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Development of a Scale to Assess Socioemotional Skills in Argentine Children Aged 9 to 12 Years

Desarrollo de una Escala para Evaluar Habilidades Socioemocionales en Niños Argentinos de 9 a 12 años

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Abstract

Socioemotional skills allow us to understand and manage emotions, to set and reach positive goals, to maintain positive relationships and to make responsible decisions. This study aimed to develop and validate a scale to assess these skills from 9 to 12 years old Argentinian children. 263 fourth, fifth and sixth graders (age M = 10 years, 4 months) from Mar del Plata, Argentina answered to the developed items, along with the scales CERQ-k and DERS. The final version contained 26 items, grouped, according to factorial analyses, in four dimensions in line with the background theory (social skills, emotional regulation, growth mindset and self-control). The scale showed adequate internal consistency (α=.87), test-retest stability (*r* = .67), evidence of content validity according to expert judgments, and of criterion validity through associations with adaptive strategies and difficulties in emotional regulation. This scale allows for easy and reliable assessment of socioemotional skills, in research, clinical and educational contexts.

Keywords: *social-emotional skills, growth mindset, emotional regulation, self-control, social skills, assessment, children*

Resumen

Las habilidades socioemocionales permiten comprender y gestionar emociones, establecer y alcanzar metas positivas, mantener relaciones positivas y tomar decisiones responsables. Este estudio tuvo como objetivo desarrollar y validar una escala para evaluar estas habilidades en niños argentinos de 9 a 12 años de edad. Así, 263 estudiantes de cuarto, quinto y sexto grado (promedio de edad M = 10 años, 4 meses) de Mar del Plata, Argentina, respondieron a los ítems desarrollados, junto con las escalas CERQ-k y DERS. La versión final de la escala está compuesta por 26 ítems, agrupados, según análisis factoriales, en cuatro dimensiones alineadas con la teoría de base (habilidades sociales, regulación emocional, mentalidad de crecimiento y autocontrol). La escala mostró una adecuada consistencia interna (α = .87), estabilidad test-retest (*r* = .67), evidencia de validez de contenido según juicios de expertos, y de validez de criterio a través de asociaciones con estrategias adaptativas y dificultades en la regulación emocional. Esta escala permite una evaluación sencilla y confiable de las habilidades socioemocionales, en contextos de investigación, clínicos y educativos.

Palabras clave: *habilidades socioemocionales, mentalidad de crecimiento, regulación emocional, autocontrol, habilidades sociales, evaluación, niños*

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Introduction

School, beyond providing knowledge in areas, such as mathematics and language, provides an environment conducive to establishing friendships, fostering collaboration and developing personal responsibility skills (Zamora et al., 2019). These skills, known as 21st century skills (Schleicher, 2018), are essential for success in adult life. Internationally, social-emotional learning (SEL, *Social and Emotional Learning*) educational programs have emerged (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2015) and categorized as *universal* interventions (since they are implemented in groups that do not present specific problems) that have shown an impact on academic performance, behavioral problems, and subsequent labor and social insertion (Durlak et al., 2022).

SEL has been defined as the process by which people understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2015). The SEL skills model proposed by CASEL (CASEL, 2013) has influenced numerous interventions internationally (Cipriano et al., 2023) and nationally (Canet-Juric et al., 2020). From the effects observed, there is an agreement that programs should focus on both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills and attitudes (Durlak et al., 2022). Thus, different competencies are identified which should be addressed in children's environments (classroom, school, family and community) to favor and lead their comprehensive development (Durlak et al., 2015).

Within these competencies, we can highlight, primarily, Self-Control (SC), which is the process of regulating behavior, emotion and cognition to achieve important goals that conflict with more tempting goals in the present (Duckworth & Steinberg, 2015). Next, Emotional Regulation (ER) and Emotion Awareness, which involves the skills to recognize and identify emotions, and apply strategies and skills to monitor, evaluate, and modify the nature and course of an emotion to accomplish goals (Gross, 2014). Further, Growth Mindset (GM) refers to the belief that both intelligence and other human qualities can be developed through effort and learning (Dweck, 2006). Finally, Social Skills (SS), which are behaviors and abilities that are brought into play in interpersonal situations for an adequate adjustment to the social environment, such as listening, communication and cooperation skills, or the ability to establish and maintain positive relationships (Gresham, 2016).

