

# Predominant Components of the Tutorial Action in University Students

## Componentes predominantes de la acción tutorial en estudiantes universitarios

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## Summary

The research related to the practice of tutorial action in university students, aimed to determine the predominant component of tutorial, recognizing that tutorial in the university is gaining value and significance for the benefit of the students, as a support area, orientation and coverage during the educational procedure in its different academic, professional and personal dimensions. The study corresponds to the quantitative approach, deductive hypothetical and substantive method, non-experimental, cross-sectional or transactional and explanatory design, with a population of 2629 students whose representative sample was 335 participants. The results of the same showed that 67% of the students considered that the tutorial action they received was adequate, while 33%, also states that the predominant dimension was the academic development. It is concluded that the tutorial action did have a significant and predominant presence since it was considered as adequate within the development of university life in undergraduate students; situation that confirmed and revalued the attention to different needs and interests by the students responding to an education of integral development.

**Keywords:** Tutorial Action, Personal Dimension, Academic Dimension, Professional Dimension.

## Resumen

La investigación relacionada a la práctica de la acción tutorial en estudiantes universitarios, tuvo como objetivo determinar el componente predominante de la tutoría, reconociendo que la tutoría en la universidad está cobrando valor y significancia en beneficio de los discentes, como área de apoyo, orientación y cobertura durante el proceder educativo en sus distintas dimensiones académicas, profesional y personal. El estudio corresponde al enfoque cuantitativo, de método hipotético deductivo tipo sustantivo, de diseño no experimental, de corte transversal o transaccional y explicativa, con una población de 2629 estudiantes cuya muestra representativa fue de 335 participantes. Los resultados del mismo, demostraron que el 67% de los estudiantes consideraron que la acción tutorial que recibieron fue adecuada, mientras que el 33%, asimismo establece que la dimensión predominante destacada fue el desarrollo académico, se concluye que la acción tutorial sí tuvo presencia significativa y predominante al haber sido considerada como adecuada dentro del desarrollo de la vida universitaria en estudiantes en formación; situación que confirmó y revaloró por la atención a distintas necesidades e intereses por parte del alumnado respondiendo a una educación de desarrollo integral.

**Palabras clave:** Acción tutorial, Dimensión personal, Dimensión académica, Dimensión profesional.

## Introduction

The adoption of tutorial within the university framework has gained value and relevance in its own main figures, in teacher as students, as well as in the people responsible for it. The context of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) said that the teacher's function should keep a wide vision that involves tutorial work, but in reality, it is assumed only as an ideal and a secondary aspect and that it is not involved in the learning process of the student (Álvarez, 2013, p. 101). The perception of the same tutorial action is varied. In Mexico, Caldera, Caldera, Carranza, Jiménez and Pérez (2015), in a study carried out in the Guadalajara University, they recognized the positive attitudes that university students reflect towards tutorial, results that showed positive attitudes. It has been practiced since a prudential time. The students in this education programs are clear and know about the reasons why tutorial is being carried out. In the Peruvian case, the National Program of Scholarships and Educational Loan (PRONABEC, by its Spanish initials) (2012, p. 23-26) show results that are of concern and that reflect the little interest in issues related to tutorial action in higher education. Other previous works referred to the tutorial

action or tutorial in higher education are shown and they include Lemus, Torres, Serrano and Gúzman (2015). They recognized problems of more incidence in relation to evaluation judgements applied to certify learning. It was suggested to implement a support model for tutorial action, focusing on the academic productivity, personal esteem and on the work with the others. Likewise, Amor (2012) confirmed that tutorial was not being fully addressed, it was only considered as an additional element and that it is not related to the student's learning process. All his conclusions addressed a concern and a real problem about the tutorial plans and orientation in the university education since it is not only enough to know or desire to improve, but to establish clear programs for the active participation by tutor teachers and students. In addition, part of the study carried out by Álvarez (2013, in view of the changes of the model of the European Higher Education Area in relation to the tutorial work, placing it in a relevant position in the internal quality assurance systems), focused on the role of the teacher with respect to his tutorial function with the students and to its collaboration and implication in the increase of a tutorial system for professional program. He also concluded that the tutorial function was defined only as an additional or secondary task, not necessarily involved in the learning process of the students, and that different agents involved should implement a good orientation systems and tutorial programs. Gil, Martínez, Tunnicliffe and Moneo (2013) identified that with the establishment of the EHEA, higher education institutions considered in their reality, within their teaching-learning process, purposes or objectives of tutorial action; and the estimation of its effects may make evident the need to constantly improve for the achievement of a greater effectiveness, evidences of evaluation and study that motivated the research, showing that the students support a tutorial coverage, they accept and value it. In this case, they influence more the professional development than the personal or academic development, even more if it could be possible to keep the same link of communication with the same tutor; qualification that urged an important intervention in the personal, academic and professional development, which was also considered in the research, but in another reality, meeting needs and different interests. Romo and Romero (2015) said that tutorial does not cover all the responsibilities for fostering a radical change to risk situations in a student or for maintaining an impeccable record; but they ensure that the effective execution of a tutorial program allows a constant evaluation for improvement purposes and specially with the coverage of authorities and other services provided by higher education institutions, the same situations observed in the teacher's experience and the tutorial work that created concerns and the need to know the true demand of the tutorial action in the different academic, personal and professional components. Therefore, the work poses the question, which is the predominant dimension in the tutorial action in university students?

