

CREATIVE PROCESSES AND EMOTIONS IN COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Received 20 January 2021; accepted 21 September 2021

Abstract. The objective was to analyse, from the perspective of the participants, creative processes developed in isolation and social distancing by COVID-19 pandemic. The main interest was to study transformations in daily, family and work life, focusing on the creation of new practices and projects. Likewise, it was relevant to study emotions, obstacles and difficulties perceived by the participants. The study was qualitative, the participants (N = 25) were selected by non-probabilistic convenience sampling. All the participants lived in intermediate or small towns in Argentina. Data collection was carried out in September, 2020. Semi-structured interviews and online qualitative research were the data collection instruments. The *Atlas.ti 8* program was used for the qualitative analysis of textual and audio-visual data. The results indicated significant modifications in the lives of the participants from isolation and distancing. These changes demand flexibility and adaptability as well as creative processes for generating alternatives and solving problems. In the context of the home, transformations of times, spaces and relationships were observed. Work and leisure activities also were reconfigured. Sadness appeared as the predominant emotion. However, some participants experienced enthusiasm and joy for the new projects. The purpose of this study was to build knowledge that contributes to the design of health promotion project.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, creativity, emotions, resilience, work.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly transformed the lives of people around the world (Organización Mundial de la Salud, 2020). The world of work also underwent significant changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report of the International Labor Organization of September, 2020 indicates that 94% of the world's workers have been affected by the job closure. Likewise, a significant loss of income and working hours is observed. In general, the decline in employment has affected women more than men (Organización Internacional del Trabajo, 2020). In Argentina, isolation and social distancing measures have been taken

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considering the particularities of each region of the country. Each region, according to its epidemiological situation, was enabling economic, social, cultural and sports activities.

In COVID-19 pandemic, what is the role of creativity in the transformation of everyday life? The objective of the study was to investigate creative processes displayed by a group of people in confinement. Especially, we analyzed transformations in daily life, work and leisure from the creation of creative products and projects. Obstacles and emotions linked to creative processes were also the object of analysis in the study. The participants were selected from a previous study that was conducted in the first weeks (April, 2020) of confinement in Argentina (Elisondo & Melgar, 2020). In Elisondo and Melgar (2020) we analyzed, from the participants' perspective, activities, emotions, and motivations linked to everyday creativity in total confinement. The sample included 302 men and women, the participants' ages ranged from 18 to 77 years. The results indicated that most participants carried out various creative activities in quarantine. These activities generated positive emotions and allowed to face negative emotions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The motivations had been varied, although reasons related to enjoyment, coping, and sharing with other people are predominant.

The study carried out in April, 2020 considered creative practices in the first moment of total confinement. Instead, the present study aimed to analyze the role of creativity and emotions in the transformation processes of daily life due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the study carried out in April, 2020 refers to a retrospective analysis of practices developed in the first three weeks of total confinement, the present investigation retrospectively investigates activities and emotions from March to September, 2020, in periods of total and partial confinement. The present study analyzed the role of creativity and emotions in the transformation processes of daily life, work and leisure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose was to build knowledge that contributes to the design and development of projects and policies aimed at promoting health, recognizing the multiple emotional, social and economic factors that condition it. The study was also focused on recovering resilient experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Vinkers et al. (2020), in times of COVID-19 pandemic, resilience is essential to cope with stress and maintain balance in different aspects of life during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this sense, Forgeard (2013) points out that some people perceive creative possibilities and develop transformative projects in their lives from traumatic situations. Chen and Bonanno (2020) consider that to understand the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its effects, it is necessary to develop complex longitudinal studies that integrate resilient factors in different domains. The authors consider that flexibility means paying attention to the changing situational demands, deciding on strategies that are likely to meet those demands, and then monitoring the efficacy of the chosen strategies, reevaluating the changing situations, and modifying strategies as needed.

