



Review

Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Burnout Syndrome on Teachers Well-Being: A Systematic Review

Pilar Puertas Molero, Félix Zurita Ortega , José Luis Ubago Jiménez and Gabriel González Valero *

Department of Didactics of Musical, Plastic and Corporal Expression, University of Granada, 18071 Granada, Spain; pilarpuertas@correo.ugr.es (P.P.M.); felixzo@ugr.es (F.Z.O.); jlubago@ugr.es (J.L.U.J.)

* Correspondence: ggvalero@ugr.es

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Abstract: Background: Emotional Intelligence (EI) has become a key factor in educational environments, which facilitates and contributes to the mental well-being of teachers, and therefore, favours the teaching and learning process. However, education professionals are under constant stress. This stress is caused by a large number of social interactions, the new skills to be acquired, and the workload, developing in many situations the Burnout Syndrome (BS). Methods and Results: The study presents a systematic review, paying special attention to the scientific literature that combines IE and BS in the work performance of teachers as fundamental factors in the work carried out by educators at different educational stages, as well as the influence they have on the quality of the teaching-learning process. The Web of Science (WOS) has been used as a database, obtaining a total of 36 scientific articles intimately related to the topic of the work, published between 2005 and 2017. Many studies show that teachers are increasingly experiencing high feelings of stress, which affect the quality of education, as well as the relevance of developing emotional intelligence, which helps prevent these negative feelings from appearing. Conclusions: EI is a capacity that should be developed in teachers, since it gives the individual the ability to regulate his emotions, making him stronger in terms of decision-making in daily situations in the teaching environments, as well as being a key factor for the success of education. Through the positive reinforcement of EI, levels of stress and anxiety that worry society so much are reduced, since this avoids the feeling of frustration before their professional realisation, which leads to improved teaching practice, health and mental well-being of teachers.

Keywords: well-being; teachers; education; Emotional Intelligence; Burnout Syndrome

1. Introduction

Teacher performance is marked by a large number of competencies and skills that they have to acquire throughout their professional careers. In addition, teachers adapt to the continuous changes that today's society undergoes, in order to guarantee the full development of the student body. Likewise, the continuous contact with students, parents, or legal guardians or relations with peers, generates an accumulation of stress and tension that often leads to the Burnout Syndrome (BS).

In this sense, teaching in educational settings is considered to be that which requires great professional competence, since it requires its own code of ethics, which is included in a set of principles, which deal with human behaviour (Ashraf et al. 2017).

According to the authors Hossein-Heidari et al. (2015), teachers must transmit their ethics automatically so that learners can take them as models, with the aim of prospering, that is, students

learn the ethics of their teachers, just as they learn it from their parents at home; therefore, the training of teachers in competencies is an elemental factor, as a means to achieve the improvement of educational quality (Moreno-Arrebola et al. 2017; Salehnia and Ashraf 2015).

In this way, the teaching profession must take into account both pedagogical knowledge for practice, as well as an awareness of its legal obligation for students in educational communities, which affects the role of the teacher and his pedagogy, i.e., the ability of learners to learn effectively (Zurita-Ortega et al. 2015).

The teaching profession is rooted in generating diverse situations and contexts in which students' learning is favored, as well as the attainment of emotional abilities that contribute to the success of subjects and facilitate the teaching-learning process (Cardelle-Elawar and Acedo-Lizarraga 2011; Trigwell 2012).

Along these lines, Pyhältö et al. (2011) emphasise that emotions are immersed in all aspects that constitute the teaching-learning process; therefore, the understanding of emotions within educational contexts is essential, this being an essential component in teacher training. Furthermore, Hosotani and Imai-Matsumura (2011) supported that in the working environment of teachers exists a wide range of factors that influence the emotions of educators and students, which must be taken into account, such as personal reality (teacher-me), social relations between teacher-teacher, teacher-teacher and educator-parents/legal guardians.

However, nowadays, the continuous direct relationship with students (lack of discipline, low motivation for learning), organisational factors (lack of recognition by peers, principals, time pressures, scarcity of resources), and personal factors (low self-esteem, tendency to neurosis, scarce control of the situation), are the means that generally influence the appearance and maintenance of the BS within educational environments (Elvira and Cabrera 2004; Extremera et al. 2007; Palomera-Martín et al. 2006).

