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Artículos científicos

Afectaciones en la gestión administrativa de las instituciones de educación superior por la covid-19

***Effects on the Administrative Management of Higher Education Institutions
by COVID-19***

***Efeitos na gestão administrativa das instituições de ensino superior pela
covid-19***

Manuel Ernesto Becerra Bizarrón

Universidad de Guadalajara, Centro Universitario de la Costa, México

manuel.becerra@academicos.udg.mx

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1673-1479>

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio fue realizar un análisis de las afectaciones causadas por la covid-19 en la gestión administrativa de una institución de educación superior. Lo anterior desde la perspectiva del personal directivo. La metodología fue descriptiva y bibliográfica. Además, se llevó a cabo un diseño no experimental de tipo transversal. Como herramienta de recolección de datos, se aplicó una entrevista semiestructurada a personas que cubrieran los criterios de inclusión, es decir, que desempeñaran un puesto de jefe de departamento, coordinación de un área funcional de la institución y además actividades de gestión. Los principales resultados encontrados fueron: incertidumbre, estancamiento de la información, trabajo demorado, reorganización y división del trabajo, interrupción y modificación de procesos.

Palabras clave: estancamiento de la información, gestión administrativa, instituciones de educación superior, trabajo demorado.

Abstract

The objective of this study was to carry out an analysis of the effects caused by COVID-19 in the administrative management of a higher education institution. The above from the perspective of the managerial staff. The methodology was descriptive and bibliographic. In addition, a non-experimental cross-sectional design was carried out. As a data collection tool, a semi-structured interview was applied to people who met the inclusion criteria, that is, who held a department head position, coordination of a functional area of the institution and also management activities. The main results found were: uncertainty, information stagnation, delayed work, reorganization and division of labor, interruption and modification of processes.

Keywords: information stagnation, administrative management, higher education institutions, delayed work.

Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo foi realizar uma análise dos efeitos causados pela covid-19 na gestão administrativa de uma instituição de ensino superior. O acima da perspectiva da equipe gerencial. A metodologia foi descritiva e bibliográfica. Além disso, foi realizado um desenho transversal não experimental. Como instrumento de coleta de dados, foi aplicada uma entrevista semiestruturada às pessoas que atendiam aos critérios de inclusão, ou seja, que ocupavam cargo de chefe de departamento, coordenação de uma área funcional da instituição e também atividades de gestão. Os principais resultados encontrados foram: incerteza, estagnação de informações, atraso no trabalho, reorganização e divisão do trabalho, interrupção e modificação de processos.

Palavras-chave: estagnação da informação, gestão administrativa, instituições de ensino superior, atraso no trabalho.

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Introduction

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus type 2 (SARS-CoV-2). On March 11, 2020, it was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). According to Cucinotta and Vanelli (2020), this caused a transformation in society and in all business sectors. Education, at all levels, went from face-to-face to virtual academic educational models, which caused a lack of control in the activities of teachers, students and research professors as well as support and service personnel. It was an unprecedented situation.

Sanchez et al. (2020) list some of the activities that were affected in the universities: virtual thesis defense, delay in the delivery of documents, delay in administrative procedures, because they were carried out digitally, and monitoring of academic matters for teachers. It affected the work of the administrative and academic management responsible for making decisions, proposing strategies to prevent the spread of the virus and to comply with ordinary and fundamental activities. Without a doubt, this exposed the strengths and weaknesses of the educational system. Elements that had already been detected by the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education [INEE] (2019) of Mexico long ago, when the educational models were totally face-to-face. Although it is true that in some way there was control of the essential conditions for school operation, that is, school infrastructure, educational supplies, teaching and administrative staff, it is also true that it was not enough for an efficient and effective operation. . There, the academic was limited to the classroom and used digital platforms only as a support, as an informative tool or sporadic review (Durán, Sierra and Castro, 2019).

Administrative processes are restricted by different aspects or situations that arise in the environment of society. These must be analyzed and redesigned in order to face the challenges that arise in the management of university education. (Villalba, 2017).

Like companies, educational institutions execute processes, in this case academic and administrative, in an environment that is constantly changing and that presents new situations from one moment to the next (Ibarra, 2002). García, Durán, Hernández and Moreno (2018) affirm that institutions and any type of company, in order to achieve their objectives, must focus on offering quality services and products, seeking productivity and the satisfaction of their users, through strategies to respond to emerging needs.