1. COVID-19 pandemic and creative processes in everyday life

Sociocultural theories of creativity emphasize the importance of contexts and links between people and objects of the culture in creative actions. According to specialists, creativity is a social process that always develops in interaction with other people in a certain sociocultural context and within the framework of shared languages, cultures and artifacts (Glaveanu et al., 2020).

Likewise, creativity is understood as a dynamic construct in permanent transformation according to different moments and situations in the lives of people and communities (Corazza & Glăveanu, 2020). In Glăveanu's (2013) 5A model, creativity involves interrelationships between actors, actions, artifacts, audiences, and affordances. The sociocultural and ecological perspectives of creativity emphasize the role of environments and social interactions in the construction of novel artifacts and projects.

The present study was based on everyday creativity as a conception that articulates novel actions in leisure and work and generates positive emotions and health benefits (Corazza, 2017; Richards, 2010). Creativity is a problem-solving process and an ability to generate new products. Creative actions were innovative projects and acts that transform typical or recurring forms of action (Cristiano, 2016, 2018). In this article, the interest was to analyze creative actions in times of COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Averill (2005), emotions can be considered mediators or products of creative activity. In the first sense, emotion refers to the broad matrix of experience in which all behavior is embedded. Emotions act as catalysts for creativity without going into the end. In the second sense, emotions can be defined as creative products that involve original forms of combination, modification of the expression of emotions. According to Fancourt et al. (2020), artistic creative activities are increasingly recognized as effective ways to regulate emotional responses. In the present study, we analyzed emotions as mediators of creative actions.

Like Karwowski et al. (2021), Lopez-Persem et al. (2021) and Mercier et al. (2021), our interest was to analyze creative activities in times of confinement. Karwowski et al. (2021) conducted two extensive daily studies, the first, in March, 2019 (pre-COVID-19 pandemic), involved 78 students who reported on their emotions and creativity for 2 weeks, the second, conducted in March, 2020 (during the COVID-19 pandemic and the confinement), involved 235 students who reported on their emotions and creative processes for a month. A cross-sectional comparison of 2019 and 2020 has shown that those participants who were locked up in their homes had more opportunities for creative behaviors. While they reported fewer positive emotions in 2020 compared to 2019, no differences were seen in negative emotions and anxiety in particular. Lopez-Persem et al. (2021) conducted an online survey to examine whether the first blackout period related to the COVID-19 pandemic (spring 2020) was associated with changes in creativity. Data from 380 participants between the ages of 18 and 84 were included. Compared to pre-COVID-19 pandemic, people reported being more creative during the confinement. They also reported participating in more creative activities in confinement. The results also showed that this positive change could be related to a greater availability of time, feeling more motivated, or having the need to solve a problem. In the article by Mercier et al. (2021), self-reported professional creativity (Pro-C) and everyday creativity (little-c) were compared before and during the confinement, using a study based on a questionnaire carried out in a French sample (N = 1266). Regarding Pro-C, no significant differences were observed between the two comparison points, before and during confinement. Regarding daily creativity, a significant increase was observed during the confinement.

In sum, this study is based on perspectives that emphasize the dynamic nature of creativity, that is, its fluctuations according to different contexts. In this sense, it is especially interesting to analyze creative processes in a complex context such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Likewise, our study focuses on everyday creativity, that is, on the creative actions of daily life both at leisure and at work.

