

The authors would like to acknowledge the fundamental contribution made by the Risks & Challenges team of partners throughout the work involved in the dissemination and implementation of the Program and address a special thanks to all the students involved.

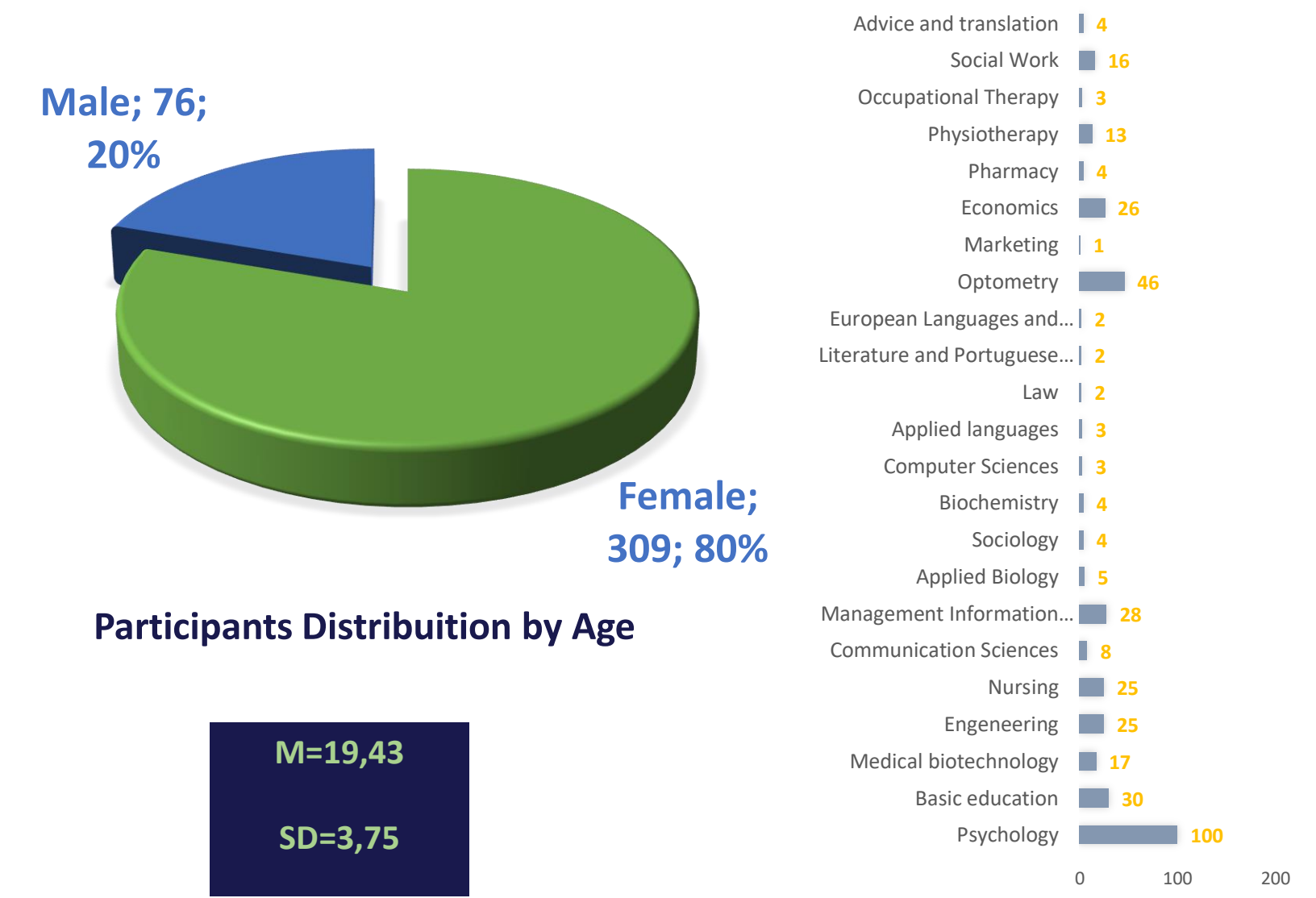
Introduction

The high prevalence of psychoactive substance use among higher education students, especially abusive alcohol consumption, raises the need for effective, structured and continuous prevention strategies. The [Riscos & Desafios Prevention Program](#), designed and validated to fill this gap, is a co-curricular, comprehensive and multi-component competence enhancement based preventive intervention. It is composed of a set of 8 two-hour weekly sessions to be implemented in group format and is aimed at students attending the 1st year of higher education. After 5 years of intervention, conditions were met for the construction of a set of 5 [booster sessions](#) designed to deepen and broaden the contents and skills addressed in the first year. Extending this intervention allows to prevent the risks associated with the massive use of the Internet by college students, following NIDA recommendations for prevention programs. This study presents the process evaluation of the Program implementation in different contexts and in different years with a sample of 371 students.

