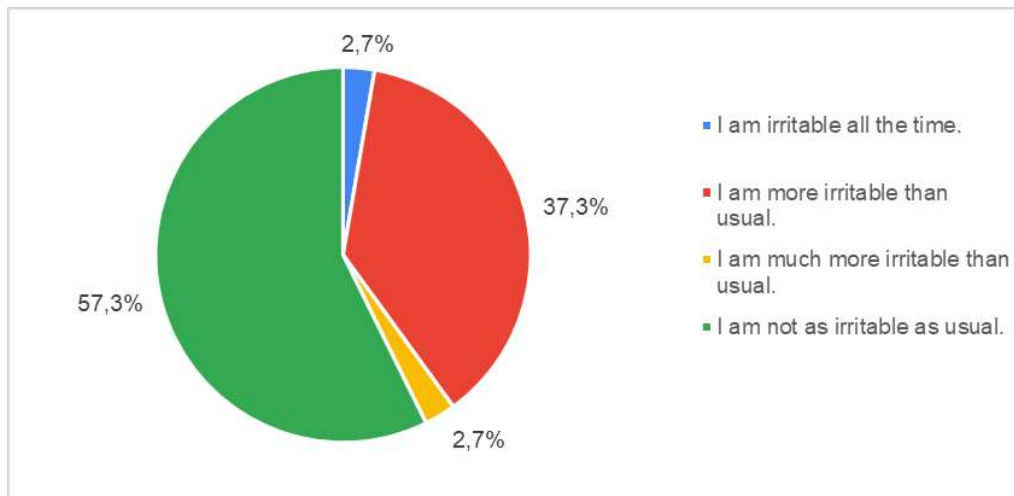


Figure 3. Answers on the scope of irritability

From this core of results, it is worth highlighting the item corresponding to difficulty focusing. 44% of the consulted students showed difficulties focusing. This was followed by 25%, who indicated they find it difficult to keep their mind on something for a long time. The findings in the consulted students lead to identifying various concerns to which universities should pay attention.

Finally, to close this presentation of results, the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-2) assessment scale establishes 4 levels of depression: minimal, mild, moderate and severe. These were determined according to the count of each one of the 21 responses on the form. Figure 4 shows the consolidation of the levels of depression found in the analyzed students in percentages.

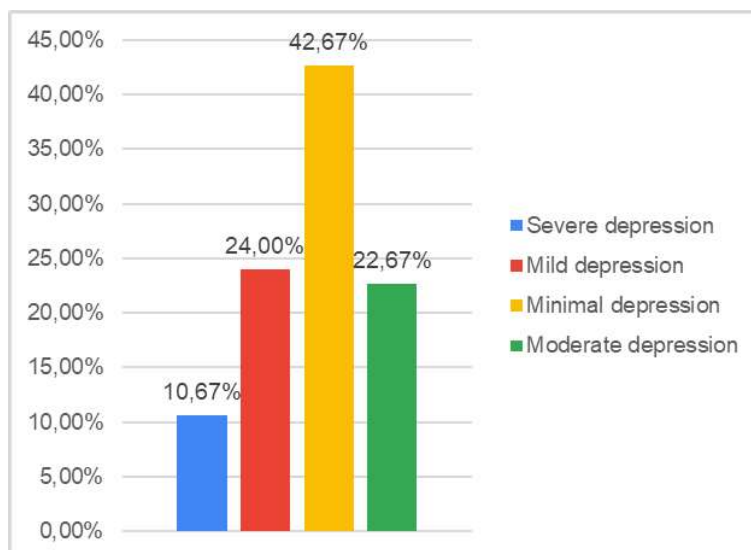


Figure 4: Answers on the scope of irritability.

In sum, 42.6% had minimal depression, 24% had mild depression, 22.6% had moderate depression and 10.6% had severe depression. As can be seen, although it is true that almost half of the studied population does not show concerning symptoms, there are some figures distributed with different symptoms that are worthy of more attention and development.

## Discussion

Depression, as is only natural, has been understood in a purely pathological context and according to its content within the framework of its usefulness, or rather its obstruction to usefulness, which is determined in terms of a human being's capacity to remain anchored in normality. It is mainly understood as being accustomed to the present way of life in each historical moment. It is a psychological disorder that gets treated as a disease and primarily prevents people from behaving normally according to the standards, acting irritable, isolated, anxious, pessimistic, among other behaviors (Del Cid, 2021). With that in mind, depression is understood as something negative, since it represents a factor that stops individuals from being linked within the gears of what is available, on an occupational, social and affective level, as pointed out by Ozkan et al. (2015).

