



RESEARCH

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**MENTAL HEALTH AND MEDIA COVERAGE OF COVID-19:
INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF TELEVISION
MANAGEMENT, AND EFFICIENT INTERRELATION OF ANXIETY
THROUGH THE DUAL TECHNIQUE: SUFFERING VS PAIN, FOR
THE IMPROVEMENT OF STRESS GENERATED BY THE
PANDEMIC**

Salud mental y cobertura mediática del COVID-19: investigación de los efectos del manejo de la televisión y la interrelación eficiente de la ansiedad a través de la técnica dual: sufrimiento VS dolor, para la mejora del estrés generado por la pandemia

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ABSTRACT

Willingness to communicate (WTC) in a foreign language is linked to a range of negative and positive emotions. The present study investigated whether language enjoyment and anxiety are potential predictors of WTC. To this end, a group of 349 EFL undergraduate students (Female = 226, Male = 123) enrolled at public Saudi Arabian universities were surveyed. Multiple regression analyses revealed that foreign language enjoyment (FLE) was a predictor of WTC, while foreign language

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classroom anxiety (FLCA) did not seem to have a significant correlation with students' WTC. These results suggest higher levels of enjoyment may have neutralized the effects of anxiety on WTC, indicating the salient role of positive emotions. Implications for foreign language teachers are discussed.

Keywords: Media coverage, Mental health, Stress, Conscious Communication, COVID-19, Overinformation.

RESUMEN

La declaración del estado de alarma por la pandemia del COVID-19 desencadena un estado de confinamiento, a millones de ciudadanos en sus domicilios. La situación de aislamiento tiene enormes efectos, en múltiples variables a nivel social, comunicativo, psicológico, económico, educativo..., y especialmente ha incidido en la salud mental. Los resultados de las investigaciones demuestran que la cobertura mediática televisiva ha desembocado en una conducta deformada de sobreinformación, y con una mayor frecuencia que antes de la crisis sanitaria, de forma sensacionalista y generando una alarma social innecesaria que ha confluído en cuadros generalizados de estrés, dolor y sufrimiento. Nos encontramos, desde los primeros meses de 2020, con una de las mayores pandemias vividas desde la I Guerra Mundial, el COVID-19. El estrés sigue siendo, pese a la considerable investigación realizada en torno a él, y a la ansiedad, y a los numerosos abordajes esbozados para afrontarlo, un aspecto inevitable de nuestra vida, y que ha obtenido especial presencia en la pandemia. El estrés forma parte de la condición humana. Todos nos hallamos sumidos, sin escapatoria posible, en la incertidumbre de cada instante, COVID-19, conflicto Rusia-Ucrania, los problemas, la enfermedad, la vejez, la muerte y la imposibilidad de controlar los acontecimientos en torno a los cuales gira nuestra vida, especialmente durante los cuadros generados por la pandemia del COVID-19.

Palabras clave: Cobertura mediática, Salud mental, Estrés, Comunicación Consciente, COVID-19, Sobreinformación.

Saúde mental e cobertura mediática da covid-19: investigação dos efeitos da gestão televisiva, e inter-relação eficiente da ansiedade através da técnica dual: sofrimento vs dor, para a melhoria do stress gerado pela pandemia

RESUMO

A declaração do estado de alarme devido à pandemia de COVID-19 desencadeou um estado de confinamento de milhões de cidadãos nas suas casas. A situação de isolamento tem enormes efeitos em múltiplas variáveis a nível social, comunicativo, psicológico, económico e educativo, e teve um impacto particular na saúde mental. Os resultados da investigação mostram que a cobertura mediática televisiva conduziu a um comportamento distorcido de excesso de informação, e com maior frequência do que antes da crise sanitária, de forma sensacionalista e gerando um alarme social desnecessário que conduziu a sintomas generalizados de stress, dor e sofrimento.