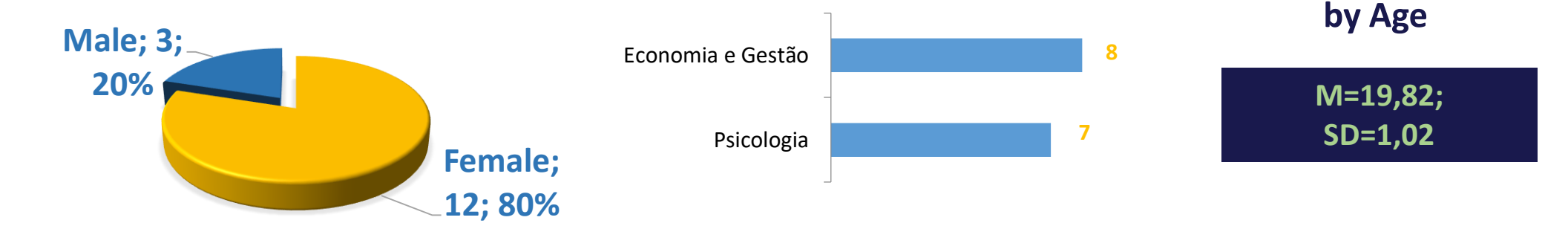
Methodology

The dissemination of the Program in different contexts of implementation counted on several partnerships. The sample consisted of 371 first year students from higher education institutions in Braga and Porto: University of Minho, Polytechnic Institute of Porto (Higher Institute of Engineering, School of Health, School of Technology and Management, Higher Institute of Accounting and Public Administration), School of Nursing of Porto, Catholic Portuguese University – Porto, University of Porto (Faculty of Economics) and Higher Institute of Social Work of Porto. The program was implemented by a team of health prevention technicians, student support technicians and teachers, trained through a 24h (classroom training) + 24h (implementation training) procedure. Additionally to the process evaluation performed orally by the different actors throughout the implementation, the Risks & Challenges Program includes six process evaluation forms: (1) Facilitator's Form; (2) Student Registration Form; (3) Attendance / Summary Form; (4) Session Implementation Form, which allows the analysis of the degree of implementation, among other aspects; (5) Post-Program Questionnaire, which aims at a global evaluation of the implementation by the participants at the 8th session of the Program, considering issues related to the organization and the general personal opinion about the Risks & Challenges Program, as well as a survey of aspects considered more positive and those that should be subject to later review and (6) Evaluation of the Program and the Group Form, which must be completed by the facilitator at the end of the Program's implementation and allows a global evaluation of its development. In this study, only the students' forms were used. The conditions of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality were respected.

Participants Distribution by Gender Participants Distribution by Course



Participants Distribution by Gender Participants Distribution by Course Participants Distribution by Age

