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Abstract

Scientific literature highlights the benefits of promoting the socio-emotional competencies (SEC) of university students in the socio-educational and health fields. These competencies can improve both the personal well-being of the professionals, as well as their job success in providing effective service to end users. We have planned a scoping review that aims to identify the main characteristics and results of the strategies that have been used to date to assess and promote university students' SEC in these fields. We will search for studies on SEC measures, interventions and correlates in four bibliographic databases and grey literature sources. This scoping review can yield valuable insights for the design, implementation, and evaluation of new strategies to promote SEC in university education.

Keywords: Scoping review, socio-emotional competencies, university education, university health and care studies, university socio-educational work studies

1. Introduction

Scientific literature recognizes and highlights the necessity of socio-emotional competencies (SEC) for professionals in the health and socio-educational fields as well as the benefits that they confer (Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), 2020; Azim Majumder et al., 2020). Professionals in these fields (physicians, nurses, social educators, social workers, etc.) perform a delicate job that requires motivation, vocation and emotional involvement (Jackson-Koku & Grime, 2019; Morrison, 2007; Rosa et al., 2015), and experience work situations characterized by complexity, vulnerability and conflict (Rosa et al., 2015).

Training university students in these professional fields in a holistic way implies providing them with not only technical skills, but also SEC for personal well-being and job success (Mintle et al., 2019; Price et al., 2020). Promoting the adoption and implementation of SEC in university education can generate benefits in two main ways: a) by augmenting effective attention to patient needs and care, improving their satisfaction and the general quality of the health and socio-educational system, as well as b) by improving the personal well-being of the professional which could be eroded due to their daily work. Regarding professional benefits, their application can lead to greater effectiveness in verbal and non-verbal communications (Carvalho et al., 2018; Holston & Taylor, 2016), increased capacity for conflict management (Cleary et al., 2018), and facilitation of the building of therapeutic relationships (Augusto-Landa & Montes-Berges, 2009), as well as better teamwork skills and the development of more effective interactions between professionals, better decision-making and development of critical thinking (Barkhordari & Rostambeygi, 2013). With respect to personal benefits, some studies have reported better stress management (Carvalho et al., 2018) improvement of mental health (Chiodelli et al., 2018) and improvement of emotional

awareness (Patterson & Begley, 2011). By contrast, an inadequate self-knowledge and poor emotional management of work-care situations can lead to personal discomfort that affects the empathetic component of professional practice (Thomas et al., 2007).

The relevance of the adoption and implementation of SEC seems to be independent of the theoretical framework from which they are approached (Pérez-González, 2008). There are authors who approach the study of SEC by referring to a meta-construct such as emotional intelligence (EI), and others who focus on either general emotional abilities (e.g. emotional understanding) or, conversely, more specific aspects (e.g. recognition and labeling of facial emotional expressions) (Keefer, 2015). There are also researchers who prefer to use socio-emotional learning as a framework (CASEL, 2020), or focus on SEC and emotional education (Bisquerra & Pérez, 2007).

Taking as a reference the EI construct, there are several classic theoretical models that have approached the topic, such as the ability model (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), the mixed model (Bar-on, 2006; Goleman, 1995) and the trait model (Petrides & Furham, 2001). To these models is added the tripartite model (Mikolajczak, 2010) that is presented as a unifying theoretical alternative to the traditional debate that revolves around whether EI is a trait or an ability. The conceptual divergence of the EI construct has entailed the proliferation of measurement instruments (Fernández Berrocal et al., 2017) and has made it difficult to integrate research findings in this area or to select suitable measurement tools for specific applications (Keefer, 2015). On the other hand, focusing on the construct of social and emotional learning, there is the CASEL (2020) framework, which addresses the promotion of five social and emotional competencies through specific programs and practices. However, more evidence is still needed on its evaluation methods, which are quite restricted (Eklund et al., 2018) as well as on the quality and standardization of their implementation (Durlak, 2016; Mckown, 2017). In

the midst of the plurality of conceptualizations of SEC, there is a point in common: the existence of a set of emotional competencies, of great vital value, that can be developed and learned (Pérez & Filella, 2019). In an attempt at synthesis, after reviewing the main theoretical proposals, Bisquerra & Pérez (2007) defined emotional competencies as a set of knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes necessary to understand, express and adequately regulate emotional phenomena and emotional education. This model grouped SEC into five blocks: emotional awareness, emotional regulation, personal autonomy, social competence, and competencies for life and well-being. In addition, Bisquerra (2003) established emotional education as the axis to promote the development of these competencies as a fundamental part of the overall personal growth.

