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Estratégias de Desenvolvimento de Competências Socioemocionais de Estudantes de um Curso de Graduação em Administração

Strategies for Developing Socio-Emotional Competences on Management Undergraduate Student

Estrategias para el Desarrollo de Competencias Socioemocionales en Estudiantes de un Curso de Grado en Administración


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PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Competências Socioemocionais. Estudantes. Curso de Graduação em Administração.

Resumo: Este artigo objetiva identificar estratégias para o desenvolvimento de competências socioemocionais de estudantes de um curso de graduação em Administração de uma Universidade pública federal localizada no Nordeste do Brasil. A pesquisa é de natureza qualitativa e foi realizada por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas com oito estudantes. Para a análise dos dados, utilizou-se a análise compreensiva interpretativa. Os resultados revelaram a identificação de três competências socioemocionais: consciência emocional, autocontrole emocional e consciência social. Para cada dimensão, foram identificadas estratégias utilizadas pelos estudantes para o desenvolvimento da competência, que estão vinculadas ao autoconhecimento, à gestão das emoções e às interações sociais. Conclui-se que a vivência de experiências no ambiente de aprendizagem na universidade colabora para o desenvolvimento de competências socioemocionais, que podem auxiliar os estudantes em seu desempenho na vida acadêmica e no mundo do trabalho.

KEYWORDS

Socioemocional competences. Students. Undergraduate Management Course.

Abstract: This article aims to identify strategies for the development of socio-emotional competencies in students of an undergraduate program in Administration at a federal public university located in the Northeast of Brazil. The research is qualitative in nature and was conducted through semi-structured interviews with eight students. For data analysis, comprehensive interpretative analysis was employed. The results revealed the identification of three socio-emotional competencies: emotional awareness, emotional self-control, and social awareness. For each dimension, strategies used by students for competence development were identified, and related to self-awareness, emotion management, and social interactions. It is concluded that experiences in the university learning environment contribute to the development of socio-emotional competencies, which can assist students in their performance in academic life and in the workplace.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Competencias socioemocionales. estudiantes. Curso de grado en Administración

Resumen: Este artículo tiene como objetivo identificar estrategias para el desarrollo de competencias socioemocionales en estudiantes de un programa de licenciatura en Administración de una universidad pública federal ubicada en el noreste de Brasil. La investigación es de naturaleza cualitativa y se llevó a cabo a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas con ocho estudiantes. Para el análisis de datos, se utilizó el análisis comprensivo interpretativo. Los resultados revelaron la identificación de tres competencias socioemocionales: conciencia emocional, autocontrol emocional y conciencia social. Para cada dimensión, se identificaron estrategias utilizadas por los estudiantes para el desarrollo de la competencia, vinculadas al autoconocimiento, la gestión de las emociones y las interacciones sociales. Se concluye que la experiencia en el entorno de aprendizaje en la universidad contribuye al desarrollo de competencias socioemocionales, las cuales pueden ayudar a los estudiantes en su desempeño profesional en la vida académica y en el mundo laboral.

Introduction

Managing your emotions is a complex process (Silva, 2023) that entails going through various emotional experiences which can either favor or hinder the achievement of goals and accomplishments. The development of socio-emotional competences is essential for one to adapt and find success in all domains of life (Conley, 2015; Elias et al., 1997).

Studies related to the development of the ability to recognize and manage emotions are based on several theoretical perspectives, such as: emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), socio-emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2006), emotional competence (Boyatzis, 2009; Bisquerra & Escoda, 2007) and socio-emotional competence (CASEL, 2005; Macêdo & Silva, 2020). In this article, we use the term socio-emotional competences, a multidimensional construct, which covers five dimensions: emotional awareness, social awareness, emotional self-control, emotional regulation and emotional creativity (Macêdo & Silva, 2020). The mobilization of these competences favors the learning process, improves interpersonal relationships and assists in problem solving, by managing one's own emotions effectively, and enhancing their sense of subjective well-being and adaptive resilience (Bisquerra & Escoda, 2007; Di Fabio & Kenny, 2016).

Socio-emotional competences are also crucial for the delivery of an effective performance at work, especially in activities that require the development of managerial skills, such as leadership, negotiation and conflict resolution. The low mobilization of these competences can cause an increase in occupational risk factors, insecurity and stress, which are related to mental illnesses, such as anxiety and depression (Boyatzis & Saatcioglu, 2008; Harvey et al., 2017).

A study carried out by Bonesso, Gerli and Cortellazzo (2019) revealed that students

do not present the desired level of socio-emotional competences demanded by companies, which directly impacts their employability.

The report on *The Future of Jobs* published by the World Economic Forum in May 2023 revealed that socio-emotional competences or soft skills have gained relevance in recent years, especially resilience, flexibility, agility, motivation and self-awareness, as well as the ability of learning throughout life. Such competences are part of the list of skills most demanded by companies for the next 5 years (WEF, 2023).

The development of these competences in the context of university is a major challenge, especially due to the increased incidence of students' mental-health related problems (Gaiotto et al., 2021), which justifies the relevance of this study, given that the development of socio-emotional competences by students can improve their physical and mental health, as reported in the study carried out by Silva (2023).