Educational institutions are complex organizations where many factors come together, whose management demands the assistance of excellent leaders, since they normally face different aspects of the organization that, in general, are not easy to articulate (Cárdenas, Farías and Méndez , 2017).

Faced with the health contingency, educational institutions had to work in coordination with government institutions to develop or follow an operational strategy with a view to creating and strengthening the credibility and trust required of their workers. Specifically, they focused on the safety of teachers and students in their return to attendance (Barquero, Barceló, López and Cabezuelo, 2020).

Teleworking has been implemented, not only in higher education institutions, but also in both the public and private business sectors with a dual purpose: first and foremost, not to expose their staff to covid-19, and the second, so that they could continue exercising their work functions from their homes in order to continue operating and not close, avoid more unemployment and thus contribute to the country's stabilization (de Tyler, Campines and González, 2021).

However, to operate under this teleworking modality, labor laws have had to be adapted, even with some drawbacks. According to Camacho (2021):

The incursion of Mexico or the inclusion in the labor law of teleworking as a formal job is still incipient; although some institutions and employers have ventured into this area in a foolish or hasty manner due to the very environment of the covid-19 health pandemic (p. 29).

The operation in the institutions and the learning processes had to continue, although with some changes such as the home office, a challenge that they had to face in the midst of the pandemic outbreak (Dahar et al., 2020). Thus, both public and private universities began, not without uncertainty, the transition of both their academic and organizational structures towards teleworking, defined as an alternative to operating outside the physical facilities of the institution or company, and using the latest technologies. of information and communication (ICT) (Sánchez, 2012). In this regard, Archer and De Gracia (2020) state that the successful implementation of technology in higher education is not just about accessing any of the existing platforms on the market, but also requires an administrative and educational structure dedicated to integration. of the virtual modality within the university.

Tünnermann (2005, cited in Cárdenas et al., 2017), for his part, comments that administrative activities are a fundamental support for the substantive activities of the

university, teaching, research and other academic services to be carried out. of the institution, in other words, that "if the management is poor, it hinders the academic work and if the management is excellent, the academic programs and activities of the institution are effectively developed" (p. 21).

Managers have had to reinvent themselves, be more resilient and make disruptive decisions to continue operating. The Development Bank of Latin America (cited in Katz, Callorda and Jung, 2020) formulates it in the following terms: "The resilience of the State apparatus in the face of the pandemic is based on its ability to continue functioning in terms of administrative processes , as well as to continue providing public services" (p. 29)

Based on the information analyzed above, the following research question is posed: what are the effects on administrative management derived from the covid-19 pandemic from the perspective of management personnel?

Method

This section explains the phases that were carried out in the research, which aimed to analyze the effects on administrative management derived from the covid-19 pandemic from the perspective of the management staff of higher education institutions.

To answer the research question, a non-experimental qualitative research design, descriptive scope, cross-sectional and cross-sectional was established.

Sample

The research period was between June and December 2020 and February and April 2021. It was carried out in a public university where the educational offer is at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Table 1 shows the inclusion criteria of the participants.

Tabla 1. Participantes

Sujeto de estudio	Cantidad		Criterios de inclusión/cantidad
	Solicitado	Respuestas	
Personal directivo, jefes de departamento y coordinadores	15	15	Personal con puestos de responsabilidad directiva. Con experiencia mínima de cinco años.
Entrevistas	15	15	Se respondieron 15 entrevistas.

Fuente: Elaboración propia

To collect the information, a semi-structured interview was used that was applied to the personnel in managerial positions of the institution. This interview is structured in three parts: the introductory, the central and the concluding. It should be clarified that the categorization process was a priori, that is, before the data collection process, of a deductive type, based on contextual analysis. The data was processed in the Atlas.ti software.

Figure 1 shows the stages of the field work that were carried out.

