

Article

Socio-Emotional Competence and Self-Efficacy of Future Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract: The assessment and development of teachers' socio-emotional competence has become a topic of interest in education. Within the classroom, this competence is demonstrated not only in teaching but also in student development. The present study addressed the relationship between socio-emotional competence and self-efficacy, as perceived by prospective secondary-school teachers ($n = 285$) studying for a master's degree in teacher training, and possible differences according to the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample. A descriptive, correlational and cross-sectional, survey-type method was followed. The instruments used were a previously validated socioemotional competence inventory, and an adapted version of the Teachers Self Efficacy Scale. The results showed an adequate level in most of the socio-emotional competencies studied and a high perception of self-efficacy, and both scales correlated positively. Higher levels of socioemotional competence were found in women and in teachers aged 40 to 50 with more teaching experience. The positive effect of experience in relation to self-efficacy being higher in women than in men was corroborated. We concluded that there is a need to develop the socio-emotional competence of trainee teachers to improve their teaching performance.

Keywords: socio-emotional competence; teacher self-efficacy; higher education; prospective secondary school teachers



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1. Introduction

Nowadays, the demands of teachers' professional careers extend beyond the demonstration of technical and professional competence into social and emotional competence. These are necessary competences to handle various classroom situations, such as managing conflicts during classes, intervening to address learning difficulties, promoting inclusion, and performing planning and administrative tasks [1,2]. This expansion of competences was exacerbated by the pandemic of 2020 as teaching shifted from face-to-face to online teaching [3,4]. (Chitra, 2020; Hadar et al., 2020). The need to respond to student needs and manage educational institutions forced teachers to overcome their fear of change, adapt to uncertainty, manage frustration and develop a greater tolerance for individual differences, all of which fall under emotional management [5]. Remaining balanced while coping with drastic changes in education, health, sanitation conditions and in life in general demands socio-emotional competence, self-regulation, stress management, empathy, adaptability, flexibility, and problem-solving. Similarly, teachers require self-confidence and a positive perception of techno-pedagogical competencies [4,6,7] to teach effectively, and this contributes to teacher efficacy. This study analyses the perception that teachers-in-training have toward their socio-emotional competencies and the relationship with teacher self-efficacy.

Theoretical Framework

The profession of secondary-school teaching requires specific skills to be able to manage adolescents. At this stage, disruptive and violent behaviour, consumption of toxic

substances, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships are common. These behaviours are also manifested in educational centres as well as classes and become a source of stress for the teacher [8,9] in addition to stress related to keeping up to date with pedagogical knowledge and strategies, becoming overworked due to correcting homework, classroom diversity or burnout syndrome, all of which demand emotional self-regulation [10–12]. Facing all these situations requires assertive responses, awareness and emotional expression to maintain internal balance. At the same time, one must be able to show empathy and social sensitivity, particularly toward adolescents, considering all the conflicts that are typical at this evolutionary stage [8,13]. For all these reasons, within the educational field and especially in secondary education, the study of socio-emotional competence in teachers is important.

In this particular study, we adopted the approach of Mikulic et al. (2015) [14], who relied on Bisquerra's concept of socio-emotional competence, as a "set of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to understand, express and appropriately regulate emotional phenomena" (2003, p. 22) [15]. It implies that this competence can be acquired throughout life by putting knowledge, attitudes and personality traits into practice. It takes into account the interaction between a person and the environment and highlights interpersonal relationships, pointing out that they are intertwined with emotions. In this regard, he adds, "listening and the capacity for empathy open the door to pro-social attitudes, which are the antipodes of racist, xenophobic or sexist attitudes, which cause so many social problems" (p. 31). It also highlights the importance of learning and developing these competencies.

Consequently, the competencies apply to education [16]. Based on an in-depth review of the literature, Mikulic et al. (2015) [14] defined nine dimensions of socio-emotional competence and integrated those that are common in different studies [17–20]. They defined this multidimensional construct as consisting of the following dimensions: assertiveness, self-efficacy, autonomy, emotional awareness, emotional expression, empathy, optimism, pro-sociality and emotional regulation. They also validated a questionnaire for the assessment of these dimensions in different contexts [21].

