

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING IN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Intervention programs based on Social Skills Training have been researched in different populations, including university students. This study aimed to review the literature about HST programs with university students, published in national and international journals, emphasizing the instruments and designs used, in addition to the main results and limitations, from 1980 onwards. The keywords in English “social skills training”, “undergraduate”, “graduate students” and “higher education” were used in six databases (Capes, ERIC, PHS/RIHS, DOAJ, EBSCost, LILACS, IBICT, WEB OF SCIENCE). Thirteen articles were found and they were analyzed regarding the variables of interest by applying the PRISMA Protocol. The results showed that nine studies used the Social Skills Inventory as the main data collection instrument and had an experimental design. The number of sessions was variable among the interventions and, in all studies, there was an improvement in the social skills repertoire of the research participants. This article contributes to the literature in the area by discussing implications for research and practice in promoting social skills in university education, as well as directions for future research that should consider the concept of social competence.

Keywords: social skills training; undergraduate students; systematic review

Entrenamiento de Habilidades Sociales en alumnos universitarios: una revisión sistemática

RESUMEN

Los programas de intervención basados en Entrenamiento de Habilidades Sociales han sido investigados en distintas poblaciones, entre ellas, la universitaria. En este estudio se tuvo como objetivo realizar una revisión de la literatura sobre programas de THS con universitarios, publicados en periódicos nacionales e internacionales, enfatizando los instrumentos y delineamientos utilizados, además de los principales resultados y limitaciones, a partir de 1980. Se utilizaron las palabras clave en inglés “social skills training”, “undergraduate”, “graduate students” y “higher education” en seis bases de datos (Capes, ERIC, PHS/RIHS, DOAJ, EBSCost, LILACS, IBICT, WEB OF SCIENCE). Se encontraron 13 artículos y estos analizados según las variables de interés aplicándose el Protocolo PRISMA. Los resultados apuntaron que nueve estudios utilizaron el Inventario de Habilidades Sociales como principal instrumento de recopilación de datos y tuvieron el delineamiento experimental. El número de sesiones se mostró variable entre las intervenciones y, en todos los estudios, sucedió la mejora en el repertorio de habilidades sociales de los participantes de las investigaciones. El presente artículo contribuye para la literatura del área al discutir implicaciones para la investigación y la práctica de promoción de habilidades sociales en la formación universitaria, así como direcciones para futuras investigaciones que deben considerar el concepto de competencia social.

Palabras clave: entrenamiento de habilidades sociales; universitarios; revisión sistemática

Treinamento de habilidades sociais em alunos de graduação: uma revisão sistemática

RESUMO

Os programas de intervenção baseados em Treinamento de Habilidades Sociais têm sido pesquisados em diferentes populações, entre elas, a universitária. Este estudo teve como objetivo realizar uma revisão da literatura sobre programas de THS com universitários, publicados em periódicos nacionais e internacionais, enfatizando os instrumentos e delineamentos utilizados, além dos principais resultados e limitações, a partir de 1980. Utilizaram-se as palavras-chave em inglês “social skills training”, “undergraduate”, “graduate students” e “higher education” em seis bases de dados (Capes, ERIC, PHS/RIHS, DOAJ, EBSCost, LILACS, IBICT, WEB OF SCIENCE). Foram encontrados 13 artigos e estes

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analisados quanto às variáveis de interesse aplicando-se o Protocolo PRISMA. Os resultados mostraram que nove estudos utilizaram o Inventário de Habilidades Sociais como principal instrumento de coleta de dados e tiveram o delineamento experimental. O número de sessões mostrou-se variável entre as intervenções e, em todos os estudos, ocorreu a melhora no repertório de habilidades sociais dos participantes das pesquisas. O presente artigo contribui para a literatura da área ao discutir implicações para a pesquisa e a prática de promoção de habilidades sociais na formação universitária bem como direções para futuras pesquisas que devem considerar o conceito de competência social.

