An Experiential and Blended Learning Approach to Promote Emotional Intelligence among Learners in Higher Education - A Systematic Review

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Abstract
The inclusion of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in higher education programs is crucial as EI competence determines personal and professional success. However, higher education programs focus on technical knowledge and skills, and pay little or no attention to EI and socioemotional competences. It is cited that EI is better taught using an experiential learning approach. Several reviews have been conducted to review EI studies. The current article reviews the promotion of EI among higher education learners or adults using an experiential learning approach in a blended and/or electronic context. The current review maps scientific studies that target the promotion of EI among young adults in higher education using and experiential learning approach in blended and electronic context as technology play a major role in today's life. The systematic review uses a descriptive methodology, and it aims to describe the intervention from a theoretical, conceptual, instructional, and technological aspects and examine the employed scientific methodologies to study interventions' effects on promoting the intended skills. The systematic review has been conducted using three main databases: Web of Science, SCOPUS, and EBSCOhost. PRISMA flowchart has been employed for the data selection process. Forty-nine documents from 2004 till 2022 are located and processed according to the specific criteria resulting in four articles met the required conditions. Required data are collected and analyzed using content analysis and descriptive methods. Main findings show that the socioemotional skills tackled in research studies are social skills, life skills, employability skills, and cultural skills, and they are taught as a part of discipline courses. Main theoretical frameworks were person-centred learning approach, experiential learning theory, and work integrated learning approach. No mention of the instructional design model has been cited. Previous studies employed qualitative or mixed approaches to collect and analyze data. No quasi-experimental methodology had been employed to quantitatively measure students' acquisition of the required skills. These studies confirm improvement of students' socioemotional skills after interventions. Several gaps can be noticed and further research studies is required with a focus on conceptualization and framing of socioemotional competences, theoretical frameworks and instructional approaches, instructional design model and process, and use of quantitative methodologies. The area of socioemotional competences promotion using innovative approaches, such as

experiential blended learning, shows a promising area for research and education since the higher education systems currently do not prioritize the explicit specialized training of these crucial skills.

Keywords: Experiential Learning, Blended Learning, Emotional Intelligence, Adult Learners, Young Adult Learners

Introduction

Several systematic reviews have been administered to study the promotion of emotional intelligence (EI) or similar competences through training or educational interventions among adolescents and adults (reviews conducted by: Bonesso, et. al., 2020; Kotsou, et. al., 2019; Mattingly, et. al., 2019; Hodzic, et. al., 2018; Schutte, et. al., 2013). As previous reviews have included all types of interventions without separating between face-to-face and electronic contexts, the current review targets only studies with interventions that employ experiential learning in blended or electronic contexts. It aims to identify the crucial aspects that should be considered when designing Experiential Blended Learning (EBL) programs to promote EI among adults or young adults. Further, it includes studies published from 2004 until the end of 2022 and it intends to identify research gaps and points to future directions.

Study Background

Promoting EI is crucial for higher education learners, in particular undergraduates, for several reasons. Conley (2015) states that university students are still developing their personalities, characters, competencies, and brains. She explains that the setting in universities is different from schools in that; there is no parental control, no school schedules, no home routines. She adds that university students move from being dependent on their parents into being independent individuals and responsible about their own life which make soft skills and socioemotional competences more crucial to their development. She elaborates that university students form new social connections with their roommates and college instructors which require new social and relationship skills.

Furthermore, EI for learners in higher education is related to better academic performance, employment, relationships, and wellbeing (literature reviews: Kotsou et al., 2019; MacCann et al., 2020; Schutte et al., 2013). Therefore, integrating EI competences in higher education systems is important to prepare students well for academia, work, and life.

In addition, research studies show the impacts of EI development programs on academic performance, physical and social health, relationships, and work aspects. MacCan et al (2020) reviews scientific studies that tackled the topic of EI in relation to academic achievement for all educational levels from elementary to university. They mention that: "Although we know that intelligence and conscientiousness are collectively the most important psychological characteristics needed for academic performance, this article highlights that there is a third broad psychological characteristic that may help students succeed—EI. The different varieties of EI most likely predict academic performance via different pathways... It is not enough to be smart and hardworking—to have the added edge for success, students must also be able to understand and manage emotions to succeed at school" (MacCan et al., 2020).

