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Livia Carmen Segura Rondan¹
Violeta Cadenillas Albornoz²
Fanny Esperanza Zavala Alfaro³
Blanca Soledad Zavala Alfaro⁴
Olga Natividad Arellanos Tafur⁵

Soft Skills and Digital Competencies in Teacher Professional Development in Times of a COVID-19 Pandemic

Abstract

In the current context, the priority objectives to recover education affected by the Covid-19 pandemic are evident and in that sense, the soft skills of teachers and their digital skills become important, because they influence teacher professional development. To determine the levels of soft skills, the validated instrument of the article by Rodríguez (2020) was used, the levels of digital competences were used by the instrument of Tourón et al. (2018) and to establish the levels of teacher professional development, the validated instrument of Porras (2020) was used, whose research purpose for this study was to establish the incidence of soft skills and digital competences in teacher professional development in times of pandemic by Covid-19. It was concluded that soft skills and digital competence significantly affect teacher professional development in times of the Covid-19 pandemic, since Nagelkerke = 0.669, establishing that soft skills and digital skills affect 66.9% in teacher professional development; and of the predictor variables, soft skills predict teacher professional development, due to Wald = 80,193; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$.

Keywords: Soft Skills, Digital Skills, Teacher Professional Development.

Introduction

In recent years, education has undergone great changes, generated by new technologies and advances in scientific knowledge of the area, which has created an urgent need on the

part of the different educational actors to develop new skills and abilities to adapt to these new demands (González and Cruzat, 2019). On the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on the education of millions of children and adolescents around the world, exposing the

Livia Carmen Segura Rondan¹, Universidad César Vallejo, Lima, Perú.

Email: lsegura12@ucvvirtual.edu.pe

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3715-2852>

Violeta Cadenillas Albornoz², Universidad César Vallejo, Lima, Perú.

Email: cadealbo@ucvvirtual.edu.pe

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4526-2309>

Fanny Esperanza Zavala Alfaro³, Universidad César Vallejo, Lima, Perú.

Email: fzavala@ucv.edu.pe

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5862-9675>

Blanca Soledad Zavala Alfaro⁴, Universidad César Vallejo, Lima, Perú

Email: bzavala@ucv.edu.pe

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3940-9992>

Olga Natividad Arellanos Tafur⁵, Universidad César Vallejo, Lima, Perú.

Email: olganatividad@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8659-8239>

shortcomings and deficits that exist in educational systems to adapt their processes to a new teaching modality (Cáceres, 2020). In this scenario, the capacities and abilities of teachers play an important role in responding to the current needs of education.

In this sense, the World Bank (2020) highlighted the importance of training and developing skills in teachers, to respond to the needs of education, adapt their procedures to the remote mode, handle computer tools and develop new teaching methodologies. Likewise, there is a deficit of adequately qualified teachers regarding the use of technological resources, which has generated, in the Covid-19 pandemic, an increase in inequalities in education; many teachers only replicate in virtuality what they would do in their face-to-face class (Aldana et al., 2020). On the other hand, 81% of primary level teachers and 78% of secondary level teachers barely have the minimum qualifications required to perform their functions,

Regarding teacher development, there is a deficient percentage, considering that approximately only 30% are trained to carry out an education remotely (Ríos and Ruiz, 2020). It is also necessary to improve soft skills at the level of the educational and vocational training system. Thus, it is difficult to locate teachers who show soft skills in their pedagogical work and in this way promote their professional development.

Soft skills are the set of socio-emotional capacities and skills that people use in their interaction with others, which are key to achieving personal and work success (Rodríguez, 2020). For their part, Marrero et al. (2018) indicated that soft skills such as those personal attributes, which allow people to achieve effective interaction, achieving adequate performance at work and in the social sphere.

Likewise, these types of skills are formed as a result of the interaction of social skills, personality, the influence of family, friends and the culture where the individual is; which facilitate the person's relationships with their environment and respond to its demands (Bak et al., 2018). Within the scientific literature it is also known as interpersonal competences, which represent a set of characteristics that a person possesses, to establish positive links with their environment, being essential for personal and social development (Balcar, 2016).

