

DETECTION OF SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR POTENTIAL CAUSES**DETECÇÃO DE SINAIS DE PROBLEMAS EMOCIONAIS EM ESTUDANTES DO ENSINO MÉDIO E SUAS POTENCIAIS CAUSAS****DETECCIÓN DE SEÑALES DE PROBLEMAS EMOCIONALES EN ESTUDIANTES DE SECUNDARIA Y SUS POSIBLES CAUSAS**Mercedes Salas Santa Cruz¹

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ABSTRACT

The present research is applied in nature and descriptive in type, with the general objective of detecting emotional problems among high school students. Among the specific objectives are the identification of levels of understanding, regulation, and expression of emotions, as well as the recognition of the tendency to seek out risky and dangerous situations among students in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years of high school at a private educational institution located in the city of Rio Branco, capital of the State of Acre, in the northern region of Brazil. The study adopted a quantitative approach, using a sample of 106 students aged between 14 and 18 years. The results showed that 50% of the participants were at an intermediate level, indicating that a portion of adolescents is exposed to certain risks but may possess some protective factors or coping mechanisms that allow them to resist or partially mitigate negative effects. However, they are not entirely resilient or protected. If emotional problems are not identified early, they may become risk factors, contributing to the development or worsening of future psychological issues. A student experiencing emotional problems is unlikely to achieve good academic performance; they tend to be distracted, absent, and show little motivation to engage in classroom activities.

KEYWORDS: Emotional problems. Adolescent. Learning.**RESUMO**

A presente pesquisa é aplicada, de natureza descritiva, com o objetivo geral de detectar problemas emocionais em alunos do ensino médio. Entre os objetivos específicos, destacam-se a identificação dos níveis de compreensão, regulação e expressão das emoções, bem como a análise da tendência à busca por situações de risco e perigo entre estudantes do 1º, 2º e 3º anos do ensino médio de uma instituição privada localizada em Rio Branco, capital do Estado do Acre, na região Norte do Brasil. Adotou-se uma abordagem quantitativa, com uma amostra de 106 estudantes com idades entre 14 e 18 anos. Os resultados revelaram que 50% dos participantes apresentaram um nível intermediário no que se refere à regulação emocional e à propensão ao risco. Isso indica que uma parcela significativa dos adolescentes se encontra em uma zona de vulnerabilidade: estão expostos a determinados riscos, mas também contam com alguns fatores de proteção ou estratégias de enfrentamento que podem atenuar, ainda que parcialmente, os impactos negativos. No entanto, essa condição intermediária não garante uma proteção plena. Caso os problemas emocionais não sejam identificados e acompanhados adequadamente, podem se transformar em fatores de risco que contribuem para o surgimento ou agravamento de dificuldades emocionais e comportamentais no futuro. Um aluno com sofrimento emocional tende

¹ World University Ecumenical.

a apresentar dificuldades de desempenho escolar, podendo mostrar-se desatento, ausente e com pouca motivação para participar das atividades em sala de aula.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Problemas emocionais. Adolescente. Aprendizagem.

RESUMEN

La presente investigación es de naturaleza aplicada y de tipo descriptivo, teniendo como objetivo general detectar problemas emocionales entre los estudiantes de educación secundaria. Entre los objetivos específicos se destacan la identificación de los niveles de comprensión, regulación y expresión de las emociones, así como el reconocimiento de la tendencia a buscar situaciones de riesgo y peligro entre los alumnos de primero, segundo y tercer año de secundaria de una institución educativa privada ubicada en la ciudad de Río Branco, capital del estado de Acre, en la región norte de Brasil. El estudio adoptó un enfoque cuantitativo, utilizando una muestra de 106 estudiantes con edades comprendidas entre los 14 y 18 años. Los resultados mostraron que el 50 % de los participantes se encontraba en un nivel intermedio, lo que indica que una parte de los adolescentes está expuesta a ciertos riesgos, pero podría poseer algunos factores de protección o mecanismos de afrontamiento que les permiten resistir o mitigar parcialmente los efectos negativos. Sin embargo, no son completamente resilientes ni están totalmente protegidos. Si los problemas emocionales no se identifican a tiempo, pueden convertirse en factores de riesgo, contribuyendo al desarrollo o agravamiento de problemas psicológicos futuros. Un estudiante que experimenta problemas emocionales difícilmente logrará un buen desempeño académico; tiende a estar distraído, ausente y a mostrar poca motivación para participar en las actividades de clase.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Problemas emocionales. Adolescente. Aprendizaje.

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a phase marked by profound biological, emotional, psychological and social transformations. This crucial period for human development is widely studied in social and biological sciences due to its significant influence on the well-being and identity formation of individuals. In the educational context, it is common to observe that adolescents face emotional problems that can directly affect their school performance and their social interactions.

Studies show that cases such as anxiety, depression and emotional dysregulation are common among students and often go unnoticed by teachers and families (Siegel, 2016). The problem to be investigated in this research is related to the identification of signs and factors causing emotional problems in high school students. This group, which comprises students aged between 12 and 18 years, faces specific challenges, such as pressure for academic performance, psychological, hormonal changes and issues related to self-image and social belonging.

The emotional problems that emerge in this phase, if not treated, may become risk factors for the development of more severe disorders in adulthood, such as anxiety and depression disorders (Pereira; Cia; Barham, 2008). Therefore, early detection of these problems in the school environment can be an essential measure for the promotion of emotional health of students. The main objective of this research is to determine the predominant levels of emotional problems in



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Mercedes Salas Santa Cruz

students of different years of high school, exploring the impact of emotional and behavioral factors in the school context and identifying areas of vulnerability. Specifically, we seek to evaluate how these students understand, regulate and express their emotions, in addition to identifying trends in the search for situations of risk or danger that may compromise their health and safety; and this constitutes a vulnerability to the appearance of more serious problems. (Fernández-Pinto et al., 2015). The relevance of this research to the field of education is significant. The understanding of emotional problems in the school environment allows the development of intervention strategies that can support the students' personal and academic growth, promoting more inclusive and healthy learning environments. As Vasconcelos and Leme (2013) point out, "the presence of emotional difficulties can significantly compromise academic development, making it necessary an integrated action among mental health and education professionals to promote student well-being" (p. 91).

In addition, by providing subsidies to educators and school managers, the research contributes to the formulation of educational policies that consider the emotional needs of students, as recommended by the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC). BNCC acknowledges that the student's integral development involves not only the mastery of cognitive content, but also the cultivation of socio-emotional skills. Among the emotional needs addressed, the ability to deal with one's own emotions, develop empathy, establish healthy interpersonal relationships, make responsible decisions and exercise self-regulation are highlighted. These competencies are organised at the BNCC in the context of personal and social training, particularly within general competence No. 9, which proposes that students learn to "exercise empathy, dialogue, conflict resolution and cooperation" (Brazil, 2017). In the social sphere, the research is justified by the importance of understanding the factors that influence the emotional well-being of young people. It is estimated that the increase in mental health problems among adolescents — such as anxiety, depression, irritability and emotional regulation difficulties — has implications not only for the school environment, but also for society in general, because emotionally unstable adolescents may have difficulties in adapting and compromising their future performance both personally and professionally (Wang et al., 2014).

Thus, the development of emotional skills since school can act as a protective factor, promoting resilience and coping ability. The study was conducted in a college in Brazil, with a sample of 106 students of both sexes, enrolled in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of high school. These students were submitted to a questionnaire, which allows identifying both emotional regulation problems and the presence of search behaviors for risk situations. The choice of this college was based on the relevance of understanding the Brazilian educational context and the specific challenges faced by high school students.

