

The impact of COVID-19 on the quality of life of Latin Americans in New Zealand

El impacto de COVID-19 en la calidad de vida de los latinoamericanos en Nueva Zelanda
 impacto da COVID-19 na qualidade de vida dos latino-americanos na Nova Zelândia

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Abstract

Introduction: This research explored how COVID-19 has negatively affected the quality of life of Latin Americans in New Zealand. No study has yet been conducted on this topic. **Objective:** This is a pilot study that describes the effects of the pandemic on the quality of life of the Latino community in that country. According to academic literature, the concept of quality of life is broad and encompasses objective and subjective factors. **Methodology:** This is a qualitative study that used digital ethnography as a methodological approach. In this way, participant observation through Facebook (as digital ethnography) and semi-structured interviews were used as data collection methods. Ten Latin Americans from Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela participated in this study. Participants were recruited through Facebook ads. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data produced by this research. **Results:** The findings of this study show that COVID-19 has not seriously affected the quality of life of the participants. **Conclusions:** Although COVID-19 has somewhat impacted the quality of life of Latin Americans in New Zealand, they think that their current quality of life in that country is positive, happy and pleasant.

Keywords: COVID-19; Latin Americans; New Zealand; Quality of life.

Resumen

Introducción: Esta investigación exploró cómo el COVID-19 ha afectado negativamente la calidad de vida de los latinoamericanos en Nueva Zelanda. Hasta el momento no se ha realizado ningún estudio sobre este tema. **Objetivo:** Este es un estudio piloto que describe los efectos de la pandemia en la calidad de vida de la comunidad latina en ese país. De acuerdo con la literatura académica, el concepto de calidad de vida es amplio y abarca factores objetivos y subjetivos. **Metodología:** Este es un estudio cualitativo que utilizó la etnografía digital como enfoque metodológico. De esta manera, se utilizaron la observación de los participantes a través de Facebook (como etnografía digital) y entrevistas semiestructuradas como métodos de recolección de datos. En este estudio participaron diez latinoamericanos procedentes de Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú y Venezuela. Los participantes fueron reclutados a través de anuncios de Facebook. Se utilizó el análisis temático para analizar los datos cualitativos producidos por esta investigación. **Resultados:** Los hallazgos de este estudio muestran que el COVID-19 no ha afectado gravemente la calidad de vida de los participantes. **Conclusiones:** A pesar de que el COVID-19 ha impactado de alguna manera la calidad de vida de los latinoamericanos en Nueva Zelanda, estos consideran que su calidad de vida actual en ese país es positiva, feliz y placentera.

Palabras clave: Calidad de vida; COVID-19; Latinoamericanos; Nueva Zelanda

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Resumo

Introdução: Esta pesquisa explorou como a COVID-19 afetou negativamente a qualidade de vida dos latino-americanos na Nova Zelândia. Até o momento, nenhum estudo foi realizado sobre esse tópico. **Objetivo:** Este é um estudo piloto que descreve os efeitos da pandemia na qualidade de vida da comunidade latina naquele país. De acordo com a literatura acadêmica, o conceito de qualidade de vida é amplo e engloba fatores objetivos e subjetivos. **Metodologia:** este é um estudo qualitativo que usou a etnografia digital como abordagem metodológica. Assim, a observação participante via Facebook (como etnografia digital) e entrevistas semiestruturadas foram usadas como métodos de coleta de dados. Dez latino-americanos da Argentina, Colômbia, Equador, Peru e Venezuela participaram deste estudo. Os participantes foram recrutados por meio de anúncios no Facebook. A análise temática foi usada para analisar os dados qualitativos produzidos por esta pesquisa. **Resultados:** os achados deste estudo mostram que a COVID-19 não afetou seriamente a qualidade de vida dos participantes. **Conclusões:** Apesar do fato de a COVID-19 ter afetado um pouco a qualidade de vida dos latino-americanos na Nova Zelândia, eles consideram sua qualidade de vida atual na Nova Zelândia positiva, feliz e agradável.

Palavras-chave: Qualidade de vida; COVID-19; latino-americanos; Nova Zelândia.



