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Review

Impact of Emotional Education Programs in the Development of Emotional Competence in Secondary Students: A Scoping Review*

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Abstract: Emotional competencies are a set of strategies to identify, comprehend, express and regulate emotions. They are particularly relevant in the educational context. In spite of their important, low emotional competencies have been reported in secondary students. This scoping review aims to synthesize the impact of emotional education programs on secondary students. The PRISMA Scoping method was used by using the Web Of Science, Scopus and Scielo databases. 23 studies were identified, out of which five articles were selected as they met the determined inclusion criteria. The main findings reveal significant improvement of emotional and social skills following school interventions. Specifically, progress was observed in areas such as emotional awareness, emotional regulation, interpersonal skills and emotional knowledge. The results highlight the efficacy of social-emotional learning programs in fostering social-emotional skills and psychosocial health of secondary education students. However, limitations, such as heterogeneity, were identified in the study of such research in Ibero-American countries.

Keywords: emotional education; secondary education; scoping review

1. Introduction

Emotional competencies are the capability of using knowledge, skills and attitudes to recognize and manage emotions, establish relations with others and solving conflicts effectively [1–3] The usefulness of emotional competencies lies in its link with better interpersonal relations [4], increase in personal well-being and academic success [4,5]. Likewise, research has shown that emotional competencies are linked with resilience, i.e., the capacity to recover and positively adapt to adverse situations, such as handling stress [4,5].

Bisquerra *et al*. [6,7] propose a competencies model that defines emotional competencies as a set of knowledge, capacities, skills, attitudes, values and behaviors that are necessary to adequately become aware of, understand, express and regulate emotional phenomena. Based on this framework, the authors present a structured model with five blocks of competencies: (1) emotional awareness, (2) emotional regulation, (3) autonomy, (4) social-emotional capacities and (5) capacities well-being. *Emotional awareness* (1) refers to the identification and recognition of one's own and others' emotions. *Emotional regulation* (2) includes strategies to manage stress, control impulses and manage conflict. Autonomy (3) refers to the ability to make decisions responsibly based on emotional self-knowledge. *Social-emotional capacities* (4) include social skills such as empathy, effective communication and cooperation. Lastly, (5) *capacities for well-being* promote self-care and self-acceptance.Theories on emotions, ranging from psychological, neurophysiological, social-cultural and evolutionary approaches, have provided emotional education with vast knowledge on what emotions are. This

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knowledge ranges from their manifestations and neurophysiological causality, ontogenetic and phylogenetic prevalence, up to how they are experienced, expressed and interpreted in social-cultural and cognitive contexts. In this regards, neurosciences and affective cognition, as well as the study of the emotional brain, are the foundations of emotional education [8–12].

The importance of education on emotional competencies does not only lie in their benefits, but also in the fact that it can be a way to solve important issues that affect schools and students, especially in secondary education. Mental health issues [13–16], school violence, bullying and other challenges of school coexistence [17], in addition to drug use [18] and school desertion, are highly prevalent concerns found both globally and in the Chilean educational context [19,20]. A lack of emotional competencies might exacerbate such issues, contributing to high levels of stress, anxiety and depression among students. In this context, emotional competencies are considered a key strategy to recognize and handle emotions, establish positive relations and constructively solve issues [21]. This is particularly relevant in the educational context in order to foster resilience, a safe school environment and to prevent aggressive behavior and mental health issues. Nevertheless, in spite of the relevance of emotional competencies when facing current educational challenges, international organizations state that there is a low level of educational competence [22,23]. Likewise, there are very few studies that look into emotional competencies in students and the efficacy of interventions aiming to improve them.