This dissertation, therefore, offers a multidisciplinary approach when considering biological, psychological and social aspects of emotional problems. The perspective adopted seeks to integrate the findings of psychology and education, highlighting the importance of systematic monitoring and the creation of programs that promote emotional health. The interventions suggested based on the results of this research can be applied in the school routine, benefiting not only students, but also education professionals, who will have subsidies to deal with emotional issues in the educational context. As Del Prette, Z and Del Prette, A (2011) state, "the school can be a privileged space for the development of emotional and social skills, provided that there is intentionality, adequate training and institutional support" (p. 46).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Emotional Conceptions

The different theories that seek to explain the origin of emotions offer different perspectives on how emotions arise and develop. Evolution theory, for example, suggests that emotions have an adaptive function, helping individuals to respond effectively to situations of danger or opportunity. Cognitive theory emphasizes the role of mental processes in the generation and interpretation of emotions, highlighting the importance of perception and thought in emotional experience. In turn, social theory highlights the influence of the social environment on the regulation and expression of emotions, considering factors such as cultural norms and social interactions (Comparini; Wechsler, 2015).

In the field of neuroscience, emotion is defined as a subjective behavioral reaction produced by information from the external or internal world of the individual. Emotions are the result of how we physically and mentally experience the interaction between our internal and external world. They are expressed through behaviors, expressions of feelings and physiological changes. This means that emotions are complex sets of chemical and neural reactions, forming a pattern; all emotions have some sort of regulatory role to play, leading, in one way or another, to the creation of advantageous circumstances for the organism in which the phenomenon manifests itself; emotions are linked to the life of an organism, to its body, to be exact, and its role is to help the organism to conserve life (Damasio, 2000).

Understanding the emotions of adolescents is fundamental, given the complexity of this period marked by intense physical, emotional and social changes. Neurobiological transformations can directly impact on the emotional functioning of adolescents, making them more susceptible to mood swings and impulsiveness. In addition, social pressures and expectations regarding academic performance and personal identity can generate internal conflicts that are reflected in the emotions of young people (Andrade; Enumo; Passos; Vellozo et al., 2021). Emotions exert a

significant influence on the behavior of adolescents and may lead them to act impulsively or inappropriately in certain situations.

Lack of skills to deal with one's own emotions can result in risky behaviors, such as drug use, violence or social isolation. Therefore, it is essential to promote the development of emotional intelligence in adolescents so that they can regulate their emotions in a healthy and constructive way (Freitas, 2017). The main emotional problems faced by adolescents include anxiety, depression, eating disorders and self-mutilation. These conditions can have diverse origins, from genetic factors to traumatic or stressful experiences. It is important to be attentive to the signs of these emotional problems to intervene early and provide the necessary support for young people in suffering (Lima; Pacheco, 2018). As Sadock, B and Sadock, V (2011) warn, "emotional disorders in adolescence, if not properly diagnosed and treated, tend to persist and worsen, compromising the social, academic and family functioning of the young person" (p. 326).

The relationship between the emotional problems of adolescents and external factors is complex and varied. Excessive academic pressure, unresolved family conflicts and bullying situations can contribute to the development of emotional problems in young people. Therefore, it is essential to address not only the visible symptoms of these problems, but also to investigate their underlying causes to promote effective intervention (Alba et al., 2021).

Offering psychological support to adolescents facing emotional problems is crucial for their recovery and well-being. Cognitive-behavioral therapy has been effective in treating various emotional disorders in adolescence, helping young people to identify dysfunctional patterns of thought and behavior. In addition, psychiatric monitoring may be necessary in more severe cases requiring drug intervention (Jacomini; Lopes; Ramos, 2023). Promoting a welcoming and inclusive school environment is essential to prevent and deal with the emotional problems of adolescents.

Encouraging open dialogue on emotional issues, providing safe spaces for expressing emotions and promoting respect for differences are key strategies to create an environment conducive to the healthy development of young people. Education professionals play a fundamental role in this process by acting as facilitators of the emotional well-being of students within the school context. As Borba and Marin claim (2017), "the school is a privileged space for the promotion of mental health, provided that educators are prepared to recognize signs of psychological distress and welcome the emotional demands of students with sensitive and qualified listening" (p. 88).

2.2. Function of emotions

Emotions play a fundamental role in adolescent decision-making, directly influencing their choices and actions. "Emotions eventually help connect homeostatic regulation and survival 'values' to many events and objects of our autobiographical experience" (Damasio, 2000).



Moreover, "...help to evaluate situations and shape adaptive behaviors". (Damasius, 2023). Therefore, emotions have a motivational and adaptive character, guides new behaviors and appropriate actions and can contribute to the well-being of the individual or to suffering.

Emotional problems, such as anxiety, depression and uncontrolled anger, can negatively affect this process, leading young people to impulsive and harmful decisions. Studies show that adolescents with emotional difficulties are more likely to act irrationally and make hasty decisions, which may result in negative consequences for their lives. In this sense, Machado and Mosmann (2019), through a quantitative study with 384 Brazilian adolescents aged between 14 and 18 years, identified that high levels of emotional deregulation were significantly associated with impulsive behaviors, such as aggressiveness, substance use and avoidance attitudes. The authors highlight that the difficulty of naming and understanding one's own emotions compromises conscious decision-making, favoring automatic and disadaptive responses to emotional conflicts.

The relationship between emotions and academic performance of adolescents is equally significant. Emotional issues, such as stress, low self-esteem and lack of motivation, can directly interfere with the school performance of young people. Untreated emotional problems can lead to difficulties in concentration, lack of interest in school activities and even abandonment of studies. Therefore, it is essential that parents and educators be attentive to the signs of emotional problems in adolescents to ensure an environment conducive to academic development (Mosmann et al., 2017).

The connection between emotions and behavior of adolescents also deserves to be highlighted. Unresolved emotional problems can lead to impulsive and self-destructive attitudes by young people. Behaviors such as aggressiveness, social isolation and use of harmful substances are often associated with mismanaged emotional issues. In this sense, it is crucial that there be adequate psychological monitoring for adolescents who face emotional problems, aiming to prevent harmful behaviors to their physical and mental health (Freitas, 2017).

In addition, the influence of social networks and social pressure on the emotional health of adolescents cannot be underestimated. The constant virtual contact, combined with the logic of visibility and performance that governs these platforms, intensifies the exposure of young people to external validations, making their self-esteem increasingly dependent on the look of the other. The search for likes, followers and digital approval can contribute significantly to the emergence or intensification of emotional problems, such as anxiety, insecurity and depressive symptoms. Constant comparison with others, exposure to cyberbullying and the need to fit into aesthetic and behavioral patterns imposed by digital culture generate frequent feelings of inadequacy, shame and insufficiency. As Andrade et al., (2023) state, "daily living with ideals unreachable in social networks interferes with self-perception, creating distortions in self-image and compromising the emotional well-being of adolescents" (p. 112).



Given this complex scenario, effective strategies to deal with emotional problems in adolescents are necessary. Promoting emotional well-being and mental health at this stage of life requires a multidisciplinary approach involving mental health professionals, educators and family members. Encouraging practices such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, regular physical activities, artistic expression and open dialogue about emotions can be fundamental to help adolescents cope with their emotional problems in a healthy way (Borba; Marin, 2017).

In short, understanding the role of emotions in adolescents' lives is essential to adequately deal with emotional problems that may arise at this stage of life. The interaction between emotions, the decisions made by young people, their academic performance, their social behavior and their mental health demands special attention from adults responsible for their care, and educators. Investing in prevention, early diagnosis and adequate treatment of emotional problems in adolescents is essential to ensure their healthy and balanced development (Comparini; Wechsler, 2015). As the authors point out, "the promotion of mental health in adolescence should be considered a priority in public and educational policies, because it is at this stage that fundamental emotional competencies for adult life are structured" (p. 89).