Figura 1. Etapas del trabajo de campo

Etapas	Permiso para el trabajo de campo
	Muestra: 15 sujetos en puestos directivos
	Instrumentos: 15 entrevistas Aplicación del instrumento: <i>Online</i> , grabación, lectura, codificación
	Análisis de resultados

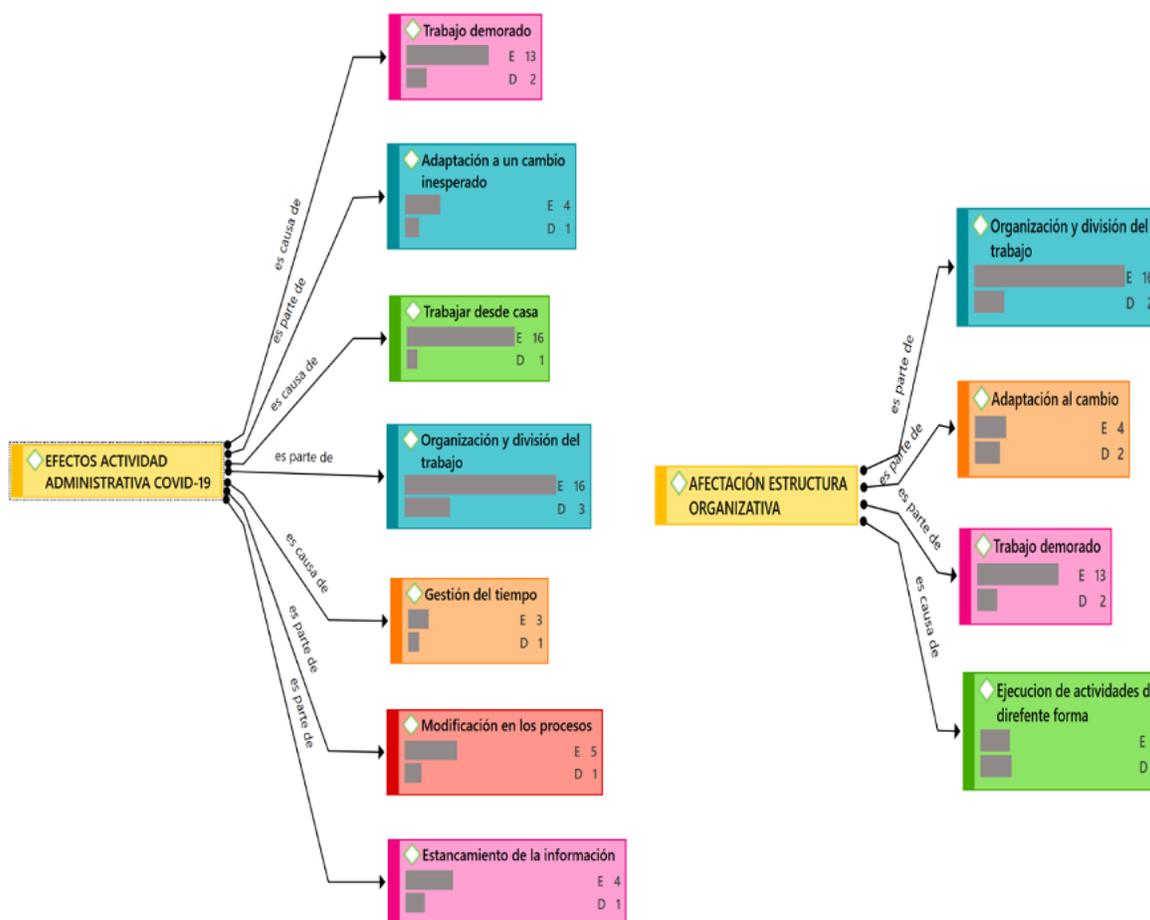
Fuente: Elaboración propia

Results

The results are shown below in the form of a semantic network. The first part of the interview consists of analyzing the effects on administrative activity and the organizational structure caused by covid-19. In figure 2 it can be seen that most of the interviewees comment that both the administrative activity and the structure were affected by the organization and

division of labor, by working from home and by carrying out activities in a different way. This caused the work and the results to be delayed. However, there are also other aspects that affected: adaptation to unexpected change, time management and modification in their work processes.