Teaching social and emotional skills at school is as fundamental as the development of academic cognitive skills [24]. Consequently, educational institutions should contribute to personal and social training of students. In order to address this issue, intervention programs for emotional education have been reported in the literature with effective results. In their systematic review, van de Sande et al. [25] reported that social-emotional learning (SEL) programs have become common in addressing the high incidence of social, emotional and behavioral issues among children, adolescents and young adults in today's society [26]. Similarly, they are being used to strengthen protection factors to improve students' well-being and academic performance. It is worth noting that previews reviews, such as that of van de Sande et al. [25] and Fernández-Martín et al. [27], were centered on studies on social-emotional learning programs, neglecting other programs that could contribute to the development of emotional competencies or be adapted to the specific context of any country.

SEL programs are described as the ability to coordinate thought, affect and behavior in order for people to be able to thrive in different cultures, contexts and be able to complete tasks and positive development results [28]. Additionally, it refers to the process by which individuals effectively acquire and apply knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, set and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and keep positive interpersonal and support relations, constructively manage interpersonal situations and make responsibly affective decisions [28–32].

These programs have been seen to have positive effects in the development of social-emotional competencies and in the psychosocial health of students. Similarly, interventions focused on self-management and relationship skills have seen greater benefits for self-awareness and social awareness [27]. In light of such positive results from SEL programs, there is a growing educational, social and political interest in the promotion of emotional education and intelligence in schools. In spite of the growing evidence on its effectiveness and the increased interest by educational communities in applying this type of interventions, there are certain limitations and heterogeneity to be found in educational research in Ibero-American countries. While there are original and/or primary studies researching the benefits of emotional education programs, there currently is not a synthesis of that information. This would allow for a consolidation of existing results, identification of gaps in research and provide a solid foundation for future interventions and educational policies in the region. Thus, the aim of this scoping review is to evaluate the impact of Emotional Education programs in the development of emotional competencies among secondary students.

In order to contribute to existing gaps in literature, this scoping review is a proposal aiming to address limitations of preview systematic reviews, by not only including SEL based interventions, but also other emotional education programs. Additionally, considerable efforts were made to focus

on factors such as gender and social-economical differences. These variables are essential for the understanding of the impact of such programs in different educational purposes.

2. Materials and Methods

The PRISMA-ScR guidelines for scoping reviews were used as set out in the methodological framework of Arksey & O'Malley [33]. An exhaustive search was carried out from September to November 2023 in order to collect all available evidence, in line with the previously determined eligibility criteria [34]. The restricted search was carried out for the 2018-2023 period in the WOS, Scopus and Scielo databases. The descriptor chain took place in English ("Emotional Competence" OR "Emotional Learning Programs" AND "secondary school") and in Spanish ("Competencia emocional*" AND "Programas de Educación Emocional" AND "Educación media" OR "Educación Secundaria").

other educational stages were excluded. (5) Subject of the study. Only studies that used emotional education programs were included. (6) In order to adequately address our research questions, experimental studies that do not specify their sample, resources and/or play elements were excluded.

