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FEMALE EMPOWERMENT IN ANDEAN ADOLESCENT GIRLS THROUGH THE PRODUCTION OF AUDIOVISUAL MICROCONTENT FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

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KEYWORDS

female empowerment, visual culture, audiovisual microcontent, social media, gender equality, education, adolescents

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Social media are part of adolescents' everyday visual culture and may function not only as spaces of consumption but also as settings for production, representation, and participation. In the central Andes of Peru, where sociocultural barriers related to gender roles persist, it is relevant to explore educational strategies that connect audiovisual literacy, critical expression, and female empowerment. Methodology: A quantitative, applied, quasi-experimental study was conducted with 43 students aged 14 to 17 from a public school in Concepción, Junín. The experimental group (n = 20) participated for eight weeks in the "Exprésate" workshop, focused on researching, scripting, producing, editing, and publishing audiovisual microcontent for social media about female empowerment; the control group included 23 students. A 49-item Female Empowerment Scale for Adolescent Girls was administered as pretest and posttest. Results: The experimental group increased its overall median score from 125.5 to 186.5 points, while the control group changed from 129 to 130. Mann-Whitney and Wilcoxon tests showed statistically significant differences in favor of the experimental group ($p < .05$), with improvements in personal agency, self-esteem, attitudes toward gender roles, sexual empowerment, and social empowerment. Discussion: The findings suggest that guided audiovisual message creation encourages a more active role for adolescent girls in relation to the visual discourses circulating on social media, turning them into producers of representations rather than only recipients. Conclusions: The "Exprésate" workshop had a positive and significant influence on female empowerment and highlights the educational potential of audiovisual production and digital visual culture for addressing gender equality, autonomy, and participation in school contexts.

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1. Introduction

This research arose from the need to strengthen female empowerment through education, a key aspect of progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 5, which promotes gender equality and the strengthening of the autonomy of women and girls (Adeleye et al., 2024; Ruiz-Bravo et al., 2018). In Latin America, structural barriers persist that restrict women's full participation in decision-making spaces, which points to limited progress in gender equity (World Economic Forum, 2023).

Female empowerment is understood as a process through which women exercise greater control and autonomy over their lives, strengthening their self-esteem, self-efficacy, sense of agency, and capacity to make decisions independently (Costa et al., 2023; Mallepu, 2025; Richardson, 2017). On this basis, they face structural inequalities such as gender discrimination and exclusion from relevant decision-making bodies with greater confidence (Cid & Hinrichs, 2015). Empowerment not only transforms structural conditions but also acts as an important protective factor for women's mental health (Bandara et al., 2024).

Empowerment among adolescent girls is a comprehensive process influenced by the changes characteristic of this age and by social barriers such as structural inequality and restrictive norms that limit their participation (Pan American Health Organization, 2010). This process is expressed in key dimensions: personal agency, which encompasses autonomous decision-making and the capacity to cope with adverse situations; self-esteem, understood as self-worth and a sense of belonging; a critical attitude toward traditional gender roles, which makes it possible to question stereotypes and redefine identity; sexual empowerment, based on knowledge of one's body, consent, and the building of healthy relationships; and social empowerment, which promotes the appropriation of rights, active participation, and the consolidation of community networks. These dimensions are interrelated and contribute to strengthening autonomy, mental health, and emotional well-being (Bandara et al., 2024; Sen et al., 2023; Stromquist, 2015).

For these dimensions to be consolidated in a sustained manner, education plays an essential role, especially from a psychological and emancipatory approach. From the standpoint of critical pedagogy, Freire (2022) argues that empowering involves forming critical consciousness, enabling adolescent girls to question their reality and act autonomously. This process requires the support of key agents of socialization such as the family, the school, and the media, which should promote empowerment from an early age (Marugán, 2015). Moreover, empowerment does not follow a linear trajectory; rather, it is built progressively from diverse experiences that shape adolescents' personal and relational development (Deere & León, 2002).