Palavras-chave: treinamento de habilidades sociais; universitários; revisão sistemática

INTRODUCTION

The theoretical-practical and empirical field of Social Skills (SS) has been consolidating in Brazil, and since the 1980s there has been a significant increase in publications (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2017). Bringing together different approaches of knowledge in Psychology, the field includes, according to Del Prette and Del Prette (2012), different explanatory models for social behavior. These models led to differentiated intervention processes, the main ones being Social Learning (Bandura, 1977), Social Perception (Argyle, 1978) and Behavior Analysis (Skinner, 2003).

Under the explanatory and empirical approach of Behavior Analysis, SS are defined by Del Prette and Del Prette (2017, p. 24) as a “descriptive construct of social behaviors valued in different cultures with a high probability of favorable outcomes for the individual, group and community, thereby contributing to socially competent performance in interpersonal tasks”. However, the complete analysis of this approach must consider the concept of Social Competence (SC) since it becomes central and articulates the link between the HS and SC with the last one qualifying the social performance from the instrumental and ethical dimensions considering a set of criteria for this (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2017, 2018a).

The applicability of the SS field has been investigated in different contexts both in national and international literature, such as family (Gottman & Rushe, 1995; Gresham, 2002), behavioral problems in relation to parenting practices (Bolsoni-Silva, Silveira, & Marturano, 2008), educational (Elias & Amaral, 2016), preparing adolescents for work (Pereira-Guizzo, Del Prette, Del Prette, & Leme, 2018), employability of people with disabilities (Pereira-Guizzo, Del Prette, & Del Prette, 2012), among others. Each of these contexts establishes generalized and specific demands for social performance and, therefore, social behavior must be understood both in its specificity and in the possibility of sharing the same social performance (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2013; Kelly, 2002).

These generalized and specific demands of social behavior generate the need to understand which variables and processes determine these behaviors and,

thus, establish the basis for planning and conducting programs to improve the repertoire of social skills, considering the requirements of social competence. As an example, empirical evidence about the situational specificity of social skills leads to a careful assessment of the contexts in which performance occurs as satisfactory or not (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2017, 2018a). This is the case, for example, of a person who can perform assertively at work, but not with family members, which theoretically presupposes an intervention plan focused on family relationships in this regard.

This intervention plan, in its applied aspect, could be carried out through the Social Skills Training (SST) programs. This is because they use a set of principles, objectives and concepts that generate procedures and techniques both for the assessment and identification of classes of social skills that are deficient in certain contexts and social demands and for intervention aimed at overcoming these deficits (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2012). The proposal by Del Prette and Del Prette (2017), that SST programs are social competence-oriented, leads to a specific definition of SST in terms of “a set of planned activities that structure learning processes, mediated and conducted” by a therapist or facilitator, duly prepared, aiming at the acquisition and/or improvement of the SS and, also, the requirements of Social Competence” (p. 80).

The effectiveness of SST programs in national and international environments has been attested to different populations, such as people with disabilities (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001; Ozonoff & Miller, 1995), patients with psychological problems (Herbert, Gaudiano, Rheingold, Myers, & Nolan, 2004; Linehan, 1993), children (Salvo, Mazarotto, & Löhr, 2005), in parents of children with school difficulties (Barros & Del Prette, 2007; Pinheiro, Haase, & Del Prette, 2002), university students (Lopes, Dascanio, Ferreira, Del Prette, & Del Prette, 2017; Melis, 2016; Pureza, Rusch, Wagner, Oliveira, 2012), university graduates (Lima, Luna, Moreira, Marteleto, Duran, & Dias, 2016), among others.

