We are IntechOpen, the world's leading publisher of Open Access books
Built by scientists, for scientists

6,700
Open access books available

182,000
International authors and editors

195M
Downloads

Our authors are among the

154
Countries delivered to

TOP 1%
most cited scientists

12.2%
Contributors from top 500 universities

WEB OF SCIENCE™

Selection of our books indexed in the Book Citation Index
in Web of Science™ Core Collection (BKCI)

Interested in publishing with us?
Contact book.department@intechopen.com

Numbers displayed above are based on latest data collected.
For more information visit www.intechopen.com

Chapter

Enhancing Student Success through Social Emotional Competence Development

Elena-Ramona Richiteanu-Năstase,
Monica-Elisabeta Paduraru and Camelia Staiculescu

Abstract

Identifying the path to achieving academic performance and social success is the desire of any student at the beginning of their career. A number of studies have attempted to identify the factors that contribute to social success and academic performance and have found the following: external factors such as (gender, parent's education level, and high school GPA) and internal factors (intrapersonal - self-confidence, self-control, emotional health, managing anxiety and stress and interpersonal-involvement and development of relationships). This chapter focuses on internal factors that contribute to social and academic success, in short, on students' socio-emotional competencies, and presents the concept of emotional intelligence, its approaches, and its component elements. Afterward, the chapter describes the concept of socio-emotional skills and socio-emotional learning, so that in the last part of the chapter we propose a model of training socio-emotional competencies, a set of activities that was implemented experimentally for 3 years within an institutional development program in the field of educational counseling. Conclusion and recommendations regarding the importance of counseling services offered to students will also be mentioned.

Keywords: socio-emotional competencies, academic performance factors, emotional intelligence, emotional intelligence approaches, socio-emotional learning, counseling services

1. Introduction

Identifying the path to achieving academic performance and social success is the desire of any student at the beginning of their career. Several studies have attempted to identify the factors that contribute to social success and academic performance and have found the following: *external factors* (such as gender [1], parent education level [2], and high school GPA [3]) and *internal factors* (intrapersonal - self-confidence [4], self-control [5], emotional health [6], managing anxiety and stress [3], and interpersonal-involvement and development of relationships [7]).

Reference [7] shows that social–emotional skills seem to influence students' academic performance more for girls than boys. Their research found that adolescents' socio-emotional skills are self-awareness, relationship management, and decision-making, and the lowest scores were in social awareness and self-management. Girls scored higher than boys on social–emotional skills in most of the areas examined except self-management, where scores were higher for boys. High academic achievers scored high on the decision variable. The authors emphasize the need to adopt active and collaborative strategies and methodologies to encourage the development of social–emotional skills in students. This study suggests that there are differences between girls and boys, but most importantly that is what leads to academic success, socio-emotional skills can be learned, and trained

The Big-Five model of personality developed by Costa & McCrae identifies five factors that define personality traits [8]: Openness, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Emotional Stability. Meta-analyses from various research studies show that personality factors (internal factors as mentioned above) are predictors of important academic and professional performance. Some studies show the importance of conscientiousness as a predictor of job performance [9], and academic performance [10, 11], as well as university completion (versus dropout) [12]. As for Emotional Stability, it has been shown to predict job satisfaction [13] and academic satisfaction [11]. Openness to experience predicts performance in training [9], and performance in new and complex tasks [14]. Extraversion is important for occupations that involve interaction with other people (sales, management) [9], and Agreeableness, it predicts performance in team tasks [15].

Research [16] among 9300 students, using the BigFive model as a measure of social-emotional skills, aimed to show whether the level of personality traits leading to performance varies with family socioeconomic status. The results showed that differences in Big Five personality traits are not definitively influenced by the socioeconomic status of students' families of origin. There were differences related to gender and cognitive abilities (fluid intelligence). Conscientiousness, considered to be the most important trait for academic success, was higher for students from families with high socioeconomic status than for those from socioeconomically disadvantaged families. For the other traits, there were no differences. The researchers point out that encouraging socio-emotional competencies training could be a viable way to increase academic performance, particularly among students from disadvantaged social backgrounds.

Also, a longitudinal study [17] on elementary school students shows that where classroom interventions have been made to develop children's social-emotional skills, the effects are seen in positive effects that persist for more than a decade. Thus, these children show fewer symptoms of ADHD, are less impulsive and disruptive, and although they do not score higher on standardized tests, they are more likely to complete higher levels of schooling, such as high school and university. The authors conclude that the long-term effects on academic achievement appear to be driven more by changes in social-emotional than cognitive skills.

So, we can draw the conclusion that, although objective, external factors are not to be neglected, they cannot be controlled and changed, the most we can do is take note of their importance. Thus, this chapter focuses on internal factors that contribute to social and academic success, in short, on students' socio-emotional competencies.

From a theoretical point of view, we need to analyze the concept of socio-emotional competencies and how they can be formed and developed. To do so, we need to clarify the underlying aspect of socio-emotional competencies, namely

emotional intelligence (EI). Socioemotional competence is a perspective of emotional intelligence. Therefore, we will first carry out an analysis of these perspectives of approaching emotional intelligence, to then focus on the concept of socio-emotional competences and socio-emotional learning.