2.3. Emotional Problems

The relationship between emotional and behavioral problems in adolescents is complex. Specifically, about the emotional aspects. McLaughlin et al., (2015) point out that adolescents experience emotions more intensely. Stressive events easily cause a strong negative effect when compared to other stages of development, suggest that adolescents experience more intensely the associations between stressful events and negative effects, causing emotional and behavioral deregulation. An untreated emotional problem can manifest itself through inappropriate behaviors such as aggressiveness, social isolation or even illicit substance use. Likewise, problematic behaviors can trigger feelings of anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. Therefore, it is essential to understand that the emotions and behaviors of adolescents are intrinsically linked, and it is essential to address both aspects in the intervention process (Pinheiro; Fernandes; Relva, 2017).

Several factors can trigger emotional problems in adolescents, and it is important to highlight the influence of social pressure, family conflicts and hormonal changes in this process. The search for acceptance among peers can lead young people to submit to unreal patterns of behavior and appearance, causing feelings of inferiority, exclusion or frustration. The lack of communication and support in the family environment can result in emotional isolation, insecurity and low self-esteem. The physiological, biological and psychological changes typical of adolescence, in turn, may intensify emotional instability, favoring the emergence of symptoms such as irritability, persistent sadness, impulsiveness or social withdrawal. Therefore, it is crucial to consider these elements when evaluating the emotional health of adolescents and developing



appropriate intervention strategies. As Marin and Borba (2018) point out, “understanding the context in which adolescents are inserted, their relationships and challenges, is fundamental to identify risk factors and build more effective care actions” (p. 102).

Social networks and technology play a significant role in the development of emotional problems in adolescents. Among the types of use that most trigger psychological distress, we highlight the excessive consumption of idealized contents, hyperconnectivity, dependence on likes and followers as a means of validation, and prolonged exposure to unreachable standards of beauty and success. Excessive exposure to social networks can lead to constant comparison with others, the search for external approval and the construction of a distorted self-image. In addition, cyberbullying, virtual exclusion and pressure to fit into socially valued behavioral and appearance models contribute to increased anxiety, depression, eating disorders and low self-esteem among young people. Therefore, it is essential to promote the healthy use of digital technologies and educate adolescents about the risks associated with their use. Family support and psychological monitoring play a crucial role in overcoming emotional problems in adolescents. A warm, empathetic and safe environment can provide young people with the support they need to deal with their emotions in a healthy way. As Andrade, Bernardes and Lisboa (2021) observe, “the impact of social networks on adolescents’ mental health is directly related to how these platforms are used and to the absence of mediation strategies and emotional support in the family and school environment” (p. 76).

The emotional problems in adolescence constitute a growing concern in the areas of Education and Health, given its direct impact on the integral development of students. Adolescence is marked by intense biological, psychological, physiological and social changes, a period in which young people face the challenge of identity construction, the definition of values and beliefs, as well as dealing with academic pressures, social expectations and hormonal changes (Papalia, 2006). Such factors, when not adequately managed, make adolescents more susceptible to emotional problems, such as anxiety, depression and emotional deregulation, which compromise both school performance and social relationships.

In the school environment, these emotional difficulties are manifested through behaviors such as lack of concentration, indiscipline, apathy and, in more severe cases, aggressiveness and self-injury. Despite its potential role in the emotional development of students, the reality of Brazilian schools does not always correspond to this ideal. Many institutions lack human and material resources to promote psychological welcoming and inclusion. As Carvalho (2007) warns, the absence of concrete actions transforms the school environment (which should be a protection space) into another risk factor for the psychic suffering of students. In this sense, it is necessary to question whether the practices adopted are actually effective or are limited to institutional discourses that mask a reality of omission and precariousness.



From the perspective of Health, studies indicate that the persistence of emotional deregulation during adolescence significantly increases the likelihood of serious mental disorders, such as anxiety, depression and suicidal behaviors. As highlighted by Beauchaine; Cicchetti (2019), emotional deregulation acts as a central mechanism in the development of several emerging psychopathologies at this stage of development.

The relationship between emotional health and physical health is widely evidenced by studies in the area of psychoneuroimmunology, which demonstrate how emotional factors, such as chronic stress, anxiety and depression, can compromise the functioning of the immune system and generate long-term negative impacts. Ader, Felten and Cohen (1991), pioneers in this field, showed that the nervous, endocrine and immunological systems are interconnected, and that adverse emotional experiences can trigger significant physiological changes, such as elevated cortisol levels and inhibition of immune response. For example, studies such as Miller, Chen and Parker (2011) indicate that adolescents exposed to emotional adversities maintain high levels of inflammatory markers, even after the resolution of the stressor event, which shows the lasting impact of mental health on the body. Therefore, addressing emotional health in a preventive way in the school environment contributes to the promotion of integral health, positively influencing both mental and physical health of adolescents.

Given this scenario, it is essential to integrate knowledge of the Sciences of Education and Health to create intervention programs that recognize the complexity of emotional problems in adolescence. The adoption of scientific evidence-based practices in the school context is essential to promote the development of socio-emotional skills, prevent mental and physical health problems and thus contribute to the formation of healthier and resilient individuals. As Borba and Marin (2017) state, “the articulation between the fields of health and education is indispensable to understand and face the psychological suffering manifested in the school environment, requiring interdisciplinary approaches and sustained in concrete care practices” (p. 97).

2.4. Adolescence

Adolescence is a transition phase between childhood and adulthood, characterized by profound biological, psychological, cultural and psychosocial transformations. It usually occurs between 10 and 19 years of age, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). However, the Statute of Children and Adolescents (ECA) considers adolescents people aged 12 years and those who have not yet completed 18 years (Brazil, 2001).

The adolescence phase is marked by certain characteristics. (Mende et al., 2017) point out that the acquisition of abstract thinking generates the intention to experiment and demonstrate the capacity of reasoning but often present themselves immaturely. They present difficulties in making decisions, seek and point out imperfections in authority figures. Other characteristics are the



feeling of invulnerability, which leads to many self-destructive and risky behaviors. The justification for these characteristics is related to brain regions that mature at different times. The region responsible for functions such as memory, emotion, hearing and language, being represented by behaviors of courage, initiation and determination, mature faster than the region responsible for decision making, responsibility, planning and problem solving. For this reason, impulsive behaviors are observed in adolescence.

During this period, physical changes occur, such as sexual development, and emotional, cognitive and behavioral changes, which mark the search for identity construction and the desire for independence. During adolescence, young people face a number of challenges, such as adjusting to new social demands and emotional regulation, which can impact both their well-being and their interactions in the school and social environment.

Social networks play a significant role in the development of emotional problems in adolescents. Pressure for likes and constant comparison with other seemingly perfect lives can lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. The search for online validation can result in anxiety, depression and other emotional disorders. Therefore, it is essential that parents and educators be attentive to the use of social networks by adolescents and promote a healthy relationship with technology (Resett, 2021).

Open communication and family support play a crucial role in preventing and treating emotional problems in adolescence. A warm and receptive family atmosphere can help teenagers express their feelings and seek help when needed. The lack of emotional support at home can increase the risk of developing emotional problems, making it essential to strengthen family ties as part of the intervention process (Souza; Cunha, 2019).

The main warning signs that may indicate the presence of emotional problems in adolescents include sudden mood changes, social isolation, constant irritability and changes in sleep or feeding patterns. It is important that parents, teachers and health professionals be alert to these signs to identify early possible emotional problems and intervene properly. As Marin and Borba (2018) warn, "the early recognition of signs of psychological distress in adolescence can be decisive to prevent the worsening of the picture and to enable interventions that promote the healthy development of the young person" (p. 114).

