

Effectiveness of Training in Empathy, Friendship, and Solidarity Competencies among Secondary School Adolescents

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Abstract

Socioemotional education during adolescence holds great importance within the school context due to its accessibility and universality. However, there are not many empirically validated programs integrated into the tutorial action plan of Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE). The aim of the present study was to analyze the effectiveness of the "Potencia tus Habilidades" program in three competencies addressed in the first year of CSE. A non-equivalent control group pretest–posttest design was employed, following a split-plot design for data analysis. The final sample consisted of 313 adolescents aged between 11 and 13 years. Empathy, friendship, and solidarity were assessed. The intervention program was implemented within the framework of tutorial action across eight sessions per term for each competency. Results showed statistically significant improvements in the trained competencies, although no changes were observed in the conflict and balance dimensions of friendship. Participants' evaluations of usability, acceptance, and satisfaction were highly positive. The importance of implementing programs aimed at promoting adolescents' personal and interpersonal development is highlighted.

Keywords: empathy; friendship; solidarity; socio-emotional education; adolescents.

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Eficacia del entrenamiento en competencias de empatía, amistad y solidaridad en adolescentes de secundaria

Resumen

La educación socioemocional en la adolescencia cobra una gran relevancia en el contexto escolar por su accesibilidad y universalidad. Sin embargo, no existen muchos programas validados empíricamente que estén integrados en el plan de acción tutorial de la educación secundaria (ESO). El objetivo del presente estudio ha sido analizar la eficacia del programa "Potencia tus Habilidades" en tres de las competencias que se trabajan en primero de la ESO. Se utilizó un diseño de grupo control no equivalente con prueba previa y posterior, de acuerdo con un diseño para análisis de datos split-plot. La muestra final ha estado compuesta por 313 adolescentes de entre 11 y 13 años. Se evaluó la empatía, la amistad y la solidaridad. El programa de intervención ha sido implementando en el marco de la acción tutorial durante ocho sesiones al trimestre para cada uno de los conceptos estudiados. Los resultados han mostrado una mejora estadísticamente significativa en las competencias entrenadas. Sin embargo, no han aparecido cambios en las dimensiones de conflicto y balance del concepto amistad. La valoración realizada por el alumnado participante sobre el programa de intervención en sus dimensiones de usabilidad, aceptación y satisfacción ha sido altamente positiva. Se ha resaltado la importancia de la puesta en marcha de programas que lleven a cabo intervenciones destinadas al desarrollo personal e interpersonal en población adolescente.

Palabras clave: empatía; amistad; solidaridad; educación socioemocional; adolescentes.

Among the components that foster the development of a healthy personal and social identity during adolescence, at least two main axes can be identified: an intrapersonal axis (e.g., self-esteem and self-knowledge) and an interpersonal axis (e.g., socioemotional competencies aimed at optimizing interpersonal relationships). Within this interpersonal axis, empathy, friendship, and solidarity are included—psychosocial dimensions closely linked to prosocial behavior and to the promotion of positive interpersonal relationships (Dermody et al., 2022; Pacheco et al., 2013; Tur-Porcar et al., 2016). Adolescence is a critical stage of transition and maturation involving profound physical, emotional, and social changes (Palacios, 2019). It represents a pathway toward one of the most important developmental processes at this stage of life: the construction of personal and social identity (Gaete, 2015).

Empathy, understood as the cognitive–emotional capacity to adopt another person's perspective (Cuff et al., 2016; Eklund & Meranius, 2021; Shamay-Tsoory et al., 2009; Zaki & Ochsner, 2012); friendship, as a fundamental bond for personal and social growth (Romero-Iribas & Camilli-Trujillo, 2023); and solidarity, as a disposition oriented toward collaboration with others and engagement in helping behaviors (Cho et al., 2022; Tomasini, 2021), have been identified as protective factors. These competencies are capable of inhibiting antisocial behaviors and promoting both personal and social adjustment (Carlo et al., 2014; Dillon-Owens et al., 2022), as well as social and emotional support among peers (García-Madruga et al., 2019; Morales et al., 2025).

It is expected that promoting this set of socioemotional competencies (i.e., empathy, friendship, and solidarity) during adolescence will not only generate helping behaviors toward others but will also contribute to enhanced well-being (Barata et al., 2024), foster the development of positive interpersonal relationships (Dillon-Owens et al., 2022), improve friendship quality (Miklikowska et al., 2022), and promote academic success (Van der Graaff et al., 2018). Moreover, as evidenced by more recent research (Fonseca-Pedrero et al., 2023; Scaini et al., 2022), these initiatives enable adolescents to face new challenges and prevent future emotional problems (Schiele et al., 2025), such as bullying (Larrain & Garaigordobil, 2020; Pérez-Esteban et al., 2020), depression (Frey et al., 2020; LoParo et al., 2024), and self-harm and suicidal behaviors (Carretero et al., 2024; Eslava et al., 2024; López-Villalobos et al., 2025), among others.