The last part of the chapter proposes a model of training socio-emotional competences, a set of activities that was implemented experimentally for 3 years within an institutional development program in the field of educational counseling.

2. Perspectives on emotional intelligence

The earliest mentions of emotional intelligence can be traced back to Darwin's work and the importance he places on emotional expression for survival and adaptation.

As early as 1920, [18] the term social intelligence was used to describe the ability to understand and manage relationships with people. In the 1940s, [19] attention was drawn to non-intellectual factors that affect our intelligent behavior. In 1983, [20] theory of multiple intelligences was brought to the fore which included two types of intelligence that addressed the emotional aspect: intrapersonal intelligence (the ability to understand oneself, with feelings, fears, and motivations) and interpersonal intelligence (the ability to understand other intentions, motivations, and desires).

The first mention of the concept of emotional intelligence dates from 1985 [21]. Starting from this first mention, the evolution of the concept of defining and measuring the concept of emotional intelligence went to multiple perspectives. So far there are three models of interpretation: a. Emotional intelligence as an ability/skill; b. Mixed models; c. Emotional intelligence as a personality trait.

The model of emotional intelligence as a skill focuses on the ability to process and adapt to emotional elements. Understood as a skill, emotional intelligence means that it is trainable, educable, and part of a person's cognitive structures. EI is defined as "an individual's ability to monitor and differentiate between his or her own emotions and those of others, and to use this information to guide his or her thinking and actions" [22].

Basically, emotional intelligence is about 4 types of skills:

• Emotion perception: the ability to observe the emotions of others as well as one's own emotions through elements of verbal, nonverbal, and paraverbal communication.

• Using emotion: directing emotions in a constructive direction by enhancing thinking operations and facilitating problem-solving.

• Understanding emotion: the ability to identify complex emotions and anticipate the nuances and evolution of emotion.

• Emotion management: the ability to regulate and self-regulate emotions to achieve goals.

Counseling and training activities that follow this model should design activities that allow each level to be explored individually. It is important to know that the

concept of skill implies that a skill manifests itself behaviorally with ease. Thus, learning experiences need to be thought of gradually, through self- and inter-exploration, then through exercises where the skill can be observed, and then tasks can be generalized into current activities. An example of this might be the expression of altruism. Altruism, however, is not only a feeling (a crystallized, lasting emotion), but also has an attitudinal component - a focus on others, a desire to do good. Training in this attitude must therefore start with simple emotions: expressing joy in social contexts (the desire to share one's joy with others). In the first stage, somatic indicators of joy are monitored. In the second stage, the person needs to be aware of the effects that putting the emotion into action (well-being, positive relationships, feeling understood and listened to) can have on their own behavior or on others. In the third stage, a person can realize that if they create a feeling of well-being, and joy, in others, their behavior will be appreciated. Therefore, the complex understanding of emotion will lead him to desire the effects it produces on others. In the last stage, a person regulates his own behavior so that when he is asked for help or feels it is appropriate, he will help others because it makes him feel good. This behavior will be applied not only in educational situations but also in everyday life.

The explanatory model of emotional intelligence [23] is based on a wide range of competencies. The model offers a mixed explanation: it relies on EI as a personality trait, and can be developed, as a competence. The levels of EI proposed [23] also mark stages of emotional development. These are:

- Self-awareness: the ability to identify one's own emotions and recognize their impact.

- Self-management: involves controlling emotions and impulses to adapt effectively to situations.

- Social awareness: the ability to sense, understand and react to the emotions of others, including understanding social networks.

- Relationship management: the ability to inspire and develop others and to prevent and resolve conflicts.

Some tests that use the explanations provided by this model are The Emotional Competence Inventory [24], and Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) [25].

The mixed approach is also the one used in this chapter and will be analyzed extensively in subchapter 3.

The EI as trait model [26, 27] considers that one's own perceptions of emotional abilities are located at lower levels of personality. An instrument for measuring emotional intelligence in this manner is the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue).

Understanding EQ as a personality trait highlights the need to explore these perceptions that individuals have of themselves precisely to reflect on them and propose ways of improvement. Even if a psychological test is not applied, however, other tasks can be formulated to facilitate discovery. Beyond developing EI as a way of preventing unpleasant, stressful, anxious situations, I believe it is necessary for every person to understand the nature of emotions and the defense mechanisms they have developed or should develop/replace.

Emotions are subjective experiences resulting from the agreement or discrepancy between a person's needs or expectations and reality. They are internal states characterized by physiological reactions, specific thoughts, and behavioral expressions.

Défense and coping mechanisms are strategies of the human psyche to reduce, control, tolerate or remove stress, discomfort, and tension generated by internal or external demands that exceed the person's resources.

Défense mechanisms are strategies by which people defend themselves against psychological pain (anxiety, sadness, etc.). They are triggered automatically and unconsciously and are aimed at reducing tension.