The emotional overload associated with the low mobilization of socio-emotional competences by students justifies the increased number of studies in the academic environment, especially those related to stress, anxiety and depression, which demonstrates that the university can be considered a stressful environment (Conley, 2015; Silva & Pereira, 2018; Pereira et al., 2022).

Despite the relevance of the topic and the disruptive environment caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of universities that have introduced programs to develop socio-emotional competences is still very small. There are, however, some reports of emotional education programs in this context that used coping strategies, adhered to self-knowledge lessons, dynamics (Nelis et al., 2009; Bonesso, Gerli & Cortellazzo, 2019, Caires et al., 2023), as well as Mindfulness (Pereira et al, 2022, Silva, 2023).

Studies reveal that the university environment is also the locus of students' socio-emotional difficulties. A survey carried out with 424,128 students from 63 universities and two educational centers (in Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) identified the students' emotional difficulties that interfere with their academic life. Problems or sensations of anxiety (63.6%), discouragement/demotivation (45.6%), insomnia/sleep cycle changes (32.7%), helplessness/despair (28.2%) and loneliness (32.7 %) were the most cited in the research, but the idea of death (10.8%) and suicide (8.5%) are also eye-catching in the responses students provided (ANDIFES, 2019). These data reveal that emotion management is a relevant topic in the university context.

Being aware of the results of this research, coupled with the authors' experiences in the academic environment of a public university, are what motivated the present study, whose goal is to identify strategies for the development of socio-emotional competences of students enrolled in an undergraduate Business Administration course at a federal public University located in northeastern Brazil.

The main contribution of this research is the definition of strategies for the development of socio-emotional competences of students, which can help universities in structuring emotional education programs that help improve mental health levels, as well as students' motivation and satisfaction.

Theoretical Reference

Reflections on the topic of emotional intelligence were introduced by Thorndike (1920), who highlighted the existence of three intelligences: mechanical, social and abstract. Among these intelligences, social intelligence involves the ability to understand others, acting wisely in human relationships.

Salovey and Mayer (1990), based on Thorndike's (1920) concept of social intelligence, expanded the discussion and proposed the concept of emotional intelligence. However, the term was popularized in the book "Emotional Intelligence", by Goleman (1995), who considered academic intelligence, measured by Intelligence Quotient tests, insufficient to prepare the individual for personal and professional opportunities.

Emotional intelligence involves four skills: a) perceiving, evaluating and expressing emotions; b) accessing or generating feelings to facilitate thinking; c) understanding emotions and emotional knowledge; and d) regulating emotions to promote intellectual and emotional learning" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Bar-On (2006) highlights that the literature reveals a social component in emotional intelligence. That is why he proposed, in 1997, the term socio-emotional intelligence, which encompasses intra and interpersonal competencies, skills and facilitators to determine effectiveness in human behavior, determining how people feel, express and deal with everyday demands.

To measure it, the author created the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) and by using it, Bar-On (2006) states that socio-emotional intelligence can be learned and taught.

Although there are similarities in the concepts of competence and intelligence, there are also differences given that competence emphasizes culture, the influence of the context, the representation of the self in its conceptualization, the interaction between the person and the environment, emphasizing learning and development. Competence is a behavioral approach to intelligence, since the cognitive, emotional and social dimensions are categories of competences (Bisquerra & Escoda, 2007; Boyatzis, 2009).

Emotional competences involve “a set of knowledge, skills, capabilities and attitudes necessary to understand, express and appropriately regulate emotional phenomena” (Bisquerra & Escoda, 2007, p. 69) and are represented through five dimensions: emotional awareness, emotional regulation, emotional autonomy, social competence and competence for life and well-being.

In the literature, both the terms emotional competence and socio-emotional competence can be used, since both assume the individual in the social context in which they operate (Bisquerra & Escoda, 2007; Bar-On, 2006).

Socio-emotional competences are defined by Elias et al. (1997) as the ability to understand, manage and express the social and emotional aspects of life with the aim of facilitating learning, enhancing relationships, solving problems and adapting to complex situations. Mobilizing these competences is the key to success in school, work and life.

Macêdo and Silva (2020) validated a scale of socio-emotional competences with five dimensions: emotional awareness, emotional self-control, emotional regulation, social awareness and emotional creativity, which are decisive for self-knowledge, in addition to helping professionals in the development of activities in the work environment, helping them deal better with competitive pressures and constant changes in the work environment.

The low mobilization of socio-emotional competences at the managerial level, for example, can enhance occupational risk factors that impact the worker's mental health (Harvey et al., 2017). The results of a survey carried out by Di Fabio & Kenny (2016) with high school students in Italy revealed that emotional intelligence could be an approach to improving the psychological and subjective well-being of young people to maintain and promote their health and performance in the

workplace.

This perspective creates an expectation in companies regarding socio-emotional competences, which have an impact on the employability of university students (Bonesso, Gerli & Cortellazzo, 2019), as recruiters look for the so-called soft and social skills in their future employees (Jones et al., 2016), which are decisive skills for The Future of Jobs (WEF, 2023).

