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Emotional Intelligence, Quality of Life, and Concern for Gender Perspective in Future Teachers

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Abstract: In recent years, concern in Spain for gender issues has been on the rise. The United Nations has established the Sustainable Development Goals, among which is the concern for achieving quality education and gender equity. In view of the above, this study analyzed the relationship between emotional intelligence and quality of life in university students taking degrees related to education; the study took into account variables such as sex, studies completed, and the degree of concern that the students show about the incorporation of the gender perspective in their curriculum. The sample consisted of 442 students from different Spanish universities who responded to an online questionnaire that included sociodemographic questions and several questionnaires, which allowed for an analysis of emotional intelligence (TMMS-24), satisfaction with life (SWLS-C), and gender-sensitive evaluation of training in gender equality (ESFIG). Some of the main results obtained concluded that there were no differences between the sexes with respect to the perception of quality of life, with the people who were more satisfied with their lives being those who were more sensitive to the incorporation of a gender perspective in training plans. In relation to emotional intelligence, women scored higher in the attention dimension and men in the emotional clarity and repair. In turn, females showed greater interest in including the treatment of gender issues in their academic training. The findings obtained show the need for future teacher training plans to pay attention to the satisfaction with life shown by students in addition to favoring the development of emotional competencies and the incorporation of gender perspective, considering the social, personal, and work-related benefits that this will bring about.

Keywords: education; teachers; emotional intelligence; quality of life; gender; university



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1. Introduction

There are a multitude of abstract concepts whose origins come from the various social reconstructions that have taken place throughout history, and the concept of “education” is one of them. Education must prepare an individual for life and help them to live in a society, to make progress, and to find their well-being [1]. Nowadays, the teacher is conceived as a mediating agent between knowledge and the learner, and thus must be aware that their personal competencies will also influence the teaching–learning process. Being a good teacher therefore not only implies mastering knowledge from an instructional point of view, but also demonstrating the ability to adapt to the changes and needs demanded at the social and institutional level [2]. Current research provides increasing importance to the analysis of different psychosocial variables that can influence the university environment, such as emotional intelligence (EI) or life satisfaction, also known as quality of life (QL); this is because students at these ages face a stage of great changes and stress-generating situations [3]. Receiving training in emotional competencies during the initial training of teachers is essential so that in their future work, they can have good emotional management in the face of possible work-related adversities, thus helping to avoid the well-known “burnout” syndrome [4,5].

In this sense, the EI of future teachers plays an important role in their perception of QL, as it will have an impact on their life and job satisfaction and, consequently, on the well-being of the future students that they will train. In this way, receiving correct emotional instruction will not only have an impact on the individual, but will also contribute to forming a less violent and more empathetic society. Children need a teacher who is empathetic, sensitive to others, and capable of having a good command of emotions, as this will allow them to better detect, prevent, and manage the socioemotional state of their students [6,7].

The emotional skills that make up EI are progressively developed from childhood, and the role played by families and teachers in the construction of the first socioemotional models is especially important; this is why both families and teachers must be trained and have sufficient emotional knowledge to meet the needs and interests of children at this age [8]. Some authors, such as [9] and [10], have suggested that teachers with a high level of EI are characterized by having and arousing the emotional skills of their students during the teaching–learning process, thus fostering their psychological development. An emotionally skilled professional is one who manages the classroom climate and inclusion of students through communication and mediation.

Social interactions allow for the construction and modulation of emotions. The educational system must be aware that it is through these interactions that each human being will build their own personal emotional pattern. In addition, teachers should be aware that sometimes there is a differential emotional socialization between men and women, which is largely transmitted by the different socializing agents, such as family, the educational system, classmates, and mass media, etc. [11].