Main coping and defense mechanisms [28] are:

- Anticipation - anticipating possible consequences and finding appropriate solutions to the given problem.

- Self-observation - monitoring one's own thoughts, feelings, motivations, behaviors, and selecting the most appropriate reactions.

- Sublimation - channeling negative emotions and impulses into socially acceptable activities and behaviors.

- Repression - removing negative thoughts, undesirable desires, or unpleasant memories from the field of consciousness.

- Intellectualization - engaging in abstract and general thinking, resulting in distancing and avoidance of negative emotions.

- Denial - refusal to acknowledge the existence of a problem, an unpleasant, embarrassing event.

- Regression - reverting to the behaviors of a younger age.

- Projection - the person blames someone else for the harm they experience.

- Rationalization - the person produces unrealistic justifications for their undesirable behavior.

- Humor - emphasizing the ironic and funny aspects of an event or situation.

- Compensation - physical or mental deficiencies are counterbalanced by developing other skills.

At a young age, children need to be taught to self-observe, to communicate their emotions, possibly to channel negative emotions into a pleasant activity, but at the same time to seek help when their emotions are beyond their ability to manage. As they grow up, the mechanisms that individuals should strive towards are anticipation and intellectualization. However, humor can also help a person make a situation easier. Exercising this coping/defending mechanism can be encouraged through the metaphor method (pupils are invited to explain through a metaphor some ironic, funny aspect of a difficult situation they have faced).

From the above three perspectives, this chapter uses a mixed model, which gives importance to emotional intelligence as an important personality trait underlying the development of social-emotional competencies.

Further, the chapter focuses on analyzing this theoretical perspective, and then describes and explains how these socio-emotional competencies can be trained and developed.

3. Social-emotional competences

From the chapter point of view, social-emotional competence is the competence to understand self and others and to manage self and interactions, using this information. Some characteristics of the social-emotional competences are [29]:

1. Skills can be developed at any age [30], and social-emotional skills fall under this rule.

2. The development of these competences in young adults (students and non-students) is very useful and necessary.

3. The link between social-emotional competences and emotional intelligence is one of dependency: building on emotional intelligence, social-emotional competences can develop and lead to personal and professional performance.

4. Social-emotional competences are a product of emotional development and social learning, leading to optimization and performance.

So, building on emotional intelligence, the social-emotional competences can be developed and trained. The literature speaks of the need to develop SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) as aspects that can be developed in all learning activities and that support learning activities. They take the form of skills such as:

• being effective and successful learners.

• making and keeping friends.

• to resolve conflicts effectively and fairly.

• to take responsibility for problem solving in relation to themselves and others.

• be able to manage strong feelings such as frustration, anger, and anxiety.

• deal appropriately with failure (do not give in to hardship, accept that sometimes they can fail).

• compete fairly, win, or lose with dignity and respect for competitors.

• to recognize and support the rights of others.

• understand and value differences between people, accept that people may have different opinions/beliefs [31].

The research carried out so far in this field [32] have identified five domains of social-emotional competencies that are essential for the optimal development of children, adolescents and adults, that can help them reach their potential: self-awareness (identifying own emotions, values, abilities and strengths; recognizing strengths in others; self-efficacy; self-confidence), self-management (managing emotions and behaviors; stress management; perseverance in overcoming obstacles; setting goals and monitoring progress; motivation), social awareness (empathy and respect for others; recognizing and appreciation of individual and group similarities and differences), social awareness (respect and respect for others, recognition and appreciation of similarities and differences), social relationship skills (maintaining positive relationships based on cooperation; preventing and/or constructive resolution of interpersonal conflicts; seeking and offering help; communication) and responsible decision-making (making constructive choices and ethical choices in personal and social behavior; evaluation and reflection).

Similarly, an instrument for measuring the socioemotional competences was developed [29]: Social Emotional Competence Development Inventory - SECD-I (Appendix 1). The model proposed [29] includes four distinct factors, but interrelated: (I) self-awareness - the recognition and understanding of one's own emotional states, evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, recognition of preferences, has two subscale Emotions and Aptitude; (II) respect for others - considering others and anticipating consequences before acting, has two subscale Empathy and Monitoring; (III) relating to others - being easy or effort to build meaningful relationships with others, has two subscale Sociability and Intimacy; and (IV) orientation towards change - the propensity to influence oneself to change or to influence others to change/motivate others to change, also with two subscale Initiative and Inspiration. This model starts from social intelligence and emotional intelligence and moves towards the development of social-emotional. SECD-I, was translated and adapted to the Romanian language [29] and resulted in the CSE scale. CSE scale can be found in Romanian language in Appendix 2. It consists of 32 items organized in 4 main factors: self-awareness, consideration of others, connection to others and influence orientation.

To develop these socio-emotional competences, activities and counseling programs designed for each level of the components of socio-emotional competence are needed. They should make students aware of their own personality traits and the degree of development of emotional intelligence, to help them develop their ability to understand and accept themselves and their own emotions, to have effective communication and interactions with others, to develop their ability to solve their problems at university or other social contexts and to facilitate professional integration.

