

Conceptual and Theoretical Understanding of Emotional Intelligence in Physical Education and Sports Participation of High School Students

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Abstract

This article examines the impacts, opportunities, and challenges of theories and conceptualizations related to emotional intelligence in **sports and physical education among high school students**. The methodology employed is a qualitative narrative review of 50 academic studies on emotional intelligence. The findings indicate that the presence of classical and mixed models contributes to the development of knowledge and training related to emotional intelligence in contemporary sports and physical education contexts. According to these models, emotional intelligence represents a personal competence that can be developed among high school students through **physical education classes, sports** participation, and activities focused on emotional awareness, teamwork, and self-regulation. However, challenges remain in ensuring systematic teacher training and structured pedagogical strategies that support the effective integration of emotional intelligence within sports and physical education programs. In conclusion, these conceptualizations suggest that incorporating emotional intelligence into sports and physical education can enhance interpersonal relationships, teamwork, and positive conflict resolution among students.

Keywords : Basic secondary education, **conceptualizations**, emotional intelligence, **physical education, sports participation**, student competence, teacher training.

Resumen

Este artículo examina los impactos, las oportunidades y los desafíos de las teorías y conceptualizaciones sobre la inteligencia emocional en el **contexto de la educación física y el deporte en el nivel de bachillerato**. La metodología utilizada consistió en una revisión narrativa cualitativa de 50 trabajos académicos sobre la inteligencia emocional. Los hallazgos sugieren que la existencia de modelos clásicos y mixtos configura la

generación de conocimiento y la formación en inteligencia emocional dentro del ámbito de la educación física y las actividades deportivas. Según estos modelos, la inteligencia emocional es una competencia personal susceptible de potenciarse en la básica secundaria mediante **programas de educación física, participación deportiva y actividades orientadas a la comprensión, autorregulación emocional y trabajo en equipo**. Aun así, persisten desafíos en la formación docente sistemática y en los planes pedagógicos que garanticen la integración efectiva de esta competencia en la educación física escolar. En conclusión, las conceptualizaciones indican que una educación física basada en la inteligencia emocional puede favorecer el desarrollo de **mejores relaciones interpersonales, cooperación, espíritu deportivo y una resolución positiva de los conflictos escolares**.

Palabras clave : básica secundaria, conceptualizaciones, competencia, inteligencia emocional, formación docente.

Introducción

In the last decade, emotional intelligence (EI) has gained increasing attention **in physical education and sports contexts**, particularly at the secondary level, where students encounter complex emotional, social, and competitive situations during sports participation. Domínguez Alonso, Nieto Campos, and Portela Pino (2022) demonstrate that EI is a competency that strengthens self-management, empathy, and group interaction. In sports settings, these competencies contribute to teamwork, fair play, and emotional regulation during competition. In this regard, Pulido Acosta and Herrera Clavero (2018) highlight that EI also supports the effective resolution of conflicts among students. Recent literature (Puertas-Molero et al., 2020; Costa Rodríguez, Palma-Leal, and Salgado Farías, 2021) agrees that EI represents an essential competency within educational and physical activity environments. Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer (1990) define emotional intelligence as the human capacity to perceive, understand, and regulate one's own emotions and those of others. Thus, although several studies have examined EI in educational contexts (Arango Benítez et al., 2024; Palamar & Mykhailichenko (2024); Reséndiz and Juárez, 2023), further research is required to understand its role in **physical education and sports participation among secondary school students**.

In the Colombian educational sphere, the implementation of emotional intelligence (EI) in pedagogical practices remains fragmented, with limited adoption confined to isolated projects or unsystematic extracurricular activities (Moreno Quinto et al., 2023; Marcano, 2023; Alenezi, 2024; Usán & Salavera, 2018). Therefore, it is essential to conduct a theoretical review of the models, theories, and concepts related to EI to examine their impact on high school education processes. According to Reséndiz & Juárez (2023), Marcano (2023), and Palamar & Mykhailichenko (2024), institutions should develop pedagogical strategies that transcend traditional teaching and promote socio-emotional competencies. Within this framework, the study seeks to describe the theories and practical conceptualizations that support the implementation of IE in education, providing an overview that enables recognition of contemporary approaches and their relevance in the school reality of basic secondary education.

