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Methodological procedure to develop emotional autonomy in university students

Procedimiento metodológico para desarrollar la autonomía emocional en estudiantes universitarios

Procedimento metodológico para desenvolver autonomia emocional em estudantes universitários

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ABSTRACT

University students are living today in an unprecedented socio-psychological situation due to the impact of COVID-19. Various negative emotions have been experienced as a result of this. Attention to this problem is of vital importance for the training of these future professionals, however, in interviews with the teachers, it was found that they have insufficient preparation for such professional performance. To mitigate this insufficiency, it is proposed to develop a methodological procedure that allows the development of the emotional autonomy

of university students during the teaching-learning process, which will improve the preparation of teachers aimed at attending to the emotional problems of their students in pandemic times. Depending on its realization, theoretical methods such as analysis-synthesis, induction-deduction, historical-logical and modeling were used. The individual interview with teachers and students was also used as an empirical method to delve into the problem investigated. As a result, a methodological procedure of great value was obtained as it constitutes an accurate guide to all education professionals for their educational work based on the development of the personality of their students and especially their emotional autonomy. This prepares them for life in pandemic situations.

Keywords: methodological procedure; COVID-19; emotional autonomy.

RESUMEN

Los estudiantes universitarios viven hoy una situación sociopsicológica sin precedentes debido al impacto de la COVID-19. Diversas emociones de índoles negativas se han vivenciado como consecuencia de ello. La atención a esta problemática resulta de vital importancia para la formación de estos futuros profesionales; sin embargo, en entrevistas realizadas a los profesores, se pudo constatar que estos poseen insuficiente preparación para tal desempeño profesional. Para atenuar esta insuficiencia se propuso un procedimiento metodológico que permitió el desarrollo de la autonomía emocional del estudiantado universitario durante el Proceso de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje, lo cual mejorará la preparación de los profesores dirigida a la atención de los problemas emocionales de sus educandos en tiempos de pandemia. En función de la concreción del mismo, se emplearon métodos teóricos como el análisis-síntesis,

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inducción-deducción, histórico-lógico y de modelación. También se empleó como método empírico la entrevista individual a profesores y estudiantes para profundizar en la problemática investigada. Como resultado se obtuvo un procedimiento metodológico de gran valía, pues constituye una guía certera a todos los profesionales de la educación para su labor educativa en función del desarrollo de la personalidad de sus educandos y en especial de su autonomía emocional. Esto los prepara para la vida en situaciones de pandemia.

Palabras clave: procedimiento metodológico; COVID-19; autonomía emocional.

RESUMO

Os estudantes universitários vivem hoje em uma situação sócio-psicológica sem precedentes devido ao impacto do COVID-19. Várias emoções negativas foram experimentadas como resultado disso. A atenção a esse problema é de vital importância para a formação desses futuros profissionais; Porém, nas entrevistas com os professores, constatou-se que eles apresentam preparo insuficiente para tal atuação profissional. Para amenizar essa insuficiência, foi proposto um procedimento metodológico que permitiu o desenvolvimento da autonomia emocional dos universitários durante o Processo Ensino-Aprendizagem, o que irá melhorar a preparação dos professores visando o atendimento dos problemas emocionais de seus alunos em momentos de pandemia. . A depender de sua realização, foram utilizados métodos teóricos como análise-síntese, indução-dedução, histórico-lógico e modelagem. A entrevista individual com professores e alunos também foi utilizada como método empírico para aprofundar o problema investigado. Como resultado, obteve-se um procedimento metodológico de grande valia, visto que se constitui em um guia acurado a todos os profissionais da educação para seu trabalho educativo pautado no

desenvolvimento da personalidade de seus alunos e, principalmente, de sua autonomia emocional. Isso os prepara para a vida em situações de pandemia.

Palavras-chave: procedimento metodológico; COVID-19; autonomia emocional.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 issue is constant in all areas of life of the individual today. This pandemic has affected the lifestyle of the people, its negative impact on each activity is remarkable, since the consequences are not only biological, but also economic, political, social and environmental. Education, therefore, has not escaped this phenomenon and its impact on the permanent training of university students has been mostly negative.