In this sense, BS is defined as the consequence that arises from the relationship between a great load of chronic stress and the performance of one's own work (Maslach 2003; Veronese and Pepe 2014), which currently constitutes one of the most alarming signals in the teaching profession. This is mainly because the information provided by educational administrations presents alarming data with an annual rise in psychiatric-type absences (Fiorelli et al. 2016; Jowett et al. 2016).

This syndrome provokes emotional exhaustion, cynical attitudes, as well as the depersonalisation of the self, which in consequence generates difficulties to develop the work in an expected way. In addition, BS generates low job satisfaction due to not being able to control and regulate emotions properly (Baranovska and Doktorova 2014).

In turn, Maslach et al. (2001) show that the conceptualisation of the BS identifies three dimensions: (a) emotional exhaustion or tiredness: caused by work pressure, loss of energy to face another day; (b) depersonalization: cynical and cold attitudes towards people with whom one works, sometimes treating people as objects; and (c) lack of personal fulfilment: feelings of negative self-evaluation of people, as well as a decrease in feelings related to personal skills, achievements, and successes.

In other words, all these consequences are caused by the imbalance between the resources available to them to carry out the work and the obligations imposed on them, which are often appreciated as utopian (Chang 2007).

Therefore, teachers with high levels in the three dimensions that make up the BS are those who have problems managing and controlling their negative emotions in the presence of their students, which in turn leads to a lack of motivation on the part of the students, and finally has negative repercussions on what and how is taught (Doudin and Curchod-Ruedi 2011; McLean et al. 2017). Similar studies developed in other contexts have shown that subjects who develop this syndrome are characterised by high levels of depression, anxiety, and anguish which correlate with a high emotional burden (Poloni et al. 2017).

However, nowadays, the development of EI in the work performance of teachers in educational environments can generate an effect that positively influences both linguistic performance and the state of emotional well-being of the students (Brown 2007). In Gardner's (2011) studies on social intelligence,

he highlights the importance of emotions for correct intellectual functioning, highlighting [Salovey and Mayer \(1990\)](#) and the importance and influence that EI exerts on the processing of information and its effectiveness. Also, it has been in recent years as well where greater importance has been given to the ability to perceive, use, understand, and regulate emotions, as well as the implications that this has in our daily lives ([Bar-On and Parker 2000](#); [Ciarrochi et al. 2006](#)).

In this way, [Salovey et al. \(1999\)](#) define IE as the ability to perceive, value, express and manage emotions, as well as the ability to understand and know them. This is necessary in order to regulate emotions, which in turn favours the intellectual and emotional development of subjects. It shows the intimate relationship that this has with all the teaching-learning processes, being necessary the knowledge of emotions within educational institutions ([Cabello-González et al. 2010](#)).

The studies contributed by [Gallagher and Vella-Brodrick \(2008\)](#) and [Lopes et al. \(2005\)](#) show that IE favours the understanding of external social emotions, promoting positive interactions as well as improving personal emotional self-regulation. Subjects with high rates of this factor are those who perform their actions with greater efficiency and who present empathy to their learners, which generates greater social support from their environment.

The fact is that IE in teachers is a factor that reduces stress and emotional fatigue, and is associated with greater personal satisfaction in the performance of work and improved social relations with the entire educational environment. It is evident that emotional skills are essential to facilitate and improve both the work performance of teachers and the teaching-learning process ([Extremera-Pacheco et al. 2016](#)).

In this sense, it is necessary to emphasise that in recent years, resilience has begun to gain importance in the area of psychology, sociology, and medicine. Several studies have shown that the development of this construct could be a predictor of the development and self-affirmation of emotional intelligence, as it contributes to the development of resistance and perseverance to overcome stressful and traumatic factors ([Callegari et al. 2016a](#)). As [Poloni et al. \(2018\)](#) states, resilience is a factor that can predict the psychosocial values of subjects and contributes to the recovery of mental illnesses.

