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SYSTEMIC, MULTICULTURAL INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH IN A UNIVERSITY RESIDENCE HALL, BASED ON A DESIGN INSPIRED BY IAP

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ABSTRACT: This article describes the IAP-based research process in a university residence hall. The intervention involved twenty-seven students and their families, a rural community, four collaborators, four organisations from the local area and three representatives from other university residences. The results present the participants' perceptions two years after the intervention regarding cultural adaptation, mental health, academic performance and change management. These were gathered through a focus group comprising six participants and interviews with one collaborator from the residence, one family representative and one representative from another residence. The intervention was assessed positively in terms of strengthening mental health (50% significantly and 16.6% moderately). There is a need to redefine academic performance in consideration of educational gaps and inclusion, to improve organisational structures, and to strengthen spaces for coordination between the residence and the community, as well as between residences.

Keywords: multiculturalism, mental health, systemic approach, participatory action research.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, access to higher education has grown steadily, accompanied by an intensification of the internationalization processes promoted by university institutions. This dynamic has favored the incorporation of students from rural areas and international contexts,

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which has generated a significant transformation in the demographic composition of the student population (Rodríguez-Gómez, 2005). As a result, university systems have been compelled to review and adapt their organizational structures and pedagogical methodologies to respond effectively to an increasingly diverse ethnic, cultural, sexual, and religious landscape that is gradually becoming integrated into academic life.

The growing heterogeneity in higher education institutions raises the need to recognize mental health as a critical component of student well-being, with direct implications for academic performance, the quality of coexistence, and retention in the education system, especially in the case of students in situations of mobility. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple studies have documented a significant increase in the prevalence of mental health disorders in the university setting (Barroso et al., 2023; Bibi et al., 2024; Lin et al., 2020; Soo et al., 2024; Thaha et al., 2023), highlighting the urgent need to design and implement institutional policies and comprehensive programs that address the psychosocial needs of the different actors that make up the educational community.

In this context, university residences are strategic spaces where multicultural coexistence is manifested daily. Students from different backgrounds come together in these spaces, generating complex dynamics that directly affect individual, group, family, and community mental health.

The transition to university life brings significant challenges—such as academic stress, isolation, and cultural adaptation—especially in diverse countries such as Ecuador, where students must integrate into new social, cultural, and educational contexts.

Various studies in Latin America and other contexts (Alonso et al., 2018; Bruffaerts et al., 2018) indicate a direct relationship between mental health and academic performance, highlighting how stress and depression affect university retention and can have long-term consequences, such as exclusion or poverty. Hence, the importance of institutions promoting strategies to strengthen mental health by prioritizing environments of well-being, positive relationships, and emotional support mechanisms (Cancino et al., 2024).

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In the case of university residences, the approach proposed by Härkönen's ecological model (2007) allows us to understand the dynamic interaction between the different systems that influence the adaptation and well-being processes of resident students. These systems comprise the individual, family, community, and institutional levels, whose interrelationship shapes the psychosocial environment in which the subjects develop. This approach allows for the identification of risk and protective factors, facilitating the design of sustainable interventions aimed at developing social-emotional skills, promoting mental health, and building inclusive and intercultural environments (Brown et al., 2023; Khdir, 2023).

Therefore, residences become a microcosm of the university and of society itself: they reflect the challenges of intercultural coexistence, institutional gaps in diversity management, and, at the same time, opportunities to build healthy, resilient, and inclusive university communities. This study is framed within this perspective, proposing the implementation of an intervention based on the ecological model to strengthen mental health and intercultural coexistence in a university residence hall.

Access to higher education has increased in recent decades, and alongside this process, there is also a trend among institutions to seek internationalization, as well as to welcome students who migrate from rural areas to cities and those who come from other countries (Rodríguez-Gómez, 2005).

As a result of the processes described above, it is clear that the higher education system needs to make adjustments to respond to ethnic, cultural, sexual, and religious diversity, among others, which is becoming part of everyday life in higher education institutions.

The diversity that coexists in higher education institutions is driving the recognition of mental health as an element that ensures academic performance, coexistence, and the retention of students in the educational process, especially those who are in a state of mobility (Solís García et al., 2024).