1 . INTRODUCTION

Numerous factors affect the quality of life of refugees and migrants in New Zealand ; some of these factors are discrimination, language barrier, unemployment, and socioeconomic problems among others (Beaglehole, 1988; Butcher et al., 2006; Department of Labour, 2004; Neilson, 2019; Treen, 2013). Discrimination is the main factor that affects the quality of life of these foreigners in New Zealand (Earley, 2019; Revell, 2012; Sánchez, 2016; Zhang, 2014).

The literature review has identified an important gap in research on the impact of COVID-19 on the quality of life of the Latin American community in New Zealand. Although some articles have indeed been published about the life of Latin Americans in New Zealand (Hoffmann, 2016; Pérez, 2012), research has not yet been published on the impact of COVID-19 on the quality of life of these people in that country. Therefore, this is the first research on the topic that contributes to filling the existing gap in the academic literature.

In addition to seeking to explore how COVID-19 has impacted the quality of life of the Latin American community in that South Pacific country, the study seeks to investigate the perception of the Latin American community in that country on how the pandemic has impacted their lives in economic, social and emotional aspects. This study makes an original contribution and provides new knowledge on the research topic. For the reasons already mentioned, this study answers the following research question:

How has COVID-19 impacted the quality of life of Latin Americans in New Zealand?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Quality of life is the theoretical framework that accompanies this research. The term quality of life began to be used after the Second World War in the United States by economic researchers who sought to understand the living conditions of North Americans after the war (Campbell, 1981; Meeberg, 1993; Urzúa & Caqueo-Úrizar, 2012). Later, in the 1960s, many researchers in sociology, psychology, and economics began researching quality of life (Campbell et al., 1976; Haas, 1999). In this way, the term quality of life became very popular among the academic and scientific community (Campbell et al., 1976; Haas, 1999). One of the promoters of the concept of quality of life was the American psychologist Abraham Maslow, who between 1943 and 1987 published several articles on his theory of what, according to him, is a good life and the ideal life (Maslow, 1943; 1954; 1962; 1970a; 1970b; 1987).

These theories of Maslow about an ideal life and a good life are known as “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs” (Maslow, 1962; Ventegodt et al., 2003a; 2003b; 2003c). Maslow (1962) states that to have “the ideal life” or a “good life” (that is, to have quality of life), it is necessary to satisfy the eight needs that make up his “Hierarchy of Needs”, which are: 1) physiological needs, 2) needs for security and tranquility, 3) needs for belonging to oneself and love, 4) needs for self-esteem, 5) cognitive needs for knowing and understanding, 6) aesthetic needs, 7) self-actualization needs and 8) the needs for transcendence in the world (Maslow, 1943; 1954; 1962; 1970a; 1970b; 1987).

Although Maslow’s research (1943; 1954; 1962; 1970a; 1970b; 1987) is quite old, it is still used to



support much more recent research on quality of life (Chan; 2018; Urzúa & Caqueo -Urizar, 2012), and This is because Maslow's theories are the ones that best explain the concept of quality of life in a broader, more detailed and deeper way (Ventegodt et al., 2003a; 2003c). It could be said that after Maslow, other researchers on quality of life have only replicated, repeated or interpreted Maslow's theories (1943; 1954; 1962; 1970a; 1970b; 1987). The above suggests that, since Maslow to date, there have not been great advances in the definition of the concept of quality of life.

For some researchers, quality of life is a purely subjective concept (Diener & Diener, 1995; Veenhoven, 2008). By subjective we understand that it is based on the opinions and feelings of each person (Ortiz, 2013). For example, Zhang (2014), explains that the subjective approach to quality of life "focuses on individuals' personal experiences and perceptions of their own life" (p. 31). The basis of this subjective approach is that quality of life can be defined by life stories, in terms of feelings or cognitive satisfactions. Likewise, Campbell (1972) states: "Quality of life should be in the eye of the beholder" (p. 442). Marans and Stimson (2011) also argue that the definition of quality of life could be based on personal opinion, and that, therefore, it would be a merely subjective concept, defined by each individual according to their way of thinking and feeling. Therefore, according to Marans and Stimson (2011), what quality of life means for one person may not mean the same for another; each individual has their concept of quality of life, and this leads us to think that there is no one erroneous response regarding the definition that each person gives to the concept of quality of life (Diener & Diener, 1995; Veenhoven, 2008).