An appropriate setting for learning and developing these socioemotional competencies is the school, a key environment for socialization and for the development of knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills that serve as protective factors against potential difficulties and promote adjustment and well-being among children and adolescents (Francisco et al., 2025; Garaigordobil, 2023). Research on the effectiveness of school-based socioemotional programs has demonstrated a positive impact on the promotion of adolescents' mental health (Cefai et al., 2022; Colomeischi et al., 2022). These findings also support the role of contemporary schools as teaching–learning contexts that extend beyond strictly academic content (Sklad et al., 2012).

In Spain and internationally, various socioemotional intervention tools targeting children and adolescents in school settings have been developed. A comprehensive overview of these programs can be found in the reviews by Clemente et al. (2023) and Lynn et al. (2024). Within the national context, several

socioemotional programs have demonstrated their effectiveness. These include the SEA program (Social, Emotional, and Mindfulness Skills Development for Youth) by Rodríguez-Ledo et al. (2018), which reported improvements in interpersonal and adjustment variables, socioemotional competence, emotional expression, and social adjustment; the PREDEMA program (Emotional Education Program for Adolescents) by Postigo-Zegarra et al. (2019), which showed improvements in emotional understanding, the development of a positive personality, and problem management; and the INTEMOR program by Sigüenza-Marin et al. (2019), which reported improvements in emotional problem-coping skills.

Despite these classroom-based intervention proposals, there remains a limited number of validated socioemotional education programs at the secondary education level, and few have been empirically tested (Bisquerra et al., 2015; Garaigordobil, 2018). Conducting further research to examine the effectiveness of these programs in educational contexts will contribute valuable evidence to support decision-making based on empirical findings.

The present study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention targeting three socioemotional competencies (i.e., empathy, friendship, and solidarity) included in the program “*Potencia tus Habilidades*” (“Enhance Your Skills”), a tool designed to promote the learning and development of socioemotional skills and attitudes within the tutorial action plan for adolescents enrolled in Compulsory Secondary Education (Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, ESO). This program therefore benefits from a structured and organized space within the ESO curriculum.

Based on previous findings from socioemotional competence development programs (Lee et al., 2023; Postigo-Zegarra et al., 2019; Rodríguez-Ledo et al., 2018; Sigüenza-Marin et al., 2019), it is hypothesized that a significant improvement in empathy, friendship, and solidarity will be observed following the implementation of the program, both in comparison with pre-intervention measures and relative to a control group.

Method

Participants

The initial sample consisted of 400 first-year students of Compulsory Secondary Education (Educación Secundaria Obligatoria; ESO) from the five public secondary schools in La Línea de la Concepción, a city located in southern Spain.

The sample was drawn from a local context characterized by a predominantly lower–middle socioeconomic status, a high unemployment rate (28.6%), and an average gross income of €25,600 per capita. Participants' families were mainly intact families, with occupations primarily in the primary sector (i.e., fishing) and, to a greater extent, in the tertiary sector (i.e., hospitality, retail, transportation, cleaning, and warehousing) (Instituto Nacional de Estadística [INE], 2023).

The final sample comprised 313 adolescents (139 boys, 44.4%), aged between 11 and 13 years ($M = 12.04$, $SD = 0.44$). For each treatment condition, an intervention group (IG) and a corresponding control group (CG) were established. Specifically, the Empathy intervention group included 45 participants (44.4% boys; age: $M = 11.98$, $SD = 0.34$) and the Empathy

control group included 44 participants (47.7% boys; age: $M = 11.91$, $SD = 0.56$). The Friendship intervention group consisted of 38 participants (44.7% boys; age: $M = 12.05$, $SD = 0.39$) and the Friendship control group included 42 participants (38.1% boys; age: $M = 11.88$, $SD = 0.50$). Finally, the Solidarity intervention group comprised 72 participants (38.9% boys; age: $M = 12.13$, $SD = 0.37$), and the Solidarity control group included 72 participants (51.4% boys; age: $M = 12.14$, $SD = 0.39$).

Each intervention group received the corresponding intervention module separately (i.e., empathy, friendship, or solidarity). A priori power analysis conducted using G*Power software (Faul et al., 2007) indicated an approximate sample size of 52 participants per group to detect statistically significant effects.