From the perspective of developmental psychology, Bronfenbrenner's (1987) ecological model explains that personal growth is constructed in interaction with settings such as the family, the school, and the community. For adolescent girls, these contexts directly influence the development of agency and autonomy. Complementarily, from social-cognitive psychology, Bandura (1997) emphasizes that self-efficacy, understood as the belief in one's own capacity to face challenges, is a key component that strengthens resilience and promotes solid autonomy in adolescent girls.

In settings such as the central Andes of Peru, these conditions are affected by sociocultural barriers that limit adolescent girls' personal development. Gender stereotypes and the lack of educational resources oriented toward empowerment perpetuate inequalities. Although the digital divide has narrowed, structural obstacles remain. In this context, the educational use of information and communication technologies may constitute a relevant strategy for strengthening female empowerment, provided that it is oriented toward the development of critical, expressive, and participatory capacities.

Huyer (2016) notes that internet access can play an important role in reducing the gender gap by facilitating skills development and enhancing women's independence. However, she warns that access alone is not enough: it is necessary to promote a transformative use of technologies, oriented toward social change and the strengthening of critical capacities. In addition, Stromquist (2015) maintains that empowerment is not achieved solely through access to information or digital resources, but requires an educational process that promotes meaningful learning, fosters autonomy, and unfolds in an environment that facilitates the real exercise of female agency.

Social media, widely present in adolescent girls' lives, are also spaces of visual culture: images, short narratives, identity models, and gender representations circulate there and can be reproduced, questioned, or redefined. In this scenario, the production of audiovisual microcontent makes it possible to move from passive consumption to expressive participation, in which students organize ideas, construct messages, and develop their own representations. Blair (2016) stresses that active strategies foster more meaningful and lasting learning.

Nevertheless, in Peru, few educational institutions have yet incorporated pedagogical approaches oriented toward empowerment and gender equity. The traditional model, based on a hierarchical relationship between teachers and students, is insufficient in the face of current challenges. The persistence of stereotyped gender roles, shaped by cultural factors, the media, and digital environments, demands a more participatory, critical, and innovative educational response.

Various studies have shown that female empowerment can be strengthened through educational strategies, access to technologies, and the development of psychosocial skills. Del Prete et al. (2013) improved the self-concept and digital skills of rural women in Catalonia through ICT workshops. Vardhan (2020) found that women in India become empowered through the use of ICT and social media, which facilitate knowledge of their rights, the development of digital skills, and greater social participation. Huyer (2016) found that ICT contribute to reducing the gender gap among rural women by expanding opportunities for economic and social inclusion. Bandara et al. (2024) established that empowerment, by strengthening personal agency and self-esteem, acts as a key protective factor for women's mental health. Adeleye et al. (2024) recorded a sustained increase in scientific output on the empowerment of women and girls since 2015, with peaks in 2017 and 2021, within the framework of SDG 5.

These goals face greater challenges in regions such as the central Andes of Peru, where patriarchal structures persist that naturalize hierarchical roles and limit female autonomy. In response to this reality, an educational intervention was designed for students at the Sagrado Corazón de Jesús public girls' school, located in the Andean city of Concepción. Institutional reports described difficulties with self-esteem, rejection of one's own image, vocational confusion, low civic participation, and other psychosocial risks associated with contexts of violence, hazardous child labor, and restrictive gender norms. The absence of institutional strategies that comprehensively address these factors deepened their situation of vulnerability. In this context, it was observed that, although the students had smartphones and used social media regularly, these technologies did not automatically become means of empowerment. This situation motivated the design of the “Exprésate” workshop, aimed at learning audiovisual language and creating microcontent about female empowerment. The proposal sought to have participants produce messages from their own experience, question stereotypes, and use digital environments as spaces for expression, participation, and meaning-making. Thus, social media were approached not only as technological channels but as settings of visual culture in which adolescent girls could intervene critically and creatively.

2. Objectives

The general objective was to demonstrate the influence of the “Exprésate” workshop on the production of microcontent for social media on the female empowerment of students at a public school in the province of Concepción, Junín. Specifically, the study sought to compare female empowerment before and after the intervention and to analyze changes in its dimensions of personal agency, self-esteem, attitude toward gender roles, sexual empowerment, and social empowerment. From the editorial perspective of visual culture, the study also makes it possible to examine the value of audiovisual production as an educational practice of representation, critical expression, and adolescent participation.

