

Development of social skills of high school students on virtual platforms, 2021

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Suggested Citation:

Pérez, F. E. L., Montero, J. M. C. , Meléndez, L. V., & Navarro, E. R. (2022) Development of social skills of high school students on virtual platforms, 2021. *World Journal on Educational Technology: Current Issues*. 14(1), 231-242. <https://doi.org/10.18844/wjet.v14i1.6720>

Received from October 04, 2021; revised from October 22, 2021; accepted from January 02, 2022.

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Servet Bayram, Yeditepe University, Turkey.

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is the development of social skills of high school students in virtual settings. **Methodology:** Qualitative, phenomenological, hermeneutical study, developed in three stages. In the descriptive stage, planning activities and ethical procedures were socialized; In the structural setting, intervention protocols, contingency plans, methodological memory, approach to participants, and delimitation of roles were foreseen both within and outside the field of study. In the discussion stage, the results were contrasted with recent studies, arriving at definitive conclusions. The technique used was the semi-structured interview, and as an instrument, a guide of questions derived from the subcategories of the study was used. The participants were five students of the sixth cycle of Regular Basic Education (first and the second year of secondary education) with ages of 13 and 14 years, three men and two women volunteers, a teacher (director), and two teachers (without management positions). Experts validated the interview. **Results:** Reciprocal help in the affective sphere motivates the encounters in virtual settings in the participants. Virtual scenarios mediate effective relationships in a significant way. **Conclusions:** Reciprocity is a priority element that generates trust and allows participants to understand the needs of their colleagues, virtual spaces serve as emotional support for all their members, and as they all connect with the active cameras, scenarios very similar to those are generated.

Keywords: Social Skills; Emotional Support; Affective Relationships; TIC.

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1. Introduction

Social skills are the emotional and communication resources that the person has to interact with others in the best conditions, respecting their rights and generating bonds of reciprocity and respect. Different theorists from different approaches have proposed conceptual approaches, there being coincidences that it is about maintaining harmonious and beneficial interpersonal relationships. However, the theories and practices have been made from face-to-face education, and the ordinary social skills that are learned in school are, at least, the primary and intermediate (Caballo, 2007). Still, in virtual settings, the manifestations of the skills are different. The virtual classrooms are loaded with activities that have very little time left to promote their development, so the meetings of the students take place after school hours.

Decoding skills are related to the process by which a message is received from the other person, which is considered input and is determined by the situation in which they occur (Schlundt & McFall, 1985). There are limitations for communication between students and teachers in virtual classrooms; non-verbal communication through gestures and looks is absent. The teacher's glances at the students and from these to the teacher are not possible either, since that everyone who is receiving the signal on their monitors can see the teacher, but the teacher cannot see them. In this sense, the generation of student-student messages in the virtual classroom is impossible; identifying the intentionality of the message cannot occur, as there is no message, and it is impossible to establish the relationship path between students. Therefore, it is impossible to receive notifications in virtual classrooms that imply skills for interpersonal relationships between peers and between them and the teacher.

By verbal or non-verbal means, establishing a contract between students implies a message to do or not to do, to receive a favor, or to give it, all marked by an emotional component. However, although virtual settings allow the development of teaching in good conditions, the same does not happen with inter-personal relationships (Sanmartín Madrid, 2020) because the classroom environment only allows the teacher to control the video in their classroom. Quality of host and the students participate when the teacher requires it, and they will turn on the camera when the teacher indicates it and even, in the case that work is done in small virtual rooms, they do not enjoy autonomy either, because the teacher is supervising, guiding or guiding the fulfillment of the assigned activity. Consequently, the second component of the decoding skill, perception, is also impossible to execute in the virtual classroom.