Given this diverse applicability, a focus of interest falls on the university population, since in this training period specific interpersonal demands are identified

for social performances that can impact both academic success and improvement in mental health and achievement professional indices. (Bolsoni-Silva, Barbosa, Brandão, & Loureiro, 2018; Hidalgo & Abarca, 1992; Kelly, 2002; Mayhew, Rockenbach, Bowman, Seifert, Wolniak, Pascarella, & Terenzini, 2005). In addition, although it occurs throughout the life cycle (Papalia & Feldman, 2013), interpersonal development in the university education phase can be crucial as it involves demands for specific collaborative interactions with colleagues and professors, practical internship activities in the context provision of services, affective-sexual involvements and others.

In addition to these aspects, interpersonal effectiveness in the face of these demands can also be decisive for adapting and staying at the University (Tezer, Kan, Öznacar, Sensoy, & Çaltikusu, 2019), including preventing social isolation and depression, effectively dealing with the offer of drug use and abuse (Sá & Del Prette, 2014), among other risks (Almeida & Ferreira, 1999; Moreno & Soares, 2014; Olaz, Medrano, & Cabanillas, 2017).

Thus, studies on social skills interventions with university students, in different courses and areas, have produced important evidence (Argyle, Bryant, & Trower, 1974; Bolsoni-Silva, Barbosa, Brandão, & Loureiro, 2018; Del Prette, Del Prette, & Barreto, 1999; Lopes, Dascanio, Ferreira, Del Prette, & Del Prette, 2017; Tezer et al., 2019). In this sense, it is suggested that the University can enable a healthy interpersonal development of the university, since the time of admission (Olaz, Medrano, & Cabanillas, 2017).

Thus, in view of the defense on the importance of promoting social skills in university students for a promising professional performance (Del Prette & Del Prette, 1983; Del Prette, Del Prette, & Barreto, 1999; Lopes, Dascanio, Ferreira, & Del Prette, 2017) and the recognition that university education must consider not only technical skills, but also demands from the work environment, interpersonal skills such as assertiveness, social resourcefulness, teamwork, communication, leadership, among others (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2018b), it is necessary to understand what already exists of intervention studies that consider the perspectives presented and, more specifically, those focused on SST programs. As well, because the need for interventions of this type has been recognized by the students themselves (Monteiro & Soares, 2017) including in terms of evidence of their influence about their own academic expectations and experiences (Benevides Soares, De Almeida Santos, Cleon de Andrade, & Siqueira Souza, 2017).

Therefore, based on the rationale presented, it is understood that it is essential to systematize what has been produced about SST programs with university students in order to assist future research

on interventions in this axis, including the importance of including them in the curriculum. In this sense, literature review studies are useful tools that provide researchers with a longitudinal view of possible gaps in intervention methods, effective procedures, the most recurrent population, specific demands, etc. such as, for example, the review by Tezer et al. (2019) who found only one survey of the Turkish population aimed at university students.

Given the above, some guiding questions for the present study are suggested, namely: 1. What has been produced about interventions on SST in university populations? 2. What are the main instruments and research designs used in these studies? 3. What are the characteristics and main results that encompass the SST used? 4. What are the main limitations highlighted in the published articles? Faced with such questions, the present study aimed to review the literature on SST programs with university students, published in national and international journals, emphasizing the instruments and designs used, in addition to the main results and limitations.

METHOD

The present study consisted of an electronic search for articles using methodological criteria based on the PRISMA model (Liberati, Altman, Tetzlaff, Mulrow, Gotzsche, Loannidis, Clarke, Devereaux, Kleijnen, & Moher, 2009). The search process was carried out in January and February 2019 and updated in March 2020. The following inclusion criteria were adopted: (a) Type: full articles published in journals; (b) Theme: empirical studies about Social Skills Training with university students; (c) Period: covering articles published since 1998, since that year was the milestone of the increase in research on this topic, to March 2020; (d) Language: Portuguese, English or Spanish. The corpus consisted of the following Databases: (a) Portal de Periódicos Capes (which encompasses international platforms of peer-reviewed articles), (b) ERIC, *Education Resources Information Center* (specific publications in the education area); (c) PHS/RIHS page (<http://www.phs.rihs.ufscar.br>) of the Interpersonal Relations and Social Skills Group, which brings together scientometric study references about the specific topic of social skills; (d) DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals); (e) EBSChost; (f) LILACS; (g) IBICT (Brazilian Institute of Information in Science and Technology); (h) WEB OF SCIENCE. The search was carried out based on the keywords, selected only in English and combined in the proposed axes: “social skills training” AND “undergraduate” OR “graduate students” OR “higher education”.