Desde os primeiros meses de 2020, estamos a enfrentar uma das maiores pandemias desde a Primeira Guerra Mundial, a COVID-19. Apesar da investigação considerável sobre o stress e a ansiedade, e das muitas abordagens desenvolvidas para lidar com eles, o stress continua a ser um aspecto inevitável das nossas vidas, e um aspecto que tem estado particularmente presente na pandemia. O stress faz parte da condição humana. Estamos todos imersos, sem escapatória, na incerteza de cada momento, na COVID-19, no conflito Rússia-Ucrânia, nos problemas, na doença, na velhice, na morte e na impossibilidade de controlar os acontecimentos em torno dos quais giram as nossas vidas, especialmente durante os acontecimentos gerados pela pandemia de COVID-19.

Palavras chave: Cobertura mediática, Saúde mental, Stress, Comunicação consciente, COVID-19, Sobreinformação.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the first months of 2020, we have been facing one of the biggest pandemics since the First World War: COVID-19. The Spanish flu of 1918-1920, which left a death toll of between 20 and 50 million people, according to the World Health Organisation, had occurred before that. We are also suffering the political aftermath of the global instability of the Trump presidency, as well as not yet having recovered from the effects of one of the severest financial crises of recent years. And while these events have not yet been overcome, we are witnessing the tensest moment in Europe since the Second World War, with one of the greatest transformations of a changing international order as a result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

With all this, media consumption has increased considerably at a global level, and our country has also experienced this phenomenon, which is beginning to become a new scenario in the new information societies, generating, consequently, a high activation of anxiety and stress (Shamash, 2015).

Within the educational landscape, Barrientos-Báez et al. (2021) explore the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education. As the world grappled with unprecedented challenges, traditional educational settings were compelled to adapt to new scenarios. The pandemic disrupted the familiar routines and structures of university education, giving rise to novel educational landscapes and approaches. In this context, the enduring presence of stress remains a significant concern. Quian (2023) delves into the multifaceted nature of stress, examining its profound impact on individuals amidst external and internal factors. Despite extensive research and efforts to alleviate stress, anxiety continues to pervade our existence. The uncertainty stemming from the ongoing pandemic, geopolitical conflicts, and inevitable aspects of life like illness and mortality reinforces our limited control over the events shaping our lives. As we grapple with isolation, disconnection, and the challenges of establishing meaningful connections, the management and identification of pain and suffering become crucial in navigating these complexities (Vargas and Sacaluga, 2022).

According to Vázquez-Chas (2023), during the confinement, online social networks have acted as buffers against loneliness, which has been a significant aid for many individuals. However, television, being the most consumed traditional medium in 2020 when the pandemic began, has attempted to connect with viewers on an emotional level in the face of the various crisis scenarios. Nevertheless, it has not always succeeded in dispelling confusion or our inability to discern lucidly the causes of pain and suffering amidst the very nature of uncertainty. The deluge of information unleashed in the age of uncertainty has taken a heavy toll on the mental and psychosomatic health of a significant portion of the global population.

According to Huamani-Calloapaza (2022), it is important to acknowledge that the data regarding television viewing prior to COVID-19 should be assessed differently, as the year in question witnessed compulsory confinement, leading to a larger number of individuals being confined in front of screens. This situation creates a perceptual vulnerability that, in times of weakness, establishes a connection with suffering associated with internal dialogue, as elaborated later in this discussion. The prevailing need to stay informed has become a habitual loyalty to television, along with numerous other viewing options. This reactive behavior and avoidance of accepting reality validate a crucial hypothesis of the reactive mind, reinforcing the inherent human inability to have complete control over everything. Consequently, this generates secondary suffering that is entirely natural to our existence (Gardner, 2017).

In 2001, viewers watched an average of 213 minutes of traditional television per day. That is 27 minutes less than the average in 2020, a figure that is also far from those recorded in recent years. With these figures, according to Eduard Nafría, director of Insights and Business Development at Kantar, television consumption in Spain has reached figures from the beginning of the century: it is the same average time as in 2003 and only three minutes more than in 2000. However, the audiovisual context is very different. At that time, the explosion of channels brought by DTT had not taken place; television was not competing with smartphones and other connected devices and the internet, and digital platforms did not have the penetration they have now (Marcos, 2022).