In the academic context, socio-emotional competences were adapted by Conley (2015), based on the dimensions of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). For the author, socio-emotional competences involve self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making, and can be used in higher education in programs to develop socio-emotional competences.

The development of socio-emotional competences occurs through Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg and Walberg (2004) associate SEL with a process through which people learn to recognize and manage emotions, care for others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, as well as develop positive relationships and avoid negative behaviors. It also helps to expand your thinking capabilities and feel more competent to carry out important tasks in life.

For higher education students, socio-emotional learning is necessary because they experience many emotions during their academic career, as they undergo changes in habits, in relationships and begin their professional trajectories (Parker et al., 2004; Silva & Pereira, 2018). Parker et al. (2004) found that competences related to the intrapersonal dimension, adaptability and stress management were considered essential in the transition between high school and university.

Mental-health related problems, such as anxiety, depression and stress, are increasingly common among university students (Silva & Pereira, 2018, Pereira et al., 2022). Silva and Pereira (2018) carried out a survey with Business Administration and Accounting students, and identified stressors, such as demotivation due to broken expectations, time organization to carry out all activities and difficulty in relating content and professional practice. According to Sarrionandia, Ramos-Díaz and Fernández-Lasarte (2018), students with high mobilization of emotional intelligence and resilience have a lower perception of stress.

A study carried out by Silva (2023) with 55 university students to evaluate the implications of an emotional education program based on Mindfulness revealed that after eight weeks experiencing socio-emotional learning processes, there was a reduction in anxiety (32%), depression (33%) and stress (23%) levels, which reveals the potential of Mindfulness practices in improving health, in addition to identifying several benefits of the program for students' well-being.

These reflections suggest the need for institutions to promote actions that encourage the acquisition of socio-emotional knowledge (Weissberg et al., 2015) and competences development, with the aim of helping students achieve well-being (Bisquerra & Escoda (2007) and better adapting to the demands of the work environment (Bonesso, Gerli & Cortellazzo, 2019; Boyatzis & Saatsciogly, 2008; Jones et al., 2016).

The higher education environment, according to Seal et al. (2010), is ideal for the dissemination of socio-emotional learning models due to its diversity and atmosphere, which facilitates interactions and the sharing of ideas and knowledge (Seal et al., 2010; Soares, Mello & Baldez, 2011). It is also important to highlight the need to create spaces

of trust and respect that allow students to express their emotions and develop socio-emotional competences that contribute to their learning (Huerta Cuervo et al., 2022).

Universities can create programs to develop the socio-emotional competences of their student through the establishment of socio-emotional learning strategies. According to Conley (2015), there are psychoeducational programs, focused solely on information, and programs aimed at developing skills, which use meditation practices, cognitive behavioral interventions, Mindfulness, relaxation and social competences, and which can help in the development of emotional and social awareness. The most promising programs are those that cover cognitive behavior, relaxation practices and the development of social competences.

SEL programs can also use coping strategies to adapt to stressful situations (Antoniazzi, Dell'aglio & Bandeira, 1998; Enns et al., 2018). A study carried out by Enns et al. (2018) with Psychology, Nursing and Social Work university students who have greater emotional intelligence reported using coping strategies more frequently, which was associated with lower levels of perceived stress. Students use these strategies to deal with stressful situations, consequences of their academic experiences.

In a survey carried out in Malaysia with medical and biomedical students (Redhwan et al., 2009), it was noticed that the coping strategies used by students were meditation, sharing problems with colleagues, sleeping well and going out with friends, with meditation being a strategy used to develop socio-emotional competences.

Bland, Melton and Gonzalez (2010) also carried out a study with university students and identified that praying, talking to their mother, surfing the internet, meeting friends and exercising were the most common coping

strategies. Nelis et al. (2009) presented a program that was successful in learning socio-emotional competences, which was carried out in four sessions: the first focused on understanding emotions; the second was centered around the identification of emotions; the third involved the expression and use of emotions and finally the fourth, associated with the management of emotions, focused on teaching coping strategies to students.

The dissemination of emotional education programs for students can be a permanent public policy to promote health and well-being in the school environment, with repercussions on professional and personal life. Caires et al. (2023) also presented the results of an Emotional Education program and emphasize that the development of socio-emotional competences is essential to improve the quality of life and well-being of university students. The relationship between socio-emotional learning and well-being is also confirmed by Denston et al. (2022).

The purpose of this study, which involves identifying strategies for the development of socio-emotional competences, can contribute to helping students with their academic performance, as revealed in the study by Huerta Cuervo et al. (2022). The methodological path of the study is discussed in the next section.

Research methodology

To achieve the goal of this research, we adopted a qualitative approach, of an exploratory nature. This type of approach is justified in the study as it seeks to detail and deepen the theme (Creswell, 2014) of socio-emotional competences. This study is classified as basic qualitative research, given that it sets out to “comprehend how people understand their lives and experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meanings they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam,

2009, p. 22).

To identify strategies for developing students' socio-emotional competences, the research is based on Merriam's (2009) precepts for a qualitative study, which focus on understanding how students interpret and attribute meanings to experiences lived in a social context.