3. Methodology

Design and methodological approach: The research followed a quantitative approach and was applied in type, with a quasi-experimental design. The independent variable was the “Exprésate” workshop on the production of microcontent for social media, and the dependent variable was female empowerment.

Population and sample: The population consisted of adolescent students in the third year of secondary school at the Sagrado Corazón de Jesús school, in the province of Concepción, department of Junín, in the central Andes of Peru.

The sample was divided into two groups: an experimental group (20 students), in which the intervention was implemented, and a control group (23 students), which did not receive the intervention and served for comparative purposes. Sampling was non-probabilistic and by convenience, which is appropriate for quasi-experimental designs. The choice of the experimental group was based on the timetable availability of classroom "C", which made it possible to hold the workshop for eight weeks.

The inclusion criteria covered adolescent students enrolled in the third year of secondary school who accepted the informed consent. Those who were outside the adolescent age range, did not consent to participate, or dropped out of the experiment were excluded.

The students in both groups were between 14 and 17 years old, with 15 being the most common age (55% in the experimental group and 56.5% in the control group), and means of 14.8 and 14.78 years, respectively.

Fifty percent of the experimental group and 56.5% of the control group lived in nuclear families, with five-member families being the most frequent (35% and 34.8%, respectively). As for brothers, having one predominated (45% in the experimental group and 43.5% in the control group). As for sisters, having one was most common (25% and 39.1%, respectively).

Procedure: The "Exprésate" workshop was conducted over eight weeks, combining theoretical and practical sessions. The participants went through the entire process of creating microcontent for social media: scriptwriting, audiovisual recording, editing, publication on digital platforms, and the use of basic web analytics tools. The content produced addressed topics of female empowerment, such as personal agency, self-esteem, a critical attitude toward gender roles, sexual empowerment, and social empowerment. (Link to the Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61553645032780&mibextid=ZbWKwL)

During the workshop, the students not only acquired technical skills but also reflected on empowerment, which promoted active and critical learning. Participatory methodologies were used, such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, the case method, and cooperative learning, linking digital content with the students' experiences and critically analyzing gender stereotypes in their environment. These strategies were aligned with the constructivist approach, Bandura's (2001) social learning theory, Kolb's (2015) experiential learning, Freire's (2022) critical pedagogy, and the learning pyramid of Dale (1969) and Blair (2016), fostering the development of critical thinking, creativity, and research capacity.

Prior to their participation, the students and their legal guardians signed an informed consent form. The purpose of the study, the procedures, and the possible benefits and risks were clearly explained, guaranteeing the right to withdraw at any time without repercussions. The confidentiality of identity and data was ensured at all stages of the study.

Instruments: The dependent variable was assessed using the Female Empowerment Scale for Adolescent Girls, constructed specifically for this research and administered at the pretest and posttest stages. It consists of 49 items distributed across five dimensions: personal agency, self-esteem, critical attitude toward gender roles, sexual empowerment, and social empowerment. Responses were structured on a five-option Likert-type scale: from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always).

Content validity was determined through the judgment of five experts, applying Student's t-test at a 95% confidence level. All items exceeded the critical value of 2.132, with scores between 13.5 (intentionality) and 22.44 (coherence), confirming their validity.

Construct validity was verified through a pilot test with 80 adolescents, using Pearson's corrected item-total correlation. The coefficients were greater than 0.2, ranging from .287 (item 14) to .757 (item 6), which indicated the internal validity of the instrument.

The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, applied to the pilot sample, yielding a coefficient of .893, which indicated high internal consistency.

Data analysis: Statistical analysis was carried out using the Mann-Whitney U test to compare the medians of the experimental and control groups at pretest and posttest. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was also used to assess changes within the experimental group before and after the intervention. The data were handled anonymously and for exclusively scientific purposes, in accordance with international ethical standards.

4. Results

The main findings aimed at assessing the effect of the “Exprésate” workshop on the students' female empowerment are presented below. To this end, the scores obtained by the experimental group and the control group at pretest and posttest were compared, considering the general variable and its dimensions: personal agency, self-esteem, attitude toward gender roles, sexual empowerment, and social empowerment.