The implementation of a social skill requires, in addition to reception and perception, the search for support from the other, the appropriate interpretation, the same that demands an empathic, assertive performance; assessing the verbal and non-verbal elements to determine if there is a need to intervene in a conflict or the resolution of a problem. The lack of occurrences of face-to-face interpersonal relationships makes it impossible for students to interpret the inputs generated by their classmates, which makes it clear that the possibilities of developing decoding skills in the virtual classroom are unimaginable, not limits that, during non-school hours, students meet by chat, Meet or Zoom. Still, these interactions are outside the scope of those generated in the classroom environment.

The second dimension that makes up social skills is decision ability, which is after the decoding of the message (input) received in the first dimension and refers to the search for an answer within the repertoire, to the choice of response and evaluating how useful it is (Schlundt & McFall, 1985). When students are faced with an external demand that comes from a colleague or friend, they must seek an answer that meets what the person who requires it expects. It will be immediate or will have subsequent consequences depending on the rights and responsibilities committed. This ability cannot be carried out to the extent that the element that triggers it is not evident; this does not imply that there are no demands, but they cannot be made visible because the virtual classroom does not allow it. Consequently, the ability to seek expert answers does not occur in virtual classrooms.

The third dimension of social skills is the one that emits the behavior (output) before the social demand (input); for this, it is necessary to elaborate the skillful, assertive, contextualized, communicated response naturally, which must be in harmony with a reciprocal attitude (Schlundt & McFall, 1985).

However, this skill cannot be developed in the virtual classroom due to the absence of face-to-face interactions.

1.1. Literature review

From a theoretical point of view, social skills are expressed through face-to-face interactions in different social settings and with other people (Caballo, 2007). Social skills are necessary for people to interact in two or more social systems simultaneously due to the speed and complexity of today's society (Ovejero Bernal, 1990). Social skills as a space that offers excellent practical possibilities for relationships between people must be considered in their training processes (Goldstein et al., 1989).

Williams, Harold M in his study on social development during childhood, referred to the constant search for social approval, to present oneself as a nice person to others and to impress with responsible behavior, acting in all cases in a powerful way (Williams, 1935). Phillips & Zigler (1964) investigated social competence in institutionalized adults and showed that the higher the previous social competence of the patients, the shorter the length of their stay and the lower their relapse rate. Regarding the concept of social ability Caballo (2007) refers that there are controversies. However, until the end of 1970, the term assertiveness was used; it was replaced by social ability, as it incorporates the element of the social context for its presentation. Social skills occur in a cultural framework and depend on personal factors, such as age, gender, social class, and education (Pérez-Santamarina Picón, 1999). They are a function of individual differences, cognitive capacities, values, and attitudes, so it isn't easy to pigeonhole them into a single concept (Tower, 1984, cited by Caballo, 2007).

For this research, symbolic interactionism was chosen as a general theory (Blumer, 1986), as a substantive theory the types of education 4.0 (IMF Business School, 2018). As the author of social skills, Schlundt & McFall (1985) propose a model consisting of three categories that occur in successive stages: (a) The skills of decoding incoming situational stimuli (input), imply the reception of information by the sense organs, the perceptual identification of traits important stimuli of the situation and the interpretation of these features within a knowledge scheme existing in the subject thanks to his history, his motivation to achieve certain ends or objectives. (b) Decision-making skills, based on the interpretation of the situation, the subject must elaborate a response proposition that he considers the most effective and the least expensive when facing the stimulus task. This decision-making process involves the use of information transformation and the use of rules that associate specific actions with circumstances stored in long-term memory. And (c) Coding skills of the information processing sequence involve translating a program of response propositions to a coordinated series of observable behaviors (execution). The performance of responses also requires an ongoing feedback process. The form and impact of specific behaviors are compared to the expected form and impact, and subtle adjustments are made to maximize the effect. Thus, execution (generating sequence of behaviors) and self-observation (adjustment based on feedback) are subcomponents of coding skills.