Because of its relevance, to date, various authors have systematically reviewed evidence about emotional skills and emotional intelligence in the medical setting (Arora et al., 2010; Cherry et al., 2014; Dugué et al., 2021; Michelangelo, 2015; Satterfield & Hughes, 2007). Likewise, other reviews have focused on the assessment or promotion of a specific component of SEC, such as empathy (Yu & Kirk, 2009) or interpersonal communication (Kim & White, 2018). Still further reviewers have linked emotional intelligence with other variables such as stress, coping strategies and academic performance (Enns et al., 2018; Singh et al., 2020).

Despite efforts to advance the assessment and promotion of SEC, we have realized that all the above-mentioned reviews belong to the health field and, as far as we know, there are no reviews on SEC in the socio-educational field. In this context, we consider it appropriate to carry out a scoping review to examine, map, analyze and synthesize the existing empirical evidence on the strategies that have been proposed to assess and promote university students' SEC in socio-educational and health fields. The

two specific objectives of our scoping review are: a) to identify the strategies that have been used to assess SEC and their quality, their theoretical framework and components that they evaluate; and b) to identify the strategies that have been used to promote SEC and what components have been addressed, their theoretical framework, their intervention and evaluation procedures, and the results obtained.

2. Methods

To maximize the reporting quality of this protocol and the scoping review, we will follow the “PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews” (PRISMA-ScR) recommendations (Tricco et al., 2018). A synthetic protocol of our scoping review was registered in INPLASY (number 202120076; doi: 10.37766 / inplasy2021.2.0076).

2.1. Search Strategy

The search for the primary studies in our scoping review will be performed using the three main bibliographic databases of the socio-educational and health fields: PsycINFO by EBSCOHost, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) by ProQuest and PubMed by National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI). To maximize the exhaustiveness of the search, the multidisciplinary bibliographic database Scopus by Elsevier will also be scrutinized, as well as the first 50 Google search results for grey literature to minimize potential publication bias. Search alerts will be set in all the databases.

The search strategy will follow the Peer Review of Electronic Search Strategies (PRESS) guidelines (McGowan et al., 2016) and it will consist of two groups of search terms referring to SEC and the population target of university students. We will also add a third group of terms preceded by the boolean operator NOT to improve the specificity of the search strategy. Table 1 shows the strategy for searching in PsycInfo, including the terms selected from its thesaurus to maximize the comprehensiveness of the results.

The search strategy will be adapted to the syntax and specific characteristics of the ERIC and SCOPUS databases. In the Pubmed database, we will use the following MeSH descriptors referring to socioemotional competences: ("Emotional Regulation"[Majr:NoExp] OR "Self-Control"[Majr:NoExp] OR "Expressed Emotion"[Majr:NoExp] OR "Emotional Intelligence"[Majr:NoExp] OR "Self Concept"[Majr:NoExp]). With respect to the target population, we will use the following thesaurus terms: "Universities"[Majr:NoExp] OR "Education, Medical"[Majr:NoExp] OR "Education, Nursing"[Majr:NoExp] OR "Education, Graduate"[Majr:NoExp] OR "Students, Health Occupations"[Majr:NoExp] OR "Professionalism"[Majr:NoExp]. The search will be performed in December 2021 and will be limited by time period (2000-2020), study research design (empirical studies), age of study participants (18 years and older), and publication language (English, Spanish).

Table 1

Search strategy for PsycINFO by EBSCOHost.

STEP	SEARCH TERMS
1	((MM "Emotional Regulation") OR (MM "Self-Control") OR (MM "Social Emotional Learning") OR (MM "Emotion Recognition") OR (MM "Expressed Emotion") OR (MM "Emotional Control") OR (MM "Self-Knowledge") OR (MM "Emotional Assessment") OR (MM "Emotional Intelligence") OR TI ("emotional skills" OR "socioemotional skills" OR "socio-emotional skills" OR "emotional competences" OR "socioemotional competences" OR "socio-emotional competences" OR "emotional abilities" OR "socioemotional abilities" OR "socio-emotional abilities" OR "emotional intelligence" OR "socioemotional intelligence" OR "socio-emotional intelligence" OR "emotional education" OR "socioemotional education" OR "socio-emotional education" OR "emotional learning" OR "socioemotional learning" OR "socio-emotional learning") OR AB ("emotional skills" OR "socioemotional skills" OR "socio-emotional skills" OR "emotional competences" OR "socioemotional competences" OR "socio-emotional competences" OR "emotional abilities" OR "socioemotional abilities" OR "socio-emotional abilities" OR "emotional intelligence" OR "socioemotional intelligence" OR "socio-emotional intelligence" OR "emotional education" OR "socioemotional education" OR "socio-emotional education" OR "emotional learning" OR "socioemotional learning" OR "socio-emotional learning") OR KW ("emotional skills" OR "socioemotional skills" OR "socio-emotional skills" OR "emotional competences" OR "socioemotional competences" OR "socio-emotional competences" OR "emotional abilities" OR "socioemotional abilities" OR "socio-emotional abilities" OR "emotional intelligence" OR "socioemotional intelligence" OR "socio-emotional intelligence" OR "emotional education" OR "socioemotional education" OR "socio-emotional education" OR "emotional learning" OR "socioemotional learning" OR "socio-emotional learning")

