

# Use of Virtual Social Networks and Social Skills in University Students from Northern Peru

*Cynthia Milagros Apaza-Panca<sup>1</sup>, Polan Franbalt Ferró-Gonzales<sup>2</sup>, José Oscar Huanca Frías<sup>3</sup>, Lucio Ticona Carrizales<sup>3</sup>, María Gregoria Sánchez Prieto<sup>1</sup>, Pedro Jesús Maquera Luque<sup>4</sup>, and Silverio Apaza Apaza<sup>2</sup>*

*<sup>1</sup> Universidad Nacional de Frontera, Sullana, Perú,*

*<sup>2</sup> Universidad Nacional del Altiplano, Puno, Perú,*

*<sup>3</sup> Universidad Nacional de Juliaca, Juliaca, Perú,*

*<sup>4</sup> Universidad Nacional de Moquegua, Moquegua, Perú,*

## ABSTRACT

The use of online social networks is giving rise to a line of research focused on the phenomenon of addiction that occurs due to the intense use of technologies and the Internet. The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between the use of virtual social networks and social skills in university students from northern Peru. The design was non-experimental, cross-sectional, correlational. A survey was applied as a technique and the instruments were two questionnaires, the Test of addiction to the use of social networks-ARS and a Test scale of social skills-EHS. It was found that 71.7% of students showed a low level of obsession with the use of virtual social networks, 27.2% medium level, while 1.1% high level. Concluding that addiction to social networks has a significant relationship with social skills; that is, the greater the use of social networks, the greater the development of social skills.

**Keywords:** Addiction, college students, social skills, social media.

## INTRODUCTION

Forms of social interaction and the exchange or consumption of information have radically changed in recent years; but if we add to this the changes, in some traumatic cases, caused by the Covid-19 pandemic towards our way of thinking and acting, we move to another dimension in terms of the communication of information and the consumption of that information (Herrera-Peco, 2021). We must not forget that we live in a hyper-connected society in which the existing communication paths between people have changed very clearly due to the widespread use of the Internet, and the use of social networks in particular.

The Internet is a technology that has especially impacted young people and has provided them with many benefits, but some people become obsessed with the Internet, are unable to control its use and can endanger their work and relationships (Jasso Medrano, López Rosales and Díaz Loving, 2017). Internet use and abuse are related to psychosocial variables, such as psychological vulnerability, stressors, and family and social support (Echeburúa and De Corral, 2010).

The concept of "Internet addiction" has been proposed as an explanation to understand the loss of control and the harmful use of this technology. Preventive strategies should be programmed both within the family and at school on the basis of risk factors and the demographic characteristics of the subjects. The psychological treatment of choice is stimulus control and gradual exposure to the Internet, followed by a relapse prevention program (Echeburúa and De Corral, 2010).

The development of social networks today turns on the main channel of communication and information for many individuals in contemporary societies. Social networks became a paradigm of hypertext, in which the written word, image and audiovisual material manage to keep their users informed and entertained, thus merging the mass and personal media, entertainment and practical (Díaz Gandasegui, 2011).

Social networks are the paradigm of the information society and simultaneously of the network society, which invites us to ask ourselves: How does the concept of friendship vary with social networks? Are social networks able to offer a different version of physical society in a virtual space or does it simply reproduce it? Is the information and communication enhanced in social networks eroded by the fear and problems that the violation of our privacy generates? Therefore, today, they constitute today one of the main sources of leisure among young generations and as a of the greatest sources of wealth and power in society (Díaz Gandasegui, 2011).

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram are some of the most used networks especially by young people, who dedicate their use more to uploading or commenting on photos, taking into account that the virtual platform Facebook is the tool par excellence that not only keeps us in Contact with friends, also allows us to expand our list of friends, entertain ourselves with games and consultations on various topics of interest. The addiction to the use of the networks may be due to the fact that it initially reduces stress, which brings with it a psychological dependence and an exhaustive need to connect frequently, this addiction can be of the same magnitude as a person addicted to alcohol or any Another addiction, people with some type of addiction tend to follow

a frequent pattern, consume to feel good and feel anxiety when they stop using (Araujo, 2016).

When referring social skills, we mean the set of skills that are relate to social behavior of people in its various manifestations and daily activities. Therefore, the term ability is used to highlight the personality, however, it is intended to show that they are a set of very specific responses that are directly associated with stimuli that are acquired through learning processes.