According to the conducted analysis, in addition to the negative effect depression has on the social and occupational development of individuals, it is necessary to understand what can cause the onset of symptoms and depression in young people who are beginning to discover their future. Along this line, depression results in a resistance mechanism that manifests itself in a structural way, as a reaction to the loss of meaning and distancing from one's own self. Depression is framed in the sense expressed by Heidegger (2006) as poverty, in the sense that students, due to their degree of original sensitivity, have a greater capacity to resist the current that submerges their existence in a pre-determined world.

The banality expressed in the different dimensions of the contemporary world can be understood in the scope presented by the phenomenological tradition of depression as a reaction to the loss of meaning in one's relationship with the world (Jasper, 1963; Straus, 1960; Binswanger, 1975). However, the fundamental key to understand this rupture in the contemporary world is expressed in the banality of the burnout society, as it is presented as a constituent of loss of meaning. In this way, what is understood as depression in a negative sense can be interpreted as a reaction, which, if overcome as a state of reactive openness to the contemporary outlook on life, can generate greater possibilities of those who can traverse this original state of the search for meaning achieving genuine joy. This reaction, with the nuance expressed in this paper, presents a return to phenomenology in its more ontological than psychological sense, which is interpretation.

The general conceptions of the state of depression are recurrent in several authors, which shows that depression and its proximity to stress and anxiety are phenomena that are negative for people's health, since they can disrupt individuals' development, as expressed by Ali Ahmed and Çerkez (2020). Overall, approaching depression with a phenomenological view on the existential structure of human beings includes a complement to

the developed views in terms of understanding depression in an educational context from a perspective that questions the work and responsibility of education in this phenomenon.

## **Conclusion**

Depression is a very important phenomenon in the world's reality - much more so when it comes to young people. Depression should be considered not exclusively as the negative result of an illness, but as a structural existential reaction that guides an individual towards a sublime and original encounter with the world. In this understanding, a depressed young person is not primarily sick, but existentially sensitive. In that order, they are closer to finding authentic joy than those who find themselves lost in the transitory comfort provided by banality.

Depression in the burnout society can be understood in light of the concept of poverty expressed by Martin Heidegger, alternatively considering abundance, success and wealth as elements that consume an individual and remove them from a genuine relationship with their most proper being. This leads them to agitation and fatigue in depression.

According to the surveyed scenario, the levels of emotional deterioration in students indicate that the problem of depression should at least be considered as a need for continuous characterization, in order to prevent reaching critical states that could lead to situations, such as suicide. Naturally, this responsibility falls on educational institutions.

Finally, establishing a new way of relating to depression in terms of its ontological understanding will make it possible to explore new forms of treatment that involve elements more akin to training in its traditional sense than to instructional intervention, anchored in the burnout society and making the yearning for joy more visible.

## **Recommendations**

The formative environments of higher education need to be continuously enriched with multidisciplinary perspectives that favor understanding the reality of the academic community from various nuances. It is necessary to encourage developing research perspectives that delve deeper into the psychological and psychosocial aspects of students and the general academic community in terms of higher education.

More qualitative research is required to delve deeper into the reality of the different university programs, in order to contribute to understanding the population's needs and universities to be able to aim their activities at addressing their particular reality. In this way, it is necessary for universities to establish surveys and mechanisms to identify depression in their institutions and, according to their particular findings, establish strategies to take advantage of the conditions expressed by the students and give a direction to the discovery of

meaning that helps them find joy.