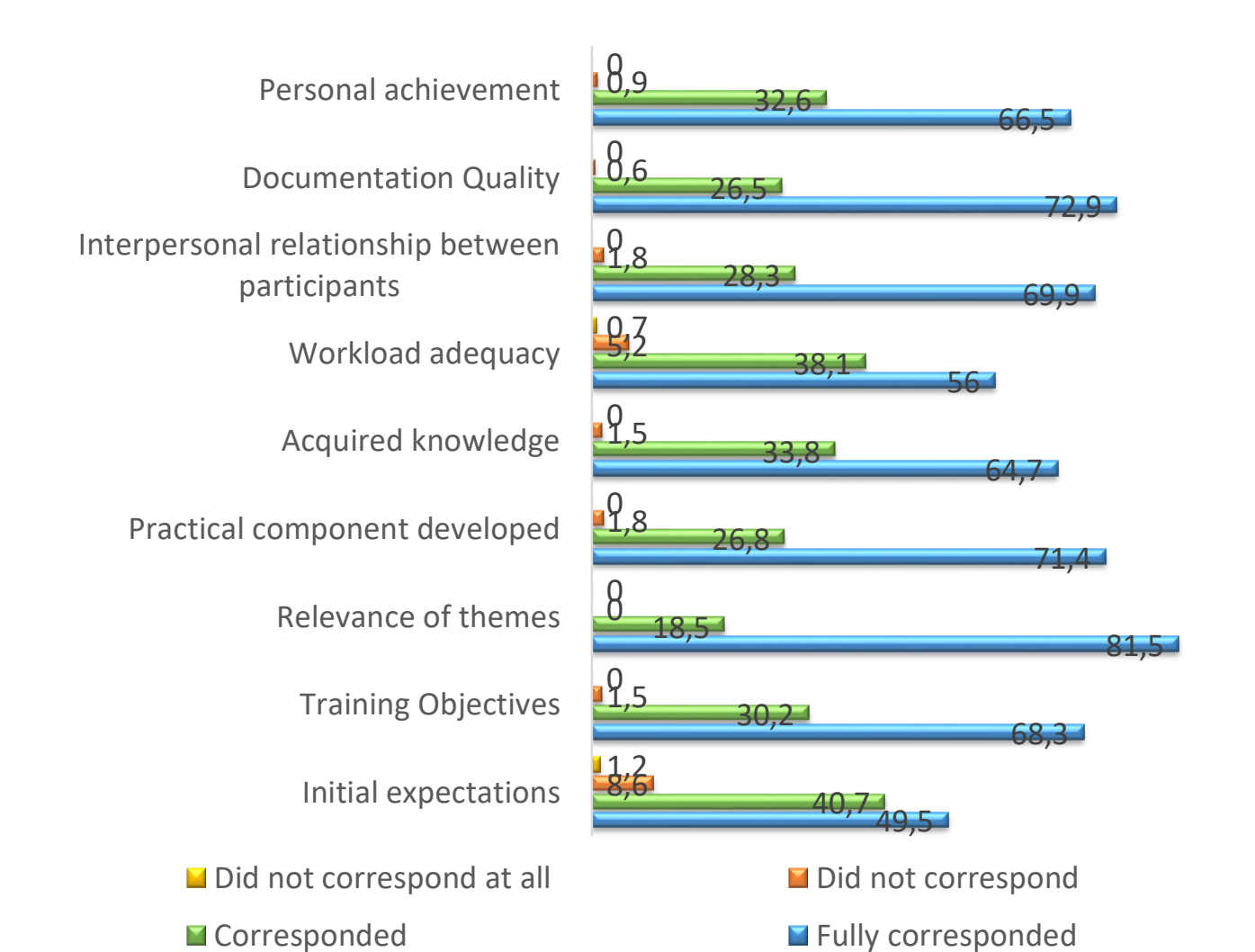


In 2018 the 5 booster sessions were designed and implemented as a pilot in order to test the suitability of materials, strategies and contents. The sample consisted of 15 2nd year students from the Faculty of Psychology and Education of the Catholic University of Porto in the second semester of 2017-18, and from the Faculty of Economics of the University of Porto in the first semester of 2018-19. The same evaluation forms were used. Additionally, Post-session Questionnaires were filled after each session.