### **Educational Orientation and Tutorial**

Pantoja and Campoy (2009) said that in many occasions the educational orientation and tutorial are related. The author recognized that the educational orientation is a component attached to the same education, thus integrating the curricular suggestion, interpreted and implemented in all the guidelines of learning and progress, helping to establish and conduct a global education by contributing with the advice and technical support in personalized functions for education, which show an approach to the variety of skills and motivations that can present the students. The educational orientation and tutorial action are closely related to each other, so that they are part of the teacher's and tutor's function (p. 271). The authors acknowledge their close relationship, although orientation is attributed to a more general and prepared plane for particular cases and the fact that it can assume roles in different aspects of the person in his future decisions. Tutorial will be seen as a part of the orientation procedure in the educational process, but also with functions in particular.

### **Tutorial Action**

Gil, Martínez, Tunnicliffe and Moneo (2013) say that tutorial action is a necessary function present in all the educational levels, in personal, academic and professional development processes, which is implemented in tutorial action plans and they must be flexible and adaptable

to situations and available resources (p.65). That is why, it was taken as a reference for the delimitation of the dimensions in tutorial action, the personal, academic and professional development, key components in the university tutorial. In this regard, Álvarez (2014) appointed by Lobato and Guerra (2016), said that the “university tutorial has the role of accompaniment, orientation and support to students in their process of learning personalization and of the development of competences, both at personal and professional level, during their career, with the dynamic horizon of the life project, a personal and professional model” (p. 383). Pantoja and Campoy (2009) for the university field, said that:

Tutorial should be distinguished as an active part within the subsystems of the systems or areas of the university supporting the students in the learning field. University tutorial should assume changes as new ways of planning time, setting more rigorous goals, being integrated in the teaching-learning process. For that reason, the work in class is a supplement and it is carried out in diverse spaces and by different agents. (p.272).

For Pantoja and Campoy (2009) tutorial allows a close link, that is a personalized relationship with the student, thus fulfilling the training and accompaniment function that allows the students to know himself, to know the way he acts, reflecting on it or thinking about several situations, to value his qualities and abilities. It also allows the student to acquire a vision of the society where he lives, to learn in society, as well as his integration and implication in the academic life, to be able to achieve a proper management of his emotions, as well as to learn to construct his academic, professional and personal project. In this regard, PRONABEC in 2012, said that the aim of the university and technological education is the attention of young people and adults with precise peculiarities derived from their experience in different areas, reason why the foundations of the tutorial system are andragogical that strengthen and stimulate the proposal. These foundations related to the tutorial are the emotional maturity and self-regulation, the critical thinking, self-determination that develop their autonomy, innovative thinking and above all the social commitment; all of this shows the approach of the tutorial action. Caldera, Carranza, Jiménez and Pérez (2015) developed the tutorial in two modalities. One of them is the individual tutorial focused on the personalized attention in benefit to and coverage of the students. This relationship can be considered face-to-face or virtual, increasing links of increased safety and reliability so that the student can strengthen his self-esteem. The other modality is group tutorial, in which tutor-teacher can interact with the group of students face to face or virtually. It also requires the organization and planning to establish dates and time of meeting (face to face or virtual), and techniques that can motivate the group to participate in an active manner. This modality has the attribute to have access to a larger number of tutorials at lower cost of time and spaces.