Design, Variables, and Control Conditions

A non-equivalent control group design with pretest and posttest measures was implemented (Shadish et al., 2002), following a split-plot data analysis design, as described below. The corresponding classrooms were selected and randomly assigned to intervention or control conditions for each socioemotional competence.

The dependent variables were Empathy, Friendship, and Solidarity. Each variable was addressed in a different academic term and with different intervention and control groups. Assessments were conducted before (pretest) and after (posttest) each intervention. The classroom group was used as the unit of selection for random assignment. Control of extraneous variables was ensured through group randomization, the formation of homogeneous groups, and consistency in conditions, methodology, and program implementation.

Instruments

Cognitive and Affective Empathy Test (TECA; Pérez & Pinto, 2009)

This instrument assesses empathy from two perspectives: cognitive and affective. It consists of 33 items with five response options covering four dimensions. The cognitive scale includes Perspective Taking (ability to understand another person's point of view; 8 items) and Emotional Understanding (understanding what another person is feeling; 9 items). The affective scale includes Empathic Stress (tendency to experience negative emotions when others suffer; 9 items) and Empathic Joy (tendency to experience positive emotions when something positive happens to another person; 7 items). The original version reported a Cronbach's alpha of .86 for the total scale, with reliability coefficients ranging from .70 to .78 across the four dimensions.

Friendship Scale for Children (et al., 2013)

This is the Spanish adaptation of the Friendship Qualities Scale, version 4.1 (Bukowski et al., 1994). It is a self-report measure designed to assess the quality of friendship relationships in children and adolescents. The scale comprises 33 items with four response options grouped into six subscales: Companionship (amount of voluntary time friends spend together; 5 items), Balance (reciprocity within the friendship; 3 items), Help (mutual care and support in conflict situations; 7 items), Security (perception of the friend as reliable and trustworthy; 5 items), Closeness (feelings of affection, unity, and priority within the friendship; 7 items), and Conflict (arguments or

disagreements within the friendship; 6 items). Reported reliability indices for the original version were: Companionship = .61, Balance = .65, Help = .80, Security = .70, Closeness = .81, and Conflict = .80.

Solidarity Attitude Questionnaire (CAS; Ortega & Mínguez, 1992)

This instrument consists of 18 items designed to assess attitudes toward solidarity in adolescents, particularly in educational contexts. Responses are recorded on a Likert-type scale indicating degree of agreement or disagreement with statements related to solidarity. The CAS has demonstrated adequate reliability and validity in previous studies, with an internal consistency coefficient of $\alpha = .87$ in the original version.

Training Usability, Acceptance, and Satisfaction Measure (Pai & Huang, 2011)

This questionnaire consists of 12 items with five response options grouped into the following dimensions: Information/Content Quality (2 items; Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$), Service/Implementer Quality (2 items; $\alpha = .85$), Method/Procedure Quality (2 items; $\alpha = .85$), Perceived Usefulness (2 items; $\alpha = .87$), Perceived Ease of Use (2 items; $\alpha = .92$), and Intention to Use (2 items; $\alpha = .92$). Additionally, two items were included: one assessing overall satisfaction (i.e., "I am satisfied with having participated in the *Potencia tus Habilidades* program"), rated on a five-point scale, and another assessing overall program evaluation (i.e., "Rate the *Potencia tus Habilidades* program from 1 to 10," where 1 = very negative and 10 = very positive).

Procedure

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the UNED (reference: 01-SISH-PSI-2025). Authorization was obtained from the school management teams to conduct the assessments and implement the program in the participating schools. Classroom groups were randomly assigned to intervention or control conditions using a computerized randomization program (PsyResearch Randomizer). This allocation was based on the five schools and their 30 first-year ESO classrooms. For each competence, random assignment resulted in two intervention and two control groups for empathy, two intervention and two control groups for friendship, and three intervention and three control groups for solidarity.

After group assignment, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Inclusion criteria were voluntary participation, informed consent from participants and their legal guardians, regular school attendance, enrollment in first-year ESO, and age between 11 and 13 years. Exclusion criteria included intellectual disability, severe neurodevelopmental disorders (e.g., autism spectrum disorder, ADHD), or lack of consent. Participants who did not complete all intervention sessions or failed to complete pre- and/or post-intervention assessments were also excluded ($n = 87$; 21.75%).

An informational meeting was subsequently held with families to explain the purpose of the study and obtain informed consent from both parents/legal guardians and participants.

The study was conducted over one academic year and divided into three terms: empathy training was delivered in the first term, friendship training in the second term, and solidarity training in the third term, with different groups for each

variable. Each intervention followed three phases: (1) pre-intervention assessment, (2) implementation of the intervention in the experimental groups (eight sessions), and (3) post-intervention assessment.