Traditionally, it has been promulgated that the female sex is more emotional and can more openly show their emotions. The male, on the other hand, is considered more rational and less expressive [7]. Nevertheless, there are studies that affirm that the existing differences in EI between males and females are more so due to a cultural component than a biological one; thus, attention must be paid to this transmission of stereotyped emotions in the classroom. In this sense, future teachers should be educated in correct emotional coeducation so that in their teaching work, they can avoid transmitting any emotional distinction associated with cultural constructs of gender. To this end, it is necessary for future teachers to be trained during their university years, and it is necessary for them to obtain the appropriate resources for building good emotional competence [6,12,13].

Historically, there has been speculation about the meaning of emotions, which at first were considered to be obstacles to the mind and an aspect to be distrusted. In 1872, Darwin appealed to the importance of emotions in his book entitled *The Expression of the Emotions in Animals and Man* [6]. Finally, Mayer and Salovey [14] formally define EI as the competence that allows a person to examine, analyze, and understand their own emotions and feelings in order to act effectively. In general terms, EI is understood as the acquisition of social and emotional skills that allow the individual to regulate, detect, use, express, or understand one's own emotions and the emotions of others [15].

The study of EI in the educational setting has been of great interest in recent years, with several existing instruments for its measurement. However, the most widely used instrument internationally is the Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS-24), which allows for the studying of three dimensions of EI: attention, clarity, and emotional repair [16]. Attention refers to the personal capacity to focus on one's own feelings and state of mind. Emotional clarity represents the ability to understand and distinguish emotions, the knowledge of how to detect their evolution, and the ability to optimally integrate them in thinking. Finally, repair has to do with the ability to control and regulate positive and negative emotions according to personal beliefs [17]. Emotional competencies are related to the emotions experienced on a personal level but also on the academic stage, influencing aspects such as adaptation to new changes, work, and/or personal success or general well-being. For this reason, an increasing number of studies are concerned with the influence of EI on the QL of university students. QL is understood as a subjective indicator that allows for the

satisfaction of needs and achievement of interests (economic, family, professional, etc.) of each person to be evaluated [18]. Therefore, the results from previous studies report that EI and QL have a positive correlation, as people who have a better EI in turn show a higher perception of their QL [19,20].

The perception of the QL of university students is of interest due to the convulsive and stressful nature of this vital stage in life, where there are numerous changes that occur that can affect students emotionally [21]. The QL of students during the university stage may be conditioned to a large extent by their satisfaction with their studies, as a large part of their daily time at this age is dedicated to their academic training. A recent study, which analyzed the quality of life in university students, concluded that males had higher levels of quality of life than females [22]. Specifically, girls showed a worse perception of their QL in the physical and emotional dimensions. Much of the research that has inquired into this issue reports that biological differences and especially conceptions of femininity and masculinity that mark cultural roles in society may be indicative of the differences in the perception of QL between the two sexes [23].

Considering this, it becomes irreversibly necessary to pay attention to the quality of university teaching that trains future teachers, bearing in mind that this will not only be important for the participants of the teaching process itself, but also for society in general [24]. Pedagogical–didactic differences on how to teach, what is taught, and what the design, performance, or evaluation in the current university educational action is will considerably influence the teaching quality of future education professionals and will help to train professionals to be capable of dismantling any attitudes or stereotypes linked to gender questions [25].

In recent years, concern for gender issues in Spain and in the rest of the world has been on the rise. In this regard, the United Nations Organization (2015) [26] established 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within its 2030 Agenda, with the aim of achieving a more sustainable future. Specifically, SDG 5 indicates the need to achieve gender equity and empower girls and women; this goal shows a direct relation with SDG 4, which refers to quality education and specifies the importance of ensuring equitable and inclusive education, which develops learning opportunities for all. The role of teachers is essential for education to enable the development and achievement of gender equity, and it is necessary for them to be properly trained in this area. This need for gender training in Spain is reflected in Organic Law 3/2007 of 22 March [27], which is aimed at the effective equality of women and men; the law states that the Spanish education system must guarantee equal rights and opportunities for men and women. Likewise, Law 3/2022 of 24 February [28] on university coexistence establishes that the rules of coexistence in the university community must incorporate the gender approach in order to avoid any gender stereotype or discrimination.