Table 1.

Female empowerment, dimensions, and indicators at pretest by study group.

Variable / dimension / indicator	Item	Theoretical range	Experimental group		Control group	
			Actual range	Median	Actual range	Median
Female empowerment	49	49–245	105–159	125.5	109–129	129
Personal agency	12	12–60	21–42	29	20–41	31
Relationship with others	5	5–25	6–18	11	6–18	12
Frustration	4	4–20	5–14	10	5–14	11
Decision-making ability	3	3–15	5–11	8	5–10	8
Self-esteem	15	15–75	29–51	39	31–51	40
Family belonging	3	3–15	5–12	7.5	5–12	8
Self-worth	6	6–30	10–21	16	11–21	17
Autonomy	6	6–30	9–23	16	9–23	17
Attitude toward gender roles	7	7–35	8–27	22	13–27	22
Immediate environment	2	2–10	3–7	6	3–7	6
Gender role beliefs	5	5–25	5–20	15	8–20	15
Sexual empowerment	8	8–40	13–29	20.5	14–29	22

Variable / dimension / indicator	Item	Theoretical range	Experimental group		Control group	
			Actual range	Median	Actual range	Median
Understanding of one's sexuality	2	2–10	2–7	5	2–8	5
Boundary-setting skills	3	3–15	3–12	8	3–12	9
Trusting relationship	3	3–15	4–12	6.5	4–12	7
Social empowerment	7	7–35	10–24	19.5	10–25	20
Awareness of rights	2	2–10	2–8	6	2–8	7
Social participation and perception	2	2–10	2–8	7	2–8	7
Sense of belonging and connection	3	3–15	4–10	6	4–11	6

Source(s): Authors' own elaboration based on the study data.

Table 1 shows the pretest results. Before the intervention, both groups presented similar scores in the overall level of female empowerment. In the experimental group, the median was 125.5, while in the control group it was 129, within a theoretical range of 49 to 245 points. This proximity was also observed in the dimensions assessed: personal agency presented medians of 29 and 31; self-esteem, 39 and 40; attitude toward gender roles, 22 and 22; sexual empowerment, 20.5 and 22; and social empowerment, 19.5 and 20, respectively.

These results show that, at the beginning of the study, the groups presented similar conditions in the general variable and its dimensions. The Mann-Whitney U test applied to the pretest did not identify statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group ($p > .05$), which supports the claim that both groups started from a comparable baseline before the workshop was implemented.

Table 2.

Female empowerment, dimensions, and indicators at posttest by study group.

Variable / dimension / indicator	Item	Theoretical range	Experimental group		Control group	
			Actual range	Median	Actual range	Median
Female empowerment	49	49–245	136–234	186.5	114–158	130
Personal agency	12	12–60	34–55	42	20–41	31
Relationship with others	5	5–25	12–23	17.5	6–18	13
Frustration	4	4–30	10–18	15	5–14	11
Decision-making ability	3	3–15	8–15	10.5	5–10	8
Self-esteem	15	15–75	40–74	58	31–51	41
Family belonging	3	3–15	6–15	13	5–12	8
Self-worth	6	6–30	15–30	24	11–21	17
Autonomy	6	6–30	15–29	23.5	9–23	17
Attitude toward gender roles	7	7–35	16–34	31.5	13–27	22
Immediate environment	2	2–10	5–10	9	3–7	6
Gender role beliefs	5	5–25	11–25	22.5	8–20	15
Sexual empowerment	8	8–40	24–39	30	15–29	23
Understanding of one's sexuality	2	2–10	4–10	7	2–8	5
Boundary-setting skills	3	3–15	9–15	12	3–12	9
Trusting relationship	3	3–15	7–15	10.5	4–12	7
Social empowerment	7	7–35	17–33	28.5	11–25	20
Awareness of rights	2	2–10	4–10	10	2–8	7

Variable / dimension / indicator	Item	Theoretical range	Experimental group		Control group	
			Actual range	Median	Actual range	Median
Social participation and perception	2	2–10	5–10	9	2–8	7
Sense of belonging and connection	3	3–15	7–13	9.5	4–11	7

Source(s): Authors' own elaboration based on the study data.