The research was carried out with undergraduate students enrolled in a Business Administration course at a public federal University located in the Northeast of Brazil, which offers classes in the morning and in the evening. One of the criteria for choosing participants was that they were in their last year of the course. Contact with students occurred due to accessibility and they were invited to participate in the research in informal conversations in the university environment.

Eight pre-graduate and senior students participated in the research, four men and four women, who studied in the morning and in the evening. It is considered that these students, as they are in the last year of the course, have already gone through several emotional experiences in their academic life. The age of the research participants ranged between 21 and 33 years. The interviews were face-to-face and lasted an average of 37 minutes each, the longest lasting 1 hour and 7 minutes and the shortest lasting 25 minutes. The interviewed participants received an identification code (S1 to S8) to keep their anonymity and to facilitate the organization of data for analysis.

The data collection instrument was a semi-structured interview script prepared based on the dimensions of socio-emotional competences proposed by Macêdo and Silva (2020). Some sociodemographic questions were also included, such as age, period they were enrolled in the course as well as what period of the day they attended classes.

Before using the research script with research participants, a pre-test was carried out

with a student enrolled in the second period of the course. The pre-test confirmed the need for some adjustments to the script to better adjust to students in the process of completing the course. The research was carried out before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, in February and March of 2020. The criterion for verifying the sufficiency of the corpus was saturation (Colbari, 2014, p. 258), which occurred in the eighth interview.

The students who agreed to participate in the interview signed an Informed Consent Form (known as TCLE, in Portuguese), in addition to authorizing the use of the interview recording anonymously.

The analysis of research data followed the process of comprehensive interpretative data analysis (Silva, 2005). The first stage of the analysis involved the transcription of the eight interviews. The second stage included reading the transcripts, with the aim of identifying the interviewees' statements related to the strategies used for the development and management of socio-emotional competences, essential in categorizing the data. The third stage consisted of analyzing the coded excerpts and grouping three thematic categories that emerged from the process. Finally, the interviewees' statements were read and re-read, which made it possible to identify three thematic categories linked to socio-emotional competences: emotional awareness, emotional self-control and social awareness. The results are presented below.

Presentation and discussion of results

The results are structured into three sections and reveal the strategies used by the students surveyed on the development of socio-emotional competences. In each thematic category, the strategies and a discussion of the results are presented in conjunction with the literature.

Strategies of Emotional Awareness

The dimension of Emotional Awareness involves the skills of perceiving and understanding one's own and others' feelings and emotions, with a compassionate, empathetic and mutual trust attitude, helping to manage relationships and make decisions (Macêdo & Silva, 2020, Silva, 2023).

The development of this dimension of socio-emotional competences enables the individual to understand their emotions, capabilities and limitations (Bar-On, 2006), helping with emotional self-control (CASEL, 2005), being necessary for the student's adaptation to academic life, which is permeated with new experiences (Parker et al., 2004).

In the students' statements, it was possible to identify the strategies they used to develop Emotional Awareness. Most of these strategies were learned and/or developed during their experiences at the university. Readings related to the theme, mainly focused on psychology and philosophy, were cited by students as a means of self-knowledge, as can be seen in the reports of some students.

“Very philosophical. I'm reading Plato's Republic right now... human problems, of ethical conflicts that have existed since humanity has been humanity, right? ... Humans, human beings go through similar problems, right?” [S2]

“I try to read different books on different subjects, but mainly focused on knowledge, in the case of self-knowledge... subjects focused on philosophy, quality of life, entrepreneurship, you know? ...But that helps you understand the world...and by understanding the world, you also begin to understand yourself. And self-knowledge makes you better at dealing with everyday situations.” [S8]

Feedback was one of the strategies used to develop emotional awareness. One of the students highlighted that he realized that he was using an “armor” to not show his emotions, after being warned by colleagues. For this student, the advice was essential to recognize his characteristic and use other strategies to deal with negative emotions.

"And I've already received feedback that this is kind of bad for me, because it's like I have a... a... an armor and it doesn't show, but I'm trying to improve that by talking more about how I feel, expressing myself better. ... I think... it's more like, load, it's like this, with... it's very tense." [S6]

In the students' reports, therapy was another strategy cited for developing self-knowledge. Two students had different experiences compared to the other interviewees. Both participated in extracurricular activities, one related to the gym and the other related to the job market, and when dealing with these situations they discovered that they were experiencing symptoms of mental disorders, such as depression and anxiety.

One of the students stated that the diagnosis provided by the professional helped him have a better understanding of his negative thoughts. Knowing the symptoms, the student learned how to deal with such thoughts when they arose and how to perceive moments of crisis when they were about to start.

"So, after I was diagnosed with this (depression), I realized, it's... how important therapy is... so I try my best to get rid of these thoughts that... bother me... I I had a lot of negative thoughts about myself, that I couldn't do it, that I wasn't capable, that I wasn't smart enough to do that... changing that thought was... paramount, you know?" [S4]

Another student stated that after no longer recognizing himself, he sought professional help and was diagnosed with

mental disorders related to anxiety. Much like S4, the diagnosis enabled S7 to understand the “triggers” that made him anxious, his limitations and how to deal with them.