2. Everyday life in times of COVID-19 pandemic

Diverse studies indicated problems related to mental and community health (stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, insomnia, denial, anger, and fear) in contexts of social isolation by COVID-19 pandemic (Brooks et al., 2020; Shigemura et al., 2020; Stankovska et al., 2020; Torales et al., 2020). Li et al. (2020) analyzed posts from 17 865 active *Sina Weibo* users; the results showed that negative emotions and sensitivity to social risks increased, while the scores of positive emotions and life satisfaction decreased. Wang et al. (2020) pointed out that COVID-19 pandemic is a public health emergency of international concern and poses a challenge to psychological resilience. They conducted an online survey using snowball sampling techniques. In total, 53.8% of respondents rated the psychological impact of the outbreak as moderate or severe; 16.5% reported moderate to severe depressive symptoms; 28.8% reported moderate to severe anxiety symptoms; and 8.1% reported moderate to severe stress levels. Female gender, student status, specific physical symptoms and poor self-rated health status were significantly associated with a greater psychological impact of the outbreak and higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Mazza et al. (2020) presented a study about psychological distress in Italy during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. The results showed an increased percentage of people with high and very high levels of distress, analyzes also indicated that female gender was associated with increased anxiety, depression, and stress.

In Argentina, Johnson et al. (2020) carried out a study on subjective and emotional effects in the first stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. An impact on mental health was noted, expressed in feelings of fear, uncertainty and anguish, typical of a sense of rupture in daily life and loss of predictability that this COVID-19 pandemic implies. The results indicate that the feeling of fear is expressed to a greater extent in the surveyed people with a lower educational level, as well as in those who perceived less comfort in their homes during preventive isolation. The women manifested to a greater extent the feelings of fear, anguish along with feelings of responsibility, care and appreciation of interdependence, affection and the possibility of introspection and reflection that the COVID-19 pandemic would generate. López Steinmetz et al. (2020) analyzed differences in mental health state indicators during three quarantine sub-periods. The sample included 1100 Argentinians. The results indicated that quarantine had negative mental health impacts and that quarantine duration is a relevant aspect to be taken into account when measuring impacts. Vulnerable groups were identified in the study: young, women, and people with history of mental disorder. The objective of the study of Torrente et al. (2021) was to measure early affective reactions in Argentine adults during the first week of the general lockdown (quarantine) in Argentina. The results showed that more than a third of the studied sample (N = 10.053) showed substantial depressive and anxious symptoms between 5 and 7 days after the start of the national quarantine. The youngest participants were affected the most by the situation; the existence of previous mental health difficulties aggravated the reactions. The aim of the study of Canet-Juric et al. (2020)

was to assess the emotional impact of the lockdown in Argentinian general population. The sample included 6057 individuals. In the two moments of the study (2 days after the mandatory quarantine started and 2 weeks later), depression tends to increase slightly, while levels of anxiety and affect (positive and negative) tend to decrease.

According to Brooks et al. (2020), duration of quarantine, fears of infection, frustration and boredom, inadequate supplies, inadequate information act as stressors during quarantine. Post-quarantine stressors related to economic difficulties and social stigmas. These authors stated that the following actions mitigate the consequences of quarantine: keep it as short as possible, give people as much information as possible, provide adequate supplies, reduce the boredom and improve communication, pay attention to the health workers and perform altruistic activities. Chen and Bonanno (2020) propose a resilient perspective to analyze the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on people's lives. According to the authors, resilience is based on several risk and protective factors related to individual differences, family context, and community characteristics. These factors include optimism, social support, and bonding, staying informed without overindulging in media consumption, employing distraction strategies like finding ways to have fun, and reducing social isolation online.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants were selected from the sample of the previous study (Elisondo & Melgar, 2020), by non-probabilistic convenience sampling considering the diversity of ages, geographic areas of residence and occupations. All the people who expressed interest in participating again were selected.

25 informants participated in the study (20 women and 5 men). The respondents were between 22 and 49 years old. The sample included people with different occupations: 10 students, 5 teachers, 5 entrepreneurs, 2 independent professionals and 3 administrative or commercial employees. All participants spoke Spanish and had a medium socioeconomic level. All participants lived in intermediate or small towns in the province of Córdoba, Spain; San Luis, Argentina; Santa Fe, New Mexico; or Buenos Aires, Argentina. Only one participant lives in a large city.