Studies show that where students have benefited from counseling services, academic performance has increased [33] and counseling services tailored to students' daily concerns contribute to greater student effectiveness (e.g., online counseling services [34]).

Based on this conclusion (that counseling and coaching social-emotional competences facilitate integration and enhance academic performance) and on the model of social-emotional competences presented above, the authors of the chapter proposed and successfully tested a model for training social-emotional competences.

4. The model of training of the socio-emotional competencies

The socioemotional competence development model included a set of activities that was implemented experimentally for 3 years within an institutional development program in the field of educational counseling.

The objectives of the program aimed to identify and test socio-emotional competencies using CSE scale, for the target group (initial and final), design the socioemotional skills training program (in the form of intensive workshops) and substantiate some solutions to improve the program.

Students were informed either directly by the counselors involved in the program activities or through posters placed in the university premises, postings on social networks, email announcements, so that the information reached those targeted and interested.

All students who wished to participate in the group activities were able to do so; participation was voluntary and did not involve any other commitment on the part of the participants. The optimal number of participants was a maximum of 25 students.

Priority to participating in this program was given to students from disadvantaged backgrounds (rural environment, social welfare institutions, orphans, low-income families, Roma) or those who have never participated in personal development activities. In the end, the experimental group was comprised of 70 students, 1st year, bachelor and 1st year master (23 in the 1st year of the study, 20 in the 2nd year of the study, and 22 the 3rd year).

To achieve the objectives set, the authors of the chapter have gone through a series of steps:

- Initial testing using CSE scales, to identify the level of socio-emotional competencies and to design the training program based on the identified needs.

All participating students were tested using the CSE scales described above. Based on this, individual profiles of the students' level of social–emotional competences were created. These profiles were supplemented with information obtained through other channels: individual discussions with students prior to the workshops, questionnaires identifying perceived needs of training in order to achieve academic performance, and so on.

Based on the information collected, in all 3 years, the students encountered difficulties in the sphere of socioemotional competences, especially at level (IV) orientation towards change - the propensity to influence oneself to change or to influence others to change/motivate others to change, but also difficulties in the level of the other levels of socioemotional competences. The various answers in the test, but also the needs mentioned by them, have permitted the team to draw a training program. For some students, individual counseling activities were recommended as well as participation in group personal development sessions, workshops and other academic activities.

- Designing and implementing the training program.

At this stage, the design and resources needed to support the activities (e.g., PPT presentation, tests, worksheets, exercises, reflective journals, posters) adapted to the needs identified in the previous stage, were developed.

Depending on the topic, specific material packages were developed for each group/ workshop session, but all of them included activities to develop every level of the socioemotional competences: (I) self-awareness - the recognition and understanding of one's own emotional states, evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, recognition of preferences; (II) respect for others - considering others and anticipating consequences before acting; (III) relating to others - being easy or effort to build meaningful relationships with others; and (IV) orientation towards change - the propensity to

influence oneself to change or to influence others to change/motivate others to change.

The program was designed for 3 days (8 hours per day), in a special location for extracurricular activities, as the students did not carry out other academic activities during that period. The location, a mountainous area, allowed the development of some activities both indoors and outdoors in a didactic way, but also team building activities.

In the group sessions, the learning activities focused on the development of social-emotional competences and on the four stages analyzed above, but also automatically touched adjacent elements such as: self-awareness, self-esteem and self-image, assertive communication, learning and successfully approaching academic learning, conflict avoidance and resolution skills, time management, stress management, etc. The list of topics addressed was modified/complemented according to the needs identified through the application of the CSE scales and other tools applied in the first stage.

Examples of sessions carried out:

In the self-discovery and personal development session was clarified the skills needed for academic success as outlined in the literature and students were engaged in individual and group self-discovery activities. For example, students were asked to characterize themselves in relation to their status through SWOT analysis and to indicate strengths and developmental points they felt they had, opportunities and threats regarding academic life.

Another exercise proposed was for students to map their academic pathway, identifying events relevant to it from the past, present, and future.

Other pair and group exercises proposed to students in this session focused on sharing information and feedback using Johari's window and other specific exercises as a tool.

Students were also advised on how to build a personal brand and how to promote their personal branding elements correctly.

In the emotional intelligence session students were introduced to the concept, the implications of emotional intelligence in their personal, social, and professional lives and were given exercises/modalities to develop emotional intelligence for each level identified. Students carried out exercises on awareness of their own emotions and those of others, self-control of emotions and management of emotions in relation to others, practiced empathic communication.

In the session on time management, students were advised on how to use their time efficiently by setting objectives, prioritizing actions, correctly estimating the duration of actions, adapting to unforeseen situations, reassessing objectives, and priorities, and managing their own behavior.

Students learned how to set long, medium-and short-term goals, how to prioritize their actions, how to manage interruptions, how to reduce the time taken for some actions, how to postpone what can be postponed, how to take satisfaction from success and so on.