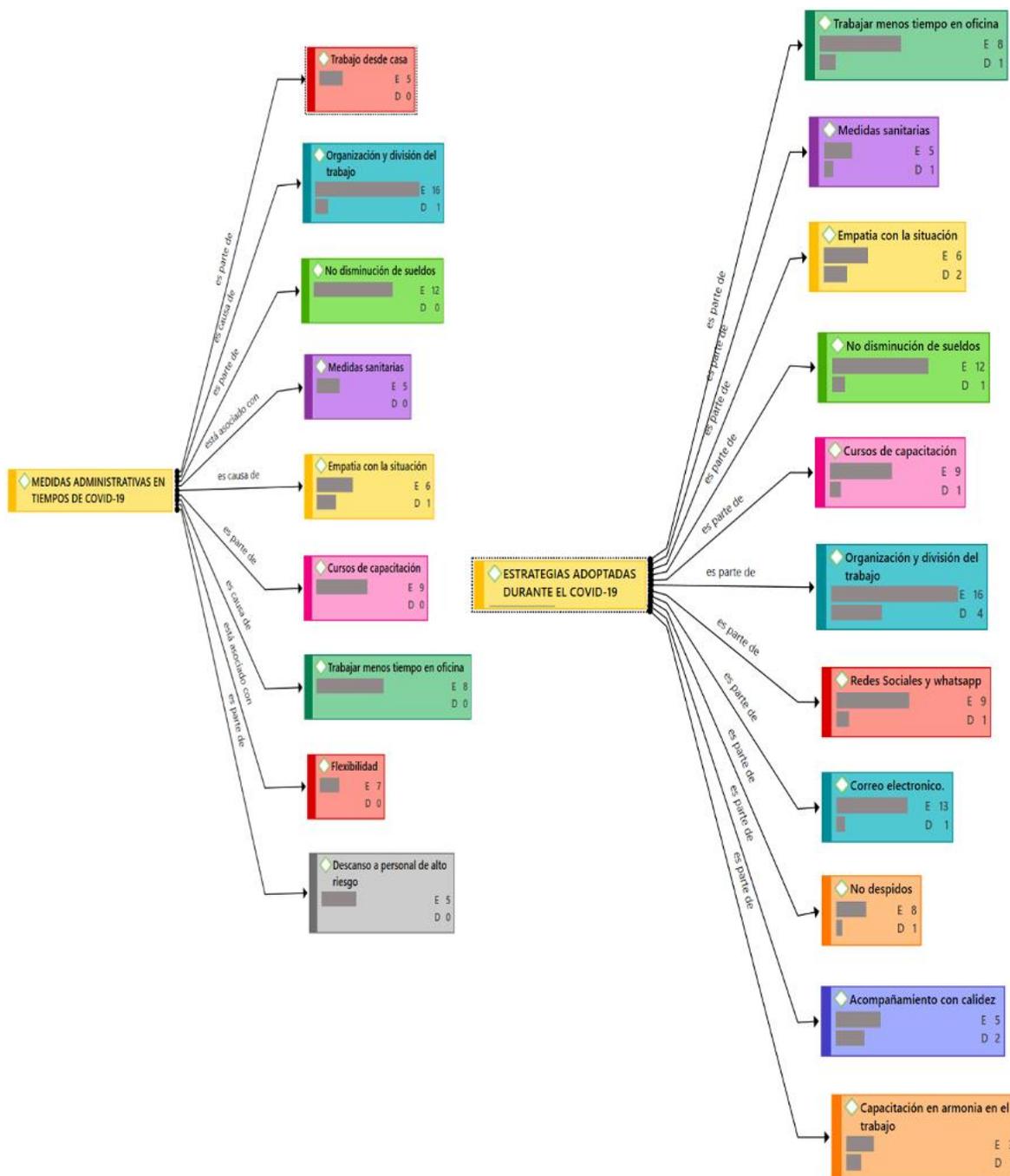
Figura 2. Efectos en la actividad administrativa y estructura organizativa



Fuente: Elaboración propia

The second part of the interview dealt with the administrative measures and strategies adopted during covid-19. Figure 3 shows that most of the interviewees comment that the measures taken were the organization and division of labor, the non-decrease salaries, resting high-risk personnel and working less time in offices. The strategies adopted include no dismissals, effective communication through email, social networks, WhatsApp, warm accompaniment, and training courses to carry out their work in the event of a contingency.