When the search in a given database did not retrieve articles with these keywords, a new search was performed only with the main term “Social Skills Training”, verifying, by reading the title and abstract, if the research context included the university public. First

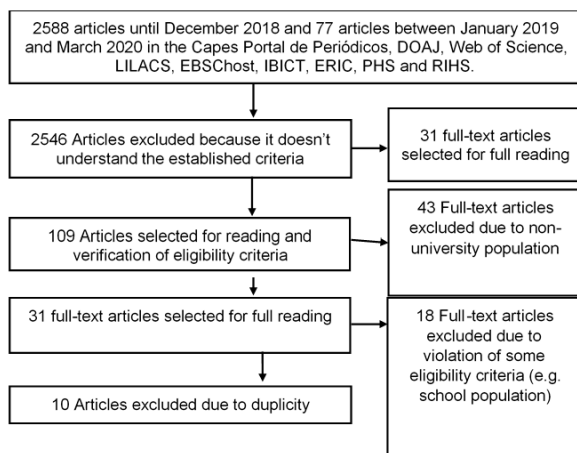
of all, the initial screening was performed, based on the previously listed criteria. When searching for articles, all titles and abstracts were read and then the studies selected for reading in full or discarded according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria described above. Articles were excluded: (a) duplicates (same article published on two different platforms); (b) that were not available for reading in full; (c) SST articles with populations other than the university population; (d) theses, dissertations and book chapters. The selected articles were read in full and categorized as to: authorship, publication date, quantity (N) and sample profile, instruments used, type of design, techniques, procedures and intervention structure, main results and limitations indicated by the authors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 summarizes the articles found using the PRISMA Protocol. Initially, 2665 articles were retrieved and, after the necessary refinements, the corpus consisted of 13 publications to be described in this review study. The total number of articles found, 2546 were excluded for not meeting the established criteria (type, theme, period, language and database) and 10 for duplication. Thus, 109 articles were initially selected to refine the inclusion criteria and 43 were excluded because they were not the university population. The 31 remaining articles were read in full, excluding 18 for not meeting the criteria established for selection (studies with schoolchildren or adolescents, which was not explained in the abstract). In this way, we arrived at the 13 studies proposed here for analysis, as detailed in Figure 1.

The 13 studies in this corpus are presented in Chart 1. It highlights: authorship and publication date, sample

Figure 1. Organizational Chart of Included and Excluded Articles as the PRISMA Protocol Proposal.



Source: Made by the author

profile/size (N), instruments used, research design, SST characteristics (techniques, procedure and intervention structures), main results and limitations indicated by the authors.

Observing Cahrt 1, it appears that the articles on SST programs, selected in this corpus, were published from 2014 and, for the most part, recovered Brazilian publications (n=8). In general, the interventions reported in the studies selected for this survey followed the usual SST planning, except for four studies (Barco, 2006; Ferreira, Oliveira, & Vandenberghe, 2014; Lima et al., 2016; Wagner, Pereira, & Oliveira, 2014) that focused on specific components and did not start from the general analysis of the participants' deficits as suggested by Del Prette and Del Prette (2017). According to Del Prette and Del Prette (2017) the initial assessment is very important, as it is the basis for the characterization of the clientele's SS repertoire and directs the objectives and conditions of the intervention to be carried out. However, it was decided to keep the articles that did not carry out this initial characterization in the present review, considering that: (a) they had a very similar structure to the others in terms of promoting the progression of objectives (from lower to higher complexity); (b) they represent an alternative, still little explored, of intervention focused on a certain class of social skills, for example, group work (Barco, 2016).

