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# Secondary school teachers' beliefs about education of social and emotional learning

Creencias de docentes de secundaria sobre la educación del aprendizaje social y emocional

Убеждения учителей средней школы о социальном и эмоциональном обучении

中学教师关于社交和情感学习教育的信念

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**Helena Fuensanta Martínez-Saura**

University of Murcia  
helenafuensanta.martinez@um.es  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1544-3632>

**María Cristina Sánchez-López**

University of Murcia  
crisalo@um.es  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8161-8782>

**Manuel Javier Cejudo Prado**

University of Castilla La Manch  
manueljavier.cejudo@uclm.es  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2381-0714>

**Juan-Carlos Pérez-González**

National University of Distance Learning  
jcperez@edu.uned.es  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4025-7516>

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Currently, teachers are considered to be the main figures for the implementation of emotional education programmes. In this context, it will be necessary to know the beliefs and ideas of teachers about social and emotional learning education, specifically with respect to the comfort of its implementation, their degree of commitment and the perceived support of their respective schools.

**Method:** In this way, this work is focused on analysing to what extent teachers' level of trait emotional intelligence (EI) is related to such beliefs and ideas (comfort, commitment and support) that they have regarding the implementation of emotional education. Differences were analysed according to EI level and sex in a sample of 115 Secondary Education teachers. The instruments used were the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form" (TEIQueSF) and the Domains of SEL Beliefs Scale (DSBS) by Brackett et al. (2012).

**Results:** The results revealed that teachers show medium-high scores in EI and that there are statistically significant differences in teachers' beliefs according to gender and EI level.

**Conclusions:** It is concluded that on the one hand, teachers are committed to the importance of teaching social and emotional learning, but they do not receive sufficient support from educational institutions, so their level of trait EI is open to improvement; on the other hand, it is evident that the higher level of EI teachers have, the greater their degree of comfort in imparting this emotional learning. Finally, teachers seem to have a greater sense of support from their centre for imparting socio-emotional learning to students.

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**Keywords:** socio-emotional learning, teachers' beliefs, teacher evaluation, educational quality.

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## Resumen

**Introducción:** Actualmente, se considera que los docentes son las principales figuras para la implementación de programas de educación emocional. En este contexto, será preciso conocer las creencias e ideas de los docentes sobre la educación del aprendizaje social y emocional, en concreto, con respecto a su comodidad de aplicación, a su grado de compromiso y al apoyo percibido de sus respectivos centros educativos.

**Método:** Bajo esta consideración, este trabajo está enfocado en analizar en qué medida el nivel de inteligencia emocional (IE) rasgo de los docentes se relaciona con tales creencias e ideas (comodidad, compromiso y apoyo) que poseen con respecto a la implementación de la educación emocional. Para ello, se analizaron diferencias según nivel de IE rasgo y según el sexo. Se contó con una muestra de 115 profesores de Educación Secundaria y Bachillerato. Los instrumentos utilizados fueron Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form" (TEIQueSF) y el Domains of SEL Beliefs Scale (DSBS) de Brackett et al. (2012).

**Resultados:** Los resultados revelaron que los docentes muestran puntuaciones medio-altas en IE y que existen diferencias estadísticamente significativas en las creencias del profesorado según sexo y su nivel de IE.

**Conclusiones:** Se concluye de este modo que, por un lado los docentes están comprometidos con la importancia de la impartición de aprendizaje social y emocional, pero no perciben suficiente apoyo por parte de las instituciones educativas, por lo que su nivel de IE rasgo es susceptible de mejora; por otro lado, se evidencia que el profesorado con mayor nivel de IE, mayor es su grado de comodidad para impartir estos aprendizajes emocionales. Finalmente, las docentes parecen tener mayor sensación de apoyo del centro para impartir aprendizajes socioemocionales al alumnado. .

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**Palabras clave:** aprendizaje socio-emocional, creencias del profesorado, evaluación del profesorado, calidad educativa.

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## Аннотация

**Введение:** В настоящее время учителя считаются главными фигурами в реализации программ эмоционального воспитания. В этом контексте необходимо знать убеждения и представления учителей о социальном и эмоциональном обучении, в частности, в отношении удобства их реализации, степени их приверженности и предполагаемой поддержки со стороны школ.