2	(MM "Undergraduate Education") OR (MM "Postgraduate Training") OR (MM "Graduate Education") OR (MM "Graduate Students") OR (MM "Professionalism") OR (MM "College Students") OR (MM "College Graduates") OR (MM "Colleges") OR (MM "Educational Degrees") OR (MM "Postgraduate Students") OR (MM "Higher Education") OR TI (Undergraduat* OR Postgraduat* OR graduat* OR universit* OR postsecondary OR college OR "higher education" OR "tertiary education" OR bachelor* OR professionalism) OR AB (Undergraduat* OR Postgraduat* OR graduat* OR universit* OR postsecondary OR college OR "higher education" OR "tertiary education" OR bachelor* OR professionalism) OR KW (Undergraduat* OR Postgraduat* OR graduat* OR universit* OR postsecondary OR college OR "higher education" OR "tertiary education" OR bachelor* OR professionalism)
3	#1 AND #2
4	addiction OR substance OR abuse OR dependen* OR alcohol OR binge OR smoke OR gambl* OR deaf* OR posttraum* OR trauma* OR depressi* OR disorder OR bulimic OR hyperactivity OR suicid* OR psychiatric* OR patholog* OR syndrome OR autism* OR schizophre* OR psychopath* OR bipolar OR self-injur* OR self-harm OR Harassment OR Stalking OR Cyberbullying OR Diagnostic* OR agres* OR violence OR maltreatment OR sex* OR spiritual* OR victim* OR child* OR parent* OR couple OR cultural OR insomnia OR stress OR distress OR anxiety OR aggress*
5	#3 NOT TI (#4) NOT AB (#4) NOT KW (#4)
6	FILTER: Peer reviewed
7	FILTER: Period (2000-2020)
8	FILTER: Lenguaje (English, Spanish)
9	FILTER: Age (Adulthood)
10	FILTER: Methodology (nonclinical case study, focus group, followup study, prospective, longitudinal, qualitative, interview, quantitative)

2.2. Eligibility Criteria

We will apply the following inclusion criteria for the selection of the primary studies to be included in the review:

- Studies must be empirical with experimental (randomized and non-randomized), non-experimental (cohort, case-control and cross-sectional), single-case or qualitative designs.
- Study participants must be undergraduate, graduate, or postgraduate university students being trained as professionals in socio-educational and health fields with the intention of effectively attending to the individual needs, well-being, and quality of life of the end-users of the service.

- Studies should provide information on the strategies used to assess or promote university students' SEC.
- Studies must be published between 2000 and 2021.

Theoretical and case report studies will be excluded, along with those whose objective is exclusively the academic review or evaluation of university study plans in the socio-educational and health fields.

2.3. Data Management

References identified by the search strategy will be entered into Mendeley bibliographic software, and duplicates will be removed. Titles and abstracts will be screened independently by two reviewers (NG, PV). When decisions cannot be made from title and abstract alone, the full paper will be retrieved. Full-text inclusion criteria will be screened independently by two reviewers (NG, PV). Discrepancies during the process will be resolved through discussion (with a third reviewer, JML, when necessary). Agreement between reviewers during the study selection process will be analysed by Cohen's Kappa (Cohen, 1960).

2.4. Data Extraction

The information from the studies will be extracted using an *ad hoc* checklist divided into four sections: identification data, sample characteristics, methodological data, and substantive data. As shown in Table 2 some information on the characteristics of the studies will vary according to the type of study: SEC intervention studies, studies that report a new SEC measure or the psychometric characteristics of an existing one or its adaptation, or correlational studies on SEC.

Similarly, for searching procedure, two review authors (NG, PV) will extract the data of selected studies independently and discrepancies will be resolved through

discussion (with a third reviewer, JML, when necessary). Agreement between reviewers during the data extraction process will be analysed by Cohen's Kappa (Cohen, 1960).

Table 2

Data extraction checklist.