Although the CASEL organization publishes SEL skills assessment guides (Crowe et al., 2011) and has at least a dozen specific SEL instruments (Humphrey et al., 2011; Gresham et al., 2018), the available instruments sometimes do not allow us to project lines of assessment for each SEL skill, cultural context, age range and/or participant or informant. In Table 1, there is a synthesis of the most used instruments. In general, the most used assessment format is the self-report, given that its ease of administration makes it especially attractive for the school context (del-Valle & Zamora, 2021).

The *Social Skills Improvement System-Rating Scales* (SSIS-RS; Gresham & Elliot, 2008) is a scale for students, teachers and families available in English and Spanish for ages 8 to 18, which assesses SEL skills, and considers teacher-student relationships, peer interactions and academic performance. On the contrary, the *Devereux Student Strengths Assessment Scale* (DESSA; LeBuffe et al., 2009) is a scale for teachers and families that assesses eight competencies that allow the construction of a strengths profile. Among the main advantages of the scale are the speed with

Table 1
Review of assessment instruments for SEL skills.

Authors	Scale name	Age	Variables evaluated	Who responds	Availability in Spanish	Paid/ Free
Gresham and Elliott, 2008	SISS-RS	8-18	Decision-making -Self-awareness -Self-management -SS -Teacher-student relationship -Academic performance	Teachers, parents and students	Yes	Pay
LeBuffe, Shapiro and Naglieri, 2009.	DESSA	4 - 13	-Personal responsibility -Optimistic thinking Goal-directed behavior -Social awareness Decision-making -SS -Self-awareness -Self-management	Teachers, after-school program staff and parents/ guardians	Yes	Pay
Districts Social Emotional Learning Surveys, Gehlbach and Hough, 2018.	CORE	9 - 18	-GM -Self-efficiency -Self-management -Social awareness	Teachers and students	Yes	Free access
Washoe County School District, 2018	WSCD Long	10 - 18	-SS -Responsible decision making Self-awareness of emotions Self-awareness of strengths -SC -Self-management of goals and school work -Social awareness	Students	Yes	Free access
Milicic, Alcalay, Berger and Torretti, 2014.	Social Emotional Learning Self-Report Scale for Children	8 - 12	Self-awareness -Awareness of others -Self-regulation -Peaceful conflict resolution -SS	Students	Yes	Free access
Washoe County School District, 2018	WCSD Student Social and Emotional Competency Assessment Short	10 - 18	-SS -Responsible decision making Self-awareness of emotions Self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses Self-management of emotions Self-management of goals Self-management of school work -Social awareness	Students	Yes	Free access

Note. ER = Emotional Regulation; GM = Growth Mindset; SS = Social Skills; SC = Self-Control.

which it can be administered and the age range it covers. Then, the CORE districts questionnaire (Gehlbach & Hough, 2018) assesses four competencies in children between 9 to 18 years: growth mindset, self-efficacy, self-management and social awareness. Advantages of this scale include its free access and the number of languages in which it is translated. The *WSCD scale* (Washoe County School District, 2018), in its 40-item version, assesses social and emotional competencies based on the strengths that students can report about themselves. Finally, the *Social-Emotional Learning Self-Report Scale for Children* (Milicic et al., 2014) aims to assess SEL competencies in children in both clinical and educational settings.

Although different scales have been developed in recent years and their availability has increased, they have some disadvantages for their application. First, the age range is limited (e.g., scales that cover 8 to 9 years) or, on the contrary, very wide (e.g., 8 to 18 years), without considering the variability associated with development. Likewise, the available instruments assess specific skills and not necessarily SEL skills (e.g., self-esteem, attention, motivation), have not been validated and adapted to the Argentine population (e.g., Socioemotional Learning Self-Report Scale, CORE scales), and finally, not all are available for free download and use. In addition, there are no adaptations that include the age range of 8 to 12 years, which in Argentine education corresponds to the last years of primary school. This is striking, since this period involves evolutionary and contextual changes that lay the foundations for a successful adjustment to early adolescence (Huston & Ripke, 2006).