On the other hand, some researchers think that quality of life is an objective concept (Georgiou & Hancock, 2009; Marans & Stimson, 2011; Peet & Hartwick, 2015). Objective quality of life "involves tangible objects such as finances, employment, place of residence (home ownership), education levels, and social or physical environment" (Georgiou & Hancock, 2009, p. 5). It is seen then that there are people who think that quality of life is a merely subjective concept, and there are those who believe that it is an objective concept. However, some researchers and organizations believe that quality of life is a combination of objective and subjective factors (Bayram et al., 2011; Bowling, 2007; Ferris, 2004; Walker, 2005; Zhang, 2014). For example, the World Health Organization (1997) defines quality of life as:

An individual's perception of his position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which he lives and about his goals, expectations, standards, and concerns. It is a very broad and complex concept that encompasses several factors, such as psychological state, physical health, social and cultural relationships, and personal beliefs. (p.1).

Likewise, Hu and Das (2019) affirm that quality of life means enjoying economic and psychological well-being. Nag and Jain (2019) say that quality of life involves health, well-being, and positive life experiences. For his part, Petroczy (2019) states that quality of life means economic and social development. On the other hand, Urzúa and Caqueo-Urizar (2012) say that quality of life is the living conditions, satisfaction with life or life experience. Ventegodt et al. (2003a; 2003c) define the quality of life as the existential satisfaction produced by economic resources and spiritual and religious factors. Therefore, literature suggests that quality of life means living satisfied and happy with our condition and lifestyle. This means that the person is satisfied with his or her socioeconomic, cultural, mental and spiritual status. It can be seen then that all the definitions found in the literature on quality of life are aligned with Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943; 1954; 1962; 1970a; 1970b; 1987).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 *Ethnography*

Ethnography is the methodological approach of this study. Ethnography is the study of people or cultural groups, where the researcher uses observation and interviews to analyse the social behaviour of the participants, their beliefs, and the way they live in the community (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019; O'Leary, 2014; Revell, 2012; According to O'Leary (2014), ethnography is "the study of cultural groups in an attempt to understand, describe, and interpret their way of life from the point of view of their participants" (p. 133). Similarly, Revell (2012) states: "Ethnography is a qualitative approach in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviours, beliefs and language of a cultural exchange group" (p. 65). Singer (2009) agrees that ethnography is related to the study of people, their beliefs, behaviours, culture, and their way of seeing the world. Furthermore, Reeves et al. (2008) argue: "Ethnography is the study of social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organizations, and communities" (p. 512).

It is clear that, for many scholars, ethnography is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand a group's perceptions and interpretations of the topic being investigated (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019; O'Leary, 2014; Revell, 2012; Singer, 2009). In this way, when seeking to know the personal point of view of the members of an ethnic group about their way of seeing and understanding the world, ethnography is an appropriate methodological approach to use in this type of study because it is based mainly on the subjective approach (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019; O'Leary, 2014; Revell, 2012; Singer, 2009). Consequently, it is not surprising that many studies based on the participants' perceptions and interpretations of the topic under investigation use ethnography as a methodological approach (Elmir et al., 2010; Mohedas et al., 2014; Moss et al., 2006; Raaflaub y Talbert, 2010).

Regarding data collection methods, Hammersley and Atkinson (2019) argue that ethnographic studies involve the use of three main data collection methods, such as participant observation, interviews, and document analysis. "What we understand by documents are materials, generally paper or electronic" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019, p. 125). Similarly, Mohedas et al. (2014) state that the design of an ethnographic study should include the use of structured or semi-structured interviews, observations, informal conversations and surveys. Therefore, given the above, the ethnographic methodology fits very well with the purpose of this research.

3.2 *Data collection methods*

3.2.1 *Semi-structured interviews*

The findings presented in this research work are based on 10 semi-structured interviews that were carried out with 10 participants from Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. These 10 interviews were conducted between June and July 2022. Each interview lasted approximately forty minutes. The interviews were conducted in Spanish, the participant's native language.

3.2.2 *Digital Observation through Facebook*

Digital observation through Facebook was my second method of data collection for this research.