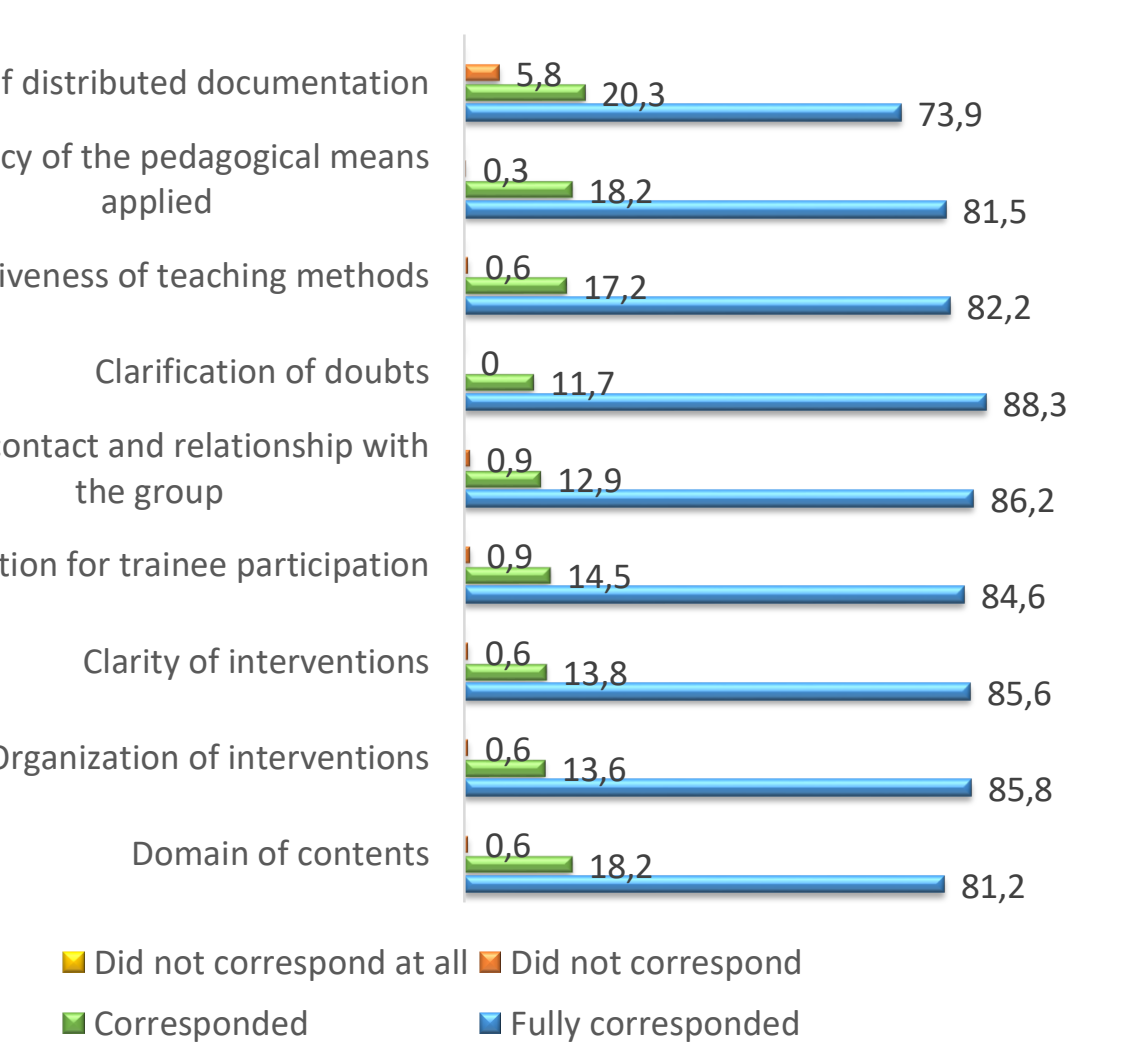
Results

The strong commitment of students with the program is shown by a residual number of absences and withdrawals. Most of the 371 1st year students in Risks & Desafios participated in 6-8 sessions (91%), thus showing a high adherence to the Program. Also, the number of dropouts (8,2% of the students only attended 1-3 sessions) was low and, in most cases, justified by changes in preexisting conditions such as unexpected schedules reorganization. Most of the 325 students who filled the Post-Program Questionnaire in the 8th session(s) evaluated the different dimensions - General Opinion about the Risks & Desafios Program, Facilitators and Program Organization - in their various items, in a very positive way, as we can see in the charts on the side. Likewise, most of these students rated the Program as Very Good. These data corroborate the positive face-to-face assessment provided by participants throughout the Program's implementation: they emphasized the importance of the practical nature of the program and expressed that the topics addressed and the competences developed were in accordance with their needs and adapted to their daily realities, preparing them to deal with various problems. They also mentioned that the experience of the Program was very significant in the development of useful personal and social skills, both for academic and personal lives, and in strengthening the network of relationships among the group members. They also emphasized the usefulness of the materials used during the 8 sessions and frequently pointed the will to maintain the Program in the following year. The facilitators reported great satisfaction with the contents and activities of the program and with the high participation among the students.