Given the fundamental role of SEL skills in adapting to the school and social environment (Panayiotou & Humphrey, 2018), it is highly beneficial to possess valid and reliable assessment measures for their evaluation. Therefore, this paper aims to present the development and validation of a self-report questionnaire (ESH-A) designed to assess Socioemotional Skills in Argentine boys and girls between 9 to 12 years old. Three objectives have been outlined: (1) to analyze the development and content validity of the EHS-A through expert-judge analysis, (2) to examine the factor structure of the scale using confirmatory analysis (construct validity) and to verify its reliability and (3) to assess the criterion validity of the instrument by examining its association with theoretically related measures. The expectation is that the EHS-A will prove to be a valid and reliable scale, easily accessible, and adapted to the characteristics of the Argentine child population.

Methods

Design and participants

A correlational, non-experimental, cross-sectional design was used (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014). The sampling was non-probabilistic, purposive. Participants were 117 boys and 146 girls (N = 263) assisting 4th (n = 121), 5th (n = 46) and 6th (n = 96) grades at three private schools in Mar del Plata, Buenos Aires (Argentina). Ages ranged from 8 years, 9 months to 11 years, 9 months (M = 10 years, 4 months). Of the total, 91 children were re-evaluated after 9 months to analyze test-retest reliability. Inclusion criteria were as follows: absence of psychological or psychiatric treatment, normal or corrected vision, typical development, and absence of a history of learning or neurodevelopmental disorders.

Instruments

Socioemotional Skills: construction and selection of the ESH-A items. The main criterion for

the selection and formulation of the items was that they represented observable indicators at the cognitive (e.g., *I get distracted when I am studying*), behavioral (e.g., *I can stop doing something if I am told to*) and emotional (e.g., *I can control myself if I am angry*) domains. Moreover, these indicators were chosen based on their frequent manifestation in both school and home settings. Most items were selected from the available SEL scales, prioritizing those that presented a better fit to the constructs (see Table 1), and reformulated if necessary. For example, from the CORE scale, the items: *my intelligence is something I cannot change much* and *challenging myself will not make me smarter* were reformulated as *I think my intelligence is something I can change*, and for *every day I challenge myself to be smarter*, respectively. Consideration was given to crafting items with language that would be comprehensible to children. A preliminary version of the scale composed of 55 items was obtained.

Once the dimensions and items were defined, a content validity analysis was performed. For this purpose, the 55 items divided into the four SEL skills (SC, ER, GM and SS) were submitted by e-mail to 10 expert judges with knowledge in psychometrics and SEL skills. These items were assessed for their pertinence (suitability for the intended dimension), quality (clear wording and language appropriateness for the target population) and relevance (culturally applicable for the local population), expressed on a 5-point Likert scale. In addition, the judges were asked to indicate which SEL skill they considered each item referred to. In general, there was an agreement on which scale each item might belong to. The experts could suggest modifications and even the rejection of an item if needed. The results were analyzed using the validation coefficient (Aiken, 1985), and items considered relevant according to expert criteria were kept (see results). As well, some items were modified semantically or syntactically; afterwards, a pilot test was carried out. The 40 items best rated by the judges (10 per dimension) were administered to 8 children aged 9 to 11 years. Based on their responses, the comprehension of the items and instructions, the difficulty of the items, the length of the questionnaire, and the receptiveness of the sample to the instrument were assessed (Cohen et al., 2011). Once the pilot test was conducted, the final administration of the instrument was carried out.

Cognitive Emotional Regulation Questionnaire for Children (CERQ-k). It is a self-report Likert-type scale for children between 9 to 11 years, developed by Garnefski and Kraaij (2007) and adapted to the local context with good psychometric properties (e.g., Andrés, 2014). It is composed of 36 items that identifies the cognitive ER strategies that children use after experiencing negative events. It assesses nine factors, corresponding with nine ER strategies: five adaptive (acceptance, positive refocusing, putting into perspective, positive reappraisal, planning) and four maladaptive (self-blame, rumination, catastrophizing, other-blame). Composite reliability indices are above .70 in child population (Andrés, 2014).