## References

- Ali, S., & Çerkez, Y. (2020). The Impact of Anxiety, Depression, and Stress on Emotional Stability among the University Students from the view of educational aspects *Propósitos y Representaciones*, 8 (3). <http://dx.doi.org/10.20511/pyr2020.v8n3.520>.
- Alpi, S. V., & Bechara, A. O. (2020). Variables asociadas a la ansiedad-depresión en estudiantes universitarios. *Universitas Psychologica*, 19. <https://doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.upsy19.vaad>
- Baltar, E. (2020). Nothingness, boredom and technology: Heidegger's reflections on nihilism *Differenz*, (6), 11-30. <https://doi.org/10.12795/Differenz.2020.i06.01>
- Baños-Chaparro, J. (2023). Explorando los factores de riesgo de la depresión: un análisis de red. *Revista Colombiana de Psiquiatría*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rcp.2023.01.005>
- Binswanger, L. (1975). *Being-in-the-world*. Selected papers (J. Needleman, Trans.).
- Boss, M. (1963). *Psychoanalysis and daseinsanalysis* (L. B. Lefebvre, Trans.). New York: Basic Books.
- Boss, M. (1979). *Existential foundations of medicine and psychology* (S. Conway, & A. Cleaves, Trans.). New York: Jason Aronson.
- Carbajales, M. (2022). The university of the 21st century. back to the past. [la universidad del siglo xxi volver al pasado] *Human Review. International Humanities Review / Revista Internacional De Humanidades*, 11 doi:10.37467/revhuman. v11.3817 <https://doi.org/10.37467/revhuman.v11.3817>
- Castellanos, R. M., & Peña, D. N. (2007). El desarrollo de las organizaciones del siglo XXI: ética, responsabilidad social, gestión de la diversidad y gestión del cambio. *Especial directivos*.
- Castellanos-Meza, F. A., Rodríguez-Carrillo, M. A., & Rodríguez-Ramírez, M. E. (2020). Depresión y rendimiento académico: propuesta del Perfil Institucional de Riesgo Académico por Depresión. *Revista de Educación y Desarrollo*, 54, 53-61.
- Cuadra, Á. (2021). Universidad y pensamiento crítico: intelectuales e influencers. *Re-presentaciones. Periodismo, Comunicación y Sociedad*, 5(15), 83-101. <https://doi.org/10.35588/rp.v1i15.5094>
- De Sousa Santos, B. (2009). La universidad en el siglo XXI. Para una reforma democrática y emancipadora de la universidad. *Mientras Tanto*, (110/111), 27-51.
- Del Cid, M. T. C. (2021). La depresión y su impacto en la salud pública. *Revista médica hondureña*, 89 (Supl. 1), 46-52. <https://doi.org/10.5377/rmh.v89iSupl.1.12047>
- Dilthey, G. (1944). *Introducción a las ciencias del espíritu*. Tran. Eugenio Imaz. Mexico: Economic Culture Fund.
- Fink, E. (1957). *Curso sobre los conceptos filosóficos fundamentales: ser-verdad-mundo*. Anuario de Filosofía. Faculty of Humanities and Education. Univ. Central de Venezuela.
- Fuster Guillen, D. E. (2019). Qualitative Research: Hermeneutical Phenomenological Method *Propósitos y representaciones*, 7(1), 201-229. <https://doi.org/10.20511/pyr2019.v7n1.267>

