Evaluation of a workshop on social skills for professional practices in students of psychology and human communication therapy in the FPyTCH of the UJED

Evaluación de un taller en habilidades sociales para las prácticas profesionales en estudiantes de psicología y terapia de la comunicación humana en la FPyTCH de la UJED

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Abstract

Objective: To present the result obtained from the evaluation of a workshop on social skills for professional practices in students of Psychology and Human Communication Therapy within the Community Services Center at the Faculty of Psychology and Human Communication Therapy belonging to the Juárez University of the State of Durango. Methodology: Mixed in a sequential explanatory design (DEXPLIS), through the statistical analysis of a constant sample from the results obtained in the social skills scale tests (Gismero), EMES-C and EMES-M in three different moments using the IBM SPSS®, applying the bifactorial analysis of variance by ranges or Friedman's test. Contribution: Achieve a correct interpretation of the results from the established hypothesis, paying attention to the particularities of the professional work, seeking that the student of Psychology and Human Communication Therapy near to graduate has a repertoire of competent social skills, that contribute to efficient professional performance and personal fulfillment, as well as the development of positive attitudes and the reduction of emotional exhaustion.

Social skills, Students, psychology, Therapy, Human communication, Professional practices, Residencies, Evaluation, Workshop

Resumen

Objetivo: Presentar el resultado obtenido de la evaluación de un taller en habilidades sociales para las prácticas profesionales en estudiantes de Psicología y Terapia de la Comunicación Humana dentro del Centro de Servicios a la Comunidad en la Facultad de Psicología y Terapia de la Comunicación Humana perteneciente a la Universidad Juárez del Estado de Durango. Metodología: Mixta en un diseño explicativo secuencial (DEXPLIS), a través del análisis estadístico de una muestra constante a partir de los resultados obtenidos en las pruebas de escala de habilidades sociales (Gismero), EMES-C y EMES-M en tres momentos diferentes por medio del IBM SPSS®, aplicando el análisis de varianza bifactorial por rangos o prueba de Friedman. Contribución: Lograr una correcta interpretación de los resultados a partir de la hipótesis establecida, prestando atención a las particularidades de la labor profesional, buscando que el estudiante de Psicología y Terapia de la Comunicación Humana próximo a egresar cuente con un repertorio de habilidades sociales competentes, que contribuyan a un desempeño profesional eficiente y a la realización personal, así como el desarrollo de actitudes positivas y la disminución del agotamiento emocional.

Habilidades sociales, Estudiantes, Psicología, Terapia, Comunicación humana, Prácticas profesionales, Residencias, Evaluación, Taller

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Introduction

Social skills are a set of behaviors that are evident in interpersonal relationships, these skills give us a greater capacity, maintaining our self-esteem without harming the people around us, such behavior is based on the mastery of communication skills and emotional self-control. Thanks to the practice of these skills we can express feelings, attitudes, desires, opinions, etc.

Since its inception, the School of Psychology and Human Communication Therapy (FPyTCH) has had a Community Service Center (CSC), where students can perform their social service and residence for the two careers taught in that academic institution (Psychology and Human Communication Therapy), contributing to their professional and academic training; In their daily practice with their patients, colleagues or users, students verbally manifest deficiencies in management of social skills, mentioning that in their psychotherapeutic processes the topics addressed were often related to other personal situations, or, due to lack of economic resources, they cannot carry out their psychotherapeutic process. Therefore, the great majority present deficiencies when putting their social skills into practice in their professional practices.

Social skills are a very important topic in the professional training of Psychologists and Human Communication Therapists, because in several graduation profiles consulted for both degrees, skills such as problem solving, speech skills, to be able to establish rapport, or empathy when caring for a person while performing professional work are handled.

The curriculum does not include the development of social skills, nor does it provide theoretical and methodological tools to deal with them, nor does it have previous information about the work they will have to do, nor the customs and beliefs of the social context, "sometimes finding themselves in situations of isolation and vulnerability reflected in a sense of lack of control and loneliness that can lead to a phenomenon such as depression and insecurity related to their personal integrity" (Ortiz & Beltrán, 2016, p. 2).