After selection, titles and abstracts were reviewed before the full texts. Finally, studies that met the inclusion criteria and that had relevant empirical research were included.   The Rayyan tool [35] was used to identify duplicate documents based on their DOI and bibliographical reference of the source. Articles whose title, keywords, abstract and content were not directly related to our research questions or that did not meet all previously mentioned inclusion criteria were excluded. Ultimately, six scientific articles were selected for systematic review (see Figure 1).
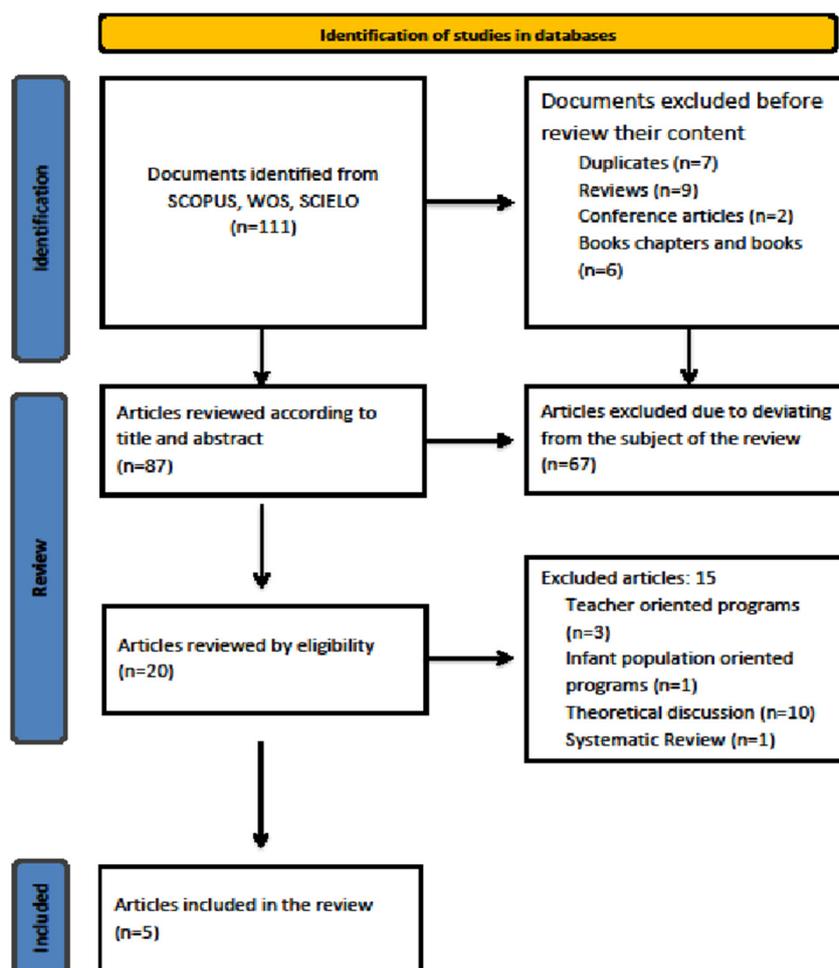

Figure 1. Flow diagram of search and selection of analyzed sources from the WOS, Scopus and Scielo databases.

Tables were used to structure information clearly. The first table provides a general overview of all selected studies, including the authors, year of publication, country of origin, sample of the study, methodological approach and design of the study. The second table provides detailed information of the authors, aim of the study, analyzed variables, instruments and results.

3. Results

The general search and selection process for articles is graphically illustrated in Figure 1, through the PRISMA flow diagram [36].

The selected studies' countries of origin were Portugal (one), Spain (two), Austria (one) and England (one). The studies were published between the years 2018 and 2024. One of them was published in 2018, two in 2021, one in 2023 and one in 2024.   Four of the studies were published in English and one in Portuguese. Out of all 20 studies that were initially reviewed, five articles were ultimately selected.

In the sample, a total of 1534 participants were analyzed. The sample sizes varied between 30 and 995 participants. All studies included samples with males and females. The age of participants ranged from 10.34 years to 16.75 years, with SDs ranging from 0.47 to 1.70. This reflects variations in the homogeneity of the ages in each study.

As for the sampling techniques used, all five studies used non-probability sampling due to accessibility and convenience. Regarding group configuration, all five studies used non-randomized grouping.

Four studies used quantitative approaches and one used a mixed approach [37]. All studies used a quasi-experimental design, used to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions in educational contexts where randomization is not possible,

Based on the evaluation instruments, the studies mainly used standardized scales and included a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design in order to measure the impact of interventions focused on the emotional competencies of students. Additionally, it is worth noting that in the study by Mahmud, group interviews were held. These focus groups were held after follow-up data collection in order to evaluate the effectiveness and application of the program, as well as to look into the perspectives of students on their experience. Likewise, quantitative measures were taken in order to explain the results.

