

# ***The emotional intelligence of teachers as an improvement in educational practices***

## ***La inteligencia emocional del docente como mejora de prácticas educativas***

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**ABSTRACT**

Emotional intelligence is the ability that allows us to express and understand our own emotions and those around us. It has gained great interest within the educational process. The research carried out is quantitative in nature; its objective was to know if basic education teachers have the emotional intelligence that leads them to better educational practices with their students. Using the survey technique, with a descriptive design, an instrument was used for data collection. The population was basic education teachers, with a sample of 90 teachers from the central region of Coahuila, specifically 30 from preschool education, 30 from primary education and 30 from secondary education. The results show that 57% of teachers must improve their attention because they pay very little attention to what they feel and express, 55% do not adequately understand their moods and 62% must regulate their emotional states. With this research it was determined that basic education teachers need to work on attention, clarity and repair of emotions to achieve an emotional balance that can be reflected in the classrooms.

**Keywords:**

Emotions; Emotional Intelligence; Emotional skills; Teacher; Emotional well-being

**RESUMEN**

La inteligencia emocional es aquella habilidad que permite expresar y comprender las emociones propias y de quien nos rodea, esta ha cobrado gran interés dentro del proceso educativo. La investigación realizada es de carácter cuantitativo, su objetivo fue conocer si los docentes de educación básica cuentan con la inteligencia emocional que los lleve a mejores prácticas educativas con sus alumnos; usando de técnica la encuesta, con un diseño descriptivo, se utilizó un instrumento para la recolección de datos. La población fueron docentes de educación básica, con una muestra de 90 docentes de la región centro de Coahuila específicamente 30 de educación preescolar, 30 educación primaria y 30 educación secundaria; los resultados expresan que el 57% de los docentes debe mejorar su atención pues ponen muy poca atención a lo que sienten y expresan, el 55% no comprende adecuadamente sus estados de ánimo y 62% deben regular sus estados emocionales. Con esta investigación se pudo determinar que los docentes de educación básica requieren trabajar tanto la atención, claridad y reparación de las emociones para lograr un equilibrio emocional que pueda verse reflejado en las aulas.

**Palabras clave:**

Emociones; Inteligencia Emocional; Habilidades emocionales; Docente; Bienestar emocional

## INTRODUCTION

Current times seek to approach education from a humanistic perspective, in which there is an effort to ensure that social and human relationships are adequately developed within the environment in which people live.

Various authors highlight their contributions to improving human potential and how this has repercussions in the educational process. Howard Gardner developed the theory of multiple intelligences, showing us that human beings learn through different skills and intelligences, some of which are more developed than others. Meanwhile, Daniel Goleman also talks about learning through a particular intelligence, called emotional intelligence, where emotions and their self-regulation play an essential role in the development of cognitive skills that lead students to achieve success in society.

During the 20th century, studies on emotional intelligence began, with Daniel Goleman being one of the main pioneers of this theory. He defines it as the ability to recognize our own feelings; however, after his studies, other authors presented their own definitions, complementing the theory and definition proposed by Goleman. One of them was Weisinger (Weisinger, 2001), who defines it as the intelligent and intentional use of emotions; we make our emotions work for us, using them to help guide our behaviors and improve our results.

Today, we live in an interconnected and challenging world that is in constant change. In the 21st century, education is expected to undergo ambitious changes and ensure quality education for the girls, boys, and youth of Mexico. This is why the educational reform proposed in 2017 by Enrique Peña Nieto brought with it changes that allowed students to learn through competencies and key learnings, resulting in learning for life. Within this plan, one of the areas to be worked on was socioemotional education, which was addressed throughout basic education, highlighting from here the importance of emotional education for students, with the aim of helping them learn to regulate their own emotions in the different circumstances that life presents, as well as promoting healthy and productive relationships. With the arrival of the New Mexican School,

emotional work remains present with the purpose of forming humane individuals with great personal well-being.

Working on emotions within the classroom leads students to develop the ability to pay attention, identify, and above all, put into practice their personal strengths in order to self-regulate their emotions and remain calm while carrying out various activities such as learning, playing, studying, developing empathy, and interacting with others. In addition, it allows them to undertake short- and medium-term projects (such as practicing a hobby, a sport, etc.).

Esther Álvarez Bolaños, in the article from the journal "Socioemotional Education" (Bolaños, 2020), mentions that socioemotional education in the educational field refers to the role that emotions play in learning and the development of life skills. From the findings of neuroscience, it is now known that an emotionally engaged brain is capable of learning effectively, since learning is closely linked to curiosity and attention.