Internet is a multi-dialogical source, in which the relational factor is the one that supports interactions, consumption, and uses; technology is oriented towards digital humanism (Lazo et al., 2016). The authors refer to the use of the internet in education, highlighting the critical, analytical, and reflective components with which messages are received and responded to. They also consider that technologies should not be used to transmit knowledge in education but rather are assumed as mediating elements of the relational process between people.

The use of technologies facilitates digital competencies, meaningful learning, and social skills in pedagogical models to solve the challenges of the present century, as shown by the results of a quasi-experimental investigation with two teachers and 40 students, in which it was used the Bee-Bot® educational robotics kit, which indicate that the experimental group reported better results in meaningful learning, computational thinking, positive social behaviors and a favorable attitude to learning (Caballero-González & García Valcárcel Muñoz-Repiso, 2020). The results of a research on the use of ICT, social skills, and satisfaction with life in 228 high school students reported that 71.5% used

the mobile phone; them 96.9% used WhatsApp, 83, 3% Facebook, finding associations of friendship/empathy, violence/self-control, among others and concluded that, with the use of ICT, it was found that the greater the repertoire of social skills, the greater the satisfaction with life (De Mello et al., 2019).

The use of the Flipped Classroom methodology improves the development of skills in high school students, as demonstrated in a quasi-experimental investigation carried out with 62 students; In the post-test, significant differences were found in favor of the experimental group who better developed the social skills of active listening, assertiveness and conflict resolution (Gómez Delgado & Meza del Villar, 2019). Soft and hard skills are requirements of professional training and are part of the conditions for accessing a job, within them are social skills; Both hard skills and soft skills are possible for development in virtual settings through the use of ICT, making appropriate use of platforms and with the help of creative pedagogical tools (D'silva Signe, 2018).

In Cusco, Peru, an investigation was carried out on the use of virtual settings (ICT) for the development of social skills, and it was found that 76% used new technologies compared to 24% that did not; In the comparison of means, it was found that the social skills score before the application of the test was 137.02, which is equivalent to the low average category and the norm obtained after the application of the program was 154.95, which is equal to the high average sort (Champi Huanaco, 2018). It was investigated about reading in virtual settings for two years from a hermeneutical phenomenological approach with a group of 436 students, semi-structured interviews were used for teachers and students, and it was concluded that, in effect, virtual settings are spaces from which the reading habit, the practice of exercises, debate and theoretical reflection (Champi Huanaco, 2018).

Intellectual skills are developed from childhood and constitute the basic structure for the formation of competencies and capacities, as shown by research carried out with 40 teachers through the quantitative-qualitative method, holding that if teacher training is lacking in the development of intellectual skills, it will affect the teaching of students, who will not develop this type of competences and capacities either (Espinoza Freire et al., 2020). It is argued that the full development of social skills is associated with their learning in childhood, which must begin at home and continue in school, which is demonstrated in an investigation carried out with children from a child development center. That it does not belong to the formal education system and in which social skills are learned through inter-learning; The research was a systematic review and was carried out with an age group of two to four years, and it was concluded that social skills should be worked on from the infancy and should be part of teaching children, giving them favorable conditions for their learning (Elizalde Cordero, 2017).

The use of virtual scenarios has also been worked with higher education students through the use of virtual platforms for collaborative learning, as shown in the results of an investigation carried out with office automation students in whom it was applied for the Edmodo program as a virtual environment, and it was found that in effect it favored the development of social skills and improved the learning levels of the subject (Zuñiga Macancela et al., 2020). In the virtual scenarios that broke out in 2020, the effect of the trend in the use of MOOCs, and webinar as virtual scenarios were investigated, and it was found that this phenomenon caused a far-reaching influence and of significant impact both for training and for cultural enrichment, for which they concluded that these tools in quarantine time had a positive and negative effect (Soledispa Baque et al., 2021).