The sample size of SST participants showed, in general, a certain homogeneity between the articles (Average=25.2, SD=11), with three different works from this average. These were the studies by Mendo-Lázaro, Barco, Felipe-Castaño, Delrío and Palácios-García (2018), whose 132 participants were divided into several work teams of four participants, the study by Shayan and Ahmadigatab (2012) in which the 100 participants were organized into four groups, two controls and two experimental and the work by Villas-Boas, Silveira and Bolsoni-Silva (2005) with a smaller sample was four participants. It is therefore suggested that, in general, studies have followed a very similar number of participants and found promising results for them.

As for the assessment instruments proposed in these interventions, nine studies used the IHS-Del-Prette (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2011b) associated with other types of instruments. Barco (2006) used three questionnaires (Social Roles, Verbal Behaviors and Group Environments) and the School Performance Classification Test. The study by Shayan and Ahmadigatab (2012) used the *Oxford Happiness Questionnaire* and the study by Melis (2016) was based on a questionnaire developed by the authors. Mendo-Lázaro et al. (2016) used the Social Skills Scale and Social Anxiety Questionnaire for Adults.

Regarding the number of sessions, there was a variation between seven (Lima et al., 2016) and 39 (Mendo-Lázaro et al., 2016), with a regularity of once or twice a week.

Chart 1. Concerning the Characterization of Articles Retrieved and Included in the Systematic Analysis of the Review (*Studies Published in Brazil - **Studies Published Abroad).

AUTHORS	PROFILE / SAMPLE SIZE	INSTRUMENTS	DESIGN	CHARACTERISTICS OF SST	MAIN RESULTS (IMPROVEMENTS))	LIMITATIONS
Del Prette, Del Prette, & Barreto (1999)*	Degree in Psychology (N=26)	Social Skills Inventory (IHS-Del Prette), Final Questionnaire, Session Registration Form	Experimental com Pre e Post-Test	SST 14 sessions of 1h30min, 2 per week	IHS-Del Prette Factors 1 and 2	Lack of instrument to assess the social competence of professionals in training
Del Prette & Del Prette (2003)*	Degree in Exact Sciences (N=10)	IHS-Del IHS-Del Prette, Peer Review Questionnaire	Pre and Post-Test	SST 17 sessions without specifying time and frequency	General Score and Factors 1, 2, 3 and 5	Not presented by the authors
Villas-Boas, Silveira, & Bolsoni-Silva (2005)*	Graduation in exact, human and biological (N=4)	IHS-Del Prette, Interview script	Pre e Post-Test	SST 22 weekly 2-hour sessions	IHS-Del Prette from a participant	Absence of a control group, low number of participants, absence of follow-up assessments and self-report as an assessment method
Barco (2006)**	Graduation in Foreign Language and Early Childhood Education (N=36)	Questionnaire about social roles, Questionnaire about verbal behavior, Questionnaire about Group Environments and School Achievement Rating Test	Experimental with Pre and Post-Test	Social Skills Learning Sessions Focused on Group Work	Communication HS, Assertive HS, HS of work Collaborative learning	Not presented by the author
Bolsoni-Silva, Leme, Lima, Costa-Junior, & Correia (2009)*	Graduation in exact, human and biological (N=15)	IHS-Del Prette and Interview Script	Pre e Post-Test	THS 20 weekly 2-hour sessions	All Factors of the IHS-Del Prette	Não apresentada pelos autores
Pontes & Souza (2011)*	Graduation in exact, human and biological (N=15)	IHS-Del Prette	Pre e Post-Test	THS 8 weekly sessions of 1 hour and 30 minutes	IHS-Del Prette scores	Not presented by the authors
Shayan & Ahmadigatab (2012)**	Degree in medical sciences (N=100)	Oxford Happiness Questionnaire	Experimental with Pre and Post-Test	SST Levinson and Goth Lyb	Participants' happiness levels	Not presented by the authors
Ferreira, Oliveira, & Vandenberghe (2014)*	Graduation in exact, human and biological (N=34)	IHS-Del Prette and IDATE (anxiety scale)	IHS-Del Prette and IDATE (anxiety scale)	Cognitive Restructuring, Anxiety Management and Videofeedback with experiential techniques 10 weekly 2-hour sessions	IHS-Del Prette and IDATE Overall Score	Absence of a control group - self-report as a measurement instrument - use of the general IHS score only