The need to improve interpersonal skills, manage stress situations and increase the wellbeing of health personnel has been identified as essential for the proper functioning of university students. For this reason, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of social competence in university students because they constitute an emerging professional class that has social interaction as the basis of their actions; in social sciences, "in psychology in particular, the interpersonal difficulties of students are even more critical, given the interpersonal nature of the performance and object of study of these disciplines" (Herrera, Freyres, López & Olaz, 2012 p. 279). In addition to the need reflected in the students of the FPyTCH is that it was proposed to conduct research related to social skills for professional practices within the CSC, where there will be five important moments for the development of the same:

- Application of the instruments and diagnosis by means of tests.
- Elaboration of the course-workshop in social skills and retests.
- Follow-up test.
- Processing of statistical data.
- Interpretation of results.

Justification

Social Skills are a very important topic in professional training, since in several graduation profiles consulted for the Bachelor Psychology and Human Communication Therapy, skills such as problem solving, speech skills, to be able to establish rapport, or empathy when caring for a person while performing professional work are handled. Completing an academic program does not guarantee the ability to act and develop successfully in the professional field, because the competencies of a professional with a clinical focus are complemented by professional practices, social service or residencies, or in situations of simulation or role playing in the academic load and in the day-to-day practice that the development of the profession implies.

The interpersonal and communication skills in a clinical professional include the ability to gather information to facilitate accurate diagnosis, appropriate counseling, therapeutic instructions, care and relationship with their patients (Ortiz and Beltrán, 2016, p. 3).

Problem

Since the career of Psychology and Human Communication Therapy belongs to the health sciences and promotes the emotional well-being of people, seeking mental health in the population and improving the quality of life, it is essential that the provider of professional services, in this case, students of the degree, have their emotional foundations solid and strengthened so that professional activities to be carried out are not hindered by emotional problems or failing that by the lack of capacity to be carried out (Ordaz, 2013, p. 6).

Objectives

General:

 To evaluate the effect of the workshop on social skills applied to UJED Psychology and Human Communication Therapy residents and social service providers.

Specific:

- Assess social skills at three points during the research.
- To design and apply a social skills workshop for professional practices in the Psychology and Human Communication Therapy students of the FPyTCH.
- To analyze the statistical changes presented in the results.
- To favor personal and professional training of the residents and social service providers of Psychology and Human Communication Therapy of the FPyTCH through the implementation of social skills.

Methodology

This article is designed under a mixed methodology, since "it represents a set of systematic, empirical and critical processes of research and implies the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, as well as their integration and joint discussion" (Hernández, Fernández & Baptista, 2014, p.4).

By having a quantitative section, objective and concrete results are expressed through the statistical treatment of the same, so predictable and structured patterns are used during the process, which can be replicated and in turn follow a logical sequence through the standards of validity and reliability; so the conclusions can be considered knowledge generators (Hernández, Fernández & Baptista, 2014, p.6).

It is considered a sequential explanatory design (DEXPLIS), since it is characterized by a first stage in which quantitative data are collected and analyzed (application of tests), followed by another one where qualitative data are collected and evaluated (workshop in HHSS). The fusion of the qualitative and quantitative methodology occurs when the quantitative data collection (CUAN) informs and contributes to the qualitative data collection (CUAL); it is important to emphasize that the second phase is built from the first, in other words, the workshop phase was generated from the results of the first application of the tests (Hernández, Fernández & Baptista, 2014, p.554).

"A frequent purpose in this model is to use WHAT results to help in the interpretation and explanation of the initial WHAT findings, as well as to deepen them" (Hernández, Fernández & Baptista, 2014, p.554).

Finally, to give clarity to the reader about the DEXPLIS model, the procedure used from WHAT to WHAT is explained:

- 1. Quantitative data collection.
- 2. Quantitative analysis.
- 3. Quantitative data collection.
- 4. Qualitative analysis.
- 5. Interpretation of the complete analysis.

In a first stage, within a mixed methodology with a sequential explanatory execution, the quantitative or qualitative data are collected and analyzed, and in a second phase the data of the other method are collected and analyzed, which enriches the procedure and the final result.

This action was implemented and carried out in the first application of the tests in order to decide the topics to be addressed in the HHSS workshop and later in the second and third application of the tests that allowed to follow up the effectiveness of the workshop in the research, by means of a statistical hypothesis test.

As the evaluation of a social skills workshop was sought, there was the need to measure and estimate the magnitude of the phenomenon presented (HHSS) through a data collection obtained from the results of the applications of the instruments to be evaluated, so it was of great importance a hypothesis test that allowed to bring to light the interpretation of results.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis of relationship between variables:

The application of a social skills workshop aimed at residents and social service providers of the degree in Psychology and Human Communication Therapy promotes the development of these skills.

