

# **Relationship between teachers' emotional competences and Primary School students' anxiety, academic performance, and emotional competences**

## **Relación de las competencias emocionales del profesorado con la ansiedad, el rendimiento académico y las competencias emocionales del alumnado de Educación Primaria<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Resumen <sup>1</sup>**

Numerosos estudios han destacado la relevancia de las competencias emocionales en la labor docente y en el desarrollo del alumnado. Sin embargo, son pocos los que analizan cómo

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estas competencias en el profesorado influyen en el bienestar, el rendimiento académico y el desarrollo emocional de los estudiantes. El presente estudio evalúa las competencias emocionales del profesorado y su relación con variables clave en el alumnado de Educación Primaria: competencias emocionales, ansiedad y rendimiento académico. La muestra incluye 118 docentes y 1676 alumnos de educación primaria de diferentes centros educativos de España. Se utilizó un diseño cuantitativo no experimental, con análisis descriptivo y comparativo-causal ex-post-facto a través del software SPSS en su versión 28.0. Los instrumentos aplicados fueron el Cuestionario de Desarrollo Emocional (CDE-A-35), el Cuestionario de Desarrollo Emocional (CDE 9-13), la Escala de Observación de Competencias emocionales, la Escala de Ansiedad en Niños (CAS), el Inventario de Ansiedad estado-rasgo en Niños (STAIC) y el promedio global de calificaciones. Los resultados evidencian que no existen correlaciones significativas entre las competencias emocionales del profesorado y las de sus estudiantes en los cursos iniciales, mientras que en los cursos superiores de Educación Primaria sí muestran una asociación significativa. Además, las competencias emocionales del profesorado correlacionan significativamente y de manera negativa con la ansiedad del alumnado en los cursos más avanzados. A pesar de no haberse identificado una relación directa entre competencias emocionales del docente y el rendimiento académico del alumnado, los resultados destacan la importancia de promover el desarrollo de dichas competencias tanto en docentes como en estudiantes. En conclusión, el estudio presentado ofrece un enfoque novedoso ante la escasa investigación en este ámbito y pone de relieve la necesidad de integrar la educación emocional en la formación docente y en el currículum escolar, con el fin de favorecer el bienestar y el desarrollo emocional del alumnado a lo largo de su trayectoria educativa.

*Palabras clave:* competencias emocionales, ansiedad, rendimiento académico, docentes, Educación Primaria, educación emocional

### **Abstract <sup>2</sup>**

Numerous studies have highlighted the relevance of emotional competences in teaching and student development. However, few studies have analysed how teachers' emotional competences influence students' well-being, academic performance, and emotional development. The present study assesses teachers' emotional competences and their relationship with key variables in Primary School students: emotional competences, anxiety, and academic performance. The sample includes 118 teachers and 1676 primary school students from different schools in Spain. A non-experimental quantitative design was used, with descriptive and comparative-causal ex-post-facto analysis using SPSS software version 28.0. The instruments applied were the Emotional Development Questionnaire (CDE-A-35), the Emotional Development Questionnaire (CDE 9-13), the Emotional Competence Observation Scale, the Children's Anxiety Scale (CAS), the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children (STAIC), and the global grade point average. The results show that there are no significant correlations between teachers' emotional competences and those of their students

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in the early years of Primary Education, whereas a significant association is observed in the upper grades. Furthermore, teachers' emotional competences are significantly and negatively correlated with students' anxiety levels in the more advanced grades. Although no direct relationship was found between teachers' emotional competences and students' academic performance, the findings highlight the importance of fostering the development of these competences in both teachers and students. In conclusion, this study offers a novel approach given the limited research in this field, and underscores the need to integrate emotional education into teacher training and the school curriculum to promote students' well-being and emotional development throughout their educational journey.

*Key words:* emotional competences, anxiety, academic performance, teachers, Primary Education, emotional education

## Introduction

Current social transformations demand an education that goes beyond academic knowledge and fosters the integral development of students. Organizations such as the OECD (2021) and UNESCO (2015; 2020) have emphasized the need to include emotional competences in educational curricula to face life's challenges and improve student well-being. In this line, the current Spanish educational law, LOMLOE (2020), recognizes emotional education as the foundation for personal, social, and academic development throughout all educational stages. Although only 5% of schools implement it systematically, according to the First National Study on Emotional Education (IDIENA, 2021), there is broad consensus among teachers about its necessity, which reinforces its value as an essential component for student well-being and their preparedness to face the challenges of contemporary society.