By analyzing the importance given to emotions within the curriculum, it should be understood that in the same way that students work with them, teachers must attend to their own emotional needs as well as those of their students, generating in them a group of skills that will support their overall development. Quijada (2018) highlights that educators who possess these resources achieve a preparation that allows them and their students to face stressful situations, which are often frequent; maintaining emotional intelligence, will lead teachers to success, since to achieve this, both the intellectual and emotional aspects must be worked on.

That is, it is essential to strengthen the emotional skills that allow both teachers and students to be determined, resilient, and perseverant, and in this way be able to face and adapt to new situations in a creative manner. By recognizing their own value and emotions, they will learn to respect themselves and others, to express and self-regulate emotions, rescuing rules and respecting agreements, as well as managing and resolving conflicts effectively.

The present study is a quantitative investigation that allowed for a better

understanding of the phenomenon under study. The study was carried out with basic education teachers from the central region of the State of Coahuila, specifically 30 preschool teachers, 30 elementary teachers, and 30 secondary teachers. These teachers work in public schools in the state, where there is mostly a deficiency in terms of infrastructure, materials, etc.

One of the main authors who discusses emotional intelligence is Daniel Goleman. He (Goleman, 1996) highlights that emotional intelligence is that set of essential skills for being able to understand, use, and manage our own emotions. For Daniel Goleman, it is the ability to recognize both our own and others' emotions and to manage our response to them. These abilities allow individuals to be more adaptable to the different situations they face, in addition to promoting confidence and security. Goleman (1996) maintains that emotional competencies are divided into two categories: intrapersonal and interpersonal. The first refers to the relationship we establish with ourselves, and the second to the relationship we have with others. However, we can say that any situation must begin with oneself, and if one does not maintain an adequate personal relationship, it is very complicated for the environment to be well established.

Within every educational system, it is determined that the knowledge acquired is good when it can lead to happiness—which can be understood as an emotion. For this reason, it is important to propose that the emotional development generated within educational institutions should be a booster in education, since it enables better relationships, study skills, and alternatives. That is why it is fundamental to think of an educational system that allows for the formation of emotionally social and competent individuals. According to Rafael Enrique Buítrago Bonilla (Torres, 2013), educational systems have the responsibility of encouraging processes of social and emotional education for children, adolescents, and adults, which pay sufficient attention to nature and the mind and are concerned with teaching the recognition and management of emotions, also explicitly addressing the problems that come with repressing them. That is why today

it is essential that students and teachers work at every moment with their emotions; self-regulation will be the goal so that they can have what we know as emotional intelligence.

Nowadays, the new task of the teacher demands continuous and constant training, broad knowledge in the field of education, as well as the application of different technological advances that are increasingly necessary in the development of educational activities, since, as a result of the pandemic, they have become part of daily teaching and learning. At the same time, the teacher must adapt to new learning solutions and enrich themselves through experiences with colleagues, developing new skills that allow them to enhance their work and provide students with new competencies that lead them to a full knowledge of themselves so that they can work on their being as well as their doing, since the main task of the teacher is to positively impact the lives of students through their permanent, continuous, and above all emotional learning.

Highlighting the above and observing that the teacher's task is fundamental to the learning of students, the following hypothesis arises: Basic education teachers have the emotional intelligence to develop better educational practices. This quantitative research with a descriptive design aims to find out whether basic education teachers possess the emotional intelligence that leads them to better educational practices with their students. Students in basic education must have comprehensive training; to achieve this, the development of other human capacities—among which emotional ones stand out—must be included in academic training. For (Berrocal, 2018), educating students' emotional intelligence has become a necessary task in the educational field, and most teachers consider mastering these skills essential for the evolutionary and socio-emotional development of their students. For this reason, the importance of good emotional intelligence development in teachers is re-emphasized, so that in this way, students can learn to self-regulate their emotions.

For (Berrocal, 2018), one of the reasons why teachers must possess certain emotional skills has a marked altruistic character and a clearly

educational purpose. He highlights that for a student to learn and develop the emotional and affective skills related to the intelligent use of their emotions, they need a complete emotional educator, since much of the learning that students acquire throughout their lives is the teaching example given by their teachers.

Nowadays, it is necessary to think about having adequate teacher training, based on emotions, from the urgent need to educate all students with the competencies necessary for life and in life, where commitment is reflected in educational work to achieve quality performance that allows for the comprehensive training of every student. According to (Farias, 2021), it is notable to reveal the importance that the teaching role acquires in pedagogical practice, since its performance demands a high level of sensitivity to one's own emotions and those of students, thus facilitating optimal quality in the interpersonal relationships that occur within the school.