Soft skills are of great importance for personal life and performance within an organization. Different studies highlight the role of soft skills today, its importance lies in: For the development of skills and abilities in the academic and work environment; people improve their resources available people; allows to develop adequate social relationships; they are related to personal and professional

development and success; allows you to adapt to changes; and they provide higher expectations in professional growth (Oliver, 2020; Cejudo and López, 2016). An important task that falls to teachers is to be emotionally prepared to be able to face and transform different contexts.

Regarding the dimensions, based on Goleman's approaches, he identified five dimensions to explain and describe the variable: In the responsibility dimension, it describes the degree of fulfillment of commitments and goals by people, demonstrating self-discipline and organization. Responsibility is understood as the degree to which a person makes decisions and acts consciously, showing commitment and assuming the consequences thereof. Adaptability is the ability that allows people to handle a set of demands and demands of the environment, acting efficiently and prioritizing the urgent; manifesting a flexible way of thinking and acting based on present needs (Ramos et al., 2021; Rodríguez, 2020; Jandrić and Ranoelović, 2018). The communication, defined as the abilities of people to transmit and receive information within a given context, which includes active listening, mutual understanding and sending clear messages (Rodríguez, 2020). Likewise, it is the ability of individuals to send and receive messages in the form of opinions, ideas and even emotional content; where factors such as the attitude of the people involved, channel, code, communication barriers, psychological and cultural aspects participate (Howe and Loana, 2021). In this regard, this ability stands out as one of the most desirable skills for teaching activity, since it implies the identification of the talent of other people, in order to enhance it through questions that lead to technical discussion and the presentation of arguments, to finally formulate conclusions (Busaibe et al., 2017). The dimension of effective access to information represents the ability of people to access, process and manage information effectively; managing to identify reliable sources, giving an adequate, precise and innovative use of the information in a certain time (Rodríguez, 2020). To access this type of information, it is necessary to select the relevant websites that enrich your learning, as well as to have the verification of the materials and resources in your virtual classroom, revealing those that are more conducive to learning, for this it is necessary to update the information that it offers according to the dates established in its planning (Pradhan et al., 2017; Bozionelos and Singh, 2017). The dimension of effective access to information represents the ability of people to access, process and manage information effectively; managing to identify reliable sources, giving an adequate, precise and innovative use

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Competencies are described as the set of knowledge, skills, personal resources and attitude that favor the development of an activity, and allow to achieve a goal successfully (Churchil, 2020). In this sense, digital competences describe the set of knowledge, skills and resources that allow the safe and beneficial use of information technologies in a given job (Tourón et al., 2018). Likewise,

Jackman et al. (2021) defined as the set of capacities and abilities that facilitates the use of any digital device, as well as its application in the communication process, to create and exchange content, solve problems of daily life and favor the development of people in educational or work environments. It is based on the theory called connectivism, it considers theoretical guidelines within the digital age, which were proposed. This perspective describes new scenarios of human action, where technology assumes a fundamental and significant role, which has transformed the different areas of people's lives (Altuna et al., 2017).

The importance of digital skills in teachers is that they provide users with knowledge and tools for the use of digital technologies in a useful and transformative way (García, 2019). According to Tourón et al. (2018) established the dimensions that make up digital skills are: The information and information literacy dimension, competencies that describe the knowledge, capacities and attitudes related to the identification, location, retrieval, storage, organization and storage of information of a digital nature, as well as also to describe the purpose and importance of it

Teacher professional development maintains that the teacher's knowledge, skills and attitudes are built from their actions, before which the professional reflects and makes decisions, attributing reflection as an important component in its development (Barros et al., 2020; Porras, 2020). In this sense, it is postulated that the teacher's reflection has a direct link with their professional development, allowing the construction of learning from experience (Galazzi et al., 2019). From this perspective, teacher professional development is considered a complex process where didactic, disciplinary and curricular competencies interact, which facilitate the role of the teacher in teaching-learning (Alarcón et al., 2020; Sánchez et al., 2018).