Based on scientific evidence, emotions play a key role in student learning, as there is a clear correlation between emotional competence and academic performance (Martínez-Sánchez, 2019; Wahyudi, 2018; Perpiñà, 2021). Furthermore, emotional education not only facilitates students' personal development but also supports their learning process, since it is essential for them to understand and manage their emotions to succeed in school (Durlak & Weissberg, 2005; MacCann et al., 2020). Several studies also show that emotional competences can predict levels of anxiety, reinforcing the need to address them in schools (Mella et al., 2021; Puertas-Molero et al., 2017; Ros-Morente et al., 2017).

Moreover, research has shown a close relationship between teachers'

ability to promote positive emotions in the classroom and meaningful student learning (Anzelin et al., 2020; Becker et al., 2014). When teachers effectively regulate their emotions, they become more sensitive to their students' needs, fostering a favorable emotional climate (Calderón et al., 2014; Gutiérrez-Torres & Buitrago-Velandia, 2019). This is key for generating a positive learning environment where students feel understood, valued, and supported. This emotional competence also benefits teachers themselves, leading to greater job satisfaction and better emotional adjustment, which results in better performance and a positive impact on the school climate (Granziera & Perera, 2019; Mérida-López et al., 2022). Therefore, teachers' values, behaviors, and goals not only influence their own teaching practices but also shape the school environment and the general well-being of students (Kim & Seo, 2018; Ramírez-Vázquez et al., 2020; Wang, 2022).

These considerations highlight the importance of teachers developing emotional competences, which are essential for effective and quality education (Pacheco-Salazar, 2017; Sutton & Wheatly, 2003). Training in emotional competences is essential for achieving positive outcomes both individually and collectively (Amponsah, 2024; Fernández-Berrocal et al., 2017; Castillo et al., 2013; Cabello et al., 2010). Teachers play a fundamental role in the development of these competences, not only as learning facilitators but also as role models (López-Cassà, 2023).

Although emotional education is increasingly recognized as essential in teaching practice, in Spain it remains an unresolved issue, as most teachers have not received specific training in this area (OECD, 2019). This lack of training limits their ability to properly manage their own emotional well-being and that of their students (Fundación Botín, 2023). In this regard, UNESCO (2020), the Talis Report (OECD, 2019), and the Education at a Glance report (OECD, 2024) propose including emotional competences in teacher training programs. Initial and ongoing professional development of teachers is closely linked to their classroom practices (Cejudo & López-Delgado, 2017). This approach is even more relevant in a constantly changing educational and social context that requires new competences to address contemporary challenges (Sánchez-Tarazaga & Matarranz, 2023). The promotion of key competences for lifelong learning is also one of the main objectives of the European Education Area. Among the competences defined by the European Commission's reference framework, LifeComp (Sala et al., 2020), are personal competences such as self-regulation, flexibility, and well-being, as well as social competences like empathy, communication, and collaboration,

all highly valued both in education and in the workplace. This framework can serve as a common foundation for educators, professionals, and citizens, especially in complex and uncertain contexts such as the present. Hence, it is important to integrate emotional competences both in university training (Palomera et al., 2019; Schonert-Reichl, 2019) and in continuous professional development (Keefer et al., 2018; Kotsou et al., 2018; Guerrero-Guillén et al., 2023). Despite advances in recognizing the importance of emotional education, the lack of a universal consensus on the conceptualization, models, and tools for measuring emotional competences highlights the need for a coherent theoretical approach (Pérez-González et al., 2020; Nelis et al., 2009). In this context, it is appropriate to present the theoretical model used in this study, as it allows for a more rigorous definition and analysis of emotional competences and their influence on teaching practice.