Therefore, the uncertainty of knowing whether future professors are also being trained in gender issues during their time at university is another main reason for this research.

The aim of this study was to analyze the relationship between emotional intelligence and quality of life in university students, taking into account variables such as gender and the degree of concern for gender perspective in university degrees related to education.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Design and Participants

The study had a non-experimental design as it did not propose an intervention to modify the variables. Likewise, it was descriptive and exploratory in nature because the main objective was to describe the results without performing any type of action on the subjects. Finally, it was cross-sectional because the application of the instruments was carried out at a single moment without repetition over time. The participants in this study were 442 university students studying degrees of early childhood and primary education and students in Master's degree programs related to education, mainly the Master's Degree in teaching of compulsory secondary education and baccalaureate, vocational training,

and language teaching. All participants who took part in the sample did so voluntarily and with the guarantee that their anonymity would be maintained at all times. A non-probabilistic sampling of causal or accidental type was used for their selection. The participant representation by sex was 69.7% women ($N = 308$) and 30.3% men ($N = 134$) aged between 18 and 45 years ($M = 21.72 \pm 3.77$).

2.2. Instruments

- Ad hoc sociodemographic questionnaire—This questionnaire was used to determine the sex and age of the participants.
- Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS-24) by Salovey et al. [29]—The Spanish adaptation (Escala Rasgo de Metaconocimientos sobre Estados Emocionales) of this scale by Fernández-Berrocal et al. [30] was used. It is composed of 24 items, answered by means of a Likert scale with 5 response alternatives, where 0 is “I do not agree at all” and 4 is “I totally agree”. An example of an item is, “When I am sad, I think about all the pleasures of life”. The scale is divided into three dimensions: attention (items 1–8), which is understood as the ability to adequately detect feelings; clarity (items 9–16), which refers to the ability to understand them; and repair (items 17–24), which is interpreted as the way to correctly regulate emotions. Item 5 was omitted because the homogeneity index did not reach an acceptable value ($IH_c < 0.200$) for the item to be taken into account. The reliability of the scale (Cronbach’s alpha) is 0.865, and that of the factors are 0.841 for attention, 0.864 for clarity, and 0.831 for repair.
- Escala de Evaluación Sensible a la Formación en Igualdad de Género by Miralles-Cardona et al. [31]—This scale, in its Spanish version, which is known under the acronym “ESFIG”, is made up of 16 items (e.g., “Gender should be integrated into teaching on a mandatory basis”) that are answered on a Likert scale with 6 response options, where 0 is “Strongly disagree” and 5 is “Strongly agree”. The items are divided into three dimensions or factors: incorporation of the gender perspective in the curriculum (items 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11), institutional sensitivity to the application of the gender equality policy in the centers (items 1, 2, 7, 8, and 12), and awareness of gender-related inequalities in the instructional processes (items 13, 14, 15, and 16). It was decided to eliminate item 4 because it had too high of a kurtosis value ($Kurt > 4.00$). The reliability of the scale and of the factors after the elimination of this item was 0.813 for the total scale, 0.891 for the gender in curriculum factor, 0.772 for the institutional sensitivity factor and 0.859 for the gender inequalities awareness factor.
- Satisfaction With Life Scale Adapted for Children by Diener et al. [32]—The Spanish validation of Álvarez et al. [33] (SWLS-C) was used. This scale consists of 5 items with Likert-type response between 1 “Strongly disagree” and 5 “Strongly agree”. An example item is, “My life is similar to the life I would like to have”. Following Alvarez et al. [33], participants were classified into two categories: satisfied with life (for the subjects who scored 20 or more) and not satisfied with life (for those who scored 19 or less). The reliability of the scale (Cronbach’s alpha) is 0.880.

All of the selected instruments have a Cronbach’s Alpha of greater than 0.700 and are therefore considered valid for the research.

