



EMOTIONAL EDUCATION, HUMAN FORMATION AND SPIRITUALITY

EDUCAÇÃO EMOCIONAL, FORMAÇÃO HUMANA E ESPIRITUALIDADE

EDUCACIÓN EMOCIONAL, FORMACIÓN HUMANA Y ESPIRITUALIDAD

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ABSTRACT: The objective of this article is to understand the perceptions of teachers who are part of the municipal network of Queimadas-PB, about the impacts and changes in their personal and professional lives after having participated in the Emotional Education training. The investigation is centered on the emergence of emotional abilities from this training, seeking to identify possible relations between Emotional Education and Spirituality. Based on the qualitative approach with a phenomenological focus, one can conclude that the Emotional Education training caused positive effects on the research subjects' personal and professional lives, specifically regarding the development of five skills: perceiving and accepting emotions; acquiring the ability to differentiate and manage emotions; developing the ability to reflect critically and creatively about emotions; acquiring the ability to think strategically about emotions aiming at well-being; and developing the ability to experience emotions in a healthy way. It was noted that the development of such skills is also related to the spiritual dimension of the subjects.

KEYWORDS: Emotional education. Spirituality. Emotion.

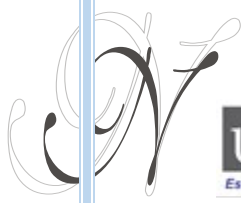
RESUMO: *O objetivo do artigo é compreender as percepções dos docentes que integram a rede municipal de Queimadas-PB, sobre os impactos e mudanças na vida pessoal e profissional após terem participado da formação em Educação Emocional. A investigação está centrada na emergência de habilidades emocionais a partir da referida formação, buscando identificar possíveis relações entre Educação Emocional e Espiritualidade. A partir da abordagem qualitativa com enfoque fenomenológico, pode-se concluir que a formação em Educação Emocional causou efeitos positivos na vida dos sujeitos da pesquisa, especificamente no que se refere ao desenvolvimento de cinco habilidades: perceber as emoções sentidas; adquirir capacidade de diferenciar as emoções; desenvolver a reflexão crítica sobre as emoções; adquirir capacidade de pensar estrategicamente sobre as emoções visando o bem estar; e desenvolver a capacidade de vivenciar as emoções de forma saudável. Registrou-se que o*

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desenvolvimento de tais habilidades também está relacionado com a dimensão espiritual dos sujeitos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Educação emocional. Espiritualidade. Emoção.*

RESUMEN: *El objetivo del artículo es conocer las percepciones de los profesores que integran la red municipal de Queimadas-PB, sobre los impactos y cambios en su vida personal y profesional después de haber participado en la formación en Educación Emocional. La investigación se centra en el surgimiento de habilidades emocionales a partir de esta formación, buscando identificar posibles relaciones entre la Educación Emocional y la Espiritualidad. Basándose en el enfoque cualitativo con un enfoque fenomenológico, se puede concluir que la formación en Educación Emocional causó efectos positivos en la vida personal y profesional de los sujetos de la investigación, concretamente en lo que respecta al desarrollo de cinco habilidades: percibir y aceptar las emociones; adquirir la capacidad de diferenciar y gestionar las emociones; desarrollar la capacidad de reflexionar de forma crítica y creativa sobre las emociones; adquirir la capacidad de pensar estratégicamente sobre las emociones con el objetivo de conseguir el bienestar; y desarrollar la capacidad de experimentar las emociones de forma saludable. El desarrollo de estas habilidades también está relacionado con la dimensión espiritual de los sujetos.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Educación emocional. Espiritualidad. Emoción.*

Introduction

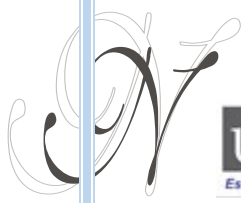
The theme of this article is centered on the search for the relationship between Emotional Education and Spirituality, based on the experience of continuing education carried out in the municipal school system of the city of Queimadas - Paraíba, throughout 2016 to 2020.

To this end, we initially try to discuss theoretical issues involving emotions, the formative proposal in Emotional Education and Spirituality, and then describe the perceptions of the research subjects about the impacts of training performed on their personal and professional life.