According to Bisquerra and Pérez-Escoda (2007), emotional competences are defined as a set of capacities, knowledge, skills, aptitudes, attitudes, and values necessary to understand, express, and regulate emotional phenomena adequately. Based on this conceptualization, a classification of competences is proposed, grouped into five dimensions according to GROP's pentagonal model of emotional competence: emotional awareness (ability to recognize and identify one's own and others' emotions), emotional regulation (ability to manage emotions and emotional responses effectively), emotional autonomy (self-management and personal initiative), social competence (ability to maintain positive interpersonal relationships), and life and well-being competences (ability to adopt responsible behaviors to face everyday life problems effectively).

From these various contributions, it is clear that emotional competences are an increasingly important area of knowledge and interest in education, particularly regarding their potential to influence both learning and student well-being. However, few studies have examined how teachers' emotional competences impact key variables in students such as well-being, academic achievement, and the development of their own emotional competences in Primary Education.

For this reason, the present study aims to:

- Explore the correlation between teachers' emotional competences and Primary Education students' emotional competences.
- Analyze the relationship between teachers' emotional competences and students' anxiety levels in Primary Education.
- Examine the relationship between teachers' emotional competences

and the academic performance of Primary Education students.

**Method**

This study employed a descriptive and comparative-causal ex-post-facto design to analyze the relationship between teachers’ emotional competences and key variables in Primary Education students: emotional development, anxiety, and academic performance.

This design is especially suitable when it is not possible to intentionally manipulate variables, as it allows for the observation and analysis of phenomena in real contexts (Hernández, 2014). It also allows the establishment of associations between variables without direct intervention.

**Sample**

The sample of this study included a total of 118 teachers (83.9% women and 16.1% men) (see Table I) and 1676 Primary Education students (50.7% boys and 49.3% girls) (see Table II), from 20 public and semi-private schools in various Spanish cities. Third-grade students were excluded because the assessment tools used were not homogeneous and did not allow for comparative analysis across the study variables.

It is important to note that none of the schools had implemented emotional education programs, and the teachers had not received previous training in emotional competences.

**TABLE I.** Teacher Sample

Participants	Men	Women	Total
Teacher	19 (16.1%)	99 (83.9%)	118

Source: Authors’ own work

TABLE II. Student Sample

Participants	Boys	Girls	Total
Grades 1–2 Primary Education	217 (50.5%)	213 (49.5%)	430
Grades 4–6 Primary Education	634 (50.9%)	612 (49.1%)	1246
Total Student Sample	851 (50.7%)	825 (49.3%)	1676

Source: Authors' own work

The selected variables for this study were Emotional competence- understood as the set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to understand, express, and appropriately regulate emotional phenomena (Bisquerra, 2009), the variable State anxiety- understood as a situation of emotional vulnerability where the child experiences fear, uneasiness, nervousness, and above all, tension, which may alter behavior (Spielberger, 2019)-and Academic performance, defined as the degree of achievement of the educational goals established in the curriculum being studied (Rogers, 2010).

The study aimed to explore correlations among these variables to understand how teachers' emotional competences may influence students' emotional competences, anxiety, and academic performance.

Instruments

In selecting the instruments, conceptual consistency, the variables to be analyzed, psychometric validity and reliability, and practical application feasibility were taken into account. Based on these criteria, the following instruments were selected:

- *Emotional Competence Observation Scale* (adaptation of Filella-Guiu et al., 2014): Consisting of 83 items with an 11-point Likert scale (0 = very rarely or never, 10 = almost always). It was used to assess the emotional competences of students in first and second grades based on their teacher's perception. Built on GROPE's pentagonal model of emotional competences and based on the emotional competence observation scale by López-Cassà (2007) for Early Childhood Education. Reliability indices: emotional awareness ( $\alpha = .83$ ),



emotional regulation ( $\alpha = .77$ ), emotional autonomy ( $\alpha = .76$ ), social competence ( $\alpha = .84$ ), life and well-being competences ( $\alpha = .75$ ).