Table 2 presents the posttest results. After the intervention, the experimental group showed a substantial increase in female empowerment, with the median rising from 125.5 at pretest to 186.5 at posttest. In contrast, the control group presented minimal variation, moving from a median of 129 to 130. This descriptive difference shows a more marked improvement among the students who participated in the "Exprésate" workshop.

The increase was also observed in all dimensions for the experimental group. In personal agency, the median rose from 29 to 42; in self-esteem, from 39 to 58; in attitude toward gender roles, from 22 to 31.5; in sexual empowerment, from 20.5 to 30; and in social empowerment, from 19.5 to 28.5. In contrast, the control group maintained similar values between pretest and posttest, with small or no changes in most dimensions.

Table 3.

Change in the medians of female empowerment and its dimensions between pretest and posttest, by study group.

Variable / dimension	Experimental pretest	Experimental posttest	Change experimental	Control pretest	Control posttest	Change control
Female empowerment	125.5	186.5	+61.0	129	130	+1.0
Personal agency	29	42	+13.0	31	31	0.0
Self-esteem	39	58	+19.0	40	41	+1.0
Attitude toward gender roles	22	31.5	+9.5	22	22	0.0
Sexual empowerment	20.5	30	+9.5	22	23	+1.0
Social empowerment	19.5	28.5	+9.0	20	20	0.0

Source(s): Authors' own elaboration based on the study data.

Note. The change corresponds to the descriptive difference between the posttest median and the pretest median in each study group.

Table 3 shows more clearly the descriptive magnitude of the change between pretest and posttest. In the experimental group, the median for female empowerment increased from 125.5 to 186.5, a change of +61.0 points. This increase was considerably greater than that observed in the control group, whose median went from 129 to 130, a change of only +1.0 point. This descriptive difference reinforces the favorable trend recorded among the students who participated in the "Exprésate" workshop.

The same pattern can be seen in all the dimensions assessed. In the experimental group, the greatest change occurred in self-esteem (+19.0), followed by personal agency (+13.0), attitude toward gender roles (+9.5), sexual empowerment (+9.5), and social empowerment (+9.0). In contrast, the control group showed minimal or no changes: personal agency, attitude toward gender roles, and social empowerment registered no change in the median, while female empowerment, self-esteem, and sexual empowerment increased by only +1.0 point. These descriptive results are consistent with the significant differences reported for the experimental group and with the stability observed in the control group.

4.1. Hypothesis testing

Non-parametric tests were used to test the research hypotheses, owing to the nature of the data and the size of the groups. First, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the scores of the experimental group and the control group at pretest and posttest. Second, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was applied to analyze within-group changes between the two measurements.

At pretest, the Mann-Whitney U test showed no statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group ($p > .05$), either in female empowerment or in its dimensions. This result made it possible to establish that both groups presented comparable initial conditions before the "Exprésate" workshop was implemented.

At posttest, the Mann-Whitney U test reported statistically significant differences in favor of the experimental group ($p < .05$). Likewise, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed significant differences between the pretest and posttest of the experimental group ($p < .05$), whereas the control group showed no significant variations ($p > .05$). Consequently, the null hypotheses corresponding to the general variable and to each of its dimensions were rejected, since the results provided statistical evidence in favor of the influence of the "Exprésate" workshop.

It was therefore confirmed that the "Exprésate" workshop had a positive and significant influence on the female empowerment of the participating students, as well as on its dimensions: personal agency, self-esteem, attitude toward gender roles, sexual empowerment, and social empowerment. This inferential evidence supports the descriptive changes observed in the medians presented in the preceding tables.

Table 4.

Level of development of female empowerment and its dimensions in the study groups at pretest and posttest.