To better understand the situation in which humanity finds itself, one must start from the knowledge of the disease that has caused such a crisis. In this sense, COVID-19 is an acute respiratory disease, sometimes serious, caused by a new corona virus SARS-CoV-2. It is thought that the virus was initially transmitted from animals to humans because the first cases appeared in December 2019 in Wuhan, China and were related to a live animal market (Lozano-Vargas, 2020, p. 3)

Person-to-person spread occurs through contact with infected secretions, primarily through contact with large respiratory droplets, but could also occur through contact with a surface contaminated by them. The dangerous thing lies in the high level of transmissibility and contagion that this disease possesses. This characteristic has had to be taken into account in priority order by the governments of all countries, as it implies serious problems

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or consequences for people's health and for the economic and social order.

This requires health authorities to adopt preventive measures to prevent the spread of the epidemic and the deaths of many people. Among the most common in all countries are quarantines, measures of physical distancing and isolation, according to what was proposed by Lorenzo, Días and Zaldívar (2020). To gain more clarity regarding these terms, it can be said that:

- Physical distancing means leaving a space between people who do not live in the same house, in this case, it is recommended more than one meter apart so that the respiratory drops of one subject do not reach another.
- Quarantine consists of separating people and limiting the movement of those who may have been exposed to the disease. This measure is of great value, since it allows specialists to observe the evolution of the contact that can be positive.
- Isolation refers to separating sick people from others to prevent the disease from spreading.

Many countries currently draw up strategies that are renewed, to support the training of the student body in the midst of such measures and turn adversity into a new opportunity. To achieve this challenge, it is necessary to implement new policies such as: face the pandemic, manage continuity of study, improve and accelerate learning. In this effort, results are introduced in terms of independence in the study, self-management of knowledge, new forms of evaluation, greater use of technology and a more leading role of the family in the Teaching-Learning Process (PEA) of their sons.

Various authors have investigated the consequences that, from the psychological point of view, COVID-19 has caused in the student

body. Espinosa, Mesa, Díaz, Caraballo and Mesa (2020) found that most of the Medical Sciences students analyzed in Pinar del Río experience stress levels and low scores in the dimensions of resilience, pressure under control and spirituality.

Distance education has replaced face-to-face classes. According to Murillo and Duk (2020) online learning is an alternative for those who have equipment of a certain quality with internet access at home. But, although it has been an alternative to mitigate the deficit of the process, there are new situations and inconveniences to be solved such as: the lack of resources and material, environmental and space conditions to be able to benefit from this option on the part of a large number of students.

Ordaz (2020) provides recommendations to promote the formation of values of students in family education during quarantines. This author offers a new perspective of analysis in the formation of the personality of students in the current prevailing conditions.

Authors such as Langer (2018) show in their research that there are teachers and students who, in addition, have hopes, desires and dreams, despite the fears, uncertainties and disorientation that, many times, seem to reign in school in times of crisis. Projects are also developed even in conditions that leave no room for it.

The development of the emotional competencies of university students will be an essential requirement in their comprehensive training in times of COVID. Rafael Bisquerra, a great scholar of this topic, proposes the following: emotional awareness, emotional regulation, emotional autonomy, and social competence and life skills for well-being, according to Bisquerra (2008).

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Although all are very important and interrelated, the proposed procedure emphasizes the development of students' emotional autonomy. This competence is considered necessary in coping with the consequences that the pandemic has caused in the psychological and especially emotional order.

According to Bisquerra (2008), emotional autonomy is the ability not to be seriously affected by environmental stimuli. It is about having sensitivity with invulnerability. This requires a healthy self-esteem, self-confidence, perception of self-efficacy, self-motivation and responsibility. Emotional autonomy is a balance between emotional dependence and disengagement.