"And that's when I went to therapy. ... I didn't feel like myself anymore. I didn't recognize myself anymore....it's because when you go to therapy, you kind of understand the trigger that makes you anxious.... when I went to the psychologist and she said: friend, you're not a machine! Calm down... Human. You need time to rest too... And it was there that I realized that I'm human, I'm not a machine. ... And that I need time to rest and to have fun too." [S7]

Therapy is seen by one of the students as an external view that would facilitate the understanding of their emotions, revealing that it would be “enlightening” to have an opinion without their own bias, since their strategy for learning more about themselves is to talk to themselves. “So we talk to ourselves... I really wanted to go to therapy, because external help is good. The external view is good. Because sometimes I think I'm in a certain way, but sometimes I'm not. Because I'm just paranoid. ... the external opinion would be enlightening." [S5]

Students seem to establish standards in relation to their behaviors and health and, when they notice unusual signs, they understand that they need to modify their strategies or seek external help. "I developed certain thermometers. So, my life is full of thermometers. I stick thermometers in people, I stick thermometers in myself... I have several ways that I... built over time to perceive things." [S5]. The thermometer defines the temperature that will guide not only relationships, but also establish parameters to define how to perceive or feel reality.

After establishing normality parameters, students seem to use them as a basis of comparison for their behaviors. One of the students stated: “I didn't feel like myself

anymore. I no longer recognized myself' [S7], and it was necessary to seek professional help to understand the feelings that caused such behaviors, which in this case was the diagnosis of anxiety disorder. Two students, S3 and S5 stated that when they experienced extreme emotions and became easily irritated, they self-reflected to understand what caused the dysfunction in their behaviors, which were different from the common behaviors in their "thermometer". For S5, the reflection process occurred after the action, and over time started to do a self-analysis of the situation and often thought "oops! This is weird. Let's go back".

The group dynamics and activities carried out in a trainee program at the institution's Junior Company were cited by some students as part of the self-knowledge process, as well as the group activities that involved turning in activities in short periods of time.

It was possible to perceive in S1 and S3's reports that a specific dynamic was responsible for moments of reflection. The dynamic consisted of sharing special experiences for the participants, enabling both internal reflection and one with the group in which it was carried out. According to Marques (2012), the ability to reflect is one of the skills developed in Junior Enterprise learning spaces. Student S1 mentions that the dynamics were responsible for helping him understand his emotions with teaching, a profession he wanted to pursue, but realized more clearly when "putting his ideas on paper". S3 described the dynamics in the same way and remembers the experience as a moment of exposure, understanding of self and others. Below is a report on S1's experience.

"...they also promoted activities for us to really get to know each other. So, like, during all the questions, during everything they were asking, I was kind of searching within myself, what I really liked to do, what made me happy, what gave me pleasure to do.

And then it was... honestly, it was there that I realized that the moments I liked most at (company name) were during the trainee, when I could teach. Those were the moments when I could talk to people and people would listen to me... Because deep down I kind of knew... but at that moment (company name) managed to... show me. Like, put it on paper." [S1]

The students' experience suggests that participating in extracurricular activities contributes to the development of Emotional Awareness. One of the students also indicated that the internship experience allowed him to get to know himself better, as he realized through his emotions that that type of activity was not what he was looking for professionally in the future, allowing clarity in choosing his career and understanding obstacles on the way to his professional journey.

"So it caused me a certain internal conflict. ... It was also a good experience of self-knowledge because I realized that it wasn't what I wanted. I didn't want to be sitting at a computer, without hearing a good morning, without hearing a good night, ..." [S1]. Another student realized that he broke the barrier of shyness in extracurricular activities and in classroom seminars. "So, that was very important, the extracurricular activities...it was extremely important for me to break... this barrier, this obstacle. Which was my shyness... And also, in addition, the activities inside the classroom." [S4]

Based on the findings, Figure 1, below, presents the contribution of the strategies to the development of Emotional Awareness.

Figure 1
Contributions of strategies in the development of Emotional Awareness

Strategy	Contributions of strategies in the development of Emotional Awareness
Readings on the Search for information about emotions topic of emotionsto deal with your problems and those of	

	others.
Feedback	Self-recognition and search for new strategies to deal with negative emotions.
Therapy	Helps in managing negative thoughts, understanding “triggers”, their limitations and capabilities; beyond Self-knowledge.
Behavioral and health “thermometers”	Recognition of behaviors or body signals that indicate a lack of behavioral control and health problems.
Dynamics and Activities	Understanding your own emotions and getting to know yourself in the process.
Extracurricular activities	Self-knowledge and development of skills through experiences.

Source: Authors (2023).

The results indicated in Figure 1 reveal that experience contributes to the performance and development of competences (Gondim, Morais & Abrantes, 2014). The strategies developed were also highlighted by Conley (2015) and revealed that the dimension of Emotional Awareness can be analyzed as the basis for the development of other dimensions (Bisquerra & Escoda, 2007; Bar-On, 2006), which for Saarni (2002) is crucial in the development of Emotional Self-Control, a dimension that emerged from the data analysis and which will be discussed in the next section.