Dimensions	Level	Pretest				Posttest			
		Experimental group		Control group		Experimental group		Control group	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Female empowerment	Developing	16	80	17	73.9	1	5	15	65.2
	Moderate	4	20	6	26.1	13	65	8	34.8
	Advanced	0		0	0	6	30	0	0
Personal agency	Initial	3	15	3	13.0	0	0	1	4.3
	Developing	16	80	19	82.6	3	15	21	91.3
	Moderate	1	5	1	4.3	14	70	1	4.3
	Advanced	0	0	0	0	3	15	0	0
Self-esteem	Initial	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Developing	15	75	17	73.9	2	10	17	73.9
	Moderate	4	20	6	26.1	10	50	6	26.1
	Advanced	0	0	0	0	8	40	0	0
Attitude toward gender roles	Initial	1	5	1	4.3	0	0	1	4.3
	Developing	8	40	9	39.1	1	5	9	39.1
	Moderate	11	55	13	56.5	5	25	13	56.5
	Advanced	0	0	0	0	14	70	0	0
Sexual empowerment	Initial	3	15	3	13.0	0	0	3	13.0
	Developing	12	60	13	56.5	4	20	13	56.5
	Moderate	5	25	7	30.4	7	35	7	30.4
	Advanced	0	0	0	0	9	45	0	0
Social empowerment	Developing	16	80	17	73.9	1	5	15	65.2
	Moderate	4	20	6	26.1	13	65	8	34.8
	Advanced	0	0	0	0	6	30	0	0

Source(s): Authors' own elaboration based on the study data.

Table 4 shows the distribution of students according to levels of development of female empowerment and its dimensions. At pretest, most participants in both groups were at the "developing" level: 80% in the experimental group and 73.9% in the control group. No student in the experimental group had reached the advanced level before the intervention.

After the workshop, the experimental group showed a favorable shift toward higher levels. In the female empowerment variable, 65% of the students were at the moderate level and 30% reached the advanced level. In contrast, the control group maintained a distribution similar to that of the pretest, with a predominance of the "developing" level and no students at the advanced level.

This change was also observed in the dimensions of female empowerment. In personal agency, 70% of the experimental group reached the moderate level and 15% the advanced level. In self-esteem, 50% were at the moderate level and 40% at the advanced level. In attitude toward gender roles, 70% reached the advanced level, making it the dimension with the greatest

favorable shift. In sexual empowerment, 35% were at the moderate level and 45% at the advanced level. Finally, in social empowerment, 65% reached the moderate level and 30% the advanced level.

The control group, on the other hand, showed no significant improvements in the levels assessed, remaining mostly at the "developing" or moderate level. This stability reinforces the interpretation that the changes observed in the experimental group were associated with the implementation of the "Exprésate" workshop.

5. Discussion

The main objective of the research was to demonstrate the influence of the "Exprésate" workshop on the development of female empowerment among students at a public school in the province of Concepción. The results showed favorable changes in the experimental group after the intervention and stability in the control group. Beyond their educational effect, these findings are relevant to the field of visual culture because the intervention positioned adolescent girls as producers of audiovisual messages capable of representing experiences, questioning stereotypes, and circulating their own discourses on social media.

In the experimental group, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed statistically significant differences between pretest and posttest scores ($p < .05$). This result suggests that the intervention contributed to strengthening the participants' female empowerment. The absence of significant changes in the control group reinforces this interpretation, since it makes it possible to rule out, at least partially, that the differences found were due solely to the passage of time or to uncontrolled external factors.

5.1. Visual production, agency, and gender representation

The findings are consistent with research that has highlighted the value of educational strategies mediated by digital technologies for strengthening women's autonomy, participation, and expressive capacity. Del Prete et al. (2013) reported improvements following ICT workshops, while Vardhan (2020) identified positive changes through the active use of social media. In the present study, the distinguishing component was the creation of microcontent: the participants did not merely receive information, but researched, selected images, wrote scripts, produced audiovisual pieces, and communicated their own messages about empowerment.

From this perspective, digital visual culture can be understood as an educational space in which identities and representations are negotiated. By producing content on self-esteem, autonomy, gender roles, rights, and participation, the students actively intervened in discourses that they habitually consume on social media. The pedagogical value of the experience lay not only in mastering technical tools, but in learning to look critically, to build a voice of their own, and to transform that reflection into audiovisual products aimed at other audiences.