In the realm of media effects, Wolf (2001) explores the transformative impact of social networks as a dominant form of communication, gradually overtaking traditional television even prior to the pandemic. The outbreak of the global health crisis has further accelerated this shift and solidified new patterns of audiovisual consumption. The limitations and closures of cinemas have driven a significant increase in online video consumption, while new players in the industry, such as Disney Plus with its staggering 130 million subscribers, have gained substantial traction. As a result, the media landscape has witnessed a notable transformation, with social networks and online platforms assuming a central role in shaping our communication practices (Wolf, 2001).

In short, a trend is evident in the collapse of the box office, the closure of cinemas and a considerable growth in online consumption of content with the arrival of Netflix with more than 221.8 million subscribers, -23.3 million in Spain.

In the examination of media dynamics during the COVID-19 pandemic, Chadwick (2013) introduces the concept of a hybrid media system, where television and other media outlets play a critical role in managing and disseminating information. Barrientos-Báez (2022) reinforces this notion, emphasizing the significance of television in particular. However, there was a notable oversight in addressing the impact of the pandemic on mental health disorders. It was not until fourteen months later, on May 9, 2021, that the Spanish government introduced the 2021-2024 Mental Health and COVID-19 Action Plan, acknowledging the need to address the psychological consequences of the crisis. The viral situation has reshaped social interactions, leading individuals to form and reside within smaller social bubbles. Even deeply ingrained cultural celebrations like Christmas faced temporary interruptions, testing our adaptability to the temporary rupture of family ties. This transformative period has also accelerated the shift towards increased audiovisual consumption, particularly through online platforms, exacerbating stress, fatigue, suffering, and pain within this new paradigm. Ultimately, the distress and secondary suffering experienced by individuals stem from the realization that we cannot exert full control over the ever-changing reality that surrounds us.

2. OBJECTIVES

The present study intends to examine, on the one hand, how the situation of isolation has generated enormous effects, in multiple variables at a social, communicative, psychological, economic, educational level..., and has especially affected mental health.

Likewise, the present investigation focuses on the demonstration that television media coverage has led to a distorted behavior of overinformation, and with a greater frequency than before the health crisis, and that in a sensationalist way it is generating an unnecessary social alarm that has confluent in generalized pictures of stress, pain and suffering.

Another of the objectives that this study intends to examine is the demonstration that stress continues to be, despite the considerable research carried out around it, and anxiety, and the numerous approaches outlined to deal with it, an inevitable aspect of our lives, and that it has obtained a special presence in the pandemic.

In addition, this research analyzes and examines that we are all immersed, with no possible escape, in the uncertainty of every moment, COVID-19, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, problems, illness, old age, death and the impossibility of controlling the events around which our lives revolve, especially during the frames generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lastly, in this study we propose the conceptual development of the Dual Technique: suffering vs. pain, for the improvement of the stress generated by the pandemic.

3. Consumers of pandemic television: side effects of over-information in the evolution towards a new television

Culture, leisure and entertainment are facing a new era of production, distribution and exhibition. The media in Spain are competing with each other and are studying in depth the new model of audiovisual society that has emerged as a result of the pandemic. A new model of television in which usability changes from the same receiving device reused as a screen where different content can be viewed, moving away from traditional television and programming.

Smart TVs were already working decades before the arrival of the pandemic, the ecosystem of applications and the improvement of internet connectivity have given rise to the multiusability of the conventional television screen. Smart TV is synonymous with diversification of the offer, as well as changing viewing habits of a new television. The development of technology varies the TV model of Smart TV compared to conventional TV sets, but the power of the screen remains decisive. The global pandemic has only led to a disproportionate increase in the consumption times of audiovisual content and, consequently, the start of a long-distance race to be the first in two sectors, technology and content generation, both of which have caused the audiovisual disease in various sectors of the population. A deformation in the times of consumption that irremediably affects our mental health, given that energy leaks are more likely to occur as a result of the difficulties in accepting the primary pain, and connecting with the cognitive fusion of our mind that seeks an explanation for not accepting (Vargas and Sacaluga 2022).

The various content providers are joining the race for improved audio and video content, better screen resolutions, more powerful multi-channel sound systems and a long list of advances and innovations. If we add to this the over-information of a programming of news content that intended to make viewers the absolute connoisseurs of everything related to COVID-19, the collapse of the individual due to so many optical and narrative impulses has resulted in the absolute impossibility of managing stress. There has been a deformation and manipulation, perhaps unintentional by the media, the cost of which, as we pointed out, would be of the utmost importance for the new post-pandemic societies with a confusion between pain and suffering that affects and impacts on psycho-corporal health.