Strategies of Emotional Self-Control

Emotional Self-Control is the ability to keep emotions under control when facing stressful situations, as well as adopting an attitude of respect when behaviors between people are different (Macêdo & Silva, 2020).

Both CASEL (2005) and Boyatzis (2009) add that impulse control and motivation to achieve your goals also help with emotional self-control. In this research, self-control strategies were also associated with coping (Carlotto, Teixeira & Dias, 2015),

centered on emotion and as it involves the individual's relationship with the environment, it can help in the management of stressful situations (Antoniuzzi, Dell'aglio & Bandeira, 1998; Enns et al., 2018).

From the analysis of the interviews, it was possible to identify that despite having strategies to develop Emotional Awareness, Emotional Self-Control was one of the dimensions that students said they had the most difficulty developing, as seen in the following reports:

"Man... I'll tell you honestly, I don't deal very well. I don't have much... much technique to deal with these things. In fact, that's kind of bad, because there are moments when... It hits and I don't know what to do." [S1]

"Last year, which was... when this... this issue of... having more [stuff] to do... to recover the calendar, right?... And then it wore me off. It was a period when...I was completely stressed... Everything was overwhelming me, because I no longer had... patience for anything..." [S3]

Students know the emotions they feel but have difficulty developing self-regulatory strategies to adapt to stressful situations (Saarni, 2002). However, despite the difficulties, they use strategies in stressful situations, also called coping (Carlotto, Teixeira & Dias, 2015). Strategies such as sleeping, shutting off, listening to rain noises, writing, dancing and singing appeared in the students' reports, which were already identified in studies by Redhwan et al. (2009) and Bland, Melton and Gonzalez (2010).

Faced with stressful situations or moments of tension, three students reported using humor. According to Booth-Butterfield, Booth-Butterfield and Wanzer (2007), humor is a coping strategy that helps people communicate and deal with stressful situations. These people would find it easy to initiate social relationships and understand their emotions, because when they perceive

tense situations they create an emotionally and socially positive environment to achieve their goals (Savage et al., 2017), as can be seen in these statements: “Yeah.. I usually use humor.” [S5] and “humor... I'm very sarcastic” [S6] and "...I feel bad, then I go and kind of unintentionally create a good environment, like, people laughing, having fun... .so I feel better too. " [S1]

In the report of one of the students, it is interesting to note that during the interview there were moments of reflection, because despite using humor, the interviewee did not perceive it as a strategy for emotional self-control. "Now that I stopped to reflect here, it's something I do, even though I'm really bad, really worried, or something along those lines, I try to take it lightly and make fun of stuff. It's always good to laugh at your own misfortune." [S1]

One of the strategies to externalize feelings used by university students to deal with moments of stress is crying, which is explained in the report as a moment to “wash the soul”. Sharman et al. (2019) emphasize that crying can promote relaxation through breathing, the unconscious regulation of your emotions and the support we receive after crying, as the following statements illustrate:

“So, I cry... sometimes I... will say it, sometimes it's a strategy to cry.it soothes, because it washes the soul, right?” [S1]

“And I was like that... Then I cried a lot, as the grade from... the waiting list only came out about 2 months later... So all this time I was tense.” [S3]

The use of the expression “it soothes, because it washes the soul” indicates that crying is like soap used to clean clothes. In this specific case, washing the soul is a process that reduces tension and makes the person calmer. Students also deal with stressful situations using sports, such as swimming, roller skating, running, kicking boxing, going to the gym and boxing, as a strategy for emotional self-

control. Students mention that it is an effective way of expressing negative emotions and generating well-being, which was confirmed in the study by Bland, Melton and Gonzalez (2010). Some statements from the students confirm this finding.

"Running, swimming... I'm in swimming now here at the University." [S2]

“...I really like roller skating. And..., exercising at the gym.” [S3]

“So, I really like it. Even though I'm exhausted, I get home from work exhausted, but I'll do something, go to the gym, go for a walk, something. I will do some physical activity, and it relaxes me a lot.” [S4]

“Another way that I discovered later was boxing.” [S5]

“So, in training I poured out, like, a lot. Because in kickboxing you throw a lot of punches and kicks a lot.” [S7]

Meditation appeared strongly in the speech of one of the students when he stated that meditation helps him both in the development of Emotional Awareness and Emotional Self-Control. Both meditation and relaxation strategies are recommended by Conley (2015) in socio-emotional learning programs. In the study carried out by Silva (2023), the ability to meditate during periods of anxiety and panic attacks was identified as one of the benefits of Mindfulness practices for well-being.

One of the students surveyed states that he has meditated since he was young but has practiced more frequently in recent years. Another student also reports an attempt at meditation by using breathing to calm himself in moments of tension, as the following reports reveal.