**Метод:** В соответствии с этим, данная работа направлена на анализ того, в какой степени уровень эмоционального интеллекта (ЭИ) учителей связан с убеждениями и идеями (комфорт, приверженность и поддержка), которых они придерживаются в отношении внедрения эмоционального образования. Для этого были проанализированы различия в зависимости от уровня эмоционального интеллекта и пола. В выборке участвовали 115 преподавателей средней школы и бакалавриата. Использовались опросник Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form (TEIQueSF) и шкала Domains of SEL Beliefs Scale (DSBS) от Brackett et al. (2012).

**Результаты:** Результаты показали, что учителя демонстрируют средне-высокие показатели ЭИ и что существуют статистически значимые различия в убеждениях учителей в зависимости от пола и уровня ЭИ.

**Выводы:** Таким образом, можно сделать вывод, что, с одной стороны, учителя убеждены в важности социального и эмоционального обучения, но не ощущают достаточной поддержки со стороны образовательных учреждений, поэтому их уровень ЭИ может быть улучшен; с другой стороны, очевидно, что учителя с более высоким уровнем ЭИ чувствуют себя более комфортно при проведении эмоционального обучения. Наконец, учителя, по-видимому, в большей степени ощущают поддержку со стороны центра в деле обучения школьников социально-эмоциональным навыкам.

**Ключевые слова:** социально-эмоциональное обучение, убеждения учителей, оценка учителей, качество образования.

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## 概要

**简介:** 目前, 教师被认为是实行情感教育项目的主角。在这种情况下, 我们认为有必要了解教师对社会和情感学习教育的信念和想法, 特别是他们对使用应用程序的舒适度、承诺程度以及学校对其的支持程度。

**研究方法:** 在此考虑下, 本研究的重点是分析教师的情商 (EI) 水平特质在多大程度上与他们对实行情感教育所持有的信念和想法 (舒适感、承诺感和支持感) 相关。为此, 根据情商水平和性别对差异进行了分析。样本包括 115 名初中和高中教育老师。研究使用的工具是由 Brackett 等人 (2012) 制作的的特质情商问卷简表 (TEIQueSF) 和 SEL 信念领域量表 (DSBS)。

**研究结果:** 结果显示, 教师的情商得分分为中高, 并且根据性别和情商水平, 教师的信念存在统计显著差异。

**结论:** 结论得出, 一方面, 教师致力于提供社会和情感学习的重要性, 但他们没有感受到教育机构的足够支持, 因此他们的特质情商水平容易提高; 另一方面, 很明显, 情商水平越高的教师, 在传授这种情感学习时的舒适度就越高。最后, 教师似乎更能感受到中心对学生提供社会情感学习的支持。

**关键词:** 社会情感学习、教师信念、教师评价、教育质量。

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## Introduction

Recent decades have shown a change in the approach to teaching. The affective, social and emotional has been positioned as being the centre of all teaching-learning development (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-García, 2014; Uitto et al., 2015), and emotional education (Bisquerra et al., 2015) has become a line of action progressively emphasised in recent years by educational policies. This is the case for such examples promoted by the OECD at international level (Tuomi, 2022), and the LOMLOE (Organic Law 3/2020, of 29 December, amending Organic Law 2/2006, of 3 May, on Education), at Spanish level.

Socioemotional processes are present in any school context and, more specifically, in classrooms. These processes can be the cause of aspects relating to both growth and fatigue for teachers and students (Fernández-Domínguez et al., 2009).

Numerous studies show the benefits of emotions in improving students' physical and mental health, their academic performance and improvement in grades (Durlak et al., 2011), reduction in manifestations of behavioural problems in the classroom, and in the appearance of prosocial conducts (Gardenswartz et al., 2010; Brackett et al., 2012; Romano et al., 2020) and, in short, in the improvement in the quality and effectiveness of teaching (Chan, 2008; Di Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2008; Castillo et al., 2013; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; López-Goñi & Goñi, 2012; Wong et al., 2010).