### **Tutorial Action Components**

They will be revealed in the following functions of the tutorial action raised by Quintanal and Miraflores (2013). Tutorial action should be established from guidelines that allow their clear definition in four relevant aspects. First, adopted as a guide of incorporation to the university environment (first courses), where the tutor will be the closest person to students in this adaptation to know their doubts from their beginning to the university environment. Second, the academic support (teach to study, motivate, inform about the course in question, etc.), avoiding the desertion or abandonment of studies due to academic or vocational problems. The tutor is not the teacher of the course, but is the person who can give orientation based on the courses designated. Third, orientation and attention to personal difficulties (develop autonomy and responsibility, inform about the rights and obligations, channel their demands and concerns, instruct how to resolve conflicts or impediments, etc.) through dialog and the close relationship with the tutor appointed and the last one, professional orientation (probable professional outings, inform about the courses, seminars, congresses, updated bibliographies, etc.), keeping a more general vision and the vision of the important work and function of this tutorial action and the impact it can have if each tutor

is really trained and is qualified for the tutorial work. The tutorial in university as stated by Muñoz and Gairín (2013) as well the orientation and coverage of student during his university studies is a special issue and current trend for the institutional managers, concerned about the acquisition, use and progress of the academic benefit. As time goes by, the same student will become an active agent in the university life, from participating in extracurricular activities, reflecting on his learning way or style, courses, being oriented towards his learning improvement, among others, showing richness in the personal, academic and professional development. Tutorial can contribute to different actions where students have more coverage, without allowing the separation or abandonment of their studies. It was necessary to know and study those tutorial action fields. In this case Gil, Martínez, Tunnicliffe and Moneo (2013), in their study, shared their work experiences about the tutorial action and the impact that has caused over 6 years in the San Jorge University after the implementation of an action plan that consisted in knowing and evaluating the specific needs the students need to meet in the three development areas in order to achieve an integral maturity, such as personal orientation that contributes to the development of their personality; identity, it gives orientation in academic aspects, increasing the skills inherent to the autonomous learning and finally, professional orientation to the student, showing the learning accompaniment in the work environment in relation to the work inclusion and self-employment. All of this in order that everyone can see and plan their life project. All this work impact on different fields will also demand a new role of the university teachers for the fulfillment of their work as a teacher of the course and as a tutor. The intervention of the tutor-teacher with the development of competencies that can improve his performance; Quintanal and Miraflores (2013) highlighted the proposals of Zabalza, in relation to the competencies that every teacher should develop to improve his teaching and tutorial performance; such as facilitating a good adaption to the context of university teaching with the intention of preventing realities of uncertainty, abandonment, frustration, exchange or prolongation of studies, giving advice to students in relation to what he can do and how he can act in different times of his university education process; or also being able to guide learning of the student through the development of different specific programs in recommendation of activities according to the needs of each students; developing intellectual work strategies and autonomous learning strategies from the particular courses, explaining the consequences of the curricular contents for the good professional performance, informing on academic, administrative and professional issues that are available to the tutor, facilitating the appropriate decision making in academic and professional aspects and the probable consequences. All of this has a greater emphasis on more detailed studies.

## Method

The research method design lies in a quantitative approach since it follows an orderly sequence from identifying a problem to obtaining determinant results and conclusions of the research. It connotes a deductive and hypothetical method from a general vision in the research to obtain specific points in it. The proper type of study was Substantive, and Sánchez and Reyes (2015) said that it focuses on describing, explaining, predicting or retrodicting the reality, with which principles and general laws that allow the organization of a scientific theory are searched. It is a non-experimental design since there was not manipulation of the tutorial action variable, but it was considered in the study environment with university students, in a way that allowed knowing the impact of the same variable in the study, and at the same time, it is cross-sectional or transactional, since the necessary data were derived in a single time, that is, a single intervention in a defined time with the sample. Since it is a substantive and non-experimental, it will also be explicative. In turn, Sánchez and Reyes (2015) defined it as the one that aims to discover the causal factors that may have influence or affect the occurrence of the phenomenon. It responds to the following questions: Why is the phenomenon X presented in this way? Which are the factors and variables that are affecting X? (p. 39). In this way, the explicative intervention allowed knowing the development of the tutorial action, giving a diagnosis so that in the recommendations, new detailed alternatives can be proposed, knowing the indicator or the predominant dimension, in the study and the results of the influence of several factors that intervene in the context.