Emotional Education Training: theoretical and experiential challenge

To understand the human being in its integrality, and in its complexity, is also to recognize that emotions mobilize and give meaning to actions (SOLOMON, 2015). More than guiding our conduct, the emotional universe, by manifesting itself in the individual, shows who he is: "We are our emotions as much as we are our thoughts and actions" (SOLOMON, 2015, p. 17).





Emotion is a natural reaction and is configured as an immediate response that arises through a stimulus or a situation. Martins (2004, p. 23) states that "emotions are global, innate and fleeting reactions that have a specific function of each being". These reactions refer to an adaptive response to the environment, considering that it is a psychological process that implies a series of triggering elements (relevant stimuli), different levels of cognitive processing (value processes), physiological changes (activation), expressive patterns (emotional expression) (FERNÁNDEZ-ABASCAL; SÁNCHEZ, 2015).

In addition to influencing human behavior, emotions reveal values: by being proud of something, for example, the individual shows that he thinks of it as good. This relationship between emotion and value deserves to be highlighted. In the words of Stocker and Hegman (2002, p. 116) "emotions are useful in the revelation of values; but what is really important in itself is the value they reveal." And influencing behaviors and revealing values, the presence of emotions has been increasingly evidenced, in recent times, as a proper and necessary element in formative processes (BISQUERRA, 2000; CEJUDO; LÓPEZ-DELGADO; RUBIO, 2015; GARCÍA; CALLEJA, 2017; GORDILLO *et al.*, 2016).

In turn, Emotional Education implies the knowledge and self-knowledge of issues pertinent to the emotional universe, in addition to the acquisition of knowledge and skills that can provide awareness and modulation of actions, so that the individual can learn to feel and act in order to provide well-being (POSSEBON; POSSEBON, 2020).

In the words of Bisquerra (2000, p. 243), Emotional Education is:

An educational process, continuous and permanent, which aims to enhance emotional development as an indispensable complement to cognitive development, constituting both essential elements of the development of integral personality. For this purpose, it is proposed the development of knowledge and skills about emotions, with the objective of empowering the individual to better deal with the challenges of everyday life. All this aims to increase personal and social well-being.

Emotional Education proposes to experience the emotion for one's own well-being, accepting and understanding what emotion is informing, in order to develop new competencies, now focused on a set of capacities that allow to understand, express and regulate in an appropriate way emotional phenomena, including emotional awareness, the control of impulsivity, teamwork, taking care of oneself and others, among others. We can affirm that Emotional Education is a process of human formation that involves the physical, vital, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions of the individual, from the mobilization of different



emotions, both from the cognitive point of view and from the experiential point of view (POSSEBON; POSSEBON, 2020).

In these terms, Emotional Education is a process of human formation that takes place throughout life, which occurs in an integral way, aiming at subjective well-being. The main goal is to provide a change in the individual, change that is:

daily and profound, and comprises an affective and loving movement; non-ideological. The need and urgency to experience love not as an abstract concept, but as an immediate question, as a bodily experience lived in daily life for the promotion of well-being are a fundamental procedure. Thus, feeding the living organism is an act of the present time. Feeding a body so that it can live is not a reminder of the past or a schedule for the future. The body is hungry to live. And living is an expression of the present time (GONSALVES; SOUZA, 2015, p. 96).

In this perspective of formation, it is about facilitating and creating a space of pedagogical experiences to discover the emotional dimension of the body. In this sense,

facilitation work is started when the emotional experience of the person is screened, so that the person converts it into an object of reflection. Therein lies the possibility of expanding their knowledge about themselves and recreating themselves, with a view to improving the quality of life. It is a process of personal transformation by itself and only takes place through the learning of new ways of acting, of dealing with one's own emotionality. It is important to highlight that the result is only achieved through a behavioral modification that is carried out through an educational process (GONSALVES; SOUZA, 2015, p. 97).

The experiential aspect concerns the opportunity to perform new learning sing-alongs and intense connection with life that are closely related to the deep experience, full of meaning intensity of the experience with life. It is the basis for the development of a new human being capable of bonding and maintaining relationships of love for himself, for the other and for nature, with the development of affective intelligence, as proposed by Rolando Toro (2014).

The reorganizing power of the experience is due to the unique quality of emerging as the first affective expression of our organism, with strong bodily sensations. The experiences constitute the original expression of the most intimate of ourselves, previous to any symbolic or rational elaboration. Emotional Education, in order to acquire a transformative potential, needs to be achieved through experience, without which it will be limited to cognition.