This research was developed to find answers about the development of social skills in high school students; therefore, the question that guided it was: How does the development of social skills of high school students take place in virtual settings? The thesis is maintained that high school students develop decoding, decision, and coding skills in virtual stages to maintain their social relationships. This study aimed to understand the development of social skills of high school students in virtual settings.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Model

It is a qualitative, phenomenological, hermeneutic investigation developed in descriptive, structural, and discussion stages. In the descriptive phase, planning activities and ethical procedures were socialized; In the structural setting, intervention protocols, contingency plans, methodological memory were foreseen, and a first approach was made to the participants to empathize and socialize the importance of the study. Likewise, the functions of the researchers were delimited both within and outside the field of study. In discussion, the results were contrasted with recent studies focused on the same line of research, arriving at definitive conclusions.

2.2. Participants

The participants were five students of the sixth cycle of Regular Basic Education (first and the second year of secondary education) with ages of 13 and 14 years, three men and two women volunteers, a teacher (director), and two teachers (without management positions).

2.3. Data Collection Tools, and Process

The technique used was the semi-structured interview, and as an instrument, a guide of questions derived from the subcategories of the study was used. Experts validated the semi-structured interview to determine its validity by triangulation (Escobar Pérez & Cuervo Martínez, 2008). The subject of social skills was subjected to an a priori matrix for the precision of the categories (skills of decoding, deciding, and coding) and subcategories (reception, perception, interpretation, search for response, selection of response, evaluation of its usefulness, execution, and self-observation), from which the guiding questions emerged. Then, they were sent via email to the participants who had a week to review them and clarify possible doubts before answering them.

2.4. Data Analysis

The results were analyzed with the professional software Atlas.ti 9, through which it was possible to process all the information resulting from the application of the interview.

2.5. Ethical considerations

Two fundamental ethical principles were considered. 1. Informed Consent (World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki, 2013): the participants voluntarily endorsed their participation through an informed consent letter where they signed the limits of their participation. 2. Confidentiality and Anonymity: (World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki, 2013) the researchers signed a letter of commitment that established the guidelines to safeguard the identity of the participants and make strictly professional use of the information. In addition, all the participants (teachers, students, and researchers) signed a letter of office where the right of everyone to know partial and final results of the study was recognized and recognized in case of awards or recognition.

3. Results

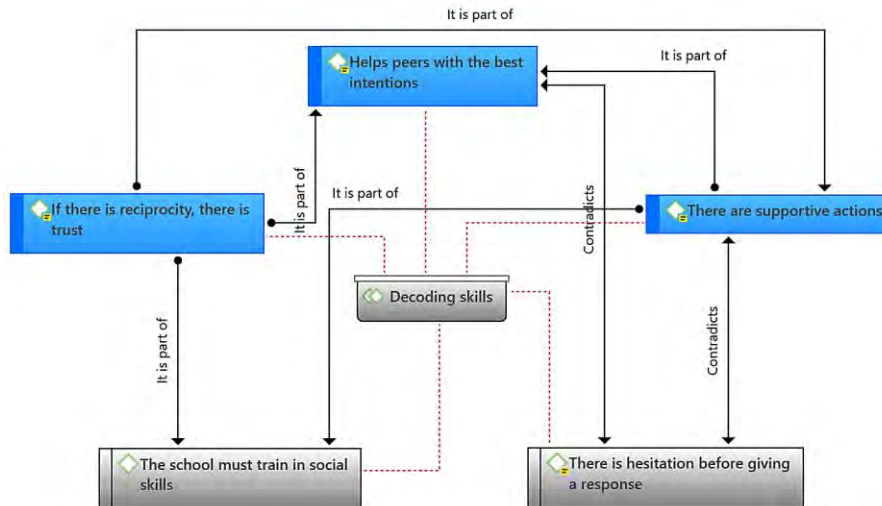


Figure 1 - Decoding network messages

In the analysis according to the level of rooting and density, for decoding skills in virtual scenarios, in scores higher than 20, it is observed that: (1) if there is reciprocity, there is trust, (2) there are solidarity actions, and (3) they help their peers with the best intention. Fourthly, it indicates that the school must train in social skills and fifthly that there is doubt before answering a question of any kind.