As noted above, a teacher's socio-emotional competence plays an important role in the relationships established in the classroom and the method of teaching [22]. Teachers who acquire this competence are in a better position to relate positively with the educational community, thereby increasing the effectiveness of education [16,23]. In this same respect, socio-emotional competence is a focus of attention in teacher training, because it is considered to be a means to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the development of students' pro-social behaviour [24,25]. In fact, teachers trained in socio-emotional competencies have an important role to play in promoting them among students to influence sustainable social development [2,4,6]. It has been proven that the self-perception of socio-emotional competence is related to a positive classroom climate [26]. Various research has shown the importance of teacher training in these skills to prevent absenteeism, dropping out and disruptive classroom behaviour [27,28] and the need to consider the individual needs of all students (Llorent, López and Gavilán, 2012) [29]. It has been shown that the development of these competencies on students has a positive impact on learning, interpersonal relationships and academic performance [30,31]

In this respect, some authors consider the perception of self-efficacy to be one of the emotional competencies [14,32,33]. However, teacher self-efficacy has been considered as an element mainly related to the pedagogical and didactic skills that allow them to perform satisfactorily [7,34,35]. In addition, Covarrubias and Mendoza (2016) [36] highlighted that the feeling of positive self-efficacy has an impact on the use of various teaching strategies, on the adaptability of teaching methods towards the specific educational needs of students, on the efficient management of classroom conflicts and on the stimulation of students' participation in their own learning. This study applies this approach to teacher self-efficacy.

Previous studies established how the feeling of teacher self-efficacy affects students' ability to learn (Bandura, 1993) [37]. In fact, it favours inclusive behaviours between primary education teachers and students with special educational needs, but less so regarding

secondary-education teachers [7]. Fernández-Viciano and Fernández-Costales (2019) [34] found an inverse relationship between perceived self-efficacy in linguistic and methodological competencies in primary-school teachers. According to the socio-cognitive view from which this construct emerges [37,38], self-efficacy is strongly conditioned by the system of beliefs that people have regarding how things should be done and how they are expected to be done. The socio-cultural context, therefore, is important for the perception of self-efficacy. Hence, training plays a fundamental role in the self-awareness of teaching skills, which, at the same time, conditions the effort devoted to the motivation and execution of tasks [39].

Given the importance of the social implications of socio-emotional competencies and how teacher self-efficacy affects students, this study explored how prospective secondary-school teachers perceived themselves in relation to these two variables.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Design

In this research, a descriptive, correlational and cross-sectional survey-type methodological design was used to determine future teachers' perceptions of their level of socio-emotional competencies and teacher self-efficacy.

2.2. Objectives

Following the analysis of the problems associated with this area of study, the present research had the following general objective: to evaluate the relationship between socio-emotional competencies and self-perceived teaching effectiveness among students who are aspiring secondary-school teachers. For this, the following specific objectives were proposed:

- To explore the level of socio-emotional competencies and teacher self-efficacy using validated instruments;
- To determine whether socio-emotional competencies are significantly correlated with teacher self-efficacy;
- To determine possible differences in socio-emotional competencies and self-efficacy according to the socio-demographic variables of the prospective teachers.

Based on these objectives, we put forward the following hypotheses:

- Socio-emotional competencies correlate positively with teacher self-efficacy;
- Socio-demographic variables influence the self-perception of socio-emotional competence and the perception of teaching self-efficacy.

2.3. Population and Sample

The study population comprised students who attended an on-line master's degree program in teacher training for compulsory secondary education and baccalaureate, vocational training and language teaching ($n = 1100$), during the 2019–2020 academic year, at the International University of La Rioja. The sample used was non-probabilistic by convenience, and the resulting sample consisted of 285 students from different autonomous communities, (61.40% women and 38.60% men) aged between 20 and 63. In this respect, 28.4% were between 20 and 30, 40% between 31 and 40, 28.4% between 41 and 50, and 3.2% over 50. As for their level of education, 4.21% had a doctorate, 40.35% a master's degree, 53.68% a bachelor's degree, 0.35% had received intermediate vocational training and the remaining 0.35% had higher vocational training. With regard to previous teaching experience, 69.5% had none, 11.9% had less than 1 year, 9.8% 1–3 years, and 8.8% had 4 or more years.