(Rojas *et al.*, 2018) developed a systematic review of the scientific publications available in the databases PubMed, Web of Science, EBSCOhost and Scielo, between the period 2007-2017, on the excessive use of social networks and Internet addiction in adolescents, the review highlights that the scientific community has focused its interest on the capacity of social networking sites to provoke addictive tendencies in the individual, revealing a relationship between both concepts (social networks and internet addiction).

On the other hand, (Challco, Rodríguez and Jaimes, 2016) determined the relationship between the risk of addiction to social networks, self-esteem and self-control in secondary-level students of a public educational institution, finding that there is a significant inverse relationship between the risk of addiction To social networks, self-esteem and self-control, that is, the lower self-esteem and self-control, the greater the risk of addiction to social networks, therefore, as students show insecurity, isolation, little self-control over their behaviors, the greater will be the risk of addiction to social networks.

At the level of university students, (Mendoza Lipa, 2018) determined a weak negative relationship between excessive use of Internet social networks and performance, therefore, there is no statistically significant relationship between the use that students dedicate to social networks and their academic performance, however, they observed that mild addiction could become a factor that compromises their development in college, so it is expected to be implemented mechanisms for monitoring and reflection on the correct use of social networks.

Another study at the level of high school and high school students is that of (Cabero-Almenara, Pérez-Díez de los Ríos and Valencia-Ortiz, 2019), who, in application of the Social Media Addiction Scale Student Form (SMAS-SF) instrument originally elaborated by (Şahin, 2018), managed to identify four factors that could explain the addiction or constant use of social networks: satisfaction / tolerance, problems, obsession to be informed and need / obsession to be connected.

From all of the above, the important thing is to recognize that the field of action and the approach have to enter to a virtual environment in which many people can be reach out and helped (Herrera-Peco, 2021). Starting from this premise, in what way does the use of social networks influence the development of social skills in university students? We propose the objective of determining the relationship between the use of virtual social networks and social skills in university students of the northern Peru.

## METHODOLOGY

The study considered a quantitative approach. The design was non-experimental, cross-sectional, correlational. The population consisted of 931 university students

from the III to the X academic cycle, for the sample a probability sampling of a simple random type was chosen, being made up of 272 public university students (65% were women and 35% men, between 18 and 22 years old). The technique was the survey, and the instrument the questionnaire. The Social Media Use Addiction Test-ARS, which consists of 24 items, and the Social Skills Scale Test-EHS, which consists of 33 items, were applied, just as (Ikemiyashiro Higa, 2017) did.

An online form was applied between January 01 and 15, 2021, with the prior informed consent of the participants to a sample made up of 272 undergraduate university students from northern Peru. The basic information requested was only about gender, and of course the items from the 2 tests. Subsequently, the data was processed in the statistical program SPSS version 23.0, in order to be analyzed and exposed in the results and conclusions of the study.

## RESULTS

The data showed that young people, who participated in the present study, spend more and more hours on social networks and that they also spend more time than they are aware of on mobile devices, mainly in two networks-industries that become oligopolistic: Instagram and WhatsApp. Likewise, the study demonstrates the dichotomous relationship between awareness of an addictive and unproductive use of time on mobile phones, and the very need to be on these platforms (Giraldo-Luque and Fernández-Rovira, 2020).

After the application of the instruments, the following results were reached:

**Table 1.** Measures of central tendency by variables

Variables	N	Rank	Average	Standard deviation
Virtual social networks	272	81	31.36	16.225
Social skills	272	86	45.60	17.919
Valid N (according to list)	272			

According to table 1. It can be seen in relation to the variable use of social networks that the average score is 31.36, placing it at a low level of addiction; while the standard deviation was 16.225. Likewise, it can be observed that in the social skills variable an average of 45.60 was obtained, placing it at a medium level in reference to social skills; while the standard deviation was 17.919.

**Table 2.** Measures of central tendency of the dimensions of the virtual social networks' variable

Variables	N	Rank	Average	Standard deviation
Obsession for virtual social networks	272	30	10.75	5.945
Lack of personal control in using virtual networks	272	30	11.93	5.368

Excessive use of social networks	272	31	8.69	6.299
----------------------------------	-----	----	------	-------

According to table 2, it can be observed that the obsession with virtual social networks is at an average of 10.75, which is at a low level; Likewise, in the lack of personal control in the use of virtual networks, he finds an average of 11.93, which is equivalent to a low level; finally, the excessive use of social networks with an average of 8.69 is also at a low level.