- *Emotional Development Questionnaire [CDE-9-13]* (Pérez-Escoda, López-Cassà, and Alegre, 2021). This self-report questionnaire was used to assess the level of mastery of emotional competences in students from fourth, fifth, and sixth grades of Primary Education. The questionnaire is based on the GROU pentagonal model of emotional competences (Bisquerra and Pérez-Escoda, 2007). The instrument uses a Likert-type response format on a scale from 0 (completely disagree) to 10 (completely agree). Each of the scales in the different dimensions: emotional awareness ( $\alpha = .80$ ), emotional regulation ( $\alpha = .75$ ), emotional autonomy ( $\alpha = .62$ ), social competence ( $\alpha = .72$ ), and life and well-being competences ( $\alpha = .72$ ), as well as the total scale ( $\alpha = .91$ ), show optimal reliability.
- *Emotional Development Questionnaire [CDE-A35]* (Pérez-Escoda, Alegre, and López-Cassà, 2021). This self-report questionnaire is based on the GROU pentagonal model. It consists of 35 items, with an 11-point Likert-type scale (0 = very rarely or never, 10 = almost always). This questionnaire was used to assess the emotional competences of the teachers participating in the study. The reliability data of this test, by scale, show the following results: emotional awareness ( $\alpha = .78$ ), emotional regulation ( $\alpha = .77$ ), emotional autonomy ( $\alpha = .77$ ), social competence ( $\alpha = .64$ ), and life and well-being competences ( $\alpha = .80$ ), and the complete scale presents an  $\alpha = .89$ .
- *Children's Anxiety Scale [CAS]* (Gillis, 1980; Spanish adaptation by Gómez-Fernández and Pulido, 2011). A questionnaire used to measure anxiety in students in the first and second grades of Primary Education. The scale consists of 20 items with a dichotomous response format (Yes or No), resulting in a total score. The reliability values of the test in this sample, using Cronbach's alpha, show optimal values ( $\alpha$



= .80).

- *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children [STAIC]* (Spielberger, 1973). This questionnaire consists of two independent scales, one to assess Trait Anxiety and the other to assess State Anxiety, with a total of 40 items using a 3-point Likert-type scale (1 = very rarely, 3 = almost always). In the present study, the validated version by Seisdedos (TEA Ediciones, 1989) was used for students in the fourth to sixth grades of Primary Education. Only the State Anxiety scale (STAIC-State) was used to evaluate the different anxiety levels students presented at the time of data collection. The test, in this sample, shows optimal internal consistency values using Cronbach's alpha of 0.97 for the State Anxiety scale.
- *Academic Report*. The overall grade point average (0 to 10) of students in the first, second, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades of Primary Education was considered a quantitative indicator of academic performance. This information was provided by the school administration.

## Procedure

The application of the questionnaires was carried out under the supervision of the research team and school staff. During this process, the Helsinki recommendations on confidentiality, anonymity, beneficence, and minimal intervention were followed. Since the participants were minors, their families or legal guardians were informed by the school administration about the purpose of the research and the procedures to be followed. They were asked to provide written informed consent to the school's responsible personnel. The research team signed a research agreement with each educational center, guaranteeing the confidentiality of the results.

To analyze the data collected in this study, SPSS software version 28.0 was used. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed. In the first phase, a descriptive analysis of all the variables involved was conducted. Subsequently, normality assumptions were verified using specific

tests: the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test and Levene’s test to assess homogeneity of variances. Additionally, to explore the associations among the study variables, Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of the relationship between the different dimensions analyzed.

Results

In accordance with the objectives of this research, the results obtained are presented below.

- Correlation between teachers’ Emotional Competences and students’ Emotional Competences

An analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the emotional competences of teachers and those of students in the first cycle (first and second grades) and in the fourth to sixth grades of Primary Education. The data review revealed no statistically significant correlations between teachers’ emotional competences and those of students in the first and second grades of Primary Education (see Table III).

**TABLE III.** Pearson correlation of Emotional Competences between teachers and students of First-and Second- Grade Primary School Students

		Teachers’ Emotional Competences					
Students’Emotional Competences in First- and Second-Grade Primary School Students		Emotional Awareness	Emo-tional Regu-lation	Emo-tional Auton-omy	Social Compe-tence	Life & Well-Being Compe-tences	Total Compe-tences
Emotional Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.091	-.121	.019	.094	-.102	-.010
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.338	.203	.840	.324	.285	.913