3.2. Measures

Semi-structured interviews and online qualitative research were analysis methods. According to Jansen (2010), the qualitative survey aims to determine the diversity and variability of points of view regarding some topic of interest. Qualitative surveys include open questions to collect diverse data and generate inductive analyzes. Fink (2003) considers that they are valid instruments to explore meanings and experiences. The instruments included questions referring to changes produced in their daily life, difficulties or problems, emotions and entrepreneurship developed during quarantine. The online interviews were conducted through *Google Meet*, each lasted approximately 60 minutes. The interview script included questions referring to changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in leisure activities, work, care, *etc.*

The participants described in detail the activities carried out and explained why they considered some of these actions as creative. They also narrated emotions associated with creative activities. Some participants reported new ventures created during confinement.

3.3. Procedures and analysis

The participants gave their consent to participate in this research and publish the data. The research was designed according to American Psychological Association's (2017) ethical principles. Specifically, we request consent for the recording of the interviews and the use of audios, images and videos sent by the participants. Authorization was also requested to publish textual data from the questionnaires. It was reported that the data would be used for the investigation, preserving confidentiality. The data and analysis were verified by other investigators and by the participants. People participated voluntarily, no incentives were offered.

The *Atlas.ti 8* program was used for the qualitative analysis of textual and audiovisual data. Grounded theory was used during data analysis. The categories (Table 1) were built from open coding. First, the textual data of the questionnaires and the interviews were coded separately. Then, they were compared and integrated into a single categorization system. Based on the interpretations of different researchers, triangulations were performed. Communicative validity processes were also developed with the participants (interviews and focus groups about results and analyzes constructed).

Table 1. Description of categories and subcategories (source: created by author)

Categories	Description	Subcategories
Creative process at home	Everyday life at home. Transformations of habits, times and spaces. Caring for people.	Time. Space. Ties. Care. Women.
Creative process at work	Transformations in work activities.	New ways of working. New ventures. Jobless.
Cocktail of emotions	Types of emotions and changes in different moments.	Positive emotions. Negative emotions. Situations. Stressors.
Creative process in postponed projects	New projects and ventures. Changes in habits and ways of life. New learnings.	Healthy practices. Sustainable projects. Meditation. Educative processes.

3.4. Results

3.4.1. Creative process at home

Like Karwowski et al. (2021) and Mercier et al. (2021), we analysed everyday creative activities during isolation. In agreement with the authors, we found that people engaged in various creative activities at home. In our study, we observed that during the confinement

the participants developed creative activities related to solving domestic problems, managing space and time, caring for other people, eating, cleaning and recreation. Specifically, the creative activities mentioned were: cooking new recipes, making vegetable garden, caring for children and creating games, reorganizing times and spaces at home, creating new forms of remote work, developing solidarity practices, building objects for physical activity and inventing novel school activities with the children.

These activities can be considered creative as they allow solving problems by appealing to divergent thoughts to search for alternatives. Likewise, they are creative because they generate novel, original and alternative products that solve problems and situations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as shortages of resources, the impossibility of leaving home, the need to share time, space and technological resources with other people. The expressions of the participants in our study show activities and creative products similar to those collected by Lopez-Persem et al. (2021), they found a significant increase in the following activities during confinement: cooking recipes, physical training, home arrangements, vegetable garden and mutual help.

The following evidences illustrate the interpretations construed (these fragments show only some segments of the analyzed corpus):

“At the beginning there were many changes, but then we began to normalize these changes and maintain practices that were novel at first. The creative things we did were the vegetable garden, the new recipes, the games to entertain ourselves and ways of doing physical activity in our little house” (Vanesa);

“The most creative thing we did these months was to accommodate us all at home, for virtual classes and remote work. We had to accommodate the spaces and recondition technologies. We also had to create schedules and organize the times of the activities of each one. We did a lot of creative homework with the kids and made up games for fun” (Maria).

According to the participants, the construction and reconstruction of spaces and times in the house had been one of the main changes in daily life. Some participants, especially university students and people who were left without work, had returned to live with their parents. This situation generated the need of negotiate times, spaces and habits with the people who live in the home. The need to share technological resources to carry out work and academic activities causes some tensions.