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS). Originally developed by Gratz and Roemer (2004) and adapted for the Argentinian population by Medrano and Trogolo (2014), this scale is composed of 36 items with a five-choice Likert-type response format. Its factor structure is composed of six dimensions: (1) Non-acceptance of emotional responses: tendency to experience secondary negative emotions as a response to a primary negative emotion; (2) Difficulty engaging in goal-directed behaviors: difficulties in concentrating or performing tasks when experiencing a negative emotion; (3) Impulse control difficulties: poor capacity to control one's behavior when experiencing a negative emotion; (4) Lack of emo-

tional awareness: extent to which one attends to and admit emotional states; (5) Lack of emotional clarity: extent to which a person knows and understands his or her emotions; (6) Limited access to emotion regulation strategies: belief that one will not be able to modify an unpleasurable emotional state. Previous studies support the suitability of the scale for the school-age population (e.g., Neumann et al., 2010). Internal consistency indices (Cronbach's α) range from .80 to .89 points in child population (Zamora et al., 2022). Specific dimension scores are often summed into a single overall ER difficulties score (e.g., del-Valle et al., 2020; Karatzias et al., 2016).

Procedure and ethical considerations

The present study was part of a larger research project approved by the Ethics Committee of the Interdisciplinary Thematic Program in Bioethics (PTIB) of the National University of Mar del Plata. The schools involved were informed of the goals and implications of the study, and informative meetings with teaching staff and families of the participants were held before data collection. An information sheet was handed out and families were invited to voluntarily participate in the study by signing an informed consent form. The children gave their informed assent to participate and could leave the study at any time if required. The guidelines of the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research of Argentina (CONICET) for ethical behavior in the Social Sciences and Humanities (Resolution No. 2857, 2006), the criteria for research recommended by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) and the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013) were respected. The assessments were conducted by the authors of the study, at the educational institutions attended by the participants. Each item was read aloud to avoid possible difficulties in comprehension or interference of the reading processes.

Data analysis

To assess content validity (Objective 1), an analysis of agreement between experts was carried out using the validation coefficient (Aiken, 1985). This index allows the analysis of agreement between experts and establishes a criterion for making decisions about revising or eliminating items. Its magnitude ranges from 0.00 (*no agreement*) to 1.00 (*perfect agreement* among the judges regarding the highest validity score of the evaluated contents) (Soto & Segovia, 2009).

In relation to the analysis of the factorial structure of the scale and its reliability (Objective 2), all responses were coded and loaded into a general database. Reverse items were recorded. The applicability of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was tested through Bartlett's sphericity test and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic, while the EFA was implemented through the FACTOR software (v. 12.03.02, Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2022). The number of factors to be extracted was estimated using parallel analysis with classical implementation (Horn, 1965), based on the polychoric correlation matrix (Ferrando & Anguiano-Carrasco, 2010). The factor extraction method was unweighted least squares (ULS), assumed robust when working with ordinal variables (Lloret-Segura et al., 2014). Oblique Promax was used for rotation, assuming interfactorial correlations (Lloret-Segura et al., 2014). With the retained items, a second EFA was performed. Then, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was accomplished with Lisrel (Scientific Software International, 2006), and the ULS was the estimation method used. Model fit

was evaluated through the following indices: χ^2, χ^2/df coefficient, GFI, AGFI, CFI, CFI, NFI and NNFI; while RMSEA was used as a measure of error (Hu & Bentler, 1998). The internal consistency of the retained factors was assessed using the omega coefficient. Interfactorial correlation was calculated using Pearson's *r* index. For the criterion validity analysis, correlations (Pearson's *r*) were performed between the factors and variables theoretically related to SEL skills: adaptive and maladaptive ER strategies (CERQ-k scale) and ER difficulties (DERS scale). Finally, the presence of differences according to gender and school year was analyzed for the extracted factors. For gender, Student's *t*-tests for independent samples were carried out (symmetry and kurtosis of the factors were between ± 2, suggesting normality; and Levene's tests suggested homoscedasticity). To evaluate whether there were differences according to school year, one-factor ANOVA tests were applied (after Levene's test suggested homoscedasticity).

