



Undergraduate students' experiences of stress during the pandemic: The impact of gender.

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Context

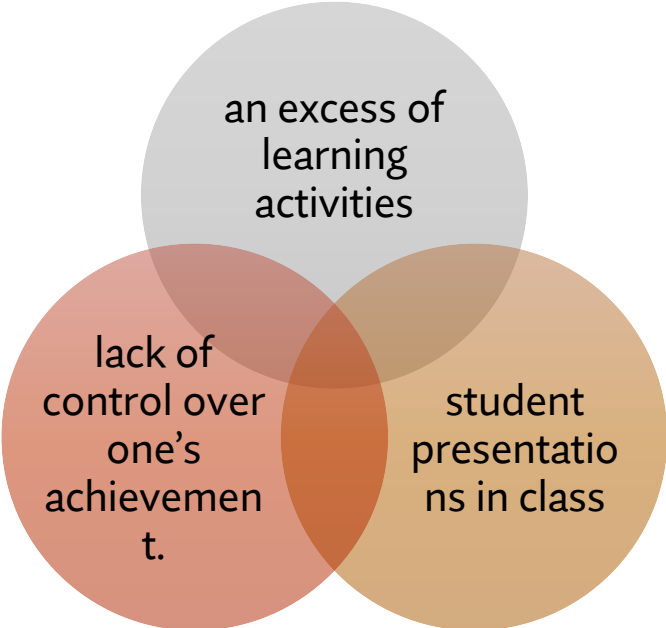
We are all aware of the numerous adjustments that have been made in a short period of time, transitioning from face-to-face teaching systems to distance learning or combination formats, as well as adjustments made to university syllabi, learning activities, online exams, and adaptations in class attendance.



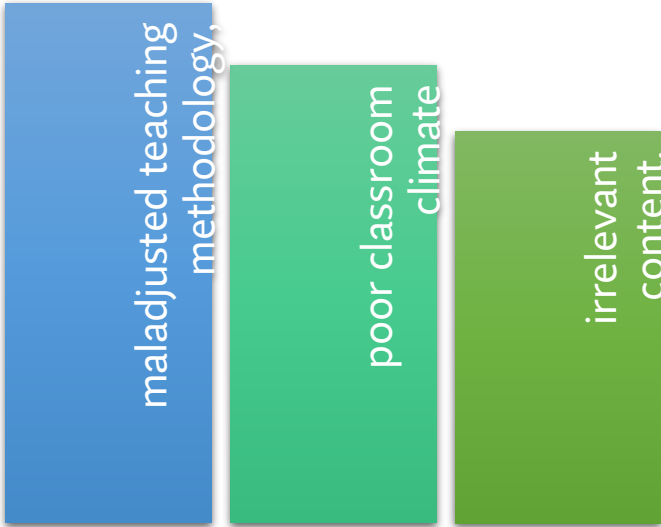
Stress Factors

In the COVID-19 scenario, it is reasonable to expect that university life has become even more stressful than usual for many students (Ahern and Norris, 2011; Denovan and Macaskill, 2017; Szulevicz et al., 2019; American College Health Association (ACHA), 2020; Hasan et al., 2020; Song et al., 2020).

Learning process



Teaching process



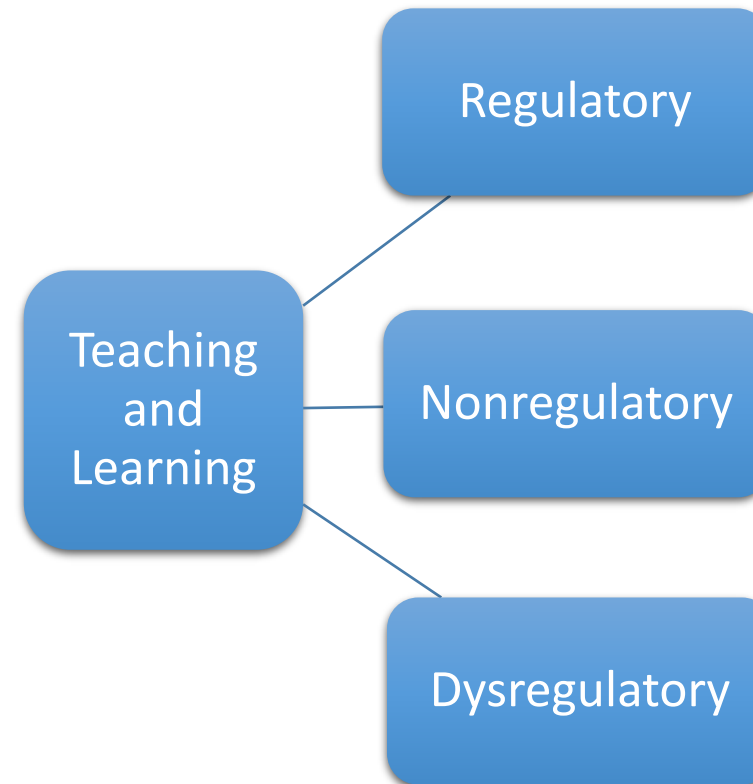
(González-Cabanach et al., 2008, 2016, 2017)