There were also significant changes in the people who are in charge of the care of children and the elderly. The development of remote work activities together with the care practices of other people had, in some cases, caused difficulties, exhaustion and stress. In this sense, it is interesting to analyze the role of women in caring for other people; the National Survey of Educational Continuity carried out in Argentina indicated that in 90% of the cases analyzed, women were the ones who take care of helping children and young people in remote school activities during the COVID-19 pandemic (Argentina.gob.ar, 2021). In many cases, women were overloaded with work, family and care activities, situation that generates negative impacts on mental health. Also interesting are the results of the study by Mazza et al. (2020) that link not having children with depression during COVID-19 pandemic. It could be hypothesized for future studies that having children causes exhaustion in women but at the same time prevents feelings of depression. In the study carried out in Argentina, Johnson et al.

(2020) observed that women manifested feelings of fear, anguish to a greater extent, along with feelings of responsibility, care and appreciation of interdependence, affections and the possibility of introspection and reflection that the COVID-19 pandemic would generate. According to the authors, this greater expression of fear and anguish expressed by women could also be giving indications that this COVID-19 pandemic affects them more particularly. In this sense, the United Nations had highlighted that women are the first responders to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis in their role as workers, volunteers and caregivers, being by this role, unequally affected since they assume greater physical and emotional costs, as well as an increased risk of infection in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic (UN Women, 2021).

Solidarity practices that transcend the home and seek to help vulnerable groups also appeared among the expressions of the participants. In the previous study (Elisondo & Melgar, 2020), solidarity practices linked to the prevention of COVID-19 pandemic (guards, making masks, *etc.*) had been observed, in the present study there were solidarity actions linked to need to feed vulnerable groups:

“We are always looking for alternatives and creative ways to feed more people in the NGO, we change the recipes, we seek collaboration in the markets, and we create our own garden [...]” (Susana).

Johnson et al. (2020) highlighted expressions of the participants referring to community, interdependence, empathy and solidarity. The authors considered that these feelings of altruism should be promoted in contexts of preventive isolation to reduce the impact on mental health. According to Vinkers et al. (2020), Wang et al. (2020) and Brooks et al. (2020), self-care, care of other people and altruistic behaviors during isolation promote well-being and mental health. Stankovska et al. (2020) also point out the importance of community strategies of mutual support for coping disorders related to isolation.

3.4.2. Creative process at work

In the previous study (Elisondo & Melgar, 2020), no difficulties were observed in the labour and economic sphere, only changes in the work practices of some participants (remote activities, virtual classes, *etc.*). In the present study, work and the economic situation appeared as a relevant category that significantly changes people's lives in times of COVID-19 pandemic. The data allowed identifying three different situations:

1. People who could not work due to restrictions imposed by COVID-19 pandemic. These participants considered that they are in an economic situation of vulnerability and that this causes them personal, psychological and family problems;
2. People who could not work but generated commercial alternatives to survive. These participants recognized financial problems and limitations in their income, but were hopeful and enthusiastic about their new projects;
3. People with stable job, but had modified the ways of working. The participants who have stable jobs indicated difficulties in new forms of work and exhaustion from simultaneous tasks at home. The participants, who work outside the home, mentioned the need to adapt to preventive measures for COVID-19 pandemic, a situation that generates personal and financial effort:

“In the workplace I feel that it was a situation that from one day to the next prevented me from continuing to develop in my field and look for alternatives to generate income. I had to redesign my routine, consider new forms of consumption, new habits to make the money that I was generating work and what I received through the Emergency Family Income for informal workers. I wrote a lot of new music and put together a publication plan that is still in effect. I think it is one of the actions (“being creative”) that most drove this moment. Everyone had to rethink in order to overcome the challenges that this paradigm shift posed. It is seen in the countless number of ventures that were launched in these months, it is something to celebrate, I think many had the possibility of seeing themselves self-sufficient and with more capacity than they believed” (Juan);

“We carry out the name change in the commercial business; we are creating the website, and changing the market niche we are targeting, with the probability of a change of location. We do many purchases and sales over the Internet” (Fatima);

“Because my mother couldn’t go to work as a domestic worker, we decided to start selling surprise breakfasts” (María);

“I’m a kindergarten teacher. Everything has changed; it is something new to teach mothers to teach their children, we use many platforms, video calls, audios, and videos so as not to lose contact with families. The activities are based on the house: exploring the patio, making meals, tidying up the home [...]” (Celia).