**Table 3.** Levels of addiction to social networks of the obsession factor for virtual social networks

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	195	71.7%
Medium	74	27.2%
High	3	1.1%
Total	272	100%

According to Table 3, it can be observed that 71.7% of university students in northern Peru have a low level of obsession with virtual social networks; followed by 27.2% who show a medium level, and finally 1.1% show a high rank in the obsession with virtual social networks.

**Table 4.** Levels of addiction to social networks of the factor lack of personal control in the use of virtual networks

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	172	63.2%
Medium	98	36.0%
High	2	0.7%
Total	272	100%

According to table 4, it can be observed that 63.2% of university students in northern Peru have a low level of the lack of personal control factor in the use of virtual networks; followed by 36% who show a medium level, and finally 0.7% who show a high rank in the lack of personal control in the use of virtual social networks.

**Table 5.** Levels of addiction to social networks of the excessive use of social networks factor.

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	218	80.1%
Medium	50	18.4%
High	4	1.5%
Total	272	100%

According to table 5, it can be observed that 80.1% of university students in northern Peru have a low level of the excessive use of social networks factor; followed by 18.4% who show a medium level, and finally 1.5% who show a high rank in the excessive use of social networks.

**Table 6.** Normality test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistical	Degrees of freedom	Sig.	Statistical	Degrees of freedom	Sig.
Virtual social networks	.106	272	.000	.940	272	.000
Social skills	.052	272	.071	.991	272	.088

<sup>a</sup> Lilliefors significance correction

Since ( $p=0.088$ ) > ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), then  $H_0$  is accepted, which is why it is concluded that the data have a normal distribution.

**Table 7.** Correlation between virtual social networks and social skills

		Skills	Network
Social skills	Pearson's correlation	1	.406**
	Sig. (bilateral)		.000
	N	272	272
Virtual social networks	Pearson's correlation	.406**	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000	
	N	272	272

\*\* The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

As ( $p=0.000$ ) < ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), then the  $H_a$  is accepted, indicating that there is a relationship between the use of virtual social networks and social skills in university students from northern Peru, 2021. This means that the greater the use of social networks, the greater the development of social skills.

**Table 8.** Correlation between social skills factors with virtual social networks.

	Correlation coefficient	Sig. (bilateral)
Self-expression	.358**	.000
Defense of own rights	.398**	.000
Angry expression	.303**	.000
Say "No" and cut interactions	.351**	.000

Make requests	.304**	.000
Initiate interactions	.315**	.000

According to table 8, it is observed that the factors of social skills such as self-expression, defense of one's rights, expression of anger, saying “No” and cutting off interactions, making requests and initiating interactions are related to social networks virtual.

## DISCUSSION

These results provide conclusive support for the significant relationship between addiction to social networks and social skills; that is, the greater the use of social networks, the greater the development of social skills. Similar results have been obtained by (Tapia-Gutiérrez and Cubo-Delgado, 2017) where there is a significant relationship between the use of social networks and social skills in fifth-year high school students from a private school.

Likewise, similar to (Cornetero Conde, 2019), which found that 51.8% of the students show a medium level of obsession with the use of social networks, in addition, important factors were observed, such as lack of control, obsession and excessive use. Along the same lines, (Chira Huaman, 2020) in his research, it was found that addiction to the use of social networks influences other factors in our life, manifesting obsession and lack of personal control.

Contrary to our results, there is (Domínguez Vergara and Ybañez Carranza, 2016), who found that addiction to Internet social networks has a significant relationship with social skills, which indicates that, with greater addiction to social networks, it shows a low level of social skills in adolescents. In addition, the study of (Delgado A *et al.*, 2016) it also has an inverse and statistically significant relationship between social skills and the use of virtual social networks in students from a public and a private university.

Both our results and that of (Peris, Maganto and Garaigordobil, 2018) allow us to detect the risk of addiction to social networks and the Internet in the similar dimensions studied. In such a way, corrective interventions can be carried out in a timely manner.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study presents one of the first experiences in determining the relationship between the use of social networks and social skills in university students in northern Peru. It was concluded that addiction to social networks has a significant relationship ( $p = 0.000$ ) with social skills; which means, the greater the use of social networks, the greater the development of social skills. Likewise, it was confirmed that social skills factors such as self-expression, defense of one's rights, expression of anger, saying

“No” and cutting off interactions, making requests and initiating interactions are related to virtual social networks.