2.3. Procedure

The first step was the development of a questionnaire using Google Forms that unified all of the previously mentioned instruments (TMMS-24, ESFIG, Satisfaction With Life, and sociodemographic questions). This questionnaire was sent by e-mail to professors from different Spanish universities, together with the instructions for its completion, so that they could pass it on to their students. At the beginning of the questionnaire, the purpose of the research was explained and the anonymity of the participants’ answers was guaranteed.

This research complies with the ethical requirements of the Declaration of Helsinki, developed by the World Medical Association [34] and adopted by the 71st WMA General Assembly (online), Cordoba, Spain, October 2020.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using the SPSS 24.0 statistical program (IBM corp., Armonk, NY, USA). The descriptive values, central tendency, and dispersion were calculated, and the reliability of the factors was checked using Cronbach's alpha in order to verify whether the scale could be successfully used in the selected sample.

In the scale measuring EI, all of the results for skewness and kurtosis were acceptable, being below the range of ± 2.00 or ± 4.00 [35]. The corrected homogeneity index (CHI) also presented acceptable values, with all items being above 0.200 [36] except for item 5. It was decided to eliminate this item, and when the CHI.R was recalculated, the results were favorable (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the TMMS-24.

	M	SD	Asym	Kurt	CHI	CHI.R
1. I pay a lot of attention to feelings.	3.34	0.770	−1.450	3.213	0.462	0.452
2. I usually worry a lot about how I feel.	3.13	0.815	−1.032	1.499	0.413	0.400
3. I usually spend time thinking about my emotions.	2.71	1.001	−0.753	0.194	0.531	0.525
4. I think that it is worth paying attention to my emotions and moods.	3.46	0.676	−1.441	3.653	0.435	0.428
5. I let my feelings affect my thoughts.	2.52	0.965	−0.393	−0.224	−0.054	-
6. I think about my mood constantly.	2.37	1.049	−0.195	−0.568	0.276	0.253
7. I often think about my feelings.	2.82	0.881	−0.708	0.314	0.401	0.381
8. I pay close attention to how I feel.	2.85	0.900	−0.730	0.252	0.531	0.513
9. I am clear about my feelings.	2.55	0.985	−0.512	0.017	0.503	0.516
10. I can often define my feelings.	2.60	0.917	−0.478	−0.022	0.573	0.582
11. I almost always know how I feel.	2.43	0.955	−0.402	−0.404	0.521	0.532
12. I usually know my feelings about people.	2.76	0.823	−0.585	0.340	0.404	0.409
13. I often become aware of my feelings in different situations.	2.96	0.636	−0.603	1.673	0.554	0.547
14. I can always say how I feel.	2.19	1.005	−0.088	−0.706	0.482	0.488
15. Sometimes I can tell what my emotions are.	2.75	0.859	−0.961	1.276	0.435	0.436
16. I can come to understand my feelings.	2.80	0.824	−0.704	0.771	0.539	0.546
17. Although I sometimes feel sad, I tend to have an optimistic outlook.	2.44	1.112	−0.359	−0.673	0.484	0.504
18. Even if I feel bad, I try to think about pleasant things.	2.47	1.013	−0.440	−0.360	0.483	0.502
19. When I am sad, I think of all the pleasures of life.	1.92	1.102	0.121	−0.716	0.478	0.487
20. I try to think positive thoughts even when I feel bad.	2.48	1.026	−0.476	−0.468	0.510	0.527
21. If I overthink things, complicating them, I try to calm myself down.	2.48	0.967	−0.578	−0.136	0.400	0.416
22. I care about being in a good state of mind.	2.93	0.796	−0.681	0.897	0.477	0.483
23. I have a lot of energy when I feel happy.	3.42	0.756	−1.573	3.398	0.284	0.283
24. When I am angry, I try to change my mood.	2.55	0.887	−0.461	0.265	0.269	0.274

Key: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Asym = asymmetry; Kurt = kurtosis; CHI = corrected homogeneity index; CHI.R = corrected homogeneity index recalculated excluding item 5.