The participants were informed of the objectives of the research and were guaranteed anonymity. All of them agreed.

2.4. Instrument

The previously validated Socioemotional Competence Inventory [14], a psychometric instrument, was used to collect information on the perception of the level of socio-emotional competence. It assesses the following nine competencies: self-efficacy (SE), optimism (OP), assertiveness (AS), emotional expression (EE), emotional awareness (EA), empathy (EM), emotional regulation (ER), pro-sociality (PR) and autonomy (AU). It consists of 72 items, rated according to a Likert scale (1, completely disagree; 2, disagree; 3, neither agree nor disagree; 4, agree; and 5, completely agree). A reliability analysis of the instrument was performed, obtaining a Cronbach's alpha of 0.932. Therefore, it was considered that the instrument had adequate reliability.

The instrument used to measure teacher self-efficacy was an adapted version of the Teachers Self Efficacy Scale (TSES) of Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk (2001) [40] by Covarrubias and Mendoza (2016) [36]; this tool is valid and reliable and explains the theory of teacher self-efficacy, which is divided into the following four dimensions: efficacy in teaching and learning strategies (ETS), efficacy in classroom management (ECM), efficacy in student engagement (ESE) and efficacy in attending to students' uniqueness (EAS). It consists of 17 items that are rated according to a Likert scale (1, not at all; 2, not at all, 3, somewhat; 4, quite a lot; and 5, very much,). The reliability analysis of the instrument was carried out, obtaining a Cronbach's alpha of 0.919. Therefore, the instrument was considered adequately reliable.

2.5. Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

The questionnaire was sent out to students online upon completion of the master's degree in teacher's training, and the study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines for research.

Firstly, descriptive statistics were calculated to determine the general characteristics of the selected sample, as well as the scores of the dimensions of socio-emotional competence and teacher self-efficacy.

In addition, correlational analyses were carried out to determine the relation of socio-emotional competencies to teacher-perceived self-efficacy, using Spearman's rho correlation coefficient.

Possible differences in the dimensions of socio-emotional competence and self-efficacy were considered by taking into account socio-demographic variables such as sex, age of the teacher and years of teaching experience. Non-parametric tests, the Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis test, were used since the variables did not conform to a normal distribution. The normality of the sample was determined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with the Lilliefors correction and the Shapiro-Wilk test.

In addition, for all significant comparisons, effect sizes were calculated using r , Pearson's correlation coefficient, for two groups, or the η^2 statistic when more than two groups were considered. Values of $r = 0.10$ were considered as low; $r = 0.3$ medium; $r = 0.5$ large; and $r = 0.7$ very large [41]. For η^2 for more than two groups, values around 0.01 had a small effect, 0.06 had a medium effect and if it reached 0.14, it was considered a large effect. Data were organised, coded and analysed using the SPSS 26.0 statistical package.

3. Results

A descriptive analysis of the self-perception scale of socio-emotional competencies was carried out, showing that the most predominant were emotional awareness (EA 4.10), optimism (OP 4.09), pro-sociality (PR 3.95) and empathy (EM 3.88) (Figure 1).