Nevertheless, a fundamental aspect for improving emotional processes in students is for teachers to be previously trained and to have a good level of emotional skills (Martínez-Saura et al., 2022). In this context, research into the importance of emotional training in teachers has also undergone an increase in recent years (Cejudo & López-Delgado, 2017; Golombek & Doran, 2014; Thomson & Palermo, 2014). Teachers who score lower in EI suffer greater instances of burnout syndrome (Oberle et al., 2020; Puertas et al., 2019) and, as a result, perceive greater social support for reducing physical and emotional distress (Blázquez et al., 2022), this support understood as the group of trustworthy individuals that permit situations of anxiety and stress to be confronted (Thoits, 1982).

Likewise, it must be borne in mind that adolescents and thus secondary school students are more receptive to emotional support provided by their teachers, as their academic success (Allen et al., 2013), satisfaction with life (Zullig et al., 2018) and psychological wellbeing (Pössel et al., 2013) largely rest on this. In the words of Pianta and Hamre (2009) and Schenke et al. (2017), emotional support from teachers is defined as capacity to generate an optimum climate in the classroom, form positive relationships with their students, encouraging their autonomy and emotional skills, and being able to respect their perspective.

Following Brackett et al. (2012), given it is mainly teachers who are involved in the implementation of emotional education programmes, their attitudes and beliefs as regards the emotional importance of teaching will have a bearing on their practice (Bowden et al., 2003). In this case there are a number of influencing factors: comfort when teaching emotional education (Rohrbach et al., 1993); the commitment and backing of the entire educational community of the school (Brackett et al., 2009; Devaney et al., 2006) and the commitment when learning these skills on the part of teachers, will all be essential for continuity.

Despite the sufficient justification of the importance of working on emotional skills in educational contexts and awareness-raising among teachers, they lack sufficient

training to carry it out (Romero, 2021; Suberviola-Ovejas, 2012). In this regard, it is necessary to begin from an initial emotional training starting from university degree studies (Retana-Alvarado et al., 2018; Bisquerra, 2005; Bueno et al., 2005; Teruel, 2000; Martínez-Saura et al., 2022).

Given that prior research has shown that the level of teaching EI is associated with different attitudes, such as for example those concerned with attention to diversity (Cejudo et al., 2016) and the importance afforded to emotional education (Cejudo & López-Delgado, 2017), this study focuses on a sample of secondary school teachers to discover the relationship between their level of trait EI and their comfort and/or self-confidence in regard to teaching social-emotional learning (SEL), the commitment or desire to participate in the training and teaching of SEL and the support culture they perceive in their school institution for promoting SEL.

Taking these aspects into consideration, the objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify teachers' beliefs on emotional education.
2. Study the correlation between general trait EI score and level of comfort, commitment and support perceived by the teacher.
3. Analyse whether statistically significant differences exist between teachers' beliefs on emotional education in regard to trait EI level and sex.

## Methodology

### Participants

The convenience sample comprised a total of 115 secondary and post-16 secondary education teachers from 12 schools in the region of Murcia, belonging to the public system, of which 72 were women (62.6%) and 43 were men (37.4%). Their ages ranged from 25 to 63 ( $M = 42.39$ ;  $SD = 10.06$ ) and they came from different educational specialities. The length of time in their profession ranged from between 1 and 38 years' experience, with a mean of 15.20 years ( $SD = 10.17$ ).

### Instruments

For the evaluation of EI as a personality trait the Spanish version (Pérez, 2003) of the EIQue-SF (Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire–Short Form) (Petrides, 2009) was used, comprising 30 items in a Likert-type 7 point scale, with 1 being completely disagree and 7 completely agree. In this study internal consistency was  $\alpha = .87$ .

To evaluate the beliefs of the teachers on social-emotional learning the Spanish adaptation of the SEL Beliefs Scale (DSBS) by Brackett et al. (2012) was used, implemented ad hoc in the case of this investigation. The guidelines for translating and adapting the instrument were based firstly on using two human translators with experience in the concept of interest in order to reduce the probability of obtaining a merely literal translation. Secondly, an evaluating committee compared the two translations to avoid conceptual equivalence. Following this, there was an inverse translation into the original language of the instrument (retrotranslation) and, finally, the original instrument was compared to an adapted version.