In the session on stress, students learned about how stress can be characterized, what causes stress, the effects of stress and how to prevent and manage stressful situations.

In the session on communication and teamwork, students looked at the elements of communication for all forms of communication, their importance, the importance of appropriate communication in different academic situations.

Coaching activities were also carried out as part of the program, for students who requested this from their counselors. In the individual sessions, personal development

issues specific to each student were deepened, resulting from the individual discussions and the applied tests, goals and individual action plans were set.

The aim of this coaching was to support students in their personal and professional development so that they could better identify or develop their skills, make better educational and career choices and be more valuable and productive at work and school.

- Retesting the level of social-emotional competences after the training program.

At the end of the program, the students involved were retested. The overall score indicated a small increase in the scores on each level of the CSE scale (avg. 1point on intimacy), proving an improvement in the perceptions regarding one's own socio-emotional competences, but also found closer scores for each level of the socioemotional competences on the scale, proving the clear improvement of some of the levels of socio-emotional competences. Moreover, we found that the scores improved especially on the last level of the scale, more precisely on initiative. The authors found the students to be better informed about the components of social-emotional competences, more aware of their own competences, more open to participate in counseling and coaching activities, and to volunteer in various academic activities.

There was no dropout among those who received counseling and coaching services consistently during the program. They also achieved good and very good academic performance. Although it was not an indicator of the importance of developing socio-emotional skills, nevertheless, the academic performance obtained was perceived by the participating students as a better one because they participated in the program's activities. The initial measurement of the performance was not possible because the participating students were 1st year students, bachelor's and master's respectively, and the activity took place about a month away from the beginning of the academic year. In other conditions, we believe that measuring performance, along with identifying the level of improvement of socio-emotional skills, can be very useful. Our choice was motivated by giving students the opportunity to develop these skills before the first session precisely because, as we showed in the first part, some studies indicate university dropout immediately after the first session.

- Applying a satisfaction questionnaire to the beneficiaries of the training program.

Satisfaction questionnaires were administered to participants at the end of the program, every year. Most of the participants (68) felt that the program had been *very useful* and that they had developed their *socio-emotional competences* and got to know each other better. Only two of them appreciated it just as a *positive learning activity*, but that they expected *more individual/coaching sessions*, not group sessions. Participants appreciated that they would apply what they had learned to: *analyzing their own decisions more carefully, interpreting social situations and interactions with others, applying good practice models, managing their emotions better, making action plans, identifying, and accessing opportunities, increasing confidence in their own strengths, and dealing with failures*.

Also, most of the participants found the program very useful in *managing everyday problems* of interaction in social and academic contexts. They especially appreciated the program for its effect in *increasing self-confidence, assertive and empathic communication*.

- Highlighting some directions for improvement of the program.

Participating students in the program suggested ways to develop the program such as:

- Involving representative people from the socio-economic environment and building on their experiences.

- Increasing the time allocated to program activities and diversifying the themes.

- Keeping the training sessions of an applied nature.

- Combining indoor and outdoor activities.

- Organizing sessions/components for trainers to ask questions and provide answers.

- Diversification of topics covered;

- More one on one activities/Coaching.

The above data reveal that such a training program of social-emotional competences leads to several results:

- Development of students' social-emotional competencies as a basis for academic and professional success.

- Better academic and social integration of students in the academic environment.

- Improving communication skills, self-confidence, problem solving.

- Retention of students at risk of dropping out in the university education system.

- Reducing absenteeism from academic activities among students.

- Increasing the number of students who complete university studies.

- Increasing the level of academic preparation of students and graduates.

- Easier professional integration of students and graduates.

- Increased chances of academic integration for students from disadvantaged groups.

Such a program works in two directions, preventive and corrective. The effects of the program are felt at the student level:

- through the adequate management of their own emotional and cognitive resources,

- through the awareness of the benefits of studying,

- through the clarification of the educational and professional path necessary to be followed for each student to reach their maximum potential,

- through the individual support of students to overcome difficulties in adapting to the university environment and learning difficulties.

The proposed training for socio-emotional competencies can be highly useful in several ways:

1. Structured Approach: the model provides a structured framework for integrating socio-emotional learning into educational settings.

2. Targeted Instruction: the training model allows for targeted instruction, focusing on specific socio-emotional competencies that are essential for students' personal and social development. It helps educators identify areas of growth and design appropriate activities and interventions to address those areas effectively.

3. Comprehensive Development: the model ensures that socio-emotional competencies are addressed comprehensively. It covers a wide range of skills and areas such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, ensuring a holistic approach to students' socio-emotional development.

4. Evidence-Based Practices: the training model is typically based on research and evidence-based practices in the field of socio-emotional learning.

5. Long-Term Impact: By systematically training socio-emotional competencies, the model contributes to students' long-term well-being and success. These competencies are not only valuable for academic achievement but also for personal fulfillment, healthy relationships, and future employability, equipping students with essential skills for life beyond the classroom.