In terms of the context of the studies, most of the interventions were carried out in public schools in urban contexts. However, the study from Austria [38] analyzed SEL programs implemented both in rural and urban environments and compared the results. This allows understanding how students in rural environments must move to urban environments in order to pursue their educational careers. In this case, the emotional competencies programs must be adapted to the context of the students.

The analysis highlights the importance of taking sample size, participant age and methodology into consideration for the evaluation of the effectiveness of emotional education programs. In Table 1, details on design and included samples are included for studies that meet the inclusion criteria.

Table 1. Design and included sample in emotional education programs.

Authors and year	Country	Age of students (M, SD)	Sample Size	Focus	Design	Evaluation of the Intervention
Pollak, 2023	Austria	10.34 years old (.76)	281 (141 females)	Quantitative	Quasi-experimental	Pre- and post-test
Cabello & Muñoz, 2023	Spain	13.74 years old (.54)	30 (16 females)	Quantitative	Quasi-experimental	Pre- and post-test

Coelho et al., 2021	Portugal	12.95 years old (1.70)	995 (474 females)	Quantitative	Quasi-experimental	Pre- and post-test
Pozo-Rico et al., 2018	Spain	16.75 years old (1.26)	158 (93 females)	Quantitative	Quasi-experimental	Pre- and post-test
Mahmud, 2021	England	11.3 years old (.47)	70 (32 females)	Mixed	Quasi-experimental	Pre- and post-test and follow-up, as well as semi-structured interviews
			Total = 1534			

Note. Prepared by the authors.

The information on Table 2 shows the distribution of the studies according to their aims, variables and evaluation instruments used to measure the results associated to the emotional education programs.

3.1. Aims of the Studies

In the aims of the analyzed studies, many different elements converge for the evaluation of the impact of emotional education programs on emotional competencies. Firstly, it is worth mentioning that there is a trend towards the development of emotional competencies, wherein the improvement and evaluation of the competencies is a central shared goal. The reviewed studies match in terms of their goals, such as *emotional awareness, regulation and autonomy, empathy and connectedness with others*.

Additionally, there is agreement in the goals regarding the emotional well-being of students. This focus is reflected in the evaluation of key variables, such as happiness, connectedness with classmates and classroom environment. For instance, Coelho et al. [39] focus in the specific dimensions *emotional competencies* and *self-concept*. Regarding this variable, the studies match in that they measure and improve self-concept and self-esteem. This is reflected in the fact that they are considered essential variables for the promotion of emotional health and social adjustment of adolescents, which in turn evidences a shared interest in strengthening these fundamental aspects.

However, there are also significant differences in their aims in the specific focus of skills to develop. While some studies, such as Pollak et al. [38], focus on specific skills such as happiness and connectedness, other studies, such as Pozo-Rico et al. [40], have a broader focus and include perception and management of emotions. Other differences were found on the application context, as the contexts of the studies vary considerable, ranging from specific programs of a single school, such as in Mahmud's study [37], to broader and more general studies evaluating multiple schools, such as Coelho et al. [39].   Conversely, the analysis of the methodologies shows that in spite of the fact that all studies aim to evaluate the efficacy of the programs, they differ in the instruments and methods they use. For instance, Cabello-Sanz & Muñoz-Parreño [41] used the Emotional Development Questionnaire for Adolescents (CDE-SEC for its Spanish initials). However, there are other studies that, in addition to questionnaires, use individual interviews to evaluate the impact on the development of emotional competencies. Mixed studies are more complete, such as Mahmud et al.   [37].

Table 2. Measures and Results of Emotional education programs.