Moreover, literature reviews conducted by Hodzic et al (2018); Schutte et al (2013); Kotsou et al (2019) found that EI is related to positive impacts on psychological and physical health and better quality of relationships. Also, EI is associated with better work-related outcomes, such as improved teamwork, conflict management, employability, reemployment,

performance, and institutional climate. All these outcomes are crucial to undergraduates' success in academia, professional and personal life (ibid).

In addition to the above-mentioned benefits, EI is related to several advantages in the e-learning or blended learning contexts. A number of scientific articles indicate that EI is linked to students' physical health, social life, mental health, and academic success in e-learning settings (Salcido-Cibrián et al., 2019; Berenson et al., 2008; Gilar-Corbi et al., 2020). Moreover, students with high EI show better technology-readiness and coping strategies (Kruger, 2008; Alenezi, 2020) when attempting to master new technologies. Furthermore, during pandemic time (e.g. COVID19) where e-learning has played a major role in delivering education, EI influences students' study habits, emotional regulation (stress, anxiety, and fear) skills, resilience and mental health (Iqbal et al., 2022; Sriperumbuduru & Sirisha, 2021; Mohamed et al., 2022; Ainiyah et al., 2021).

Promoting EI among Undergraduate Learners

Promoting EIC is possible through education. Several literature reviews and meta-analyses have been conducted to answer the question: "can training develop EI?", and they all suggest positive results regarding improving EI after intervention programs (Hodzic et al., 2018; Kotsou et al., 2019; Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019; Schutte et al., 2013). Hodzic et al (2018) and Mattingly & Kraiger (2019) respectively meta-analyzed 24 and 58 studies. They found moderate positive effect size for the EI training. Hodzic et al (2018) found that the ability-based model training showed higher effects than trait and mixed models, while Mattingly & Kraiger (2019) mentioned that effect sizes were relatively robust over type of EI measure: ability vs mixed model, but not significant. Hodzic et al (2018), also found that "training effects of Mayer and Salovey's understanding emotions dimension were significantly higher than the training effects of the facilitating thought dimension". Moreover, Kotsou et al (2019) conducted a literature review of (46) studies and found positive results for EI training programs, in addition to better outcomes related to work, academia, relationships, and physical and psychological health.

EI Programs' Content, Approaches, and Instructional Strategies

EI in higher education might be tackled under several related terms. Conley (2015) explains 113 short-duration college intervention programs that target socioemotional competences, such as, mindfulness, meditation, relaxation, social skills development, and cognitive-behavioral change. She finds that mindfulness programs are most promising, and programs are only effective when they are skills-based with built-in supervised practice and do not utilize lectures as the main approach for learning. She (2015) differentiates between two main types of social emotional learning programs in higher education. The first type is the psychoeducational programs which are "interventions that primarily provide didactic information to participants on topics such as stress, coping, and ways to relax". The second type is the skills-oriented programs that offer (or do not offer) supervised-skills training. They have five main categories: cognitive behavioral intervention, meditation, mindfulness, relaxation, and social skills training.

Concerning EI interventions, Hodzic et al (2018) mentioned that specific learning programs promote EI, yet "the intensity of this improvement depends on the theoretical background of the interventions". They also differentiated between two types of EI interventions: the one focused on "declarative knowledge" meaning that understanding of emotional knowledge and "procedural knowledge" skills to turn knowledge into practice; and they claimed that

most of the analyzed intervention studies focused on declarative knowledge that served as the base to the practical knowledge. They stated: "in order to translate this knowledge into practice (to enhance the procedural knowledge) and in order for it to have observable benefits, repetitive and longer trainings are needed." In addition, they found that most effective interventions "used a workshop approach with group discussions and interactive participation", and the follow-up analysis suggested that the training positive effects remain over time.

Bonesso et al (2020) conducted a distinct systematic literature review to investigate the theoretical and methodological frameworks and contextual factors found in training and educational programs targeting adolescents and adults to develop behavioral, social, emotional, and cognitive competencies. The two most adopted learning approaches are: experiential learning based on Kolb's theory, and whole person pedagogy based on Rogers' theory. In addition, they found that characteristics of the learning experiences, such as wholistic and experience-based learning approaches, and characteristics of the learners, such as their career aspirations and desire for continuous learning, influence the development of behavioral, social, emotional, and cognitive competencies.