To gain greater clarity regarding the emotional sub competencies that make up emotional autonomy, they are defined below:

- Self-esteem is considered by Fernández (2005, p. 366) the global affective dimension of the entire self-reference process; it is the affection that one feels towards oneself. How much the person loves me, is respected, accepted and esteemed, self-esteem is expressed, this being the nourishment of personal dignity and pride.
- Self-confidence is the belief or perception that the individual has of their own ability to perform a set of activities or tasks. Thus, if difficult tasks are faced with a high level of self-confidence, this will cause them to be perceived as changeable, rather than threatening (Aguirre, Castro, Candia, Cordero & Sánchez, 2016, p. 62).
- Perception of self-efficacy: it was defined as the perceived ability to cope with specific situations; it involves the belief about one's own capacities to organize and execute actions to achieve certain

results. This psychological construct, proposed by Bandura in 1986, has been considered a determining and strongly predictive psychological variable of academic achievement. (Contreras, Espinosa, Esguerra, Haikal, Polanía and Rodríguez, 2005, p. 186)

- Self-motivation is what moves a person in a direction and with a specific purpose; achieving a goal is therefore a factor that conditions the ability to learn. Self-motivation is giving yourself the reasons, drive, enthusiasm and interest to achieve what you want, that is, it is to influence your mood. A student becomes successful if he is self-motivated enough, since he creates in him an internal force that becomes a powerful engine that drives him to move forward, a vital energy necessary to make extraordinary efforts and thus achieve his objective or goal. In general terms, it can be affirmed that self-motivation is the lever that moves all behavior, which allows them to provoke changes, both at the school level and in life in general (Reátegui and Yahuarcani, 2015, p. 18).
- Responsibility is understood as the tendency of the personality to act in correspondence with the sense of duty before itself and society, as an internal need, which is a source of positive experiences and is carried out independently of the external obligation, based on the understanding your need. It implies a commitment to quality in the fulfillment of school, family and social tasks, disciplinary norms and individual and collective behavior. Willingness to meet goals and perseverance in the face of difficulties (Sánchez, 2021, p. 3).

It is necessary to adopt flexible and innovative actions that allow the achievement of a developer Teaching-Learning Process in the midst of the circumstances of the pandemic. To achieve this purpose, teachers must adopt an active and leading position based on their knowledge and skills as teachers. However, in interviews with 11 professors from the University of Holguín, it was found that there is little preparation of teachers for care during the PEA of the emotional problems of university students generated by the pandemic.

In this sense, the teachers report not having previously experienced an epidemiological situation with a similar precedent, having received little preparation in their academic training to care for students psychologically affected by a pandemic, and receiving little preparation from the career leaders and coordinators year on the attention to the emotional problems of the student body, generated by COVID-19.

The analysis of the shortcomings and of the theoretical references allows us to reflect on: how to contribute to the preparation of teachers for the development of emotional autonomy of university students?

Based on the above, the objective of the present work is: to elaborate a methodological procedure for the development of the emotional autonomy of the university students during the Teaching-Learning Process, which will improve the preparation of the professors, aimed at the attention of the emotional needs of their students in times of pandemic in the context of the University.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

It was an exploratory-descriptive investigation, which addressed a subject scarcely investigated in the Cuban context. The study was carried out from the individual criteria of students and teachers, as this is a subjective construction process that composes the meanings and evaluations that the subjects grant to their personal experiences. The research sample was taken from 13 first-year university students and 11 professors from the cloister, who will teach these disciples in the context of the University.

To address the state of the art of the subject in question, the use of the analysis-synthesis method was required, which allows the understanding of the problem under investigation and the theoretical references that support it in the bibliography consulted, in addition to synthesizing the most common characteristics that adjust to the proposed objective in the context that is working. The historical-logical method became necessary in the study of the sequential behavior over time of emotional phenomena in pandemic situations. The induction-deduction method allowed the supply of the essential aspects for the dissertation of the topic; this provides theoretical aspects of a subjective and objective nature for the pragmatic analysis of the educational reality in the treatment of the development of emotional autonomy in university students. The modeling made possible the elaboration of the methodological procedure. As an empirical method, the individual interview with teachers and students was used, which made it possible to identify the existing problem situation.

RESULTS

In Cuba, the beginning of the school year for first-year university students has been postponed in time, as a result of the dilemma between caring for human life and continuity in the academic training of the student body. In interviews carried out with the sampled first-year students of the University of Holguín, it was found that:

- Everyone understands the need for isolation and quarantine measures, because it prevents the spread of the disease and prevents the increase in cases and the death of people.
- Students show understanding today in restricting mobility and delaying the start of the school year.
- They feel a commitment to actively participate in social impact tasks such as: investigations, care for vulnerable people and others.
- They feel useful in housework and exchange with the family.

