

Systematic Review

Intervention Programmes on Socio-Emotional Competencies in Pre-Service Teachers: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

At present, teachers face working environments characterised by high levels of stress, largely due to constant interaction with students and the multiple challenges inherent in the educational context. In this scenario, the development of socio-emotional competencies (SECs) becomes an essential component of their professional education, as it enables them to manage their emotions effectively and build positive interpersonal relationships within the educational community. Objective: The aim of this research was to analyse the dimensions, strategies, and success factors of education programmes in socio-emotional competencies (SECs) aimed at pre-service teachers. Method: A systematic literature review was carried out using the PRISMA method. Publications in English and Spanish, published between 2019 and 2024 in peer-reviewed academic journals and focused on the university level, were included. Conference proceedings, books, book chapters, and articles not centred on SECs were excluded. The search was conducted in the Web of Science (WOS), Scopus, and ERIC databases, with the final search date being 24 January 2025. After applying the inclusion criteria, eight empirical studies were selected. Results: The reviewed programmes demonstrated similarities in their methodological designs and in the socio-emotional competencies addressed. The practical sessions were based on cooperative methodologies that promoted experiential learning and reflection. The strategies used included video and text analysis, portfolios, role-playing, and simulations. The effectiveness of the programmes was assessed primarily through self-report techniques, such as questionnaires, scales, and interviews. In addition, some studies complemented these strategies with simulations using avatars, content analysis, and digital video recordings. This diversity of approaches reflects the absence of a uniform evaluation criterion; nevertheless, the findings consistently demonstrate the effectiveness of the programmes. Conclusion: The intervention programmes analysed proved effective in developing key competencies in future teachers, such as emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and communication skills. Among the limitations identified in the intervention programmes are biases in sample selection, reflected in the participation of small or unrepresentative groups. This systematic review highlights the relevance of socio-emotional competences in pre-service teachers, addressing the gap caused by the limited number of longitudinal studies. The evidence consolidates current knowledge and underscores effective practices and interventions that enhance educational quality.



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1. Introduction

Socio-emotional competence (SEC), which has been recognized as an essential element of teacher competencies, has gained importance in higher education in recent decades (Muñoz, 2023; Rojas et al., 2023). The incorporation of SEC development programmes responds to a growing demand for well-rounded professionals (Chacón-Cuberos et al., 2021), not only with disciplinary knowledge but also with emotional and interpersonal skills for effective performance in education (OCDE, 2024). SEC comprises a set of capabilities related to self-regulating an individual's emotional response and behaviour in social interactions to successfully manage daily situations (Bisquerra & Pérez, 2007; López-Goñi & Goñi, 2012). These are essential for personal well-being and professional success (Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2022), as they allow teachers to adapt to changing conditions in the social and work environment (Muñoz, 2023). The term "SEC" is based on a combination of theories related to emotional intelligence, multiple intelligences, and positive psychology, among others (García-Martínez et al., 2021; Puertas et al., 2018), and it encompasses capabilities related to personal improvement, such as self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-control, and motivation, as well as capabilities for interpersonal relationships, such as empathy, effective communication, and responsible decision-making (Valero-Moya, 2023). Emotional intelligence is understood as the human capacity to assertively manage both one's own and others' emotional and cognitive aspects, integrating competencies such as emotional regulation, empathy, and motivation (Gkintoni et al., 2025). Soft skills, in turn, are conceived as non-technical abilities linked to personal attributes, encompassing personal, interpersonal, and intrapersonal dimensions, and are shaped by specific cognitive and contextual processes. Among them are communication, creativity, problem-solving, teamwork, time and stress management (Luo & Li, 2025). In this sense, socio-emotional competencies, emotional intelligence, and soft skills are closely interrelated, constituting essential elements for the integral education and professional performance of pre-service teachers. In educational context, SEC is considered a pillar of professional practice and emotional well-being of teachers (Rendón, 2019). An effective mastery of SEC enables teachers to manage emotions and promotes good interpersonal relationships between teachers and students, which is crucial for students' cognitive, social, and affective-motivational development (Godoy & Trujillo, 2024). In the field of educational research, there is enough evidence to consider teachers' SEC as a decisive factor in quality, inclusive, and equitable education (Lozano-Peña et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2024).

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OCDE, 2024) recommends that educational systems strengthen SEC, especially related to emotional control, teamwork, and goal achievement. Better emotional regulation is positively linked with the development of the basic psychological needs, such as lower academic stress in university students (Chacón-Cuberos et al., 2021). Thus, during education practice, teachers face the management of their own emotions but also face the challenge of understanding the emotional needs of their students and resolving conflicts, all with the aim of providing a positive learning environment. From this point of view, in addition to pedagogical and didactic formation, teachers obviously need to develop simultaneously personal skills such as self-awareness; emotional regulation; autonomy; and interpersonal aspects, such as empathy, assertive communication, and leadership (Valero-Moya, 2023). However, teachers sometimes report difficulties in mastering SEC during teaching process (García-Martínez et al., 2021) due to a lack of resources in initial education (Aspelin, 2019; Rendón, 2019). Educational institutions are responsible for strengthening socio-emotional learning in their teachers and students through SEC transversal integration into pedagogical curricula at degree and continuing education programmes (Godoy & Trujillo, 2024). Initial education, especially an education degree, represents an opportunity for the development and en-

hancing of these skills (Aspelin, 2019; Rojas et al., 2023). Future teachers will face complex challenges that require a solid emotional and relational foundation and will be mediators in management of learning environments and promotion of coexistence (Wang et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2023). Therefore, this initial education is valued as a strategic axis for strengthening educational systems (Calderón, 2024), especially in contexts characterized by increasing diversity and complexity (Pérez-Escoda et al., 2019).