As in the study by Johnson et al. (2020), people reported feelings of uncertainty and discomfort related to the family’s economic and work situations. People perceived deterioration in their economy. The International Labour Organization (2020) and other authors (Brooks et al., 2020; Chen & Bonanno, 2020) had also pointed out that one of the main effects of quarantine is the economic difficulties they generate in the population, especially in the most vulnerable groups.

In the analysis of the changes in the employment situation of the participants, it was also necessary to consider the national policies aimed at transferring money to people who, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the health measures implemented, are deprived of generating income (Ingress Familiar of Emergency). The Emergency Assistance Program for Work and Production (Argentina.gob.ar, 2021; Ingreso Familiar de Emergencia, 2020) was also implemented to respond to the economic impact caused by the health emergency, take care of work and guarantee production. This program had two large groups of beneficiaries: formal employees of the private sector, who work in companies highly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and freelancers who registered a significant cut in their income. These programs had contributed to the economic support of people who have not been able to work or their activity was limited by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also observed that in some cases this transfer of money has contributed to the development of new ventures.

Likewise, it was necessary in the analysis to consider different localities in which the participants live. In small towns, the economic impact seems had been less, as economic activities began to develop more rapidly than in intermediate or large cities. Some participants had also pointed out that the inability of the population to travel to large cities had benefited merchants in towns, expanding their sales. While people could not move to other cities, must make purchases of food, clothing, footwear, *etc.* in shops in the towns where they live.

In the expressions of some participants, creative process and resilient actions related to work were observed. Many had created new products and ventures to cope with the economic crisis and the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. New practices were also observed in the development of work activities in a context of isolation and distancing, such as buying and selling over the Internet, managing web pages and social networks for commercial exchange, home delivery, *etc.* Entrepreneurs had generated innovative strategies to communicate with potential clients, give visibility to their products and capture new sales opportunities in other sectors. Some participants valued positively these changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These participants seemed to have generated resilient creative actions, taking advantage of opportunities in adverse situations. In this sense, the proposals of Chen and Bonanno (2020), Vinkers et al. (2020) and Forgeard (2013) were relevant to articulate creative practices and resilience in adverse contexts such as those generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. New actions and original products emerged thanks to individual and group creative processes that allowed solving labour and economic problems. People bring divergent thoughts and actions into play to create new ways of working, selling, delivering products, and making them visible. As in a previous study (Elisondo, 2018) on entrepreneurship and creativity, technologies and social networks played a prominent role in these creative processes. Technological mediations also were relevant in people who had remote stable work. For example, the teachers developed creative processes constructing alternatives and solving problems that were generated by the impossibility of face-to-face interaction. Other studies (Elisondo et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2021) also observe creative practices of teachers to reconfigure their work in a virtual way.

According to Tang et al. (2021) job uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic can improve creativity. In our study we observed that some participants have developed creative processes in their work activities, either by reconfiguring their work spaces or generating new ventures and forms of commercialization. The limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have generated economic difficulties, but also opportunities for the development of new creative ventures.