For this reason, the aim pursued in this work is to carry out a systematic review, paying special attention to the scientific literature that includes studies that combine IE and BS in the work performance of teachers, as fundamental factors in the work carried out by educators at different educational stages, as well as the influence they have on the quality of the teaching-learning process.

2. Methods

To obtain a structure and integrity of the appropriate study, the PRISMA statement has been followed for systematic reviews ([Moher et al. 2009](#)). The studies have been classified and coded by the authors through the independent evaluation, deleting those in which there were no coincidences in order to check the reliability of the coding and the degree of agreement, which has been 80%, obtained by dividing the total number of matches by the total of the categories proposed for the study and multiplied by 100.

2.1. Procedure

2.1.1. A Literature Search and the Identification of Relevant Studies

The systematic review of the articles was carried out during May and June 2018, paying attention to those that relate EI and BS to the professional development of teachers.

In order to carry out the present work, all the articles were taken regardless of the language in which they were published, discarding those that have not been subjected to peer review. The Web of Science (WOS) was used as the main search engine, supported by SCOPUS.

For the search, the terms “Emotional Intelligence”, “Burnout”, and “Teachers” were used, obtained from Eric’s Thesaurus, applying, in turn, the operators boolean “and” and “or”. Later the search was

refined taking only those articles published in the research areas “Education, Educational Research”, and “Psychology”.

2.1.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

A total of 61 articles related to the study theme were obtained. As the selection criteria for the sample, the following were taken into account: (1) All articles that relate EI, BS, or both to the work performance of teachers and (2) Only those studies that show sufficient data to extract information on the topic to be dealt with were taken into account.

The inclusion criteria were carried out by means of a first reading of the title and summary of the various articles selected and then a systematic reading of the complete studies.

Through this process, a total of 25 articles were eliminated, leaving the base body of the study composed of a total of 36 scientific studies. As for the analysis of the data, comparative work was carried out following a logical order of the data, in addition to the synthesis of all the information to arrive at the attainment of the current study, as shown in Figure 1 below.

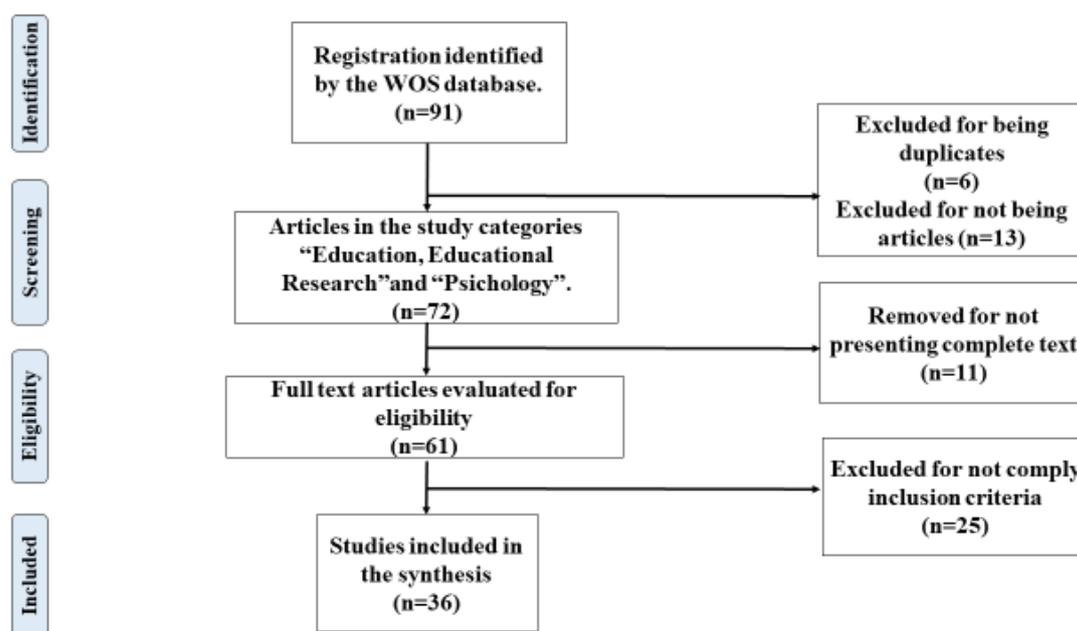


Figure 1. Flowchart.