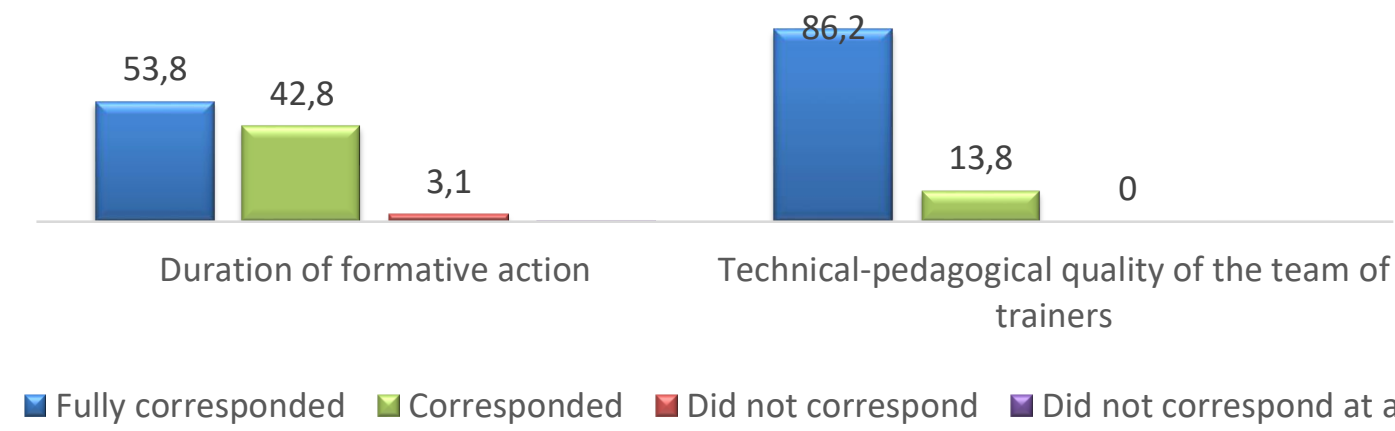
General opinion about the Risks & Desafios Program (% n=325)



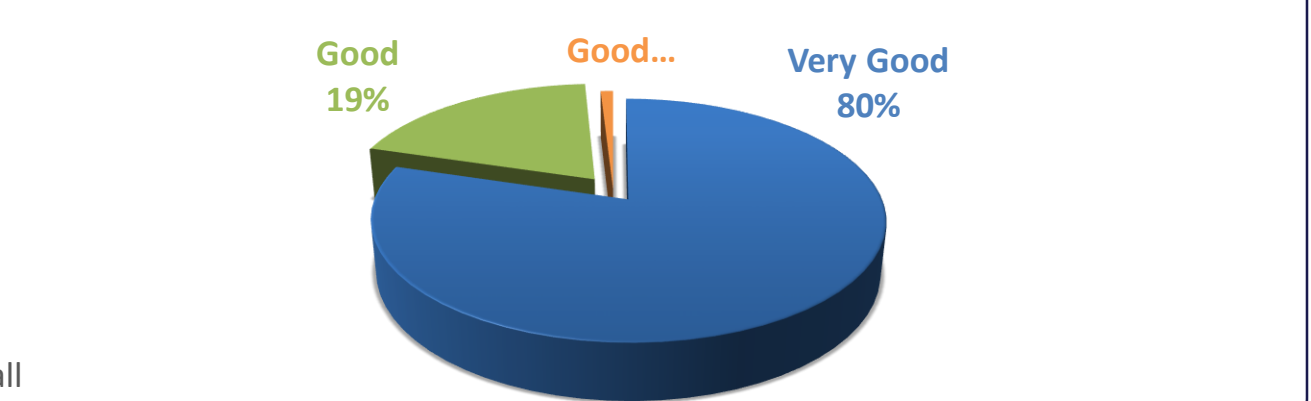
Opinion about the Facilitators (% n=325)



Opinion about Program organization (% n=325)