## **METHOD**

The methodology used in this research was quantitative, experimental, and descriptive, employing data collection and statistical analysis through a survey using a test.

The population of this study consisted of basic education teachers from the central zone of the State of Coahuila, Mexico, with a sample of 90 teachers: 30 preschool teachers, 30 primary teachers, and 30 secondary teachers.

To carry out the methodology, an instrument was applied, which consisted of an emotional intelligence test. This instrument allowed us to obtain information according to the indicators of emotional intelligence, developed through a psychometric technique, which was used at the time of applying the emotional intelligence test, with the aim of evaluating the level of emotional intelligence presented by teachers in this region of Coahuila de Zaragoza, Mexico.

It is true that knowing the emotional intelligence of each individual is not simple, since this is a very subjective matter. However, based on a test or questionnaire, it is possible to determine an individual's intelligence, providing a guideline to work on the development or strengthening of intelligence according to the results obtained.

Marqués (2017) maintains that Daniel Goleman proposed an emotional intelligence questionnaire that measures three key dimensions:

Attention: I am able to feel, as well as express my feelings in an appropriate manner.

Clarity: I understand my emotional states well.

Repair: I am able to regulate my emotional states correctly.

This test is composed of 24 statements, which are divided into three groups to evaluate the dimensions mentioned above. Each group consists of 8 statements, based on the Likert scale.

## **RESULTS**

Intelligence tests are those assessments that measure abilities, knowledge, aptitudes, and functions; one of their main characteristics is measuring intelligence. However, the emotional intelligence test is a measurement tool for the various areas of individuals' emotional behavior.

The type of instrument applied was an emotional intelligence test. To be evaluated and recognize the level of emotional intelligence, the following characteristics were taken into account. First, it is important to mention that the ranges to be evaluated are determined by gender, female or male, and these are evaluated according to the different dimensions that make up the test.

Marqués (2017) determines that to know the degree of emotional attention, the numbers chosen according to the different dimensions previously mentioned must be added up; and the results are interpreted taking into account the following scores.

### **Scores for men:**

If the result is less than 21: It means they pay little attention and need to improve.

If the result is between 22 and 32: They have adequate attention.

If the result is greater than 33: It means they pay too much attention and need to moderate it.

### **Scores for women:**

If the result is less than 24: It means they pay little attention and need to improve.

If the result is between 25 and 35: It suggests they have adequate attention.

If the result is greater than 36: They pay too much attention and are advised to moderate it.

Regarding emotional clarity, the interpretation is as follows, taking into account the following indicators.

#### **Scores for men:**

If the result is less than 25: It means they need to improve their clarity.

If the result is between 26 and 35: It is considered that they have adequate clarity.

If the result is greater than 36: It means they have excellent clarity.

#### **Scores for women:**

If the result is less than 23: The person needs to improve their clarity.

If the result is between 24 and 34: It means they have adequate clarity.

If the result is greater than 35: It indicates they have excellent clarity.

In the last dimension, called emotional repair, the interpretation is as follows.

#### **Scores for men:**

If the result is less than 23: The respondent needs to improve their emotional repair capacity.

If the result is between 24 and 35: It means they have adequate emotional repair capacity.

If the result is greater than 36:\*\* It denotes excellent emotional repair capacity.

#### **Scores for women:**

If the result is less than 23: It means they need to improve their emotional repair capacity.

If the result is between 24 and 34: It means they have adequate emotional repair capacity.

If the result is greater than 35: It means they have excellent emotional repair capacity.

In this section, we describe the results obtained in the research process. The instrument was applied to the teachers who belong to the established sample; according to the results obtained from the 90 respondents, to this effect and for better distribution through a form, the teachers answered the 24 statements established by the test. The teachers showed empathy and interest in responding to the test, which was a great advantage for the development of this research.

With these collected data, the results were processed to obtain, through statistics, the results of each respondent in the different key dimensions

as stipulated by the author, to proceed with the distribution of relative frequency (percentages) as shown in the following tables, which were analyzed according to the results obtained regarding the different genders.