Intervention

Potencia tus Habilidades Program

The training of these three competencies is part of the *Potencia tus Habilidades* (“Enhance Your Skills”) program, which is currently undergoing validation. This program is a universal and longitudinal socioemotional education intervention designed to be implemented within the tutorial action plan across all years of Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO). It is intended to be delivered in a dynamic, simple, and practical manner by teaching staff.

The program addresses various psychological contents throughout the ESO stage, including prosocial behavior, self-evaluation and expectations, emotional intelligence, coping strategies, problem solving, and social skills, all framed within a cognitive-behavioral training model. The present study reports on the intervention applied to three competencies included in the program: empathy, friendship, and solidarity.

The intervention consisted of eight tutorial sessions of approximately 50 minutes each, delivered weekly over the academic year. All sessions were implemented by the same researcher together with the classroom tutor, who had been previously trained. The methodology incorporates new technologies and relies entirely on audiovisual materials. The program includes four group-based theoretical sessions, two individual sessions focused on cognitive-conceptual activities, and two sessions with behavioral and experiential components. Figure 1 presents a roadmap of the program for each competence addressed.

Data Analysis

First, assumptions for statistical analyses (i.e., independence, normality of the dependent variables, and homogeneity of variances) were examined. Descriptive analyses of the study variables were then conducted. To analyze pretest scores in the

intervention and control groups, individual ANOVAs were performed. When pretest differences between groups were detected, ANCOVAs were conducted to determine whether these differences remained significant after adjusting for pretest scores as a covariate.

Subsequently, the effect of the intervention program was examined using mixed repeated-measures ANOVAs, with within-subject variables including Total Empathy, Perspective Taking, Emotional Understanding, Empathic Stress, Empathic Joy, Total Friendship, Companionship, Help, Security, Closeness, Conflict, Balance, and Solidarity. Partial eta squared (η^2p) was used as the effect size index. Intervention conditions corresponded to empathy (IG-E), friendship (IG-F), and solidarity (IG-S). All analyses were conducted using SPSS statistical software (version 27.0).

Results

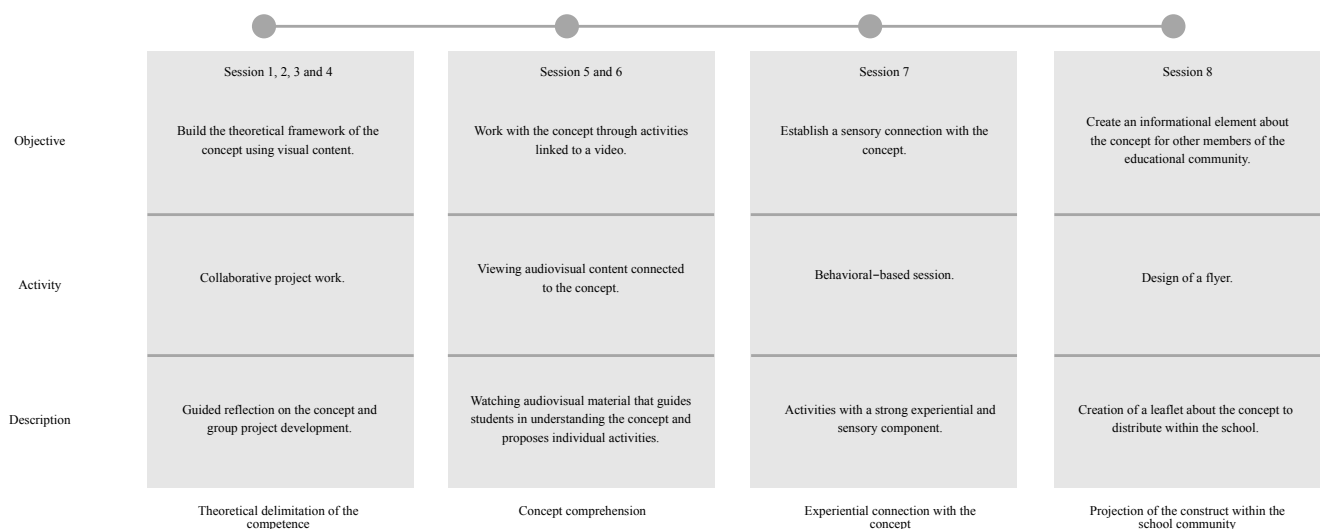
Basic Descriptive Statistics and Assumption Testing