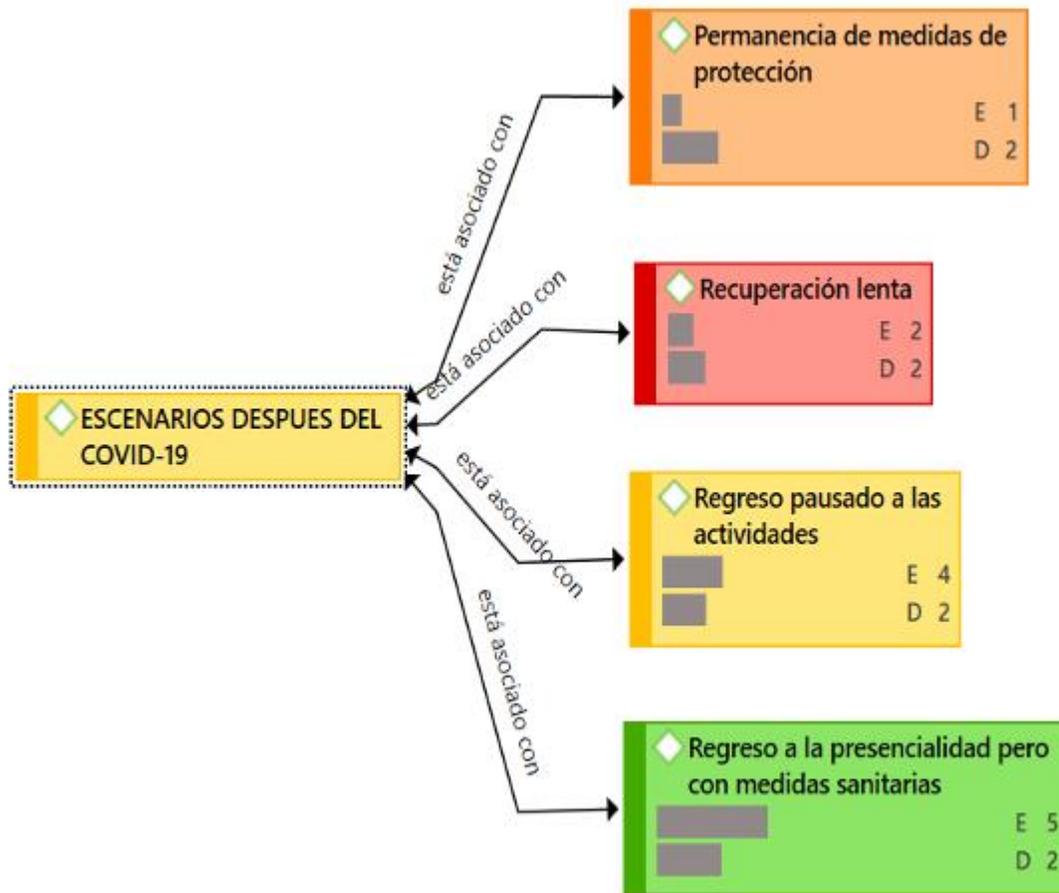
Figura 3. Medidas administrativas y estrategias tomadas



Fuente: Elaboración propia

The third part of the interview consists of analyzing the scenarios for public education universities once the covid-19 pandemic passes or is controlled. Figure 4 shows the scenarios foreseen by the interviewees, for example, that they will return to face-to-face classes with the sanitary measures and that it will be a leisurely and slow return.

Figura 4. Escenarios después de la covid-19



Fuente: Elaboración propia

The following table shows the number of citations or frequency of each interview.

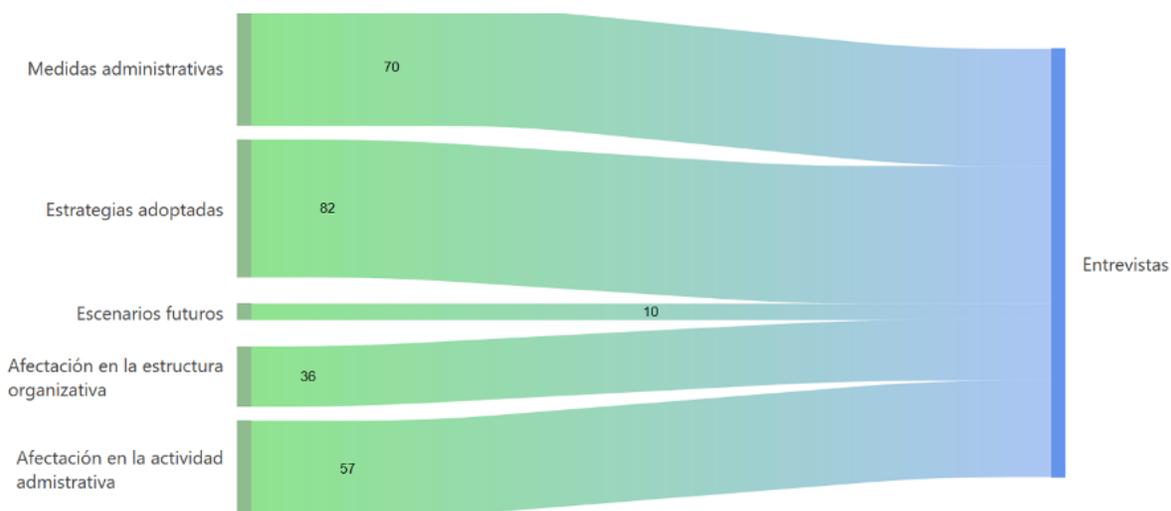
Tabla 2. Frecuencia enraizamiento de códigos en cada entrevista