Authors and year	Number of sessions	Objective	Variables	Instruments	Results
Pollak et al., 2023	8	Evaluating the social-emotional learning program "You, Me and The Little Monsters" on the skills *connectedness with classmates* and *happiness*.	Happiness. Connectedness. Social-emotional Skills. Classroom climate of students and teachers.	1) EPOCH Adolescent Well-Being Measurement [42]. - EPOCH Sub-scale "connectedness with peers" . - Sub-scale Verification of the List of self-report for social and learning behavior [43]. 2) Perceived Classroom Responsibility Climate Questionnaire [44]. - Sub-scales for students and teachers.	The experimental group showed a statistically significant increase in social-emotional skills, connectedness with peers and happiness. A decrease in classroom school climate was seen in the experimental group, apparently caused by factors external to the intervention.
Cabello & Muñoz, 2023	10	Providing teachers with a practical and flexible resource that allows them to properly guide the comprehensive development of students wherein cognitive and emotional perspectives are key to human	Emotional Awareness. Emotional Regulation. Emotional Autonomy. Social Competence. Competence for life and well-being.	1) Emotional Development Questionnaire for Secondary School Students (CDE-SEC)[45].	The experimental group shows statistically significant improvements in emotional awareness, emotional regulation and in total emotional competence.

		well-being to the ".			
Coelho et al., 2021	9	Re-evaluating the effectiveness of the PASS SEL program in self-perceptions of secondary students. Evaluating the effectiveness of the PASS SEL program on secondary students.	Self-concept (three dimensions: social, academic and emotional). Self-esteem.	1) Self-concept Form 5 (AF-5) [46,47]. 2) Self-concept Scale Form 5 (AF-5) [46,47] 3) Self-Description Questionnaire-II [48].	The experimental group showed improvements in social self-concept and self-esteem. Gender differences in the initial levels of each self-perception. Males showed higher levels of social and emotional self-concept, as well as self-esteem. Females, on the other hand, showed higher levels of academic self-concept.
Pozo-Rico, 2018	12	Analyzing the effectiveness of the Training Course on Emotional Intelligence (TCEI) program in order to develop emotional intelligence in secondary education.	Emotion perception. Use of emotions to solve problems. Management of relevant emotions.	1) Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) and the skills model (STEM/STEU), used to evaluate emotional competencies in academic and personal life. 2) Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) [49].	The experimental group showed a statistically significant increase in emotional perception, emotion use and results in STEU and STEM when compared to the control group.

				3) Situational Test of Emotional Understanding (STEU) and Situational Test of Emotion Management (STEM) [50].	
Mahmud, 2021	6	Analyzing the effectiveness of a social-emotional learning program specific for a context in the improvement of skills, capabilities and academic performance, as well as social-emotional skills of students transitioning from primary to secondary education.	Self-awareness. Empathy.	1) Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Child Form (TEIQue-CF)[51]. 2) Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) [52].	The experimental group showed a statistically significant improvement in empathy. The findings of the focus groups highlight the ways in which the intervention helped students to address negative emotions and to deal with and handle difficult issues, as well as positive and negative strategies for future interventions.

Note. Prepared by the authors.

Another difference is the degree of specificity of the studies, as some have very specific, limited objectives, such as evaluating the students' connectedness with their classmates and their happiness [38]. Others, such as Cabello-Sanz & Muñoz-Parreño [41], have broader and more general objectives, such as providing teachers with resources for comprehensive development.

Despite all differences, it is worth noting that all studies highlight the importance of emotional competencies within the educational context, based on their school's reality and taking into consideration the age of students. These factors are essential for the implementation and

development of emotional competencies. This review focused on secondary students, as they are the ones experiencing social and emotional changes that require the development of skills leading to academic success and that promote emotional competencies. For instance, Cabello-Sanz & Muñoz-Parreño [41] aim for comprehensive development that includes both cognitive and emotional aspects.

3.2. Variables Included in the Assessment

All of the studies focus on the evaluation of the effects of emotional education programs, which is evidence of their effectiveness. In general terms, the programs evaluated in the reviewed studies reflect that emotional skills were improved in students and that it was possible to foster their connectedness with others, thereby promoting well-being.