The younger population aged 18-30, as indicated by the Spanish Society of Psychiatry, has been one of the most affected groups in terms of mental health; even more vulnerable than people in other age groups.

Drawing on the philosophical insights of Innerarity (2020) in his work *Pandemocracia: una filosofía de la crisis del coronavirus*, it becomes evident that the measures taken to combat the transmission of COVID-19, such as home isolation, school closures, and

business shutdowns, have not only been essential for public health but have also resulted in significant psychological repercussions. These non-pharmacological interventions, while aiming to control the spread of the virus, have inadvertently given rise to what some authors refer to as the "parallel pandemic". This parallel pandemic encompasses the psychological effects caused by both the disease itself and the measures implemented by health and political authorities. It is within this context of intertwined health and psychological consequences that the true complexity of the COVID-19 crisis unfolds.

There is also a sector of the population that, during the course of the pandemic, has not escaped a phenomenon so typical of our times: conspiracy theories and fake news. Digital infoxication, a term coined by Alfons Cornella to refer to information overload, has led to over-information, to an excess of news control and, therefore, to the malaise of anxiety. But the age groups studied do not only focus on the young population affected.

The media has witnessed the phenomenon of how the rest of society has been overwhelmed by the onslaught of the pandemic. All age groups have been caught unaware and in a certain way we were initially faced with an abundance of information that the media did not know how to deal with, and which generated the aforementioned mistrust. On a daily basis, they were faced with disinformation and repeated intoxications that bordered on libel. The traditional media were trying to channel a flow of information that in many cases was contradictory, while at the same time they were overwhelmed by a huge number of loudspeakers on the internet.

And the supply of news and fiction, moreover, multiplied with the overload of streaming platforms that for years have been competing for the largest market share and endangering the maintenance of conventional television. The media cocktail has deepened society's confusion, a connection with primary suffering, which will be increased by the hasty way in which the authorities themselves designed protocols for action at the same time that communiqués were issued from different spokespersons. Likewise, the urgency and speed of the events did not contribute to reaching a consensus on decision-making, and citizens found themselves immersed in a spiral of failed communications that led to confusion, falsehoods, media noise and, consequently, uncertainty, fear, anxiety, primary pain and suffering.

Social networks, as well as television, radio, cinema and the rest of the media, are an ideological vehicle that can become, depending on their usability and character of information transmission, a factor of emotional and/or mental disturbance. Individuals can develop an authentic process of viralisation of fear, and the user-viewer can redirect his or her opinion towards that offered by the media, varying his or her discernment of the situation. The best defence for individuals in the face of information oversaturation lies in intellectual preparation, analytical capacity and a critical spirit in the face of cacophony.

The group of 18-30-year olds is in the process of learning. The misuse of networks, as well as an excessive use of technological devices, has led to some mental disorders and

anxiety. But television competes with social media, and remains the most consumed media in 2022, more so than print and radio, which have been relegated to audiences that have been hit harder by the internet phenomenon. The TV penetration rate in Spain for individuals aged 14-34 was below 75% in 2021, while those aged 74 and over accounted for approximately 93% of the population.

In the realm of persuasive communication in tourism, Caldevilla-Domínguez et al. (2023) shed light on the profound influence of social media in fostering unprecedented levels of connectivity among individuals. While this connectivity offers numerous benefits, it is crucial to recognize that our psychological dependence on social media can have detrimental effects on our mental well-being. As our minds engage in an internal dialogue, they desperately seek non-accepted explanations to compensate for the challenges of reality. Consequently, social networks have been associated not only with unhappiness but also with the potential development of mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, particularly when used excessively or without caution. This discourse will delve into the significance of acknowledging and accepting primary pain or suffering as a fundamental compass for effective stress management (Kabat-Zinn, 2016).