Previous studies Bonesso et al (2020); Hodzic et al (2018); Kotsou et al (2019); MacCann et al (2020); Mattingly & Kraiger (2019) recommend further research to investigate the following. One, better experimental design with randomized control groups is recommended by Hodzic et al (2018); MacCann et al (2020); Kotsou et al (2019) and better EI measurement, not only self-report scales, is suggested by (Bonesso et al., 2020; Kotsou et al., 2019). Two, specific and clear intervention studies are needed as mentioned in Bonesso et al (2020); Kotsou et al (2019); Mattingly & Kraiger (2019) and studies that investigate the long-term impacts of EI interventions are suggested by (Bonesso et al., 2020; Hodzic et al., 2018; Kotsou et al., 2019). Third, measuring outcomes other than EI, such as, social relations and work performance, is suggested by (Bonesso et al., 2020; Kotsou et al., 2019; Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019). Fourth, studying EI in relation to individual differences, vulnerable groups, and different categories of learners is recommended by (Bonesso et al., 2020; Hodzic et al., 2018; Kotsou et al., 2019; Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019). Also, conducting research in different cultural contexts, as most of these studies are taken place in the European and US contexts, is proposed by (Bonesso et al., 2020).

Promoting EI Using Experiential Learning

As shown in the previous literature review, Experiential Learning is considered an effective approach to develop socioemotional competences. Experiential Learning is defined in APA Dictionary (2022) as "learning that occurs by actively performing and participating in an activity". Its theory was first developed by David Kolb in 1984 to emphasis the importance of and systemize the experiences in learners' acquisition of new skills, knowledge, and values (Kolb, 2015, p. xiv). Kolb explains a four-stage learning cycle, through which learners construct knowledge; the stages are: concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 2015, p. 31-61). Moreover, the study conducted by Cortellazzo et. al (2021) and the systematic review performed by Bonesso et al (2020) found an experiential learning approach plays a crucial role in learners' acquisitions of socioemotional competences.

Promoting EI in Electronic Contexts

Although the reviewed literature and meta-analyses mentioned above tackled EI in both types of settings: face-to-face and e-learning, most of the included studies were focused on face-to-face settings. Reviewing e-learning studies by retrieving scientific articles from Web of Science database during the past five years (2016-2020), only 10 studies are found relevant. These ten scientific articles Koc & Boz (2020); Alkozei et al (2019); Gilar-Corbí et al (2018); Abdolrezapour (2017); Almeida (2020); Pozo-Rico et al (2018); Köppe et al (2019); West et al (2020); Nadler et al (2020); Choubisa & Singh (2018) confirm the importance of EI e-training, but they have the following limitations. One, experiments were conducted on a small number of participants and less likely to be generalized (398, 95, 198, 63, 275, 49, 177, 158, 110, 96 = 1610 participants). Two, samples were drawn from the following countries: USA (3 studies), Germany (1 study), Spain (1 study), Moldova (1 study), Portugal (1 study), Turkey (1 study), Iran (1 study), and India (1 study). Third, studies conducted on: working adults (2 studies), university/undergraduate students (5 studies), working adults and university students (1 study), secondary students (1 study), and language learning center students (1 study). Fourth, among the five studies that targeted university students: 2 studies targeted business or business-related students, 1 study targeted military medical students, 2 studies targeted no specific discipline students. Fifth, some studies showed significant results in the total EI scores but no significant results in some of EI sub-skills scores. Sixth, studies were investigating EI e-training from the following perspectives: employee training (1 study), clinical psychology (1 study), organizational psychology (1 study), educational psychology (2 studies), English language learning (1 study), entrepreneurship and/or business education (2 studies), secondary education (1 study), and medical/surgical education (1 study).

Limited studies have employed e-learning programs to develop EI for university students. Literature reviews show only five studies (in the past five years 2017-2021 from Web of Science Database) that target university students: 2 of them for business or business-related studies, 1 study for military medical students, 2 studies for no specific discipline students. They employed different strategies to develop EI: individualized tutorials, flipped classroom, coaching-mediated interventions Gilar-Corbí et al (2018), game-based learning and scenario-based learning Almeida (2020), simulation West et al (2020), text-based self-directed sessions Choubisa & Singh (2018), and a validated face-to-face EI program turned into web-based training (Köppe, et al., 2019). The theoretical/conceptual framework for EI employed model is clear in some studies as they state that they follow ability EI Köppe, et al (2019) or trait EI (Gilar-Corbí et al., 2018). Some of the studies employed concepts from Positive Psychology theory Choubisa & Singh (2018) and Flow theory (Almeida, 2020). It is important to note that only two studies are tackling the topic from an educational psychology perspective Choubisa & Singh (2018); Gilar-Corbí et al (2018), the rest are in medical/surgical or business education (Almeida, 2020; Köppe, et al., 2019; West et al., 2020).