Universities have begun to implement various programmes aimed at strengthening awareness and management of one's own emotions through self-reflection (Lozano-Peña et al., 2023). Reports highlight that these types of programmes promote significant improvements in emotional self-awareness and self-regulation, empathy, and resilience (Godoy & Trujillo, 2024), key elements for managing classrooms as diverse as nowadays. One of the international frameworks for SEC development is the one proposed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL Guide, 2015), which introduces the Social and Emotional Learning approach. The aim of this model is to acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow students to manage their emotions, establish positive interpersonal relationships, and take responsible and empathetic decisions.

Therefore, considering the different observations about SEC, there is a need to seek recent scientific evidence to identify effective practices and strategies used education programmes. This systematic review aims to identify primary studies on SEC development programmes and, more specifically, to evaluate methodological characteristics and develop a comprehensive summary of the strategies and results. It seeks to answer three main questions: RQ1: What socio-emotional dimensions are most frequently addressed in these programs? RQ2: Which strategies are most effective for developing SEC during teacher education? RQ3: How effective have these programs been?

The undertaking of this systematic review on socio-emotional competencies in pre-service teachers is of fundamental importance, as it allows for the rigorous consolidation and organisation of the available scientific evidence, ensuring its relevance and currency. The scarcity of longitudinal studies focusing on future teachers highlights a gap in the literature. Furthermore, the lack of these competencies may exacerbate cultural adaptation problems and hinder engagement with diversity, affecting both the learning process and future teaching practice. In this regard, studies of this nature contribute to the recognition of good practices and effective interventions, while also making visible their impact on educational quality.

2. Materials and Methods

This research was conducted following the guidelines of the PRISMA method (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) for the development of eligibility criteria, the identification of information sources, the formulation of search strategies, the selection process, and data collection (Page et al., 2021), thereby ensuring a rigorous, reproducible, and high-quality procedure.

2.1. Criteria of Eligibility

- (a) Publication between 2019 and 2024.
- (b) Journal articles.
- (c) Research performed in the field of university education.
- (d) Studied carried out in Education.

2.2. The Exclusion Criteria Were as Follows

- (a) Studies not published in English or Spanish.

- (b) Studies not published in peer-reviewed journals (conference proceedings, books, book chapters, and other types of publication).
- (c) Theoretical studies or reviews.
- (d) Master's and doctoral studies.
- (e) Studies not linked to programmes for the development of socio-emotional competencies in pre-service teachers.
- (f) Studies relating to other areas of knowledge.

2.3. Information Sources and Search Strategy

In systematic review studies, the selection of databases is a crucial aspect to ensure the comprehensiveness and quality of the evidence gathered. In this research, ERIC, Scopus, and Web of Science (WoS) were selected due to their relevance and coverage in the field of education and the social sciences. ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) is the reference database in education and is essential for addressing research on socio-emotional competencies in educational contexts. Scopus, in turn, is one of the largest multidisciplinary databases, with extensive coverage in social sciences, psychology, and education. Finally, Web of Science (WoS) is characterised by its rigour in indexing high-impact journals, thus guaranteeing the inclusion of high-quality, peer-reviewed studies. Taken together, these three databases provide broad and representative coverage for research on socio-emotional competencies in relation to education. This review focused on articles written in English and Spanish, published between 2019 and 2024 (both years inclusive) in the databases Web of Science (WOS), Scopus, and ERIC. The search strategy was operationalised using the following Boolean algorithm: *((university AND teacher OR pre-service student AND teacher) AND (socio-emotional AND competence OR socio-emotional AND skills) AND (intervention OR programme OR development))**. The initial literature search across the three databases yielded 124 articles, of which 71.7% were found in WOS and Scopus, while the remaining 28.3% were located in ERIC.

2.4. Studies Selection Process

Following the review of titles, authors, journals, abstracts, and keywords of the retrieved documents, 15 duplicate articles were identified and removed, resulting in an initial dataset of 109 articles for the review. The data were exported to an Excel spreadsheet, integrating information from the three databases consulted. Three reviewers independently analysed the information, and any discrepancies were resolved through consensus. In the second phase, after reading each abstract and its associated keywords, and in accordance with the defined inclusion criteria, 109 articles were excluded. The reasons for exclusion are detailed in the corresponding PRISMA flow diagram table. As a result, 15 articles were selected for full-text reading. Following this in-depth review, the final number of studies included was reduced to eight, all of which met the established criteria for inclusion in the review. The final selection included only empirical research focused on the development of education programmes in socio-emotional competencies (SECs) aimed at pre-service teachers.

The inclusion criteria applied were as follows:

- (a) Articles reporting empirical studies demonstrating the effects of the relationship between assessment tools and teacher competency development within the context of initial teacher education.
- (b) Articles presenting experiments involving the use of one or more assessment tools and their effects.