Based on the "Friedman" model of analysis of bifactorial variance by ranges used in non-parametric statistics in behavioral sciences, the hypotheses are:

- Ho: The central tendency in the three moments of application of the tests is the same.
- Hi: The central tendency is different in at least two moments of application of the test.

Population and Sample

An invitation was made to the resident students and service providers of the FPyTCH community care center. The students who accepted to be part of this work and were in a position to sign an informed consent, in order to obtain better results both in the application of the tests and in the workshop to be evaluated, so 18 students participated.

A sample was used for convenience (Hernández, Fernández & Baptista, 2014, p.401), in which a non-probabilistic and non-random technique is used, with the purpose of creating a sample from the ease of access to the population and establishing the availability of students through the informed consent prior to the intervention.

Career	Gender	Academic level
15 Psychology students.	3 Men.	5 students of 6th semester.
3 Students of Human Communication Therapy	15Women.	3 students of 7th semester. 8 students of 8th semester. 2 graduates.

Theoretical Framework The nature of social skills

The interest shown by psychology in knowing how people socialize is old, given that it is covered by different developmental theories, in which socialization contents, the importance of interactions and social relations for the establishment of better mental health are addressed (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2002).

The term social-emotional skills or social-emotional learning is currently used. When referred to as skills, it has the connotation of the possibility of their educability or training, while social-emotional learning can be described as the acquisition of diverse social-emotional skills, among which are self-knowledge, self-regulation, social awareness, skills to relate to others and responsible decision-making (García, 2018, p.5).

"Childhood is a critical period for the development of social skills where children are born with a certain temperamental bias towards inhibition or expressiveness, these innate predispositions interact with everyday learning to give rise to observable social manifestations" (Caballo, 2005 in Oros & Fontana, 2015, p.111).

Adolescence is extremely important for the development of social skills, because the young person faces multiple tasks that involve relating to the outside world in a different way than in childhood. It is in this period that they must develop skills to solve social problems in an independent way (Del Prette, Del Prette y Méndez Barreto, 1999 in Herrera, Freytes, López, & Olaz, 2012).

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Salutogenic approach and social skills

Social skills are defined as behaviors that help to have interpersonal relationships in various social factors to obtain success in the professional and work environment. "The establishment of satisfactory social relationships helps the person to perform successfully and healthily in different areas, both in affective relationships and in professional, working, and academic life is a salugenic factor of great importance" (Morán and Olaz, 2014, p. 94).

Social ability is the capacity that the subject has to successfully develop in the environment and achieve the satisfaction of their needs, is a quality related to health, emotional adjustment and welfare of individuals. Therefore, the practice of social skills "helps to raise the levels of self-efficacy, personal resources, and social competence of individuals; thus improving their possibilities for a creative and socially wellbeing life" (Arancibia & Péres, 2007, p. 135).

"Social-emotional competencies serve as part of prevention to diminish different risk situations such as violence, depression, stress, among other situations, thus minimizing the vulnerability of the person to dysfunctional situations" (Bisquerra, 2005 cited in Aguilar, Moreno & Torquemada, 2019, p. 216)

An important reason that can explain the development and acceptance of social skills training is "the improvement of the quality of life and well-being of people" (Pulido & Herrera, 2014, p. 262).

Importance of social skills development

From birth the human being needs to relate to others and be a participant in society where values, norms and beliefs are involved; the social contexts in which they interact (family, work, school) help to acquire and learn social skills.

"The deficit in the development of HHSS lies in the maladjustment or difficulty in establishing interpersonal relationships, since there is a series of negative consequences such as low social acceptance or social rejection, psychological maladjustments, emotional and academic problems, and antisocial behavior" (Bueno, Durán and Garrido, 2013 in Pulido and Herrera, 2014, p. 262).

In addition to the first stages of primary education during the higher education stage, the acquisition and strengthening of HHSS is crucial for professional life, fundamentally in careers where interpersonal relationships are part of the work field (Padilla, Colunga and Aguilar, 2019, p. 71).

University social skills training

The HHSS is a set of behaviors that allows the person to be functionally developed both in the social and professional environment, that is why importance is given to the issue of social skills in universities because they are defined as the basis of social competence; which students must face.