The instrument evaluates three dimensions on the beliefs of teachers regarding social and emotional learning. With the data from this study a consistency of (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .78$ ) was obtained. Each of the factors comprises 4 items: Comfort (feeling of self-confidence in teaching SEL) ("I feel comfortable providing training in social and emotional skills to my students"), Commitment (I have a desire to participate in the training and teaching of SEL) ("I want to improve my ability to teach social and emotional skills"), and School culture (support from the school for promoting SEL) ("The school culture of my educational centre supports the development of socioemotional skills in boys and girls").

Each of the 12 items has 5 answer options in a Likert-type scale going from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree).

## Procedure

Firstly, the instruments were selected and adapted to a single Google Forms questionnaire to facilitate online data collection.

On the one hand this form permitted the preservation of anonymity of the participating teachers and, on the other hand it avoided the appearance of lost values, as the system prevented passing a section or sending responses until all items had been completed. The questionnaire was subjected to a review process by experts and translators.

Nevertheless, before disseminating the data collection tool, the necessary documentation was presented to the Ethics Committee of the University of Murcia to obtain their approval and thus afford greater rigour to the study. Furthermore, following the international ethics criteria included in the Declaration of Helsinki, the opportune measures were adopted in order to guarantee complete confidentiality of the subjects' personal data, in accordance with Organic Law 3/2018, of 5 December, on the Protection of Personal Data and guarantee of digital rights.

An informed consent section was included at the beginning of the questionnaire to authorise or reject participation and data collection and processing. Following acceptance and consent, each of the questionnaires was initiated. They were separated into various sections with short titles of one or two words in order to avoid providing information on what was going to be analysed, thus avoiding possible conditioning factors in the responses. At the end of this, the participants were able to read a text thanking them, along with contact details in case they needed to resolve doubts or obtain further information on the study. The link to the online questionnaire was active for 60 days. At the end of this period, the link was blocked to stop more responses from being admitted.

## Data analysis

A reliability analysis was carried out (internal consistency) on the instruments used, via the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ). Next, there was a descriptive analysis of the responses provided by the teachers, revealing the means and standard deviations, both overall and by dimensions.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to analyse the results obtained between the different dimensions. The values expressed by Funder and Ozer (2019) were taken into consideration in order to assess the effect size.

Lastly, the differences between the mean values as regards level of EI as personality trait and sex of the teachers were studied. A t-Student test was carried out for independent samples, with Cohen's d statistic also being calculated to determine effect size. In all cases the level of statistical significance obtained was \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . Version 28.0 of the SPSS program was used for statistical analysis.

## Results

### Emotional intelligence and beliefs regarding SEL.

As shown in Table 1, in the dimensions linked to beliefs on social-emotional learning (SEL), a medium-high total score is observed ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = .440$ ). According to the beliefs of the teachers on social emotional learning, comfort is the most valued dimension (4.04), whereas commitment obtained a lower score (3.67).

In this case, the professionals feel comfortable and sufficiently trained in social-emotional learning; however, an environment where this type of training can be developed is not favoured in all educational centres.

In relation to trait EI and following the criteria indicated in the article by Petrides (2009) on the psychometric properties of the TEIQue-SF, the sample shows a medium-high level ( $M = 5.11$ ,  $SD = .67$ ).

**Table 1**

*Descriptive statistics of the DSBS scale and trait Emotional Intelligence*

	Mean	SD
<b>GDB</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>.440</b>
Comfort-Ease Dimension	4.04	.710
Item 5. I find it natural to be concerned for the social and emotional needs of my students.	4.20	1.019
Item 7. I feel comfortable providing training in social and emotional skills to my students.	3.91	1.039
Item 8. The lessons or informal classes on social and emotional learning form part of my teaching practice.	4.23	.983
Item 9. I trust in my capacity to provide training on socioemotional learning.	3.84	1.204
<b>Commitment dimension</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>.480</b>
Item 3. All teachers should receive training on how to teach social and emotional skills to students.	4.44	.808
Item 4. I would like to attend a workshop to develop my own skills.	3.90	1.071

