



Measuring Levels of Cooperation and Assertiveness in the E-Learning System during a Pandemic Crisis

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Abstract

In education, the advantages of collaborative work are multiple (Comoglio & Cardoso, 1996; Jardim, 2010, 2019; Kaendler, Wiedmann, Rummel & Spada, 2015) such as rewarding social relationships, the development of a positive human climate, high levels of performance and psychological health indexes. The greater the effort spent on working together, the greater the tendency to esteem one another, the more they esteem themselves, the more they will strive to have a good joint performance and social competence (Jardim, 2019). Also in lifelong learning, in the various training offerings, assertiveness training becomes increasingly important. Assertiveness is the ability to express feelings and ideas without disrespecting others by healthily manifesting our social interactions. The development of soft skills assumes several benefits in a gratifying statement. Personal and social competences are increasingly important in marked development processes and or in transition in different educational contexts, as is the case of attending higher education, where a diversity of development tasks and life events confront the subject with the need for adaptation, requesting personal and environmental resources (Pereira, Motta, Vaz, Bernardino & Melo, 2006; Dixe, Custódio, Catarino, Ventura, Loreto, Carrasqueira, et al, 2010).

In the impossibility of teaching in person due to the public health measures implemented to stop the COVID-19 pandemic, an attempt was made to evaluate in the e-learning system, the cooperation and assertiveness in students through the use of two specific scales.

This is a quantitative, cross-sectional study involving higher education students in two Portuguese polytechnic institutes. The methodological guidelines provided by Jardim and Pereira (2006) were used in the overall assessment of assertiveness (EAGA Scale) and cooperation in the academic community (EAGC Scale). Both scales are assessed on a five-point Likert scale consisting of 8 and 9 items, respectively. A non-probabilistic sampling method was used.

The median value obtained in the Global Evaluation Scale of Cooperation was 35 (IQR=7.5) revealing a high cooperation capacity in the surveyed students. On the other hand, on the Global Assessment Scale of Assertiveness the median was 32 (IQR=7), which translates into a high ability in assertiveness. Additionally, we tried to identify if there was any relationship between the results obtained in both scales through the Spearman correlation coefficient (r_s). It was verified that there is a weak positive relation ($r_s=0.13$) without statistical significance (p -value=0.19) These scales can be used as a complementary tool in distance learning so that teachers can outline teamwork strategies while maintaining the levels of cooperation and assertiveness in their students with a view to their school success.

Keywords: Assertiveness, Cooperation, Education, Learning, Psychological health