The acquisition of HHSS is a lifelong learning process, where the passage to new experiences and contexts makes changes in social goals and demands of wider interpersonal behavioral repertoires.

"There are studies carried out by Argyle, Bryant and Trower in 1974 on social performance in university students, where it was observed that they present deficits in their social competence; these authors found that 10% to 30% of a sample of Oxford students presented great difficulties in common social situations such as approaching other people, going to discos, taking the initiative in a conversation, talking to people of another sex, among others" (Herrera et al., 2012, p. 278).

Different authors have pointed out the importance of having HHSS for the professional development of university students, "there are two types of competencies that are indispensable for effective action and good professional performance, instrumental competencies and social competencies" (Gore, 1996 in Herrera, et al., 2012, p. 279):

- Instrumental competencies refer to the specific skills that allow a person to be more effective as a professional, and include short and long-term time organization, goal management, problem solving, and task-specific knowledge.
- Social skills allow the individual to interact effectively on an interpersonal level in their work environment.

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The importance of social competence in university students is emphasized, since they constitute an emerging professional class that has social interaction as the basis of its actions. In social sciences, "in psychology in particular, the interpersonal difficulties of students are even more critical, given the interpersonal nature of the performance and object of study of these disciplines" (Herrera, et al., 2012, p. 279).

One of the main disagreements of young university students is that the curriculum does not include developmental difficulties in social skills, nor does it provide theoretical and methodological tools to address them, nor does it have prior information about the work they will have to do, nor the customs and beliefs of the social context. "sometimes finding themselves in situations of isolation and vulnerability reflected in a sense of lack of control and loneliness that can lead to a phenomenon such as depression and insecurity related to their personal integrity" (Ortiz & Beltrán, 2016, p. 2).

The need to improve interpersonal skills, manage stress situations and increase the well-being of health personnel has been identified as essential for the proper functioning of university students.

It is not enough to develop knowledge and technical skills that prepare the man for the labor development strictly and concretely linked to the object of his profession, it is necessary to propitiate a permanent disposition for the analysis and improvement of the individual communicative behavior (Ordaz, 2013).

Higher education must not only provide solid competencies for the world of today and tomorrow, but also contribute to the formation of a citizenry with ethical principles, committed to the construction of peace, the defense of human rights and the values of democracy (Ordaz, 2013).

Social skills in university students with a clinical profile

The clinical practice is the part of medicine that integrates medical knowledge with the solution of the patient's problems. It can be seen as a body of knowledge or as the ability to care for patients, the attitude or willingness to help them authentically.

The interpersonal and communication skills in a clinician include the ability to gather information to facilitate accurate diagnosis, appropriate counseling, therapeutic instructions, and establishing care and relationships with patients (Ortiz and Beltran, 2016, p. 3).

In the training of social skills, it is indispensable to create mutually beneficial relationships, stimulate participation and enthusiasm, consolidate group identity and commitment, and share the merits, among other skills characteristic of a balanced and creative personality (Ordaz, 2013).

A fundamental factor for students to become cultural and learning promoters is related to social practice; therefore, it is necessary to develop in students with a clinical approach knowledge and skills that allow them in their social bond, to promote the culture and the scientific-technical advances of their profession (Ordaz, 2013).

In order to achieve a socially skillful professional future, it is indispensable to develop a group of skills through which pleasant emotions are generated, unpleasant ones are controlled, criteria unfavorable to the context are adequately expressed, respecting other people's judgments, teamwork is practiced, as well as the effective resolution of professional and personal problems.

There is a need for a system of professional training that allows the next mental health professionals to enter into practice without having full responsibility for the clients; such training should provide the opportunity to engage in professional work under the supervision of qualified professionals.

Such supervision offers a role model, training the university student during the professional role, providing feedback and guiding the student towards reflection with the possibility of providing consultation on technical and ethical issues. The learning process can be encouraged through a program that covers most of the needs of the desired profile for the students' professional practices, taking into account the need for some area of specialization if necessary.

Results

Three standardized psychological tests were applied, which were conducted at three different times with the same sample population under the same criteria.

The first application was at the beginning of the research in a diagnostic way with the students that were going to start their professional practices in the CSC, from the results obtained the course-workshop in social skills was designed for the students that participated in the sample population, the second application was at the end of the course-workshop and the third application was at the end of the school semester and therefore their practice time in the CSC.