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics (i.e., means and standard deviations) for the scores of the constructs under study and their respective dimensions.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) of the study variables by group and pre- and post-intervention conditions

	Intervention group (IG)		Control group (CG)	
	Pre (n = 45)	Post (n = 45)	Pre (n = 44)	Post (n = 44)
Empathy	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Perspective Taking	26.67 (4.85)	32.31 (4.61)	27.52 (4.93)	27.66 (4.14)
Emotional Understanding	29.89 (4.34)	34.60 (5.01)	28.86 (4.18)	29.68 (4.51)
Empathic Stress	26.91 (4.65)	30.69 (6.14)	28.25 (5.64)	28.66 (4.56)
Empathic Joy	27.33 (3.72)	31.20 (3.88)	27.80 (4.58)	28.00 (4.78)
Total Empathy	110.78 (11.94)	129.02 (13.86)	112.39 (14.39)	114.00 (12.64)

Figure 1. Road map with program sessions, objectives, and activities



	Intervention group (IG)		Control group (CG)	
	Pre (n = 38)	Post (n = 38)	Pre (n = 42)	Post (n = 42)
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Friendship				
Companionship	14.55 (1.75)	17.66 (2.38)	16.05 (2.27)	15.69 (2.27)
Help	21.26 (3.37)	25.29 (3.32)	22.07 (4.71)	22.31 (4.72)
Security	14.37 (2.52)	16.58 (3.11)	15.74 (2.56)	15.10 (2.28)
Closeness	20.92 (3.19)	24.53 (3.07)	22.48 (3.25)	22.24 (2.82)
Conflict	11.47 (3.55)	11.13 (3.80)	11.64 (3.04)	11.29 (3.39)
Balance	6.50 (2.38)	6.47 (2.41)	6.83 (2.51)	7.00 (2.68)
Total	89.08 (7.86)	101.66 (10.06)	94.81 (9.57)	93.38 (7.34)
	Intervention group (IG)		Control group (CG)	
	Pre (n = 72)	Post (n = 72)	Pre (n = 72)	Post (n = 72)
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Solidarity	8.24 (5.81)	18.75 (7.37)	7.65 (8.01)	7.86 (7.23)

Note. Pre.: Pre-assessment; Post: Post-assessment; M: Mean; SD: Standard Deviation.

The results obtained from the Acceptance/Usability/Satisfaction questionnaire for the intervention program were as follows: Information Quality ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.59$), Service Quality ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.61$), Method Quality ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.60$), Perceived Usefulness ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.76$), Perceived Ease of Use ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.58$), Intention to Use ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.72$), Satisfaction Level ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 0.66$), and Overall Evaluation ($M = 9.16$, $SD = 1.11$).

Comparison of Dependent Variables at Pretest Between Intervention and Control Groups

Results from individual ANOVAs indicated equality of means between the intervention and control groups for Total Empathy ($F = 0.33$, $p = .57$), Perspective Taking ($F = 0.68$, $p = .41$), Empathic Understanding ($F = 1.28$, $p = .26$), Empathic Stress ($F = 1.50$, $p = .22$), Empathic Joy ($F = 0.27$, $p = .60$), Solidarity ($F = 0.25$, $p = .62$), and for the Friendship dimensions of Help ($F = 0.78$, $p = .38$), Conflict ($F = 0.05$, $p = .82$), and Balance ($F = 0.37$, $p = .54$).

Significant differences between control and intervention groups emerged for Total Friendship (MCG = 94.81, MIG = 89.08, $F = 8.45$, $p = .005$), Companionship (MCG = 16.05, MIG = 14.55, $F = 10.69$, $p = .002$), Security (MCG = 15.74, MIG = 14.37, $F = 5.80$, $p = .02$), and Closeness (MCG = 22.48, MIG = 20.92, $F = 4.65$, $p = .03$).

ANCOVA results for these dimensions indicated that pre-post differences could not be explained solely by baseline differences; therefore, the intervention had a significant impact on the intervention group: Total Friendship ($F = 47.54$, $p < .001$), Companionship ($F = 35.05$, $p < .001$), Security ($F = 14.44$, $p = .001$), and Closeness ($F = 38.74$, $p < .001$).

Intervention Effects

Table 2 presents the results of the repeated-measures ANOVA and the corresponding effect sizes of the intervention. The findings reveal a significant interaction between the within-subjects variable (time) and group membership for all variables examined, with the exception of the Friendship dimensions Conflict and Balance.