With regard to the epistemic basis of the study, the described theory is based on constructivism, from which the vision that the human being learns autonomously, at his own pace, through his active participation, forming content of his reality is maintained. From its interaction with the environment that surrounds it (Ortiz, 2015). Likewise, Porras (2020) described the technical pedagogical dimension, describes procedures related to continuous professional growth regarding the use of didactic resources to achieve learning processes, achievement capacities, to optimize learning; as well as for planning activities according to management commitments. The personal - social dimension describes procedures that the teacher performs to help their continuous development,

Methodology

It is circumscribed in a quantitative approach of non-experimental design, of a transectional cut, with a probabilistic sample, the population made up of 335 teachers and with the probabilistic sample, 180 teachers from a Network of 20 Public educational institutions were determined.

The instruments used were: For the soft skills variable, the validated instrument from the article by Rodríguez (2020) was used, obtaining a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.850. For digital competences, the instrument of Tourón et

al. (2018) obtaining a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.951 and to establish the levels of teacher professional development, the validated instrument of Porras (2020) was used, obtaining a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.919 indicating that the instruments are acceptable.

Results

Descriptive Results Analysis

For the description of the levels found in the variables

Table 1.

Results of the levels of soft skills and their dimensions

Levels	Soft skills		Responsibility		Adaptability		Communication		Development of others		Effective information management	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Low	73	40.6	79	43.9	86	47.8	86	47.8	97	53.9	76	42.2
Half	78	43.3	72	40.0	66	36.7	59	32.8	57	31.7	67	37.2
High	29	16.1	29	16.1	28	15.6	35	19.4	26	14.4	37	20.6
Total	180	100.0	180	100.0	180	100.0	180	100.0	180	100.0	180	100.0

It can be established in Table 1, about soft skills the teachers showed 40.6% of low level, 43.3% of medium level and 16.1% of high level. For responsibility, the teachers showed 43.9% of low level, 40% of medium level and 16.1% of high level. Regarding adaptability, teachers showed 47.8% of low level, 36.7% of medium level and 15.6% of high level. Regarding the communication dimension, the teachers showed

47.8% of low level, 32.8% of medium level and 19.4% of high level. Likewise, the development of others, teachers showed 53.9% of low level, 31.7% of medium level and 14.4% of high level. Regarding the effective management of information, the teachers showed 42.2% of low level, 37.2% of medium level and 20.6% of high level.

Table 2.

Results of the levels of digital competences and their dimensions

Levels	Digital skills		Information management		Communication and collaboration		Creation of digital content		Security		Problem resolution	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Ineffective	92	51.1	79	43.9	102	56.7	109	60.6	62	34.4	69	38.3
Half	76	42.2	75	41.7	56	31.1	60	33.3	89	49.4	86	47.8
Effective	12	6.7	26	14.4	22	12.2	eleven	6.1	29	16.1	25	13.9
Total	180	100.0	180	100.0	180	100.0	180	100.0	180	100.0	180	100.0

It can be established in Table 2, about digital competence, the teachers showed a 51.1% ineffective level, 42.2% average level and 6.7% effective level. In the information management dimension, teachers showed 43.9% of ineffective level, 41.7% of medium level and 14.4% of effective level. Regarding the communication and collaboration dimension, the teachers showed 56.7% ineffective level, 31.1%

intermediate level and 12.2% effective level. In relation to the creation of digital content, teachers showed a 60.6% ineffective level, 33.3% average level and 6.1% effective level. Regarding safety, teachers showed a 34.4% ineffective level, 49.4% average level and 16.1% effective level and finally problem solving, teachers showed a 38.3% ineffective level, 47.

Table 3.

Results of the levels of teacher professional development and their dimensions

Levels			Pedagogical technician		Social person		Institutional	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Inadequate	73	40.6	74	41.1	77	42.8	71	39.4
Regular	65	36.1	53	29.4	55	30.6	71	39.4
Suitable	42	23.3	53	29.4	48	26.7	38	21.1
Total	180	100.0	180	100.0	180	100.0	180	100.0

It can be established in Table 3, in terms of teacher professional development, 40.6% said it is of an inadequate level, 36.1% said it is of a regular level and 23.3% of an adequate level. Regarding the pedagogical technical dimension, 41.1% said it is of an inadequate level, 29.4%

said of a regular level and 29.3% of an adequate level. Regarding the personal social dimension, 42.8%, 30.6% of regular level and 26.7% of adequate level and as for the institutional level, 21.1% of adequate level.