The fundamental problem with social media is that people interact in assumed realities and fictitious spaces that when they reveal their true nature create distress and frustration. The same is true of other types of social networking experiences that involve direct communication, such as Twitter, when the size of tweets in some languages was reduced to 280 characters. An extraordinary manifestation of our "deep self", and especially of our ego that protects itself from existential emptiness, by projecting an image in the form of publications, and approvals embodied in "likes" (García-Campayo, 2017).

A determining phenomenon that directly affects the consumption of content has to do with the fact that the enjoyment of content has become individualised, whereas it used to be shared in groups. At the beginning of the century, cinemas were created as screening rooms because the aim was to share entertainment, and over the years we have witnessed an incredible increase in the number of seats, with today's megaplexes counting more than nine thousand two hundred seats, as is the case of Kinépolis Madrid. But the reality is that the enjoyment of on-line content has diversified consumption. In our country, more than five decades ago there were two television channels. As there was only one television, the family nucleus was obliged to watch their content in a shared way, a situation that with today's new television media - mobile screens- is reduced to individuality. Social networks create alternative realities, encapsulate and compete against each other at high speed, presenting images of success in life journeys that harbour emotional ups and downs. The tremendous phenomenon of social media is a revolution in a double sense, and not always a positive one. The extraordinary speed with which content is uploaded without any kind of control, and a margin of freedom that has never existed in terms of the supply of audiovisual products, explode in a lack of regulation.

A new television that caters to new forms of entertainment, individually adapted, with a multiplicity of screens and scenarios and content, mostly pay-per-view, on demand, an absolutely revolutionary concept in the television spectrum that makes us, apparently, masters and lords of our own decisions and content selections.

Indeed, the new television will be totally liquid, and it will be inconceivable that it will not flow through the screens normally. It will seek its place in each context and will tend to be consumed more and more individually. The fewer shared hours of viewing, the greater the demand for hours of content per individual. This is why it is possible that we may still have several years of "audiovisual bubble" ahead of us. Moreover, as in social networks we are what we share and also what we say we watch, the strength of the brand and its ability to attribute subjective qualities to its customers will be another element in the decision to choose one service or another (Neira, 2020).

4. METHODOLOGY. STRESS: CAUSES, CONDITIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

During the months in which the pandemic spread, an exhaustive search for explicit data on our object of study was carried out. Our application methodology, faced with this situation of quantitative and qualitative media deformation, and of obvious and disproportionate consumption times, the situation reaches an extreme in which we feel isolated, confined and alienated from the natural world, without knowing how to establish contact with others, or with the transpersonal intelligence of life. (Vargas and Sacaluga, 2022). Media coverage, technology, and this veritable tsunami of information have, in recent times, accelerated the pace and complexity of our daily lives, which had an obvious peak in COVID-19. During the pandemic, electronic devices, email, WhatsApp and social networks keep us hyper-connected twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, exposing us to a real avalanche of impulses, continuous unconscious reactivities, and emotional demands of the mental continuum. Our brain is overwhelmed by the acceleration of the pace and a real bombardment of information that exposes us to frustration, worry, panic, resistance, self-criticism, self-demand and irritability (Vargas, 2020).

We tend to believe that stress is a consequence of circumstances external to us, such as those generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but, in reality, it is born from the way we evaluate events, or our abilities to cope with and discern the duality of pain (primary suffering) and suffering (secondary suffering). One of the most persistent delusions of the mind is to think that the source of our dissatisfaction lies outside ourselves. The proposal of the dualistic technique of pain vs. suffering is a research continuity of the Stress 0.0 programme, a practical methodology to reduce stress to its minimum expression (Vargas, 2020). The dualistic pain vs. suffering technique becomes a useful proposal, of conceptual and experimental discernment, for anyone experiencing any signs or symptoms of stress such as anxiety, irritability, reactivity, or simply feeling overwhelmed by the events generated by the emergence of the pandemic, and the impact of the media coverage analysed in our research.

In this context, it is not surprising that many people become so worried or depressed that, to regain their lost inner balance, they are forced to seek, or receive, medication. And while this treatment may sometimes be necessary to regain health and wellbeing, it is also important to cultivate the inner resources of self-care that help us to cope, with cardiac (emotional) intelligence, more adequately with stress, pain and illness (Doria, 2021).