2.5. Procedure for Data Extraction

The selection of studies was carried out by three independent reviewers. In the first phase, 124 records were assessed based on titles and abstracts, of which 116 were excluded due to duplication or failure to meet the inclusion criteria. Subsequently, two reviewers independently examined the full texts, with disagreements resolved through the involvement of a third evaluator. Although no statistical index of interrater reliability was calculated, the process of discussion and consensus ensured both transparency and methodological rigour. The final selection criteria were (a) a population composed of pre-service teachers, (b) interventions or studies related to the development of socio-emotional competences, (c) publications between 2019 and 2024, and (d) availability of the full text. As a result, eight articles were included in the review, and their data were organised and systematised in an Excel spreadsheet for subsequent analysis.

2.6. List of Data

Following the protocol applied and based on the study of the full articles, the aspects to be considered for study were organized according the following dimensions:

- (a) Bibliometric data (year of publication and country of origin);
- (b) Methodological approach and type of design (pre-experimental, quasi-experimental, phenomenological, mixed methods, etc.);
- (c) Assessment procedures employed (strategies and tools used); socio-emotional competencies assessed.
- (d) Socio-emotional competencies assessed.
- (e) Effects of the assessment procedures on the development of socio-emotional competencies.

The research was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. However, in this systematic review, priority was given to the essential elements related to the formulation of the research questions, eligibility criteria, and processes of study selection and analysis. Certain components, such as risk-of-bias assessment or protocol registration, were not included due to the nature of the study. Nevertheless, methodological traceability and transparency were maintained throughout all stages of the review process.

3. Results

The results of this systematic review provide insight into the approaches, models, and challenges of SEC programmes for teachers. Throughout the analysis of the studies, theoretical models that support the interventions are identified as the most effective practical strategies in the context of university, specifically initial teacher education and education degrees.

Eight articles that met the established inclusion criteria were collected (Figure 1). The programmes were developed in Europe (5), North America (1), and Asia (2). All the reviewed programmes addressed SEC at pre-service teachers. The Innovation Project for the Promotion of Social and Emotional Competencies (Zych et al., 2022), developed in Spain, had the highest number of participants, followed by the Emotional Education Programmes for Teachers (MADEMO) (Schoeps et al., 2020), also from Spain. On the other hand, the programmes with the lowest participation were two Programmes on the Relational Competence of Pre-Service Teachers, both developed in Sweden (Aspelin & Jönsson, 2019; Jönsson et al., 2024). Regarding the methodological approach, a mixed design predominated, combining qualitative data (participant reflections) and quantitative data (questionnaires and scales), which allowed for a more comprehensive understanding and more thorough analysis of the results.