It is important to emphasize that, during the applications of the instruments, the sample was kept constant with the purpose of carrying out a work from related samples and, in this way, having the reliability and validity necessary for the presentation of the results.

The following is a brief description of what each test evaluates in order to better understand this section:

- EMESC: Measures the frequency of negative thoughts.
- EMESM: Different forms of HHSS behavior.
- GISMER::Evaluation of assertiveness and social skills.

A constant population was observed in the analysis of results during the three moments in the three instruments, which allowed verifying the normality of the sample, by means of Shapiro Wilk's test. In this test, it was detected that the results do not obey to a normal distribution because their asymptotic significance is less than 0.05; therefore, it was decided to resort to non-parametric tests of multiple comparisons.

In this case it was resorted to apply Friedman's test of bifactorial variance of ranges, which corresponds to paired or related observations, where the results shown in table 1 were obtained:

	EMES C	EMES M	GISMERO
Number of	18	18	18
observations			
Test statistic	4,333	,333	5,292
Freedom Degrees	2	2	2
Asymptotic	,115	,846	,071
Significance			

Table 1 Test statistic values (Friedman) *Own Elaboration*

Applying the same criteria as in the test of normality, it is observed that the asymptotic significance, in all three tests, is greater than 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Therefore, referring to the analysis of the mixed methodology in the section CUAN, there was no significant difference in any of the three moments during the three applications of the instruments, reflecting statistically the little functionality of that workshop, because the central tendency in the three moments of application of the tests is the same, causing very minimum changes in the participants and therefore without validity.

Regarding the interpretation WHICH, it can be stated that the lack of effectiveness could be due to multiple factors of which we can highlight: personal and emotional situations, abandonment of the psychotherapeutic process in the case of psychology students, or the variable amount of patient assignment within the CSC, given that this process depended administratively on the CSC; which limited the implementation of the learning that could have been generated in the workshop.

It is considered important to emphasize that although the research hypothesis was not confirmed, the objectives, regardless of the results, were achieved, since the evaluation of the workshop, as well as the evaluation of the social skills in the three stipulated moments, were achieved. It was also possible to design and apply the workshop with the sample population from the first data obtained in the first evaluation of the tests and the statistical analysis was achieved in the three moments with the IBM SPSS ® program.

In terms of promoting personal and professional training of residents and social service providers, it can be interpreted that WHAT was not achieved the objective, but it is important to note that the mixed methodology opens the possibility of an assessment WHAT, in which the participants reported verbally to have learned techniques that could be implemented in their professional work.

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Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the work carried out in this research, the following objectives can be concluded:

- Regarding the evaluation of the effect of the workshop on social skills applied to residents and social service providers of Human Communication Psychology and Therapy, it can be said that there is no significant change in the statistical data from the analysis of bifactorial variance by Friedman's ranges, because the data do not obey to a normal distribution, given that its degree of asymptotic significance is less than 0.05.
- Social skills were evaluated in three moments during the investigation from the schedule of activities designed for the present research, respecting the stipulated dates, as well as the permissions to work with the sample population.
- There is evidence of the design and application of a social skills workshop for professional practices in the students of Psychology and Human Communication Therapy of the FPyTCH.
- The results obtained during the three applications of the social skills evaluation instruments used are analyzed using Friedman's bifactorial analysis of variance test and the Shapiro-Wilk normality test.

During the present investigation the personal and professional training of the residents and social service providers of the Psychology and Therapy of Human Communication of the FPyTCH is favored by means of the implementation of the social skills, as well as the acquisition of new knowledge generated from the course-workshop in social skills.

When beginning with the analysis of the statistical results and carrying out a feedback process to the present investigation, it was concluded that by means of a workshop in social skills in a propaedeutic way previous to carrying out the professional practices, it is not enough for such skills to be maintained and put into practice immediately, since a model of learning them is needed that favors the modeling of behavior, as well as the opportune corrections before being put into clinical practice; Such a model could be based on a behavioral model, through which there can be modeling and reinforcers that maintain the desired behavior in residents and social service providers.

Finally, it can be concluded that it is important to continue generating research on this research topic, given that the updated bibliography was scarce, which suggests a lack of materials that provide accurate and timely data on higher education, because the research found focused more on basic education or the importance of social skills in drug use in adolescents.

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