The dual technique: suffering vs. pain, for the amelioration of stress generated by the pandemic, and by the disproportionate times of communicative consumption, is aimed at anyone living with stress, suffering, pain, anxiety or illness. In this way, the commitment to integrating and internalising the programme into your daily life will not only help you reduce stress and anxiety to a minimum but will become an inspiring path that can guide you with a clear mind towards achieving a healthier, more fluid, peaceful and compassionate life (García-Campayo, 2021).

Stress is a hot topic because it affects a large number of people. It consists of the automatic and natural response of our organism to situations that we find threatening or challenging, from our most reptilian sphere (Vargas, 2019a). When stress is prolonged or intensified over time, our health, our performance, and even our personal relationships can be affected.

One of the most effective ways to self-consciously dissolve stress comes through our ability to accept its presence and be able to embrace our anxiety with compassion and cardiac (emotional) intelligence (Vargas, 2019b).

We define compassion as the deep awareness of the suffering of oneself and other beings, along with the desire to help prevent it (García-Campayo, 2019). From this concept we find self-compassion and its effects on stress management. Self-compassion implies affection, kindness and understanding towards oneself when experiencing pain, or suffering, in a stressful situation, rather than self-criticism, blaming oneself or denying one's own pain. It consists of treating ourselves as we would treat a helpless child, or a dear friend. The opposite would be destructive and blaming self-criticism (Vargas, 2019b).

In general, for the vast majority of Westerners, it is more difficult to give affection to oneself than to others. The gesture of embracing our stress in a way that projects self-pity into a complicated situation. But for some people this experience is practically impossible. Some, because they experience it as a weakness or a risk of becoming indolent (García-Campayo and Demarzo, 2015). Others, because they do not consider themselves worthy of receiving affection from others (often because they did not receive it unconditionally in childhood). If this practice is too difficult for us, an effective trick is to start the practice of compassion towards friends and, when we are giving affection to people, we love we can include ourselves in the picture, and give affection to ourselves as well (Kabat-Zinn, 2009).

5. RESULTS. DUAL TECHNIQUE: SUFFERING VS. PAIN FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF STRESS GENERATED BY THE PANDEMIC

As a result of our research mental health and media coverage of COVID-19: investigation of the effects of television management, and efficient interrelation of anxiety through the dual technique: suffering vs pain, for the improvement of stress generated by the pandemic, the presence of suffering has been an eternal constant in the life of human beings since the beginning of time. It becomes that which the human being does not want to experience above all else in any of its forms, which logically no one wants for oneself. The inability to find the meaning of something that the ego deeply fears, but which, nevertheless, is natural and consubstantial to our existence, and is one of the favourite themes of philosophy and religions (García-Campayo 2021). We can find an infinite number of approaches and interpretations that have been given to the meaning of suffering throughout our history: in some cases we have crystallised it as a punishment in primitive religions, or as a karmic test for personal improvement, which could be considered the predominant view of today's religions.

When a situation that generates great suffering strikes us in our lives, the pseudo-intuitive way of reacting, and which we have incorporated in an almost automatic and primitive way, focuses on asking ourselves a powerful question like a repetitive and almost obsessive mantra: why me? In the vast outpouring of this question lies the essence, and the map of our dual technique of healthy pain and suffering management (Kabat-Zinn, 2009). In that critical, inspiring moment, every human being has to reach an individually satisfying answer to the most universal question in the history of mankind: the real meaning of suffering. Numerous research studies show that people with spiritual beliefs have better psychological health than those who do not. The first conclusion we draw is that one of the benefits that spirituality generates is that it gives meaning to suffering and allows us to face it in a healthier way (García-Campayo 2021). One of the main variables in developing our healing capacity for acceptance is to give meaning and a compass to suffering. Spirituality also facilitates the development of a GPS sense of life and values.

6. DISCUSSION. TYPES OF SUFFERING: AVOIDABLE AND UNAVOIDABLE

In relation to the discussion obtained by our investigation: we can determine: Any mental or emotional phenomenon, or any stressful phenomenon that generates pain, if we don't potentiate it (by thinking about it, rejecting it or struggling with it) and simply observe it dispassionately, as an external phenomenon that belongs to someone else, it will disappear. In this way we do not allow pain to disguise itself as suffering (García-Campayo, 2021).