Emotional Regulation	Pearson Correlation	.007	.038	-.021	.053	.004	.020
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.941	.687	.826	.574	.969	.833
Emotional Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	.120	.014	.034	.129	-.036	.068
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.204	.886	.718	.173	.703	.474
Social Competence	Pearson Correlation	-.052	-.090	-.108	-.026	-.092	-.108
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.582	.341	.253	.786	.335	.254
Life & Well-Being Competences	Pearson Correlation	-.040	-.001	-.100	-.018	-.062	-.067
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.671	.993	.293	.850	.513	.482
Total Competences	Pearson Correlation	.045	-.064	-.028	.067	-.080	-.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.634	.503	.766	.482	.402	.815

N= 430. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Source: Authors' own work

Regarding students in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades of Primary Education, the results reveal a significant association between the total emotional competences of teachers and students' life and well-being competences ( $r = 0.206$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). However, this relationship was not observed for other emotional competences, such as emotional awareness ( $r = -0.037$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), emotional regulation ( $r = 0.141$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), emotional autonomy ( $r = 0.079$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), social competence ( $r = 0.023$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), or the total emotional competences ( $r = -0.022$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) of the students (see Table IV).

**TABLE IV.** Pearson Correlation of Emotional Competences between Students and Teachers of Fourth-to Sixth-Grade Primary Education Students

Teachers' Emotional Competences							
Students' Emotional Competences in Fourth- to Sixth-Grade Primary Education Students		Emotional Awareness	Emotional Regulation	Emotional Autonomy	Social Competence	Life & Well-Being Competences	Total Competences
Emotional Awareness	Pearson Correlation	-.063	.003	-.042	-.016	-.011	-.037
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.511	.977	.659	.867	.909	.697
Emotional Regulation	Pearson Correlation	.147	.086	.095	.107	.067	.141
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.121	.366	.319	.258	.482	.136
Emotional Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	.074	.076	.018	.031	.078	.079
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.436	.423	.849	.745	.410	.403
Social Competence	Pearson Correlation	-.067	-.002	.082	.043	.017	.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.479	.986	.388	.649	.855	.809
Life & Well-Being Competences	Pearson Correlation	.134	.171	.135	.090	.182	.206*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.158	.071	.155	.342	.054	.028
Total Competences	Pearson Correlation	.045	-.064	-.028	.067	-.080	-.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.634	.503	.766	.482	.402	.815

N= 1246. \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01

Source: Authors' own work

# Relationship Between Teachers' Emotional Competences and Anxiety Levels in Primary School Students

The relationship between the anxiety levels of first- and second-grade

students and the emotional competences of their teachers was examined. The analysis revealed no significant associations between the anxiety of early-cycle students and the emotional competences of the participating teachers (see Table V).

**TABLE V.** Pearson Correlation Between Teachers' Emotional Competences and Anxiety of First-and Second- Grade Primary School Students

		Teachers' Emotional Competences					
		Emo- tional Aware- ness	Emo- tional Regu- lation	Emo- tional Autono- my	Social Compe- tence	Life & Well-Being Competences	Total Compe- tences
Anxiety in First- and Second-Grade Primary School Students	Pearson Correlation	.033	-.017	.027	.011	.045	.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.731	.856	.774	.910	.637	.753

N= 430. \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01  
Source: Authors'own work

In the analysis of the relationship between teachers' emotional competences and the anxiety of fourth- to sixth-grade Primary Education students, negative and statistically significant correlations emerged between student anxiety and teachers' emotional autonomy ( $r = -0.246$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), social competence ( $r = -0.218$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and overall emotional competences ( $r = -0.248$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) (see Table VI).

**TABLE VI.** Pearson Correlation Between Teachers' Emotional Competences and the State Anxiety of Fourth- to Sixth-Grade Primary Education Students

		Teachers' Emotional Competences					
		Emotional Awareness	Emotional Regulation	Emotional Autonomy	Social Competence	Life & Well-Being Competences	Total Competences
State Anxiety in Fourth- to Sixth-Grade Primary Education Students	Pearson Correlation	-.118	-.168	-.246**	-.218*	-.121	-.248**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.213	.074	.009	.020	.203	.008

N= 1246. \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01

Source: Authors'own work

▪ Relationship Between Teachers' Emotional Competences and the Academic Performance of Primary School Students

The relationship between teachers' emotional competences and student performance was analyzed. The results showed no correlation between teachers' emotional competences and the academic performance of early-cycle students (see Table VII). Similarly, no significant relationship was found between these variables among teachers and students in fourth- to sixth-grade Primary Education (see Table VIII).