From the standpoint of social-cognitive psychology, the results can be understood through the concept of self-efficacy proposed by Bandura (1997), understood as the belief in one's own capacity to face challenges and act upon the environment. In the workshop, the students not only received information about female empowerment but also created and disseminated microcontent related to self-esteem, autonomy, gender roles, rights, and social participation. This process allowed them to exercise communicative, reflective, and creative skills, strengthening their personal agency and their sense of competence.

The workshop methodology was grounded in active and meaningful learning. The participants researched topics related to female empowerment, wrote scripts, produced audiovisual content, and shared it on social media. This dynamic meant that learning was not limited to the reception of information, but involved searching, analysis, creation, and communication. In this sense, the change observed can be explained by the adolescents' direct participation in an

experience in which they learned, reinterpreted, and transmitted messages from their own reality.

In this regard, the learning pyramid, attributed to Dale (1969) and later taken up by Blair (2016), suggests, as a point of reference, that people may retain a greater proportion of what they learn when they teach or explain it to others, with estimates even approaching 90%. Although this percentage should be treated with caution and not as an absolute figure, it is useful for understanding the pedagogical value of the experience. The students did not only listen to content about empowerment; they had to organize it, turn it into audiovisual messages, and communicate it to other people. This process of learning in order to communicate fostered a deeper appropriation of the content addressed.

From the perspective of Kolb's (2015) experiential learning model, the workshop articulated four formative moments. First, concrete experience was expressed in the investigation of issues related to female empowerment and in the production of microcontent. Second, reflective observation took place when the participants analyzed their own experiences, the messages they had created, and the reactions generated by their productions. Third, abstract conceptualization made it possible to relate what was learned to notions of gender, autonomy, rights, and digital communication. Finally, active experimentation took shape in the dissemination of the content and in the use of social media as spaces for expression and participation.

The methodological sequence of the workshop integrated research, creativity, and communicative action, which favored the critical appropriation of knowledge and the strengthening of personal agency. The result is consistent with Cid and Hinrichs (2015), who understand empowerment as a progressive process of transforming power relations through reflection and action. In the case of the participants, the workshop promoted not only a conceptual understanding of empowerment but also a concrete practice of expression, questioning, and communication in their own voice.

Bandura's (2001) social learning theory also helps to explain the results obtained. During the workshop, the students observed, analyzed, and produced models of communication related to female empowerment. However, they did not remain passive recipients of content; instead, they took on the role of message producers. By creating content addressed to other people, they gradually incorporated new ways of understanding their identity, their capacities, and their place within the community.

Likewise, the findings reaffirm that access to digital technologies does not in itself guarantee processes of empowerment. As Huyer (2016) warns, ICT require a transformative use, oriented toward the development of capacities, autonomy, and participation. In this research, social media acquired pedagogical value because they were used in a guided, critical, and contextualized manner. The results therefore suggest that the production of microcontent can foster processes of empowerment when it is combined with critical reflection, collaborative work, and teacher support.

The results can also be interpreted in light of the contributions of Stromquist (2015) and Freire (2022), albeit from different theoretical planes. Stromquist (2015) allows empowerment to be understood as an educational process that is not reduced to access to information, but involves the development of capacities, critical consciousness, and real possibilities for participation. Freire (2022), for his part, contributes a pedagogical perspective centered on the formation of subjects capable of critically reading their reality and acting upon it. From this combined standpoint, the “Exprésate” workshop did not merely transmit content about gender equality; it created the conditions for the adolescents to develop their own messages, question stereotypes, and narrate experiences from their own context. This expressive dimension is especially relevant in settings where traditional social norms may restrict the voice, autonomy, and participation of adolescent girls.

From the perspective of developmental psychology, the study indicates that female empowerment can strengthen factors associated with emotional well-being, such as self-efficacy, agency, self-esteem, and identity expression. These components take on particular importance in contexts of vulnerability, where adolescent girls may face psychosocial risks, family violence, or sociocultural restrictions. In line with Bandara et al. (2024), empowerment can act as a protective factor for women's mental health insofar as it fosters the perception of control, self-worth, and the capacity to make decisions.