Since the pandemic, several studies (Barroso et al., 2023; Bibi et al., 2024; Chamuah, 2019; Lin et al., 2020; Muñoz Del Carpio Toia et al., 2024; Priestley et al., 2022; Sheldon et al., 2021; Soo et al., 2024; Stoll et al., 2022; Thaha et al., 2023) have shown mental health

problems arising in higher education institutions and becoming increasingly frequent. They also point to the importance of developing policies, programs, and projects that address the mental health of the various actors in the university community, thus ensuring quality processes that take into account the well-being of students in all its dimensions.

University residences are spaces where this inter- and multicultural encounter occurs naturally, drawing attention to the dynamics generated between the various actors and their impact on individual, group, family, and social mental health.

The transition to university life often presents significant challenges for students, including academic stress and adapting to a new social environment (Buenaño, 2024). In Ecuador, where cultural diversity is a prominent feature, students must navigate not only a new academic context but also a complex web of social, ethnic, religious, cultural, and gender identities.

These factors can contribute to the emergence of mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression, which require specific attention in the context of university residences. In this sense, these spaces represent key settings for designing and implementing interventions aimed at promoting and caring for mental health.

A study conducted with university students in Chile showed that mental health problems are associated with a decrease in academic performance, increased functional disability, university dropout, and future poverty (Alonso et al., 2018; Ashwood et al., 2015; Bruffaerts et al., 2018; Hjorth et al., 2016). Another study in Ecuador indicates that stress in university students is the beginning of an increase in depression symptoms, the immediate effect of which is low academic performance. Palma-Delgado and Barcia-Briones (2020) mention that emotional disturbances affect academic performance and are a significant factor in learning and satisfactory academic results.

Consequently, based on these results, it is recommended that educational institutions develop strategies to strengthen mental health in university students, emphasizing improvements in the environment, interpersonal relationships, and, therefore, the mood of university students.

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A study conducted in Kurdistan found that an educational environment that considers multiculturalism as a core part of its processes favors the cultural adaptation of foreign students, as it improves the relationships between students, their environments, and educational settings, and consequently their physical and mental health.

The university experience is enriched when students from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and cultures interact. This process requires support to avoid conflicts and the creation of an adverse environment. In view of the above, there is a need to develop interventions in university residences that emphasize improving coexistence with people from different cultures and promoting inclusion, cultural understanding, mental health, and emotional well-being.

University residences represent on a micro level what is experienced on a macro level in the university context: the difficulties of coexistence between different cultures, the strategies that emerge from the actors themselves to overcome these difficulties, show the shortcomings of the university system in terms of how much they have developed structures for managing complexity, show the successes and failures of educational models, the gaps in the system, among others. It is an ideal space for understanding the system and learning lessons that will transform the university into an intelligent organization, capable of managing the diversity and complexity demanded by current contexts (Rosa et al., 2023).

The internationalization processes promoted by universities globally require focusing attention on these structures and promoting interventions in this space, where many students find a support network to complete their academic processes.

DEVELOPMENT

This process began with a request made by the actors involved in the university residence, with whom a participatory diagnosis was carried out involving 27 students, representatives of their families, and four collaborators.

The main problems identified were the cultural adaptation of students and their families to new social and cultural contexts, mental health issues that were invisible in the context of the

residence, their association with difficulties in academic performance, and, finally, difficulties in managing new processes and procedures that had been implemented in the residence and had led to institutional restructuring.

Following the diagnosis, psychosocial intervention strategies and processes were designed to strengthen mental health, with an emphasis on promoting emotional well-being, preventing psychosocial risks, and developing healthy living environments that are linked to the university residence.

For the intervention in the university residence, the ecological model (Härkönen, 2007) was also considered, and a systemic approach was adopted, which seeks to mobilize the system from different levels of relationship, from within, from within to without, and from without to within. For this reason, it was vitally important to get to know not only the students who lived in the residence, but also their families and the community environment from which they came.

Identifying what was happening with the individuals in the residence at the cognitive, emotional, and social levels led to a process of psychological support with each student. Group sessions were then used to apply techniques that allowed interpersonal conflicts to be externalized and to build the group into a space of trust and support. These initial actions revealed the need to work on processes within the family system.