Hypothesis Test Analysis

Table 4.

Results from a fit of the model and R2 of soft skills and digital competence in teacher professional development

Fit information for models						Pseudo R squared	
Model	Logarithm of likelihood -2	Chi squared	gl	S.I.G.	Cox and Snell	,591	
Intersection only	201,906				Nagelkerke	,669	
Final	41,155	160,751	4	,000	McFadden	,416	

Table 4 showed that the plausibility test indicated that it is significant ($x^2 = 160.751$; $p < 0.05$). Likewise, Nagelkerke = 0.669, which is why it is established that soft skills and digital

competence affect 66.9% in teacher professional development in times of a Covid-19 pandemic in the district of Independencia, 2021.

Table 5.

Goodness of fit of soft skills and digital competence in teacher professional development

Goodness of fit			
	Chi squared	gl	S.I.G.
Pearson	13,254	12	,351
Deviation	11,098	12	,521
Link function: Logit.			

The deviation presented the result of $x^2 = 11,098$, showing a $p > 0.05$; Therefore, it is established that the ordinal logistic regression

model considers soft skills and digital competence in teacher professional development, being valid and accepted.

Table 6.

Estimation of the parameters of soft skills and digital competence in teacher professional development

Parameter estimates								
		Estimate	Dev. Error	Wald	gl	S.I.G.	95% confidence interval	
							Lower limit	Upper limit
Threshold	[Des_pro = 1]	-7,009	,990	50,097	1	,000	-8,949	-5,068
	[Des_pro = 2]	-3,804	,874	18,944	1	,000	-5,517	-2,091
Location	[Hab_B = 1]	-6,560	,733	80,193	1	,000	-7,995	-5,124
	[Room_B = 2]	-3,263	,615	28,110	1	,000	-4,469	-2,057
	[Hab_B = 3]	0a	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[Com_dig = 1]	-2,504	,731	11,735	1	,001	-3,937	-1,071
	[Com_dig = 2]	-1,710	,721	5,619	1	,018	-3,123	-,296
	[Com_dig = 3]	0a	.	.	0	.	.	.
Link function: Logit.								
to. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.								

In table 6, it was evidenced that soft skills predict in teacher professional development, due to Wald =80,193; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$.

Checking the Specific Hypotheses

Table 7.

Model fits and R2 of soft skills and digital competence in the dimensions teacher professional development

Pedagogical technical professional development dimension						
Fit information for models					Pseudo R squared	
Model	Logarithm of likelihood -2	Chi squared	gl	S.I.G.	Cox and Snell	,486
Intersection only	165,705				Nagelkerke	,549
Final	45,814	119,892	4	,000	McFadden	,307
Social personal development dimension						
Fit information for models					Pseudo R squared	
Model	Logarithm of likelihood -2	Chi squared	gl	S.I.G.	Cox and Snell	,496
Intersection only	167,162				Nagelkerke	,561
Final	43,921	123,241	4	,000	McFadden	,318
Institutional development dimension						
Fit information for models					Pseudo R squared	
Model	Logarithm of likelihood -2	Chi squared	gl	S.I.G.	Cox and Snell	,611
Intersection only	217,372				Nagelkerke	,693
Final	47,635	169,738	4	,000	McFadden	,444

In Table 7, the likelihood test indicated that it is significant ($\chi^2 = 119,892; 123,241$ and $169,738$ with $p < 0.05$) in the technical pedagogical, social personal and institutional dimensions of professional development, respectively. Likewise, soft skills and digital competence significantly affect the technical pedagogical dimensions Nagelkerke = 0.549 with 54.9%; in the personal social dimension, Nagelkerke = 0.561 with 56.1%; and institutional professional development, Nagelkerke = 0.693 with 69.3%; Therefore, it is established that soft skills and digital competence affect the dimensions of teacher professional development in times of a Covid-19 pandemic in the district of Independencia, 2021.