Overall, a model of training for socio-emotional competencies provides a structured and evidence-based approach to fostering students' social and emotional development, enhancing their overall well-being, and preparing them for success in various aspects of life.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

Developing students' social-emotional competencies is crucial to their overall well-being, academic success, and future success in life. The proposed program provides an integrated solution of guidance, counseling, and personal development services, focusing on the development of students' socio-emotional competences and, secondarily, on the students' awareness of their own personality traits, supporting them in the development of their self-image, in assuming responsibility, in solving problems of school, social or professional integration.

Beyond the usefulness of the program as such, we propose several administrative, preventative and intervention measures that could be taken by the university to support the development of social-emotional competencies.

To achieve academic, social, and professional success the university can adopt several *preventive administrative measures* such as:

- organizing additional courses in the subjects where the most backlogs have been recorded (remedial actions);

- development of counseling and guidance services for socioemotional competences;

- encouraging extra-curricular and out-of-school activities (in student NGOs, meetings with employers, sports competitions, etc.) for students to develop their skills in non-formal settings;

- organizing programs for the development of socio-emotional skills for all students at the university, introducing them in the offer of optional/faculty courses. For greater effectiveness, the course could be organized on a compulsory basis for first year students and the program could be complemented with tutoring and coaching activities;

- Integration into Curriculum: Incorporate socio-emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum across various subjects and grade levels. Embed opportunities for students to develop and practice socio-emotional competences through class discussions, group activities, and project-based learning;

- Teacher Training and Professional Development: Provide teachers with training and professional development on SEL strategies and techniques. Equipping educators with the knowledge and skills to foster socio-emotional competences will enhance their ability to create supportive learning environments and effectively guide students' development in this area;

- University-wide Approach: foster a school-wide approach to SEL by creating a positive and inclusive culture that prioritizes the development of socio-emotional competences. Establish practices such as regular check-ins, peer mentoring, conflict resolution strategies, and opportunities for student leadership and voice;

- increase the level of student awareness by stepping up promotion of counseling and guidance services;

- addressing complementary themes/programs such as leadership, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making.

The university can also develop *intervention services* that consider:

- tutoring activities, individual and group counseling, and guidance;

- support for students taking exams in various subjects by developing a support system offered by teachers;

- guidance and support (tutoring) - both from teachers and by involving students from older years;

- career counseling and career guidance - visits to employers, meetings with employers, career planning, etc. First year students will thus clarify their expectations, objectives, identify the elements of their career path;

- workshops in specialist areas and study visits, meetings with teachers, university management, senior colleagues, employers;

- recreational activities, getting to know the city, visiting representative cultural institutions, meetings with representatives of student organizations, involvement of beneficiaries in student organization projects to develop socioemotional and communication skills;

- organizing workshops: with the participation of mental health specialists, doctors, psychologists, other professionals in which specific topics on self-awareness, anger management, personal development, self-awareness, and maintaining mental health will be discussed.

This will create an academic environment that combines traditional teaching with other ways of learning and personal, academic, and professional development. The authors believe it is important for students to feel comfortable in the university environment ("at home"), to participate in extracurricular activities, to relate to teachers and peers, which will increase the possibility for students to be academically and professionally successful. Teachers and university staff must provide an academic context that helps students to integrate academically, combine educational provision and related services, facilitate social interactions, make academic integration and socialization easier, as predictors of academic success.

The program would support students in having a linear, chronological, progressive transition from one institutional structure to another, covering both information and academic, content aspects, as well as activities that facilitate socialization, integration into student life.

Appendix 1

Social Emotional Competence Development Inventory (SECD-I) Survey
For each statement, please predict how often your FRIENDS would say that statement is true of you.
Please use the 9-point scale in the box (1-never; 3-rarely; 5-sometimes; 7-often; 9-always).
Place your answer in the corresponding gray box.

No	Question	N_S	N_I	I_I	I_S
Q01	People share their feelings with him/her				
Q02	She/he ends up being the leader				
Q03	She/he takes the lead role				
Q04	She/he makes an effort to start friendships				
Q05	She/he influences others				

No	Question	N_S	N_I	I_I	I_S
Q06	She/he is comfortable meeting new people	▓			
Q07	She/he stays in regular contact with his/her friends	▓			
Q08	She/he is confident in leading others				▓
Q09	She/he is trustworthy		▓		
Q10	She/he is the decision-maker of the group			▓	
Q11	She/he enjoys taking charge of groups			▓	
Q12	She/he shares his/her feelings and thoughts with friends		▓		
Q13	People come to him/her when they are upset		▓		
Q14	She/he can persuade others to do what he/she wants				▓
Q15	She/he has many close friends	▓			
Q16	She/he motivates others to perform				▓
	Total Score				
		N_S	N_I	I_I	I_S

For each statement, please indicate how often you think that statement is true of you. Please use the 9-point scale in the box (1-never; 3-rarely; 5-sometimes; 7-often; 9-always).

Place your answer in the corresponding gray box.