Pollak et al. [38] and Cabello-Sanz & Muñoz-Parreño [41] studies evaluated social-emotional skills in general terms. Examples of this are empathy, emotional regulation and social competence, which are fundamental for the comprehensive development of students. Empathy is evaluated in certain studies through the use of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index. This instrument defines empathy as one of the reactions of an individual when facing experiences observed in others and includes 4 sub-scales (*perspective taking, fantasy, empathic preoccupation and personal discomfort*). For Mahmud [37], self-awareness and empathy are fundamental aspects for social-emotional development and while in their study they are specific measures, they are implicitly included in social-emotional skills in other studies.

Other authors focus on emotional regulation and emotional awareness, which are essential for the adequate management of emotions and improvement of emotional well-being [40,41]. The way in which these variables were evaluated included the use of specific scales or the measurement of more general social-emotional skills.

While there is agreement in the variables that were studied in the programs, there are also differences in terms of the specificity in the use and management of emotions. This is reflected in the detailed evaluation of how students manage their emotions in different situations [40]. The analysis of classroom climate through the assessment of the way in which classroom dynamics are affected by the SEL program adds an important context dimension that is not addressed by other studies [38].

For Coelho et al. [39], self-concept and self-esteem provide a view into how students perceive themselves and their trust in different areas. The study highlights gender differences in initial levels for each self-perception. According to the results, males showed higher levels of social and emotional self-concept and self-esteem, while females showed higher levels of academic self-concept. This approach allows for a better understanding of gender dynamics in the training of self-concept and self-esteem. Likewise, it allows for such differences to be taken into consideration in the design and implementation of educational programs that aim to promote the emotional and academic well-being of students.

This diversity of measured variables provides a deep and more complex view of how emotional education programs can influence different aspects of child development, ranging from happiness and connectedness, to self-evaluation and school adaptation.

3.3. Evaluation Instruments

The studies used different evaluation instruments, but share common aspects when addressing *emotional competencies, self-concept, emotional intelligence and school adaptation.* They differ in the specific dimensions that each study prioritizes and the tools used to measure them. This diversity in the evaluation of emotional education programs reflects the need of adapting instruments to the specific goals of each research.

Pollak et al. [38] study uses the EPOCH adolescent well-being measurement for the evaluation of connectedness with peers and happiness, focusing on specific aspects of adolescent well-being. Cabello-Sanz & Muñoz-Parreño [41] use the Emotional Development Questionnaire for Adolescents (CDE-SEC) for the evaluation of emotional competencies in areas such as emotional awareness, regulation and autonomy. Coelho et al. [39] uses the Self-concept Scale Form 5 (AF-5) for the evaluation of self-concept in social, academic and emotional dimensions, focusing on specific aspects

of self-concept. Pozo-Rico et al. [40] evaluate emotional intelligence in the academic and personal life through the use of the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) and the skills model (STEM/STEU), focusing in variables related to emotion perception and its usefulness for problem solving. Mahmud [37] uses the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Child Form (TEIQue-CF) to evaluate self-awareness and empathy.

3.4. Effects of the Interventions

In terms of the effects of the reviewed studies, significant impacts on social-emotional development have been observed. Emotional education programs show positive effects on connectedness with classmates, happiness, emotional awareness and emotional regulation. There is evidence of important improvements on emotional competencies such as *self-concept and self-esteem*, which contribute to a more positive perception of oneself. Regarding emotional intelligence, programs have a positive influence on dimensions such as *self-awareness, empathy and emotional management*, which suggests that there is a comprehensive impact on the emotional health of participants. Additionally, an improvement in school adaptation can be seen, in terms of peer relationships and learning skills, which reflects that the programs address strategies that are beneficial to emotional aspects and academic environments.

3.5. Methodological Limitations

The studies show some significant methodological deficiencies. Firstly, the lack of randomization in studies limits equivalence between control and experimental groups, which might bias results and reduce the internal validity of the studies. More specifically, Cabello-Sanz & Muñoz-Parreño [41] study shows statistically significant differences in pre-test measurements between the experimental and control groups. Likewise, only two of the studies use follow-up measurements after post-test measurements [37,38]. This prevents the evaluation of long-term sustainability of the observed effects.