	Mean	SD
Item 10. I would like to attend a workshop to learn how to develop the social and emotional skills of my students.	2.02	1.192
Item 11. I want to improve my capacity for teaching social and emotional skills.	4.35	.849
<b>School Culture-Support Dimension</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>.470</b>
Item 1. My educational centre expects teachers to express an interest in the social and emotional needs of students	4.21	.996
Item 2. The school culture of my centre supports the development of socioemotional skills in boys and girls.	4.64	.840
Item 6. My management team in the centre creates an environment that promotes social and emotional learning in our students.	4.17	.991
Item 12. My management team does not encourage social and emotional learning in our students.	3.97	1.008
<b>EIGT</b>	<b>5.14</b>	<b>.672</b>

Note. GTEI = General Trait Emotional Intelligence; GMB = General Mastery Beliefs.

## Convergence between trait EI and Beliefs about SEL

As can be seen in Table 2, EI as a personality trait showed a positive and significant correlation, with a medium effect size in the belief denominated Culture ( $r = .22^*$ ,  $p = .018$ ).

**Table 2**

*Correlations between trait EI and Beliefs*

	EIGT	Comfort	Commitment	Culture	GDB
EIGT					
Comfort	.04				
Commitment	.09	.50**			
Culture	.22*	.44**	.32**		
GDB	.13	.88**	.75**	.71**	

Note. GTEI = General Trait Emotional Intelligence; GMB = General Mastery Beliefs; \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

## Difference of means in Beliefs according to SEL

To explore the possible differences of means in regard to EI level two subgroups were created for their comparison via the t-Student test for independent samples (Table 3): a subsample of teachers who show a low level of EI (subjects that had obtained equal scores lower than the 25th percentile;  $n = 28$ ) and a subsample of teachers who show a high level of EI (subjects who had obtained scores equal to or high than the 75th percentile;  $n = 31$ ).

As Table 3 shows, when comparing the score given to each dimension of the DSBS scale, significant differences were observed in regard to the EI level of the partici-



pating teachers in an overall score in beliefs regarding mastery of social learning of emotional content and the comfort dimension.

In both variables of the scale, the teachers with a high EI level show higher scores than those with a low EI level.

To evaluate the magnitude of the differences the effect size was calculated for each, with the observance of a very large effect size in Comfort ( $d = .943$ ), large in Beliefs ( $d = .620$ ) and small in Commitment ( $d = .300$ ), and Culture ( $d = .341$ ).

**Table 3**

*Beliefs in regard to GTEI*

		N	Mean	Sd	t	p	d
Comfort	Low EI	28	3.56	.411	-3.624	<.001	.943
	High EI	31	3.90	.307			
Commitment	Low EI	28	3.65	.570	-1.111	.273	.300
	High EI	31	3.79	.348			
Culture	Low EI	28	3.91	.704	-1.312	.195	.341
	High EI	31	4.16	.757			
GDB	Low EI	28	3.70	.428	-2.297	.024	.620
	High EI	31	3.95	.380			

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

### Difference of mean values in Beliefs according to Sex

Table 4 shows the statistically significant difference that exists between Men and Women in the culture of support in the centre and the general score for teachers' beliefs regarding their mastery over the teaching-learning process of socioemotional content.

Women score more highly in the case of both variables from the scale. To be able to evaluate the magnitude of these differences, the effect size was calculated for each variable, with a small effect size being observed for the Comfort ( $d = .127$ ) and Commitment ( $d = .104$ ) dimensions. The effect size for Culture and the general score for Beliefs is moderate.

**Table 4**

*Beliefs in regard to sex*

		N	Mean	Sd	t	p	d
Comfort	Male	43	3.72	.515	-.740	.461	.127
	Female	72	3.78	.443			

		N	Mean	Sd	t	p	d
Commitment	Male	43	3.64	.485	-5.28	.599	.104
	Female	72	3.69	.480			
Culture	Male	43	3.80	.660	-2.931	.004	.575
	Female	72	4.19	.703			
GDB	Male	43	3.72	.423	-2.010	.047	.391
	Female	72	3.89	.441			

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

## Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this work has been to analyse the level of trait EI of the participating teachers and their beliefs for addressing socioemotional teaching-learning processes.