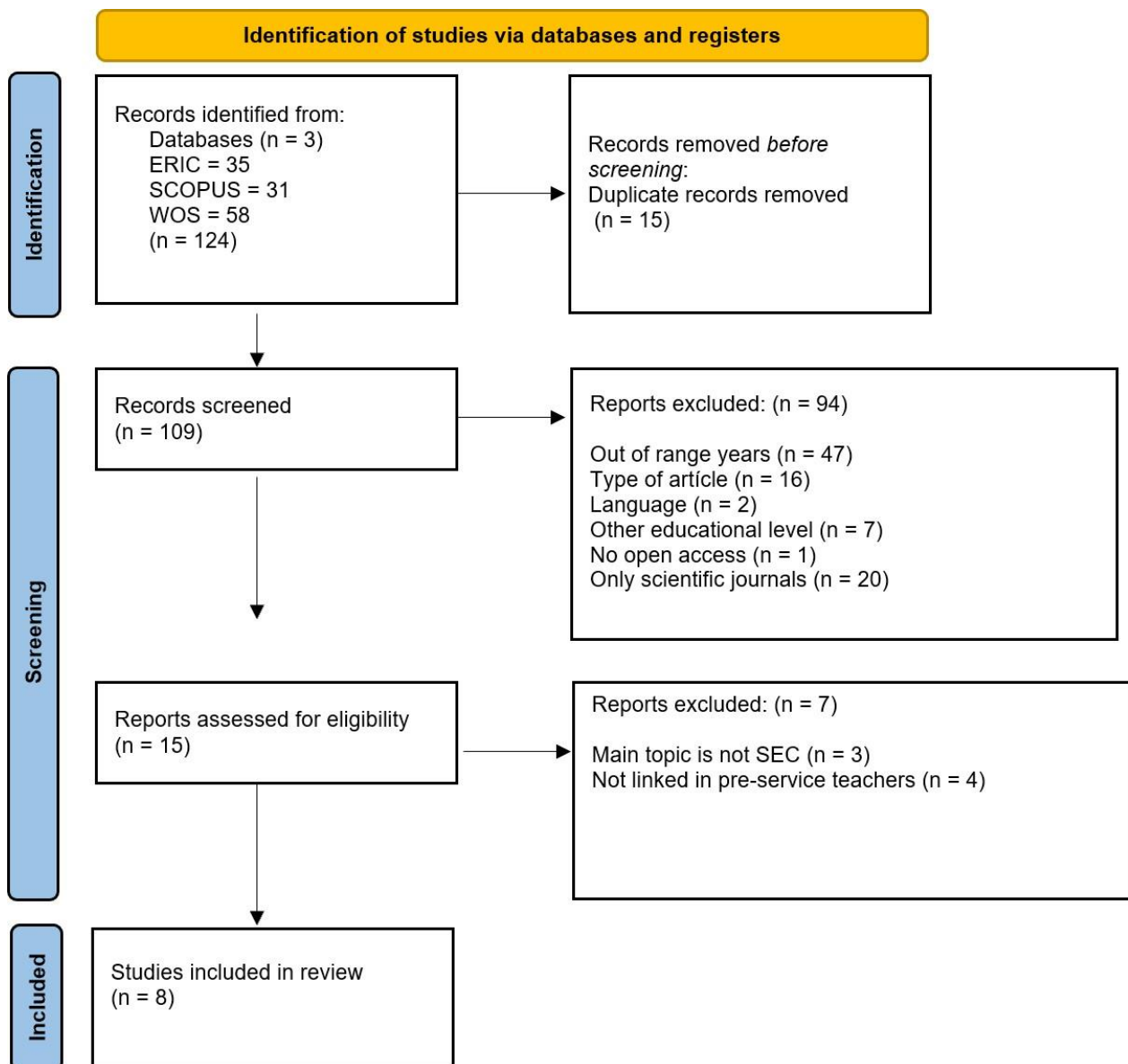


Figure 1. Flowchart of the study selection process according to the PRISMA guideline. Source: own elaboration.

A description of the studies is presented in terms of country, type of design, and sample size in Table 1, and the competencies worked along the programmes; the comparison of the methodology and techniques used in Table 2; and, finally, an analysis of the effectiveness of the interventions, limitations, and recommendations.

The interventions were implemented using active and interactive methodologies, focusing on reflection and the use of collaborative dynamics and techniques. In addition, both in-person and virtual environment programmes were delivered, the latter supported using simulations and avatars. Most programmes were executed over the course of an academic semester.

SEC education programmes for pre-service teachers emphasize the development of competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation, relationship skills, collaboration, and decision-making. These programmes are based on various theoretical models, including Scheff's (1990) Interpersonal Relationships Theory, Mayer and Salovey's (1997) Emotional Intelligence Model, Gibbs' (1988) Reflection Model, and the Social-Emotional Learning Model proposed by Shriver and Weissberg (2020). Among the techniques applied, SCAM-

PER (Mosqueda, 2021) and CASEL Guide (2015), simulation-based learning and portfolios stand out. Regarding duration, most of the intervention programmes were developed over the course of an academic semester.

Table 1. Characteristics of the studies analysed.

Number	Authors	Programmes	Country	Participants	Design
1	Aspelin and Jönsson (2019)	Relational Competence	Sweden	6	Qualitative
2	Schoeps et al. (2020)	Emotional Education	Spain	135	Mixed
3	Huerta and Vicario (2021)	Online pilot programmes	México	32	Pre-experimental with post-test
4	ElSayary and Mohebi (2025)	Socio-Emotional, Technological, and Metacognitive Knowledge (STM-K)	United Arab Emirates	112	Mixed
5	Kasperski and Crispel (2022)	Simulation-based learning to the development of communication skills	Israel	40	Mixed
6	Zych et al. (2022)	Innovation project to promote social and emotional skills	Spain	322	Quasi-experimental
7	Caires et al. (2023)	Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)	Portugal	87	Phenomenological
8	Jönsson et al. (2024)	Relational Competence	Sweden	9	Mixed

Table 2. Socio-emotional dimensions most commonly targeted in the programmes.

Author	SEC	Theoretical Model	Methodology	Time
Aspelin and Jönsson (2019)	Relational competence: communicative, socio-emotional, and differentiation	Interpersonal Relationships Theory (Scheff, 1990)	Videos and texts	Semester
Schoeps et al. (2020)	Emotional perception, expression, emotional understanding, and empathy	Emotional Intelligence Model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997)	Individual and group reflection	Course
Huerta and Vicario (2021)	Self-awareness, self-regulation, interpersonal relations, decision-making, and leadership	Emotional Intelligence Model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997)	SCAMPER, online socializing	Course
ElSayary and Mohebi (2025)	Emotional awareness, communication, and collaboration	Reflection Model (Gibbs', 1988)	Reflection, TIC, portfolio	Semester
Kasperski and Crispel (2022)	Empathy, emotional control, assertiveness, and collaboration	Simulation-based learning (SBL)	Simulation actors, videos	Course
Zych et al. (2022)	Empathy, understanding, and emotional regulation	Active and interactive	Role-playing, cooperatives work	Semester
Caires et al. (2023)	Self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, and decision-making	Social-emotional learning (SEL) model (Shriver & Weissberg, 2020).	CASEL, emotional portfolio	Semester
Jönsson et al. (2024)	Relational competence: communicative, socio-emotional, and differentiation	Interpersonal Relationships Theory (Scheff, 1990); social bond	Simulation, videos, and avatars	Course

4. Discussion

These education programmes, also known as socio-emotional education programmes, share a common main objective to prepare teachers to recognize their own and others' emotions, seeking proper self-regulation, which fosters positive social interaction with other members of the educational community. For pre-service teachers, this represents a valuable training complement, very useful for becoming emotionally intelligent professionals. These programmes focus on managing emotional and social skills effectively through adapted practical sessions, where self-reflection is the mainstay of the experience. A practice-based approach gives teachers the opportunity to test the fundamental teaching practices they have learned, receive feedback, and refine them. Sessions are typically conducted using an active and cooperative methodologies that encourages experiential learning, simulation, and self-regulation techniques. The participants work in learning scenarios that model situations faced by teachers in their daily work, thus encouraging them to experience emotions and work-related stress in the educational environment. During this simulation process, participants analyse and discuss the events and circumstances with their peers and reflect on their own socio-emotional skills. This enhances the quality of social relationships and the holistic development of individuals, making learning more significant.