While several studies have been conducted in this area (Arango Benítez, Orjuela Roa, Buitrago Roa & Lesmes Martínez, 2024; Palamar & Mykhailichenko (2025); Reséndiz & Juárez, 2023), pedagogical practices in **physical education and school sports** still demonstrate fragmented implementation or are limited to isolated initiatives or unsystematic extracurricular activities (Moreno Quinto et al., 2023; Marcano, 2023; Alenezi, 2024; Carmona et al., 2020; Usán & Salavera, 2018). This highlights the need for approaches that offer new perspectives on the **systematic and cross-curricular integration of emotional intelligence (EI) within physical education and sports programs**. From this perspective, the present study promotes reflection on the significant influence of EI on teaching and learning in sports contexts, encouraging a critical analysis of how emotions affect **sports performance, teamwork, motivation, fair play, and the overall learning environment in physical education classes**.

The present review focuses on examining the theoretical foundations and conceptual approaches of emotional intelligence in secondary education, particularly within physical education and sports contexts. It aims to provide a structured understanding of existing literature and identify key gaps in the integration of EI into pedagogical practices. The specific research questions addressed in this review are presented after the theoretical framework to ensure conceptual clarity and alignment with the study design.

Research Question

- What are the key theories underpinning emotional intelligence in physical education and sports participation among high school students?
- How is emotional intelligence conceptually understood within physical education and sports contexts at the secondary level?
- What role does emotional intelligence play in influencing sports participation, teamwork, and behavior among high school students?
- What challenges and opportunities exist in integrating emotional intelligence into physical education and sports programs in high school settings?

Theoretical Framework

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been examined through various theoretical models that interact and complement one another in educational contexts, including **physical education and sports activities**. In this regard, the **ability model** proposed by John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey (1997), revisited in recent studies by Martínez Pascual (2022) and Cornejo Montoya et al. (2022), conceptualizes EI as a group of cognitive abilities structured into four branches: perception, facilitation, understanding, and emotional regulation. These abilities are particularly relevant in **physical education and sports settings**, where students must manage emotions during competition, teamwork, and performance situations. In contrast, the **mixed model** proposed by Daniel Goleman (cited in Pacheco-Salazar, 2017) expands the cognitive perspective by including personality traits and social competencies. From this standpoint, EI involves not only emotional regulation but also motivation, empathy, and interpersonal skills that support **cooperation, sportsmanship, and positive interaction during physical education and sports participation**. Therefore, the principal approaches to EI in **secondary education, particularly within physical education and sports environments**, are summarized below.

Table 1. Predominant approaches to IE in secondary education.

Period	P	Predominant approach	Representative authors	Main contributions
2015-2017	2	Theoretical foundation and validation of classical models	Mayer & Salovey (1997); Goleman (1996); Bar-On (2006); Fernández-Berrocal & Cabello (2015)	Conceptual consolidation of IE; development of instruments (MSCEIT, EQ-i); linkage with performance and school coexistence.

018-2019	2	Teacher training and school climate	Cejudo & López-Delgado (2017). Alenezi, 2024, Costa Rodríguez et al. (2021) (Aguirre et al., 2025; Chapoñan Adanaque, 2024; Campillo Valenzuela, 2023; Fernández Galindo, 2024; Jiménez Labastida, 2024; et al., 2023).	The teacher as an emotional mediator: integration of EI in pedagogical practice and professional training.
020-2022	2	Well-being and resilience in the context of a pandemic	Puertas-Molero et al. (2020); Fernández-Berrocal & Cabello (2021) (Puertas-Molero et al. 2020; Rivera Campos, 2025; Rúa Quintero, 2024; Sornoza-Mendoza et al. 2025; Acosta Fancite, 2023; Gavilánez-Franco, 2025; y Escobar Escudero et al. 2024).	Positive impact on self-regulation, motivation, and mental health; consolidation of EI as a psychosocial prevention tool.
023-2025	2	Curricular transversality and institutionalization	Gil Troya et al. (2024); Otero Bocanegra et al. (2025); Palamar & Mykhailichenko (2024) (Millenaar et al. 2022; Moreira Palacios et al. 2025; y Otero Bocanegra et al. 2025).	Integration of EI into the school curriculum, the school's approach as an emotional ecosystem, and advances in institutional policies.

Referring to these approaches, Palamar & Mykhailichenko (2024) and Pacheco-Salazar (2017) agree that classical models remain relevant in teaching practice and in the Latin American school context. Similarly, Costa-Rodríguez, Palma-Leal, and Salgado Farías (2021) emphasize that emotional development should be considered a cross-curricular competency, involving both teachers and students in educational processes focused on well-being and positive social interaction.