The work of formation in Emotional Education assumes, therefore, that the human being is a totality whose parts (dimensions) are integrated and are involved – physical, vital, mental, emotional, spiritual dimensions (POSSEBON; POSSEBON, 2020). In this sense, the human

being is considered as an entirety and any dimension of his necessarily affects the other ones because they are involved and influencing each other, thus being a holistic proposal.

Concept of Spirituality and the role of emotions

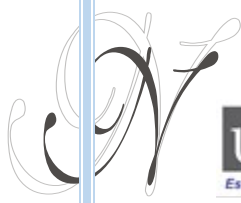
Richard Maurice Bucke describes a curious experience he experienced one night upon returning to his home in the late nineteenth century. He called it cosmic consciousness (BUCKE, 1996, p. 42):

Suddenly, without any kind of warning, I found myself engulfed by a cloud of the color of the flames. For a moment, I thought there was a fire, a huge bonfire somewhere near the city; then I thought the fire was inside me. Immediately, a feeling of joy took hold of me, of immense happiness accompanied or followed by an intellectual enlightenment impossible to describe. [...]

Among other things, I did not simply believe, but I saw that the universe is not composed of dead matter, but constitutes a living presence; So I became aware of eternal life. It was not the conviction that he would attain eternal life, but the consciousness that he already possessed it; I saw that all human beings are immortal, that the cosmic order is such that, without a doubt, all things have contributed to the good of each one; that the basic principle of the world, of all worlds, is what we call love; and that everyone's happiness is, in the long run, absolutely certain.

The impact of this experience transformed his life, leading him to dedicate several years of study and research to his understanding. The result was the publication of his work, *Cosmic Consciousness*, in 1901, considered a pioneer in the field, in which he gathers a significant number of episodes and interprets them, trying to give them a reasonably precise definition. Eleven items synthesize the investigation of what is usually found in episodes of cosmic consciousness (BUCKE, 1996, p. 108): a) Subjective light; b) Moral elevation; (c) intellectual enlightenment; d) The sense of immortality; e) The loss of fear of death; f) The loss of the sense of sin; g) The suddenness and instantaneity of awakening; h) The previous character of man - intellectual, moral and physical; (i) the age of enlightenment; j) The charm added to the personality, so that men and women are always (?) strongly attracted to the person; k) The transfiguration of the individual who is the object of change, as seen by others when the cosmic sense is actually present.

A century of research improved the understanding of cosmic consciousness, although other terms were used to describe the same experience or something of an approximate nature. We will recall some significant names in this story: William James (n.d.), who investigated the religious experience; Sigmund Freud (2010), who commented on a given experience, calling her 'oceanic' and interpreting it as her mother's need, according to her psychoanalytic approach;



Abraham Maslow (n.d.), who described sixteen characteristics of a phenomenon he called *peak-experience*, usually translated as a crowning experience; Charles Tart (1994, 2012), who detailed the altered states of consciousness; Joseph Rhine (1965, 1966, 1973), who at Duke University investigated Extrasensory Perception, a phenomenon normally present in cosmic consciousness; Walter Pahnke (WEIL, 1989, p. 26 27), who used psilocybin in a scientific experiment to produce a mystical state; and finally Stanislav Grof (2020a, 2020b), LSD researcher who, after his ban, developed with Christina Grof the holotropic breathing technique, to obtain the same effects of the substance.

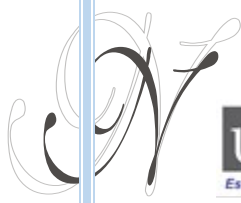
It is possible to interpret the experiences recorded by the numerous philosophical and religious traditions as cosmic consciousness, for example: Nirvana of Buddhism; Yoga Samadhi; Beatitude, Grace, Seventh Heaven, Kingdom of Heaven, etc. of Christian traditions (WEIL, 1989, p. 17). Also, according to Pierre Weil (1989, p. 9), a new area of knowledge was developed:

Transpersonal Psychology is a branch of Psychology specialized in the study of altered states of consciousness; it deals more especially with the "cosmic experience" or the so-called "superior" or "enlarged" states of consciousness. These states consist of entering a dimension outside of space-time as is often perceived by our five senses. It is an expansion of common consciousness with a direct view of a reality that is very close to the concepts of modern physics.