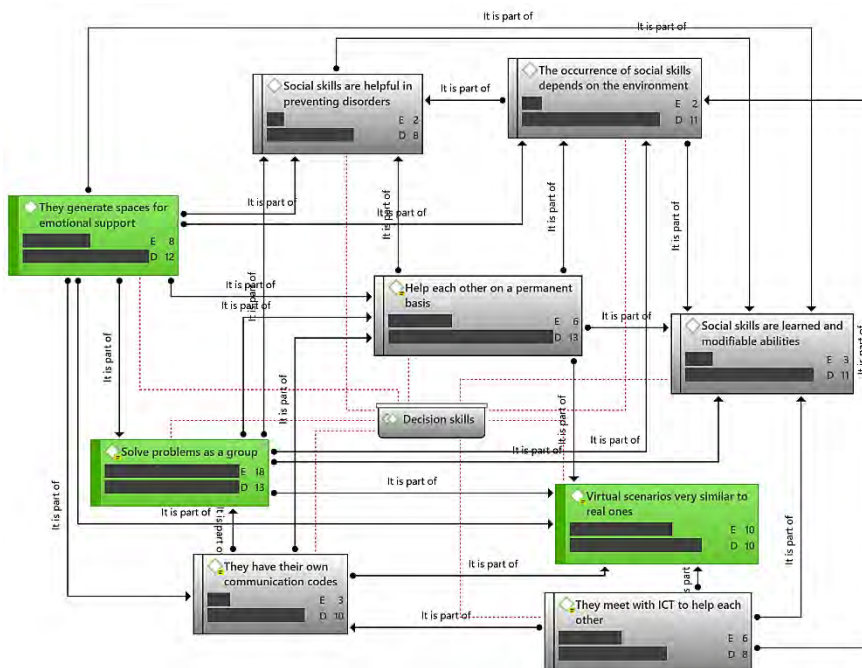


Figure 2 - Network of the decision skills category

In the analysis of decision skills, according to rooting and density of 20 or more, it was found that: (1) they solve group problems, (2) emotional support spaces are generated, (3) virtual scenarios are very similar to the real ones. Next, answers are referring to (4) they help each other permanently, (5) they meet through ICT to help each other, (6) social skills are learned and adjustable, (7) they have their communication codes, (8) the occurrence of social skills depends on the context, and (9) social skills are tools to prevent disorders.

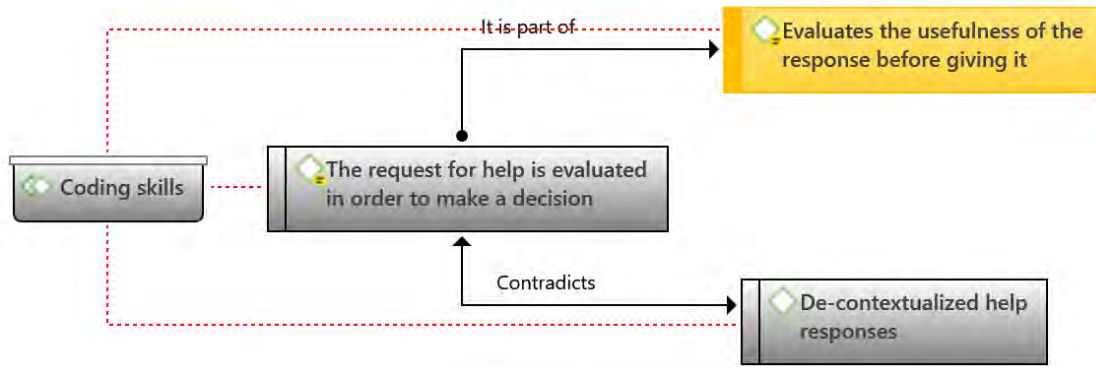


Figure 3 - Network of response coding skills category

A response with rooting and a density greater than 20 was found for coding ability: (1) the usefulness of the response is evaluated before it is given; immediately there is (2) the request for help to make a decision is evaluated, and (3) sometimes decontextualized help answers can be given.