Moreover, changes over time differed significantly between groups across the remaining variables, indicating that the intervention influenced participants' scores. As shown in the descriptive statistics table, these changes occurred primarily in the intervention group. Effect size estimates suggest that the

Table 2 . Repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA)

	Within-subjects effects			Between-subjects effects			Interaction		
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2p	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2p	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2p
Empathy									
Perspective taking	35.39	< .001	.29	4.91	.03	.05	32.13	< .001	.27
Emotional Understanding	38.98	< .001	.31	12.20	< .001	.12	19.33	< .001	.18
Empathic stress	19.21	< .001	.18	.12	.73	< .001	12.43	< .001	.12
Empathic joy	24.71	< .001	.22	2.90	.10	.03	20.00	< .001	.19
Total empathy	97.84	< .001	.53	6.54	.01	.07	68.62	< .001	.44
	Within-subjects effects			Between-subjects effects			Interaction		
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2p	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2p	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2p
Friendship									
Companionship	32.00	< .001	.29	.31	.60	.001	50.80	< .001	.40
Help	50.48	< .001	.39	1.60	.21	.02	39.83	< .001	.34
Security	6.48	< .001	.08	.01	.91	.001	21.47	< .001	.22
Closeness	34.01	< .001	.30	.34	.56	.001	44.31	< .001	.36
Conflict	2.26	.14	.03	.05	.83	.001	.001	.97	.001
Balance	0.09	.77	.001	.72	.40	.01	.16	.70	.001
Total	38.71	< .001	.33	.53	.47	.01	61.10	< .001	.44
	Within-subjects effects			Between-subjects effects			Interaction		
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2p	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2p	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2p
Solidarity	109.4	< .001	.43	28.40	< .001	.17	101.06	< .001	.42

Note. *F* = *F* statistic; *p* = significance level; η^2p = partial eta squared.