Although Bucke's cosmic experience, and many others recorded, seem spontaneous, in fact, philosophical and religious systems have developed, throughout its history, many techniques, known as technologies of the sacred, to provoke it, thus recognizing its benefits. We listed some of them in the sequence. We cannot lose sight of the view that Spirituality is a search, in an altered state of consciousness, so the resources employed in this search are those that produce non-ordinary states.

We insist, according to our understanding, that Spirituality is not to reflect, ponder, analyze, measure, compare, etc., on the transcendent, these are rational and logical operations; Spirituality is experiencing altered states of consciousness that lead to the transcendent. It is therefore clear the role of emotions in Spirituality, because they overcome rationality, they are stronger and more primitive.

We highlight at this moment the list of resources that can, under certain circumstances, help both in the search for the transcendent, that is, in Spirituality, and in emotional balance, that is, as a potential instrument of Emotional Education:



- 1) Sensory features of hearing: silence, sounds of nature (sea, waterfall), sounds of bass instruments (drum, didjeridou, gong, etc.), certain songs and tunes, mantras and prayers;
- 2) Sensory features of vision: darkness, contemplation of nature, landscapes, works of art, strobe light;
- 3) Sensory features of olfaction and tasting: aromas, flavors and smells, essential oils of Aromatherapy;
- 4) Sensory features of touch: touch, caress, massage, encounter, hug;
- 5) Movement resources: dance, walking, pilgrimage, rite, exercise;
- 6) Body work: diet, fasting;
- 7) Breathing exercises;
- 8) Various techniques such as meditation, concentration.

The resources listed here, presented separately in the practice of philosophical and religious systems, are infinitely combined.

On the lookout, Spirituality is not confused with Religion, although for some people the search for the transcendent can be attempted through a formally instituted Religion. Compare our definition of Spirituality with the classic definition of Religion by Émile Durkheim (1996, p. 32):

A religion is a sympathetic system of beliefs and practices relating to sacred things, that is, separate, forbidden, beliefs and practices that bring together in the same moral community, called the church, all those who adder.

We affirm that Spirituality, as a search, presupposes experiences in altered states of consciousness, that is, outside the condition of wakefulness and rational, logical and reflective states. One enters these states altered spontaneously (perhaps it would be to say that we do not know the mechanisms of the process) or one tries through the technologies of the sacred. No technique is an absolute guarantee of success, but insistent practice has given effective results.

The methodological design of research

The qualitative research carried out had the challenge of understanding, from the phenomenological approach, the perceptions of teachers about the impacts of training on emotional education in their personal and professional life. The research subjects were sought among the education professionals who are part of the municipal network of Queimadas-PB, particularly those who participated in the training in Emotional Education offered by the Department of Education /SEDUC in partnership with the Human Education Center

NEEMOC/UFPB, during the years 2016 to 2020. Twenty-one teachers who were willing to be interviewed and answer an electronic form participated in the investigation. Data were collected during 2021.

In the treatment and analysis of data, sentences were extracted that concern the studied phenomenon, performing the extraction of significant assertions. This process was performed through an examination of data obtained based on the transcriptions of the statements, highlighting the "significant statements", that is, phrases or quotations that allow an understanding of how the participants perceive the phenomenon experienced (CRESWELL, 2014). Then, groups of meanings were organized for the statements, where such statements were used to develop a description of what the subjects experienced. The meanings were grouped into themes, allowing the emergence of themes common to all transcriptions (CRESWELL, 2014). All results obtained were integrated into a description of the investigated phenomenon.

In the organization of meaning groups, the Emotional Experience was considered, proposed by Possebon (2018). This proposal indicates the set of socio-emotional skills to be developed in works involving Emotional Education: perceiving and welcoming the emotions felt; acquiring the ability to differentiate and manage emotions; developing the ability to reflect critically and creatively on emotions; acquire the ability to think strategically about emotions aimed at well-being; and develop the ability to experience emotions in a healthy way.

The use of this explanatory model was not configured as a fixed and immutable pattern; it was used as a possibility of interpretation of the data, without reducing the richness and diversity of the data obtained, which could confirm or not the proposal, as well as include new elements.

Learning in emotional education: dialogue with empirical data

About the existence of impacts of the Emotional Education Course on their personal and professional life, 100% of the research subjects answered affirmatively.