3. Results

3.1. Evolution of Scientific Production

From 2005 to the present day, a total of 61 articles relating EI and BS to teaching practice have been published. From all of them, a total of 36 studies were included in this systematic review, which represent 59.01% of the total of work developed on this subject.

Figure 2 below shows the production of articles dealing with EI and BS in teachers. Taking as a temporal range from 2005 to 2017, it can be observed that the production is of ascending nature, obtaining its highest point in 2015 and 2016, both for the population (N = 11) and for the basic body of research (N = 6; N = 7). Likewise, the greatest decline was detected in 2008 and 2014. It should be noted that no studies were found in years prior to those reflected in the graph.

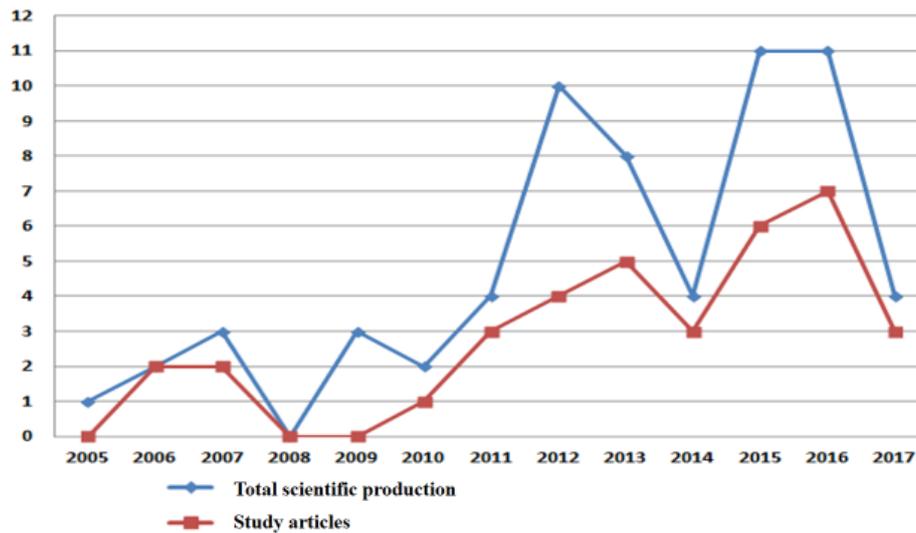


Figure 2. Evolution of the scientific production of the population and study sample.

3.2. Data from Studies Selected for the Systematic Review

Table 1 shows the selected data for each of the items that make up the base body of this work. In order to extract the data, the following coding has been taken into account: (1) author(s) and year of publication; (2) conceptualization; (3) population; (4) educational stage; (5) type of research; and (6) instruments used for data collection.

Table 1. Synthesis of the studies corresponding to the systematic review.

Authors (Year)	Country	Type of Research	Sample	Educational Stage (Media Experience)	Variable	Instruments
Adina-Colomeischi (2015)	Romania	cross-sectional	575	PE/HS/U (15)	EI/BS	EIS MBI
Augusto-Landa et al. (2012)	Spain	cross-sectional	251	PE (39 ± 11.25)	EI/BS	TMMS MBI
Baranovska and Doktorova (2014)	Slovakia	cross-sectional	586	PE/HS (30–52)	EI/BS	EE MBI
Brackett et al. (2011)	USA	cross-sectional	123	HS (37.79 ± 10.99)	EI/BS	ERA MSCEIT MBI
Becker (2006)	Germany	cross-sectional	91	PE	EI/BS	EIS MBI
Chang (2006)	China	cross-sectional	167	HS (5.29 ± 4.77)	EI/BS	EIS MBI
Chang (2007)	China	cross-sectional	267	PE (4.67 ± 3.84)	EI/BS	SIQ MBI
Cho and Park (2007)	China	cross-sectional	254	PE	EI/BS	EIS MBI
Fiorelli et al. (2016)	Italy	cross-sectional	149	PE	EI/BS	ECQ MBI
Feuerhahn et al. (2013)	Germany	Longitudinal (6 month)	100	U (37.2 ± 9.1)	EI/BS	JP EE
Ghanizadeh and Royaei (2015)	Iran	cross-sectional	153	HS (12.97 ± 11.4)	EI/BS	ERQ MBI
Goroshit and Hen (2016)	Israel	cross-sectional	543	PE/HS/U (40.6 ± 11.1)	EI	ESE

Table 1. Cont.