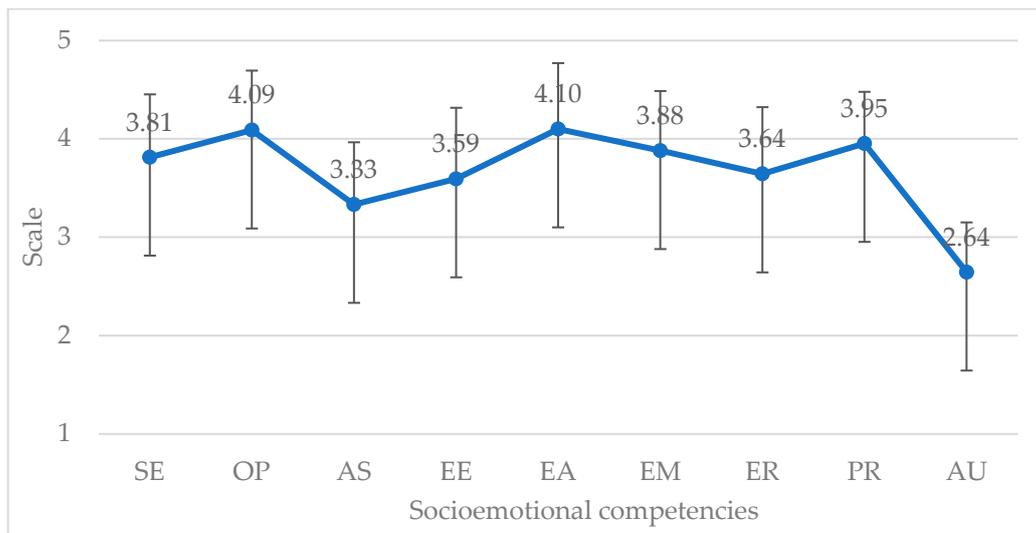


Figure 1. Means and standard deviations of socio-emotional competencies.

On the other hand, the results of the teacher self-efficacy scale (Figure 2) showed a high level of self-efficacy given that all the dimensions reached values above 3.6. Specifically, we found that the dimensions in which students had the highest scores were those related to student engagement (ESE 4.18) and teaching and learning strategies (ETS 4.12).

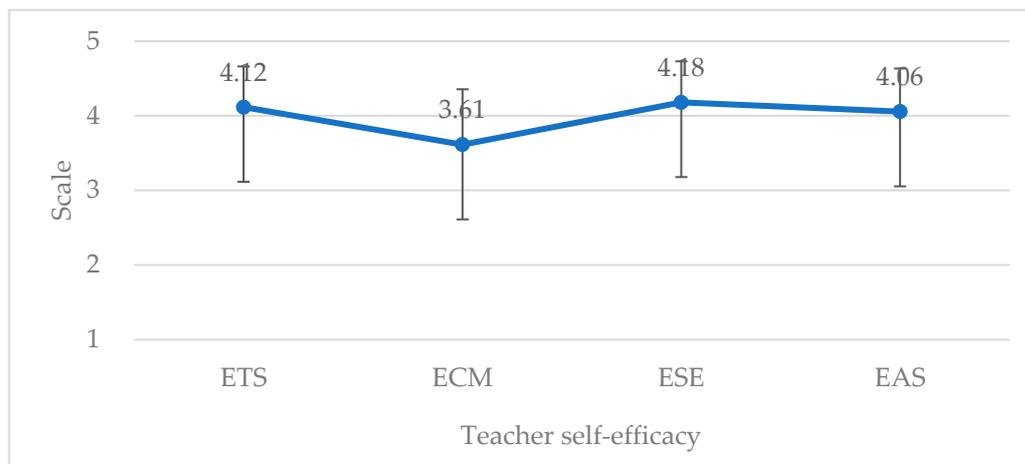


Figure 2. Means and standard deviations of the dimensions of the teacher self-efficacy scale.

We studied whether there was any correlation between socioemotional competence and teacher self-efficacy. To do so, we first applied the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test with the Lilliefors correction and the Shapiro–Wilk test to check whether the scores on both scales had a normal distribution. The results indicated that for the teacher self-efficacy scale, $p < 0.05$, while for the socio-emotional competence, $p > 0.05$ (Table 1). Therefore, non-parametric tests were performed, specifically Spearman’s rho test, so as to correlate the results.

Table 1. Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test.