Method
Scope and Questions

The scope of the current review can be defined using PICOC framework that stands for: Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcomes, and Context (Booth et al., 2016, p. 86). Thus, the scope is as the following: P: Adults, Young Adults, I: Experiential and Blended Learning, C: Conventional Instruction, O: Emotional Intelligence Competences (EIC), and C: Higher Education – Executive Education – Professional Development.

The systematic review aims to find answers to the questions:

(1) How the experiential blended learning programs have been designed to promote EIC for adult or young adult learners?
- What is the content of EIC?
- What are the underpinning concepts and frameworks?
- What are the employed instructional design models?
- What are the employed instructional strategies?
- What is the amount and format/medium of blended/e-learning experiences?
- What are the emphasized practices?

(2) How the experiential blended learning programs to promote EIC have been tested among adult or young adult learners?

(3) How have the experiential blended learning programs affected learners' emotional intelligence competences?

Eligibility Criteria
The inclusion and exclusion criteria are:
(1) The intervention must be based on the experiential learning approach or theory AND in blended or electronic contexts.
(4) The intervention must aim to promote emotional intelligence or similar competences (soft skills, life skills, SEL).
(5) The intervention must target higher education, adults, or young adult learners.
(6) The study must either provide detailed description about the intervention, tested the intervention quantitatively or qualitatively, or both.

Limitations are:
- The study must be conducted on or after 2004 as Web 2.0 technology has emerged since then, and technology involved before that year is considered outdated (Harrison & Barthel, 2009).
- The study must be written in English language since this is the language the researcher understands.
- The type of documents should be article as conference papers are usually not available.

Information Sources and Search Strategy
The following mainstream databases are employed to locate scientific articles: WOS, SCOPUS, EBSCOhost. Using PICOC framework to generate the search terms as the following: population and context can be referred to the same population context, so, relevant terms are: (Adults OR "Young Adults" OR "Higher Education" OR "Executive Education" OR "Professional Development" OR "Tertiary Education" OR "Postsecondary Education" OR university OR college OR undergraduates). Intervention must be ("Experiential Learning" AND "Blended Learning" OR "e-learning" OR elearning OR "hybrid learning" OR "technology-mediated" OR technology). No need to mention the conventional instruction to locate documents. The outcomes are mainly ("emotional intelligence" OR "emotional skills" OR "emotional competences" OR "emotional development" OR "social skills" OR "social competences" OR "social development" OR "socioemotional" OR "soft skills" OR "life skills" OR "personal development" OR "social emotional Learning"). These terms must be present at least in abstracts. Limitations are: dates must be 2004 onwards and language is limited to English. Document types are articles or conference papers or dissertations (exclude book chapters or reviews). Research conducted on January, 3rd, 2022.

The total results are 49 documents. After excluding Duplicates (15), the total number became 34 documents (31 journal article + 3 doctoral dissertations). One document was excluded as it was in Portuguese language not English. Total number of documents is 33 (see appendix 1).

Selection Process

Using PRISMA flowchart, the abstracts of 33 documents are reviewed by the principal researcher according to the four main criteria stated above. Sixteen documents are found irrelevant and excluded from the sample as they did not tackle EIC or similar competences; they mainly focus on STEM education, teachers' education, technology adoption, and knowledge translation. The remaining seventeen documents are sought for retrieval, sixteen documents are retrieved. The full documents are reviewed according to the four main inclusion criteria. Eleven documents are excluded mainly because they tackle an experiential learning approach in non-electronic contexts; not blended nor e-learning, or they are not tackling emotional intelligence competences or relevant skills explicitly (these skills might be unintended outcomes) (See PRISMA flow chart figure 1). Thus, the documents included in the review are four articles (See table 1). Microsoft Excel application (MS Excel) is used to organize the documents.