AUTHORS	PROFILE / SAMPLE SIZE	INSTRUMENTS	DESIGN	CHARACTERISTICS OF SST	MAIN RESULTS (IMPROVEMENTS))	LIMITATIONS
Lopes, Gerolamo, Del Prette, Musetti, & Del Prette (2015)*	Degree in exact sciences (N=41)	IHS-Del Prette	Pre e Post-Test/Follow-up	THS 15 weekly sessions with 2 hours	coping, Risky self-affirmation, Conversation and social trust and, Self-exposure to strangers and new situations	Not presented by the authors
Lima, Luna, Moreira, Marteleto, Duran, & Dias (2016)*	Graduation in Medicine (N=12)	IHS-Del Prette and Stress Symptom Inventory	Pre e Post-Test	Experiences in social skills 7 sessions	Reduction in the level of stress without, however, being statistically verified	Reduction in the level of stress without, however, being statistically verified
Melis (2016)*	Graduate in Speech-Language Pathology (N=22)	Questionários elaborados pela autora	Pre e Post-Test	SST 15 weekly 2-hour sessions	Diverse social behaviors with both classmates and teachers	Absence of Control Group and follow-up - Self-reports as the only source of data - absence of all HS in the questionnaire
Mendo-Lázaro, Barco, Felipe-Castaño, Delrío, & Palácios-García (2016)**	Graduation in Social Education (N=132)	Social Skills Scale and Social Anxiety Questionnaire for Adults	Experimental with Pre and Post-Test and Follow-up	Cooperative learning 39 sessions, twice a week	HS scale and decrease in anxiety, however, both not statistically significant	Participant self-assessment - large number of students per class
Lopes, Dascanio, Ferreira, Del Prette, & Del Prette (2017)*	Degree in Exact Sciences (N=35)	IHS-Del Prette and Field Diaries	Pre and Post-Test and Follow-up	SST 15 sessions	Escore Geral e Fatores 1 e 4 do IHS	Self-reports as data - lack of control group and regular and systematic collection of participants' performance

Source: Made by the author

This data allows us to infer the diversity and effectiveness of these SST and suggests that meeting the specific needs of participants and seeking to guarantee the integrity of the intervention (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2017) has been respected by the creators of these interventions.

As for the designs used, the studies were pre-experimental with pre- and post-test measurements in nine studies and four studies were experimental with a control group (Barco, 2016; Del Prette, Del Prette, & Barreto, 1999; Mendo-Lázaro et al., 2016; Shayan & Ahmadigatab, 2012). The experimental design with the presence of a control group and subjects randomly divided between these groups has been considered fundamental to ensure evidence of effectiveness and, therefore, seems to be a point that requires greater investment in programs with university students (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2011a), 2018c) in Brazil. Studies that used follow-up measures were also rare, found in only four studies and only from 2014 onwards (Ferreira, Oliveira, & Vandenberghe, 2014; Lopes et al., 2017; Lopes, Gerolamo, Del Prette, Musetti, & Del Prette, 2015; Mendo-Lázaro et al., 2016).