Authors (Year)	Country	Type of Research	Sample	Educational Stage (Media Experience)	Variable	Instruments
Johnson and Naidoo (2017)	Africa	Longitudinal (6 sessions; 3 h)	27	PE (51)	BS	MBI
Ju et al. (2015)	China	cross-sectional	307	HS (42.01 ± 8.74)	EI/BS	WLEIS MBI
Karakus (2013)	Turkey	cross-sectional	425	PE	EI/BS	WLEIS MBI
Kim and Lee (2013)	China	cross-sectional	152	K (34.3 ± 33.3)	EI	EIS
Kotaman (2016)	Turkey	cross-sectional	24	K (1.5)	EI/BS	Interviews
Lee and Chelladurai (2016)	USA	cross-sectional	430	U (19.50 ± 3.96)	EI/BS	WLEIS MBI
Madaliyeva et al. (2015)	USA	Longitudinal	240	HS	EI/BS	IQ FPI-B
Nizielski et al. (2012)	Germany	cross-sectional	300	HS (15.37 ± 7.94)	EI	WLEIS
Nizielski et al. (2013)	Germany	cross-sectional	300	PE (15.37 ± 7.94)	EI/BS	WLEIS MBI
O'Toole and Friesen (2016)	New Zealand	cross-sectional	20	PE/HS/U (17.15 ± 10.05)	EI/BS	TSES CBI
Pena-Garrido and Extremera-Pacheco (2012)	Spain	cross-sectional	245	PE	EI/BS	TMMS MBI
Pérez-Escoda et al. (2013)	Spain	Longitudinal (30 h)	92	PE	EI	CDE-A
Pishghadam and Sahebjam (2012)	Iran	cross-sectional	147	PE (31.2 ± 9.2)	EI/BS	EQ-I MBI
Platsidou (2010)	Greece	cross-sectional	123	PE (6.2)	EI/BS	EIS MBI
Pulido-Martos et al. (2016)	Spain	cross-sectional	250	PE (39.0 ± 11.03)	EI/BS	TMMS SSST
Rey and Extremera (2011)	Spain	cross-sectional	123	PE (39.86 ± 9.66)	EI	WLEIS
Saiari et al. (2011)	Iran	cross-sectional	183	HS (25.5)	EI/BS	ECQ MBI
Seddighi et al. (2016)	Iran	cross-sectional	102	PE/HS/U	BS	MBI
Satybaldina et al. (2015)	Iran	cross-sectional	72	HS	EI/BS	EMIN MBI
Vesely et al. (2014)	USA	Longitudinal (5 weeks)	49	U (26.5 ± 6.19)	EI/BS	TMMS MBI
Yin (2015)	China	cross-sectional	1.281	PE/HS	EI	WLEIS
Yin et al. (2013)	China	cross-sectional	1.281	HS	EI/BS	WLEIS TSS
Zysberg et al. (2017)	Israel	cross-sectional	300	K (46.60 ± 10.61)	EI/BS	SREIT BSI

Note 1: EI, Emotional Intelligence; BS, Burnout Syndrome; Note 2: K, Kindergarten; PE, Primary Education; HS, High School; U, University; Note 3: ERQ, Emotion Regulation Questionnaire; MBI, Maslach Burnout Inventory; EMIN, Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire; SIQ, Successful Intelligence Questionnaire; EIS, Employee Satisfaction Inventory; WLEIS, Wrong and Law's Intelligence Scale; CDE-A, Adult Emotional Development Questionnaire; EQ-I, Emotional Quotient Inventory; ECQ, Emotional Competence Questionnaire; SREIT, Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test, BSI, Brief Symptom Inventory; TSES, Teacher's Self-Efficacy Scale; CBI, Copenhagen Burnout Inventory; ESE, Emotional Sensitivity Scale; IQ, Intelligence Questionnaire; FPI-B, Freiburg Personality Inventory; SSST, Sources of Stress Scale in Teachers; JP; Job Performance; EE, Emotional Exhaustion; TSS, Teaching Satisfaction Scale; TMMS, Trait-Meta Mood Scale.