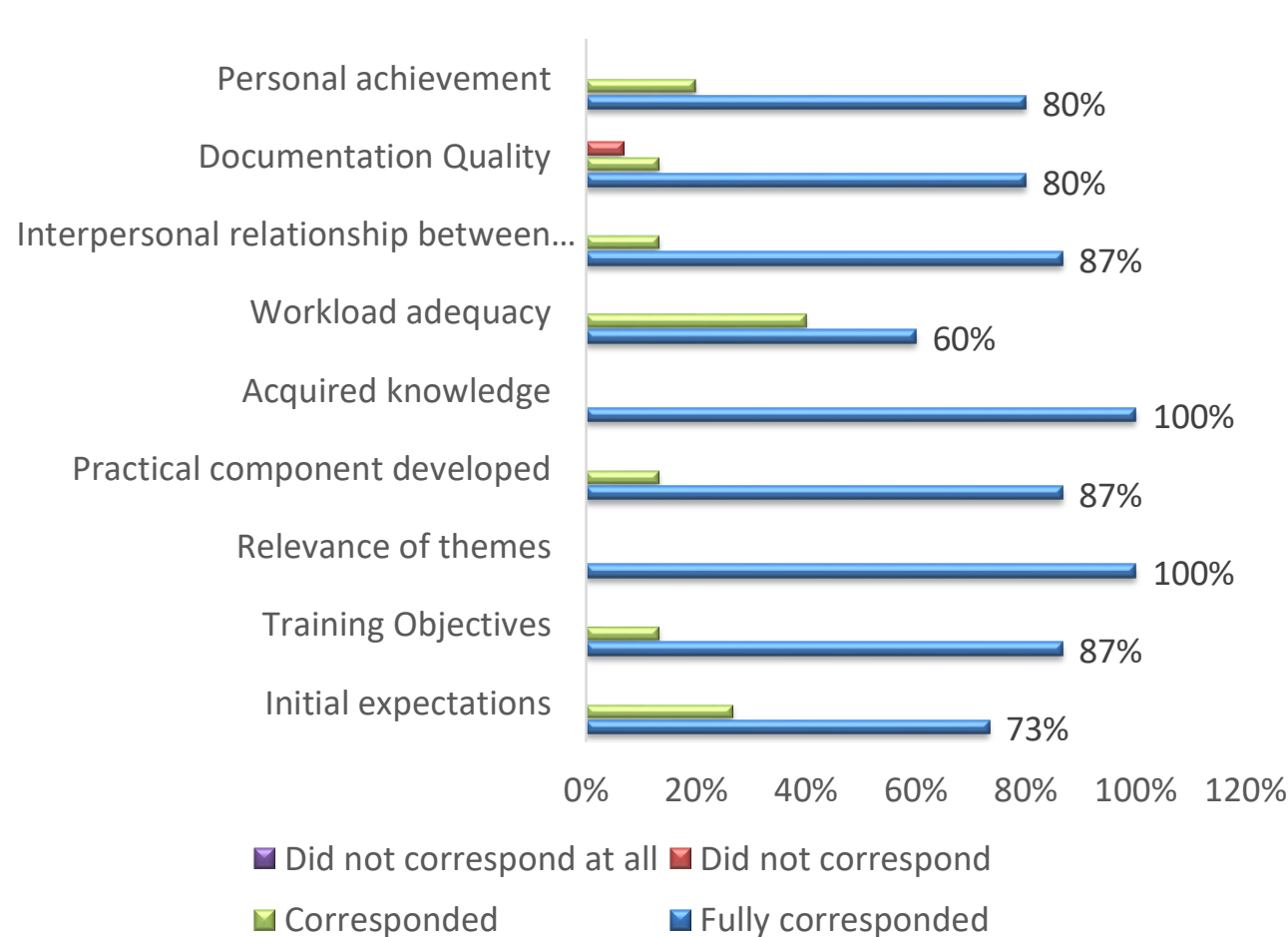


Global Opinion on the Risks & Desafios Program (% n=325)