According to Bronfenbrenner's (1987) ecological approach, adolescent development is influenced by immediate settings such as the family, the school, and the community. In this sense, the "Exprésate" workshop was embedded in the school setting as a psychoeducational intervention that made it possible to redefine personal and social experiences through the use of digital technologies. The school, in this case, functioned as a supportive environment for promoting reflection on gender roles, autonomy, and social participation.

The implications of the study are relevant for the education system. First, the results show that active methodologies can contribute to strengthening female empowerment when they promote participation, expression, and critical reflection. Second, they show that digital technologies can be valuable pedagogical tools if they are used with a formative, and not merely instrumental, orientation. Third, they highlight the need to incorporate educational proposals that strengthen adolescent girls' autonomy, communication, decision-making, and leadership. In addition, the study contributes to the achievement of SDG 5 by showing that gender equality can be addressed through contextualized, technology-mediated educational experiences.

Nevertheless, the results should be interpreted in light of some limitations. The small sample size (n = 43) reflects the characteristics of the quasi-experimental design and the participatory nature of the workshop, which required close support and personalized work. However, this condition limits the possibility of generalizing the findings to other populations. It is therefore recommended that the intervention be replicated in educational institutions in different sociocultural contexts and with larger samples.

Another limitation concerns the absence of longitudinal follow-up. Measurement was carried out at only two points in time, before and after the intervention, so it was not possible to determine whether the effects were maintained over time. Future research could incorporate subsequent measurements to analyze the persistence of learning, as well as the continued use of social media as means of adolescent expression, participation, and leadership.

Although the educational use of social media yielded favorable results, its limits must be acknowledged. These platforms can also reproduce gender stereotypes, promote forms of self-exposure, or condition autonomy through algorithms, trends, and dynamics of social validation. For this reason, pedagogical interventions should not be limited to teaching the technical use of social media, but should also promote a critical, ethical, and responsible reading of digital environments. From this perspective, the "Exprésate" workshop opens up possibilities for designing sustainable educational strategies that integrate emerging technologies, participatory approaches, and gender equality education in adolescent contexts.

6. Conclusions

The implementation of the "Exprésate" workshop on the creation of microcontent for social media had a positive and significant influence on the female empowerment of the students in the experimental group. The evidence obtained confirms that guided digital production can constitute a relevant educational strategy for strengthening adolescent autonomy, self-esteem, and participation.

The "Exprésate" workshop significantly influenced the participants' personal agency. It was demonstrated that they strengthened their capacity to make decisions, express opinions, and recognize their own personal resources, which reflects progress in their autonomy.

The “Exprésate” workshop significantly influenced the participants' self-esteem. It was confirmed that the intervention fostered a more positive self-appraisal, which underscores the value of audiovisual expression as a means of strengthening adolescent self-perception.
The “Exprésate” workshop significantly influenced the participants' attitude toward gender roles. It was shown that they developed a greater capacity to question stereotypes and recognize gender inequalities, which reinforces the importance of addressing this dimension through active educational experiences.
The “Exprésate” workshop significantly influenced the participants' sexual empowerment. It was demonstrated that the intervention strengthened aspects related to recognition of the body, consent, boundary-setting, and self-care, dimensions necessary for adolescent autonomy.
The “Exprésate” workshop significantly influenced the participants' social empowerment. It was confirmed that they strengthened their awareness of rights, willingness to participate, and sense of belonging, which reflects the social and community character of female empowerment.
The workshop methodology, based on the production of audiovisual microcontent, enabled the participants to organize, reinterpret, and communicate knowledge about female empowerment through images, short narratives, and digital products. In terms of visual culture, the main contribution lies in showing that learning can be strengthened when adolescent girls cease to be merely consumers of representations and begin to construct their own messages from a critical view of their reality.
The educational use of digital technologies and social media proved to be a relevant resource for contextualizing gender equality education in spaces close to adolescents' everyday experience. These results support the incorporation of audiovisual literacy and critical visual production strategies into school-based proposals oriented toward empowerment, always with pedagogical support, ethical criteria, and attention to the sociocultural context.

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