Based on Table 1, we can observe the countries where the different studies that constitute the base body of this study were developed. It is also necessary to point out that the country that has carried out the most research on the subject to be analysed was China (N = 7), followed by Iran (N = 6), and Spain (N = 5), with the lowest production in Greece, Romania, Slovakia, Italy, and Africa (2).

In the same way, the instruments used to measure each variable were taken into account, obtaining that for the BS, the most used was the MBI in 63.8% of the cases. However, for the measurement of the EI, multiple questionnaires were used, highlighting the WLEIS.

The articles selected to constitute the base body of this work have been carried out in the different educational stages (Kindergarten, Primary Education, High School, and University), finding that the Kindergarten and University stages are the ones that have worked the least. Table 2 below shows the studies carried out at each stage of education and their respective percentages.

Table 2. Studies carried out at each educational stage.

Educational Stage	Study Number	Percentage
Kindergarten	3	8.4%
Primary Education	14	38.9%
High School	9	25%
Primary Education and High School	2	5.5%
University	3	8.4%
Primary Education, High School and University	5	13.8%
Total	36	100%

Through Table 2, we can observe that the educational stage that has been most studied corresponds to Primary Education (38.9%), followed by High School (25%), and by those who work in various educational stages (Primary Education, High School, and University) constituting 13.8%. It should be noted that the studies carried out at the stages of Kindergarten (8.4%) and University (8.4%) are very scarce.

4. Discussion

Through this study, the aim is to identify the relationship between EI and BS and the work performance of teachers. Several authors have affirmed that IE plays a fundamental role in the profession of teachers, as well as in the satisfaction of teaching, that is, the action and expression of the emotions felt (Baranovska and Doktorova 2014). Within the strategies of emotional work, only the expression of the emotions felt influences the satisfaction of teaching, which has a positive impact on the learning of learners. Having a good perception of EI is an important factor in maintaining optimal mental health because people with high levels of IE have a better sense of self-efficacy, and in turn, avoid the feeling of professional burnout (Cho and Park 2007; Pulido-Martos et al. 2016; Yin et al. 2013).

The results extracted from some studies such as Rey and Extremera (2011), O'Toole and Friesen (2016), and Satybaldina et al. (2015), show that the ability to perceive, understand and regulate one's own emotions and that of others is necessary to develop in order to achieve better emotional and personal well-being. They also found that better perception of IE contributes to acquiring greater social resources, development of empathy, better self-esteem, as well as optimal satisfaction when they are used. The latter leads to better levels of IE and facilitates a wide network of friendships and interpersonal relationships, which enhances the mental well-being of teachers (Ghanizadeh and Royaei 2015; Zysberg et al. 2017).

Furthermore, as shown by the studies of Augusto-Landa et al. (2012), Adina-Colomeischi (2015), Goroshit and Hen (2016), and Pena-Garrido and Extremera-Pacheco (2012), EI acts as a protection against the appearance of BS, associating it with higher levels of commitment to professional performance. The most predictive dimensions of EI are assimilation, interpersonal perception, and subject personality. Teachers with higher levels of self-concept are more resilient in stressful situations and more likely to maintain a sense of personal achievement. In this way, the need to develop this series of emotional skills in the teaching staff is evident, which act as protectors against the various stress factors caused by work situations, thus increasing the level of enthusiasm and dedication to the profession (Brackett et al. 2011; Platsidou 2010; Seddighi et al. 2016).

However, in the studies of [Becker \(2006\)](#) and [Kim and Lee \(2013\)](#), they reveal that teachers are under increasing stress, sometimes leading to BS, which is a consequence of feelings of work overload and lack of appreciation on the part of peers, students, and legal guardians. Chronic stress, the feeling of unmet work needs, as well as age and personality, are determinants of teachers' health and mental well-being ([Chang 2006](#); [Goroshit and Hen 2016](#); [Kotaman 2016](#); [Seddighi et al. 2016](#)). In their studies, their results highlighted that teachers had moderate levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation, finding the most alarming results in the low sense of personal achievement ([Doudin and Curchod-Ruedi 2011](#); [Nizielski et al. 2012](#); [Saiiari et al. 2011](#)).