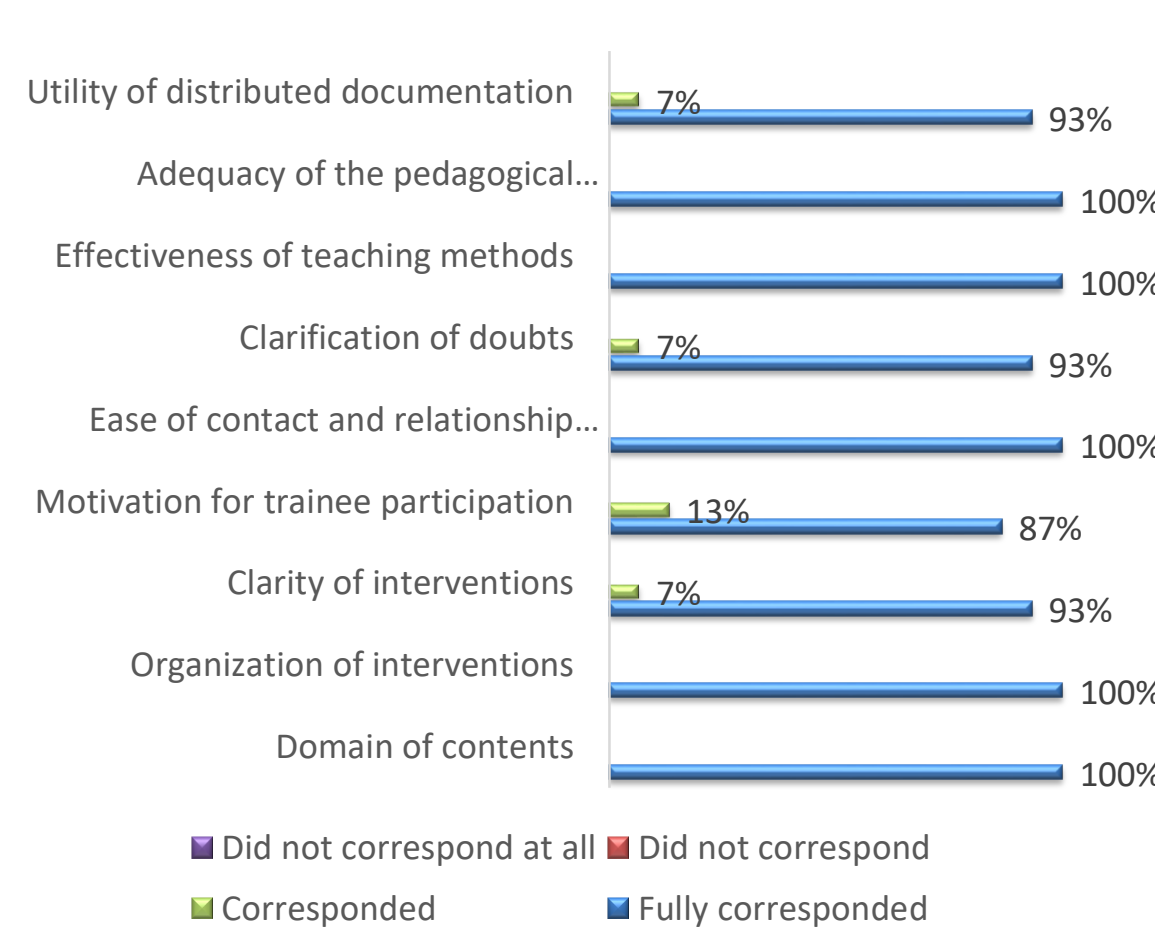


As far as the booster sessions are concerned, the implementations revealed that the topics covered, the materials and methodologies used and the competencies developed in the Risk & Challenges reinforcement sessions are adapted to the needs and experiences of these students. It was felt that this intervention proved to be very consistent and relevant for both facilitators and students. Session-by-session procedural assessment tools showed, together with the critical discussion fostered at the end of each session, a very positive assessment of all sessions by the participants. The charts below show the final evaluation as expressed in the Post-Program Questionnaire. Also, the facilitators expressed that the materials and contents were highly appropriate to the intervention and that the students were deeply involved and highly interested in the activities.