These limitations raise the need of implementing a rigorous design in future research in order to reach more robust and generalizable conclusions on the effectiveness of emotional education programs.

4. Discussion

The aim of this scoping review was to evaluate the impact of emotional education programs implemented in secondary education institutions by analyzing five relevant studies that contribute to and help in the comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

One of the main results is evidence of significant improvements in the development of emotional and social competencies by means of the introduction of educational intervention programs applied in educational institutions. Specifically, improvements were observed in the emotional competencies emotional awareness, emotional regulation, interpersonal skills and emotional recognition, as described by Bisquerra Alzina et al. [1], in the program implemented by Cabello-Sanz & Muñoz-Parreño [41] through the use of the Emotional Development Questionnaire for Adolescents. These findings suggest that emotional education programs, when implemented effectively, can have a positive impact on the social-emotional development of students. The results are in line with previous studies, such as Cipriano et al. [53], Bisquerra Alzina & Pérez Escoda [6], which reported significant improvement in terms of emotional competencies. These studies line out that the introduction of emotional competencies programs are focused on skills, attitudes, behavior, school climate and safety, school performance and significantly better academic achievement by students.

A noteworthy aspect is the variability in the effects of interventions in terms of gender differences and initial competence levels of students. Two interventions reflect how males and females can experience and benefit from interventions [38,39]. This raises a need to personalize programs to address such differences effectively. Additionally, the review highlights the importance of the development of empathy and trust in the school environment. One study in particular,

Mahmud [37], showed an initial reduction in self-reported empathy scores after the intervention, which can be interpreted as a greater awareness and understanding of what empathy is, instead of an actual decrease in this skill. This finding underscores the complexity of measuring changes in competencies such as empathy. Likewise, it stresses the importance of using rigorous and reflective evaluation methods. The results also show that the effectiveness of emotional education programs is influenced by the specific educational context and the adaptation of the programs to the particular needs of students and of the educational institution. This reflects the importance of planning in SEL program implementation, so that they are inclusive and effective for all students.

The results of this review provide convincing evidence of the importance of emotional education programs for the development of social-emotional competencies in secondary students. However, it is important to take into account that in the design and implementation of such programs, there are individual characteristics of students and the educational environment that must be taken into consideration. Doing so can have a significant impact on the program's success and the students' well-being. Likewise, there is a need to overcome the methodological limitations identified in the studies focused on their evaluation. This could help in learning about the long-term results of emotional education programs and to precisely describe the effects and differences of control groups and experimental groups when they are randomized and groups are matched.

Similarly, it is important to implement emotional education programs that lead to the development of emotional competencies in Latin American countries, like Chile. This is relevant insofar as the emotional well-being and mental health of adolescents has experienced a sharp decline in recent years [54] . Likewise, low levels of emotional competencies have been reported [55]. This is also the situation of countries like Japan, where the amount of children diagnosed with mood, behavioral and psychotic disorders has increased significantly in recent years [56]. In this vein, emotional issues like depression and anxiety are the main challenges related to mental health.