“I always try to meditate... it helps a lot and, to always think about the consequences of actions, the consequences of consequences. I stayed for a year at a Buddhist meditation center in Rio de Janeiro. And a year in a meditation center in São Paulo.” [S2]

“...sometimes I get restless, like, really restless and then I say: no... calm down, breathe, pause... so I can control it and I'll be ok.” [S7]

Although they do not call it mindfulness, two students claim to use the strategy of “being in the moment” [S6], which can be considered an attempt at mindfulness. Studies by Carpena and Menezes (2018) revealed that university programs related to the two strategies used by students were successful in reducing student stress. One of the interviewees reported the following: “I try a lot to separate it like this, that's because, one thing that... I learned from reading too, is... being in the moment. So, for example, if I have a problem at home and I'm in class, I won't be able to solve anything while being there” [S7]. The use of mindfulness as a strategy to strengthen the well-being and health of students was the basis of an emotional education program developed by Silva (2023) and implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic, whose first classes were aimed at undergraduate and postgraduate students.

In the students' reports, it is possible to see that they can deal better with stressful situations when they understand what caused their emotional state. S4 highlighted the importance of therapy, professional help and noticed an improvement in their self-control mechanisms after learning more about “triggers” and the emotions they caused. S7's report, presented below, illustrates that the identification of a trigger goes through a process of reflection on the action and, when evaluating the consequences of the action, she becomes calmer.

“And with that, understand your behavior, why you act and then kind of when you understand that... that little action made you anxious, like, you don't need such a huge reaction... what's that, like, what are the maximum consequences that this can bring me? And most of the time, the consequences

almost don't exist. ... Then I realize that it's just in my head, and I feel calmer.” [S7]

E7's experience suggests that she mobilizes her emotional creativity. Silva and Macêdo (2023) define emotional creativity as a socio-emotional competence that demands the ability to reflect on one's emotional experiences in an innovative way, through reflection on emotions and action on emotions, two dimensions that characterize a person's ability to be emotionally creative.

Support from colleagues and family is one of the strategies university students use to face stressful situations. Redhwan et al. (2009) state that most students reported that going out with friends and counseling were the best ways to deal with stress. One of the students stated that they depend on interpersonal relationships to feel better and calm down in moments of tension. These strategies are relevant, since results from a study with university students revealed that “the university lifestyle and the difficulties faced by students can lead to emotional exhaustion and be associated with stress” (Pereira et al., 2022).

“So, I still kind of depend on other people to tell me obvious things. Like, it's going to work out, calm down...Also because I'm...very emotionally unbalanced” [S1].

In the words of two students, the moments when they go out with friends provide a disconnection from stressful elements. For Bland, Melton and Gonzales (2010), friends are the sixth largest coping strategy used by university students. S6 highlights: “I like going out with people to have beer.” [E6]. Another student also reveals the same strategy: “I go out. I go out to a bar to talk... I disconnect a little.” [S8]

Although the family is considered a stressful element for some authors (Redhwan et al., 2009; Bland, Melton & Gonzalez, 2010), one of the students mentioned family members as people with whom they can talk and share what they are feeling.

“So, talking to other people, talking to my parents, also talking to my boyfriend, my sister, who are the closest people, right? Who are always with me. Or if it's an academic issue, that... that you can talk about... that your colleagues are also experiencing, share with people who are feeling that... who can understand that situation... It's quite, like, important.” [S3]

The search for social support in times of tension occurs because students recognize their family, colleagues and community as a source of support. Recognition of oneself in others is part of the definition of Social Consciousness (CASEL, 2005), which will be discussed in the next section.

Based on the research findings, Figure 2 presents the main contributions of the strategies for the development of emotional self-control. It is noted that the search for self-control occurred after experiencing a stressful situation.

Figure 2
Contributions of strategies in the development of Emotional Self-Control

Strategy	Contributions of strategies in the development of Emotional Self-Control
Humor	Creating a fun environment to alleviate negative feelings.
Crying	Search for relaxation through breathing and unconscious regulation of your emotions.
Practicing sports	Management of negative emotions in the search for well-being.
Meditating	Calming the mind by breathing.
Understanding the situation	Understanding the cause for your emotions to improve emotional self-control mechanisms.
Social support	It provides moments of relaxation and sharing of feelings.

Source: Authors (2023).

The strategies used by students indicated in figure 2 can be used during stressful situations, and can help them manage their emotions, thus avoiding behaviors that help them mobilize this competence when experiencing emotional experiences.

Strategies of Social Awareness

The last dimension identified in the interviewees' reports was Social Awareness. This dimension involves the ability to maintain good relationships with people, through cooperation in teamwork, acting with responsibility, empathy and collaboration to understand the other's difficulties and act respectfully (Macêdo & Silva, 2020; Conley, 2015).

Before starting any social relationship, two students said they observed the other to protect themselves and others. One of the students seeks to analyze the other's behaviors and opinions so as not to disrespect them in the first interaction. The use of the expression “to feel first” characterizes an analysis of the environment or the context of the situation before interacting with the other. Observation was indicated as a form of respect for others. The reports of S1 and SA5 are presented below.