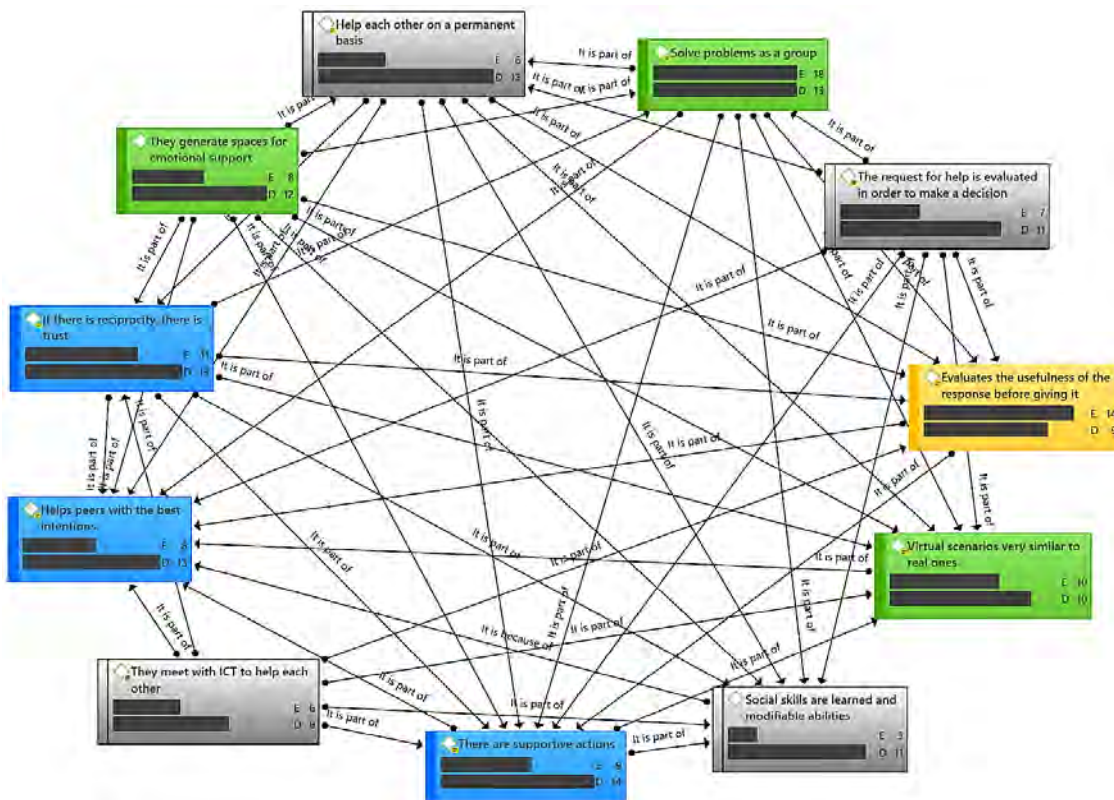


Figure 4 - Triangulation of social skills categories

In the triangulation process, coincidences were found in the following codes (1) if there is reciprocity, there is trust, (2) there are solidarity actions, (3) they help their peers with the best intention, (4) they solve problems in a group, (5) emotional support spaces are generated, (6) virtual scenarios are very similar to real ones, and (7) evaluate the usefulness of the answer before giving it.