The school environment also plays a crucial role in the emergence of emotional problems in adolescents. The difficulties in school can affect the psychological functioning of the person, giving rise to internalized or externalized problems and, conversely, the presence of psychological problems may be the implicit cause of poor school performance.

Bullying, academic pressure and the absence of emotional support in the school environment can contribute significantly to the development of mental disorders in adolescence. It is essential that schools adopt preventive measures against bullying and offer psychological



support to students to promote a healthy school environment (Jacomini; Lopes; Ramos, 2023). Although teachers occupy a privileged position in identifying signs of psychological distress, it is important to recognize that they should not be held accountable alone for the emotional care of students, especially when they lack specific training in the area. As highlighted by Oliveira and Santos (2021), “assigning exclusively to the teacher the role of mediator of the emotional well-being of the student can be both an overload and a way to make the absence of structured public policies for school mental health invisible” (p. 143). Thus, the implementation of public policies aimed at the mental health of adolescents should include not only direct psychological support to the student, but also continuing education of educators, the presence of interdisciplinary teams and the construction of an institutional care culture.

Investing in educational programs on mental health in schools, providing accessible psychological services and promoting awareness campaigns are important measures to address this issue in a comprehensive way (Leusin; Petrucci; Borsa, 2018). Early intervention in cases of emotional problems in adolescents is essential to avoid future complications and promote healthy development.

The earlier the problems are identified and treated, the greater the chances of recovery of adolescents. Therefore, it is essential that there be an integrated support network involving family, school, mental health professionals and social services (Momeñe et al., 2021). The possible negative consequences of untreated emotional problems in adolescence are alarming.

In view of the typical transitions of the age group, adolescence may be a period of vulnerability for the emergence of emotional and behavioral problems (Jacobs; Reinecke; Gollan; Kane, 2008). Undoubtedly, adolescence is considered a phase with specific developmental characteristics, and actions that offer risk to this population generate damage that can spread to adulthood and remain in relation to the other. Therefore, attention to the mental health of adolescents should be a priority in public policies and clinical practices, in order to prevent these devastating long-term consequences. As Andrade, Bernardes and Lisbon (2021) state, “the psychological suffering not treated in adolescence tends to crystallize and compromise the processes of affective bonding, identity and autonomy in adulthood” (p. 76).

2.5. Vulnerability

The relationship between emotional vulnerability and the development of emotional and behavioral problems in adolescents is an extremely relevant topic in the field of psychology. Emotional vulnerability can be understood as the predisposition of an individual to react intensely and negatively to stressful or challenging situations. In this sense, adolescents with greater emotional vulnerability are more susceptible to develop emotional problems, such as anxiety, depression and mood disorders.



This complex relationship between vulnerability and emotional problems can be influenced by several factors, such as genetics, family environment, traumatic experiences and social pressures (Gauy, 2016). Risk factors that can increase emotional vulnerability in adolescents are varied and interconnected. Past traumas such as physical or emotional abuse, parental neglect and traumatic events can leave deep marks on the psyche of young people, making them more likely to develop emotional problems (Andrade; Bernardes; Lisbon, 2021).

In addition, the adolescent brain is especially vulnerable to respond to drug use with the beginning of a flood of physiological and behavioral responses that may contribute to addiction. This vulnerability to addiction is due both to the activation of certain genes and to the alteration of neuronal functioning, making the release of dopamine dependent on drug use. The sooner they are exposed to alcohol and drugs, the more likely they will develop an addiction. From the perspective of brain development, it was clearly demonstrated that alcohol poisoning kills brain cells and their connections, especially in regions that control attention and memory. Repeated parties watered with alcohol harm the brain (Siegel, 2016).

In addition, social and family pressures also play a significant role in the emotional vulnerability of adolescents, since unrealistic expectations, family conflicts and bullying can contribute to increased stress and anxiety in this age group. Early identification of emotional vulnerability in adolescents is essential to prevent the emergence of more serious emotional problems in the future (Souza; Cunha, 2019).

The influence of social networks and technology on the emotional vulnerability of adolescents is a worrying aspect today. Because of the influence of the internet on the behavior of adolescents, both the remodeling of habits and lifestyles and the constant and generalized access to this tool with the potential to modify neuronal networks in sensitive periods of development. (Santos; Andrade; Bueno, 2015). Moreover, the excessive use of these tools can contribute to social isolation, constant comparison with others and cyberbullying, negatively impacting the mental health of young people. Therefore, it is essential to promote the conscious use of social networks and guide adolescents about the potential risks involved in this virtual environment (Stevez; Jiménez, 2017).

Parents and educators should be attentive to early signs of emotional vulnerability, such as sudden mood changes, social isolation and academic difficulties. By identifying these signs early, it is possible to intervene effectively and offer adequate support to adolescents before emotional problems worsen (Silva, A.; Silva, M.; Enumo, 2017).

A warm and safe home environment can provide emotional support needed to cope with the challenges of adolescence. Similarly, schools that promote an inclusive and empathetic environment can contribute to the psychological well-being of students, offering resources such as vocational guidance, psychological counseling and preventive programs (Freitas, 2017).



The long-term consequences of not addressing emotional vulnerability are significant and may negatively impact the adult life of individuals.

Several intervention strategies can be adopted to help vulnerable adolescents cope with their emotional problems. Cognitive-behavioral therapy has been shown to be effective in the treatment of mental disorders in young people, by assisting in the identification and modification of dysfunctional thinking patterns. In addition, support groups with other young people facing similar challenges can provide a safe space to share experiences and learn healthy coping strategies (Machado; Mosmann, 2019).

Adolescents who do not receive adequate support to deal with their emotional problems are at risk of developing mental disorders over time. In addition, the lack of early intervention can lead to interpersonal difficulties, low self-esteem and impairment of social functioning in adulthood. Therefore, it is essential to invest in promoting the mental health of adolescents early in life to ensure healthy development throughout life. As Comparini and Wechsler (2015) state, "emotional disorders in adolescence, if not identified and treated early, tend to consolidate, compromising global development and future quality of life" (p. 89).

3. RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEARNING

The attentional system is a fundamental pillar on which all learning is based, because attention and emotion are two aspects of cognition in permanent interaction. This means that emotions that govern attention (such as constant stress and fear) affect the normal functioning of neurological connections in the brain and hinder the learning process. Anxiety and depression exert a significant influence on adolescents' capacity for concentration and memory, directly interfering with content assimilation. Studies show that anxiety can impair the focus of students, hindering the absorption of new knowledge and retention of information. Similarly, depression can affect motivation and interest in school, compromising academic performance; in many cases, learning delay is a direct reflection of affective dysfunction. As Mora (2017) states, "emotion is the motor of attention, and attention is the basis of learning. Without emotion, learning simply does not occur" (p. 112).

In addition, the difficulties experienced in the school environment can affect the psychological functioning of students, giving rise to internalized problems, such as anxiety and depression, or externalized, such as aggressiveness and risk behavior. Conversely, the presence of emotional disorders may also be the cause of poor academic performance, establishing a harmful cycle. Therefore, the importance of a correct observation and evaluation by parents, teachers and professionals accompanying these cases is highlighted (Cruvinel; Boruchovitch, 2003; Wright-Strawderman; Watson, 1992; Colbert et al., 1982). Therefore, it is essential that



educators be attentive to these emotional signs in students to provide the necessary support and help them overcome such difficulties (Resett, 2021).