Results

Aiken's *V* coefficient was calculated for content analysis. Results indicated that items 5, 9, 13 and 14 of the SC dimensions and items 1, 2 and 13 of the ER dimension had poor quality -with a score between .55 and .98-. However, items 5 and 9 referring to the GM dimension, items 4 and 6 referring to the SC dimension, and items 1, 2, 9, 11 and 13 referring to the SS dimension were low in terms of pertinence -with scores between .78 and .95-. In addition, these items showed lower values than the rest in terms of relevance (although above .50). Therefore, item 5 of the GM dimension, items 4, 5, 6, 9, 13 and 14 of the SC dimensions, items 1, 2, 9, 11 and 13 of the SS dimensions, and items 1, 2 and 13 of the ER dimension were eliminated for presenting low agreement in their content validity (see detail in Appendix 1).

Then, the applicability of the EFA was confirmed through Bartlett's sphericity test (2853.3; $gl = 780$; $p < .01$) and the KMO statistic (.77). The initial EFA suggested the retention of 4 factors that explained 41.8% of the total variance. In general, items developed to assess ER, GM and SC tended to cluster together, whereas items developed to assess SS tended to have low and duplicated factor loadings on different factors. Items 1, 37 (developed to assess GM), 10, and 38 (developed to assess ER) were eliminated because they had loadings below .30 on all factors. Only items with higher loadings in the expected factors were kept. Thus, items 11, 31 (developed to evaluate SS), 14, 22 (developed to evaluate ER), 29, 33 (developed to evaluate GM), 12, 16, 20 and 36 (developed to evaluate SC) were eliminated.

A second EFA was performed with the remaining items, which suggested the retention of 4 factors that explained 47.7% of the total variance. One more time, satisfactory loadings were observed for all factors, except for the items developed to assess SS, which tended to present duplicated or low loadings.

Besides, a CFA was carried out with the remaining items. The model fit indices were good ($\chi^2 = 470.54$, $p < .01$; $\chi^2 / df_{(293)} = 1.60$; GFI = .94; AGFI = .93; CFI = .97; NFI = .92; NNFI = .97; RMSEA = .048) and the factor loadings of the final items were also adequate. The results of the EHS-A in its final 26-item version are shown in Figure 1. The internal consistency of the retained factors was adequate (HHSS: .61; GM: .76; ER: .75; SC: .75; total scale: .85). The interfactorial correlations are presented in Table 2 (along with descriptive statistics) and were also adequate. Test-retest reliability was also good (GM: $r = .41$, $p < .01$; ER: $r = .52$, $p < .01$; SS: $r = .60$, $p < .01$; SC: $r = .70$, $p < .01$; total scale: $r = .67$, $p < .01$).

Table 2
Interfactorial correlations and descriptive statistics of the EHS-A dimensions.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Social skills.	-	.51**	.52**	.28**	.74**
2. Emotional regulation.	-	-	.55**	.47**	.83**
3. Growth mindset.	-	-	-	.40**	.79**
4. Self-control.	-	-	-	-	.72**
5. Total scale.	-	-	-	-	-
ME	3.99	3.68	3.93	3.81	3.86
DE	0.50	0.71	0.64	0.75	0.49

Note. ** $p < .01$.