The population was composed of students from the César Vallejo private university, which has the tutorial program. The total population during the 2017-I academic period was 2629 students in the morning, afternoon and night shifts, where all the involved individuals had the same possibilities of being part of the sample. For the representative sample through the probabilistic sampling, the statistical formula of Arkin and Colton was applied. This sample was composed of 335 students who participated in the study through the simple random sampling. Survey was used and it turned out to be the most appropriate for the study in relation to the tutorial action. The instrument at hand was the scale, where each student could issue a value of level of importance from 1 to 10 in a total of 26 items, subdivided and organized in three dimensions (personal, academic and professional). The instrument content was validated by a panel of experts and the validity of the construct determined through the factor analysis. For the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach' Alpha was used since the indexes and ranges corresponded to an ordinal scale. For normality of data, Kolmogorov Smirnov was used since the sample was composed of more than 50 individuals.

**Results**

The descriptive results showed that 67% of students at the César Vallejo University – Northern Lima considered that the tutorial action received was adequate, while 33% of them considered that the tutorial action received was inadequate and fair.

**Table 1.**

*The tutorial action in university students from the César Vallejo University - Northern Lima*

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate	27	8%
Fair	85	25%
Adequate	223	67%
Total	335	100%

The hypothesis testing was carried out through logistic regression since normality test indicated that it did not present normality, since the value of the data was lower than the value of theoretical significance. For that reason, a nonparametric test is chosen.

**Table 2.**

*Coefficients of logistic regression of the dimensions of the tutorial action from the César Vallejo University -Northern Lima.*

Indicator	B	Standard error	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
					Lower	Upper
Personal development	-.048	0.131	0.715	0.953	0.737	1.233
Academic development	0.267	0.149	.073	1.306	0.975	1.749
Professional development	-.082	0.144	0.569	0.922	0.696	1.221

The most important dimension is the academic development, but in turn, it is not statistically significant.

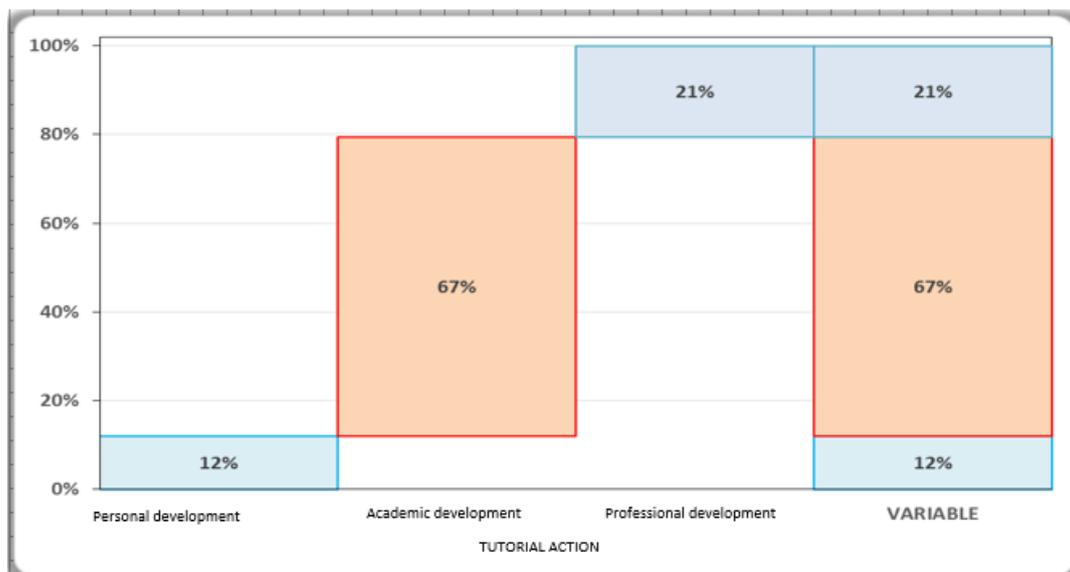


Figure 1. Weights of the dimensions of the tutorial action in students at the César Vallejo University- Northern Lima.

The academic development recorded the greatest predominance in the tutorial action. However, the predominant dimension of academic development is considered a risk factor since its odds ratio  $< \text{Exp}(B) >$  was higher than 1, thus becoming the dimension that needs more attention since if it is not safeguarded, the tutorial action would have more difficulties than the expected.