4.1. Practical Implications

The evidence arising out of this scoping review reflects the need of integrating emotional education programs in secondary education curricula. Baeza & Barría [57] thesis dissertation focused in the evaluation of the Orientation and Philosophy course programs in how they address emotional competencies according to the Bisquerra's [58–60] emotional competence model. One of the conclusions of their work was that emotional competencies were not developed explicitly or systematically in the programs. Through the development of clearly defined evaluation guidelines, the authors reviewed different specific aspects of each program of the courses in second and third grade of secondary education. In the case of the Orientation course, they concluded that the course focus is on personal development, specifically in the prevention of risk behavior, while the focus of Philosophy was in the development of higher thought and metacognitive processes through the application of contents to day to day life. However, neither of the courses directly addressed emotional competencies. According to Bisquerra's model, the emotional communication criterion is the least developed in the Orientation and Philosophy courses. This is one of the most important dimensions in the field of emotional education and for its teaching in educational institutions, as it encompasses identification, recognition, expression and emotional regulation. The latter is paramount in the development of human beings, particularly in the studied age range. In the same line, Prieto Rojas & González Arias [61] studied a different population (first to sixth grade primary students). They evaluated the impact of a program in the development of emotional competencies. This research reflects that Chilean school curricula generally lack explicit learning objectives that highlight the importance of emotional education in the education of students. In spite of the existence of certain contents associated with emotional development in the course of Orientation, these contents are very few and are not properly fleshed out in day to day educational practices.

Such gaps in the curricula raise the need for the educational system to work in the promotion of an emotion-centered educational focus in schools. Ideally, educational institutions should foster academic performance as well as develop emotional competencies. This allows social-emotional development in students. Thus, they acquire skills that help them to be better prepared to face the

uncertainties of life. By implementing these programs, students are provided with essential tools that allow them to address emotional and social challenges, especially in the post-pandemic context.

4.2. Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this scoping review is its dependence on self-reported measurements. Most of the studies are based on self-reported measurements by students in order to evaluate their emotional and social competencies. While these measurements are valuable, they are also subject to biases, such as social desirability or lack of awareness of one's own emotional states. Additionally, some studies show limited samples or were carried out in specific contexts, which restricts the generalization of their findings to a broader population.

An additional relevant limitation is the lack of longitudinal studies, as most of the reviewed studies were cross-sectional in nature and did not evaluate the effects on the long term. As a result, while there were improvements in terms of social and emotional competencies after the interventions, it is not possible to establish whether these effects persist over time. Lastly, the review has deficiencies insofar as the sample size, as only five studies were included. This limited number might restrict the generalization of the findings and does not provide a complete representation of the impact of emotional education programs on diverse populations and contexts.

The main strong points of this scoping review were its methodology, as very clear methodological guidelines were used based on PRISMA-ScR. This lends the review a high degree of reliability and replicability of findings. On the other hand, the variability of the analyzed Emotional Education Programs, as opposed to other reviews, was not limited to specific programs, such as SEL programs. Conversely, our review considered a higher variety of emotional education programs, which gave way to a broader evaluation of their impact on different contexts and populations. Additionally, different factors were analyzed, such as gender differences and social-economic conditions, enriching the discussion on the issue of emotional education programs.

5. Conclusions

Emotional education programs on secondary students are effective in improving emotional and social competencies, such as emotional awareness and regulation, interpersonal skills, self-concept and empathy. These improvements are relevant for the comprehensive development of students and are beneficial not only for their academic performance, but also for their general well-being and their developing skills for life.

Our review evidences that emotional education programs adopt a variety of focuses. Some programs focus in the development of specific skills, such as self-awareness, regulation and empathy, while others focus on social-emotional aspects of academic learning. With regard to methodology, we identified the frequent use of interactive activities, group discussions, role playing and reflection exercises. Some programs also include digital technologies that facilitate emotional learning, such as applications and online platforms. Didactic strategies range from structured lessons to more flexible activities based on inquiry.

It is worth noting that personalization and adaptation of the programs to the needs of individuals and students' specific context is essential. Gender differences, students' initial level of skills, educational and family context determine how students respond to interventions. This suggests that the design of a program must be thorough, rigorous and inclusive.

Lastly, it is important to note that this review is intended to emphasize the need of integrating emotional competencies in the educational field. As stated by Bisquerra Alzina & Pérez Escoda [6], students assimilate academic knowledge better when they feel motivated, they manage their impulses, show initiative and assume responsibility, i. e., when they have emotional competencies.

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