Table 1 - Code group analysis - document

	Interview			Teachers			Theories			Totals	
	Absolute	Column-relative	Table-relative	Absolute	Column-relative	Table-relative	Absolute	Column-relative	Table-relative	Absolute	Table-relative
Coding skills	10	20.00%	8.93%	7	20.00%	6.25%	5	18.52%	4.46%	22	19.64%
Decision skills	20	40.00%	17.86%	17	48.57%	15.18%	21	77.78%	18.75%	58	51.79%
Decoding skills	20	40.00%	17.86%	11	31.43%	9.82%	1	3.70%	0.89%	32	28.57%
Totals	50	100.00%	44.64%	35	100.00%	31.25%	27	100.00%	24.11%	112	100.00%

Of all the information, 44.64% was collected from students, 31.25% from the teaching and managerial staff, and 24.11% from theoretical references. It is observed that the content of the speeches focuses with greater intensity on the second category, which is the ability to make decisions with 51.79%, which succeeds the decoding ability with 28.57% and precedes the ability coding with 19.64%.

Table 2 - Determination of the emergency index (IDE)

Code	Emergency index
Solve problems as a group	31
If there is reciprocity, there is trust	24
Evaluates the usefulness of the response before giving it	23
There are supportive actions	23
Helps peers with the best intentions	21
They generate spaces for emotional support	20
Virtual scenarios very similar to real ones	20
Help each other permanently	19
The request for help is evaluated to make a decision	18
Social skills are learned and modifiable abilities	14
They meet with ICT to help each other	14
The occurrence of social skills depends on the environment	13
They have their own communication codes	13
The school must train in social skills	11
Social skills help prevent disorders	10
There is a hesitation before giving a response	6
De-contextualized help responses	4

4. Discussion

In decoding skills in virtual scenarios, it was found that reciprocity is a priority element that generates trust and allows them to understand the needs of their colleagues, highlighting the existence of solidarity actions that imply understanding what a partner demands and responding to that demand. From the group made up of the other members of the group, the help they give is loaded with the best intention to contribute to the resolution of the claim; The requirement that the school train in social skills also appears within this category, since in a circumstance like this, relationships between classmates are essential to face the restrictions. Lastly, they recognize that lacking precise data on the person's situation requesting help; there is doubt before answering. This result is consistent with the

research of Gómez Delgado & Meza del Villar (2019), who highlighted that active listening, which is equivalent to decoding, is a social skill that, together with assertiveness, helps to resolve the problem. He reached these results after investigating the use of Flipped Classroom as a pedagogical strategy to improve the development of skills in the classroom. Along the same lines is the research by Elizalde Cordero (2017), whose study concluded that social skills are learned through inter-learning; it is necessary to decode the messages in a bidirectional way so that learning processes are generated. Similar results are presented by Zuña Macancela et al. (2020). They used virtual platforms for collaborative learning and found that all participants must adequately decode the codes that contain the information for collaboration to occur. The learners' social skills are required and when more mastery of the process, the better the learning levels.

In the decision skills generated in virtual scenarios, it was found that problem-solving is done in groups after school hours, it is also observed that these virtual spaces serve as emotional support to all their members, and since they all connect with the active cameras, they are very similar to the real ones. With less intensity and as ordinary activities of this space, it is mentioned that they help each other permanently and do so through information and communication technologies, they recognize the modification they made on their social skills, they have their own codes communication skills that appear more or less frequently depending on the context, and social skills are tools to prevent disorders. These results coincide with (D'silva Signe, 2018), who found that using social skills to incorporate ICT as a pedagogical tool for developing soft and hard skills is effective when used appropriately. Also, Soledispa Baque et al. (2021) investigated the use of MOOCS and Webinar seminars as virtual scenarios for decision-making on academic aspects. They found that this phenomenon caused an extensive and high-impact effect both for training and for cultural enrichment. The same was found (Champi Huanaco, 2018), who used virtual scenarios to develop social skills from applying a program that required decision-making after receiving instructions and found that all participants scored high at the end of the program.