	Statistical	gl	<i>p</i>
Socio-emotional competence	0.030	285	0.200
Teacher self-efficacy	0.054	285	0.042

As can be seen in Table 2, all the dimensions of teacher self-efficacy correlated, to a greater or lesser extent, with some socio-emotional competencies. Among them, we can highlight how efficacy in teaching and learning strategies (ETS) correlated more with certain socio-emotional competencies such as self-efficacy ($r = 0.336$) and emotional regulation ($r = 0.209$). Efficacy in classroom management (ECM) only correlated with emotional expression ($r = 0.285$), assertiveness ($r = 0.274$), optimism ($r = 0.270$) and self-efficacy ($r = 0.228$). On the other hand, efficacy in student engagement (ESE) had higher correlations with self-efficacy ($r = 0.312$), optimism ($r = 0.308$) and emotional expression ($r = 0.268$). Finally, efficacy in attending to students' uniqueness (EAS) correlated to a higher degree with assertiveness ($r = 0.308$), self-efficacy ($r = 0.253$) and emotional expression ($r = 0.250$).

Table 2. Correlations between socio-emotional competencies and teacher self-efficacy.

Socio-Emotional Competencies		Teacher Self-Efficacy			
		ETS	ECM	ESE	EAS
Self-efficacy	Correlation coefficient	0.336 **	0.228 **	0.312 **	0.253 **
	Sig. (bilateral)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Optimism	Correlation coefficient	0.279 **	0.270 **	0.308 **	0.241 **
	Sig. (bilateral)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Assertiveness	Correlation coefficient	0.242 **	0.274 **	0.236 **	0.308 **
	Sig. (bilateral)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Emotional expression	Correlation coefficient	0.234 **	0.285 **	0.268 **	0.250 **
	Sig. (bilateral)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Emotional awareness	Correlation coefficient	0.272 **	0.178 **	0.278 **	0.248 **
	Sig. (bilateral)	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.000
Empathy	Correlation coefficient	0.175 **	−0.010	0.162 **	0.083
	Sig. (bilateral)	0.003	0.865	0.006	0.161
Emotional regulation	Correlation coefficient	0.209 **	0.060	0.127 *	0.128 *
	Sig. (bilateral)	0.000	0.315	0.032	0.030
Pro-sociality	Correlation coefficient	0.189 **	0.068	0.184 **	0.154 **
	Sig. (bilateral)	0.001	0.250	0.002	0.009
Autonomy	Correlation coefficient	−0.148 *	0.067	−0.014	−0.102
	Sig. (bilateral)	0.012	0.261	0.812	0.084

** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. * The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Possible differences in socio-emotional competencies and teacher self-efficacy were examined by taking into account some of the socio-demographic variables such as sex, age and years of teaching experience. For this purpose and given that the variables did not fit a normal distribution, non-parametric tests were used, such as the Mann–Whitney U test for sex and the Kruskal–Wallis H-test for age and teaching experience.

To find out if there were differences in the socio-emotional competencies according to sex (Figure 3), the Mann–Whitney U test was applied. It was observed that women achieved a higher average range than men in all competencies. However, statistically significant differences were only established in the competencies of self-efficacy ($z = -2.091$, $p = 0.037$, $r = 0.12$), emotional expression ($z = -3.580$, $p = 0.000$, $r = 0.21$), emotional awareness ($z = -4.337$, $p = 0.000$, $r = 0.25$) and pro-sociality ($z = -3.432$, $p = 0.001$, $r = 0.20$), with low-effect sizes in all of them.