Support was provided to the family system, consisting of three sessions with each of the families and two meetings with family representatives, in which the structure and functionality of the family were addressed in light of the changes brought about by the students' migration to the city.

Finally, intervention was carried out at the organizational level, using the ADKAR model as the basis for the methodology. The experience showed that the awareness-raising phase, the participation of the organization's collaborators, and the implementation of new internal communication processes were significant.

After the intervention at the organizational level, it was necessary to learn about the sector in which the residence is located through context mapping and to promote spaces for dialogue

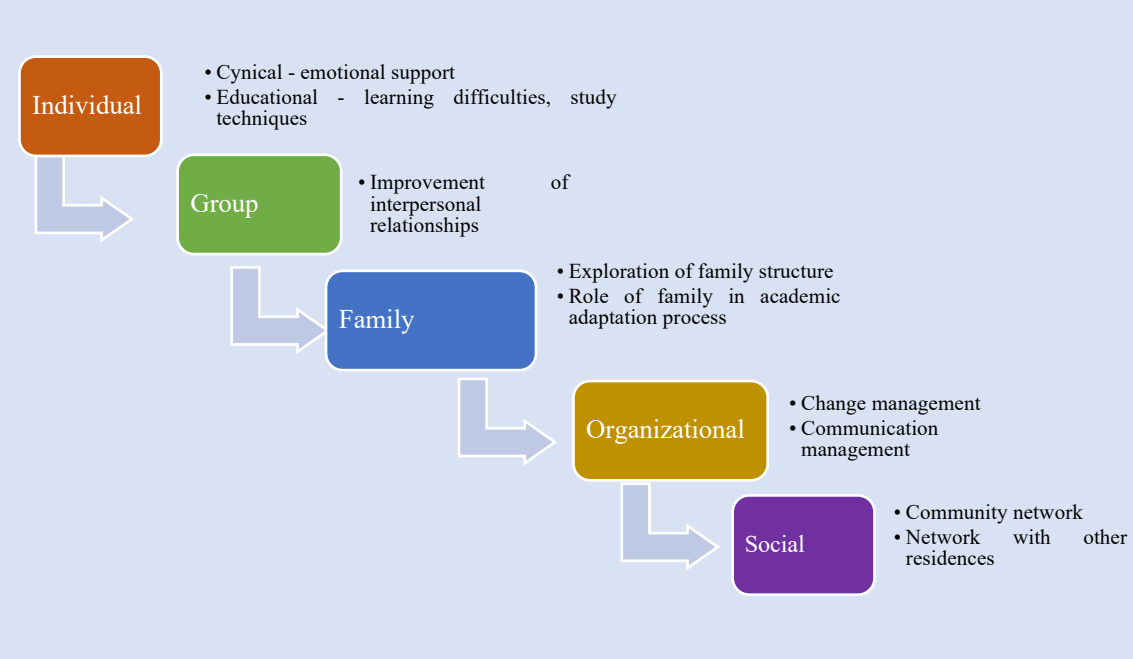
with other organizations and institutions located in the same sector. Agreements were made to promote quality and warmth for the students. In addition, two meetings were held with other university residences, which allowed for the exchange of experiences, the observation of common problems, and learning about the type of service offered in each residence, as well as the characteristics of the population with which they work.

The intervention process took into account psycho-socio-educational aspects, as well as cognitive, emotional, academic, social, and environmental factors that can influence the adaptation, learning, and psychological well-being of university residents.

The following is a summary of the levels of intervention and the lines of action for each level of intervention.

Figure 1

Levels of intervention with direct and indirect stakeholders in university residences



Note. The levels of intervention show the gradual and interconnected approach between the different systems of student relationships. Own elaboration.

Next, we will describe the process through which data is collected and analyzed on the perception of the interventions carried out in the university residence by the actors who participated in them.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted using a qualitative approach, with a design based on Participatory Action Research (PAR), with an exploratory-descriptive scope. The objective of the research was to implement a psychosocial intervention to strengthen mental health, adaptation, and intercultural coexistence in a university residence that welcomes students in mobility from different towns and nationalities in Ecuador.

Through the interventions carried out, the experiences of the various actors related to the residence are explored. Research has shown that this type of intervention can facilitate the expression of emotions and the development of coping strategies among students, thus promoting their mental well-being (Cáceres-González et al., 2023).