On the other hand, motivation and enthusiasm play a crucial role in the academic performance of adolescents. Being emotionally involved with the learning process can increase the willingness to face challenges and seek new knowledge (Souza, Cunha, 2019). Thus, it is important to highlight the importance of emotional well-being for the school success of young people. Educators should encourage and value the positive emotions of students, creating an environment conducive to cognitive and emotional development (Machado; Mosmann, 2019). Because emotions have a powerful influence on the consolidation of memories, memory is affected by emotions, because everything that is experienced with emotion is deeply engraved in the brain. (Mora, 2013) states that mental performance requires three cognitive processes: attention, working memory and executive functions. Which are all controlled by emotion, not cognition. The students will be distracted, absent and with little motivation to participate in the classes. Undoubtedly, emotions are intrinsically linked to cognition, which in turn is linked to the learning process and this process is commonly part of its development in the school environment. Therefore, since we are an essential part of our interaction with the world, it is necessary to awaken emotions in the school context.

The classroom is an environment in which numerous emotional associations can be produced between situations, school subjects, teachers, colleagues etc.; in short, between a multitude of contexts and emotional states that can be positive and negative. There are emotions that favor the learning process and others that make it difficult. Different investigations have managed to establish the link between emotions, their activators and the resulting behaviors.

Table 1. Relationship between activators, emotions and behavior (Chabot and Chabot, M., 2009)

ACTIVATORS	EMOTIONS	BEHAVIOR
Dissatisfaction with the school system. (threats)	Insecurity (fear)	Disconnection (escape)
Difficulty with some subjects	Frustration (rabies)	System reviews (attack)
Failure (loss)	Disappointment (sadness)	Demotivation (retract in yourself)
Reprimand (adverse situations)	Humiliation	No commitment (rejection)
Unexpected results (insecurity)	Stupefaction (Surprise)	Nervousness and irritability
Negative feedback from teachers (contempt)	Disdain	Lack of Respect for the Educator
Success and support (desired situation)	Enthusiasm (happiness)	Motivation and interest (approach)

To promote a welcoming and empathetic school environment, it is essential to adopt pedagogical strategies that favor the emotional development of adolescents. The practice of empathy by educators can contribute to create stronger links with students, stimulating their self-esteem and confidence. In addition, activities that promote emotional expression and open dialogue can help young people to better deal with their emotions and develop essential socio-emotional skills for their integral formation (Andrade; Enumo; Passos; Vellozo et al., 2021). Parents also play a fundamental role in monitoring the emotional health of their adolescent children.

A family environment favorable to cognitive development includes emotional support, open communication and stimulation of self-knowledge. Parents should be attentive to the signs of emotional problems in their children and seek professional help when necessary. The active involvement of parents in the school and emotional life of adolescents can contribute significantly to their psychological well-being. As Comparini and Wechsler (2015), “family emotional support and hearing sensitive to children’s needs are essential factors for promoting mental health in adolescence” (p. 102). This conscious presence in the daily lives of young people can prevent the worsening of symptoms and strengthen protective bonds against the vulnerabilities typical of age.

4. EMOTION AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Emotions largely control our social behavior, so it is natural that brain regions that play an important role in emotions also play an important role in the processing of social signals. Sandra



and Sam (2009 p. 132). This means that our opinion of a given situation often influences how we react emotionally to it. Similarly, Lisa Feldman Barrett argues that emotions are not innate, but are built from cultural experiences, interpretations and contexts. It emphasizes that emotions are flexible and can vary widely from person to person. Emotions are socially constructed and vary culturally, this can be understood as how during adolescence young people learn to interpret and express emotions according to the social and cultural norms of their environment, which influences how they develop their emotional skills, certainly learning the emotional norms of their cultural environment helps adolescents to adapt socially and interact effectively with others. However, the behavior mediated by their peers is also related to the preference for more immediate activities, in the sense of gratification the exposure to higher risk, in terms of affective regulation (Muszkat et al., 2015).

With the arrival and improper use of technologies, for example the Internet and its derivatives have very powerful advantages to facilitate life in multiple aspects, but their misuse results in harmful behaviors to the mind and behavior; and the screen is the worst educator to achieve this; today's teenagers do not know how to express their emotions by looking in the eyes of the person standing before them because being in front of the screens slows the ability to understand emotions, to connect with people, with their emotions, and cancels the ability to express what they have to feel in their eyes. It is proven that children or adolescents who have relationship difficulties or acceptance by colleagues tend to have higher rates of school dropout, violent behavior and psychopathological disorders in adulthood (Son; Soria, 1997). Thus, we can affirm that the role of the school is extremely important, being a social space that facilitates coexistence and, consequently, psychosocial development, preventing the emergence of antisocial behaviors, especially at this stage of life, in which conflict is one of the characteristic marks. As Vygotsky (1991) stated, "the social environment is not only the context of human development, but the source of where it emerges" (p. 34). The interaction between peers, teachers and other mediators allows learning to occur in a shared way, transforming individual experience into a process of collective construction, fundamental to the constitution of subjectivity and emotional balance of adolescents.

Adolescence is a period of intense changes, and understanding the impact of emotions on social behavior helps both young people and teachers to offer adequate support.

5. RESEARCH WAYS AND CONTEXT

The research was of the applied type, because with the knowledge acquired, useful and beneficial strategies and interventions can be applied. The approach is quantitative; (Hernandez; Fernandez; Batista, 2003) tell us that "the quantitative approach uses data collection and analysis to answer research questions and test previously established hypotheses, and is based on

numerical measurement, counting, and often on the use of statistics, to establish patterns with precise behavior in a population.

5.1. Search type

The type of research is descriptive: for Cervo, Bervian and da Silva (2007, p. 61), this type of research occurs when recording, analyzing and correlating facts or phenomena, without manipulating them (Cervo; Bervian; Da silva, p. 79, 2007). According to Barros and Lehfeld (2000, p. 71), through descriptive research, we seek to find out how often a phenomenon occurs, its nature, its characteristics, causes, relationships and connections with other phenomena.

According to Cervo, Bervian and da Silva (2007, p. 62), this type of research can take several forms, such as those highlighted below: Descriptive studies: studies and describes characteristics, properties or relationships existing in the community, group or reality researched; and, in the case of this investigation, we sought to specify properties and characteristics of the emotions of high school students of the school BR.

5.2. Research subjects

For this research study, the population consists of 106 students from 1, 2 and 3 years of high school, between men and women aged 14 to 18 years of age from a private institution located in Rio Branco, the capital of the state of Acre, in the North region of Brazil.

Table 2. Total Research subjects

TOTAL RESEARCH SUBJECTS		
	N	%
Valid cases	106	100
Excluded	0	0,0
Total	106	100

Source: Original Search data (2024)

5.3. Instruments used for data collection and analysis

The data obtained were processed in Excel 2010. For this, a database was created in which each student's answers were inserted. Statistical analysis was performed with the data of 106 students (100%), between men and women, aged between 14 and 18 years.

A questionnaire consisting of 14 easy-to-use questions was used to process the data and to ensure the best performance of the research. According to the application of the instrument and

in accordance with the current legislation, the participants or their legal guardians signed the Informed Consent Form (CLE).

Of the questionnaire questions, 8 items assess emotional regulation problems and 6 items measure the search for sensations. The total number of questions comprises the area of vulnerability, which encompasses both emotional regulation problems and the search for sensations. The objective of this questionnaire is to detect emotional, behavioral problems and explore the vulnerability area of students of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade of high school. The results obtained may contribute to the early identification of problems that, if untreated, may worsen, providing useful information not only for detection but also for prevention.