Regulatory Teaching

Refers to a good teaching style, in that it favors a good learning process. It includes teaching style and teaching profile.

SRL vs ERL

The Self- vs Externally-Regulated Learning Theory (de la Fuente, 2017)



The Self- vs Externally-Regulated Learning Theory

Regulatory. Teachers have properly planned and designed the teaching–learning process. In this scenario, students are less likely to show stress symptoms, negative emotionality, and burnout, and motivational behaviors of engagement can be maintained.

Nonregulatory. Teacher's planning is not compatible with the new situation of online teaching. Students feel uncertain about the way forward, and external regulation is lacking, thus increasing the likelihood of stress symptoms, negative emotionality, and a certain degree of burnout.

Dysregulatory. Teachers make arbitrary decisions about teaching and learning in the new situation. Students feel overwhelmed by the demands, are plagued with uncertainty and negative emotionality, and show greater levels of burnout



Aims

- (1) to analyze whether the students' perception of teaching and learning stress factors predicted significant changes in achievement emotions and motivational state of engagement burnout and whether the academic year and gender could also predict these emotional changes;
- (2) to inferentially analyze the specific causal effects that the academic year and gender had on stress factors originating in the teaching–learning process, on negative emotions, and on the state of engagement-burnout of undergraduate students.



Methods

A total of **642** university students (between the ages of 18 and 25), mean age was **20.42 years** (SD = 5.8), participated anonymous and voluntarily in this study.

N= 201 students participated in 2018,

N= 168 students in 2019, and

N= 305 in 2020

All of them were studying for Degrees in Psychology and Education but the students. In the three years, samples of these questionnaires were collected from March to August.

Using an ex post facto design, SEM analyses, simple and multiple ANOVAs were performed.



Results

Direct Effects

TABLE 2 | Standardized Direct Effects of prediction.

	Gender	Stress factors of Teaching	Stress factors of Learning	Negative Emotions	Burnout
Stress Teaching					
Stress Learning		0.943			
Negat. Emotions	-0.90		0.692		
Burnout			0.215	0.512	
Value cont.		0.586			
Negative climate		0.679			
Method diffic.		0.622			
Lack of control			0.912		
Public speaking			0.484		
Heavy workload			0.852		
Hopel.Study				0.926	
Shame.Study				0.846	
Boredom.Study				0.785	
Anger.Study				0.863	
Anxiety.Study				0.869	
Depletion					0.834
Cynicism					0.799
Low Efficacy					0.551