No	Question	A_E	A_A	C_E	C_M
Q17	I know what I want		▓		
Q18	I know what makes me angry	▓			
Q19	I think about how others will respond				▓
Q20	I know when I am upset	▓			
Q21	I know my strengths		▓		
Q22	I think before I speak				▓
Q23	I know what I like to do		▓		
Q24	I consider another person's perspective before acting				▓
Q25	I know what makes me afraid	▓			
Q26	I am aware of my surroundings				▓
Q27	I know what makes me cry	▓			
Q28	I can tell how others are feeling			▓	
Q29	I know my weaknesses		▓		
Q30	I understand the different viewpoints of others			▓	
Q31	I consider the beliefs of others			▓	
Q32	I value opinions that are different from my own			▓	
	Total Score				
		A_E	A_A	C_E	C_M

Appendix 2

Social Emotional Competence Inventory
Please use the 9-point scale in the box (1-never; 3-rarely; 5-sometimes; 7-often; 9-always).

Question	Answer
1. People share their feelings with him/her	
2. She/he ends up being the leader	
3. She/he takes the lead role	
4. She/he makes an effort to start friendships	
5. She/he influences others	
6. She/he is comfortable meeting new people	
7. She/he stays in regular contact with his/her friends	
8. Is confident when coordinating others.	
9. She/he is trustworthy	
10. She/he is the decision-maker of the group	
11. She/he enjoys taking charge of groups	
12. She/he shares his/her feelings and thoughts with friends	
13. People come to him/her when they are upset	
14. She/he can persuade others to do what he/she wants	
15. She/he has many close friends	
16. Motivates others to achieve performance.	

For each statement, please indicate how often you think that statement is true of you.

Please use the 9-point scale in the box (1-never; 3-rarely; 5-sometimes; 7-often; 9-always).

Întrebare	Răspuns
17. I know what I want	
18. I know what makes me angry	
19. I think about how others will respond	
20. I know when I am upset	
21. I know my strengths	
22. I think before I speak	
23. I know what I like to do	
24. I consider another person's perspective before acting.	
25. I know what makes me afraid	
26. I am aware of my surroundings	
27. I know what makes me cry	

Întrebare	Răspuns
28. I can tell how others are feeling	
29. I know my weaknesses	
30. I understand the different viewpoints of others	
31. I consider the beliefs of others	
32. I value opinions that are different from my own	

SELF-AWARENESS

Emotions	Items	18	20	25	27	Total
A_E	Answer (1–9)					
Aptitudini	Items	17	21	23	29	Total
A_A	Answer (1–9)					
RESPECTING OTHERS						
Empathy	Items	28	30	31	32	Total
C_E	Answer (1–9)					
Monitoring	Items	19	22	24	26	Total
C_M	Answer (1–9)					
THE CONNECTION WITH OTHERS						
Sociability	Items	4	6	7	15	Total
N_S	Answer (1–9)					
Intimacy	Items	1	9	12	13	Total
N_I	Answer (1–9)					
ORIENTATION TOWARDS CHANGE						
Initiative	Items	2	3	10	11	Total
I_I	Answer (1–9)					
Inspiration	Items	5	8	14	16	Total
I_S	Answer (1–9)					

Author details

Elena-Ramona Richiteanu-Năstase, Monica-Elisabeta Paduraru
and Camelia Staiculescu*
Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania

*Address all correspondence to: camelia.staiculescu@dppd.ase.ro

IntechOpen

References

[1] Sander P, Sanders L. Gender, psychology students and higher education. Psychology Learning and Teaching. 2007;**6**(1):33-36. DOI: 10.2304/plat.2007.6.1.33

[2] Ting S-MR, Robinson TL. First-year academic success: A prediction combining cognitive and psychosocial variables for Caucasian and African American students. Journal of College Student Development. 1998;**39**(6): 599-610

[3] Tobey PE. Cognitive and Noncognitive Factors as Predictors of Retention among Academically at-Risk College Students: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach. [dissertation]. California: University of Southern California; 1996

[4] Foster TR. Comparative Study of the Study Skills, Self-Concept, Academic Achievement and Adjustment to College of Freshman Intercollegiate Athletes and Non- athletes. [thesis]. Indiana: Purdue University; 1998

[5] Wolfe RN, Johnson SD. Personality as a predictor of college performance. Educational & Psychological Measurement. 1995;**55**(2):177-185. DOI: 10.1177/0013164495055 002002

[6] Fazio NM, Palm LJ. Attributional style, depression, and grade point averages of college students. Psychological Reports. 1998;**83**(1): 159-162. DOI: 10.2466/PR0.83.5. 159-162

[7] Portela-Pino I, Alvariñas-Villaverde M, Pino-Juste M. Socio-emotional skills in adolescence. Influence of personal and extracurricular variables. International Journal of Environmental Research and

Public Health. 2021;**18**(9):4811. DOI: 10.3390/ijerph18094811

[8] Jr CPT, McCrae RR. Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) and NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) Manual. Odessa-Florida: Psychological Assessment Resources; 1992. p. 101