When analyzing the skewness and kurtosis of the ESFIG, it was found that all items were acceptable as they were below the range of ± 2.00 or ± 4.00 [35]. The corrected homogeneity index (CHI) also presented acceptable values, with all of the items being above 0.200 [36] (Table 2). Table 2 shows the items of the scale translated into English, but the Spanish version was used for Spanish students.

The scale measuring life satisfaction presented good skewness and kurtosis in all of its items, with all being in the range of ± 2.00 [37,38]. As for the CHI, all items maintained levels of above 0.200 [36] (Table 3).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the EFIG.

	M	SD	Asym	Kurt	CHI
1. The faculty of education has taken a proactive approach to gender equality.	3.61	0.927	−0.987	2.125	0.394
2. The faculty applies the current equality regulations.	3.66	0.869	−0.749	1.742	0.370
3. Gender training is a necessary condition for learning to educate in equality.	4.34	0.908	−1.715	3.600	0.457
4. Including a gender perspective in teacher training is essential to combat sexism.	4.32	0.955	−1.900	4.468	0.514
5. Gender questions are just as important to my training as those relating to other differences.	4.12	1.025	−1.541	2.957	0.557
6. Diversity of sexual identities should receive greater attention in the curriculum.	3.98	1.114	−1.285	1.614	0.563
7. My plan of study includes the development of competencies to educate in gender equality.	3.53	1.151	−0.752	0.303	0.481
8. The gender perspective receives sufficient attention in the subjects.	2.79	1.304	−0.291	−0.436	0.241
9. Gender should be integrated into teaching on a mandatory basis.	3.93	1.118	−1.410	2.387	0.600
10. All subjects in the curriculum should be taught with a gender perspective.	3.69	1.236	−1.075	0.951	0.558
11. There should be at least one compulsory subject on gender equality in the curriculum.	3.82	1.264	−1.169	1.035	0.540
12. Teachers are sufficiently sensitized to gender issues.	3.01	1.217	−0.386	−0.283	0.200
13. Teachers tend to have higher and more demanding expectations of male students than of female students.	1.83	1.501	0.523	−0.693	0.412
14. Male students receive more attention from faculty than female students.	1.51	1.446	0.782	−0.330	0.420
15. The achievements of female students are often downplayed.	2.05	1.542	0.248	−1.045	0.409
16. Students' achievements are attributed more to their effort than to their ability.	2.46	1.633	−0.060	−1.159	0.422

Key: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Asym = asymmetry; Kurt = kurtosis; CHI = corrected homogeneity index.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the life satisfaction questionnaire (SWLS-C).

	M	SD	Asym	Kurt	CHI
1. My life is similar to the life I would like to have.	2.49	0.979	−0.618	0.049	0.738
2. My life is good.	3.09	0.782	−0.871	1.267	0.712
3. I am happy with my life.	2.95	0.875	−1.000	1.337	0.813
4. I have achieved the important things I have wanted to achieve in my life.	2.87	0.976	−0.909	0.676	0.638
5. If I could live my life over again, I would live it in much the same way.	2.58	1.096	−0.671	−0.171	0.703

Key: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Asym = asymmetry; Kurt = kurtosis; CHI = corrected homogeneity index.

3. Results

Table 4 shows that the percentage of students who are not satisfied with their lives is very similar to those who are (48.9% vs. 51.1%). As for the distribution by sex, there are no major differences either; the male sex is as equally represented as the female sex in both satisfied and dissatisfied subjects (48.9% vs. 51.1%).

Table 4. Satisfaction with life as a function of sex.

	Male (N/%)	Female (N/%)	Total (N/%)
Not satisfied with life	63 (47%)	153 (49.7%)	216 (48.9%)
Satisfied with life	71 (53%)	155 (50.3%)	226 (51.1%)

To analyze the relationship of sex with the TMMS-24 and EFIG scores, a Student's *t*-test was performed (Table 5). When the dimensions of the TMMS-24 were compared with the sex of the participants, statistically significant differences were found in the attention factor in favor of women [$t(1, 440) = 2.145, p \leq 0.05$], with an MD = 0.138. Men scored higher in both the clarity factor [$t(1, 440) = 2.600, p \leq 0.05$] (MD = 0.168) and repair factor [$t(1, 440) = 2.331, p \leq 0.05$] (MD = 0.156). Regarding the EFIG, statistically significant differences were only found in the gender factor in the study plans in favor of females [$t(1, 440) = 4.903, p \leq 0.01$], with an MD = 0.444.

