

# Review of: "Friendship and Socio-Emotional Skills in 3th / 4th Year Students in Portuguese Basic Education"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

## **Sample Size and Representation:**

The sample size is relatively small (N=91 students from 4 classes). A larger and more representative sample from a broader geographic area could have strengthened the generalizability of the findings.

The study was conducted in only one school group in Castelo Branco, Portugal. Expanding the study to include more school groups or regions could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

## **Lack of Intervention Implementation:**

The researchers had planned to implement an Emotional Intelligence Development Program (EIDP) as part of the study, but were unable to do so due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The inability to carry out this planned intervention limits the ability to assess the impact of such a program on the students' social relationships and emotional skills.

## **Cross-Sectional Design:**

The study had a cross-sectional design, which only provides a snapshot in time. A longitudinal approach could have allowed for the examination of changes in social relationships and emotional skills over time, potentially providing more insights.

## **Reliance on Self-Report Measures:**

The study primarily relied on self-report measures (Sociometric Friendship Test and Emotional Skills Questionnaire) to assess the students' social relationships and emotional skills. Incorporating additional observational or behavioral measures could have provided a more comprehensive assessment.

## **Lack of Control Group:**

The study did not include a control group to compare the results of the experimental classes (had the intervention been implemented) with those of non-intervention classes. The lack of a control group limits the ability to draw causal conclusions about the effects of the proposed EIDP.

## **Potential Confounding Factors:**

The study did not explicitly address or control for potential confounding factors, such as socioeconomic status, family background, or other contextual variables that could have influenced the students' social relationships and emotional skills.

**Instrument Validation:**

While the researchers mention that the measuring instruments (Sociometric Friendship Test and Emotional Skills Questionnaire) were subjected to a validity and reliability process, more details on the psychometric properties of these instruments could have been provided to establish their robustness in the context of the study.

**Potential Bias in Data Collection:**

The study relied on documentary observation, natural and participant observation, as well as the administration of the self-report measures. The potential for observer bias or social desirability bias in the students' responses could have influenced the data collected.

**Absence of Baseline Measures:**

The study did not report any baseline measures of the students' social relationships and emotional skills prior to the planned EIDP intervention. Collecting such baseline data could have strengthened the ability to assess the potential changes resulting from the intervention.