Figure 2. Matrix of estimated marginal means plots for the empathy variable

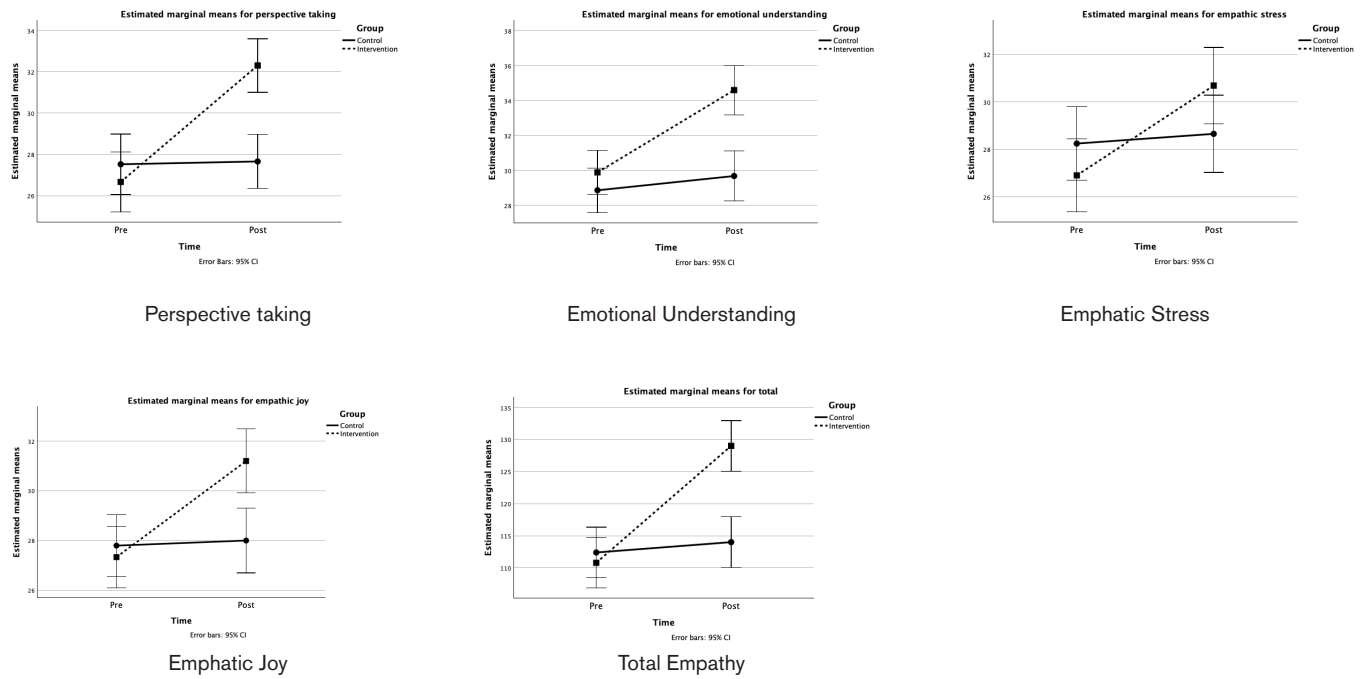


Figure 3. Matrix of estimated marginal means for the friendship variable

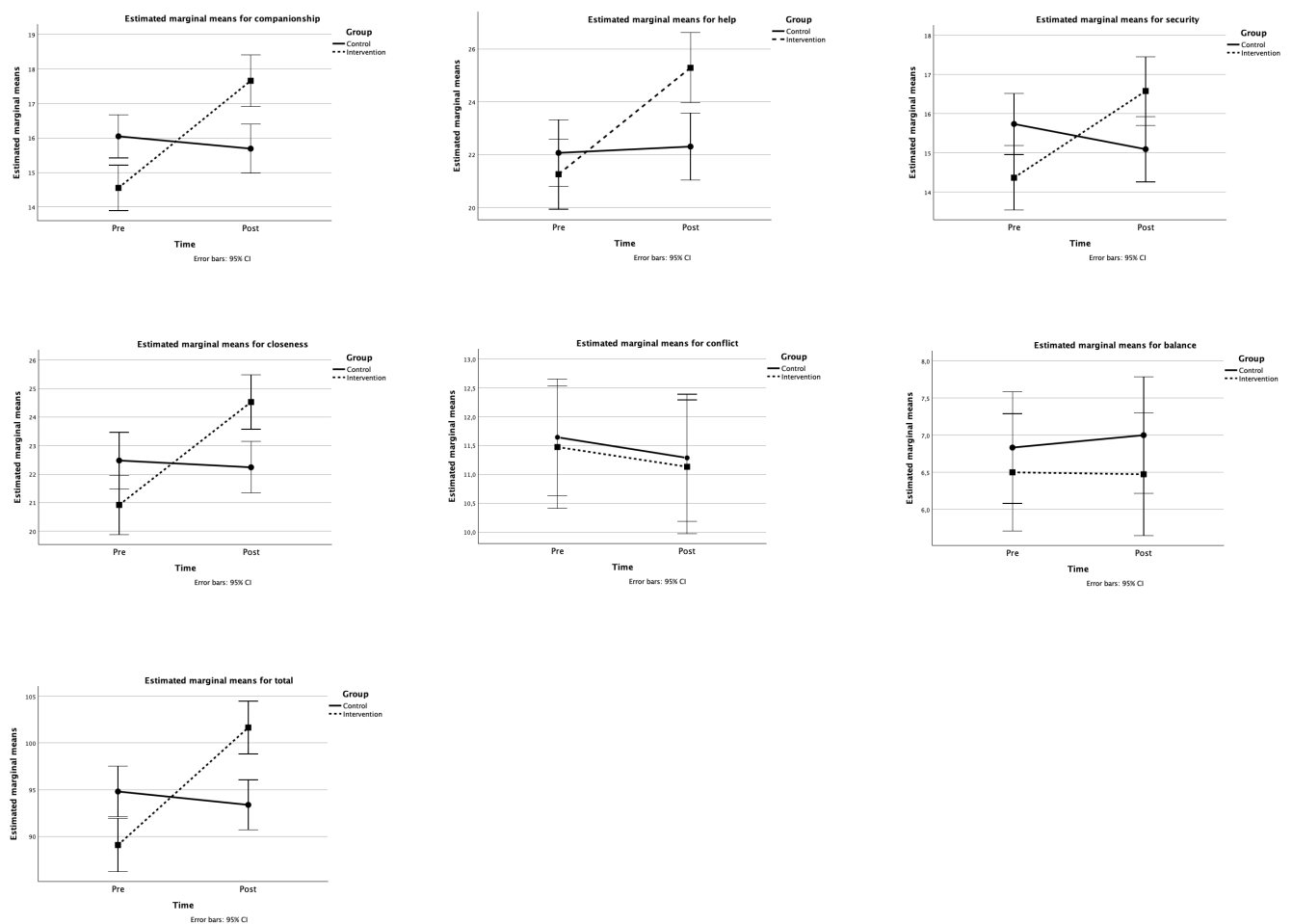
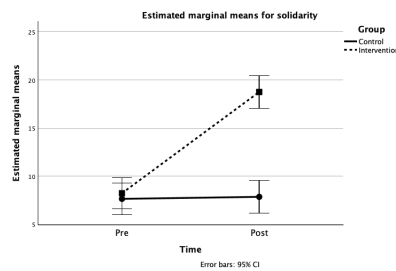


Figure 4. Estimated marginal means for the solidarity variable



intervention had a meaningful impact, with partial eta squared (η^2p) values ranging from medium ($\geq .06$) to large ($\geq .14$).