Table 5. Differences in means according to sex.

					Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means			
		M			F	p	t	df	p	MD
Attention	2.95	Men	2.859	Equal variances are assumed	0.210	0.647	−2.145	440	0.032 *	−0.138
		Women	2.998	Equal variances are not assumed			−2.139	251,347	0.033	−0.138
Clarity	2.62	Men	2.746	Equal variances are assumed	0.904	0.342	2.600	440	0.010 *	0.168
		Women	2.577	Equal variances are not assumed			2.670	269,571	0.008	0.168
Repair	2.58	Men	2.695	Equal variances are assumed	3.137	0.077	2.331	440	0.020 *	0.156
		Women	2.539	Equal variances are not assumed			2.427	278,443	0.016	0.156
Gender in the curriculum	3.980	Men	3.670	Equal variances are assumed	2.364	0.125	−4.903	440	0.000 *	−0.444
		Women	4.114	Equal variances are not assumed			−4.657	225,977	0.000	−0.444
Institutional sensitivity	3.319	Men	3.368	Equal variances are assumed	4.100	0.043	0.845	440	0.399	0.069
		Women	3.298	Equal variances are not assumed			0.877	276,388	0.381	0.069
Awareness of gender inequalities	1.96	Men	1.966	Equal variances are assumed	5.277	0.022	0.040	440	0.968	0.005
		Women	1.961	Equal variances are not assumed			0.038	225,273	0.969	0.005

Key: M = mean; F = statistic of the Student's *t*-test; *p*: significance; df = degree of freedoms; MD = mean differences; * = $p \leq 0.05$.

The following table (Table 6) shows the results of the comparison of the TMMS-24 and ESFIG items in terms of the subjects' life satisfaction. Regarding emotional intelligence, statistically significant differences were found in all dimensions in favor of subjects who were satisfied with their life, i.e., attention [$t(1, 440) = 2.494, p \leq 0.05$], clarity [$t(1, 440) = 7.301, p \leq 0.05$], and repair [$t(1, 440) = 7.046, p \leq 0.05$]. As for the ESFIG, statistically significant differences were found in favor of students who were satisfied with their life in the dimensions of gender in the curriculum [$t(1, 440) = 2.183, p \leq 0.05$] and institutional sensitivity [$t(1, 440) = 3.954, p \leq 0.05$].

Table 6. Differences in means according to life satisfaction.

					Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means			
		M			F	p	t	df	p	MD
Attention	2.95	Not satisfied with life	2.880	Equal variances are assumed	2.813	0.094	−2.494	440	0.013 *	−0.148
		Satisfied with life	3.028	Equal variances are not assumed			−2.486	426,642	0.013	−0.148
Clarity	2.62	Not satisfied with life	2.416	Equal variances are assumed	3.553	0.060	−7.301	440	0.000 *	−0.414
		Satisfied with life	2.831	Equal variances are not assumed			−7.285	431,122	0.000	−0.414
Repair	2.58	Not satisfied with life	2.373	Equal variances are assumed	3.811	0.052	−7.046	440	0.000 *	−0.415
		Satisfied with life	2.789	Equal variances are not assumed			−7.025	427,189	0.000	−0.415
Gender in the curriculum	3.980	Not satisfied with life	3.885	Equal variances are assumed	2.512	0.114	−2.183	440	0.030 *	−0.185
		Satisfied with life	4.070	Equal variances are not assumed			−2.174	419,316	0.030	−0.185
Institutional sensitivity	3.319	Not satisfied with life	3.168	Equal variances are assumed	2.509	0.114	−3.954	440	0.000 *	−0.296
		Satisfied with life	3.464	Equal variances are not assumed			−3.939	421,357	0.000	−0.296
Awareness of gender inequalities	1.96	Not satisfied with life	1.875	Equal variances are assumed	0.816	0.367	−1.404	440	0.161	−0.171
		Satisfied with life	2.046	Equal variances are not assumed			−1.406	439,942	0.160	−0.171

Key: M = mean; F = statistic of the Student's *t*-test; *p*: significance; df = degree of freedoms; MD = mean differences; * = $p \leq 0.05$.