This section presents the SEC education programmes selected from the literature search to improve emotional skills for pre-service teachers. The interventions carried out both abroad and in Spain are described in a systematic and rigorous manner, proving the effectiveness of emotional education. The analysis demonstrates that there is no design uniformity, as there is a wide variety in duration, frequency of sessions, intervention objectives, and several teaching strategies or methodologies, as can be seen in more detail in Table 2.

Strategies Employed in the Programmes

The Program on the Relational Competence of Pre-Service Teachers ([Aspelin & Jönsson, 2019](#)) is based on [Scheff's \(1990\)](#) Theory of Interpersonal Relationships. In this model, the quality of the social bond between members of the educational community is considered essential, which implies lasting emotional connections due to good interpersonal communication. Relational competence is valued as a key competence, on the same level as didactic and classroom management/leadership competences. Teachers' relational competence is conceptualized in the teacher–student relationship and encompasses socio-emotional, communicative, and differentiation (degree of closeness in relationships) competences. [Jönsson et al. \(2024\)](#) presented a new programme, that continued this line of research for the development and improvement of teachers' relational competence. It was applied as a pedagogical tool to evaluate personal relationships and social interaction in pre-service teachers. As support for the improvement and teaching performance, they introduced two different strategies, video simulations and virtual simulations with avatars, with the intention of promoting reflective capacity, identifying possible deficiencies and enhancing skills.

The Emotional Education Programme for Teachers (MADEMO in Spanish) focused on expanding teachers' resources to implement emotional education in their classrooms ([Schoeps et al., 2020](#)). It is based on [Mayer and Salovey's \(1997\)](#) Intelligence Model as a tool to develop specifically four socio-emotional dimensions, along with transversal elements such as modelling, scaffolding, and meaningful learning. The authors proposed the achievement of a skill set that ranges from the most basic psychological processes (perception and understanding of emotions) to the most complex ones (regulation, expression, empathy, and promotion of emotional and intellectual growth). The working dynamics were executed through exploration, dialogue, and reflection on the importance of these competencies in the integral development of individuals. They were useful for

strengthening teacher–student interaction and fostering emotional self-regulation inside and outside the classroom.

Huerta and Vicario (2021) displayed a pilot virtual education programme on socio-affective competencies using SCAMPER technique (Mosqueda, 2021). This technique promotes the generation of innovative ideas to solve complex topics. It basically involves exploring creativity from different perspectives that give rise to the acronym (replace, combine, adapt, modify, add, eliminate, and reduce). This virtual programme develops sequential activities that strengthen socialization, cooperative work, and the ability to assertively express emotions, empowering individuals to become self-aware and capable of facing difficulties and making decisions through dialogue and debate with others.

ElSayary and Mohebi (2025) highlighted the importance of integrating socio-emotional, technological, and metacognitive knowledge in pre-service teachers' education. The theoretical basis is the Gibbs' Cycle (Gibbs, 1988), which is a guide for critical reflection on emotions during past situations, for personal and professional development, widely used in education. It is structured in several stages: detailed description of the situation, expression of feelings and emotions during, objective evaluation, conclusion about what happened, and proposal of possible actions to improve. This programme combines Gibbs' reflective model, to learn from experience, with the electronic portfolio, as an evaluation strategy, where practical work, videos, and other useful elements for feedback are stored. The activities included a variety of ICT applications, such as video recording, creation of animated stories, interactive presentations, games, questionnaires, and videos with augmented reality applications for education.

Kasperski and Crispel (2022) incorporated simulation-based learning (SBL) as a methodology for developing basic interpersonal communication skills in educators and teachers, especially empathy, emotional control, assertiveness, and collaboration. Simulation created an emotionally appropriate learning space where participants confront and perfect their interpersonal skills. In each session, professional actors and one participant actively participated, while the rest were observers and offered constructive peer feedback to their colleagues in the subsequent analysis. Conflict situations were recreated, expressly designed to subject the participant to problematic interactions, with tensions and complaints, within a simulated dialogue with a student displaying misbehaviour.

In Zych et al. (2022)'s paper, an innovation project is proposed for the promotion of social and emotional skills, approached from the perspective of improving coexistence and preventing violence. Skills such as empathy, social skills, and emotional understanding and management were promoted. The methodology consisted first of teaching theoretical and practical content on these skills, and, subsequently, participants were asked to design materials, activities, and tasks contextualized in different subjects for their future students, but with the requirement of using practical and interactive dynamics such as role-playing and collaborative groups.

The Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programme (Caires et al., 2023) is based on the idea that when teachers experience adequate socialization in the workplace, they feel more satisfied and committed to their teaching, their psychological and mental well-being improves, and they create more favourable learning environments for their students. This programme is supported by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Model (CASEL Guide, 2015). It is an initiative of professionals in the fields of educational research and practice, whose main objective is to promote the adoption and implementation of education programmes in SEC. This model focuses specifically on five domains (CASEL Guide, 2015): self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. This programme uses an electronic portfolio because it is

very useful for gathering evidence of the emotional dynamics experienced, and it help participants reflect on what they have learned.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the conclusions emphasise the relevance of socio-emotional education programmes as a key component in initial teacher training. These initiatives not only promote self-awareness and self-regulation; they also strengthen the interpersonal skills that are essential for effective teaching practice. At the same time, this review identifies gaps and limitations that highlight the need for further research in this field.

The methodologies and techniques used in socio-emotional development programmes for teachers aim not only to improve educators' personal skills but also to empower them to foster these skills in their students, thereby creating a more effective and emotionally healthy learning environment, supporting students in their own emotional experience and regulation.

5.1. Strategies Most Effective for Developing SEC Teacher Education

The success of socio-emotional programmes for future teachers is reflected in the strengthening of their ability to establish strong pedagogical connections, manage diverse classrooms with a wide diversity of students, and address the emotional challenges inherent in teaching practice. The programmes analysed have shown notable success in the development of SEC and have demonstrated a positive impact on multiple dimensions in initial training. Among the most notable influential factors are (1) the experiential and reflective approach of the methodologies employed; (2) the integration of strategies that promote self-reflection through practical, dynamic, and group sessions; and, finally, (3) the continuity and consistency of the interventions, as opposed to isolated or ad hoc actions.

In the intervention programme focused on relational competence (Aspelin & Jönsson, 2019), the main achievement was raising awareness of the importance of interpersonal bonds with students. The programme increased participants' awareness of their own relational practices and promoted a reflective analysis of them. It also helped future teachers begin to recognize their strengths and opportunities for improvement when communicating, distinguish between healthy and dysfunctional relationships, and gain a deeper understanding of their own and other people's emotions in the educational context. The most developed competencies were effective communication, interpersonal differentiation, and socio-emotional skills, and the ability to gain a deeper understanding of their own and other people's emotions in the educational context. The most developed competencies were effective communication, interpersonal differentiation, and socio-emotional skills.

Subsequently, the group led by Jönsson et al. (2024) implemented a practical programme again oriented toward teachers' relational competence, but now structured around three key dimensions: communication, interpersonal differentiation, and socio-emotional competence. Methodologies based on audiovisual resources and animation with avatars made it possible to simulate and enrich real-life teaching–learning situations, resulting in more personalized and immersive education for participants. The results demonstrated improved relationships with positive and productive bonds, and these results were simultaneously reflected in higher academic performance and a more favourable learning environment. Furthermore, the programme highlighted the importance of preventing negative relationships in the classroom, given their detrimental influence on students' behaviour and development.

The programme called the Assessment of Emotional Education Programme for Teachers (MADEMO) (Schoeps et al., 2020) reported significant improvements in the identification of both their own and others' feelings, as well as in the recognition of unpleasant

emotions and understanding the circumstances that trigger them. The incorporation of new emotional self-regulation strategies allowed them to deal with stressful situations more appropriately and consciously, in addition to improving social interaction, strengthening the emotional climate in the classroom, and reducing the emotional exhaustion associated with teaching. The programme also promoted greater emotional awareness and the use of effective strategies for regulating emotions in educational contexts.

Huerta and Vicario (2021) explored innovative strategies to strengthen the socio-affective competencies of university students in the context of virtual classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme demonstrated improvements in students' mood, generated spaces for emotional reflection, and strengthened social interaction in virtual environments. Distance education was humanized, promoting emotional expression, dialogue between peers, and the identification of emotional needs that required professional attention. The SCAMPER technique made it possible to transform everyday activities into more creative, motivating, and effective experiences for students. Likewise, a significant strengthening of the SEC was achieved by promoting interaction, recognition, and expression of their emotions more easily, which allowed participants to manage situations of stress and anxiety and express themselves with greater confidence. Another relevant achievement was the socialization among members of the educational community, who, by replacing physical spaces with virtual interaction environments, reinforced collaboration.

In the programme "Promoting Socio-Emotional, Technological, and Metacognitive Knowledge through Electronic Portfolios" (ElSayary & Mohebi, 2025), pre-service teachers demonstrated significant development of these skills due to the effective integration of digital tools and multimodal feedback. Improvements in reflective skills, independent use of technological resources for teaching, and understanding of their own emotions and cognitive processes were evident. Among the competencies with best results were collaborative work, self-assessment, independent learning, mastery of technological tools, in addition to promoting meaningful interaction with mentors and peers and critical analysis of their own teaching practice.

The Preservice Teachers' Perspectives on the Contribution of Simulation-Based Learning to the Development of Communication Skills programme (Kasperski & Crispel, 2022) was successful in providing a meaningful, realistic, and transformative learning experience. Participants perceived simulation-based learning as useful and particularly highlighted the value of the feedback they received, allow them to reflect on their own performance, identify their weaknesses, and develop their skills. Furthermore, pre-service teachers gained practical knowledge about interpersonal communication and increased their confidence in handling real-life classroom situations. The most successfully developed competency was effective interpersonal communication.