	Entrevistas Gr = 240; GS = 15	Frecuencia relativa
Afectación en la actividad administrativa Gr = 57; GS = 7	57	22.35 %
Afectación en la estructura organizativa Gr = 36; GS = 4	36	14.12 %
Escenarios futuros Gr = 10; GS = 4	10	3.92 %
Estrategias adoptadas Gr = 82; GS = 11	82	32.16 %
Medidas administrativas Gr = 70; GS = 9	70	27.45 %
Totales	255	100.00 %

Fuente: Elaboración propia

Figure 5 shows the interaction of the interviews of each document with the categories and how it is related to the other. In this case, there was more interaction of codes in the strategies adopted (82) and administrative measures (70), followed by the affectation in the administrative activity (57) and organizational structure (36).

Figura 5. Interacciones de categorías



Fuente: Elaboración propia

Discussion

Without a doubt, the pandemic was a watershed, a phenomenon that to date continues to affect the administrative management of higher education institutions, first, due to health care, and later, due to the uncertainty of the transition of an entire academic model. forged from face-to-face to virtual, all without much time in between, which brought with it a series of situations that had repercussions on decision-making, organizational restructuring, organization of on-call shifts, modification of processes, which It even led to improvisation, an operation that was hit and that brought delays and bottlenecks in the execution of procedures.

The measures that were taken to mitigate the contingency situation and not to promote the spread of the virus, in the first instance, were:

- That it continue to operate from home and that communication through email, WhatsApp and other digital platforms be strengthened (the use of email was the most used medium by the university and, in the case of groups, social networks and WhatsApp)
- The meetings were held digitally.
- Training courses for both administrative staff and teachers who did not know how to use the new digital tools.

Empathy on the part of managers, the integration of work teams, strategies for carrying out work at home and rest for high-risk personnel stand out in a situation like this.

As limitations of the study, it can be considered that more interviews could not be carried out, given the situation of the pandemic, due to the overwork that managers have and the reduced hours of operation.

Conclusions

This study shows the effects on administrative management caused by the covid-19 pandemic in higher education institutions. The main cause found? Ignorance of this situation, which destabilized everyone and generated an atmosphere of indecision on the part of managers.

Prevention and care measures were taken a little late, because since December 2019 the impact of this disease in other countries had been reported. The main axis of action was the transfer from face-to-face to virtual, not only academically, but also in a good part of the

administrative operation, in addition to total rest for high-risk personnel, which caused lack of control, reorganization and division. of work by guards, which, in turn, brought as a consequence a stagnation of information, interruption and modification in the processes due to the adaptation that leads to a change as drastic as the one discussed here. Other measures that were taken were the flexibility to work from home, warm accompaniment, training in harmony with work, pantry support, the teaching of a series of courses for the use of new platforms, as well as the purchase of licenses for its proper functioning, to strengthen the emotional issue and health measures. Of course, we must not ignore the transparency that there would be no layoffs or decrease in salaries, which undoubtedly supported trust and commitment.

Regarding the scenarios that are expected once the pandemic is controlled for higher education institutions, there is a gradual return to activities, with strengthened communication and an attitude of coexistence, although still with social panic, and with a part of the administrative and academic operation carried out virtually.

Future lines of research

It is recommended to continue investigating the ways in which administrative and academic management strengthen their work systems through the increasingly constant adoption of technologies in their operation, and how this affects their work teams. Likewise, delve into the way in which academic scenarios are adapting to hybrid classes and their results in higher education.

Lastly, it would also be worth investigating the good administrative and academic practices that will prevail once face-to-face classes return.

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