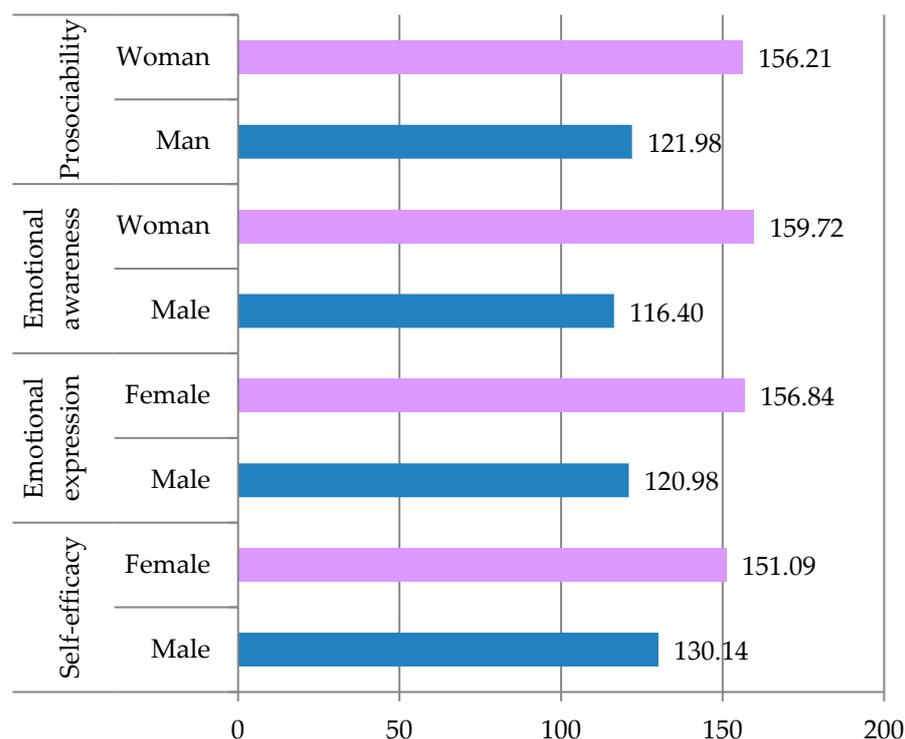


Figure 3. Average range of socio-emotional competencies according to sex.

The Kruskal–Wallis H-test was applied to analyse whether age had an influence on socio-emotional competencies, and statistically significant differences were found between the four established age ranges (20–30, 31–40, 41–50 and over 50), and some of the socio-emotional competencies such as self-efficacy ($p = 0.003$), optimism ($p = 0.001$), emotional expression ($p = 0.019$) and empathy ($p = 0.011$).

Looking at the average ranges (Table 3), the differences were the lowest for self-efficacy and optimism in the 20–30 range (124.87 and 116.88, respectively) and 41–50 (171.22 and 170.72, respectively). In the case of emotional expression, differences were found between 20–30 (129.07) and for those over 50 (189.89), which constitute the highest average range. As for empathy, differences were found between 41–50 (166.31) and over 50 (95.78), which was the highest average range.

Table 3. Average range of socio-emotional competencies according to age.

Competencies Socio-Emotional	Age	N	Average Range
Self-efficacy	20 to 30 years	81	124.87
	31 to 40 years	114	136.79
	41 to 50 years	81	171.22
	>50 years	9	130.78
Optimism	20 to 30 years	81	116.88
	31 to 40 years	114	141.67
	41 to 50 years	81	170.72
	>50 years	9	145.44
Expression emotional	20 to 30 years	81	129.07
	31 to 40 years	114	136.28
	41 to 50 years	81	161.17
	>50 years	9	189.89
Empathy	20 to 30 years	81	136.43
	31 to 40 years	114	134.83
	41 to 50 years	81	166.31
	>50 years	9	95.78

The Kruskal–Wallis H-test was applied and statistically significant differences were found between years of teaching experience and two of the socioemotional competencies. Optimism ($p = 0.029$) and pro-sociability ($p = 0.031$).

Observing the average ranges (Table 4), we can state that there were differences found in optimism between subjects with no experience (136.05) and those with 4 years or more (187.62), in favour of the latter. In the case of pro-sociability, differences were found between those with no experience (136.39) and those with between 1 and 3 years of experience (182.30), who constituted those with the highest average ranges.

Table 4. Average range of socio-emotional competencies according to years of teaching experience.