## REFERENCES

- Araujo, E. (2016) ‘Indicadores de adicción a las redes sociales en universitarios de Lima’, *Revista Digital De Investigación En Docencia Universitaria*.
- Cabero-Almenara, J., Pérez-Díez de los Ríos, J. L. and Valencia-Ortiz, R. (2019) ‘Escala para medir la adicción de estudiantes a las redes sociales’, *Convergencia Revista de Ciencias Sociales*. doi: 10.29101/crcs.v27i0.11834.
- Challco, K., Rodríguez, S. and Jaimes, J. (2016) ‘Riesgo de adicción a redes sociales, autoestima y autocontrol en estudiantes de secundaria.’, *Revista Científica de Ciencias de la Salud*.
- Chira Huaman, F. Y. (2020) ‘Adicción a las redes sociales en estudiantes de un colegio nacional de Huancavelica’. Available at: <http://repositorio.usil.edu.pe/handle/USIL/10072>.
- Cornetero Conde, W. J. (2019) *Adicción a redes sociales en estudiantes universitarios del séptimo y octavo ciclo de la facultad de psicología de una universidad privada en Lima Metropolitana, Ayañ*. Universidad Inca Garcilaso de la Vega.
- Delgado A *et al.* (2016) ‘Las habiliaddes sociales y el uso de redes sociales virtuales en estudiantes universitarios de lima metropolitana. Revista de la Facultad de Psicología [revista en Internet] 2016 [acceso 10 de febrero de 2018]; (19): 55-75.’ Available at: <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/1471/147149810004.pdf>.
- Díaz Gandasegui, V. (2011) ‘Mitos y realidades de las redes sociales’, *Prisma Social: revista de ciencias sociales*.
- Domínguez Vergara, J. A. and Ybañez Carranza, J. (2016) ‘Adicción a las redes sociales y habilidades sociales en estudiantes de una institución educativa privada’, *Propósitos y Representaciones*. doi: 10.20511/pyr2016.v4n2.122.
- Echeburúa, E. and De Corral, P. (2010) ‘Adicción a las nuevas tecnologías y a las redes sociales en jóvenes: un nuevo reto’, *Adicciones*. doi: 10.20882/adicciones.196.
- Giraldo-Luque, S. and Fernández-Rovira, C. (2020) ‘Redes sociales y consumo digital en jóvenes universitarios: economía de la atención y oligopolios de la comunicación en el siglo XXI’, *Profesional de la información*, pp. 1–15. doi: 10.3145/epi.2020.sep.28.
- Herrera-Peco, I. (2021) ‘Health Communication and social media: We need more nurses’, *Revista Científica de la Sociedad Espanola de Enfermeria Neurologica*, 53(xxxx), pp. 1–4. doi: 10.1016/j.sedene.2021.03.001.
- Ikemiyashiro Higa, J. (2017) *2017\_Ikemiyashiro\_Uso-de-las-redes-sociales-virtuales*. Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola.
- Jasso Medrano, J. L., López Rosales, F. and Díaz Loving, R. (2017) ‘Conducta adictiva a las redes sociales y su relación con el uso problemático del móvil’, *Acta de Investigación Psicológica*, 7(3), pp. 2832–2838. doi: 10.1016/j.aiprr.2017.11.001.
- Mendoza Lipa, J. R. (2018) ‘Uso excesivo de redes sociales de internet y rendimiento



- académico en estudiantes de cuarto año de la carrera de psicología UMSA', *Educación Superior*.
- Peris, M., Maganto, C. and Garaigordobil, M. (2018) 'Escala de riesgo de adicción-adolescente a las redes sociales e internet: fiabilidad y validez (ERA-RSI)', *Revista de psicología Clínica con Niños y Adolescentes*. doi: 10.21134/rpcna.2018.05.2.4.
- Rojas, C. *et al.* (2018) 'Adicción a Internet y uso de redes sociales en adolescentes: una revisión', *Revista española de drogodependencias*.
- Şahin, C. (2018) 'Social Media Addiction Scale-Student Form: The Reliability and Validity Study.', *Tojet - The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 17(1), pp. 169–182.
- Tapia-Gutiérrez, C. P. and Cubo-Delgado, S. (2017) 'Relevant social skills: Perceptions of multiple educational actors', *Magis*, 9(19), pp. 133–148. doi: 10.11144/Javeriana.m9-19.hsrp.