In the coding skills generated in virtual settings, it was found that learners evaluate the potential usefulness of the answer before giving it; they assess a colleague's request for help to decide on how to help him, and sometimes decontextualized solutions for support may be provided that do not solve the applicant's problem. These results are consistent with those found by Caballero-González & García Valcárcel Muñoz-Repiso (2020), who found that the use of technologies facilitates digital skills, that is, the coding of responses, to solve the challenges of this century. Along the same lines, De Mello et al. (2019) investigated the use of ICT, social skills, and life satisfaction and found associations of friendship/empathy, violence/self-control coded responses. Likewise, Cruz-García (2020), in a two-year investigation, found that virtual settings are spaces where reflection, debate, and other competencies are promoted. Espinoza Freire et al (2020) reported similar findings, who specified that skills constitute the basic structure for forming competencies and capacities.

After a year of using the platforms and devices, there is a perception that virtual scenarios are very similar to real ones, there are no restrictions of any nature to talk about a diversity of topics, they can develop almost all the activities that They were designed in the presence, within them joking, singing, telling jokes. Therefore, mandatory isolation is no longer a limitation; What's more, due to the ubiquity of communication, they can meet from anywhere they are and at any time. The difficulties they usually have to revolve around going to bed late, doing housework, arranging their personal space, not having time for leisure and privacy, that leads them to meet and express their frustrations that they cannot bear to be locked up all day, however, the comment of their classmates, in the sense that everyone goes through the same thing and the best way to solve the problem is by obeying the parents who want the best for them, is of great help.

Adolescents who studied together since primary school and commonly knew their homes had consolidated stronger bonds of friendship. Among them, there is the consideration of being significant people, in that sense, the advice of a friend. At the same time, a companion of Studies regarding family events represents a lot of value and comforts each other. The narratives of a manager and two

teachers show that students use social skills to solve problems they do in a group. In uncertainty, concern, or confusion, they resort to the companions to seek adequate answers to their demands. The encounters in virtual settings that take place outside of school hours constitute powerful spaces for emotional support that allow them to overcome stressful situations, duels and, in addition, offer guidance on how to find answers to experiential concerns. The results from the theoretical perspective agree that social skills in virtual settings generate spaces for emotional support, which are valuable in confinement situations. It is also agreed that social skills are competencies learned in some instances. They are susceptible to modification if the circumstances require; they also specify that their occurrence depends on environmental factors and the environment.

Social skills in virtual settings require technologies as necessary elements for relationships, information, and communication (Lazo et al., 2016). In that order, adolescents report, first of all, that they resort to them to drink. Decisions on issues that concern the group, friendship issues are a priority, and then schoolchildren appear. Second, virtual scenarios are spaces for understanding the requests for help received from colleagues; here, the term understanding refers to the understanding of psychological phenomena that colleagues go through and not listening to a message. Third, the elaboration of a collectively constructed response and its subsequent communication to the person who requires it is mentioned.

4.1. Theorization of social skills in virtual settings

Adolescents use their social skills in virtual settings to maintain the trust generated in the presence, which is characterized by reciprocity, solidarity actions are produced that allow them to maintain cohesion, the help that is given is marked by the best intention with which they do, virtuality will enable them to solve problems in a group way and turn, becomes a space of emotional support for situations that affect the affective world, since virtual rooms are very similar to real ones when they are known in advance. Its usefulness is evaluated before issuing a response to the group's demands or one of its members. Therefore, it is confirmed that high school students develop decoding, decision, and coding skills in virtual settings to maintain their social relationships.

5. Conclusions

Reciprocity is a priority element that generates trust and allows participants to understand the needs of their colleagues, highlighting the existence of solidarity actions, accompanied by good intentions to contribute to the resolution of individual and group demands.

Problem-solving is done in groups after school hours. It is also observed that these virtual spaces serve as emotional support for all their members. As they all connect with the active cameras, scenarios very similar to the real ones are generated.

Learners evaluate the potential usefulness of the answer before giving it; They assess a colleague's request for help to decide how to help him. On occasions, decontextualized answers for use may be provided that do not solve the applicant's problem.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors do not declare conflicts of interest.

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