3.4.3. Cocktail of emotions

Participants experienced various emotions during lockdown, sadness, uncertainty, stress, anxiety, anger, frustration and fear were predominate. Likewise, the participants indicated some positive emotions: hope, enthusiasm and happiness (Figure 1). These results correspond to previous studies that indicate problems in mental health during quarantine in different countries (Brooks et al., 2020; Canet-Juric et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020; Shigemura et al., 2020; Stankovska et al., 2020; Torales et al., 2020; Torrente et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020). Some participants reported changes in emotions similar to grieving processes, that is, moments of denial, anger, negotiation, depression and acceptance. These processes occurred mainly for changes and losses in daily life due to COVID-19 pandemic: loss of work, of their own home, of social and family ties, routines, *etc.* Three participants reported problems in their mental health (panic attacks, depression) in quarantine, they started psychiatric treatment.

People who had generated entrepreneurship and new projects (companies, careers, *etc.*) reported positive emotions as enthusiasm, motivation and satisfaction. This result is linked

“It is a strong moment of change not only brings with its frustrations, it also gives us opportunities as long as we are able to see them and therefore take advantage of them” (Fatima).

Considering the proposals of the World Health Organization (Kluge, 2021) and Chen and Bonanno (2020), it is necessary to promote a resilient attitude in people during COVID-19 pandemic, reducing loneliness, stimulating the realization of physical and relaxation activities and the creation of new ventures. According to the participants, technologies played a relevant role, not only allowed the continuity of educational and work activities, also permitted social interactions and events such as birthdays, parties and celebrations. Several of the interviewees highlighted their participation in social events via *Zoom Video Communications*, *Skype* and *WhatsApp*. In addition to the relationships between creative activities and well-being, it is relevant to analyze the role of emotional creativity in the COVID-19 pandemic. Zhai et al. (2021) highlight the importance of emotional creativity in reducing the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of people. In their study they observed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, individual emotional creativity was significantly positively correlated with perceived social support, emotional regulatory self-efficacy, and post-traumatic growth.

Carrying out solidarity practices also seems to connect people with others, generating positive emotions and social commitment. In sum, the actions constructed by the participants to interact with others persons were very relevant since, as stated by Brooks et al. (2020), Vinkers et al. (2020) and Stankovska et al. (2020), these help prevent loneliness, boredom and the negative consequences of isolation.

3.4.4. Creative practice in postponed projects

The results indicated that many people generated new actions that involve personal growth, self-realization and postponed projects. These projects often involved others and generated healthy and friendly practices with the environment. Many of the participants did meditation, yoga and physical activity as a search for connection with the body, mind and others, as well as activities that promote well-being and mental health. Regarding diet, positive changes are also observed; many people have modified the food preparation processes, including organic products often produced in their own gardens. In the first moment of quarantine (Elisondo & Melgar, 2020) practices related to physical activity, yoga and meditation were observed, as well as changes in diet and food production. In the present study, many of these habits had been consolidated over time.

Yoga, gardens, meditation spaces, organic products, food for sale, an English course, university degrees, were some of the new projects that people had undertaken during quarantine. All these projects can be considered creative as show new actions and decisions, original products and ruptures as ingrained practices (Cristiano, 2016, 2018). Gfeller (2019) indicated relationships between everyday creativity processes and new forms of feeding and food production. According to the author, transformations in the ways of producing and consuming food can be considered creative processes as they imply ruptures in traditional ways and promote new ways of connecting with nature.

Many of the educational projects undertaken by the participants can be considered unexpected learning, that is, knowledge construction processes that were not planned but that were achieved thanks to the conditions generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some people had undertaken solidarity projects aimed at generating changes in the lives of people from vulnerable groups. These altruistic behaviors contribute not only to personal development but also to the construction of social changes:

“Crossed emotions, despite how bad I’m going, the fact of having decided to start a career (the one I wanted all my life philosophy) puts me in a very good mood” (Mariano);

“I think it is one of the actions (“being creative”) that most drove this moment. Everyone had to rethink in order to overcome the challenges that this paradigm shift posed. It is seen in the countless number of ventures that were launched in these months, it is something to celebrate, I think many had the possibility of seeing themselves self-sufficient and with more capacity than they believed” (Mario);

“The need to help [...] I contacted the parish of the neighborhood, to collaborate with something, I had a strong need to collaborate in something with a family, the lack of work, poverty has deepened and I think helping has helped me to be a little better, I always think a lot about children [...]” (Emma).