**TABLE VII.** Pearson Correlation Between Teachers' Emotional Competences and the Academic Performance of First-and Second-Grade Primary School Students

		Teachers' Emotional Competences					
		Emotional Awareness	Emotional Regulation	Emotional Autonomy	Social Competence	Life & Well-Being Competences	Total Competences
Academic Performance – First- and Second-Grade Primary School Students	Pearson Correlation	-.060	-.134	-.150	-.05	-.077	-.137
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.526	.157	.113	.593	.418	.149

N= 430. \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01

Source: Authors'own work

**TABLE VIII.** Pearson Correlation between Teachers' Emotional Competences and Academic Performance of Students in Fourth-to Sixth-Grade Primary Education

Teachers' Emotional Competences							
		Emotional Awareness	Emotional Regulation	Emotional Autonomy	Social Competence	Life & Well-Being Competences	Total Competences
Academic Performance- Fourth-to Sixth-Grade Primary Education	Pearson Correlation	-.070	-.138	.018	-.164	-.125	-.130
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.466	.148	.851	.086	.192	.174

N= 1246. \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01  
Source: Authors'own work

Discussion

The first objective of this study was to explore the correlation between teachers' emotional competences and those of primary school students. Regarding the results obtained in the initial cycle (first and second grade), no correlations were found between teachers' emotional competences and those of their students. However, in the more advanced stages of primary education (fourth, fifth, and sixth grade), the findings reveal a significant association between the overall emotional competences of teachers and students' life and well-being competence. These results are consistent with previous research, such as that of Jennings and Greenberg (2009) and Poulou (2015), which report a significant relationship between teachers' and students' emotional competences, moderated by the developmental stage of the students. In this sense, in the upper levels of primary education, greater emotional maturity may enable increased receptiveness to the influence of the teaching environment, which could help explain the associations observed in this study. It is important to highlight that the development of emotional competences follows a progressive evolutionary course from early childhood to adolescence, increasing in complexity with age (Denham, 2019). In the early years of



Primary Education, students' emotional interactions are more focused on peer groups and are primarily influenced by peer relational dynamics. However, in the later grades, emotions become more autonomous and increasingly shaped by adult figures such as teachers. This process is facilitated by the progressive development of higher-order cognitive functions, such as sustained attention and reflective thinking, as well as by advances in language skills. These allow students to identify, express, and regulate their own emotional states, seek support when needed, and expand their emotional vocabulary (Holodynski et al., 2013).

The second objective of this study was to analyze the relationship between teachers' emotional competences and the anxiety levels of primary school students. The results did not reveal significant associations between student anxiety in the early years of primary education and teachers' emotional competences. However, in the upper grades (fourth, fifth, and sixth), significant negative correlations were observed between the two variables. In other words, higher levels of teachers' emotional competence were associated with lower levels of student anxiety.

These findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that teaching is an inherently emotional activity, in which continuous interpersonal interactions generate a constant experience of emotions (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). In this regard, various studies have shown that teachers' emotions can predict students' emotional experiences (Becker et al., 2014; Uitto et al., 2015), significantly influencing their ability to identify, express, understand, and regulate their own emotional states (Rodrigo-Ruiz, 2016). These results align with the work of Jennings and Greenberg (2009), who emphasize how the development of teachers' emotional competences affects the emotional climate of the classroom and the emotional well-being of students—an effect that is particularly evident in the later years of Primary Education. According to these authors, the influence of teachers on students' emotional regulation varies according to developmental stage, becoming more significant as students gain greater emotional autonomy. During the early years of Primary Education, students tend to be more emotionally dependent, relying heavily on authority figures (such as teachers) for emotional regulation. However, in this stage, student anxiety may be more strongly determined by other factors, such as

school adaptation, family support, or early socialization routines, which could explain the weak association between anxiety and emotional competences in the lower grades. As children progress developmentally, they acquire greater independence in emotional regulation, allowing the teacher's influence on anxiety management to become more relevant. In this line, previous studies have shown that students with high levels of anxiety often struggle with emotional expression (Mathews et al., 2016), which can negatively impact their overall well-being as well as the quality of their social and academic relationships (Fernández-Berrocal et al., 2017; Ruvalcaba-Romero et al., 2017). Specifically, the *Life and Well-Being* Competences subscale, which includes items related to personal well-being and self-satisfaction, such as "I am satisfied with how I face life and how happy I am" (Pérez-Escoda et al., 2021), emerges as a relevant indicator for understanding the link between teachers' emotional competences and students' emotional well-being.