Reliability

The scale and its domains were evaluated by calculating the internal consistency index using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Table 3 allows us to realize that in the overall internal consistency of the scale (14 items) in the sample studied, alpha varies between 0.810 and 0.825, which can be valued as an indicator of high reliability since it exceeds the cutoff point equal to 0.70 considered as an indicator of good reliability for measuring instruments. It is also observed that reliability scores in most items are acceptable.

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha

Nr. Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	0.82
2	0.824
3	0.823
4	0.823
5	0.823
6	0.81
7	0.813
8	0.816
9	0.813
10	0.812
11	0.818
12	0.825
13	0.814
14	0.822

Source: Original Search (2024)

Reliability statisticals

The items are reliable, therefore they have consistency and can be replicated in similar groups.

Table 4. Cronbach's alpha based on typified elements

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha (based on the specified elements)	Nr. of elements
0.829	0.829	14

Source: Original Search data (2024)

6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

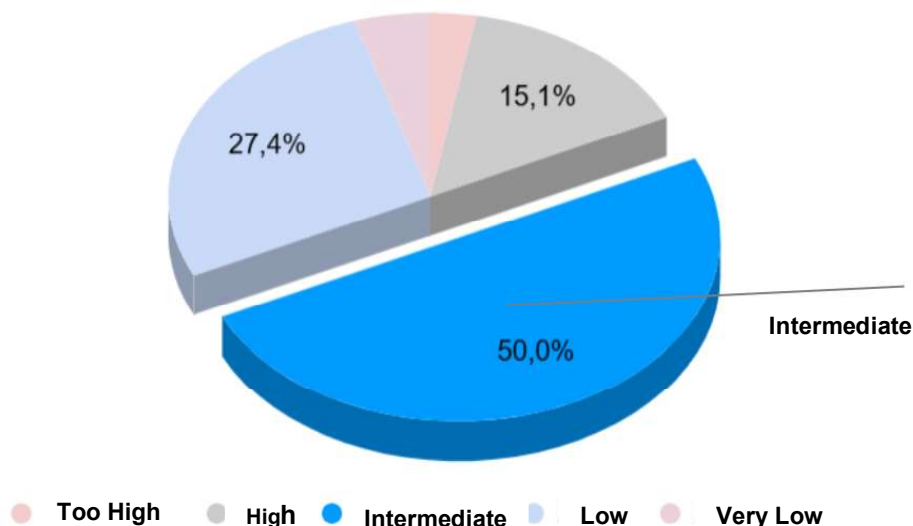
Emotional and behavioral problems have a significant impact on physical and mental health, learning and the social environment of adolescents. As emotions are an integral part of human experience, they also play an important role in determining future behaviors and their disturbances can lead to serious behavioral changes of a pathological nature. Therefore, the impact of emotional and behavioral problems on personal, family, school, health and public health is evident. It is therefore necessary to implement early detection strategies, within a model to promote emotional well-being and prevent more serious problems. An ideal prevention strategy is the reliable identification and detection of adolescents at risk. For this reason, it is considered extremely important to determine the level of emotional problems of high school students BR. The population consists of 106 students from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year of high school, between men and women aged 14 to 18 years old in the school Association Modelar de Ensino - AME.

For data treatment, and for the best performance of the research, a questionnaire of 14 easy-to-apply questions within the questions was used as an instrument, with 8 items measuring, emotional regulation problems, and 6 items measuring the search for sensations. The total number of questions measures the area of vulnerability. Within this area are emotional regulation problems and the search for sensations.

The general objective

The general objective of this research is to determine the predominant levels of emotional problems in 1st graders. 2nd year of high school BR. The general results will appear in the following table.

Percentage distribution of predominant levels of emotional problems in students of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade of high school.



Source: Original search results (2024)

This area includes aspects related to emotional lability, as well as the degree of persistence and susceptibility of emotional states. In adolescence there are many transformations that are expressed by an emotional fragility (Papalia; Olds; Feldman, 2006). Emotional misfit is a problem that has been aggravating in recent decades, with chronic and serious consequences, and there seems to be some relation between adolescent health problems and behavioral problems (Costello et al., 2006; Pacheco; Vitale; Montesano; Pedromónico, 2003).

According to the results obtained in the total scale of emotional problems applied to the sample of 106 students, it is observed that 50% of the participants are at the intermediate level, 27.4% at the low level and 15.1% at the high level.

The intermediate term refers to concepts that are between two opposite points. In this context they are between the low level and the high level of the scale of emotional problems. At the low level it shows a percentage of 27.4% this result means that this group of students has no difficulty in understanding and regulating their own emotions or expressing them. But at a high level, he's got a 15.1%. A high score on this scale could indicate difficulties for adolescents in controlling and regulating their emotions and moods, as well as identifying and recognizing the causes or events that make them experience certain emotions. (McLaughlin et al., 2015) points out



that adolescents experience emotions more intensely. For example, stressful events easily cause a negative effect when compared to other stages of development, suggest that adolescents experience more intensely the associations between stressful events and negative effects, causing emotional and behavioral deregulation. This may be due, on the one hand, to the region responsible for functions such as memory, emotion, hearing and language being represented by behaviors of courage, initiative and determination, mature faster than the region responsible for making decisions, responsibility, planning and solving problems.

As a result of these transformations, it is common for adolescents to present emotional instability, manifested by sudden mood changes, bursts of anger and a propensity to be involved in situations of risk or danger, as a way to explore limits and affirm their identity; externalizing behaviors can lead students to experience negative relationships with teachers and colleagues, which, therefore, decreases their interest and motivation to learn (Malinauskiene et al., 2011). To diminish their interest and motivation to learn, they could present difficulties to cope with school demands. In this context, the results were also in agreement with the literature where emotional dysregulation is defined as the difficulty or inability to deal with experiences and process emotions (Leahy; Tirch; Napolitano, 2013).

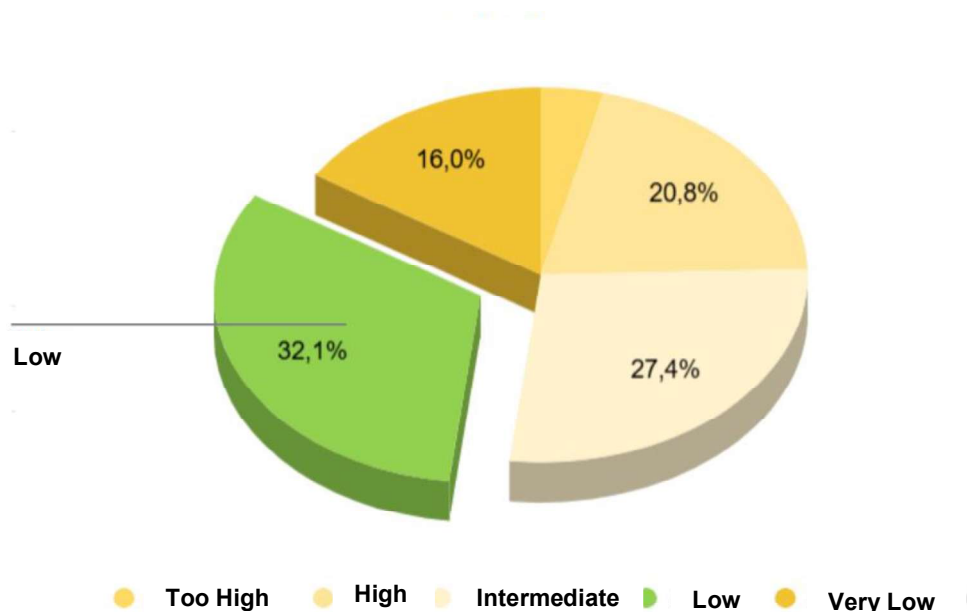
Similarly, the different investigations claim, students with externalizing problems usually have difficulties dealing with school demands, because, due to the characteristic of their symptoms, they cannot stay in the classroom for long and engage in school activities, which compromises their school performance (Desen; Szelbracikowski, 2006).