The programme "Emotionally and Socially Competent Teachers: Innovations for Promoting Social and Emotional Competencies in Students of Education Sciences" (Zych et al., 2022) obtained positive results, demonstrating a significant improvement in socio-emotional competencies, attributed to an innovative methodology focused on active practice and participation. The experimental group developed greater emotional awareness, self-regulation, communication skills, and a notable improvement in collaborative work for conflict resolution.

Caires et al. (2023) implemented an Emotional Educational Programme in initial teacher training. The intervention fostered emotional self-reflection, recognition of complex emotions, and experience-based learning, which contributed to strengthening a sense of belonging, encouraging connecting with peers, and promoting more empathetic learning environments. Participants perceived this experience as transformative, as it enhanced emotional literacy and sense of interpersonal connection, as well as a feeling of belonging to new

communities and networks of educators. The programme enabled pre-service teachers to develop a deeper understanding of their emotions, greater open-mindedness to emotional expression, and skills to manage conflicts in the classroom. This education provided them greater confidence to take on the new roles, tasks, and responsibilities involved in initial teacher education. However, it is important to note that some studies include participants with very wide age ranges, for example, 18–25, 19–43, or even 22–62 years, representing a significant methodological limitation. This heterogeneity hinders the replicability of the studies, as the conditions of implementation are not comparable, and it also restricts the possibility of making direct comparisons between programmes. Consequently, the results should be interpreted with caution, since such varied ages may influence both the effectiveness and the generalisability of the findings.

5.2. Limitations of Programmes

Regarding the limitations identified in the reviewed studies, the following stand out: (1) The number of participants, as almost all the programmes were small-scale, and the duration of the programme stand out. Both characteristics hinder the generalisation of the results. (2) Most of the analysed programmes lasted one academic semester; however, in some cases, they were short, intensive courses delivered in just a few days. Short, intensive programmes can contribute to the development of socio-emotional competencies (SEC), but a more extended learning approach, lasting several weeks, is recommended. In fact, some studies suggest that the effective development of a competency requires approximately thirteen weeks of education to achieve lasting results ([Lozano-Peña et al., 2023](#)). (3) Another limitation was that trainee teachers received feedback from the facilitator or their peers. However, it would have been more enriching to receive feedback from an active teacher or one with greater professional experience, as this could have provided a more contextualised and practical perspective. (4) The small number of studies included in the final analysis (eight) was another limitation, reflecting the scarcity of recent research specifically addressing the issue of socio-emotional competencies (SEC) in trainee teachers. (5) The reviewed research shows a wide dispersion in the age ranges of participants. (6) The diversity of strategies employed and innovative methodologies, such as digital simulations, avatar-based experiences, and semi-structured interviews, allowed for the observation of SEC in contexts closer to professional practice. Closely related to this limitation, the literature shows that intervention programmes complemented with ICT tools stimulate greater skills development and emotional intelligence. For example, the use of avatars, as mentioned by [Jönsson et al. \(2024\)](#), allows for the simulation of real classroom situations. However, it may present challenges in physical interaction among participants, building social relationships, conflict resolution, and socio-emotional development. In contrast, face-to-face programmes, such as that of [Schoeps et al. \(2020\)](#), in which participants attended courses or workshops with direct physical contact with their peers, have demonstrated better outcomes in strengthening skills related to social interaction, active listening, non-verbal communication, self-awareness, and self-regulation. (7) The use of self-reports in evaluating SEC. While self-reports allow for reflection on performance and self-learning, helping to identify areas for improvement, they also have drawbacks by creating a bias between what the participant does, thinks, and says, which may lead to an underestimation of actual competencies in relation to social desirability.

5.3. Recommendations

A set of recommendations is proposed to guide the design, implementation, and evaluation of socio-emotional competence (SEC) development programmes within the context of teacher education. These recommendations aim to overcome the limitations of

traditional approaches, which have tended to relegate such competences to a secondary role despite their positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning processes (Lozano-Peña et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2023).

The assessment of SEC is essential for identifying areas in need of improvement and for determining which strategies should be implemented to strengthen these competences (Pérez-Escoda et al., 2019). It is recommended to establish systems of continuous evaluation, both formative and summative, which allow for monitoring participants' progress and dynamically adjusting socio-emotional learning strategies. The monitoring of socio-emotional development is reasonably feasible through a combination of self-reports, performance observations, and behavioural assessments (Lozano-Peña et al., 2021). This approach is widely endorsed in educational research, as it enables a deeper understanding of the complexity of these competences. Evaluation instruments should integrate both qualitative and quantitative indicators of emotional development and classroom climate. The literature on SEC highlights the importance of combining different instruments and sources of information to achieve more comprehensive and contextualised evaluation. For example, an experiential portfolio can be used to collect experiences and challenges throughout the learning process (Caires et al., 2023). Continuous programme evaluation ensures both the relevance and the impact of education on the improvement of teaching practice.