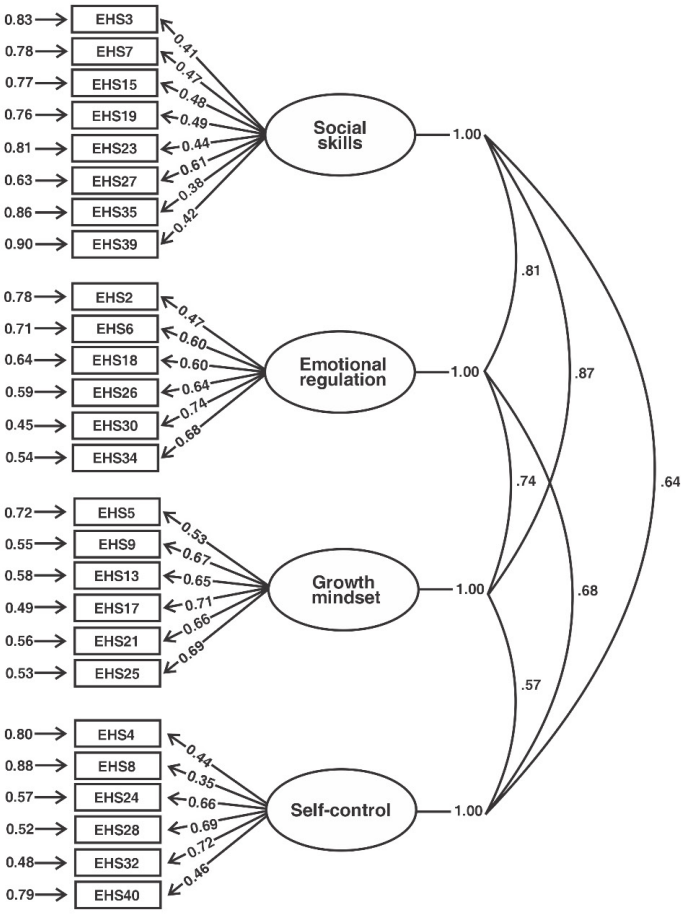

Figure 1
Factorial solution (CFA) for the socioemotional skills model.

Table 3 shows the relationships between the EHS-A dimensions and theoretically related constructs. Low and moderate correlations were observed suggesting that higher SEL skills scores relate to a more frequent use of adaptive ER strategies (CERQ-K) and less difficulties in emotional regulation (DERS). The frequency of use of maladaptive ER strategies (CERQ-K) was not associated with SEL skills.

Finally, the presence of gender and school grade differences was analyzed for the four factors of the scale. Results showed that there were no differences between boys and girls, and no dissimilarities between grades, in any of the four EHS-A factors.

Discussion

Thanks to the contributions of organizations, such as CASEL, and the demonstrated importance of assessing SEL skills in various domains, empirical and theoretical research in this field has significantly increased. However, no instruments for assessing these skills have been developed in Argentina. For this reason, the main objective of this study was to develop and validate a Social-Emotional Skills Scale for Argentine Children

Table 3
Correlations between the EHS-A dimensions, adaptive strategies, and total emotional regulation difficulties.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Social skills.	-	.51**	.52**	.28**	.74**	.41**	.06	-.25*
2. Emotional regulation.	-	-	.55**	.47**	.83**	.59**	.09	-.41**
3. Growth mindset.	-	-	-	.40**	.79**	.43**	.18	-.27*
4. Self-control.	-	-	-	-	.72**	-.18	.10	-.42**
5. EHS-A total scale .	-	-	-	-	-	-.01	.49**	-.48**
6. Adaptive strategies (CERQ-k).	-	-	-	-	-	-	.45**	-.04
7. Maladaptive Strategies (CERQ-k).	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.46**
8. Difficulties in emotional regulation (DERS).	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

(EHS-A) between 9 to 12 years and to provide evidence of its reliability and validity.

To design and create the scale, other SEL skills scales were used as references, and the operational definitions of the constructs were followed. Consequently, a 55-item scale was initially developed, which, after undergoing expert analysis, was refined to 40 items (10 for each skill, i.e., SS, SC, GM, and emotions and ER). The scale was tested preliminarily with a pilot sample and subsequently with the total sample.

The final version of the EHS-A comprises 26 items, demonstrating satisfactory psychometric properties and enabling the identification of four principal factors that account for 47.7% of the variance. The logical structure of these factors aligns well with the theoretical propositions found in the literature (CASEL, 2015), and the items reflect the essential characteristics of each SEL skill.

The first factor, designated as SS, encompasses items related to the willingness to listen to peers, volunteer to assist others, and seek help when needed skills that contribute to more fulfilling interpersonal relationships (Gresham, 2016). These findings are in line with the principles of social reciprocity, suggesting that the readiness to offer, express gratitude, and receive help fosters connections among children (Bono et al., 2022; Froh et al., 2010).