The following table (Table 7) shows the results of the bivariate analysis performed using Pearson's correlation test. Due to the size of the sample, only correlations that were higher than 0.300 are highlighted. The attention factor positively correlated with clarity ($r = 0.338$), while the latter positively correlated with repair ($r = 0.378$).

Table 7. Bivariate correlations between the studied factors.

	Attention	Clarity	Repair	Gender in the Curriculum	Institutional Sensitivity	Awareness of Gender Inequalities
1. Attention	1	0.338 **	0.225 *	0.224 **	0.191 **	0.103 *
2. Clarity		1	0.378 **	0.074	0.276 **	0.039
3. Repair			1	0.069	0.233 **	0.078
4. Gender in the curriculum				1	0.225 **	0.176 **
5. Institutional sensitivity					1	0.110 *
6. Awareness of gender inequalities						1

Key: ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral); * = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (bilateral).

4. Discussion

The aim of the study was to determine whether there is a relationship between EI and QL in university students, taking into account variables such as age, sex, studies completed, and the degree of concern the students show towards the incorporation of gender perspective in university degrees related to education. The main findings of the research showed that the percentage of people who were satisfied with their lives (51.1%) was very similar to the percentage of people who were not (48.9%). In addition, it was detected that there were no significant differences in the university students according to sex in terms of their perception of their satisfaction with life. However, these data contrast with similar studies that have been recently published that indicate that women have lower levels of QL; this may be due to the fact that women suffer more stressful events throughout their lives than men, react with high frustration to problems related to family and academic issues, or experience hormonal changes that cause them to have a worse perception of physical and emotional well-being [22,39]. Likewise, other studies support that this difference in the perception of QL between men and women may be due to causes such as differences at the biological level or in the cultural roles of masculinity and femininity in which the students live in their family and/or social environment [23].

QL and emotional adjustment are related because, if emotions are not managed effectively, stressors could lead to mental health problems, influencing EI (attention, clarity, and repair). This link was confirmed by a study carried out with university students that aimed to address the relationship between EI, resilience, and life satisfaction, which also affirmed that people who better managed their emotions were the most satisfied with their lives [40]. These data denote the need to offer teachers training in emotional intelligence, with EI being a determining factor in the favorable attitude that teachers may or may not show towards the teaching–learning process [15]. Continuing the analysis of the sex variable, this study has concluded that women score higher in attention, which implies that the female sex pays more attention to emotions. Men, however, show higher values in the dimensions of clarity and repair. These results are in line with other studies that also state that, according to sex, women have higher scores in the “Attention” dimension of EI [17,41].

This greater attention to emotions in the female sex, according to other studies, may still be due to socialization norms associated with traditional gender stereotypes, in which women are perceived with greater attention to feelings as they manifest higher levels of parenting competence and affiliative behaviors [42]. Men’s higher results in clarity and repair obtained in the present study are equally consistent with other research that likewise proves the significant relationship of clarity and repair with subjective well-being [43]. Furthermore, when analyzing EI, positive correlations have been found between some of its dimensions, which implies that having a high score in one of the dimensions will also positively affect another of them. In this sense, it is confirmed that people who show greater attention to their emotions are in turn those who are clearer about them. Likewise, individuals who score higher in clarity also have higher levels of emotional repair. Along

the same lines, the study by Rodríguez-López et al. [44], which was carried out with university students, confirmed the correlation found between the three factors of EI.