Implementation of EI in the educational field

From an applied perspective, Pacheco-Salazar (2017) views emotional education as both a preventive strategy against school conflicts and a foundation for harmonious coexistence, promoting a pedagogy that develops self-reflection, empathy, and emotional regulation among students and teachers. In the context of **physical education and sports**, these competencies become particularly relevant, as students frequently experience competitive pressure, teamwork dynamics, and emotional responses during physical activities. Similarly, Martínez Pascual (2022) proposes a structured and constructivist approach that incorporates sessions on emotional awareness, mindfulness, empathy, and assertive communication. Such approaches can be effectively integrated into **physical education classes and sports training**, where students learn to manage emotions, cooperate with teammates, and maintain fair play. This demonstrates that emotional intelligence can develop through intentional and sustained educational practices. In addition, Marcos-Sánchez et al. (2023) indicate that socio-emotional competencies are closely linked to teaching effectiveness. From a curricular perspective, [Abdulhameed, Hamzah & Saleh \(2024\)](#) highlight the importance of explicitly incorporating emotional intelligence into educational programs through diverse strategies such as cooperative learning, reflective activities, and experiential learning. Within **physical education and school sports**, these strategies can strengthen teamwork, motivation, leadership, and respect among students. Likewise, Huamantupa (2023) emphasizes that emotionally supportive environments, supported by intrinsic motivation and emotional autonomy, promote meaningful and lasting learning. In **sports and physical education contexts**, such environments encourage students to develop confidence, resilience, and positive attitudes toward physical activity. Expanding this discussion, Porras Carmona et al. (2020) stress the importance of initial teacher training, noting that teachers' empathy and emotional awareness influence their ability to implement inclusive and supportive pedagogical practices. Therefore, emotional education should be systematically incorporated into teacher preparation programs, especially in **physical education and sports education**, recognizing that teachers' emotional competence plays a crucial role in fostering positive learning environments and overall educational quality.

Perceptions regarding the implementation of inclusive education at the high school level.

Cejudo and López-Delgado (2017) demonstrate that teachers with greater emotional competence value their professional relevance more highly. Similarly, Costa Rodríguez et al. (2021) emphasize that teachers' emotional competence (EI) enables conflict management, promotes respect, and strengthens meaningful learning. Consistently, Cabello and Fernández-Berrocal (2015) agree that EI is essential for fostering comprehensive educational processes. Expanding on this, Palamar & Mykhailichenko (2024) argues that emotional training is essential to improving school climate in Latin American contexts. Along these lines, Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal (2004) highlight individual differences in emotion self-awareness as a factor in pedagogical effectiveness. Likewise, Frago and Luzuriaca (2021) emphasize that emotionally competent teachers act as mediators in interpersonal relationships and promote positive coexistence. Collectively, these findings are reflected in teachers' perceptions about the implementation of IE at the high school level.

Table 2. Perceptions regarding the implementation of inclusive education at the high school level.

Authors	Perception
Marcos, Manzanal y Gallego (2022) Cabello y Fernández-Berrocal (2015) Marcos et al. (2022)	Implementing EI at the high school level improves motivation, self-regulation, and academic performance

Cabello y Fernández-Berrocal (2015) Reséndiz y Juárez (2023) Domínguez Alonso et al. (2022)	
Mérida-López et al. (2020) Marcos-Sánchez et al.(2023) García Marín (2021) Puertas-Molero et al. (2020)	Teachers' socio-emotional skills directly impact students' well-being, academic engagement, and emotional self-regulation.
Puertas-Molero et al. (2020) González-Gómez y García-Ruiz (2021) Cejudo y López-Delgado (2017)	Promoting emotional intelligence (EI) among teachers and students is a key strategy for strengthening well-being and holistic development.
García-Tudela y Marín-Sánchez (2019) Ureña y Peralta (2023)	Integrate emotional education into the curriculum as a basic and cross-cutting competence
Pacheco-Salazar (2017)	Active methodologies could allow teachers to explore and connect their emotions with professional practice
Ordoñez y Ochoa (2022)	The implementation of IE is a structural process
Puertas-Molero et al. (2020) y Costa Rodríguez et al. (2021)	To consolidate an emotional educational culture, emotional education programs must be designed.
García Marín (2021)	The school is an emotional ecosystem, and within it the teacher occupies a central role as a mediator, guide, and role model; therefore, teacher training is key to developing this competence.
la UNESCO, mediante el Informe Delors (1996) Ureña y Peralta (2023)	Education should focus on “learning to be” and “learning to live together”.
Ortega Tello et al. (2023).	To implement IE, contextualized pedagogical strategies are required.