For the preparation of the tables, the number of levels or factors of emotional intelligence and the score of each respondent according to the 8 items corresponding to each of the factors or dimensions were taken into account, to proceed with the absolute statistics (quantity) and relative statistics (percentages) that allow us to show the following Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1. Male. (24 respondents)**

Emotional Attention	
Needs to improve attention, pays little attention	62%
Needs to improve attention, pays too much attention	17%
Adequate attention	21%
Emotional Clarity	
Needs to improve clarity	67%
Adequate clarity	12%
Excellent clarity	21%
Emotional Repair	
Needs to improve repair	71%
Adequate repair	12%
Excellent repair	17%

**Table. Female (66 respondents)**

Attention Emotional	
Has to improve his attention lends little attention	54%
Has to improve his attention lends too much attention	23%
Adequate attention	23%
Clarity Emotional	
Has to improve clarity	52%
Adequate clarity	30%
Excellent clarity	18%
Repair of the emotions	
Has to improve repair	59%
Adequate repair	32%
Excellent repair	9%

According to what it has been observed in the results shown above, we realize that there is a certain similarity in the results presented by both male and female respondents. In the three levels or factors of emotional intelligence, the highest percentage for both genders is found in: must improve attention (pays little attention), must improve clarity, and must improve repair.

This indicates that teachers have an area of opportunity for working on emotional intelligence, and that this can be a supportive factor for their work in the classroom and with their students.

For a better appreciation of the results, the following Table 3 was created, where we again rely on relative statistics for greater clarity.

**Table 3.** *Female - Male (90 respondents)*

<b>Attention Emotional</b>	
Has to improve his attention lends little attention	57%
Has to improve his attention lends too much attention	21%
Adequate attention	22%
<b>Clarity Emotional</b>	
Has to improve clarity	55%
Adequate clarity	26%
Excellent clarity	19%
<b>Repair of the emotions</b>	
Has to improve repair	62%
Adequate repair	27%
Excellent repair	11%

According to the previous table, regarding the factor of emotional attention, 57% of teachers need to improve their attention since they pay very little attention to what they feel and express, while 21% need to improve because they pay too much attention to their feelings, and only 22% have an adequate level of attention regarding their emotions.

Regarding emotional clarity, 55% of respondents do not adequately understand their moods, 26% have adequate clarity, and a small 19% have excellent emotional clarity.

The last factor evaluated shows that 62% of teachers need to improve in repair, that is, the regulation of emotional states in an appropriate way, while 27% have adequate repair and the remaining 11% do so excellently.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the research highlight that, in all three dimensions of emotional intelligence—emotional attention, emotional clarity, and emotional repair—both male and female teachers need to improve each of them, since only very few achieve a balance in what they feel, express, understand, and regulate in their emotions.

This is why it is relevant for teachers to work on their own emotions to maintain excellent professionalization, because to educate, it is necessary to know, with the latter leading to working on one's being. To educate and teach adequately, the teacher needs to “be,” in order to help students achieve the essential competencies

for life. The above highlights the importance of working on emotional intelligence, since the teacher who develops it within themselves and brings it to the classroom continuously will be an example of constant professionalism, empathy, and a promoter of healthy emotions.

The work and integration of each of these dimensions of emotional intelligence will allow the teacher to achieve professional success. Although teachers are aware of the importance of developing their own emotional intelligence, the results show that today there is still a lack of actions to achieve emotional balance among educators.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of the research demonstrate that today, teachers do not adequately regulate their emotions, since they still need to work on their emotional intelligence. Regarding gender, according to the evaluated results, it can be seen that women regulate their emotions better, both in attention, clarity, and emotional repair.

It is said that when there is high emotional intelligence, social intelligence increases. (Mendoza, 2018) states that teachers with higher emotional intelligence transmit a heightened sensitivity towards quality teaching-learning processes, in addition to possessing certain personal characteristics that are integrated into their personality, which can be great allies for their students' learning.

The results suggest that teachers must be in constant updating and emotional work in order to

establish a balance between the different levels or factors of emotional intelligence. This will allow teachers to establish better social and family relationships, lower their anxiety levels, and above all, establish better educational practices.

The practice of emotional intelligence in students requires prior work by the teacher, since if the teacher does not have knowledge of their own emotions, it will be difficult for them to promote appropriate emotions in their students.

Based on the analysis and integrating the results obtained with the developed methodology, it can be said that the hypothesis posed at the beginning of the research is confirmed: teachers do not fully possess the development of emotional intelligence that would allow them to maintain a better environment within the classroom. Teachers must work on paying attention to their emotions and feelings so that they can regulate them appropriately.

Finally, the authors for example (Montecino, 2019), support that the development of Emotional Intelligence is fundamental to enhance academic success, as well as to prepare students capable of receiving a comprehensive education. Meanwhile, (Hernández, 2021) highlights that the challenges of education are increasingly relevant, causing much concern among educators. Therefore, putting emotional intelligence into practice in school will allow both students and teachers to have greater control over their emotional aspects.

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