[9] Barrick MR, Mount MK. The big five personality dimensions and job performance: A meta-analysis. Personnel Psychology. 1991;**44**(1):1-26. DOI: 10.1111/j.1744-6570.1991. tb00688.x

[10] Poropat AE. A meta-analysis of the five-factor model of personality and academic performance. Psychological Bulletin. 2009;**135**(2):322-338. DOI: 10.1037/a0014996

[11] Trapmann S, Hell B, Hirn JOW, Schuler H. Meta-analysis of the relationship between the big five and academic success at university. Zeitschrift für Psychologie/Journal of Psychology. 2007;**215**(2):132-151. DOI: 10.1027/0044-3409.215.2.132

[12] Alarcon GM, Edwards JM. Ability and motivation: Assessing individual factors that contribute to university retention. Journal of Educational Psychology. 2013;**105**(1):129-137. DOI: 10.1037/a0028496

[13] Judge TA, Heller D, Mount MK. Five-factor model of personality and job satisfaction: A meta-analysis. Journal of Applied Psychology. 2002;**87**(3): 530-541. DOI: 10.1037/0021-9010. 87.3.530

[14] Griffin B, Hesketh B. Why openness to experience is not a good predictor of job performance. International Journal of

Selection and Assessment. 2004;**12**(3): 243-251. DOI: 10.1111/j.0965-075X. 2004.278_1.x

[15] Peeters MA, Van Tuijl HF, Rutte CG, Reymen IM. Personality and team performance: A meta-analysis. European Journal of Personality. 2006;**20**(5):377-396. DOI: 10.1002/ per.588

[16] Lechner CM, Bender J, Brandt ND, Rammstedt B. Two forms of social inequality in Students' socio-emotional skills: Do the levels of big five personality traits and their associations with academic achievement depend on parental socioeconomic status? Frontiers in Psychology. 2021;**12**:679438. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.679438

[17] Sorrenti G, Zölitz U, Ribeaud D, Eisner M. The causal impact of socio-emotional skills training on educational success. SSRN Electronic Journal. 2020; **8197**:1-86. DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.3562877

[18] Thorndike EL. Intelligence and its uses. Harper Magazine. 1920;**140**: 227-235

[19] Wechsler D. Non-intellective factors in general intelligence. Psychological Bulletin. 1940;**37**:444-445

[20] Gardner H. Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice. New York: Basic Books; 1993. p. 320

[21] Payne WL. A Study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence; Self-Integration; Relating to Fear, Pain and Desire. [thesis]. Cincinnati Ohio: The Union Institute; 1985

[22] Salovey P, Mayer JD. Emotional intelligence. Imagination, Cognition and Personality. 1990;**9**(3):185-211. DOI: 10.2190/DUGG-P24E-52WK-6CDG

[23] Goleman D. Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More than IQ. New York: Bantam Books; 1995. p. 352

[24] Boyatzis RE, Sala F. The emotional competence inventory (ECI). In: Geher G, editor. Measuring Emotional Intelligence: Common Ground and Controversy. New York: Nova Science Publishers; 2004. pp. 147-180

[25] Boyatzis RE. The Creation of the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) [Research Report]. Pennsylvania: Hay Group; 2007

[26] Petrides V, Furnham A. On the dimensional structure of emotional intelligence. Personality and Individual Differences. 2000;**29**(2):313-320. DOI: 10.1016/S0191-8869(99) 00195-6

[27] Petrides KV, Pita R, Kokkinaki F. The location of trait emotional intelligence in personality factor space. British Journal of Psychology. 2007;**98**: 273-289. DOI: 10.1348/000712606X12 0618

[28] Richițeanu-Năstase E-R. Consiliere și orientare pentru carieră și viață. Bucharest: ASE; 2019. p. 284

[29] Vaida S, Seal C, Naumann S. Translation and adaptation of the social emotional competence development scale. International Journal of Management and Business Studies. 2013; **3**(2):142-146

[30] Goleman D, Boyatzis R, McKe A. Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence. Bosoton: Harvard Business School Press; 2002. p. 352

[31] The Royal Society's response to the White Paper: The future of higher education [Internet]. 2003. Available

from: https://royalsociety.org/~/media/
Royal_Society_Content/policy/publica
tions/2003/9812.pdf [Accessed: June 22,
2023]

[32] Cipriano C, Taylor JJ, Weissberg R,
Blyth D, Mckown C. Catalyzing Future
Directions of SEL Assessment [Summary
Report]. Chicago: Collaborative for
Academic, Social, and Emotional
Learning; 2020

[33] Devi MRR, Devaki PR,
Madhavan M, Saikumar P. The effect of
counselling on the academic
performance of college students. Journal
of Clinical and Diagnostic Research.
2013;**7**(6):1086-1088. DOI: 10.7860/
JCDR/2013/5247.3054

[34] Goss S, Adebowale O. Counselling
and guidance in Africa. British Journal of
Guidance & Counselling. 2014;**42**(4):
353-358. DOI: 10.1080/03069885.
2014.918363