Another point of contention we have reached: This is the great secret of emotional management aimed at eliminating stress in our being. Any thought or emotion that generates stress, pain or anxiety, regardless of its content, and no matter how terrible it may seem now, will disappear spontaneously in a short time. Of course, it will have

intense moments of influence, but it has an internal process and has its rhythm from within (Vargas, 2020).

Next, we proceed to give the keys to our dual technique of discernment of suffering and pain as an equanimous combination for the correct management of stress generated, among other factors, from the media overexposure that we are experiencing.

The first neural highway that we must courageously address in this process is that most of our suffering is absolutely avoidable, and it would not really be necessary for us to experience it. One of the important teachings of mindfulness that comes from Eastern traditions is the difference between primary suffering or pain and secondary suffering, also called simply suffering. The differences are as follows:

- Phase 0. Pain, or primary suffering: this pain is necessarily inherently associated with human existence and is therefore unavoidable. In this stage, the three main irrevocable sufferings that we will experience are the inevitable processes of growing old, falling ill and dying, which will affect all of us, as well as our loved ones (García-Campayo, 2021). It is important to accept "in capital letters", that we can do absolutely nothing to prevent the appearance of these scenarios in our lives, and of these processes, although our society, and more specifically the media, in their multiple manifestations, try to deactivate them, make them up, deny them, annul them, hide them and conceal them. For the assimilation of this first key concept, the wise thing to do is to reach a profound acceptance that in life there is, necessarily and unavoidably, a certain quota and quantity of absolutely inevitable pain, for each one of us (Doria, 2021). A transpersonal intelligence allows us to dissolve, through our own acceptance and view, the emergence of certain ancestral fears that have perennially accompanied the suffering of human beings. It is based on the ability to sustain the understanding of life and death. In this way, those who place their intention in the muscular development of this transpersonal intelligence, Gardner's ninth intelligence (Vargas and Sacaluga, 2022), gain access to the acceptance and recognition of their deep identity, and experience a profound transformation that rests before the image of their own death, and that of the beings around them. Their fear of the decay of egocentrism is reduced to a minimum; at the same time, the mourning for the loss of loved ones is transformed and mitigated in an acceptably unsuspected way.
- Phase 1. Secondary suffering, or we can simply call it suffering. We self-induce it by not accepting pain, or by wanting to control, or, more accurately, pseudo-control the world and uncertainty, for which we use our internal dialogue or rumination of the mind (García-Campayo and Demarzo, 2018). It is really a natural, animal and primary defence of the ego, which is not capable of bravely accepting the quota of pain that has befallen us (García-Campayo, 2021). Some of these secondary sufferings would be the following:
 - Phase 1.0. Retrospection: looking for someone to blame in the past. In this first strategy our being is activated in the form of an anxious search for a culprit in ourselves, or in other people, for events or happenings that are an inherent part of

nature. For example, now in the contractionary times that we have experienced, and are experiencing, with so much media deformation, this strategy has been used as a means of escape. For example, when we react to the death of a loved one, we blame ourselves for not having been present at the moment of death. Very present in the era we have experienced in the COVID-19 pandemic. The second strategic path that we can implement in this phase 1.0. is the search for external responsibility, in the administration, leaders, or other people in the face of catastrophes that are difficult to foresee and inevitable, such as tsunamis, earthquakes or the recent volcano on La Palma in the Canary Islands.

- Phase 1.1. Denial of reality in the present: when we fight against the reality that is happening, and we do not want to accept it. An example of this is when we are diagnosed with a serious illness, and we compulsively seek second and third opinions from other professionals, one after the other, to try to confirm in vain that it is a mistake. A denial of reality that the ego sets in motion to avoid accepting your inherent vulnerability.
- Phase 1.2. Anticipation and vital predetermination in the future: this strategy of running away consists of anticipating what our future will be like in relation to something that has not happened in the present but that the mind, in its incessant internal dialogue, expresses on its internal screen as a high-definition content. An example of this can be found after the death of a loved one, as a series of thoughts such as: "I can never be happy again, because no one will love me like him (or her), life will no longer be worth living" are set in motion and develop.