Two years after the intervention described in the previous section, perceptions of the experience were gathered from the different actors involved in the process. Some of the actors in the process who were still involved with the university residence were contacted, and it was established as a criterion that they had participated in the diagnosis and interventions. The corresponding permissions were requested to collect the information, and informed consent forms were signed as part of the ethical considerations.

A focus group was formed with six students who were part of the process and who still lived in the residence. In this space, a Likert scale was applied based on the categories that emerged in the diagnosis and are presented in Table 1. At the end, opinions were collected from the students who participated in the focus group.

Structured interviews were also conducted with a residence collaborator, one family representative who participated in both the diagnosis and the follow-up and meetings, and

one representative from another university residence who participated in the two meetings with residences.

The following categories and subcategories of analysis were considered for both the student scale and the interviews:

Table 1

Post-intervention analysis categories with university residence stakeholders

Main category	Subcategories of analysis
Cultural adaptation	Expectations regarding the new context. Social support. Participation in activities.
Mental health strengthening	Psychological well-being. Strengthening interpersonal relationships. Promoting mental health.
Academic performance	Time management and application of study techniques. Motivation and academic commitment. Academic performance.
Change management	Internal communication. Sense of belonging. Promotion of mental health. Strengthening relationships.

Note. The table summarizes the categories used in the post-intervention evaluation of the psychosocial intervention implemented in the university residence hall. These categories emerge from the participatory diagnosis, the intervention project, and the follow-up reports. Own elaboration.

To analyze the data collected, discussion forums were organized among researchers and reports produced during the research process were reread. The research process took three years, from the initial request and formulation of the proposal to the execution of the diagnosis and intervention.

Recurring themes were sought in the narratives of the actors and contrasted with theoretical elements. Based on this triangulation of data, the information was organized according to the categories that emerged in the participatory diagnosis.

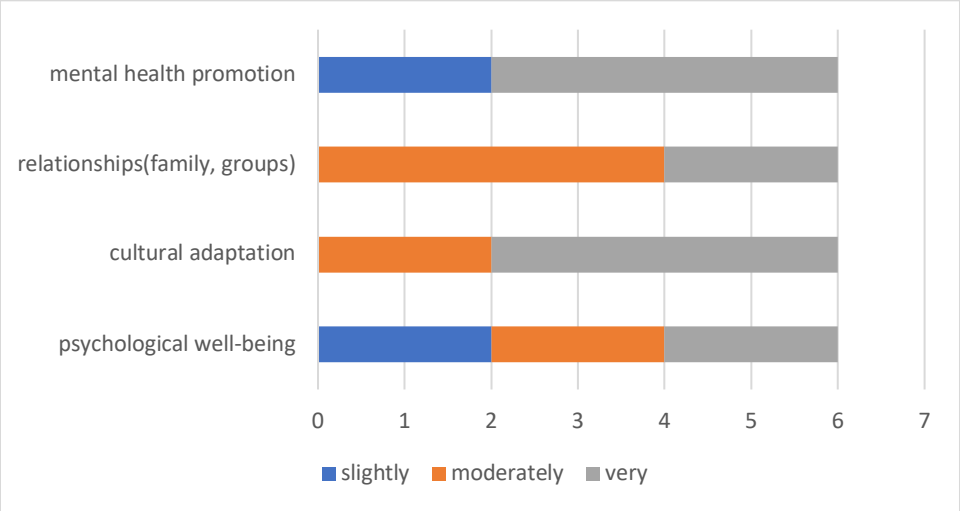
RESULTS

This section presents the perceptions of key stakeholders who could be contacted regarding the intervention process.

The first matrices show the results of applying the scales to students to identify their perceptions of psychological intervention in the areas of mental health, education, and organization.