Data Collection Process and Data Items

Content analysis method has been used to collect and analyze data related to answering the systematic review's main questions. Content analysis is defined Booth, et. al (2016, p. 304) as: "the process of organizing written, audio, or visual information into categories and themes related to the central questions of a study or review." Content analysis tool using Google Forms has been developed to collect and analyze data answering the systematic review's stated questions. The study has been conducted by a main researcher and reviewed by two university professors.
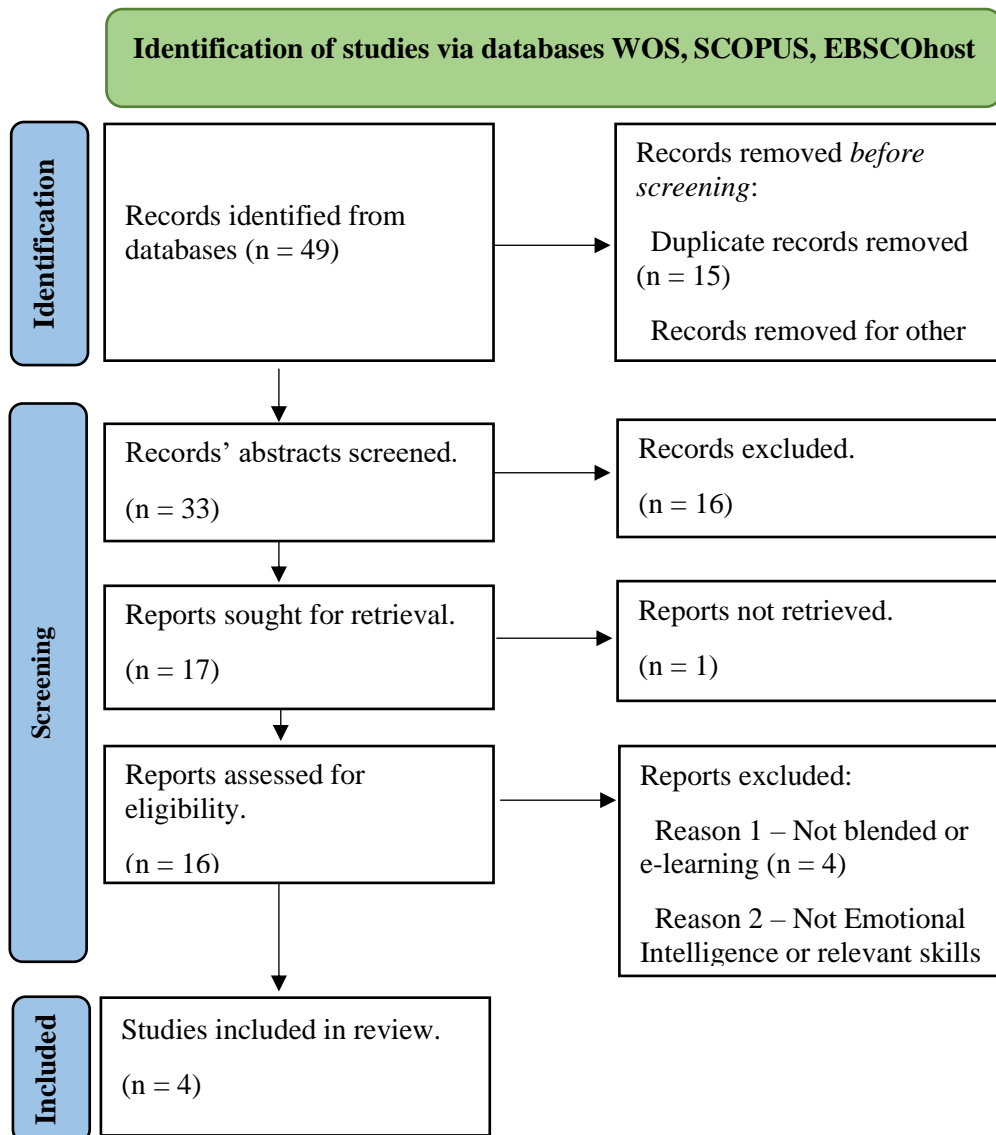
Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Chart Selection Process

Table 1

The Four Selected Documents for the Systematic Review

Year	Authors	Article Title
2005	Motschnig-Pitrik, R	Person-centered E-learning in action: Can technology help to manifest person-centered values in academic environments?
2015	Croes J.V., Visser M.M.	From tech skills to life skills: Google online marketing challenge and experiential learning
2017	Schech, Susanne; Kelton, Maryanne; Carati, Colin; Kingsmill, Verity	Simulating the global workplace for graduate employability
2018	Udyavar R., Smink D.S., Mullen J.T., Kent T.S., Green A., Harlow A.F., Castillo-Angeles M., Columbus A.B., Haider A.H.	Qualitative Analysis of a Cultural Dexterity Program for Surgeons: Feasible, Impactful, and Necessary

Results & Discussion

To answer research questions, descriptive method is employed to analyze the collected data. The studies are tackled one by one in the following paragraphs to answer the stated questions.