- Gebattel, V. E. (1954). *Prolegomena einer medizinischen Anthropologie: Ausgewählte Aufsätze*. Springer.
- Han, B. C. (2018). *The Agony of Eros* (2nd edition): Prologue by Alain Badiou Herder Editorial.
- Han, B. C. (2022). *The Burnout Society*. Herder Editorial.
- Hart, B., Lusk, P., Hovermale, R., & Melnkv, B. (2018). Decreasing depression and anxiety in college youth using the creating opportunities for personal empowerment program (COPE). *Journal Psychiatry Nurses Association*, 25(2), 89-98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078390318779205>
- Heidegger, M. (1997) *Ser y tiempo*. (Rivera, Jorge Trad.) Chile: Editorial Universitaria. (Original work published 1927).
- Heidegger, M. (2004). *¿Qué es filosofía?* (Tran. J. A. Escudero). Barcelona: Herder
- Heidegger, M. (2007). *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*; [Freiburg course, winter semester 1929-1930]. Alianza.
- Heidegger, M. (2006). *La pobreza*. Tran. Agoff, I Madrid: Amorrortu.
- Hesse, H. (2021). *On Little Joys*. Alianza Editorial.
- Jaspers, K. (1993). *Psicopatología General*, 3<sup>rd</sup>. Edition, Ed. Beta, Buenos Aires.
- Kahlmeyer-Mertens, R. S. (2022). Dos interpretaciones de la angustia: Heidegger & Boss. *Aoristo-International Journal of Phenomenology, Hermeneutics and Metaphysics*, 5(2), 199-209. <https://doi.org/10.48075/aoristo.v5i2.29838>
- Köhler, L., & Saner, H. (1985). *Hannah Arendt–Karl Jaspers. Briefwechsel*. München: Piper.
- Korman, G. P., & Sarudiansky, M. (2011). Theoretical And Clinical Models For The Conceptualization And Treatment Of Depression. *Subjetividad y procesos cognitivos*, 15(1), 119-145.
- Ladevéze, L. N., Barrio, T. V., & Canal, M. N. (2020). The Transition to Global Liquid Modernity: The Revolt of The Masses in The Undefined Neighborhood *Arbor*, 196(797), a568-a568. <https://doi.org/10.3989/arbor.2020.797n3005>
- Maldonado-Avenidaño, N., Castro-Osorio, R., & Cardona-Gómez, P. (2021). Propiedades psicométricas del Inventario de Depresión de Beck-II (BDI-II) en población universitaria colombiana. *Revista Colombiana de Psiquiatría*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rcp.2021.08.007>
- Marx, C; Engels, F. (1967), *On Colonialism*. Moscou, Editorial Progreso.
- Miranda, A. L. (2020). O cálculo e o risco: Heidegger e Beck. *Kriterion: Revista de Filosofia*, 61, 73-97. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0100-512X2020n14504alm>
- Moreira, V. (2007). Significados posibles de la depresión en el mundo contemporáneo: Una lectura fenomenológica mundana. *Psyche*, 16(2), 129-137
- Morgan, A. (2022). *Being-in-the-World*. In *Continental Philosophy of Psychiatry: The Lure of Madness* (pp. 131-162). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Obaid, F. P., & Albagli, R. D. L. F. (2020). A critical analysis of debates on grief and depressive disorder in the age of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. *Salud colectiva*, 15, e2319. <https://doi.org/10.18294/sc.2019.2319>
- Obregón-Morales, B., Montalván-Romero, J. C., Segama-Fabian, E., Dámaso-Mata, B., Panduro-Correa, V., & Arteaga-Livias, K. (2020). Factores asociados a la depresión en estudiantes de medicina de una universidad peruana. *Educación Médica Superior*, 34(2).

- World Health Organization. (2018). ICD-11. International Classification of Diseases (11<sup>th</sup> revision). Retrieved from <https://icd.who.int/es>
- Ozkan, A., Ozdevecioglu, M., Kaya, Y., & Koc, F. Ö. (2015). Effects of mental workloads on depression-anger symptoms and interpersonal sensitivities of accounting professionals/Efectos de la carga mental del trabajo en los síntomas de depresión-ira y en la sensibilidad interpersonal de los profesionales de la contabilidad. *Revista De Contabilidad*, 18(2), 194-199. Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/effects-mental-workloads-on-depression-anger/docview/1746922362/se-2>
- Real Academia Española: Diccionario de la lengua española, 23<sup>rd</sup> ed., [version 23.6 online]. <<https://dle.rae.es>> [April 27, 2023].
- Rubio, D., & Heredia, M. (2023). ¿En qué consiste la crisis de la educación? *Praxis & Saber*, 14(38), e15105. <https://doi.org/10.19053/22160159.v14.n38.2023.15105>
- Sánchez Hernández, F. X. (2019). De la pobreza como problema a la pobreza como virtud. *Veritas*, (44), 69-88.
- Sánchez-Villena, A. R., & Cedrón, E. F. (2019). Análisis factorial exploratorio del Inventario de Depresión de Beck (BDI-II) en universitarios cajamarquinos. *Interacciones. Revista de Avances en Psicología*, 5(3). <https://doi.org/10.24016/2019.v5n3.177>
- Straus, E., & Straus, E. (1960). Das Zeiterlebnis in der endogenen Depression und in der psychopathischen Verstimmung. *Psychologie Der Menschlichen Welt: Gesammelte Schriften*, 126-140.
- Trawny, P. (1999). Die Armut der Geschichte. Zur Frage nach der Vollendung und Verwandlung der Philosophie bei Heidegger. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann zum 65. Geburtstag. *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, (H. 3), 407-427.
- Vázquez, C., & Mouján, J. F. (2016). Adolescencia y Sociedad-La construcción de identidad en tiempos de inmediatez. *PSOCIAL*, 2(1), 38-55.
- World Health Organization. (2017). Depression and other common mental disorders: global health estimates (No. WHO/MSD/MER/2017.2). World Health Organization.
- World Health Organization. (2019). International Classification of Diseases, (ICD-11).