This digital observation included an analysis of participants' Facebook posts about how COVID-19 impacted their quality of life in New Zealand. For six weeks (between June and July 2022), I observed participants' posts on Facebook, with their permission (Beneito-Montagut et al., 2017; Capobianco, 2015; Fernández et al., 2015; Frömming et al., 2017). This observation period lasted more than fifty hours, for an average of five hours per participant. Before starting this method of digital ethnography, participants accepted my 'friend request' on Facebook. My observation on Facebook was based on analysing all the participants' posts on this digital platform, to understand how they perceive the impact of COVID-19 on their quality of life in New Zealand. Once the observation period had passed, I proceeded to analyse the selected notes through document analysis (Bowen, 2009).

3.3 Sampling and Recruitment

To promote voluntary participation in this research, I created advertisements to recruit participants. I circulated these ads on Facebook, especially on the Facebook pages of Latin American communities in New Zealand. In this way, select the first 10 participants who offered to take part in the research and who met the selection criteria. Among the 10 participants, we found six women and four men with an average age of forty-two years; they are three Argentines, two Colombians, one Ecuadorian, one Peruvian and three Venezuelans. The participants in this research were selected according to the following criteria:

1. Be a former Latin American migrant.
2. Be a resident or citizen of New Zealand.
3. Have lived in New Zealand for at least three years.
4. Over twenty-one years of age.
5. First generation immigrant.

3.4 Analysis of data

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data produced by this research (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Fernández, 2016; O'Leary, 2014) "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 6). In this research work, three themes that emerged from the thematic analysis are presented, these are 1) the economic impact of COVID-19 on quality of life, 2) the social impact of COVID-19 on quality of life and 3) the mental and emotional impact of COVID-19 on quality of life. These three themes are presented below with a brief analysis and discussion.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The economic impact of COVID-19 on quality of life

It is no secret that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused economic problems for many people around the world. For example, in New Zealand, due to the pandemic, many entrepreneurs had to close their companies because they went bankrupt, and as a result, a large number of workers lost their jobs. It could be said that the pandemic created in this sense a domino effect of a global economic crisis. The-



re is no doubt that this economic crisis affects or impacts in some way the quality of life of the planet's inhabitants. For this reason, participants in this research were asked: How has COVID-19 impacted your quality of economic life? Well, let's see their answers. A forty-two year old woman from Argentina who has lived in New Zealand since 2002 said:

I can tell you that COVID-19 has affected the economic quality of life of many people I know, but thank God, my quality of life has not been considerably hit by the pandemic bug, you see...you know that everyone on the planet has been a victim of COVID-19, but as I tell you, I am not in a bad way financially... yes, it is true that when the pandemic was in full swing my economic income was reduced by about 15%, but that did not affect my life much. Quality of life [...]. I would say my quality of life in New Zealand is still excellent. (Participant 3)

For his part, a man from Colombia says something very similar to what was mentioned by the participant from Argentina. He says the following:

Brother, the truth is that things have not been completely easy, so I'm not going to tell you a lie, but thank God, COVID did not harm me as much as other people... for example, when we were in quarantine the situation got a little difficult because my salary was reduced a little, but I can say that I did not experience serious economic problems, I can even say that I was well...compared to other people in Colombia I have been very well [...]. My quality of life here in New Zealand is very good...I can't complain, brother, complaining would be a sin because I have everything I need and I feel satisfied. (Participant 7)

Another participant from Venezuela gave us a very similar answer to the two previous answers, she says:

Gosh...what can I tell you? Look, notice that this unfortunate pandemic caused me some small financial problems, but it could not take away my job nor did it cause me serious financial problems. Thank God my quality of life here in New Zealand is optimal, positive...very good. The pandemic did not negatively impact my financial situation. Financially I am very well and that is why I can help my family in Venezuela financially. (Participant 9)

The quotes presented above from these three participants allow us to see that, according to them, COVID-19 did not seriously impact their economic status in New Zealand. For this reason, these Latin Americans affirm that their quality of economic life in that country is good. However, it is worth mentioning that the participants are not saying that they did not have any economic problems due to the pandemic, rather, they affirm that COVID-19 did affect them economically, in fact, the first participant cited above (participant 3), alleges that when the pandemic was at its most severe, his income was reduced by 15%. Likewise, the other two participants already mentioned "that things have not been completely easy." And that the pandemic "caused them some small economic problems." But even so, they maintain that the economic effects caused by the pandemic were not serious enough to harm their quality of life. This is precisely what the participant from Peru affirms about his quality of life in the country, he says the following:

I am a bricklayer and during the quarantine due to the pandemic I could not go to work, for everything, I lasted more than six months without going to work. This caused my financial situation

to be affected because I no longer received the same income...during my forties I received less money. But thank God, every week I received financial aid from the government, which allowed me to cover my expenses. I am currently working full-time again, and my financial situation has improved significantly, even now my financial situation is much better than before the pandemic [...]. I can say that the pandemic has not prevented me from having an excellent quality of life in this beautiful country. It is true that during the pandemic I experienced some financial difficulties, but these were not serious enough to harm my quality of life in New Zealand. (Participant 5)

It is interesting to note that there is a pattern that is repeated in the responses provided by the participants already mentioned, this pattern is that they use the phrase “thank God” to refer to their quality of life, that is, according to the participants, God has helped them by protecting them from suffering the economic crisis caused by the pandemic. The belief in God expressed by the participants is in harmony with the study conducted by Ventegodt et al. (2003a; 2003c), where they state that people’s perception of quality of life is associated with satisfaction with economic resources and spiritual and religious factors. Likewise, Maslow’s studies (1943; 1954; 1962; 1970a; 1970b; 1987) show that spirituality and belief in a divided being (God) are very important in the enjoyment of quality of life. Furthermore, these arguments also coincide with the study conducted by Chan (2018) on the effect of religious beliefs on the existential well-being and quality of life of Chinese people in Hong Kong. Chan (2018) says:

When taking into consideration the degree of religious commitment and sense of belonging, religious believers obtained higher scores on the quality of life and spiritual well-being scale than non-believers (highest in Christians, followed by the Chinese religious group). (p.273)

Chan (2018) also adds, “The data indicated positive influences of religious beliefs on quality of life and spiritual well-being” (p. 272). Likewise, Gallien et al., (2014) suggest that spiritual and religious values can promote existential well-being and quality of life.

Therefore, the findings of this research are in harmony with the studies mentioned in the previous paragraph, where the quality of life is related to the individual’s satisfaction with the enjoyment of material possessions, spirituality and belief in God. In the case of the participants, they claim to have a good economic position and also claim to believe in God.

For that reason, it is not strange that they perceive their quality of life in New Zealand as excellent, very good and satisfactory. All Latin Americans who took part in this study expressed that they were very satisfied with their quality of life in New Zealand, and for this reason, they thank God for allowing them to enjoy this quality of life in that country. It is as the participant from Ecuador said: *“I thank my God because the pandemic has not affected my quality of economic life at all [...] in New Zealand.”* Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that while the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the quality of economic life of many people around the planet, this pandemic has not severely impacted Latin Americans living in the South Pacific country. Widely mentioned in this study.

4.2 The social impact of COVID-19 on quality of life

Maslow’s studies (1943; 1954; 1962; 1970a; 1970b; 1987) point out that it is important to have the needs of love and belonging satisfied to enjoy a true quality of life. The needs for belonging and love described by Maslow are considered social and cultural needs. These include the desire for affiliation,



belonging and company, such as having friends, partners, children, good family relationships and cultural identity. In other words, according to Maslow (1943; 1954; 1962; 1970a; 1970b; 1987), human beings need to be accompanied and surrounded by loved ones, and socialize with them to feel happy, and thus enjoy the quality of life. However, it is known that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, people around the world had to maintain social distance from their friends and family who did not live with us in the same house. There is no doubt that the pandemic caused social isolation worldwide, and this in turn could have affected the quality of life of many people in several ways.