Table 3.

Coefficients of logistic regression of the indicators of the academic development dimension in students at the César Vallejo University- Northern Lima.

Indicators of academic development	B	Standard error	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
					Lower	Upper
Adapt to the university functioning.	0.270	0.112	0.016	1.310	1.052	1.630
Learn to manage my time for study and task development.	.009	0.142	0.947	1.009	0.765	1.332
Develop autonomous learning strategies to have academic success.	-0.225	0.147	0.126	0.798	0.598	1.065
Learn to do research and to conduct academic tasks.	0.345	0.117	.003	1.412	1.123	1.776
Become aware of my learning skill to improve my performance.	-0.281	0.116	.016	0.755	0.601	0.948

The most importance indicator was learn to do research and to conduct academic tasks and the second predominant indicator was become aware of my learning skill to improve my performance and it is significant.

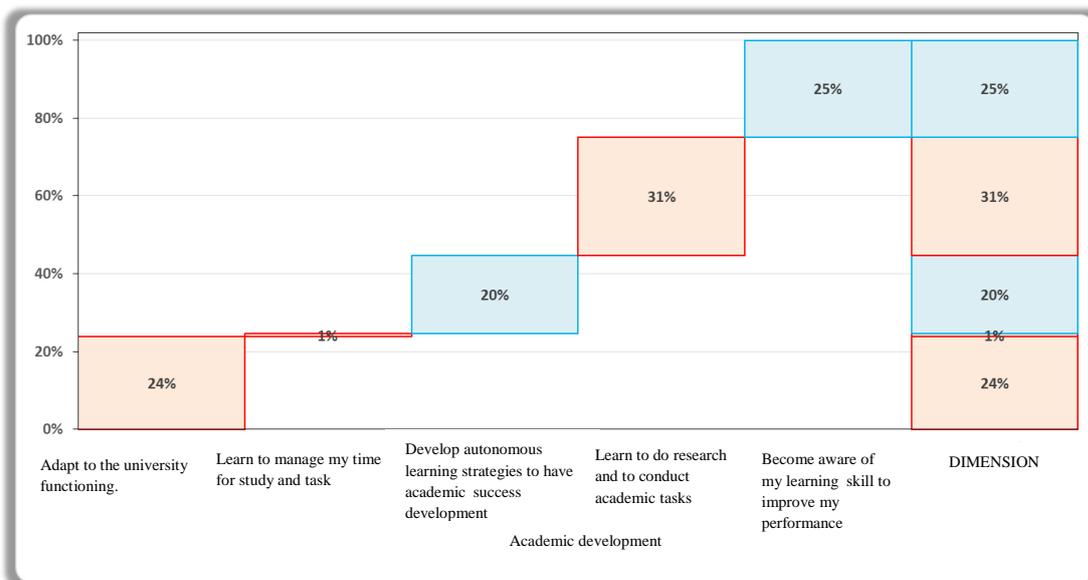


Figure 3. Weights of the indicators of the academic development dimension in students at the César Vallejo University- Northern Lima.

In the results, the indicator Learn to do research and conduct academic tasks ( $B = 0.345$ ) showed a higher coefficient and therefore, it contributed more to the academic development in students from the César Vallejo University- Northern Lima. Likewise, this indicator shows an odds ratio ( $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.412$ ), which means that it is a risk indicator that must be worked on with more emphasis. In the same way, the indicator Become aware of my learning to improve my performance ( $B = -0.281$ ) also showed a higher coefficient, but after the above-mentioned indicator, and contributed to the academic development in students. It is also a protection indicator, where it is necessary to keep strengthening this indicator so that it continues to improve.

### Discussion

The research identified that 67% of the students considered the tutorial action as adequate, which was in contrast of what Álvarez (2013) said when he reflected that the tutorial has not been fully implemented yet, a situation that alarmed universities in that context, then considering the tutorial action as an element of great influence. Marcelo (2015) said that the tutorial accompaniment is really important during the adaption process of the students to the university life by meeting the academic, social-emotional, cultural and personal development needs and requirements. It was additionally confirmed with this study that the action is adequate for the university students in their full training process and even more as an intervention in benefit of the university students. According to the descriptive results, 33% of the total of students from the Vallejo University consider the tutorial action irregular and inadequate. Additionally, Álvarez in his study published in 2013 concluded that in view of the lack of tools adapted to the higher education, it was one of the requirements that must be improved to meet the demands of the teachers to plan and to execute tutorial plans. Here it was assumed as one of the reasons why the tutorial action may have a percentage of inadequate or fair, and adopt it as a measure that should be addressed to better future results.