Figure 2

Students' perceptions of interventions to strengthen mental health



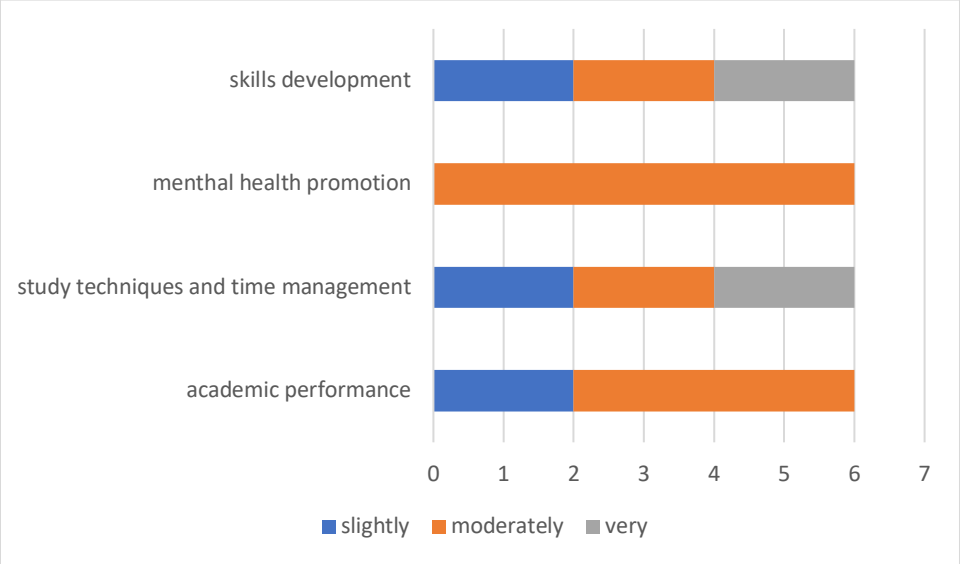
Note. The figure shows the main indicators perceived by students after the psychosocial intervention carried out in the university residence. Own elaboration.

The students who participated in the focus group after completing the scale mentioned that the work carried out helped to highlight the importance of addressing mental health in the residence. They indicated that there are group conflicts, insecurity, and misunderstandings,

highlighting the need to continue these processes and to establish psychological support tailored to the diversity of situations faced by students based on their cultural backgrounds.

Figure 3

Students' perceptions of interventions in academic performance



Note. The figure represents students' perceptions of changes in the educational environment following the psychosocial intervention carried out in the university residence. Own elaboration.

Unlike the responses regarding mental health interventions in education, students perceive the actions taken as positive, but at the same time indicate that they were not sufficient, pointing to the need for greater coordination between the residence hall and the university itself, with the directors and teachers of each of the degree programs.

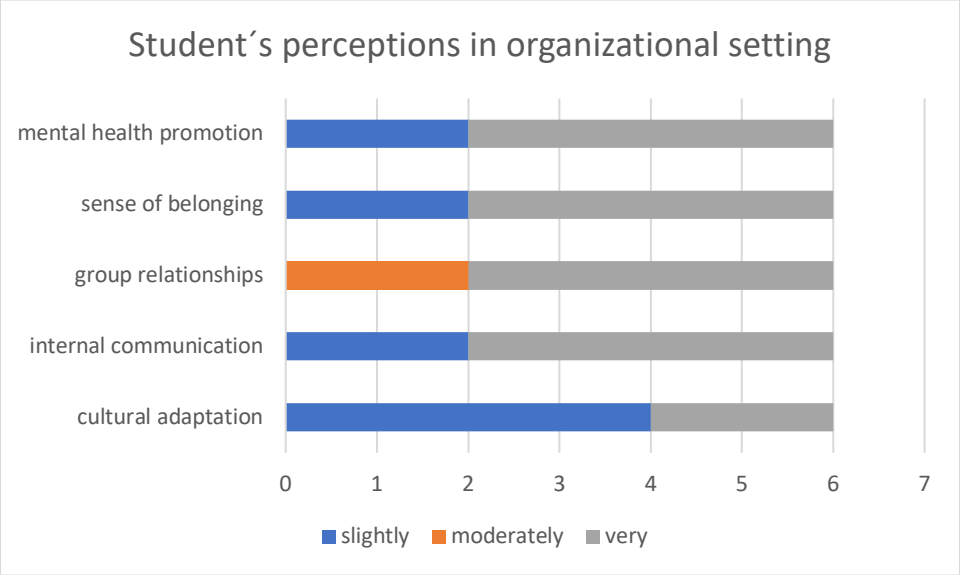
They see a need to work on raising awareness among students of the host culture so that they can support the adaptation of students in the residence to the new educational and cultural context.