For this reason, participants in this study were asked if the social isolation imposed during COVID-19 quarantines had impacted their quality of life. They said the following:

During the COVID quarantine I did not leave the house to socialize with my friends and family, I only went out to buy food. [...] The pandemic affected my quality of social life at that time. But now things are back to normal and I can socialize with my friends and family. (Participant 1)

I can tell you that during the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, we could not go out to talk with our friends in their homes, nor could we receive anyone in ours... it was very hard... I felt alone and sad. (Participant 2)

It was very hard to live isolated during the quarantine, but I did not get discouraged, because thanks to social networks I was able to continue having contact with my family and friends... it is not the same as talking to them in person, but this medium helped me not feel alone. (Participant 3)

The truth is that my husband and I kept in touch with our friends and relatives online, that's how we were able to cope with the loneliness caused by the pandemic. Of course, it wasn't easy being locked up in the house for months, I even gained weight and everything. But I can say that in the end, the pandemic could not defeat me. Currently, I continue with my normal life and now I have more friends than before. (Participant 4)

The quarantine was hard for me because I am used to working every day, going out and talking to my co-workers is something good for me [...]. I would say that the quarantine greatly affected my mood and quality of life, but it was temporary because now things are going well again. (Participant 5)

As a single woman, the quarantine caused by the pandemic affected me a lot, I felt lonelier than usual, but well, in those moments of loneliness I talked a lot [on social networks] with my friends and family who are in Venezuela, so I endured loneliness. (Participant 6)

One in this life has to adapt to everything, I adapted to the circumstances. I maintained communication with my friends in Colombia and this kept me distracted and busy. (Participant 7)

Human beings are used to meeting friends and relatives, you saw. But the pandemic caused us to be isolated from each other. However, I maintained communication with friends and relatives through social media. (Participant 8)

Let me tell you that in my forties I enjoyed eating a lot, watching television and talking to a lot of people online. (Participant 9)



I saw in the quarantine an opportunity to rest and write a lot because I like to write, but I also watched a lot of television and made use of social networks to socialize with some people. This is why I tell you that I never felt alone during the pandemic. (Participant 10)

In the quotes from Latin Americans presented above, it can be seen that COVID-19 impacted the quality of social life of these people. By “quality of social life,” we mean the ability to socialize with friends and family. Also to give love and feel loved, as shown by the Maslow’s studies previously cited. In this sense, the fact that the participants could not talk and share in person with their loved ones was a strong blow to their mood that affected their quality of social life. It could be said that all the inhabitants of the planet were socially impacted by the pandemic.

Since participants were unable to socialize in person with their loved ones, they turned to social media to communicate with their friends, both in New Zealand and their home countries. Therefore, in the data collected from the digital observation of the participants through Facebook, it was observed that, during the quarantine period in New Zealand, the participants posted a lot of information on Facebook. That is, the observation of these people on Facebook suggests that, during the quarantine, they dedicated more hours than usual to using this digital platform. This agrees with the responses of the participants in the interviews, where they state that to cope with social isolation they made constant use of social networks to communicate with their loved ones. It is understandable that, being alone at home, and having a lot of free time, the participants used much of that free time socializing with friends and family through Facebook and other digital platforms.

Therefore, the findings of this research suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the quality of social life of the participants. That is, during the quarantine, they were not able to socialize in person with their family and friends. This made most of them feel alone and isolated. However, participants say that now that there are no COVID-19 restrictions in New Zealand, they feel happy to be able to socialize in person with their loved ones and friends. Therefore, it could be stated that like the world population, COVID-19 temporarily impacted the quality of social life of the participants. Currently, participants enjoy an excellent quality of social life, because as already mentioned, New Zealand no longer has restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

4.3 The mental and emotional impact of COVID-19 on quality of life

The previous section showed the effects of COVID-19 on the quality of social life of Latin Americans who participated in this study. This part highlights the emotional impact that the pandemic has had on the participants. During the interviews, these people were asked the following question: How did COVID-19 impact your mental and emotional state? Below are three of the responses given by the participants.

I think the emotional and mental impact that the pandemic had on me was that I felt alone and sad. For example, I am a single woman who lives alone, and during the quarantine, I was isolated and locked in my house. Also, in Venezuela, two of my friends died of COVID. This made me feel depressed...even every day I felt very afraid that the pandemic would take away a member of my family in Venezuela. You know that the health system in my country is not the best...well really, in my country everything is bad. Every month I sent money to my parents in Venezuela, and I was quite worried about them. I felt distressed and even depressed about the whole situation they were experiencing



there. Thank God I did not contract the disease and my parents did not get sick from COVID either... I think this is a miracle, but I did experience a lot of worries. (Participant 6)

In the case of this participant, it can be noted that COVID-19 did not directly affect her physical health, that is, she was not infected by the virus. But indirectly, COVID-19 managed to affect his mental health. For example, she admits that she felt alone, sad, worried, anxious and depressed. It is evident that, in the case of this Venezuelan woman, the pandemic negatively impacted her mental and emotional state, and therefore her quality of life.