Like Lopez-Persem et al. (2021) we observe that many people have developed projects during confinement that they had postponed due to lack of time. People also report having built learning about different topics and about new ways of life. Johnson et al. (2020) also identified possible positive consequences of quarantine: appreciation of interdependence (solidarity, empathy, union and social conscience), opportunity for reflection (awareness, introspection), valuation of the environment, the state and the institutions (health, science, education) and review of lifestyle (food production, organization at home, redefinition of labor logic, *etc.*). In summary, the quarantine in addition to personal, family and work difficulties has generated opportunities for new projects, searching for new paths for physical, psychological and social well-being. People developed creative processes to generate healthy practices, changes in diet and food production, and new forms of communication mediated by technologies. People reorganized times, spaces and links, took advantage of technological mediations and available resources to transform themselves and generate new habits. They were also encouraged to undertake new projects and desires postponed, study a university degree, take training courses, learn English, and create new ventures were some of the creative achievements of people in quarantine. According to Vinkers et al. (2020) and Chen and Bonanno (2020), communication, new projects, flexibility, adaptability and control of situations were key factors of resilience, fundamental in times of COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusions

The results indicated significant modifications in participant’s life in times of COVID-19 pandemic. In the context of the home, transformations of times, spaces and relationships were observed; academic, work and leisure activities were reconfigured. Most of the activities took place at home, situation that generated tensions and challenges in the search for

personal spaces and times. Activity overload affected many people, with a special emphasis on women. In many cases, work and the family economy have been affected by isolation, many people have not been able to work for a long time or have significantly reduced their income. In other cases, people have to reconfigure their work activities and develop them remotely. In short, people experienced permanent changes in their personal life and in work activities. These changes demand flexibility and adaptability as well as creative processes for generating alternatives and solving problems. Creativity, flexibility and adaptability seem to play a prominent role in the relationships between resilience and COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, during confinement, creative processes are observed in solving daily problems, in the search for alternatives before restrictions and in the construction of original products (recipes, gardens, arrangements, physical activities, games, planning of spaces and times, *etc.*). Likewise, we find creative processes linked to new ways of working and the creation of new business ventures.

The participants lived a mixture of emotions in times of COVID-19 pandemic, these emotions, in addition to being diverse, were dynamic and changed at different times and situations. Faced with changes and adverse situations, sadness appears as the predominant emotion. Unexpected learnings, development of postponed projects, healthy and sustainable practices, solidarity actions and new conceptions about oneself and society, also emerged from the adversities imposed by COVID-19 pandemic.

In all the transformation processes analyzed, technologies play a relevant role: they allow the reconfiguration of social relations, educational processes and work practices. New ways of relating, learning, teaching, and working emerge from the restrictions imposed in times of COVID-19 pandemic. It is relevant in future studies to analyze how activities mediated by technologies are reconfigured after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The present study has limitations related to the sample, the method of data analysis and the lack of triangulation strategies between different methods. The sample was very small and lacked the necessary diversity to carry out selective and axial coding, that take into account all the contextual conditions and intervening circumstances of the phenomenon. In future studies, it is necessary to expand the sample and clearly define the selection criteria of the cases. Only open codifications were carried out, in future studies it is necessary to diversify the sample and carry out selective and axial codifications. It is also interesting in future studies to analyze the impacts of isolation and distancing on the economy and post-COVID-19 pandemic mental health, considering the socioeconomic particularities of the groups, gender variables, places of residence and resilience capacities and the creation of new projects. Future studies would also contribute to analyzing the processes of consolidation of healthy and sustainable habits in the new normal. Likewise, it is important to carry out longitudinal studies on the ventures created in times of COVID-19 pandemic and the postponed projects revived during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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