Indirect Effects

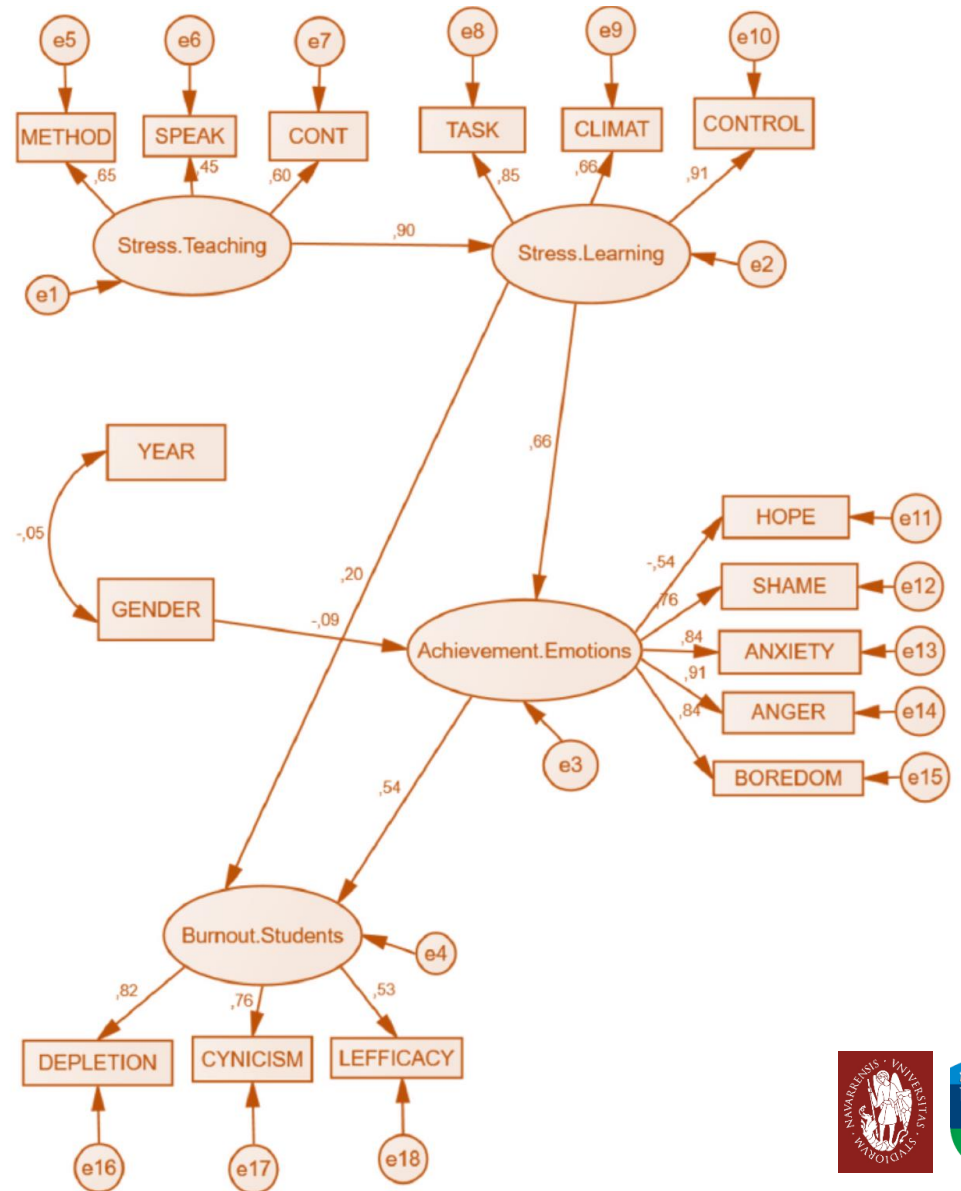
TABLE 3 | Standardized Indirect Effects of prediction.

	Gender	Stress factors of Teaching	Stress factors of Learning	Negative Emotions	Burnout
Stress Teaching					
Stress Learning					
Negat. Emotions		0.652			
Burnout	-0.046	0.536	0.354		
Value cont.					
Negative climate					
Method diffic.					
Lack of control		0.860			
Public speaking		0.456			
Heavy workload		0.804			
Hopel.Study	-0.083	0.604	0.640		
Shame.Study	-0.076	0.552	0.585		
Boredom.Study	-0.071	0.512	0.543		
Anger.Study	-0.078	0.563	0.597		
Anxiety.Study	-0.078	0.567	0.601		
Depletion	-0.038	0.447	0.474	0.427	
Cynicism	-0.037	0.428	0.454	0.409	
Low Efficacy	-0.025	0.295	0.313	0.282	

Results



Contrasting 2020, 2019 and 2018 academic years, determinants of negative academic emotions and the state of burnout were stable despite the COVID-19 outbreak.



Conclusion



During the 2020's pandemic. Female students showed greater involvement and anxiety, while male students showed greater cynicism and burnout.

Positive predictive relationships were found between stress factors during the teaching process (e.g., methodological difficulties) and stress factors in the learning process (e.g., excess of activities). In turn, these variables predicted the absence of positive emotions and the presence of negative emotions, as well as academic burnout.



Thank you for your
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de la Fuente J, Pachón-Basallo M, Santos FH, Peralta-Sánchez FJ, González-Torres MC, Artuch-Garde R, Paoloni PV and Gaetha ML (2021) How Has the COVID-19 Crisis Affected the Academic Stress of University Students? The Role of Teachers and Students. *Front. Psychol.* 12:626340. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.626340

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