They mention that there are significant differences between the educational systems of students coming from large cities and those coming from communities, and that this is not easy to overcome in the classroom. They propose working on motivation, including

motivational talks or success stories, to help students in the residence better connect with their academic goals.

Figure 4

Students' perceptions of intervention in the organizational setting



Note. The figure shows students' perceptions of organizational changes following the psychosocial intervention implemented in the university residence hall. Own elaboration.

In the conversation following the application of the scale, the students in the residence hall pointed out that the intervention would have been relevant for another type of structure, but that, at least in terms of internal communication and mental health promotion, progress has been evident. Among the proposals they made were: the implementation of workshops on social-emotional skills, the organization of collective events that foster coexistence, and the promotion of a culture of active listening within the residence, in addition to incorporating multimedia resources that make the exchange of information more agile and allow it to reach all residents more effectively, and encourage participation.

After working with the student focus group, interviews were conducted with a staff member, a parent, and a representative from another student residence. The results are shown below:

Table 2

Perceptions of the university residence collaborator on the intervention process

Conceptual Category	Description
Cultural adaptation	The strategies implemented have had an impact, but this is not uniform or sufficiently significant for all residents. Differences in individual experiences likely influence how these activities are perceived. To improve this aspect, it would be key to conduct periodic assessments of residents' needs and design activities that address their specific challenges in a more direct and personalized way.
Mental health strengthening	The activities have had a moderate impact on the sense of belonging. However, there is a need to design more inclusive dynamics that fully integrate all residents. Regarding emotional well-being, he mentioned that, although the current activities have a positive focus, they could be adjusted to address the emotional and psychological needs of students more comprehensively. There is no need for more activities, but there is a need to optimize existing ones and involve staff and professionals working in the residence more.
Academic Performance	The impact on academic performance and time management is moderate; practical, personalized workshops are necessary. Create spaces that encourage positive use of free time and healthy study habits to balance responsibilities.
Change mangement	An improvement in communication has been observed, but I suggest implementing digital tools for greater efficiency, such as mobile applications, electronic newsletters, and organized groups on messaging platforms, which would allow for a more effective exchange of information and promote a greater sense of community among residents.

Note. The table shows the perceptions of the university residence collaborator regarding the impact of the psychosocial intervention implemented in the different areas of action. Own elaboration.

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Table 2

Families' perceptions of the impact of the intervention in the university residence

Conceptual Category	Description
Cultural adaptation	It was important for us parents to know where our children live, to get closer to the authorities, and for them to get to know our community. We don't all live the same way, nor do we all feel the same way. Coming to the city is tough because we are always discriminated against, and we have to fight hard to get ahead.
Mental Health strengthening	We met other parents and shared our experiences of our children leaving home, the pain that accompanies us. When they went to the community, we were also able to talk about the migration of children and how it affects mothers. We also talked to the psychologists who came to help the family. It was good, but they haven't come back, if they were to continue doing so.
Academic performance	I have noticed that my son is calmer, and it seems that his grades have improved as well. Some of the others have already graduated too. If it is good for us to be part of what happens to our children, I am grateful to know how they are doing.
Change management	If communication has improved a little, we are now better informed about how our children are doing. I think they themselves have understood that it is good to tell us how they are doing, so that we can rest assured too.

Note. The table presents families' perceptions of the effects of the psychosocial intervention implemented in the university residence, considering the cultural, emotional, organizational, and educational spheres. Own elaboration.

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Table 3

Perceptions from the representative of another residence regarding the impact of the intervention

Conceptual Category	Description
Cultural adaptation	Learning about other realities gives us insight into how to manage processes in each of our spaces. We see that there are similar problems and others that are entirely specific to the type of population each university works with.
Mental health strengthening	Without a doubt, work on mental health is important. Students face significant changes when they migrate from the provinces to the capital or when they come from another country. These changes must be supported to ensure that students complete their academic training, as social interaction is a determining factor. I think it's great that parents know where their children are and how they are doing, as this helps to alleviate anxiety.
Academic performance	When talking with other residence hall residents, I have seen that there is work to be done in terms of raising awareness of residence halls in academia. They exist, but many people are unaware of them, which makes it more difficult for students to adapt to the educational process. Students also need ongoing induction and reinduction processes.
Change management	The management of residential homes is complex due to the diversity of the population served, which is why I also believe that mistakes are made in communication and I consider the work that has been done to improve communication to be relevant. In fact, it has also helped us to reflect on this issue. Dialogue always helps us find answers. Sharing spaces between universities to address this issue is new but enriching, and should be continued. Perhaps joint projects could be undertaken.