Nevertheless:

- All students report feeling sadness and anxiety as a result of the frustration of their needs for improvement, not being able to start their studies at the University yet.
- They feel bored, worried about the future.
- Of these, 7 (53%) have suffered stress due to isolation, the delay in entrance tests and the start of the University, fear of contagion of the disease and the loss of family and friends.
- Six (46%) feel overwhelmed by the delay in professional training that the current epidemiological situation has generated.
- Five (38%) say they feel sad about the situation that the world

and our country are experiencing due to the pandemic.

- Four (30%) feel longing for contact with other colleagues and sharing in social activities with them.

Characterization of the preparation of teachers in attention to the emotional problems of university students

For the study of the preparation of the professors in attention to the emotional problems of the university students, an individual interview was applied to the faculty of the sample. The results of the same are shown below.

Of these, only three (27%) state that they feel very prepared to attend to the emotional needs of the students in the classes they teach, since they received subjects in their academic training that allow them to do so. Of the total, two (18%) consider that they have medium preparation, while six state that they are poorly prepared.

There are four (36%) teachers who have knowledge about emotional competences and, specifically, about emotional autonomy, three (27%), while two (18%) are students of the subject. Of them, three (27%) have any idea of how to develop it and only one has planned actions during the class to promote it in an intentional way.

The majority of the teachers interviewed, nine (81%), state that they do not receive training in the year groups about the attention to the emotional problems of the students generated by the pandemic; much less how to attend to them from the class. They all argue that affected students should be cared for in the University's Educational Guidance Office or referred to other specialists. They are of the criterion that there is not yet enough information on the subject, teaching materials, manuals and other resources to guide teachers in

attending to the emotionality of their students.

Methodological procedure for the development of emotional autonomy of university students as a result of COVID-19

As results of the theoretical and empirical methods used, the methodological procedure "The development of emotional autonomy of university students in Higher Education classes" is presented.

The procedure has an integrative and systemic conception of different pedagogical resources framed in: the diagnosis of the preparation of teachers to attend the emotional education of their students in the university context. It also includes the development of seven actions as a solution to the problems detected in the diagnosis.

Action 1. Exploring the emotional needs of the university students

- Knowledge of students' experiences during the pandemic, confinement, frequent reactions to family and social events related to the loss of loved ones, through techniques such as individual interviews or discussion of this topic at the beginning or during class.
- Knowledge of the most impactful topics in the students that are treated in the subject and that are in some way related to the reactions to crisis situations or COVID-19.
- Knowledge of the most frequent emotional reactions in students during situations of stress, loss, confinement, frustration of life projects and continuity of study.

Action 2. Creation of a relaxed socio-psychological climate

A positive environment during the PEA is of great importance to stimulate each student in the development of personality, as proposed by Torres, Medina and Carralero (2019). In this sense, they suggest that in order to achieve an adequate socio-psychological climate, the preparation of teachers is essential to favor the socio-psychological climate in the school group and prevent problems that affect the emotional health of its members. To achieve this, these authors recommend:

- Study of the theoretical-methodological foundations to diagnose and carry out educational guidance. Indicators related to a positive environment are of great importance, such as: mutual understanding, respect for different points of view, criteria, values and beliefs; that the group receives guidance in order to promote a healthy and harmonious coexistence.
- Adoption of a good state of mind by the teacher before starting his class and staying that way throughout the class.
- Encouragement of constructive behavior by students instead of punishing negative behavior during class.
- Orientation so appropriate students in the implementation of learning activities. To do this, it must take into consideration their learning needs, the conditions for carrying them out and opinions.
- Avoidance of the formation of prejudices, through constant observation and dialogue, that allows the teacher to verify the changes that are occurring with the student's emotionality and understand their reactions to negative events that may occur.
- Realization of an adequate handling of the error on the part of the professors, who must

transmit security and stimulate the construction of the knowledge between all during the class; in this way, the self-esteem of those evaluated their perception of self-efficacy and their self-motivation for learning is stimulated.

- Using methods and techniques it is possible to identify the causes that affect the internal dynamics of the group, the situations of interpersonal conflicts, how the structure of the group is formed, if there are isolated or rejected students, as well as the potentialities of the group.