The second factor, labeled ER, involves the application of strategies and skills to monitor, evaluate, and modify emotions in order to achieve goals and respond appropriately to environmental demands (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2007; Gross, 2014). The items assess understanding of emotion regulation, particularly for unpleasant emotions like anger and sadness, control over emotional reactions, and the use of strategies to modify emotions, such as shifting attention or positive refocusing.

The third factor, named GM, encompasses items reflecting the belief that children possess the ability to develop skills, overcome challenges and learn through perseverance. This factor collectively represents the notion that abilities are not fixed but can expand and improve with time and effort, emphasizing the idea that perseverance and learning from mistakes contribute to overcoming obstacles (Dweck, 2017).

Finally, the last factor, labeled SC, primarily pertains to the process by which children balance long-term goals or norms with more immediately rewarding short-term desires or impulses. The items illustrate the conflict between emotion/desire and the expected behaviors from others, exemplifying the process of regulating behavior, emotion, or cognition to achieve meaningful goals (Duckworth & Steinberg, 2015).

Concerning the internal consistency of the retained factors, it was satisfactory for ER, SCand GM. The factor related to SS exhibited a lower internal consistency. Nevertheless, test-retest reliability was robust for all factors, indicating the reliability of the EHS-A scale. In summary, regarding the analysis of construct validity (objective 2 of the study), the results affirm the relative independence of the various SEL skills, consistent with existing literature (Gresham et al., 2018). It is noteworthy that no differences were observed based on gender or school grade for any dimensions of the EHS-A, aligning with reviews that do not identify gender as a moderator of SEL skills (Durlak et al., 2022; Zamora et al., 2020).

In terms of criterion validity, both GM, SS, and ER exhibited positive associations with adaptive ER strategies (Garnefski et al., 2001). Among the adaptive ER skills, also known as functional or positive-focused, acceptance, distraction, planning, cognitive reappraisal, and perspective-taking stand out (Garnefski et al., 2001). In other words, children with higher GM, good SS, and effective emotion regulation are more inclined to use adaptive strategies frequently when dealing with negative emotions or experiencing a negative mood. It is noteworthy that no relationships were identified between adaptive strategies and the SC dimension, nor between SEL skills and maladaptive ER strategies.

Conversely, it was observed that all the dimensions proposed by EHS-A exhibited negative associations with ER difficulties (DERS). In this context, emotional dysregulation refers to challenges in the ability to regulate or modulate emotions in response to negative situations or events (Gratz & Roemer, 2004). It encompasses non-acceptance of emotional responses, a lack of emotional awareness and clarity, difficulties in engaging in goal-directed behavior, challenges in impulse control, and limited access to effective ER strategies. Consequently, children with higher SEL skill scores demonstrated lower ER difficulties, implying that these skills may play a role in the ability to control and manage emotions (Domitrovich et al., 2017; Eisenberg et al., 2010).

However, it is important to note some limitations of the present study. First, while the analyzed sample size is adequate for the number of items in the EHS-A, a larger number of participants could enhance the empirical results and facilitate the generalization of findings. Additionally, gathering reports from both families and teachers could enrich the assessment and provide a complementary perspective on children's skills.

Finally, it is relevant to comment on the use of self-report tools in children. The literature suggests that children may tend to overestimate their behavioral assessments due to their relative mastery of knowledge about themselves (Molina et al., 2013) and their inclination to respond according to normative patterns of what they consider appropriate or inappropriate (Lemos, 2006). Despite this, the development and use of self-report instruments for SEL skills from the age of 9 present a current area of interest with potential for the future development of measurement instruments. It is recommended that the items should be read one by one to children to enhance their comprehension.

In general terms, the outcomes of the current study signify progress in the availability of instruments for evaluating SEL skills in Argentina.

Additionally, unlike other instruments that concentrate on problematic behaviors, the EHS-A appraises positive or strengths-focused aspects, aligning with the models proposed by CASEL. While future studies are warranted, this work serves as an initial impetus for evaluating SEL skills in the everyday life settings of school-aged children.