The data are consistent with the literature, which points to a high incidence of these difficulties in children and adolescents, with the potential to generate academic failure, social loss, relationship difficulties, suicide and drug abuse (Costello; Foley; Angold, 2006). Social isolation, lack of motivation and low self-esteem are only some of the consequences that may arise when emotional problems are not adequately addressed. As Silva and Barros (2021) point out, "when negative emotions are not recognized and worked, they tend to intensify, compromising the well-being and integral development of adolescents" (p. 77). This neglect may compromise not only school performance, but also the construction of identity and social ties during a crucial phase of development.

Specific Objective 1

Identify the levels of comprehension, regulation and expression of emotions in students of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade of high school BR.

Percentage distribution of levels of comprehension, regulation and expression of emotions in students of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade of middle school.



Source: Original search results (2024)

In this area, the presence of difficulties in understanding and regulating one's own emotions and expression is assessed, which manifest in sudden and frequent mood changes and mood changes throughout the day. It also includes aspects related to the difficulty of controlling emotional reactions or identifying and understanding certain mood states, as indicated (Biazus; Ramires, 2012).

Through the results in this area of regulation of emotions, it is possible to observe a percentage of 32.1% at low level, which means that this group of students have no difficulty in understanding and regulating their own emotions or expressing them. This may be due to the discipline style adopted by parents, family interpersonal dynamics and interactions between siblings, who play crucial roles in the development of adolescents. These elements provide valuable lessons in areas such as conflict resolution, compliance, cooperation, competition and strategies to influence the behavior of others. Thus, parents are an important factor in the development of emotional skills and can do so by acting directly on children or indirectly through



observation and modeling. (Martí, 2008). As well, the good relationship with colleagues and teachers is also fundamental because it provides social support and interpersonal learning opportunities that contribute to the emotional well-being of adolescents (Mosmann et al., 2017)

On the one hand, we have a 28.8% high level, the high level on this scale means, difficulties of the person evaluated in controlling and regulating their emotions and mood, as well as in identifying and recognizing the causes or events that make them experience certain emotions, which is why they will probably present sudden changes in mood, or mood swings. These difficulties in recognizing and regulating the emotional states themselves are associated with internalized and externalized problems, so the presence of emotional dysregulation represents a personal vulnerability factor that makes the person more likely to present a set of disorders such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, behavioral problems, eating disorders, etc. Since emotions do not seem to be expressed in a healthy way, adolescents can find their ability to deal with overworked thoughts and feelings, or it is a risk factor for them to express themselves in an unregulated way, through two symptoms "or physical actions".

Emotional deregulation may correspond to a problematic style that results in aggressive behaviors, impulsive actions, dysfunctional expressions, use of food as an escape for emotional discomfort, alcohol consumption and/or other substances, or other conducts that do not contribute to the healthy management of emotions (Neufeld, 2019). It is estimated that approximately one in five children and adolescents presents some type of psychological problem (Polanczyk et al., 2009). As we can reflect, the roots of most mental health problems reside in these early stages of development. In fact, the presence of affective and/or behavioral symptoms at subclinical level considerably increases the subsequent risk of developing a mental disorder (Radua et al., 2018). Therefore, it is essential to recognize the early signs of emotional distress and invest in promoting emotional skills from childhood. As Santos and Gondim (2021) state, "the adolescents with low emotional skills tend to have more identity problems, stress, depression, anorexia, psychosomatic disorders, less ability to ask for help and social support, as well as more suicidal ideas" (p. 93). This evidence reinforces the need for preventive actions and continuous support in schools and families.

There was also a significant proportion of 27.4% of participants at the intermediate level of emotional regulation, indicating a moderate vulnerability, although with the presence of possible protective factors that can be strengthened through appropriate interventions.

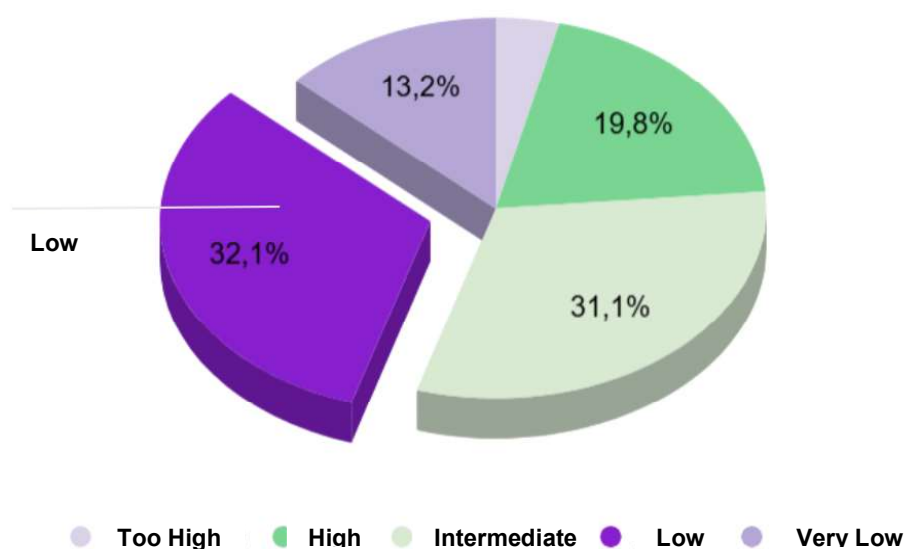
This average of deregulation suggests that, although most adolescents are exposed to risk factors, some coping mechanisms may help mitigate negative effects. However, without appropriate interventions, this vulnerability can evolve to more serious emotional problems.



Specific objective 2

Recognizing the levels of tendency to look for risk and danger situations in students of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year of high school BR.

Percentage distribution of levels of tendency to look for risk and danger situations in students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade of high school.



Source: Original search results (2024)

This scale assesses the preference for situations of risk or danger that may compromise the health or safety of the individual and that constitute vulnerability to the appearance of an externalised type.

The search for sensations has been identified in the literature as a risk factor associated with the performance of risk and dangerous behaviors for the health and safety of the person, as well as antisocial behaviors, such as unprotected sex, suicide attempt and automobile accident. These behaviors are associated with changes that occur at the physiological and psychological level (high hormonal activity, sexual maturation, variability in intellectual dynamics, etc.), which drive the individual to a constant search for situations involving high risk levels (Broche-Pérez; Cruz-López, 2014).



The low-level results have a 32.1% a very significant percentage. This group of adolescents has a low vulnerability to risk and risk factors. They are not exposed to conduct bold and dangerous conduct, usually this group of adolescents does not present conduct problems. Certainly, these adolescents have parents who properly understand and interpret their behaviors. The importance of the family in the prevention of risk behaviors is due to the fact that it is a first protective agent and facilitator of the healthy development of the adolescent; it is in the family that one knows and learns, the usefulness of this learning can help the adolescent to face the changes properly (Valenzuela, 2013). It is essential that parents understand the different stages of human development to properly interpret the behaviors of their adolescent children. By identifying the factors that put a teenager at risk and recognizing those that can mitigate the negative effects, parents can implement strategies that promote protection and reduce these risks.

At the high level with 19.8%, a high score in this area indicates that the person actively seeks situations involving high levels of risk and emotion. Therefore, they tend to avoid routine or monotonous situations and seek new and stimulating environments. They have a greater tendency to perform physical and social risk behaviors because they are consolidated due to the neuroendocrine substances associated with the pleasure these behaviors provide.