Action 3. Prevention, from the objective of the class, of the attention to the emotional needs of the students

The objective, as a fundamental component of the class, guides the teacher in the development of his activity. It is the guiding component of the educational process. Therefore, in order to achieve the development of students' emotional autonomy, the teacher must intentionally plan:

- Elaboration of the objective of each class close link between the content to be treated as formative intentionality, planning the development of emotional autonomy of students.

Action 4. Selection of parts of the class that allow the development of students' emotional autonomy

- Study or the methods and procedures of a teaching that promotes the development of a healthy self - esteem, self - confidence, self-efficacy, self - motivation and responsibility of students, while achieving active appropriation of contents of the subject taught. To do this, it must take into account being, knowing how to do and living together.

- Selection of teaching methods and procedures based on what has been studied.
- Selection of the moment of the methodological structure of the class in which the use of participatory techniques, group dynamics, role play, self-evaluation, hetero-evaluation and co-evaluation is most convenient.

Action 5. Linking the contents of the subject that are conducive to enhancing the emotional autonomy of the student body

- Study the contents of the subject that allow the treatment of emotional autonomy and its subcomponents.
- Use stories, anecdotes, and fables, examples of personalities that constitute paradigms in their actions that are linked to the content and, at the same time feel guidelines to demonstrate an adequate emotional performance in crisis or pandemic events.

Action 6. Development of learning tasks that allow students to develop emotional autonomy to face the consequences of the pandemic

- Development of novel and attractive learning tasks that contribute to personal development, cognitive independence and, at the same time, to the education of emotional autonomy.
- Elaboration of questions, use pedagogical situations, emotional dilemmas with a motivating approach in which the student develops his self-esteem, self-confidence, perception of self-efficacy, self-motivation and responsibility.
- Use or working methods team in learning activities during practical classes, seminars and workshops that promote experiential exchange between students and

the development of responsibility in fulfilling the roles that are assigned to them.

Action 7. Verification of the incidence of the proposed procedure in the development of the emotional autonomy of the student body

- Verification, through personality study techniques, of the state of emotional autonomy that is being achieved in students. In this sense, it is convenient to use observation, individual and group interviews, complete sentences, autobiography, composition, drawing of the human figure and others in which the teacher prepares.
- Use of oral and written evaluation to check not only the assimilation of the subject's contents, but also the responsibility achieved in their self-preparation, the fulfillment of the learning tasks.
- Ascertain, by involving students, the significance of the content of the subject and their current emotional states.

DISCUSSION

Education in universities is currently tempered by an adverse social context due to COVID-19. The continuity of study and the training of university students in many remote places impose new challenges for teachers in educational work, for which they are not sufficiently prepared. The results of the individual interview with students and teachers in this research correspond to the previous statement.

The consequences that derive from the pandemic at the socioeconomic level are diverse; they include a forced detriment to the psychological health of people. University students and professors require greater preparation to

adapt and overcome the negative effects that the current reality demands of them.

The measures to confront COVID-19, although necessary, are, as stated by Lorenzo, Días and Zaldívar (2020), one of the most controversial issues in relation to the possible associated psychological impact. The results achieved in this article, based on the interviews with the students, demonstrate the validity of this approach. In this sense, there is evidence of understanding on the part of the student body of the need for the measures adopted; however, they manifest various negative emotions and moods as a consequence of them. From which an approach-avoidance conflict towards confinement and quarantine is revealed.

The students interviewed in this research have suffered stress, the main causes of which have been the delay in the entrance tests and the entrance to the University, leaving the disease itself or its possibility of contagion in the third plane. It is the criterion that the cases studied have not had their own experiences or that of other people close to COVID, therefore the feeling of danger with respect to death, and the disease as such, takes a second place in relation to the stress due to waiting to start your professional training. The previous judgment is different from that proposed by Langer (2018) in his article on fears in times of crisis, according to teachers and students from Argentina, who first experience fear of dying and anguish due to human and material losses.