Appendix 1

Aiken V Results.

Item	Description	Quality	Relevance	Relevance
MC 1	My intelligence is something I can change.	.95	.93	.95
MC 2	Every day I challenge myself to be smarter.	.85	.9	.93
MC 3	I can learn any subject if I put my mind to it.	.93	.93	.95
MC 4	I can try harder to make things work out for me.	.93	.85	.9
MC 5	I am able to overcome challenges or problems, even if they are difficult.	.85	.78	.88
MC 6	Even if I make a mistake, I know I can start again.	1	1	1
MC 7	I am able to work hard, even when things are difficult.	.93	.93	.95
MC 8	I am confident that I can achieve anything I set my mind to.	.95	.88	.88
MC 9	I like challenges.	.88	.78	.95
MC 10	When I try to do something, I think I'm going to fail.	.93	.95	.95
MC 11	I know I can learn more to be smarter.	.88	.88	.93
AU 1	I do things even though I know they are wrong.	.9	.93	.95
AU 2	I wait until the last minute to do my homework.	1	.98	.98
AU 3	When others speak, I wait my turn.	.95	1	1
AU 4	I can calm down when I am nervous or worried.	.93	.85	.93
AU 5	I can do my homework, even if I don't like it.	.85	.93	.93
AU 6	I complete tasks, even if they seem difficult to me.	.98	.95	.95
AU 7	I do my homework, even if I don't feel like it.	1	.98	.98
AU 8	I can concentrate in class, even if there are things that distract me.	.93	.93	.98
AU 9	At home or at school, I lose my temper.	.78	.83	.85
AU 10	When I am very angry, I talk back to adults.	.98	.98	.98
AU 11	If a colleague insults me, I go and do the same to him/her.	.9	.98	.98
AU 12	Even if I want to play, I do my homework first.	.98	.9	.95
AU 13	I think I am impulsive.	.55	.83	.9
AU 14	I say everything that comes to my mind.	.8	.9	.9
AU 15	If I want something, I find it hard to wait.	.98	.98	1
AU 16	I do things without thinking about the consequences.	.95	.95	.95

Item	Description	Quality	Relevance	Relevance
E1	I can describe my emotions.	.73	.88	.93
E2	I notice when my emotions distract me.	.78	.9	.93
E3	I know what to do to feel better when I am sad.	.98	1	.98
E4	Even if I am angry, I try to treat others well.	1	1	1
E5	When I see someone's face, I realize how they feel.	.95	.93	.93
E6	I talk about my emotions with others.	.98	.95	.98
E7	I can calm down when I am angry.	.95	.95	.95
E8	I get angry when things go wrong.	.9	1	1
E9	When something bad happens to me, I try to think about nicer things.	.95	.95	.95
E10	When something bad happens to me, I try to look on the bright side.	.93	.95	.98
E11	When something bad happens to me, I think about how I can fix it.	.98	1	.93
E12	I know the difference between being sad, scared or angry.	.98	1	.95
E13	I notice when I am tense or nervous.	.85	.95	.95
HHSS1	I care about the feelings of others.	.95	.93	.95
HHSS2	I accept my colleagues, even if they think differently from me.	.93	.88	.83
HHSS3	I like to listen to what my colleagues have to say.	.98	.9	.95
HHSS4	I am alone during recess.	1	.9	.88
HHSS5	I fight with my peers and colleagues.	.9	.9	.95
HHSS6	When I need help, I ask for it.	1	1	1
HHSS7	I am grateful when people do something for me.	1	.98	1
HHSS8	I take care of my colleagues' things as if they were my own.	.93	.83	.83
HHSS9	I call or write to my friends.	.98	.88	.9
HHSS10	When someone needs help, I offer to help.	.98	.98	.98
HHSS11	I get together with classmates (outside of school).	.98	.9	.85
HHSS12	I like to participate in group games.	1	.98	.95
HHSS13	When people are good to me, I am good to them.	.85	.8	.85
HHSS14	I find it easy to make friends.	.98	.98	.98
HHSS15	My friends trust me.	.98	.88	.93

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