The results obtained in the study have shown that, generally, the participants consider that possessing a good level of EI is quite important for carrying out their teaching task effectively, given they obtained a mean of 5.17 out of a maximum score of 7. Furthermore, a medium-high level is shown in relation to trait EI, according to the criteria indicated by the author of the scale (Petrides, 2009). It has been possible to observe similar medium-high scores for EI in other studies with different instruments (Palomera et al., 2006; Pena & Extremera, 2012).

In fact, investigations such as that by Cejudo and López-Delgado (2017) set out that teacher EI is a determining variable in regard to their attitude favouring the importance of emotional training. Those teachers with high EI give greater recognition and are more sensitive to the emotional dimensions in the execution of quality teaching practice (Bisquerra et al., 2015). More specifically, teachers think that interpersonal emotional skills (emotional management of others, relationship and impulse control skills) are more necessary than intrapersonal skills.

These values are open to improvement and bring us to the need to continue working on emotional training of and with teachers, despite their increase over the last decade (Golombek & Doran, 2014; Uitto et al., 2015). Proof of this are the results presented in the systematic literature reviews such as that by Martínez-Saura et al. (in the press) that show the existence of emotional training programmes, but they are not yet sufficiently widespread. Despite this, broadly speaking these imply an improvement in the institutional climate and, therefore, better educational quality.

Furthermore, the teachers show a high degree of comfort-ease as regards the possibility of receiving and giving training on emotional education, but the perception they have on their school culture in this same regard does not accompany this belief, given that the scores are lower.

From this result we can gather that it is necessary for educational bodies to position themselves as the main driver for promoting SEL training. In particular, Murillo et al. (2011) recognise the importance of the sense of belonging to an institution on the part of the entire educational community and the strong influence of the sociopolitical and school context (training, initial and ongoing; employment conditions; school climate; approach of management and educational administration, and family participation).

In this manner, it is evident there is a need for training programmes in emotional education to begin with improving the institutional climate (Johnson & Naidoo, 2017; Ju et al., 2015).

Other studies reflect similar results on high levels of Comfort (Collie et al., 2015), demonstrating a growing awareness on the part of teachers as regards their training needs in matters of emotional education at a global level. This leads to the conclusion that teachers' beliefs regarding their capacity for emotional training to deal with the socioemotional demands of the classroom are high. However, these data go against the current reality of the situation in schools. Teachers are overwhelmed and need strategies (Moreira et al., 2018). This is demonstrated by a lack of training (Gallante, 2013) that has become evident in stressful situations such as the pandemic caused by Covid-19 (Fernández-Abascal & Martín-Díaz, 2022; Jennings et al., 2020).

Moreover, the correlation between overall trait EI and school culture when giving emotional education is significant. In this way, the results coincide with those shown by Poulou (2017) where the perception of Comfort in the application of SEL practices was associated with teacher-student relationships, characterised by closeness, supporting the prosocial classroom model of Jennings and Greenberg (2009), which states that the EI of teachers is important for healthy relationships, connecting both variables in this way. Beliefs on teaching in general, along with self-efficacy (Comfort) and school culture, are strongly linked to teacher efficacy (Collie et al., 2015).

Regarding the differences found depending on EI level, it is noteworthy that those teachers with higher trait EI state they have a stronger level of beliefs, reaching significant differences in that related to Comfort or Ease they have in the face of socioemotional content. The results reached show teachers who firmly believe in their capacity, connection and trust for addressing and boosting SEL activities.

Again, in relation to the differences by sex, women obtained higher means in the three dimensions and the global average compared to men. Moreover, there are significant differences in two of them: Culture and General Mastery Beliefs. Similar results are found in the study by Molina et al. (2022) where men are less willing to express comfort in teaching SEL education than women. In addition, they mention that they provide evidence that shows that secondary school teachers are less likely than primary school teachers to implement SEL programmes and that, in secondary schools, education for wellbeing is undervalued in comparison with structured curriculum subjects.