In the interviews that were carried out with the students, they also felt as potential participation in household chores with more time and benefit, as well as family exchange, which agrees with what was proposed by the author Ordaz (2020), who defends the idea that there are potentialities in the personal development of the subjects during their stay at home. Making adequate use of the potential offered by the time of not

being in school has formative value. Research and care for vulnerable people contribute to forming values such as: responsibility and the development of self-esteem, self-confidence.

The totality of the sample studied reflects in their answers having taken advantage of the opportunity to be with the family for longer than usual. They consider it has been good, because they exchanged more affectively with their members and carried out activities together, which contributed to their personal and professional training, as well as to their experiential learning.

But the symptoms of stress, uncertainty about the future, boredom, boredom, overwhelmed by the delay in the continuity of study, which resulted from the interviews carried out with the sampled students coincide with the investigations carried out in different nations such as Panama, Chile, Ecuador, Spain, United Kingdom and others, who highlight various negative psychological effects as a consequence of quarantines (Lorenzo, Días and Zaldívar, 2020, p. 5):

- Post-traumatic stress symptoms, confusion and anger, and even increased suicide rates.
- Fears of infection, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and despair.
- Frustration and boredom from confinement, decreased social activities, and reduced physical contact; people experience boredom, frustration, and a sense of isolation.
- Inadequate supplies: this finding was a source of frustration and was associated with anxiety and anger, characterized by the excessive and compulsive purchase of hygiene products, disinfectants and food for fear of running out.
- Inadequate information: excess and abuse of news by public health authorities and the media about deaths and others related to the pandemic that instill panic

and uncertainty in the population. According to the researchers, over information is not good because subjects consume information that matches their previous thinking; therefore, if the thoughts are negative, people often consume pessimistic news and become even more overwhelmed.

The study presented in this article, although it uses a small sample, shows that in the segment of the population studied, teachers feel little prepared to face the emotional problems of their students, as a consequence of the preventive measures of COVID and of the disease itself. They suggest receiving little information about the development of emotional autonomy and how to achieve it in educational practice. They have not enough teaching materials, manuals or other guiding resources for this purpose. Therefore, we are faced with a problematic situation in which first-year university students require attention to their emotional problems and the teaching staff is not prepared for it.

The methodological procedure proposed in this research is aimed at mitigating the problem, since it contributes to the development of emotional autonomy required by students to better adapt to educational and living conditions in times of pandemics or crisis in general. This proposal is a guide that university faculty will have to satisfy the emotional needs of their students, while increasing their professional preparation.

Unlike other proposals for methodological procedures such as that of Torres, Medina and Ramírez (2019), for the formation of the professional identity of their students and that of Rodríguez, Torres and Leyva (2020), in order to favor the Process of Teaching-Learning of the Psychology subject, in this article a methodological procedure is proposed that is aimed at the

development of the emotional autonomy of its students. Strengthening this competence of emotionality in the student body in times of crisis and pandemic is very important.

From this methodological procedure, teachers will be able to ensure that their students develop the ability to not be seriously affected emotionally by negative stimuli from the environment that surrounds them, while remaining empathetic. This enhances a healthy self-esteem, self-confidence, perception of self-efficacy, self-motivation and responsibility, essential aspects for the training of future professionals.

The foregoing supports the need for the methodological procedure called "The development of emotional autonomy of university students in Higher Education classes." This contributes to the formation of one of the emotional competencies necessary in the preparation of the student body in times of pandemic, both for their personal development and for a better professional practice in their future.

In general, the study of the bibliography consulted reflects that COVID-19 is a threat to the physical and psychological integrity of ourselves and others, over which we have control. This highly unpredictable and uncontrollable situation of potential danger favors negative emotional states in people.

University students do not escape these psychological effects. The interview with 13 first-year students from the University of Holguín confirms the above statement, by manifesting states of stress and negative emotions as consequences of the measures adopted to prevent the spread of the disease. Taking care of their emotional competencies, especially promoting the achievement of emotional autonomy is a challenge for teachers, who state that they do not have sufficient preparation for it. One way to prepare teachers for this purpose is the methodological

procedure proposed in this article. Having this tool is of great importance for education professionals, as it constitutes a guide in their educational actions.

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Author declares not to have any conflicts of interest.

Author´s Contribution:

The author prepared the article, complying with the different actions corresponding to this purpose.



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