The results presented so far have shown the EI and QL of teachers that are in training, pointing out the causes that may arise in relation to gender differences. In this regard, it should be noted that the findings found when evaluating the ESFIG only highlight a significance in the aspect that women show more concern to include the gender perspective in the curriculum. This was also confirmed by Miralles-Cardona [45], who also pointed out that the students of the infant and primary education degrees showed greater receptivity than the students enrolled in the Master's degree in teacher training. These data may be due to the historical disadvantages that have accompanied the female sex in many social spheres and the current frequent demand for global strategies that deconstruct the entrenched male and female social models; in consideration of these factors, the inclusion of these equity-based strategies into an education may help men and women detect their abilities, attitudes, and interests without feeling pressured or subjected to any social pressure [46].

This study also compared EI and gender perspective with life satisfaction. The results in relation to EI found significant differences in favor of people who were satisfied with their life (53% of the men and 50.3% of the women), where we conclude that the greater the life satisfaction, the greater the attention, clarity, and emotional repair. These data are consistent with a previous research study that used a sample of university students and confirmed that there is a positive relationship between EI and QL. [47]. Likewise, it should be noted that other studies that have also analyzed the relationship between both variables have shown contrary results, indicating that there is no significant relationship; however, there is evidence that people with a higher level of QL display better stress management and general mood. These results can be justified on the understanding that students who have more knowledge of emotional and social skills are able to cope more effectively with the demands of their environment [18].

On the other hand, the relationship between QL and concern for gender perspective in the university curriculum showed that the future teachers who are most satisfied with their lives are those who are most concerned about including gender-related content in their curriculum and are most satisfied with the sensitivity shown by the university institution to the need to address this subject. The need for small attitudinal and behavioral changes will make it possible to generate changes at a personal level and therefore at a social level, as any change that is borne from an individual is transferred to society as a whole [48]. A teacher who is trained in gender topics and is aware of the relevant changes to be made in order for society to progress towards equity and inclusion must be able to bet on experiential learning marked by patterns of behavior in which gender relations are egalitarian, which promotes a better quality of life for all individuals [49]. However, as indicated in the study by Miralles-Cardona et al. [50], it is important to keep in mind that sometimes future teachers who have already graduated may have a very unrealistic perception of their skills and abilities to apply the gender perspective in their teaching work, especially women, as the study of these authors concluded; however, the reality of recent research indicates that most of them are not properly trained because they have not received sufficient information in their curricula. Consequently, it is evident and urgent that university curricula should incorporate more frequent educational practices that help the development of gender equality and acquisition of emotional skills. Therefore, it is advisable that during university training, activities should be proposed to train future teachers in content related to gender and the SDGs, such as the search for inclusive terms, detection of sexist language in school material, taking care of visual grammar, paying attention to how men and women are represented in school books, etc. [49].

5. Conclusions

The role of future teachers, who will educate the younger generations, should be to train students in the most integral and meaningful ways possible. It is essential that they receive sufficient emotional competences during the university training stage to know

how to recognize and manage their own emotions, as this is a basic element for a correct teaching–learning process. The issues involved in daily teaching tasks can trigger stress factors, and it will be the teachers who are well-prepared and have a better sense of quality of life who will be able to cope more effectively and intelligently with the stress. If not, poor management of emotions and low levels of life satisfaction could lead to disinterest in the students or negative attitudes of the teachers towards their teaching work.

Likewise, the need to provide teachers in training with the necessary tools to face the changes demanded by society, i.e., assuming an active role in the promotion of an egalitarian education free of sexist attitudes, cannot be overlooked. Education must be the engine of change; training future teachers in gender issues will allow new generations to grow up living in freer, safer, and more egalitarian spaces.

The limitations of this research include the fact that it was not possible to have a larger sample. More studies in this line of research would be necessary to obtain relevant results. However, the results obtained in the present study may provide a solid basis to help understand the importance of improving the training plans of future teachers by attending to necessary (and sometimes neglected) issues such as emotional skills, satisfaction with life, and concern for effectively addressing potential problems due to gender bias.

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