In the same vein, regarding the differentiation by sex as a sociodemographic variable, a number of studies show that teachers show greater job satisfaction (Anaya & López, 2014; Anaya & Suárez, 2007); concede more importance to adaptation to changes and self-motivation for developing their teaching (Cejudo & López-Delgado, 2017); have higher levels of emotional understanding and regulation (Suárez & Martín, 2019); and show higher levels of positivity (engagement) at work (Pena et al., 2012). Nevertheless, male teachers appear to show greater emotional regulation (Cazalla-Luna & Molero, 2018; Molero et al., 2010; Saucedo et al., 2019).

Lastly, it is considered that the main contribution of this study has been to offer a new vision on trait EI linked to the importance afforded by teachers to being emotionally intelligent in order to carry out their jobs optimally and how their EI level is related to their beliefs on SEL mastery. Moreover, this investigation is characterised for being one of the first to use the DSBS (Domains of Social and Emotional Learning Beliefs Scale) in the Spanish context, providing with it a new tool for research into emotional education.

In short, the conclusions drawn from this study are as follows:

Firstly, the results confirmed that the scores obtained on the level of trait EI of the participants, although encouraging, still have room for improvement. It would thus be necessary and interesting to both continue working on raising awareness in teachers at all levels on the importance of having a good emotional foundation and to offer spaces, courses, conversations, activities, resources, etc. to increase their level of emotional skills because, as the results reflect, teachers are committed to the cause but do not perceive the same level of commitment on the part of educational centres.

Secondly, the significant convergences found between the different scales showed that, on the one hand, the greater the EI level of a teacher, the higher their degree of Comfort when teaching activities on emotional education and, on the other hand, this is consistent with the idea that a higher level of EI allows the teacher to carry out their teaching role with greater aptitude, given it permits them to have better physical and mental health, possess better strategies for managing stressful situations and thus achieve better job satisfaction and professional development.

Thirdly, the differences in regard to sex reveal that women are more prepared to carry out their teaching role showing better self control, well-being and social and emotional skills, and that they feel more comfortable with and committed to the possibility of developing activities on emotional education. Luckily, the levels of EI recorded are highly similar between both sexes, which aids in eliminating the social stereotype linked to women being traditionally more sensitive and men being obliged to show themselves as disconnected from their more emotional side.

Lastly, it is necessary to mention that there is still little scientific literature on beliefs on SEL education in the Spanish sphere, above all aimed at secondary education teachers.

## Limitations and future lines of research

The conclusions of this study are mainly limited by the teacher sample size. However, our results are in line with other investigations in the framework of teacher EI. In fact, it is the first time there has been a study of the association between teachers' level of trait EI and their evaluation of their beliefs regarding mastery in regard to tackling the teaching-learning process of socioemotional content.

Likewise, it is important to add that in future studies there will be a complementarity of instruments and the incorporation of a qualitative perspective, with the purpose of enriching the study objectives and facilitating comprehension on the relationship between EI and comfort, commitment and the culture of support felt by teachers in their working environment.

Our results suggest that, indirectly, a possible increase in the trait EI profile in teachers could also be an advancement when addressing the teaching-learning process with greater prestige. This would involve potential beneficial effects in students such as increasing school self-motivation, improving social relationships within the classroom, having better emotional management and possessing a better concept of self. This is justified in the sense that it provides a new tool that permits the evaluation of personal beliefs about mastery in relation to trait EI that may have a bearing on the quality of the teaching-learning process. Nevertheless, this must be tested in future works focused on improving the competence of teachers through emotional education programmes.

However, it is important to indicate that the results partially replicate those of other national and international studies with greater sample sizes, which have been previously cited.

Generally, this initial exploratory study with the adaptation of the scale of beliefs on the education of socioemotional learning suggests, still with a high degree of provisionality, that the degree of beliefs and attitudes of secondary school teachers towards the implementation of emotional education is relatively independent of their level of EI, save perhaps in the case of perceived comfort. All of this, in any event, requires replication with new and larger national samples.

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