Marcos, M. y Gallego (2022) Marcos-Sánchez et al. (2023) Alenezi, 2024 ; Porras, Checa y Luque (2022) Gil Troya et al. (2024). Palamar & Mykhailichenko (2024)	Teachers' socio-emotional skills contribute to a better classroom climate
Moreno Quinto et al. (2023)	Incorporating reflective, collaborative, and creative strategies in the classroom promotes student well-being and reduces interpersonal conflicts.
Pérez Mármol et al. (2023) Puertas-Molero et al. (2020) Fernández-Berrocal y Cabello (2022)	Implementing EI improves resilience, engagement, perception, and emotional regulation
Berrocal et al. (2023) Ureña y Peralta (2023) Valdiviezo y Rivera (2022)	Educational institutions (EIs) are an indispensable component of students' comprehensive education, strengthening coexistence and socioemotional well-being.

In assessing emotional intelligence (EI) in educational contexts, Pablo Fernández-Berrocal and Natalio Cabello (2021) recommend the use of validated instruments such as the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test and the Emotional Quotient Inventory to measure specific emotional skills, enabling educators to design interventions according to students' needs. In **physical education and sports environments**, these assessments can help identify how students manage emotions related to teamwork, competition, and performance. In contrast, Arango Benítez et al. (2024) emphasize combining theory and practice in EI with qualitative approaches that encourage critical reflection on its application in education, including experiential learning contexts such as **physical education classes and school sports activities**. In Colombia, Marcano (2023) reports that school-based emotional education programs contribute to improving coexistence and academic performance, although their implementation remains irregular and fragmented. Similarly, Valdiviezo-Loayza and Rivera-Muñoz (2022) observe that, although research on EI in Latin America is still developing, there is growing consensus that EI can strengthen self-esteem, emotional regulation, and student engagement. Within **physical education and sports participation**, these competencies can also contribute to improved motivation, teamwork, and persistence in physical activities among secondary school students.

On a related note, Costa Rodríguez, Palma-Leal, and Salgado Farías (2021) and [Alenezi \(2024\)](#) demonstrate that, although educators recognize the importance of managing emotions in the classroom, many still lack specific training and institutional support to enact this in a structured manner. This gap between recognizing theory and applying it in practice represents a significant tension in contemporary secondary education. To address this, López-Machín (2025) recommends implementing targeted teacher education programs. Additionally, both Valdiviezo-Loayza and Rivera-Muñoz (2022) and López-Machín (2025) advocate for the inclusion of emotional intelligence (EI) programs in teacher preparation. Despite these

recommendations, clear and sustained national policies to guide teacher training in emotional competencies remain absent. Ultimately, this disconnect between theoretical understanding and practical application **in physical education and sports contexts** undermines the effectiveness of educational programs and may contribute to inequalities in students' socio-emotional development, teamwork skills, and emotional regulation **during physical activities and sport.**

Method

Research Design

This article presents a qualitative narrative review of the scientific literature on educational intelligence (EI), defined here as the cognitive, emotional, and social abilities that influence learning and adaptation in secondary education. As Arango Benítez et al. (2024) note, this research method integrates and compares theoretical and practical findings from diverse sources, fostering understanding of the subject. Similarly, Valderrama & Dreibelbis (2024) state that documentary review promotes reflection.

Search Strategy (databases, keywords, time period)

The authors began the search and selection process by using a content analysis matrix for systematic document review and applying specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. Accordingly, the researchers used a qualitative data analysis matrix from the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE, 2016) to provide an analytical summary of the articles reviewed.

Researchers systematically searched recognized academic databases—Scopus, Scielo, Redalyc, Dialnet, and Google Scholar—using combined keywords, such as (“EI” AND “secondary education OR high school” AND “teaching-learning” “perception* OR opinions OR “point of view” OR evaluation”) AND “holistic education.” Here, “EI” covers both educational and emotional intelligence in schools. This process produced documents focusing on emotional intelligence from pedagogical and socio-emotional perspectives.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To lend credibility to the study, five inclusion criteria were established:

1. articles published in Spanish and focused on emotional intelligence (EI) in secondary education, where EI refers to its role in teaching and learning;
2. research in indexed journals, defined as publications in academic databases that apply peer-review standards;
3. documents published between 2015 and 2024;
4. studies addressing EI in secondary education; and
5. empirical, narrative, or qualitative studies.

The exclusion criteria were:

1. journals, conference papers, book chapters, or reviews without peer review;
2. studies not focused on the secondary level;
3. articles outside the specified time frame;

4. publications in non-indexed journals; and
5. documents in other languages not offering full text in Spanish.

Study Selection Process

After gathering these studies, researchers applied inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure relevance and quality. Critically reading the selected documents, researchers recorded approaches, theories, methodologies, results, and limitations on bibliographic cards, which revealed patterns, leading theories, and gaps in EI implementation at the secondary level.