As for the academic dimension, the descriptive results, 60% of students considered the academic development in the tutorial action as adequate, while 11%, inadequate. Amor (2012) concluded that the more useful objective in the tutorial action is to receive orientation and counseling in relation to the teaching and learning process; both results reflected a close acceptance in the academic development. In this regard, Gil, Martínez, Tunnicliffe and Moneo,

(2013, p.69) said that the academic development is the orientation towards the development of autonomous learning skills, as well as the development of meta-cognition. In the same results, the study showed that 40% of them considered that the academic development of the tutorial action they received is fair and inadequate, percentage that reflected some deficiency for an adequate consideration in the academic development of the tutorial action. In this regard, Gil, Martínez, Tunnicliffe and Moneo (2013) concluded that the students reflected on the importance of meeting the professional development needs, as opposed to academic and personal development; results that could give an answer to the preliminary results, since that percentage of inadequate or fair may originate because that sample of students considers more important other dimensions such as the case of Gil, Martínez, Tunnicliffe and Moneo (2013) who consider that professional dimension has more importance by the university students in Spain.

The results also showed that the significance value (Sig.) observed is higher than the theoretical significance value  $\alpha = .05$  in all the dimensions, accepting the null hypothesis. Consequently, there were not differences in the dimensions of tutorial action in university students from the César Vallejo University – Northern Lima, reason why the general hypothesis of research was rejected since the predominant dimension was the academic development, but since it was not statistically significant, it was considered a risk factor since its value of odds ratio  $< \text{Exp}(B) >$  was higher than 1, thus becoming the dimension that needs more attention, as it is not safeguarded, tutorial action will have more difficulties than the expected. Amor (2016) concluded that students perceived the development of tutorial as an essential activity in their academic career. He confirmed that the tutorial action is a relevant activity for many students, and is one of the main concerns of the students, to which they proposed a greater emphasis for the search for alternatives that give coverage. With Amor's thesis (2012), the inferential result related to the personal development was complemented, since the indicator Be able to know myself ( $B = 0.296$ ) showed a higher coefficient and therefore, contributed more to the personal development in students of the representative sample, thus the null hypothesis was rejected. For that reason, there were differences in the indicators of the personal development dimension in students from the César Vallejo University- Northern Lima; and Amor concluded that the students accepted that through tutorial, teachers should facilitate the students the personal development, favoring their self-esteem, motivation and self-management, detecting and preventing risk situations (abandon/academic failure), leaning towards the search for student wellbeing from a personal wellbeing.

The same inferential results in relation to the indicators of the academic dimension reflected that null hypothesis was rejected. Consequently, there are differences in the indicators of the academic development dimension in students from the César Vallejo University-Northern Lima. The indicator Learn to do research and conduct academic tasks ( $B = 0.345$ ) showed the higher coefficient and therefore, it contributed more to the academic development in students from the César Vallejo University- Northern Lima. In addition, Lemus, Torres, Serrano and Gúzman (2015) concluded that the incorporation of peer advisory and tutorial actions could facilitate the understanding of the process by the students through a tutorial action plan. These statements led to new horizons since university students are saying that in the academic development learn to do research and conduct academic tasks can be related to peer tutorials (where advanced-semester students advice or help with the academic procedure of first-semester students). The intervening university does not work this type of tutorial, but the study raised it as an option for new results that would be considered in new research works that would focus on it in the academic development within the tutorial action. In the results corresponding to the professional development dimension, the null hypothesis was rejected. Consequently, there were differences in the indicators of professional development dimension in students from the César Vallejo University- Northern Lima. In this regard, the indicator Become aware of my potential to develop professionally ( $B = -0.512$ ) shows higher coefficient and therefore, it contributes more to the professional development in students, similar situation to the results and conclusions of the Amor's thesis published in 2012, when he refers to the fact that the students accept that it should be very important to develop abilities and skills in the development of their profession through

tutorials. Situation that recognizes the tutorial action as a broad work in many areas of work, being the professional development an action field that every student wants to optimize.

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