Having as reference the first axis of responses highlighted by Possebon (2018), which is the perception and acceptance of the emotions felt - emotional competence that includes different skills such as recognizing the information that is associated with the emotion felt, the ability to identify whether the experience of emotion is being healthy or maladaptive, the awareness of one's own emotions, from the physiological and intersubjective point of view, among others - there is a significant set of statements. The research subjects reported that their



ability to perceive emotional phenomena was expanded and state that they were able to acquire "greater knowledge about emotions and feel them, instead of trying to silence them, this made me know myself better", "I know now how my emotions act on me".

When it comes specifically to the impacts for the practice of the profession it was possible to achieve a new understanding of colleagues: "I can better understand and respect my co-workers", "now I can understand more my colleagues in the profession, something that was previously more difficult". The expansion of perception also addresses the student: "I have acquired a deeper and more sensitive look for each student, now I see him as a person and not only as a student", "my bond with the students has been improved and much because now I can get closer, I understand what they feel", "I can understand beyond my emotions, I can understand the emotion of my student."

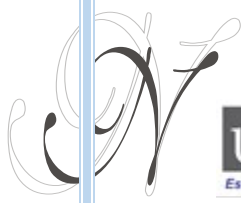
Every human relationship involves emotional aspects and, to the extent that education professionals understand these aspects, they can create new and better ways of bonding. As Gordillo *et al.* (2016), the knowledge of the affective history of the student and his current situation provides the teacher with a quantity of information that may be the key to be able to interact their reactions or behaviors.

In the second axis of responses, which refers to the ability to differentiate and manage emotions, skills such as understanding the causes and consequences of the emotion experienced, modulating the response to the stimulus, distinguishing the action to be performed, among others are associated with it (POSSEBON, 2018). According to the data obtained, it was found that the subjects indicated that "I learned to distinguish emotions", "today I can understand and differentiate my feelings and emotions", "I became a more centered person because before I could not balance my emotions".

When it comes to the impact of the learning they have obtained in the course for the development of work, specifically about the ability to differentiate and deal with emotions, the statements beckon in the following sense: "now I think more before talking or taking an attitude, before I did not do that", "I changed a lot in the sense of knowing how to deal with certain situations that before could not, because I was afraid to express myself," "I feel more confident and safer."

When it comes specifically to the relationship with each other, the research subjects report that "living with others at work has become easier because now I understand more the emotions they feel", "I am a better observer now, and it helps me a lot", "I can see better the different emotional reactions than I do", "I feel more emotionally regulated to work in the classroom".





The search to perform better emotional responses, through conscious action, shows that the training performed acts in the incorporation of knowledge that promotes the expansion of the ability to differentiate the emotions felt and the perception that the subject can act on them.

The third axis of responses is related to the ability to reflect critically and creatively on emotions, involving skills such as the recognition of the need for change to provide well-being, the identification of new habits to be built, the self-guidance, the identification of risks to be overcome, among others (POSSEBON, 2018). On this issue we were able to record statements such as "emotional education helped me in self-knowledge and this helps me to improve my relationships with myself", "I can deal more harmoniously with my emotions", "my life changed because I learned to know and experience my own emotions more lightly".

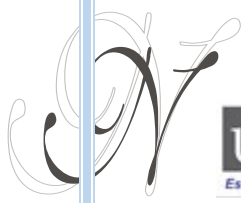
The research subjects also highlighted the development of empathy and communication skills: "today I feel more emotionally regulated, more empathetic and grateful, with more ability to solve the problems that arise", "I feel more emotionally regulated to make my decisions", "I have acquired more listening and dialogue capacity", "I am managing to have a more empathetic listening and with fewer judgments".

If, on the one hand, it is possible to affirm that the training offered allowed professionals to learn about emotions, distinguishing each one of them and developing the ability to solve issues in a more regulated and empathic way, on the other hand, a gap in the initial training of the teacher is evident: emotional education. According to Mora-Miranda *et al.* (2022), this aspect should be considered because we are probably faced with better generations prepared from the instructive point of view, but who are not contributing to an understanding of the student as a whole.

The fourth axis of responses corresponds to the acquisition of the ability to think strategically about emotions, aiming at well-being. This competence is related to different skills, among them, the identification of strategies to change the emotional response, the modification of the internal focus, the ability to distance from maladaptive processes (POSSEBON, 2018). In this sense, we were able to identify statements that indicate the following: "I can deal more harmoniously with my emotions after I was able to understand and differentiate each of them". The statements also beckoned in the sense of modification to seek new ways of facing everyday challenges: "now I think of more than one alternative to solve the problems that arise", "I learned to review some attitudes that did me no good".