Regarding the results of the articles analyzed here, all studies report an improvement in the repertoire of social skills of the participants and, among the indicators used are those of mental health such as stress reduction (Lima et al., 2016), anxiety (Ferreira, Oliveira, & Vandenberghe, 2014; Mendo-Lázaro et al., 2016) and levels of feelings of happiness (Shayan & Ahmadigatab, 2012). Such data resume the need and contribution that such interventions would have in university contexts, both for the social and academic contribution of students.

As for the structural characteristics of the programs, nine studies organized SST based on structured sessions and taking the participants' deficits as a starting point. These sessions were conducted by a therapist or facilitator and lasted at least 10 sessions. As for the techniques and procedures used in these programs, there was greater diversity, from reports of techniques such as reinforcement, feedback, modeling, role-playing, cognitive restructuring, anxiety management, videofeedback, modeling, cooperative learning and experiences. Despite the diversity, the studies in general did not discuss the critical components that could explain the results, such as those involving social competence, which, therefore, seems to be a challenge for researchers in the area (Comodo, 2016; Del Prette & Del Prette, 2011a, 2018c; Del Prette, Del Prette, & Barreto, 1999).

Having arranged the organizational characteristics of the SST referenced here, it is worth noting that the dissemination of SST in Universities can occur in different ways and, therefore, the studies here demonstrate a great contribution to the reflection of how these could occur. A promising alternative was presented by Shayan

and Ahmadigatab (2012), when they suggested offering training workshops in social skills starting at university entrance and continuing throughout graduation. These considerations are relevant to the reflection about the pedagogical project of the different university courses and the monitoring of current educational trends. This is the case of the intervention, in the Brazilian context, conducted by Lessa (2017) through experiences in social skills for groups of undergraduate students and already trained professors, in a program linked to an optional curriculum subject at the university.

Another aspect to be considered is the moment in the course when these training activities should take place, as few studies have covered the early years of academic life (Shayan & Ahmadigatab, 2012). Certainly, early interventions can help students throughout their university journey, both in terms of improving the quality of mental health and in cognitive learning processes. Finally, despite not being the objective of the present study, it is worth noting that most of the studies selected in this review did not refer to the concept of social competence despite using social skills. It can be assumed that this occurred because the centrality of this concept was only recently emphasized and also due to the complexity of criteria that involve the evaluation of this construct, as recognized by Del Prette and Del Prette (2017). This assessment requires investigating the participants' complex behaviors during the interaction in different contexts (real or simulated), in order to assess immediate and likely medium and long-term results for the person and their context (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2017) and, therefore, it could be the focus of future studies in the area.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present article is considered to have made important contributions to the literature in the area of SST. This is because, in the evaluation of the programs, all the studies in this corpus indicated an improvement of the participants in social skills and also, in general, in mental health and adaptation to the interactive demands of the university and demands similar to those of the future work environment. Thus, studies that encompass this type of intervention could continue to be explored with this population and it is considered that, despite advances in the theoretical and practical field of social skills, it is understood that there are many additional aspects to be considered, especially in terms of which refers to the teaching and training conditions of undergraduate students.

Considering the possibility of disseminating, both theoretical and practical, the field of social skills, it is possible to assume that future interventions should also consider the evaluation and promotion of other requirements of Social Competence such as values of coexistence, self-monitoring, knowledge about the rules

and norms of the social environment, self-knowledge. All can be understood as relevant in the academic training of university students in general, as well as in their future performance in the corporate work context and therefore deserve to be the focus of future research that can deepen these requirements.

Despite the general picture obtained in this review, some limitations must be pointed out. The first one refers to the scope of the study, considering the keywords used. Because they were well delimited, they may have excluded studies with a similar theme, but potentially relevant, such as those that consider programs aimed at specific skills and which are also rare in the literature, or that consider a specific research platform. Such as, for example, articles involving empathy training, communication training, assertiveness (Aryani & Bakhtiar, 2018), theses and dissertations that have not yet been published, among others. However, it is considered that this review brings important contributions to science in the area of social skills and social skills training and offers possible directions for future interventions, especially with university students.

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