Study 1 in 2005 - Title: Person-centred E-learning in action: Can technology help to manifest person-centred values in academic environments? by Motschnig-Pitrik.

In Motschnig-Pitrik' study (2005), the researcher aimed to "to approach significant, whole-person learning by combining person-centred teaching, as developed by the American psychologist Carl Rogers, with elements of e-learning, resulting in an approach called person-centred e-learning". She designed the program for students at University of Vienna in Austria throughout two semesters in two courses: project management and web engineering.

The result for the first question: How the experiential blended learning programs have been designed to promote EIC among adults or young adult learners? is as the following. The content of socioemotional competences are soft skills and social skills mainly: communication, motivation, leadership, and teamwork. However, no well-established model has been cited as a reference for the components or content of soft skills. As mentioned by the author, she followed a person-centred approach developed by Carl Rogers as the main theory in designing the wholistic learning experiences covering mainly the intellect, skills, and feelings and intuitions. She also illustrated three main concepts embedded in the learning experiences: realness, acceptance, and deep understanding. No instructional design model has been mentioned. The employed instructional strategies are opening dialogues about the proceeding workshop's reaction sheets, group discussion, 2-4 students in team projects, inclusion of real problems, authentic feedbacks and reflections, climate of respect, open virtual space for comments, acceptance of evaluation and guidance, deep and meaningful understanding, clarification of uncertainties. The utilized technology elements are learning platform modules which contain provision of resources on internet, a course home page, communication and participation in discussion forums, students' workspaces, blackboards,

and whiteboards, evaluation using web-based self and peer evaluation. The online platform served as an organizational intellectual information and repository of students' work, photographs of the flipcharts. The duration of the program was 3 workshops consisted of 9 hours as a total, delivered in a blended learning environment; yet the number of hours spent online is not specified. Students used the online platform as an organizational and intellectual repository and the conventional class settings for dialogues and discussions. The author highly emphasized the role of the facilitator with high interpersonal values.

The result for the second question: How the experiential blended learning programs to promote EIC have been tested among adult or young adult learners? is as the following. The author employed a case study method to evaluate students' reactions and attitudes toward a person-centred e-learning approach. Eighty students were involved, responses were gathered in the form of reaction sheets (n = 56) and an attitude questionnaire (n = 15 + 131) about the program person-centred approach. The same evaluation has been repeated after a year from the first one. Also, motivational orientation has been evaluated.

The result for the third question: How have the experiential blended learning programs affected learners' emotional intelligence competences? is that the author explained students' reactions (n=56) to the person-centred e-learning approach, which were positive in general, but not their acquisition of the soft skills.

Study 2 in 2015 - Title: From tech skills to life skills: Google online marketing challenge and experiential learning by Croes & Visser.

Croes & Visser (2015) studied the impacts of Google Online Marketing Challenge (GOMC) on students' life skills. The GOMC had 80k participants from around 100 countries. The challenge aims to develop online marketing knowledge and skills among university students. The study focused on investigating undergraduate and graduate students' development of life skills after their participation in the GOMC. The study was conducted on students enrolled in Information Systems class in Aruba university, a country in the South America Continent.

The result for the first question: How the experiential blended learning programs have been designed to promote EIC among adults or young adult learners? is as the following. The content of the life skills was extracted from a pilot group (4 students) who had previous participation in GOMC. They wrote critical reflections from which the life skills components have been outlined. Life skills extracted were clustered in four groups. First, interpersonal life skills are: verbal communication, working with team members, leadership, job problem solving, organizational skills. Second, digital technical skills are: ability to explain the benefits of ads to a select audience, ability to discuss how to use social media in a marketing plan, ability to illustrate how technical and cultural factors affect the success of an online advertising campaign, ability to discuss online marketing and media planning. Third, the intrapersonal life skills are: self-awareness and reflection, confidence in abilities, strategic planning. Fourth, adaptive applied skills are flexibility and adaptability, explain click through rate, landing page, campaign optimization and ROI, and written communication skills. Authors did not provide descriptive information about GOMC except that it was based on experiential learning and problem-based learning in which students were involved in doing marketing campaigns for real organizations using real money sponsored by Google. No instructional design model had been mentioned. Problem-based learning, real world problem and competitive challenge seem to be the main instructional strategies employed in a blended learning format for a duration of 21 days. The amount of online presence was not specified.