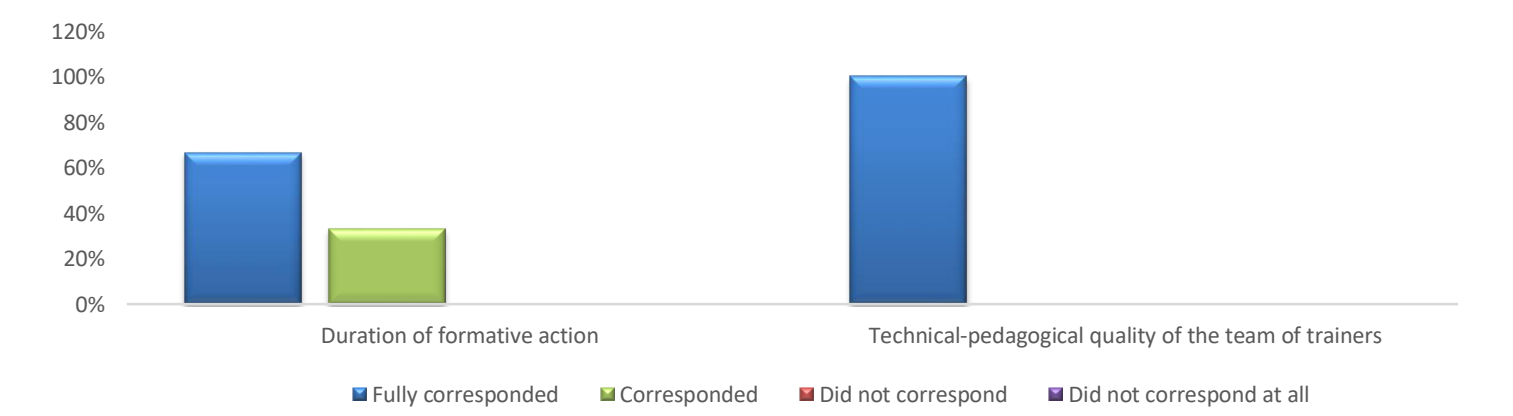
General opinion about the Risks & Desafios Program (n=15)



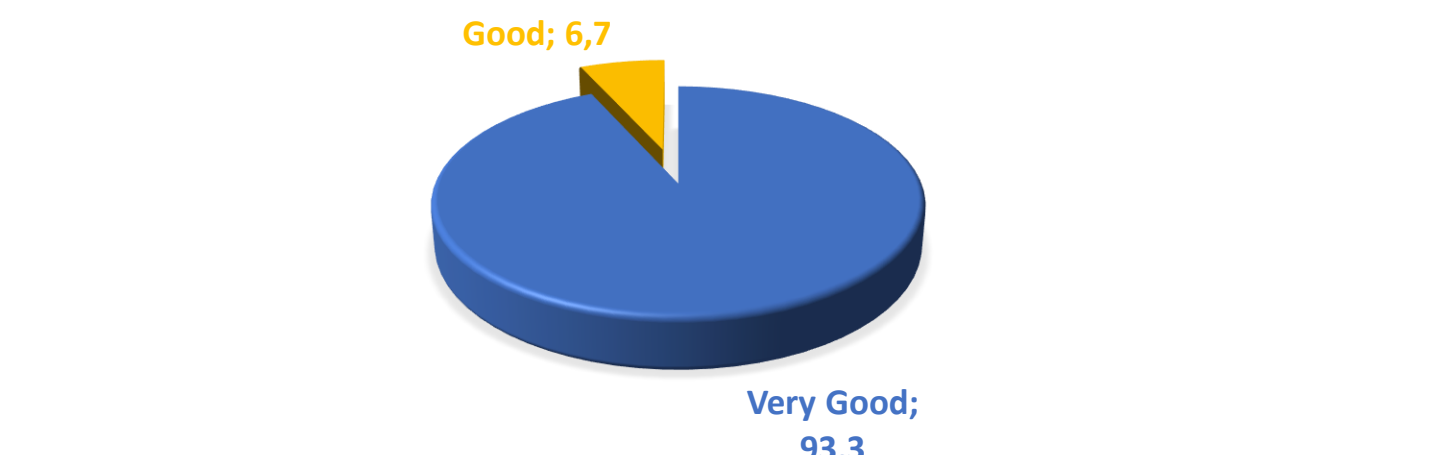
Opinion about the Facilitators (n=15)



Opinion about Program organization (% n=325)



Global Opinion on the Risks & Desafios Program (% n=325)



Conclusions

In sum, the process evaluation revealed clearly positive results, expressing the adequacy of both the R&D Program and the booster sessions to the characteristics of the target group and reflecting the consistency of the theoretical-practical conceptualization formulated, as well as the methodologies and materials used. This evaluation reiterates the importance of investing on health promotion and prevention of addictive behaviors through structured programs aimed at higher education students who present themselves as a target population with identified needs in this area and reinforces the opinion of the partners about the pertinence and validity of the intervention with the Risks & Challenges Program, corroborating the evaluation of efficacy of the Risks & Desafios Program. These positive outcomes also support the continuity of the implementation of the R&D Program and booster sessions and encourage research to revalidate its preventive effects.

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The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.