Note. The table presents the perceptions of the representative of another university residence regarding the impact of the psychosocial intervention implemented in the residence studied, highlighting shared learning and opportunities for inter-institutional collaboration. Own elaboration.

Although the implementation of the process is viewed positively, there is a need to continue reviewing the achievements and suggestions of the various stakeholders in the university residence, otherwise the progress made so far will be lost.

In addition, the population with which the university residence works is in constant flux, with students constantly entering and leaving the groups, which makes the management and evaluation of the processes complex.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Mental health promotion

In the current context, higher education institutions have realized the importance of caring for mental health (Zeng et al., 2019) and the need to understand the state of mental health, especially among students and teachers, to prevent existing problems from worsening or new mental health disorders from appearing (Li et al., 2025). Urgent interventions are required to address increased stress, difficulties in social adaptation, and the management of academic overload generated by entering university among members of the educational community in higher education institutions (Brown et al., 2023).

In this regard, a study conducted with university students in Chile showed that 31% of students had mental health problems (Martínez et al., 2021), which then had an impact on their educational process and its completion.

University residences are key spaces in universities and, at the same time, complex due to the number of members from diverse cultural backgrounds that they accommodate (Härkönen, 2007).

Interventions that promote mental health care by supporting the various actors involved allow us to understand other dimensions of the reality of students in mobility, to develop a meta-vision that clarifies the meanings attributed to the experience of studying in other contexts and to cultural adaptation, and move from looking at performance in a cold and disjointed way to seeing academic performance processes that led to profound changes resulting from crises and challenges for students, their families, and their communities.

The research challenges mental health paradigms derived from biomedical models, placing itself within a community mental health model that recognizes mental health as a systemic construct. This marks a difference from traditional interventions focused on diagnosing

pathologies and referring students to individual therapy processes. Instead, it proposes a construction of mental health based on the diverse levels of relationships that shape the subjectivity of students in residence.

Cultural adaptation

With regard to cultural adaptation, it is important to note that this can mean the acculturation and assimilation of a new culture by students in a situation of mobility, or it can mean maintaining two cultures at the same time (González-Alafita and Flores-Meléndez, 2011).

In this case, students have developed strategies to maintain their culture of origin, such as returning to their communities during vacation periods or forming groups with students who come from the same community. On the other hand, in order to adapt to the culture of the city where the university is located, they seek relationships with students from the host culture. However, this represents a permanent tension between what they assimilate at the university and what their families maintain as belief systems, that is, a conflict between losing individual identity to assume a social identity as a result of the pressure exerted by the new groups in which they are involved (Abbas et al., 2024). From the perspective of the host culture, there is no openness to include new beliefs or value diversity.

Adaptation to the new cultural context is closely linked to students' interactions with their classmates, friends, family, and the various social groups in which they participate. To the extent that they are able to adequately manage psychological, social, and communication variables at various levels of interaction, their adaptation process improves and, therefore, their chances of academic success increase (Handrianto et al., 2025).

The results obtained after the intervention in the university residence generally show a positive assessment of the process and highlight the importance of mental health in promoting cultural adaptation. Students in mobility situations experience not only academic stress but also stress due to the change in cultural context, as they often experience processes of acculturation, discrimination, and exclusion.

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Working from a mental health perspective also leads us to question cultural alienation and the reproduction of colonialist logic as part of university education (Jane Blithe and Pereira Lima de Carvalho, 2023).

Academic performance

When examining the category of academic performance, several studies (Arntz et al., 2022; Baquerizo-Quispe et al., 2022; Curichimba Davila et al., 2024; González-Olaya et al., 2014; Meza Santa-María, 2023; Moreno Aguiar, 2020) suggest that mental health problems affect student performance, especially at the university level, making it important to implement interventions to help improve the conditions of those facing these difficulties. Cancino et al. (2024) highlight that mental health is one of the factors that most influences university dropout rates.