Discussion

The study, after testing the hypotheses, found the following results: Soft skills and digital competences significantly affect teacher professional development in times of a Covid-19 pandemic, since Nagelkerke = 0.669, which is why it is established that the skills soft skills and digital competence affect 66.9% in teacher professional development and of the predictor variables, soft skills affect teacher professional development, due to Wald = 80,193; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, in times of a Covid-19 pandemic in the district of Independencia, 2021. Interpreted as a higher level of soft skills and digital skills, there

are better levels of professional development or a lower level of soft skills and digital skills, lower levels of professional development are presented. Establishing that through these skills people solve problems, cope with difficulties, develop their activities effectively, understand the emotional states of others and tolerate stressful or adverse situations (Seymour et al., 2017).

In this regard, Rodríguez (2020) concluded that soft skills influence 70% in the professional development of teachers. Soft skills are positively related to teacher development, responsibility, adaptability, and the development of others. Likewise, these types of skills are formed as a result of the interaction of social skills, personality, the influence of family, friends and the culture where the individual is; which facilitate the person's relationships with their environment and respond to its demands (Bak et al., 2018).

Likewise, Marrero et al. (2018) defined soft skills as those personal attributes that allow people to achieve effective interaction, achieving adequate performance at work and in the social sphere. In addition, he agreed with Guizado et al. (2019) expressed that, in terms of digital competence and teacher professional development, it is advisable to join forces and the focus should be reflected from academic training so that basic information and communication technologies can be mastered

and thus develop the digital skills that are required and that they achieve a full knowledge of those digital skills that are required and that they achieve a full knowledge of those skills for their professional performance,

Digital competences presented levels of digital competence, coinciding with, Benavente-Vera et al. (2021) developed an investigation with the purpose of demonstrating the effectiveness of a program in the development of digital competences. It was concluded that teachers must be trained to use technological and pedagogical tools in a theoretical and practical way, which will allow them to develop skills and abilities. Likewise, Pozú et al. (2020) stated that education faces as one of its great challenges the integration of technological resources in the teaching-learning process and the development of teachers in the use of these resources.

In the soft skills levels, it was found that the teachers showed 40.6% of low level, 43.3% of medium level and 16.1% of high level, in this regard, Rodríguez et al. (2021) found low levels of soft skills and likewise, they represent an influential factor in the professional development of teachers. Concluding that soft skills have a decisive influence on the personal and professional development of teachers, which allow them to adapt to current demands, social and emotional aspects of students, to new technologies and methodologies. Likewise, Rendón (2019) found that there is a direct relationship between the socio-emotional intelligence variable and teacher training, this being an important factor in professional development.

Regarding teacher professional development, most of the country's educational institutions have scarce technological resources; where teachers have limitations to make use of technological tools for education, this has been evidenced as a major problem as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (Mendoza, 2020) Coinciding with the fact that there is a deficit of adequately qualified teachers with respect to use of technological resources, which has generated an increase in inequalities in education in the Covid-19 pandemic; many teachers only replicate in virtuality what they would do in their face-to-face class (Aldana et al., 2020). On the other hand, teachers barely have the minimum qualifications required to perform their functions,

Likewise, in the first specific hypothesis, the study found that soft skills and digital competence significantly affect the professional development of the teacher's technical pedagogical dimension in times of a Covid-19 pandemic, since Nagelkerke = 0.549, therefore It is established that soft skills and digital competence affect 54.9% in the technical

pedagogical professional development of the teacher in times of pandemic by Covid-19 of the district of Independencia, 2021. Interpreting as a higher level of soft skills and digital competences is they present better levels of pedagogical technical professional development or at a lower level of soft skills and digital competences, there are lower levels of pedagogical technical professional development.