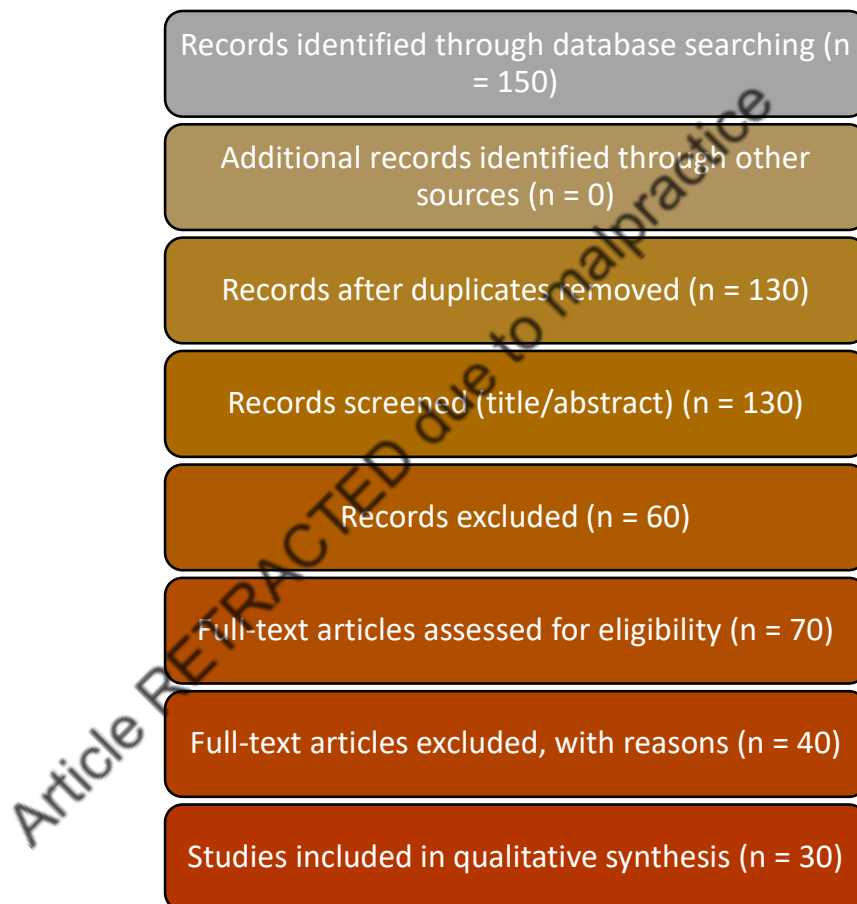


Figure: PRISMA Flow Diagram of Study Selection Process

A systematic screening process was followed in accordance with PRISMA guidelines. A total of 150 records were identified through database searching, with no additional records from other sources. After removing 20 duplicates, 130 records remained for screening. Following title and abstract screening, 60 records were excluded, and 70 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. Of these, 40 articles were excluded based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in 30 studies included in the qualitative synthesis.

Data Extraction

Narváez & Moreno De La Cruz (2022) argue that such matrices help organize and compare research information. Accordingly, the researchers used a qualitative data analysis matrix from the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE, 2016) to provide an analytical summary of the articles reviewed.

Systematizing the collected information enabled the comparison of different studies and the identification of both convergent and divergent perspectives related to emotional intelligence in physical education and school sports. Following this approach, an interpretive synthesis was conducted in which the data were organized within a comparative matrix to analyze the relationships between emotional intelligence and sports participation among high school students.

Quality Assessment

Chand (2025) highlights that maintaining objectivity in qualitative analysis is essential for ensuring reliable and meaningful results. This process offered a broader understanding of current research trends, empirical evidence, and existing challenges associated with integrating emotional intelligence into physical education programs and school sports activities. Furthermore, Otero Bocanegra et al. (2025) compiled studies published between 2020 and 2025, indicating that incorporating emotional intelligence into physical education and sports environments contributes not only to improved learning outcomes and sports performance but also to the development of emotional well-being, teamwork, and sustained student engagement in physical activities, thereby helping to address contemporary challenges related to equity and student development.

Findings

The results are presented based on the analysis of 30 selected studies included in the qualitative synthesis, following the PRISMA-guided selection process. The findings are organized into key thematic areas, including the role of emotional intelligence in sports participation, its impact on student behavior and learning, and the challenges and opportunities associated with its implementation in secondary education

Predominant theoretical trends

The analysis indicates a growing tendency to apply two principal perspectives of emotional intelligence (EI): **ability-based approaches and broader competency-based approaches**. The ability-oriented perspective explains EI as a set of mental abilities related to recognizing emotions, interpreting emotional signals, and managing emotional responses effectively. **In physical education and sports settings**, these abilities help students control frustration during competition, remain motivated in training, and cooperate with teammates.