Estimated Marginal Means

Figures 2, 3, and 4 display the estimated marginal means for the intervention and control groups across each dimension examined.

Visual inspection of the figures illustrates the changes over time in the intervention group compared to the control group. Specifically, the intervention group shows an increase in scores from pretest to posttest, whereas the control group exhibits stability or a slight decrease across the two time points.

Discussion

The main objective of this study was to analyze the effectiveness of the “*Enhance Your Skills*” program in the development of socio-emotional competencies—specifically empathy, solidarity, and friendship—among first-year secondary education students (ESO) in a city in southern Spain. In line with the proposed hypothesis, the results indicate that the program generated significant changes in the intervention group compared to the control group across all the variables explored, with the exception of the *Conflict* and *Balance* dimensions of the friendship construct. Contrary to expectations, the program did not show significant changes in these dimensions when compared to the control group. In the specific case of this study, the absence of targeted activities within the program design may explain this outcome.

The conclusions of this research are consistent with previous studies showing that interventions aimed at improving prosocial behavior and its components produce positive and statistically significant effects in participants (Shin & Lee, 2021). Promoting empathy facilitates the emergence of prosocial behaviors in adolescents (Cardona-Isaza et al., 2023; Fu et al., 2022; Harris et al., 2023), enhancing interpersonal relationships with peers and activating processes related to perspective-taking and more positive conflict resolution strategies (Wang & Qi, 2023). The program validated in this study improved friendship relationships. Consistent with prior research, improvements in friendship quality have a positive impact on reducing adolescent victimization and serve as a predictor of its decrease (Cao et al., 2024). Therefore, the implementation of activities and content that promote improvements in friendship quality during adolescence is particularly relevant.

Similarly, positive effects were observed regarding the program’s impact on the *Solidarity* competence. The promotion of solidarity has been shown to foster the development of positive interpersonal relationships and reduce negative behaviors, providing tools that enhance prosocial behavior and support positive personality development in adolescents (de Castro, 2008).

Overall, the results support the effectiveness of the “*Enhance Your Skills*” program in developing socio-emotional competencies related to empathy, friendship, and solidarity within the school context. These findings are consistent with previous research (Cefai et al., 2022; Colomeischi et al., 2022; Dowling et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024), which identifies socio-emotional skills programs as valid strategies for promoting adolescents’ personal and social well-being. Specifically, the results of the present study align with those of Durlak et al. (2022), Falcó et al. (2020), Pedrini et al. (2022), and Pollak et al. (2023), among others, which demonstrate the effectiveness of socio-emotional education programs in the prevention, protection, and socio-personal development of adolescents.

Strengths and Limitations

In summary, the data from this study are consistent with previous research (Francisco et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2023), highlighting the importance of implementing personal and interpersonal development programs in secondary education, particularly through tutorial action plans. This context facilitates the accessibility and normalization of socio-emotional education, contributing to students’ individual and social growth. Furthermore, the results related to the acceptability, satisfaction, and usability of the intervention program reveal a positive response from students toward this type of intervention.

Despite the positive findings, this study presents several limitations. First, the sample size limits the representativeness and generalizability of the results (Murray, 2009). Future studies are encouraged to expand the sample by including schools from different geographical areas to increase representativeness. Second, although prosocial behavior is closely related to empathy, friendship, and solidarity, it was not directly assessed; this dimension should be included in future research. Third, the absence of significant changes in the *Conflict* and *Balance* dimensions of the friendship construct suggests the need to incorporate specific actions aimed at promoting change in these areas. Additionally, it would be relevant to explore the program’s differential effectiveness by gender, as well as across different cultural contexts, including other informants such as teachers or family members.

Conclusions

Given the impact of these competencies on adolescent development, it is essential to implement educational programs within the framework of secondary school tutoring. Schools provide a normalized, accessible, structured, and formal environment that supports the systematic development of these skills, contributing to improved psychological health and well-being. The interpersonal space of the classroom should become a setting in which students can enhance their socio-emotional competencies and achieve healthy personality development through interaction with peers, who act as facili-

tators of teaching–learning processes and their internalization.

Finally, to ensure the success of this type of program, the active involvement of the educational institution is essential. Teacher training in socio-emotional aspects and the transversal participation of the entire teaching staff constitute key factors for effective implementation. Future studies will analyze other socio-emotional competencies included in the “*Enhance Your Skills*” program for advanced secondary education levels, assessing their effectiveness as tools for personal and interpersonal development.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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