Competencies Socio-Emotional	Years of Teaching Experience	N	Average Range
Optimism	Inexperienced	198	136.05
	Less than one year	34	145.01
	1–3 years	28	149.84
	4 years or more	25	187.62
Pro-sociability	Inexperienced	198	136.39
	Less than one year	34	137.24
	1–3 years	28	182.30
	4 years or more	25	159.18

To assess whether sex had an influence on teacher self-efficacy (Table 5), the Mann–Whitney U test was applied, revealing that women achieved a higher average range compared to men in all dimensions, although they established statistically significant differences only in the IES dimension ($z = -2.338$, $p = 0.019$), with a low effect size ($r = 0.14$).

Table 5. Average range of teacher self-efficacy by sex.

Teacher Self-Efficacy	Sex	N	Average Range	Sum of Ranges	Z	Asymptotic Sign (Bilateral)	Effect Size
In Student Engagement (ESE)	Man	110	128.76	14,163.50	−2.338	0.019	0.14
	Woman	175	151.95	26,591.50			

Regarding the influence of age on teacher self-efficacy, no statistically significant differences were found.

Finally, we analysed whether years of teaching experience influenced teacher self-efficacy. We applied the Kruskal–Wallis H-test and found statistically significant differences between years of teaching experience and all dimensions of teacher self-efficacy ETS ($p = 0.013$), ECM ($p = 0.013$), ESE ($p = 0.001$) and EAS ($p = 0.003$).

Looking at the average ranges (Table 6), there were differences in the effectiveness in the ETS between subjects with no experience (134.38) and those with 4 years or more (188.60), in favour of the latter. Regarding ECM effectiveness, differences were found between those with no experience (134.12) and those with 4 or more years (186.90), who had the highest average range. On the other hand, in ESE effectiveness, differences were again found between those with no experience (133.55) and those with 4 years of experience or more (200.00) who reached a higher average range. Finally, in EAS effectiveness, we again found differences between those with no experience (132.03) and those with 4 years or more (187.22), with the latter having the highest average range.

Table 6. Average ranges of teacher self-efficacy as a function of years of teaching experience.

Teacher Self-Efficacy	Years of Teaching Experience	N	Average Range
In teaching and learning strategies (ETS)	Inexperienced	198	134.38
	less than one year	34	150.69
	1–3 years	28	153.88
	4 years or more	25	188.60
In classroom management (ECM)	Inexperienced	198	134.12
	Less than one year	34	149.10
	1–3 years	28	159.16
	4 years or more	25	186.90
In student engagement (ESE)	Inexperienced	198	133.55
	Less than one year	34	146.60
	1–3 years	28	154.55
	4 years or more	25	200.00
In attending to a student's uniqueness (EAS)	Inexperienced	198	132.03
	Less than one year	34	158.34
	1–3 years	28	162.46
	4 years or more	25	187.22

4. Discussion

Traditionally, the learning achievements of university students have focused on cognitive aspects. However, different studies have highlighted the influence of social and emotional skills on academic performance [23,30,31]. The assessment and development of socio-emotional competence has become a topic of interest in higher education. Specifically, the socio-emotional competence of future teachers influences the way they teach as well as the development of these competencies in their students [4,6,25]. For this reason, the present study addressed the relationship between socio-emotional competencies and teacher self-efficacy, as perceived by students upon their completion of the master's degree in teacher training for secondary education.

Firstly, an adequate level was determined in most of the socio-emotional competencies. The competencies that were above average were emotional awareness (knowledge of emotions), optimism (ability to maintain a positive attitude), pro-sociality (actions taken for the benefit of others) and empathy (reaction to the emotional state of others). It seemed that teachers developed fairly acceptable socio-emotional competencies, which could lead to emotionally competent students. However, the levels observed could be improved so as to be high or very high. These results were in line with those provided by Piovano et al. (2020) [23], who determined above-average levels in the emotional awareness and pro-social competencies in a study conducted with university students using the same instrument. In relation to these results, Rojas et al. (2017) [22] determined the need to strengthen emotional awareness, emotional regulation and social competencies in future teachers, given the impact they have on teaching, and determined high levels of emotional awareness but not of emotional regulation since no relationship was established between emotion, cognition and behaviour.