When it comes to the impacts on daily work, the statements inform in a special way the relationship with the students: "through what I learned in emotional education I can reassure my students, calm them, and thus i get good results in activities and evaluations", "I can control





my actions more calmly in the face of situations experienced in daily school life", "dealing with students' emotions has become much easier, I can help them feel better and that makes all the difference in the learning outcome."

The evidence of the existing and direct relationship between conscious emotional action of the teacher and development of the student's learning reveals the need to consider the importance of this type of training. The emotional context facilitates or hinders the development of the student.

The fifth and final axis of responses is related to the ability to experience emotions in a healthy way. This competence concerns skills such as expressing emotion in a healthy way, consciously self-generating emotions that promoting well-being, recognizing the impacts of their emotional expression on other people, dealing with stimuli that generate toxic actions, through self-regulation strategies, among others (POSSEBON, 2018). On this point, the research subjects indicated: "today I feel more relaxed and seek balance to solve my personal issues, I am seeking a better quality of life", "after I have known the emotions and their effects with a better act, I can position myself better when I experience each of them", "now my emotions are allied for me to live better", "I now know how to resolve my emotional issues and then I can contribute to a better quality of life," "I have expanded the nutritional relationships that contribute to my well-being and pushed away toxic relationships."

Considering the statements, we can record several impacts with regard to work: "now I try to qualify more the work of my colleagues, something I did not before", "I learned to respect more the individuality of each one in school", "I can show more affection and respect with my co-workers", "it is very stressful the work at school, but today I can say that the atmosphere is more welcoming, we started to relate in a different way".

In addition to the model proposed by the Emotional Experience (POSSEBON, 2018), we also recorded two other types of findings.

The first finding refers to the fact that the research subjects continue to perform the exercises of emotional education in their daily life. This fact has had effects for himself and also for his family: "I have developed emotional education exercises at work and at home with my family and this has generated a lot of harmony and unity", "the main impact for me was to discover how breathing exercises, and other exercises also influence my emotions and my behavior. Now I do every day", "I learned various exercises and practice with my family", "emotional education exercises generate well-being, I always do".

The second finding refers to the question of spirituality. According to the reports obtained, the research subjects consider the existence of the relationship between emotions and





spirituality: "emotional education is related to spirituality because they are dimensions of the human being", "emotion and spirituality are directly related", "I cannot explain in words but I feel that there is no spirituality without emotion", "even knowing that the two present their differences I think, in a way, one relates to the other."

The statements indicate that emotional education and spirituality act in order to promote mental health and the well-being of individuals: "both act significantly in the well-being and quality of life of the individual", "the two help to direct a more loving look at life", "both work the idea of belonging in the world, of cosmic unity, which is a complex way of understanding human existence", "the two allow a reflection and questioning about the dimensions of the human being", "through some exercises of emotional education we touch on our spiritual dimension".

Final considerations

Emotional Education is an educational process of conscious action. This means that it implies the knowledge and self-knowledge of issues pertinent to the emotional universe, in addition to the acquisition of knowledge and skills that can provide awareness and modulation of actions, in order to learn to feel and act in order to provide well-being. This perspective also beckons in the sense of affirming a process of experiential human formation oriented so that the individual can achieve, through vital learning (which favor the acquisition of competencies that structure the emotional life of the subject), the development of a set of affective capacities, such as listening, praising, qualifying, caring.

We consider that the emotional education course offered as continuing education contributed to the emotional well-being of the subjects involved, and to the establishment of new and better relationships in the family and in the work environment. Of the five skills used as analytical reference - to perceive and welcome the emotions felt; to acquire the ability to differentiate and manage emotions; to develop the ability to reflect critically and creatively on emotions; to acquire the ability to think strategically about emotions aimed at well-being; and develop the ability to experience emotions in a healthy way - it can be verified that all of them were the object of the statements, allowing us to affirm that the emotional education course contributed to the development of these emotional skills.

Specifically on the relationship between Emotional Education and Spirituality, it was verified the existence of a positive relationship, first by the recognition that human dimensions are interconnected, influencing even the physical and mental health of individuals. It was also



recorded that a spiritual experience can be achieved through the exercises of emotional education that, when learned, are incorporated into the daily life of the subjects as an emotional regulation strategy and promotion of well-being.

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