“Like, damn, let's see what these people are like. I'm going to start slow. I'll observe, I'll feel first, then later, if that's the case, I'll create bonds...” [S1]

“But I like meeting new people. ... I'm the person who observes, I observe people a lot before talking to them. ... to understand how the person works, so as not to disrespect them, saying something they don't like out of the blue.” [S5]

Another strategy that helped in the development of social awareness was experienced in the dynamics carried out in the Junior Company trainee. A specific dynamic involved listening to others and developing

empathy, starting with the meaning of the word. The student who participated in this dynamic developed the ability to “put themselves in someone else’s shoes” by understanding the reality of others. He stated “what really impacted me... was knowing the word empathy. I didn't know the word empathy, so knowing... that you can put yourself in someone else's shoes. Really think... I still remember, to this day, the dynamics he created that we could only hear. ... So we were back to back, sitting back to back with one person, a couple, right? ... I kept thinking how important it is for us to know how to listen to people, you know? ... To understand... absorb what the person is saying, give importance to what the person is saying.” [S3]

In the reports of two students, it is clear that the ease in dealing with others in group work at the university came from previous experiences in the university environment. For both, during their school experience they learned how to deal with others and consider other people's time limitations.

“... from a very early age I learned to work in groups. Because since you were a child you must work in groups. ... Don't do to others what you wouldn't want them to do to you...” [S1].

“I try to put myself in other people’s shoes, especially when it comes to time. I think time is a very delicate thing” [S5].

The internship experience was also configured as a strategy that contributes to the development of students' social awareness, as they stated that during the internship they learned to deal with others, to “be tactful with other people” [S8], especially in terms of patience.

“... internship only had me and another intern who was young, the rest were, like, in their 30s or older. ... They already have greater difficulty with technology, they are not as agile. So, in the internship I learned a lot to be

patient with other people's time.” [S7]

“From the internship... hm... I think the main thing I learned was... hm... developing a skill is... knowing how to deal with people.” [S4]

Huerta Cuervo et al. (2022) concluded that social interaction activities, including in the virtual environment, as well as empathy, are decisive in the development of students' socio-emotional competences.

Figure 3

Contributions of strategies in the development of Social Awareness

Strategy	Contributions of strategies in the development of Social Awareness
Observation	It helps in the socialization process to understand others before meeting them.
Group dynamics	Development of empathy through understanding the reality of others.
Life experiences	Ability to deal with others, considering their time limitations; learning to be patient and work as a team.

Source: Authors.

Based on the strategies adopted by the students, summarized in Figure 3, it was possible to identify the contribution of the strategies to the development of students' social awareness, which are related to socialization and empathy. The university environment, as highlighted by Seal et al. (2010), is the ideal place to develop socio-emotional competences, especially those focused on the dimension of Social Awareness, such as empathy.

Conclusions

The study made it possible to identify strategies for developing some socio-emotional competences of students in the academic training environment. The research results reveal the importance of students' experience in the development of socio-emotional competences.

Strategies for developing emotional

awareness contribute to self-knowledge, and involve reading, therapy, feedback and development of reflective thinking. In emotional self-control, the strategies are linked to the ability to manage emotions through meditation, reflection, humor and using crying as a strategy to deal with stressful situations.

The results of the study revealed that the strategies developed by the students helped them deal with situations experienced in the academic environment and that their identification can help them manage emotions in the various social spaces of their lives (personal, academic and professional).

The strategies for developing students' socio-emotional competences reported in this research were presented in a structured way, but this specificity does not mean that emotional awareness, emotional self-control and social awareness are developed separately, since the socio-emotional competence construct is complex and multidimensional, but also demands going through experiences in specific contexts. This reveals that emotional awareness helps with emotional self-control and social awareness in a bidirectional way, that is, one skill favors the development of the other. The results also indicate that some strategies were identified in more than one socio-emotional competence, which confirms the contribution of this study to the development of socio-emotional competences.

The dimensions of Emotional Regulation and Emotional Creativity indicated by Macêdo and Silva (2020) were not identified in this research, but can be analyzed in future studies, aiming not only to deepen the identified strategies, but to reveal the contribution of other strategies to the development of socio-emotional competences.

The study also has limitations, since final-year students of a Business Administration course at a public university were investigated, who experience emotional

experiences in a unique way. In this way, the results characterize the experience of some students in a specific context. Carrying out studies with students who are in other phases of the course, as well as in other institutions, can help verify whether the strategies identified in this study are also adopted by other students in other contexts and academic training environments.

It is concluded that the university environment is a social space that collaborates for the development of students' socio-emotional competences, which can enhance the training of professionals who are more aware of the importance of managing emotions to deal with the disruptions and crises experienced in the professional environment, as well as help with career management and self-knowledge.

The main theoretical implications of this study involve the identification of the strategies adopted by students in the development of socio-emotional competences, which can support future research on the topic. Regarding practical implications, the study indicates that the process of developing socio-emotional competences demands going through emotional experiences in the context of the action where the student learns, and this indicates the need to disseminate more experiential teaching and learning strategies. From a social point of view, the main implication of the study involves the need for teachers and academic managers to promote strategies and actions to promote the development of socio-emotional competences in the pedagogical projects of the courses, as well as plan teacher training actions involving the theme, using the strategies identified in this study as examples of actions to develop students' socio-emotional competences.

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