Another participant stated that he had lost a cousin to death due to COVID-19 and that when he found out about this he felt very sad. His sadness grew greater when he learned that he could not travel to his country of origin to attend his cousin's funeral because due to the pandemic the airports were closed. The participant says:

I felt very frustrated and helpless, seeing that I could not travel to my country to attend my cousin's funeral... I confess that I cried out of helplessness and anger. I never imagined that the pandemic would hit me so hard, my cousin was like my brother... he and I were like brothers, we grew up together... we were very close, we only separated when I came to New Zealand, and we were making plans for He came to live in this country, but unfortunately the pandemic did not allow it and I was depressed by the situation. (Participant 5)

It can be seen that, like the previous case, this participant's mental health was impacted by the pandemic, since the virus caused the death of his cousin and as a result this participant became depressed. On his Facebook account, this participant has seven posts that allude to the death of his cousin. These posts show that he felt frustrated and sad at not being able to travel to his country of origin to attend the funeral.

Of the 10 participants in this research, only one of them stated that he was seriously infected with COVID-19. He says:

I contracted the COVID-19 disease and had to be hospitalized...I was very bad, it was very difficult for me to breathe, and the doctors had to put me on a respirator. They were very difficult times, this was complicated because I suffer from asthma, you know, you know that New Zealand is a very humid country, and this is unfavourable for asthma. In such a way that when I contracted the disease I had a very bad time...believe me, if I tell you that I had a bad time it is because it was like that. But after about ten days in the hospital, they sent me home and I slowly recovered. At that time I felt alone and sad, I thought I would die of COVID-19. (Participant 8)

This participant's experience shows us that his mental and physical health was impacted by COVID-19. Likewise, all participants in this study stated that, at some point during the pandemic, they felt alone, sad and depressed. This shows that COVID-19 impacted the health of the participants and therefore their quality of life in New Zealand.

Therefore, the findings of this research show that the COVID-19 pandemic did not seriously impact the quality of economic life of the participants, since they were living in a first-world country, the government helped them cover all their financial expenses while the country was in quarantine. For this reason, the participants state that currently their economic status is good and that is why they feel happy



with their economic quality of life. On the other hand, although the pandemic managed to negatively impact the social, emotional and mental quality of life of the participants, they claim to feel satisfied with their current quality of life in New Zealand.

Therefore, the findings of this research are in harmony with the studies carried out by Maslow (1943; 1954; 1962; 1970a; 1970b; 1987), Chan (2018), Ventegodt et al. (2003a; 2003b; 2003c), among others, where it is shown that quality of life is related to the individual's satisfaction in the enjoyment of material possessions, being surrounded by loved ones, spirituality and belief in God.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, this study was based on the research question: How has COVID-19 impacted the quality of life of Latin Americans in New Zealand? To answer this question, 10 Latin American inhabitants of New Zealand were interviewed. Also, they were observed by Facebook to understand their perception of their quality of life during the pandemic.

The data produced by this research shows that participants consider their current quality of life in New Zealand to be excellent and enjoyable. However, during the quarantine period imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the quality of life of the participants was impacted by it. For example, participants state that the pandemic affected their economic income; in the case of one participant, his income decreased by 15%. All participants stated that, during the pandemic, they saw how their economic income was reduced. But, even so, they had the necessary resources to satisfactorily cover all their economic needs. For that reason, they claim that the pandemic did not seriously affect their quality of economic life.

On the other hand, the social, mental and emotional quality of life of the participants was considerably impacted by the pandemic. For example, all participants in this study stated that, at some point during the pandemic, they felt alone, sad and depressed due to the problems caused by the pandemic. The findings presented in this study are an original contribution to the studies of Latin Americans in New Zealand, thus filling the existing gap in the academic literature on the subject.



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