With regard to teacher self-efficacy related to the skill of the teaching staff, students perceived a high level of self-efficacy related to classroom teaching and learning strategies. A high level of self-efficacy was also perceived in relation to the involvement of students and the teacher's ability to motivate them, as well as the attention paid to the uniqueness of the students. The dimension of efficacy in classroom management was below average. The detected levels of teacher self-efficacy allowed for the use of varied teaching strategies to motivate students regardless of interests and needs [7–36]. This was important, as studies have concluded that the lack of adequate methodological strategies in novice teachers can determine their future professional practice and that they may even consider quitting teaching [42]. In any case, studies by Fernández-Viciano and Fernández-Costales

(2019) [34] determined that self-efficacy in trainee teachers is higher than in practising teachers, possibly due to direct classroom experiences. Teacher self-efficacy is an important construct in future teachers as it lasts over time and is resistant to change, acting as a long-term element in their professional practice.

With regard to the relationship of socio-emotional competencies to the self-efficacy of future secondary-school teachers, the two scales used showed a significant relationship between emotional expression (the ability to express thoughts and emotions clearly), emotional regulation (control of emotions), assertiveness (ability to express opposition appropriately), optimism, and teaching self-efficacy (ability to organise the class pedagogically, motivate students, and manage the class taking into consideration the uniqueness of the students). Similar results have been provided by Barrientos et al. (2020) [26] and Pegalajar and López (2015) [24] in a study of early childhood education teachers, in which they conclude that socio-emotional competencies may influence their classroom methodology, and by Llorent et al. (2012) [29], who related them with the ability to meet the individual needs of students.

In this study, the different nature of socio-emotional competencies and teaching efficacy in relation to sex, age and years of teaching experience was addressed. Women had higher levels in all socio-emotional competencies, with significant differences in self-efficacy (the ability to achieve desired goals), emotional expression, emotional awareness and pro-sociality. These results were in agreement with those of Piovano et al. (2020) [23], who found higher levels of emotional expression and pro-sociality in women and those of Llorent et al. (2020) [27], who found that women were more socio-emotionally competent than men, having higher scores in emotional self-awareness and pro-sociality. However, these authors found higher levels of emotional regulation in men. When the effect of age on socioemotional competencies was studied, older students (between 40 and 50) had higher self-efficacy, optimism, emotional expression and empathy. It seems that age has a positive effect on some emotional competencies, as was also shown by Mikulic et al. (2017) [21] and Llorent et al. (2020) [27], the latter finding greater emotional control in teachers aged over 47. It is possible that the effects of learning and practice have an effect on the regulation and control of emotions. Finally, teacher experience has a positive effect on the level of certain socio-emotional competencies, such as optimism and pro-social skills, possibly because more experienced teachers have acquired them. On the other hand, a positive effect of years of teaching experience showed that all dimensions that determine teaching efficacy were higher in women than in men. This was possibly influenced by the higher level of socio-emotional competencies.

Although this study is a first approach to the study of socio-emotional competencies in relation to teacher self-efficacy, it has some limitations such as the size of the sample and the type of sampling. For this reason, the aim was not to generalise the results, but rather to contribute to an understanding of the extent to which socioemotional competencies affect perceived teacher self-efficacy. The results allow us to propose future studies aimed at developing these competencies through training programmes, which should be adapted to the specific characteristics of the teacher, especially with regard to age and years of experience.

5. Conclusions

We conclude that the level of self-perceived socio-emotional competence correlates positively with perceived teacher self-efficacy. On the other hand, the variables of sex, age and teaching experience influenced the level of self-perception. In terms of the self-perception of teacher self-efficacy, we only found differences for sex and age.

Therefore, we consider it necessary to develop the socio-emotional competencies of trainee teachers to improve their teaching performance and develop skills to help them to manage the classroom appropriately. This will contribute to procuring a safe, balanced and trusting environment that favours assertiveness, empathy and self-esteem and the implementation of appropriate teaching and learning strategies to increase the performance

of their students. In this sense, the university context is a privileged space for linking the cognitive and emotional aspects in the curricula. The development of training programmes in emotional competencies should be considered an important element for improving education.

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