If we take a "step back" and observe our "stress-washed" thoughts and emotions from a greater distance, we are no longer trapped, and only then does our capacity for discernment emerge. Only then can we adequately weigh and observe the response we make, noting whether the thought or emotion we are experiencing really matches the reality of the moment. This is the main difference between "responding" and "reacting" (Vargas, 2019b). To "react" is to act automatically as a result of a stimulus; it is an involuntary, passive act, beyond our control. However, "to respond" is the will to act from inner balance, presence and conscious attention. When we respond we are inviting the primary suffering into the scene with its acceptance, and when we react, we are connecting to the frequency of secondary suffering, unfolding its full potential through internal dialogue, and cognitive rumination.

In mindfulness, these types of suffering have also been called: clean, the inevitable, and unclean, the avoidable. This is a metaphor for one's capacity to manage and dissolve it. What it emphasises is that one, the clean, arises spontaneously in the process of life and the nature of the human being. On the contrary, the unclean one requires the authorship and intervention of the mind, the flight, reactivity and fight against reality (García-Campayo, 2021).

In this process of discerning between pain and suffering as a strategy for managing stress we can find an extraordinary narrative metaphor that materialises the essence of this difference. Traditionally, the difference between the two has been evidenced with the so-called "parable of the two arrows" original to Buddhism and which mindfulness

has incorporated into its teachings to explore both interdependent concepts. The first arrow is the primary suffering, which we have called the inevitable. The one that is related to loss, death, illness. Here we can locate the presence of the pandemic as an example of this. The second arrow is formalised through secondary suffering, which we have called the unnecessary and avoidable (García-Campayo, 2021). The second arrow is related to our struggle against what happens to us and is positioned in a frequency that we obtain from media overexposure to the media, which in many cases unconsciously points to the vectorisation of this second arrow. Curiously, although it is difficult for the mind to accept it, the greatest suffering is produced by this second arrow, and therein lies our absolute responsibility to discern the presence of both arrows when accepting pain and/or suffering in a conscious and unconscious manner. The media connects to the second arrow because it somehow uses the vulnerable, elusive language of the mind, therefore, it is the magnetised centre for triggering the secondary suffering of the second arrow. Having said all this, once we can discern this confusion of the mind it is our full responsibility to accept the pain, or primary suffering, and perceive the visitation of the secondary suffering so that its activation levels reach the lowest possible levels and the psycho-bodily "tearing" of the date is as harmless as possible.

The main conclusions of our investigation are the following: we find ourselves, on the one hand, in the necessary reconstruction of informational health as the new vaccine for the health of the individual, and we must continue to study and analyse the work of the members and those who create programmes on television in all their windows and viewing possibilities because they directly affect the intrapersonal and interpersonal emotional intelligence of each individual (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). We are faced with a real challenge, since the multi-scenario of an abundance of content, in this situation of quantitative and qualitative media deformation, and of obvious and disproportionate consumption times, which are not always suitable or harmless to health, the need for a tool to act as an internal compass is becoming increasingly evident. Our dual technique of discernment between pain, or primary suffering, and secondary suffering, or simply suffering, is shaped as a healing path so that stress does not affect us in a disproportionate and unconscious way in our lives (García-Campayo, 2021).

We can therefore conclude that in life there is a certain amount of pain linked to human existence that we will have to suffer, and that the media automatically and unconsciously amplify, due to the voracious nature of their identity. Through their persistent intervention, the media transmute pain into secondary suffering. We must be aware that this quota of pain, in one form or another, visits us every day, regardless of the media's narrative hyperbolisation. Experience tells us that, curiously enough, this quota of naked primary pain, without suffering, is less than a quarter of all our global suffering. Even if the information society insists on activating this suffering, and this arrow of the narrative metaphor that we have used. On the contrary, there is a much greater amount of suffering, linked to our expectations, internal reactivities to unrealistic media consumption of the world, and our struggle to control it, that we

could fully avoid. The practice of the dual technique would allow us to detect the silhouette of this secondary suffering, and prevent it before it appears, regardless of the circumstances. Understanding the deliberate communicative infoxication of information societies, courageously assuming our responsibility to discern between pain and suffering, in order to lower the stress levels produced by media coverage.

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