The broader competency perspective expands this view by incorporating motivational factors, personality characteristics, and social interaction skills. Within **school sports and physical activity**, these elements are visible in behaviors such as leadership, teamwork, fair play, and respect for opponents. Because sports participation naturally involves interaction, cooperation, and competitive situations, EI becomes a valuable competence that supports both **personal growth and positive participation in physical activities**.

Consequently, emotional intelligence is increasingly regarded as a **cross-disciplinary competence** that contributes to students' holistic development rather than being treated as an isolated educational concept. In **physical education programs**, integrating emotional awareness with sports practice can improve communication, resilience, and collective performance among students. Recent academic discussions continue to revisit earlier theoretical perspectives while adapting them to modern educational environments, including **school sports and physical activity contexts**. These developments suggest that emotional competencies remain highly relevant for supporting students' learning experiences, motivation, and social interaction during **games, training sessions, and competitive activities in secondary education**.

The evolution of emotional intelligence (EI) theories has also influenced educational practices in **physical education and sports environments**. Contemporary perspectives emphasize that emotional competencies such as self-control, motivation, teamwork, and resilience are essential for students participating

in **physical activities** and competitive **sports**. In school sports settings, students frequently experience emotions related to performance, cooperation, and competition, which require effective emotional regulation. Recent research highlights that emotional responses during **games, training sessions, and competitive events** are shaped by social interaction, situational pressure, and learning experiences. Therefore, integrating emotional intelligence into **physical education programs and sports participation** can contribute to improved teamwork, fair play, motivation, and positive interpersonal relationships among students. These perspectives support the development of holistic educational practices that combine **physical development with socio-emotional learning in school sports contexts**.

Emotional intelligence supports students in managing emotions, enhancing teamwork, and maintaining fair play during sports activities. It contributes to improved interaction, cooperation, and emotional control, enabling students to effectively handle competitive situations within physical education environments. The findings show that emotional intelligence positively influences student motivation, engagement, and well-being. It enhances participation in physical activities, supports emotional regulation, and contributes to improved academic and personal development through increased confidence, resilience, and sustained involvement in school-based sports.

Impact of EI on teaching and learning processes

The results suggest that implementing emotional intelligence (EI) in the classroom has positive effects on academic performance, emotional self-regulation, and school climate. In this regard, Marcos, Manzanal, and Gallego (2022) demonstrate that socio-emotional competencies directly influence academic engagement and learning quality, arguing that developing these skills enables students to manage their emotions more effectively, establish healthy interpersonal relationships, and face academic challenges with greater resilience. Similarly, the analysis revealed that EI is a key factor in developing student motivation. Fernández-Berrocal et al. (2023) highlight its role in emotional self-regulation, noting that recognizing and appropriately managing emotions enables students to maintain optimal motivation, overcome frustration when making mistakes, and persevere in achieving their academic goals.

Table 3. Effects of the implementation of IE in secondary education.

Period	Main authors	Observed effects
Académica	Fernández-Berrocal & Cabello (2022). Domínguez Alonso et al. (2022).	Improved performance, concentration, motivation, and school retention.
Socio-emotional	Valdiviezo-Loayza & Rivera-Muñoz (2022); Palamar & Mykhailichenko (2024)	Strengthening self-esteem, empathy, resilience, and emotional regulation.

1	Pedagogica	Alenezi, 2024. Marcos-Sánchez et al. (2023).	Transformation of the teaching role towards reflective, empathetic, and participatory practices.
1	Institutiona	Costa Rodríguez et al. (2021); Gil Troya et al. (2024).	Improvement of the school climate and coexistence; promotion of more humane and collaborative environments.

The study also indicates that emotional intelligence (EI) plays a significant role in creating a **positive and supportive learning environment**, particularly within **physical education and school sports activities**. Research by Cejudo and López-Delgado (2017) and Costa Rodríguez, Palma-Leal, and Salgado Farías (2021) highlights that the development of emotional competencies encourages empathy, cooperation, and constructive conflict resolution among students. In **sports and physical education classes**, these competencies help students manage competitive emotions, respect opponents, and strengthen teamwork.