The utilization of real-world problems and real money were emphasized as good practices by the authors.

The result for the second question: How the experiential blended learning programs to promote EIC have been tested among adult or young adult learners? is as the following. Authors employed a 29-items survey to find out students' perceptions (n=15) about the GOMC program, their implementations, and preferences in an exploratory study format.

The result for the third question: How have the experiential blended learning programs affected learners' emotional intelligence competences? is as the following. According to students' surveys (n=15), 50% or more agree on improvements in their interpersonal skills, 73% or more agree on improvements digital technical skills, 80% or more agree on improvements in intrapersonal skills, and 60% or more agree on improvements in adaptive skills. The overall mean was 3.7. The digital technical skills and intrapersonal skills represent the highest scores while the interpersonal skills represent the lowest score. The authors explained that the nature of the challenge emphasized the digital skills, and the experiential learning component emphasized the intrapersonal skills. Yet, the interpersonal skills had been improved but not as strong as the other skills. No clarification had been provided as the study was exploratory.

Study 3 in 2017 - Title: Simulating the global workplace for graduate employability by Schech, et. al.

Schech et. al (2017) designed and investigated a new format to deliver an international studies course in order to develop employability skills for university students as an international collaboration between Swedish and Australian universities. They emphasized the inclusion of ICT to provide students with international and cultural experiences that are difficult to acquire in face-to-face settings.

The result for the first question: How the experiential blended learning programs have been designed to promote EIC among adults or young adult learners? is as the following. The soft skills, termed as employability skills, are ten skills framed by the Australian Government – Commonwealth of Australia. They are grouped in three main clusters: navigate the world of work: (1) manage career and work life and (2) work with roles, rights, and protocols; Interact with others: (3) communicate for work, (4) connect and work with others, (5) recognize and utilize different perspectives; get the work done: (6) plan and organize, (7) make decisions, (8) identify and solve problems, (9) create and innovate, (10) work in a digital world. The authors explained the concept of work integrated learning (WIL) as the main underpinning approach on which the program has been designed. They mentioned that WIL is an instructional strategy that helps university students to build connections between life experiences, theories, and practice, which enables them to apply this understanding into new and diverse contexts and scenarios. They added that WILis an effective technique to enhance students' employability since it integrates real-life experiences in work settings with classroom instruction. No instructional design model was mentioned. The main employed instructional strategy was in-person simulation which consists of building real-world events that have live interactions between participants who play several roles relevant to the targeted skills.

The simulation model was illustrated as employing the following strategies and technologies: online learning website for academic readings and discussion forums, live streamed symposium for experts' presentations and teacher mediated chats, in-person simulation contained complex evolving scenarios and international blended students' teams, and

debriefs done by students and staff, and as reflective assignments. The duration of the program was six weeks of online study followed by a six-hour simulation. The medium were mainly blended environments in which Moodle, Skype, and a live streaming site were main technical tools. Authors emphasized the international experiences learners get from interacting with international students and guests.

The result for the second question: How the experiential blended learning programs to promote EIC have been tested among adult or young adult learners? is that Qualitative students' feedbacks (n= 37) had been collected after the program completion.

The result for the third question: How have the experiential blended learning programs affected learners' emotional intelligence competences? is as the following. Students' comments were clustered in three main themes: knowledge application in problem solving, cultural collaboration, and digital work. According to the authors, students' comments reflected their development of the majority of stated ten employability skills.

Study 4 in 2018 - Title: Qualitative Analysis of a Cultural Dexterity Program for Surgeons: Feasible, Impactful, and Necessary by Udyavar, et. al..