In this regard, the intervention identified mental health factors associated with academic performance in students, which they refer to as motivation, but which refer to the difficulties of facing a cultural context that is more complex than the context from which they come. The students also pointed out, as a disadvantage, the gaps in knowledge they have in relation to students from schools in large cities, that is, the existence of an educational gap that becomes significant in academic performance. In addition, they mentioned the difficulty of relating to other young people when working in groups, as it is very difficult to be integrated into existing groups. They point out that there is discrimination among classmates for various reasons, with a significant native-migrant gap in reading comprehension, study methods, knowledge, and use of digital resources (Ortega, 2024).

Previous research shows that student mobility should be viewed in terms of the challenges it entails, as it not only involves student performance and students completing their education, but also highlights the need for an in-depth review of the implications of this educational process in terms of understanding the environments from which students come and the possible impacts that this education could have on them in terms of reconfiguring individual

and social identity. which is why these changes must be accompanied by consideration of psychological, pedagogical, anthropological, and social aspects (Gu et al., 2010).

The educational field reveals the need to address issues that go beyond study techniques or time management, as they point to an area for improvement in interventions, placing the motivation of students in mobility, group interaction processes, and identity changes resulting from the educational process in academic settings, as well as the socioeconomic and educational barriers that exist and limit inclusion in the new context, as central themes (Durand Villalobos and Juvera Quijada, 2024).

Change management

University residences are shifting from being peripheral locations to becoming hubs for university life, especially when internationalization is considered the fundamental goal of universities seeking to expand in the medium and long term in a globalized world.

Consequently, another relevant level of intervention was organizational: raising awareness among residence hall staff about change management helped overcome resistance to this first intervention and positioned communication as a process that deserves to be continuously evaluated and improved, as indicated in the results presented.

Furthermore, the results recognize that communication must be managed in multiple directions, taking into account the characteristics of each group.

Interventions related to mental health do not contemplate actions at the organizational level, as in this case, since the impact of the organizational structure, norms, roles, cohesion, status, and institutional discourses is not considered. The impact of the organizational structure of the residence on the daily lives of the students who live there is overlooked.

Residences do not build contextualized processes and procedures with systemic perspectives that enhance diverse capacities and take advantage of multiculturalism; on the contrary, they consolidate rigid structures that objectify the subject, stripping them of their identity by imposing beliefs, behaviors, and meanings, among others, under the premise of obedience.

In line with the above, it should be noted that this micro-space naturally condenses complexity and provides guidance on the changes that need to be implemented in higher education institutions to better serve new generations and their dynamics.

Internationalization requires a focus on global skills training through the formulation of policies, programs, and projects that promote cultural adaptation, consider curriculum modification, and provide support for students in mobility situations (Sharipov, 2020).

Interventions to manage change at the organizational level prevent individual psychological support services from becoming overwhelmed, as the organization can create self-help spaces for better management of academic stress and the growing demands of increasingly complex social contexts (Duffy et al., 2019).

Finally, it should be noted that despite the importance of residences in university contexts, there are weaknesses in their organizational structure, the processes implemented in them are still very precarious in terms of managing induction processes, internal and external communication, developing codes of conduct, protocols, or protection routes for resolving the various conflicts that may arise in them, as well as managing inclusion processes that reduce existing gaps in various areas.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of psychosocial intervention in the university residence allowed us to identify cultural adaptation, academic performance, and organizational change management as the main categories associated with mental health.

This process took place in contexts characterized by broad cultural, sexual, and religious diversity, where the richness of multiculturalism is evident, as are the challenges it poses in terms of promoting inclusive and emotionally safe environments within the university setting.

It is necessary to redefine the category of academic performance to take into account ethnic and cultural diversity, existing gaps in educational processes, and the impact of the

educational process on the identity construction of students, as well as their families and communities.

This experience highlighted the need to consolidate organizational structures within university residences that allow for the consolidation of support programs at the individual, group, family, community, and organizational levels.

It is suggested that universities institutionalize policies to strengthen mental health based on an ecological and community mental health model.

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