Coinciding with the study by Mello et al. (2018) stated that, the practices of teachers to achieve and improve their skills in the management of Information Technologies, must be carried out with a pedagogical sense and thus give the possibility of new forms of teaching and learning in students using their digital skills for their renewed pedagogical work. The pedagogical technical aspect establishes that teacher professional development represents a complex, dynamic, flexible, open and learning-oriented process that goes far beyond the accumulation of knowledge and knowledge (Chen, 2018). This process is determined by significant experiences that are presented in professional and personal practice, which provoke reflection and transformation of the profile as a teacher (Chaaban and Sawalhi, 2020). Procedures related to continuous professional growth are described regarding the use of didactic resources to achieve learning processes, achievement capacities, to optimize learning; as well as for planning activities according to management commitments (Porrás, 2020). On the other hand, he argued that this dimension also includes autonomous and active participation in significant professional development activities, related to the needs and demands of the educational environment (Barros et al., 2020). As well as for planning activities according to management commitments (Porrás, 2020). On the other hand, he argued that this dimension also includes autonomous and active participation in significant professional development activities, related to the needs and demands of the educational environment (Barros et al., 2020). As well as for planning activities according to management commitments (Porrás, 2020). On the other hand, he argued that this dimension also includes autonomous and active participation in significant professional development activities, related to the needs and demands of the educational environment (Barros et al., 2020).

Likewise, it was found that soft skills and digital competence significantly affect the professional development of the teacher's personal social dimension in times of a Covid-19 pandemic, since Nagelkerke = 0.561, which is why it is established that the skills Soft skills and digital competence have a 56.1% impact on personal social development in times of the

Covid-19 pandemic in the district of Independencia, 2021. Interpreted as a higher level of soft skills and digital skills, there are better levels of social professional development or lower level of soft skills and digital competences, there are lower levels of social professional development. Theoretically coinciding with the personal-social dimension, describes procedures that the teacher performs to help their continuous development, in aspects related to the identification and analysis of their difficulties to improve their performance, accepting the recommendations of others, acting safely and responsibly in the full development of their activities (Porras, 2020). The development of skills and personal attitudes that are essential to establish adequate links with others is described as part of their professional performance, which favors professional growth and good relationships within the institution.

It was also found that soft skills and digital competence significantly affect the institutional professional development of teachers in times of the Covid-19 pandemic of Independence, 2021, since Nagelkerke = 0.693, which is why it is established that soft skills and Digital competence affects 69.3% in the institutional professional development of teachers in times of pandemic by Covid-19 of the district of Independencia, 2021. Interpreted as a higher level of soft skills and digital competences, there are better levels of institutional professional development or a lower level of soft skills and digital competences, lower levels of institutional professional development are presented and in this way the teacher assumes a guiding role within the training process in the educational institution where he works looking for a comprehensive training, therefore, assuming a certain model is to establish the foundations where the necessary strategies will be framed to be able to carry out the teaching-learning process according to the needs of the society in which it is develops (Pinto et al., 2019). Assuming a certain model is to establish the foundations where the necessary strategies will be framed to be able to carry out the teaching-learning process according to the needs of the society in which it is developed (Pinto et al., 2019). Assuming a certain model is to establish the foundations where the necessary strategies will be framed to be able to carry out the teaching-learning process according to the needs of the society in which it is developed (Pinto et al., 2019).

The institutional dimension describes procedures aimed at teacher development, with regard to participation, proactivity and professional innovation to strengthen the institution, showing high degrees of identity, collaborative work and commitment to the

institution (Porras, 2020). Describing procedures related to identity, involvement and teamwork, it consists of strengthening the teaching institutional life, accepting challenges of their functions and responsibilities (Barros et al., 2020). It describes the degree to which a teacher is involved in the fulfillment of institutional objectives, responding to the goals of school management, performing a shared work through participatory dialogue, to make decisions in favor of improving school management within their school.

Conclusions

In this research it was concluded that soft skills and digital competence significantly affect teacher professional development in times of the Covid-19 pandemic of Independence, 2021, since Nagelkerke = 0.669, which is why it is established that soft skills and competence digital influence 66.9% in teacher professional development and of the predictor variables, soft skills affect teacher professional development, due to Wald = 80,193; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, in times of a Covid-19 pandemic in the district of Independencia, 2021.

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