Furthermore, effective emotional regulation contributes to reduced behavioral conflicts and promotes a sense of belonging among students, which is essential for building inclusive and motivating learning environments. In the context of **sports participation**, emotional awareness and control help students handle success and failure, maintain motivation, and develop respect for fair play. As a result, emotional intelligence is increasingly considered an important element in promoting **positive interaction and healthy social dynamics during physical activities and competitive games**. Consequently, both teachers and students are encouraged to recognize the value of emotional intelligence as a meaningful tool for personal development and learning. Studies such as García-Tudela and Marín-Sánchez (2019) and Porras, Checa, and Luque (2022) show that positive attitudes toward EI can strengthen teaching practices and student engagement. Emotional education also contributes to improved academic and personal outcomes by supporting well-being, increasing intrinsic motivation, and encouraging continued participation in school activities (Valdiviezo-Loayza and Rivera-Muñoz, 2022; López-Machín, 2025). Similarly, Puertas-Molero et al. (2020) report that incorporating emotional intelligence into educational environments enhances emotional health and improves the overall educational climate. Arango Benítez et al. (2024) further emphasize that EI supports more inclusive, supportive, and resilient educational practices capable of responding to contemporary educational challenges, particularly in **physical education and sports-based learning contexts**.

Implementation challenges and opportunities

The analysis indicates that the incorporation of emotional intelligence (EI) into secondary education is constrained by structural and pedagogical limitations. Among the main challenges is the lack of systematic and continuous integration into curricula. In this regard, Marcano (2023) and Moreno Quinto et al. (2023) note that this dynamic has led to fragmented, short-lived **athletic** interventions. This lack of systematization is accompanied by insufficient **teacher and coach** training in emotional competencies, which restricts their ability to serve as socio-emotional mediators in the **gymnasium and on the field**. This limitation exacerbates inequality in the application of emotional education programs, restricting their reach and reducing their formative impact **on student-athletes**, as Valdiviezo-Loayza and Rivera-Muñoz (2022) warn. Therefore, there is a significant lack of updated proposals that contribute to the effective implementation of national policies on Emotional Intelligence (EI) within secondary **physical** education institutions.

Nonetheless, the evidence also shows successful experiences demonstrating the potential of active methodologies, reflective strategies, and educational technologies to strengthen the socio-emotional

development of high school students. [Abdulhameed, Hamzah & Saleh \(2024\)](#) and Huamantupa (2023) note that when these strategies are applied in a structured, context-specific manner, they contribute to the creation of more inclusive and resilient school environments. Likewise, the findings suggest that overcoming these limitations requires a two-pronged strategy: on the one hand, the formulation of educational policies that guarantee the mainstreaming of emotional intelligence (EI) across the curriculum, and on the other hand, the strengthening of initial and ongoing teacher training in emotional competencies. If implemented, these actions would not only consolidate EI as a structural axis of holistic education but also promote a more humane, empathetic pedagogy focused on students' socio-emotional and academic well-being. Taken together, the results provide an overview of the most relevant theories and practices surrounding emotional intelligence in secondary education, thereby strengthening a more humane, empathetic pedagogy oriented towards holistic well-being. [The analysis identifies challenges such as limited curriculum integration and insufficient teacher training in emotional competencies. However, evidence shows that structured methodologies and context-based approaches support effective implementation, improving emotional development and fostering inclusive and supportive physical education environments.](#)

Discussion

The analysis of academic documents indicates that emotional intelligence (EI) has progressively moved from being viewed mainly as an individual psychological ability to becoming a broader competency that supports learning, interaction, and personal development within **physical** education and school **sports** contexts. This transformation reflects an important shift in educational thinking, where learning is no longer limited to cognitive development but also recognizes the role of emotions in shaping students' participation, motivation, and behavior **during physical activities, games, and competitive sports**. The findings suggest that traditional theoretical perspectives on emotional intelligence continue to influence educational practice, yet their application in **physical education** programs has gradually become more practical and context-based. In sports environments, emotional competencies such as self-control, resilience, empathy, and teamwork are increasingly recognized as essential for students' development both on and off the playing field. In many educational contexts, particularly within **school sports and physical training activities**, emotional intelligence is now understood as a key element that connects physical performance with social and emotional learning. This perspective highlights the importance of integrating emotional awareness, cooperation, and fair play into **physical education curricula**, allowing students to develop not only physical abilities but also interpersonal skills and ethical values through sports participation. Consequently, EI emerges as a central component that supports balanced student development by linking **physical activity, emotional regulation, and positive social interaction** within the educational process.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings demonstrate that teachers act as emotional mediators in the teaching-learning process (Cejudo & López-Delgado, 2017; [Alenezi, \(2024\)](#)). Thus, teaching also involves providing emotional support and creating classroom environments that promote participation and well-being. However, the analysis also revealed that teacher training in emotional competencies remains limited and unsystematic, which hinders the consolidation of a sustained emotional pedagogy (Moreno Quinto et al., 2023; Marcano, 2023). This training gap represents a fundamental challenge to strengthening social-emotional education from a more systemic, continuous perspective.