Information data
Author
Publication year
Sample characteristics
Size
Gender distribution
Age (mean, standard deviation and range)
Country
Field (socio-educational and/or health)
Educational level (undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate)
University degree
Methodological data
Research design
Sampling technique
Purpose of the study (intervention, SEC measure -new, properties of existing one, adaptation- or correlational)
Substantive data
Theoretical SEC framework
SEC measures
Reference
SEC components assessed
Form of administration (CAPI, CATI, online or paper and pencil)
Validity indicators
Reliability indicators
Fairness indicators
Burden indicators
Feasibility indicators
Intervention studies
Name of the intervention program
Promoted SEC components
SEC are the primary or secondary objective of the intervention?
Procedure (e.g., in or out of the classroom, face-to-face or online, simulated or real-life experience, individual or group)
Implementation cost indicators
Main results on SEC

Main results on other outcomes
Correlational studies
Role of SEC measure/s in the study (exposure or outcome)
Main results on the relationship between SEC and other measures

2.5. Strategy of Data Synthesis

We will provide a narrative synthesis of the characteristics and results of the included studies about the strategies for assessing SEC and the interventions carried out to promote them. Firstly, we will yield a detailed descriptive analysis on the population of participants: geographical origin, gender and age, and field and educational level. Secondly, we will provide a critical analysis of the research designs of the included studies, the quality of the samples and the risk of bias of the intervention studies. Subsequently, we will carry out a synthesis of the theoretical frameworks identified in the selected studies and consequently of the SEC and their components that they identify and define. Specifically, in assessment studies, we will detail information on the SEC measures identified and their quality indicators. Likewise, in intervention studies on SEC, we will contribute to a classification of studies based on their main characteristics: intervention procedures used, SEC components promoted, and results. Finally, correlational studies will make it possible to identify the most frequently used SEC assessment strategies, as well as their main correlates.

2.6. Risk of Bias Assessment

The risk of bias (RoB) of the intervention studies included in the review will be assessed. We will apply the tools proposed by the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) for experimental (randomized) and quasi-experimental group studies (Tufanaru et al., 2020), non-experimental cross-sectional and cohort studies (Moola et al., 2020), and qualitative studies (Lockwood et al., 2015). Furthermore, the procedure proposed by Maggin et al., (2013) will be applied to single-case studies. RoB will be independently

assessed by two reviewers (NG, JML) and discrepancies will be resolved by discussion with a third author (PV) when necessary. Agreement between reviewers during the RoB assessment process will be analysed by Cohen's Kappa (Cohen, 1960).

No studies will be excluded due to high RoB, because the results of the RoB assessment will in themselves be a relevant part of the review. RoB will be considered when drawing conclusions about intervention studies.

2.7. Proposed Timeline and Researcher Involvement

The schedule of activities is outlined in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Scoping review work plan.

STAGE	TASK	TIME	RESPONSIBLE(S)
1	Identifying the research question	Month 1	NG, PV, JMV
2	Search strategy design	Month 1	NG, PV, JMV
3	Writing the protocol	Month 2	NG, PV, JMV
4	Study selection	Months 3-5	NG, PV, JMV
5	Data Extraction	Month 6	NG, PV, JMV
6	Data Synthesis	Months 7-9	NG, PV, JMV
7	Write- up	Months 9-11	NG, PV, JMV

2.8. Personnel

The three authors will actively participate in all phases of the preparation and writing of the manuscript.

3. Discussion

Given that SEC are considered a critical requirement for professionals in the socio-educational and health fields, this scoping review will contribute an accounting of the strategies that have been proposed to evaluate and promote them in university students in both fields so far. To date, existing reviews in the health field are specific to a single SEC or to examining associations between similar theoretical constructs (e.g. emotional intelligence) with other variables such as academic performance. This review

will have a two-fold contribution. In the field of health, it will provide a holistic and broad vision, taking into account the conceptual diversity of the subject. On the other hand, in the socio-educational field, we will discover and provide new information since, as far as we know, there are no SEC reviews in the socio-educational field. Concerning our results regarding assessment strategies, we will provide valuable information about which SEC are being evaluated and their measurement quality, among other data. Secondly, regarding promotion, our results will contribute helpful information to clarify which SEC are being promoted and the characteristics of the different types of interventions. Results of this scoping review will yield valuable insights into the design, implementation and evaluation of strategies aimed at promoting SEC in university training in the socio-educational and health fields. The ultimate goal of focusing on SEC will be the promotion of the professional's personal well-being as well as their job success in order to achieve effective attention to the individual needs, well-being and quality of life of service end-users. In addition, it would improve the satisfactoriness and general quality of the socio-educational and health system.

Conflict of interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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