The third objective of this research was to examine the relationship between teachers' emotional competences and the academic performance of Primary School students. The results did not show a significant correlation between these variables. These findings contrast with other studies (Curci et al., 2014; Yang et al., 2023) that do report an association between the two factors. However, other research suggests that, although emotional competences are essential for teacher well-being and effectiveness, their impact on students' academic performance may be mediated by intermediate variables such as motivation, professional or teaching engagement, or classroom climate (Frenzel et al., 2021). In this regard, studies such as that by Addimando (2019) suggest that teachers' emotional competence may have an indirect influence on students' academic performance, primarily through increased professional engagement. That is, an emotionally competent teacher may be better equipped to engage positively and consistently in their educational role, potentially fostering a more effective learning environment for students. Given that empirical evidence on this relationship remains limited and sometimes contradictory, further research is needed to clarify the mechanisms through which teachers' emotional competences may directly or indirectly influence students' academic performance.

It is worth noting that the schools included in the sample had not

previously implemented emotional education programs, and the participating teachers did not have specific training in this area. This lack of prior intervention strengthens the value of the findings by allowing the studied relationships to be observed in settings not influenced by previous programs. Moreover, the study offers a novel contribution to the existing literature by providing a relatively unexplored perspective on how teachers' emotional competences impact key student variables, such as well-being, academic performance, and the development of their own emotional competences. Nevertheless, several limitations must be acknowledged that may affect the generalizability of the findings. First, there was a gender imbalance in the teacher sample, with a majority of female participants. While this reflects the actual demographic distribution in Primary Education, thereby potentially enhancing the external validity of the study, it would be advisable for future research to strive for a more balanced sample to explore possible gender-related differences. Additionally, in the first cycle of Primary Education, student assessments were hetero-reported due to the developmental stage and early literacy acquisition of the group. This method of evaluation may introduce certain variations in the results compared to self-reported data, which should be taken into account when interpreting the findings. Furthermore, although including third-grade students would have been of great interest, this group was excluded from the analysis due to inconsistencies in the evaluation instruments, which hindered comparison across the study variables. Finally, future research should consider conducting longitudinal studies to assess the stability of the results over time and further advance understanding of the impact of teachers' emotional competences on student development.

## Conclusion

The present study offers a novel approach, given the scarcity of previous research in this field, and has made it possible to identify various relationships between teachers' emotional competences and different aspects of students' emotional and academic development, with variations depending on the

educational level.

First, it was observed that in the early grades of Primary Education, there is no significant correlation between teachers' and students' emotional competences. However, in the later years of Primary Education, the results do show a significant association between these variables. This finding highlights the importance of tailoring emotional education interventions to the developmental characteristics of students, particularly in the upper primary grades, when the impact of teacher modeling becomes more evident.

Second, the study found that teachers' emotional competences play a relevant role in reducing student anxiety in the upper grades of Primary Education. This suggests that older students are more receptive to their teachers' influence, which contributes to lower anxiety levels and, consequently, to a more favorable learning environment. From a practical perspective, this reinforces the need to train teachers in emotional competences not only as a tool for personal regulation, but also as a means of creating emotionally safe and supportive school contexts for learning.

Finally, no direct relationship was found between teachers' emotional competences and students' academic performance. This lack of direct correlation does not diminish the importance of emotional well-being in teaching and learning processes, but rather underscores the complexity of these connections and the need to address them from a holistic perspective that includes both cognitive and emotional dimensions.

Overall, the findings of this research highlight the relevance of emotional competences in the school context and the importance of strengthening them in both initial and ongoing teacher training. These results support the need to design and implement specific programs for the development of teachers' emotional competences and to integrate emotional education into the student curriculum, with the aim of promoting student well-being, emotional development, and academic success throughout their educational journey.

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