In **the socio-emotional dimension of physical education and school sports**, this review confirms that the integration of emotional intelligence (EI) supports students' emotional regulation, resilience, and empathy during physical activities, games, and competitive sports (Puertas-Molero et al., 2020; Fernández-Berrocal & Cabello, 2021). In challenging situations, such as the pandemic, these competencies acted as protective factors

that helped students manage stress, maintain motivation for **physical exercise and sports participation**, and strengthen cooperation within teams, which also supported continued engagement in school activities..

Promising examples indicate that emotional intelligence (EI) is well supported by active, reflective, and technological methods. This combination fosters coexistence, motivation, and deeper learning [Abdulhameed, Hamzah & Saleh \(2024\)](#); Huamantupa, 2023). When EI is applied in a meaningful and sustained manner, it improves school climate and fosters more empathetic and inclusive communities. Overall, the study finds that EI transforms teaching relationships and school culture by making education more collaborative and human-centered. Schools that incorporate emotional management into daily routines see greater participation, cohesion, and collective well-being (Gil Troya et al., 2024; Otero Bocanegra et al., 2025). EI is a key axis of educational development and essential for meeting current teaching challenges.

The findings of this research indicate that strengthening emotional intelligence (EI) in **physical education and school sports** requires a dual strategy: first, preparing teachers and coaches with strong emotional competencies so they can guide students in managing emotions **during games, training, and competitive activities**; and second, promoting the integration of these competencies **across physical education programs, sports participation, and health-related learning environments**. When these elements are effectively implemented, emotional intelligence becomes not merely an additional aspect of education but an essential component of the **sports and physical education process**. In this context, EI functions as a bridge connecting **physical training with the human and social dimensions of learning**. Its inclusion at the secondary school level contributes to a more holistic educational experience by encouraging cooperation, resilience, fair play, and positive interpersonal relationships among students during **sports and physical activities**. Furthermore, the development of emotional competencies **through physical education and competitive sports** supports students' overall well-being and strengthens a positive and respectful learning atmosphere. [The discussion indicates that emotional intelligence \(EI\) plays a significant role in enhancing students' emotional regulation, motivation, and social interaction within physical education and sports contexts. Teachers function as key emotional mediators; however, limited training in emotional competencies restricts consistent implementation. The findings highlight that integrating EI through structured, active, and reflective approaches improves school climate, student engagement, and teamwork. Additionally, EI supports resilience and stress management in competitive environments, reinforcing its importance as a core component of holistic education and student development in secondary school settings.](#)

Conclusion

Upon completion of this review, several conclusions have emerged. First, emotional intelligence (EI) is an essential component of holistic education in secondary schools, particularly in the pedagogical and socioemotional domains. The development of emotional competencies enhances self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and a positive school climate, thereby directly affecting student learning and psychological well-being. In this sense, EI cannot be considered an isolated component of education, but rather a structural dimension of the contemporary educational process that must be integrated across the curriculum.

Furthermore, it is concluded that **physical education teachers and coaches** play a crucial role as emotional mediators of learning. Their ability to recognize and manage their own emotions impacts the **gymnasium** climate, the quality of **athletic** interactions, and pedagogical effectiveness. **Socio-emotional** training for **coaches** is a priority for strengthening teaching practice and promoting a more humane, reflective, and participatory **physical** education. The implementation of emotional intelligence also transforms the school's **sporting** dimension. Its cross-curricular integration fosters collaborative **team** environments, reduces **interpersonal** conflicts **during competition**, and reinforces a sense of institutional belonging.

In this way, emotional education contributes to humanizing teaching and consolidating empathetic, inclusive, and resilient **athletic** communities, oriented toward collective **physical and mental** well-being.

However, the review identified persistent limitations that hinder its full consolidation. Most **physical** educational experiences are developed in a fragmented or extracurricular manner and lack sustainable policies to ensure their continuity and **evaluation within the sports curriculum**. Long-term institutional strategies are required, accompanied by systematic **coach and teacher** training, regulatory frameworks, and **athletic** pedagogical resources that guarantee their effective integration into **physical education** curricula. Finally, the evidence suggests that the impact of emotional intelligence extends beyond the **gymnasium** sphere to human and social development. Its practice strengthens mental health, **team** cohesion, and **sporting** coexistence, forming emotionally competent citizens capable of acting with empathy, responsibility, and a sense of community. Consequently, the integration of emotional intelligence into Colombian **physical** education requires institutional commitment, political will, and a **student-centered athletic** pedagogical vision capable of balancing reason and emotion to cultivate well-rounded human beings who are aware of themselves and others **on and off the field**.

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