Therefore, the urgency of integrating (SEC) transversally and explicitly into teacher education curricula at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels has been emphasised (Wang et al., 2024). These competences should not be addressed as isolated content disconnected from teaching but rather integrated as a core curriculum present across all areas and practical experiences. Teachers require specific education in two key dimensions (Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2022): intrapersonal and interpersonal competences, which are essential for fostering interpersonal connections in the classroom and creating positive learning environments (Devis-Rozental & Farquharson, 2020). It is therefore crucial to implement activities that enhance self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, receptive communication, and basic social skills (Pérez-Escoda et al., 2019).

Socio-emotional learning necessitates the implementation of methodologies such as collaborative and experiential practical sessions, always connected to and contextualised within students' realities (Palomera et al., 2019; Puertas et al., 2018). The objective is to promote reflection not only on one's own feelings but also on those of pupils. Strategies such as guided critical reflection, experiential workshops, and portfolios support students in internalising socio-emotional skills from a practical perspective. Additional active methodologies include the flipped classroom, cooperative learning, gamification, project-based learning (PBL), inquiry-based learning, game-based learning (GBL), and service-learning (SL). In this regard, the longitudinal study by Hernández-Barco et al. (2024) implemented a metacognitive and emotional programme designed to strengthen self-regulation, self-efficacy, and emotional management in future science teachers. The intervention, conducted over three consecutive academic years (2018–2021), incorporated methodologies such as PBL, inquiry, GBL, and SL. The results indicate a significant increase in positive emotions, a higher perception of self-efficacy, and an improvement in participants' scientific knowledge.

Thus, active methodologies can be integrated transversally into teacher education subjects through specific modules. For instance, in science didactics, inquiry and PBL allow trainee teachers to design experiments and school research projects; in mathematics education, gamification and GBL foster playful problem-solving; in language and literature, flipped classrooms and cooperative learning promote critical text analysis and collaborative production; and in courses such as Seminar on the Development of Social Educational Projects or Programme for Working with Parents, service-learning is key to linking theory with community practice. In this way, each methodology is contextualised

within its disciplinary field, fostering both academic and socio-emotional competences in pre-service teachers.

Nevertheless, in large classes, the implementation of active methodologies poses significant challenges regarding individual learning monitoring, assessment, and feedback, as it is difficult for a single teacher to provide personalised and authentic attention to all students. Group size may also generate imbalances in participation, particularly in gamification, inquiry-based learning, GBL, or service-learning experiences. It is therefore advisable to use digital platforms such as Socrative for monitoring activities or Mentimeter for real-time progress tracking, in combination with the organisation of students into micro-groups with clearly defined roles. Likewise, tools such as CoRubrics, Rubistar, or Quick Rubric, combined with self-, peer-, and hetero-assessment strategies, facilitate learning monitoring, promote equitable participation, and help maintain pedagogical quality even in high-density classrooms.

The combination of active methodologies and ICT tools enhances both motivation and education effectiveness, as digital tools such as online platforms, educational social networks, and collaborative applications are highly useful for developing communication, empathy, and problem-solving skills. For example, portfolios (ElSayary & Mohebi, 2025) and avatar simulations (Jönsson et al., 2024) can strengthen interactive and personalised learning, improving competences such as self-awareness and emotional regulation (Caires et al., 2023). In addition, the use of ICT during initial teacher education provides the added benefit of improving digital competence, thereby preparing future teachers more effectively for integrating ICT into their teaching practice. Virtual learning environments enhance participants' emotional experience, as digital techniques help reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness while simultaneously fostering cognitive learning and promoting a more supportive atmosphere for online education (Lapidot-Lefler, 2022).

However, the implementation of technology in developing countries is hindered by economic constraints. According to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, in 2021, public expenditure on education in Latin America and the Caribbean represented a regional median of 4.9% of GDP. Within this context, public universities in the region usually allocate between 4% and 5% of GDP, thus representing a considerable challenge for reducing the digital divide. This limitation affects access to adequate connectivity, the availability of technological infrastructure, and education in digital competences for both teachers and students. It is therefore imperative to strengthen state investment in educational infrastructure, foster strategic partnerships between universities and private sector enterprises, promote low-cost and highly accessible models, and ensure public policies that support digital equity.

Another important recommendation concerns the cultural contextualisation of education programmes. Contextualisation entails adapting the content and objectives of the programme to the specific realities of the educational environment and the needs of teachers and their students. Strategies should respond to the cultural, social, and emotional particularities of learners and their contexts. Programme design must take into account the sociocultural characteristics and specific challenges of the educational community (Devis-Rozental & Farquharson, 2020). The incorporation of intercultural and community-based approaches can substantially enhance the relevance and impact of such programmes (García-Martínez et al., 2021). Contextualisation also requires flexibility to adjust modules according to emerging needs and to promote the collective construction of solutions to local challenges.

It is essential to align these programmes with institutional policies, thereby ensuring their sustainability and coherence within the university setting (Wu et al., 2023). Such coordination will foster the creation of emotional learning communities in which students

share experiences, reflect collaboratively, and build networks beyond the classroom. These guidelines are expected to lead to improvements in teacher education and to greater satisfaction among pre-service teachers, aligning more closely with current educational needs. A planning process centred on programme outcomes will help to avoid displacing other objectives and ensure sustained educational progress. Finally, it is also important that the implementation of socio-emotional programmes, in addition to focusing on design and the use of active strategies, takes into account teachers' perspectives in order to understand how they perceive such programmes and how they apply them in their daily practice (Cooper et al., 2023).

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