Furthermore, in the studies carried out by [Pishghadam and Sahebjam \(2012\)](#), [Lee and Chelladurai \(2016\)](#), and [Platsidou \(2010\)](#), the data extracted showed that within the dimensions that constitute BS, the best predictor of emotional exhaustion is neuroticism, since these subjects tend to be more anxious, insecure, and depressed, leading them to be more emotionally vulnerable. They also exhibit a higher sense of depersonalisation which is characterised by low levels of awareness, developing in cynical, irritable, and critical teachers and a low sense of personal achievement, observable through attitudes of neglect, disorganisation, as well as by a weak personality. They concluded that all these factors are serious psychological problems that affect the teaching-learning process ([Nizielski et al. 2012](#); [Yin 2015](#)).

In this sense, it should be noted that a great deal of research has focused on the appearance of this syndrome in various work contexts. They agree that burnout syndrome is more common in professions in which people are treated (teachers, doctors, nurses, etc.), where factors such as disinhibition, irritability, and apathy on the part of the subjects with whom they work are the causes of the development of chronic stress levels ([Callegari et al. 2016b](#)).

As the data from the Karakus study ([Karakus 2013](#)) show, the feeling of exhaustion in teaching work is increasingly high, becoming a problem, which highlights the need to develop emotional skills in teachers. For this reason, intervention programs have begun to be carried out; those that have been carried out in the Primary Education stage show improvements in terms of the emotional regulation of the participants, as well as the improvement of the institutional climate ([Johnson and Naidoo 2017](#); [Ju et al. 2015](#)).

At the high education stage, teachers exhibit the highest levels of stress and BS, the implementations for these courses have revealed that through special training, stress levels were reduced, as well as feelings of dissatisfaction or depression, which in turn increased the productivity of activities ([Madaliyeva et al. 2015](#)). At the university level, the data collected from the implementations that have been carried out show that working and teaching to develop emotional skills has a positive impact on the psychological well-being of the teacher ([Feuerhahn et al. 2013](#); [Vesely et al. 2014](#)).

With regard to the educational stages, various studies show that the area where teachers have the highest levels of emotional intelligence is in the area of children, who show greater satisfaction with the work done than those who teach in primary school ([Callegari et al. 2016b](#); [Puertas-Molero et al. 2018b](#)). Likewise, the highest levels of stress are presented by secondary school teachers, who are characterised by low communicative and emotional capacity with the students, the continuous devaluation and the inability to control the multiple situations that occur in the classroom, which results in labour dissatisfaction ([Ashraf et al. 2017](#)). Regarding university education, in the study developed by [Puertas-Molero et al. \(2018a\)](#), it is shown that the great majority of the teacher's present medium and high levels of burnout. At this stage, stress is determined by job instability, workload, continuous training to which they are exposed, as well as the acquisition of new knowledge to adequately train workers.

Once the current situation has been analysed, it becomes clear that there is a high risk of developing Burnout syndrome within the teaching profession. This highlights the importance of continuing to investigate those aspects that may be related to its appearance or reduction, as well as discovering those means that can help teachers reduce these levels of stress.

Therefore, as future perspectives, it is proposed to check the possible relationship of Burnout syndrome and emotional intelligence with other variables such as resilience or the practice of physical

activity. It also highlights the need to develop cognitive-behavioural interventions that promote emotional self-regulation and thus the mental well-being of teachers that is so important for the training of future professionals.

5. Conclusions

Lending to the theoretical foundation and conclusions drawn from this study, it is stated that IE is a capacity that should be developed in teachers, making this necessary from the training of subjects, since it gives the individual the ability to regulate his emotions, making him stronger in terms of decision-making in daily situations in teaching environments, as well as being a key factor for the success of education. Through the positive reinforcement of EI, the levels of stress and anxiety that worry society so much are reduced, as this avoids the feeling of frustration before their professional realisation, which leads to improved teaching practice, as well as the health and mental well-being of teachers.

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