Udyavar et. al (2018) developed and investigated a new curriculum for surgical residents; that was called "the Provider Awareness Cultural Dexterity Toolkit for Surgeons (PACTS)" and it aims to provide a cultural dexterity framework, which places a greater emphasis on skills acquisition and adaptability to dynamic interpersonal circumstances than the traditional cultural competency framework. The study was conducted in three medical centers in Boston, United states. It served as a pilot study to explore surgical residents' perspectives on the cultural dexterity program, mainly their clinical practice, their attitudes about cross cultural care, and cross-cultural communication skills.

The result for the first question: How the experiential blended learning programs have been designed to promote EIC among adults or young adult learners? is as the following. The content of the cross-cultural communications skills was utilized from the PACTS and cultural dexterity framework. The authors did not provide enough details on the components of these skills. The underpinning concepts and strategies employed in the program were flipped classrooms and role-modeling. The program was implemented during one academic year and through four sessions. Students mainly completed online materials before their participation in in-person experiential learning sessions. No instructional design model had been mentioned. The online learning duration was not specified. The results emphasized the role modeling approach as an integral strategy to develop interpersonal skills and cultural dexterity.

The result for the second question: How the experiential blended learning programs to promote EIC have been tested among adult or young adult learners? is that the authors employed qualitative grounded theory approach in a pilot study to collect and analyze students' responses in four focus groups – 6 to 9 students each.

The result for the third question: How have the experiential blended learning programs affected learners' emotional intelligence competences? is that students' feedback responses about the program were collected but not their acquisitions or development of communication and interpersonal skills.

Gaps and Future Directions

To summarize the previous four relevant studies, it is found that gaps can be categorized in five categories as the following:

The skills or competences content
- Social skills, life skills, employability skills, and cultural dexterity skills were the main employed competences. This clearly shows that emotional intelligence as a socioemotional competences model has not been employed in the four previous studies.
- Socioemotional competences are tackled as a part of discipline courses (e.g. international studies, surgical education, digital marketing, and project management). There is no study that tackled the development of socioemotional competences in an explicit specialized course.

The underpinning theories and concepts
- Person-centred learning approach, Experiential Learning Theory, and Work Integrated Learning approach were employed in the studies. However, just one study (Croes & Visser, 2015) referred briefly to Kolb's learning theory. Yet, it did not illustrate how the learning cycle and learning spaces have been applied.

The instructional design models, strategies, and technologies
- None of the four previous studies provided brief details on the instructional design (ID) of the developed programs.
- The previous studies employed several experiential strategies and instructional technologies. They used mainly: in-person simulation, problem-based learning, role-modeling, dialogues, and discussions. Technology served as way to organize learning materials, store students' works, communicate and discuss, collect feedbacks, prepare for the upcoming sessions, and doing real work (e.g. digital marketing campaigns).
- Further detail on duration of online compared to face-to-face settings is needed.

The scientific Methodologies
- Previous studies employed qualitative or mixed approaches to collect and analyze data. Students' reactions and/or feedbacks had been collected before and/or after the program completion. No quasi-experimental methodology had been employed to quantitatively measure students' acquisition of the required skills.

The socioemotional competences outcomes
- Socioemotional competences (social skills, life skills, employability skills) had been improved according to students' reactions and feedbacks.

Conclusion
According to the above four studies, several gaps can be noticed, and they can be categorized into four categories for future research studies. They are conceptualization/framing of socioemotional competences, theoretical/instructional approaches, instructional design model and process, and methodological testing. It is apparent that the term that refers to socioemotional competences in higher education systems is not unified and as a result it is not well framed. This shows urgent need to structure socioemotional competences in a unified and well-framed manner. Emotional intelligence competences might provide a well-established model to tackle this issue for young adult learners. In addition, studies that use experiential learning approach as theorized by David Kolb (2015) should provide details on how the learning cycle, learning spaces, educators'

roles, and learners' roles have been designed and implemented. Further, technology roles in blended learning experiences should be elaborated and learners' online presence in terms of quality and quantity should be described. Experiential blended learning programs to promote socioemotional competences in explicit specialized courses for adult learners is an area of research that represent a future research direction that has not been investigated yet. Besides, studies that involve the development of learning programs should illustrate the instructional design model and process. Moreover, it is recommended to administer quasi-experimental studies that quantitatively investigate the effects of experiential blended learning programs on socioemotional competences. In conclusion, the area of socioemotional competences development using innovative approaches, such as experiential blended learning, shows a promising area for research and education since the higher education systems currently do not prioritize the explicit specialized promotion of these crucial skills.

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