According to neuroscience, these behaviors are also explained by the fact that frontal lobes, responsible for functions such as planning, decision-making, working memory and impulse control, are the last regions of the brain to reach full maturation, which only occurs, on average, around the third decade of life. Decision-making is a complex cognitive mechanism, and a deficit in this function can manifest in various ways, and the state of mind greatly influences this capacity (Facundo; Mateo, 2015). The frontal cortex normally plays a determining role by restricting impulsive manifestations and a deficit in this circuit would increase a person's vulnerability to impulsive aggression. (Facundo; Mateo, 2015). Such vulnerability can be explained, in part, by the fact that brain regions associated with functions such as memory, emotion, hearing and language, often related to behaviors such as courage, initiative and determination, mature faster than the areas responsible for decision-making, responsibility, planning and problem solving.

On the other hand, the acquisition of abstract thought generates the intention to experiment and demonstrate the capacity of reasoning but often present themselves immaturely. (Mende et al., 2017). For this reason, we observed impulsive behaviors in adolescence.

The intense hyperstimulation characteristic of the 21st century has caused significant impacts both in children and adolescents, who, accustomed to a constant bombardment of stimuli, need increasingly intense experiences to remain motivated. This scenario has led many young people to seek, repeatedly, high-risk situations in an attempt to obtain new forms of gratification and excitement.

At the intermediate level we also have a fairly considerable 31.1% which are between the two opposite levels, in this case high and low. Although this scale does not specifically represent



problems, it may represent weaknesses or personal risk factors that, in conjunction with other characteristics of the person or the environment in which it is inserted, make the appearance of psychological problems more likely and the consequent increase in adaptation difficulties, for example an emotional regulation deficit. (Wang et al., 2014). Because certainly in adolescence it is usually considered a period of risk for the development of emotional and behavioral problems. This leads to the reflection of appropriate prevention and/or maintenance measures for this group of adolescents.

The results derived from this study agree with those obtained in previous studies, both national and international. All these studies, in addition to the diversity of information collection instruments, samples and analysis techniques, seem to present convergent results that indicate emotional and behavioral symptoms, are common in adolescence and are the most common complaints in schools by teachers.

As we have seen, understanding the emotional problems in adolescence requires multiple knowledge, especially about the processes of biological, psychological and social development. Factors such as parental styles, the bonds established in childhood and the presence of family history of psychopathologies can be determinant in the origin and maintenance of emotional and behavioral symptoms. This understanding requires an integrated and contextualized approach. As Borsa and Bandeira (2014) state, "emotional and behavioral difficulties in adolescence are complex phenomena, influenced by multiple interdependent variables, which involve from individual predispositions to relational and environmental factors" (p. 151). This complexity reinforces the need for interventions that take into account all the experiences experienced by adolescents.

This study represents an advance in understanding the emotional problems of students. Based on the results obtained, strategies to promote emotional well-being or prevention and early intervention in this type of problem can be designed and implemented. The objective would be to mitigate its possible impact at different levels; both on physical and mental health, as well as on school, family and social.

7. CONSIDERATIONS

The main objective of the research was to determine the predominant levels of emotional problems in high school students, specifically in students of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd years, exploring the understanding, regulation and expression of emotions, as well as the tendency to seek risk situations. Through this investigation, it was possible to obtain a detailed view of the emotional challenges faced by young people in a critical period of development, offering valuable insights to the educational and health community.

The research results indicate that many students are at an intermediate level of emotional regulation, which suggests a certain vulnerability, but with potential protective factors that can be



reinforced. This average of deregulation suggests that, although most adolescents are exposed to risk factors, some coping mechanisms may help mitigate negative effects. However, without appropriate interventions, this vulnerability can evolve to more serious emotional problems.

The analysis of levels of comprehension, regulation and expression of emotions revealed that there is a significant disparity among students regarding the ability to process and express emotions in a healthy way. Those who have low comprehension and emotional regulation skills often show difficulties in dealing with challenging situations, which can result in impulsive behaviors and disproportionate reactions to conflict situations.

A significant finding was the tendency to search for risk situations, which is an important characteristic to be monitored. Adolescents with low emotional regulation ability tend to seek risk situations as a way to deal with their emotions, which may include substance use, involvement in dangerous activities and impulsive behaviors. This behavior shows an attempt to find an escape or relieve stress, but it actually enhances exposure to new risks.

These results are especially relevant for the field of education, as they indicate the need for programs that directly address socio-emotional education. The school, being one of the main environments in which adolescents live, has the role of offering a safe and welcoming space where students can develop their emotional skills. Integrating emotional education to the school curriculum is a way to prepare young people to deal with their feelings and interactions constructively, contributing to a more positive learning environment.

For adolescents, the relevance of the research is reflected in the possibility of knowing themselves and developing a deeper understanding of their own emotions. This is crucial in a phase of life marked by intense transformations and the search for identity. Emotional regulation not only facilitates academic and social success, but also promotes resilience and general well-being, helping adolescents to face challenges in a more balanced and healthy way. In the context of society, the research reinforces the importance of investing in public policies and programs to support adolescents' mental health.

Adolescence is a vulnerable and susceptible phase to external influences, and untreated emotional problems can cause long-term impacts, affecting the social and economic development of the population. Therefore, preventive and early intervention programs are essential to prevent the worsening of these problems in adulthood. In addition, the research highlights the need for joint work between school, family and health services, because emotional support and values transmitted at home play a fundamental role in the formation of personality and emotional stability of adolescents.

In many cases, the lack of family support, or an unstable home environment, contributes to the emergence of emotional and behavioral problems. The practical application of the results may involve the development of early detection and support strategies for adolescents. For example, offer training for parents, teachers and school employees on how to identify signs of emotional and



behavioral problems, and raising awareness of the specificities arising from each period of human development, promoting an environment of understanding and support.

With these strategies, the school can act not only as an academic learning space, but also as a protective and emotional development environment.

In general, the research reinforces the idea that the socio-emotional development of adolescents should be a priority in education and health policies. By understanding the specificities of emotional problems in this age group, it is possible to develop interventions that align with the needs of young people and contribute to their integral development. In addition, integration between the Education and Health Sciences allows professionals in these areas to collaborate to create more comprehensive and well-founded support programs.

Such programs should recognize emotions as an essential part of human experience and as determining factors for the well-being and success of students. This interdisciplinary approach benefits society as a whole, as it forms citizens more aware of themselves and more prepared to face the challenges of adult life. The promotion of emotional health in schools contributes to the creation of a healthier and resilient society, where young people are able to manage their emotions and interact positively with the world.

In conclusion, the research highlights that, to achieve a full development of adolescents, it is essential to adopt a preventive and integrative approach, involving all actors responsible for the education and well-being of young people. The school, together with family support and the support of public policies, has the potential to be a transforming space in the lives of adolescents, providing them with the necessary tools for healthy and balanced development.

Thus, the data obtained reveal that emotional problems, despite being common in adolescence, can be mitigated and even prevented through appropriate interventions. By fostering emotional education, society invests in the future, helping to shape a generation of teenagers who are more prepared to contribute positively to their communities and consequently to the world. Finally, the advance in understanding emotional problems in adolescents represents an important step towards strengthening mental health in the educational context.

This research provides valuable support so that schools and public policies can direct efforts to promote environments that welcome and encourage the emotional development of adolescents. These joint efforts not only benefit young people but also promote a more conscious and proactive society in creating a healthy and inclusive learning environment, and it is essential that educational and health policies continue to advance to provide comprehensive support that responds to the emotional demands of adolescents, contributing to the formation of citizens more prepared for the future.

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