

Emotional Intelligence of University Students in Latin America: A Systematic Review of the Scientific Literature Published in Spanish Between 2015 and 2021

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The ability to relate, listen and respond assertively in an academic, personal, and social context, controlling emotions is called emotional intelligence. The objective of this research was to analyze the scientific evidence on emotional intelligence of university students in Latin America from 2015 to 2021. In this systematic review, Scielo, Scopus and Ebsco databases were analyzed, from where scientific articles were identified. Fifteen articles were identified, to which the proposed dimensions, instruments and definitions of the term emotional intelligence were identified. The results indicate that it is a priority to deepen research on emotional intelligence to increase production at Latin American level.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, university students, Latin America, systematic review

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence is an ability to value, express and manage emotions in the individual, who is able to control emotions in various situations, i.e., awareness. The interaction with their environment, which is the convenient or adequate to deal with problematic situations in various contexts, providing pedagogical support based on structural procedures that improve acting in front of various disciplines (Belykh, 2018; García-Tudela & Marín-Sánchez, 2021). And the education of emotional intelligence is a priority activity at the university level (García-Ancira, 2020).

In this sense, the findings of Research on emotional intelligence indicate the need to explore and analyze them as a priority in any field. Among them they analyzed articles from the databases, Scopus, Scielo and EBSCO on emotional intelligence, where they used keywords, "emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships". After the analysis, they concluded that teachers must be emotionally prepared to respond assertively to different circumstances (Huamán Mendez et al., 2021). Likewise, another bibliographic review on the importance of emotional intelligence, with a descriptive approach, analyzed articles over a period of 20 years on emotional intelligence. Concluding on the need to deeply analyze emotional

intelligence since it is an ability that perceives, values and adequately expresses emotions (Costa-Rodriguez et al., 2021).

In Spain, a study on emotional intelligence and its influence on the learning of university students showed the need to strengthen soft skills and competencies for their personal and professional development. In the research, an instrument called Total Brain Theory Diagnosis was applied. The results indicate that the dominance of the hemispheres has a positive influence on emotional intelligence. Concluding that it is necessary to train university students to develop learning styles (Estrada et al., 2019). On the other hand, in a research on emotional intelligence and psychopathological risk in university students, the research was developed under a quantitative approach. The Perceived Emotional Intelligence Test was applied to 303 students. They concluded that there is a relationship between psychopathological traits and emotional intelligence, suggesting that the findings be disseminated to the university community (Delgado-Gómez et al., 2019).

In Ecuador, research was conducted on emotional intelligence and the performance of university students, finding a relationship between both variables. The study was developed under the mixed approach. The Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS) was applied to 110 students. They concluded on the need to enhance emotional intelligence to provide security in their development of academic potentialities (Ortiz Mancero & Núñez Naranjo, 2021).

In Pakistan, it became evident that emotional intelligence and creative performance are skills that should be trained to enhance the individual's capabilities. The research had a quantitative approach, the instrument called Knowledge Management Processes was applied to 248 professionals. It was concluded that self-directed learning is negative in relation to knowledge management, being necessary to establish strategies to promote collaborative or networked work (Shafait et al., 2021).

In Spain, the findings reached on the emotional intelligence of university faculty for learning coping strategies towards stress, resulted in the need for training and management of emotions for coping with stress. Three instruments were used, including Wong and Law's Emotional Intelligence Test. The findings indicate the importance of the study of emotional intelligence as a stress reducer (García-Martínez et al., 2021). Likewise, research was conducted on the construct of emotional intelligence and early disapproving schemas in university students, using the SQ-SF and TMF24. The results indicated that difficulties in emotional regulation dissipate the ability to understand one's own emotions (Pérez-Bonet et al., 2021).

In the United States, it was evidenced that the relationship between family members and emotional intelligence is complex, due to its nature, since there are hierarchies and individual interests, which limits family cohesion. Three instruments were applied: summary of hierarchical task, relational and process regressions. The results were that the hierarchical regression manages one's own emotions, and the other relationships were of negative impact, in addition that the awareness of emotions did not produce any type of conflict (Hamzah et al., 2021).

Emotional intelligence should be promoted or encouraged by everyone, and to the absence can destroy the profession or activity that you develop (Goleman, 2004). It is also conceptualized as the ability to express emotions accurately (Mayer, 1998). However, if it is related to academic activities, it includes self-knowledge, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Alviárez & Pérez, 2009; Blanc et al., 2010; Carrasquero Rosario, 2011; Esteves Pairazamán et al., 2019, 2020; Salcedo Rodriguez & Pérez Vázquez, 2020; Suyo Vega et al., 2019). University teachers, in their role as researchers (Suyo-Vega, Meneses-La-Riva, Fernández-Bedoya, Ocupa-Cabrera, et al., 2022; Suyo-Vega, Meneses-La-Riva, Fernández-Bedoya, Polônia, et al., 2022), should be aware of the different strategies for the development of emotional intelligence in students (Widad & Abdellah, 2022).

Nowadays, and coming out of the health crisis originated by COVID-19 in which e-learning strategies had to be adapted due to the policies of each country (Suyo-Vega, Meneses-La-Riva, Fernández-Bedoya, Alarcón-Martínez, et al., 2022), it is necessary to carry out preventive mental health activities in order to reduce the impact of emotional exhaustion that teachers and students may have suffered.

Based on the findings and the theoretical framework proposed, the following question was established: What is the scientific evidence on emotional intelligence of university students in Latin America, analyzing the concepts, dimensions, and instruments from 2015 to 2021?

The objectives were established according to the guiding question, and the scientific evidence on emotional intelligence of university students in Latin America was analyzed, in addition to systematizing the various concepts, dimensions and instruments that are used in research.

These findings are of personal and academic help, not only to the teaching staff but also to the university student body that develops research, in such a way that a practical and social justification is appreciated as it is one of the few that make visible Latin American studies written in Spanish (Fernández Bedoya, 2020).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research had a qualitative approach since the scientific articles were analyzed and focused on understanding the phenomena, in their natural space (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza Torres, 2018).

For the search of scientific evidence in the selected databases, priority aspects that determined the selection were taken into account as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA APPLIED

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Articles in final version	Literature review articles
Articles between the years 2015 - 2021	Systematic review articles
Articles in Spanish language	Letters to the editor
Articles corresponding to the area of social sciences	Essays
Articles detailing experiences in Latin America	Short communications
Articles indexed in Scielo, Scopus and Ebsco	

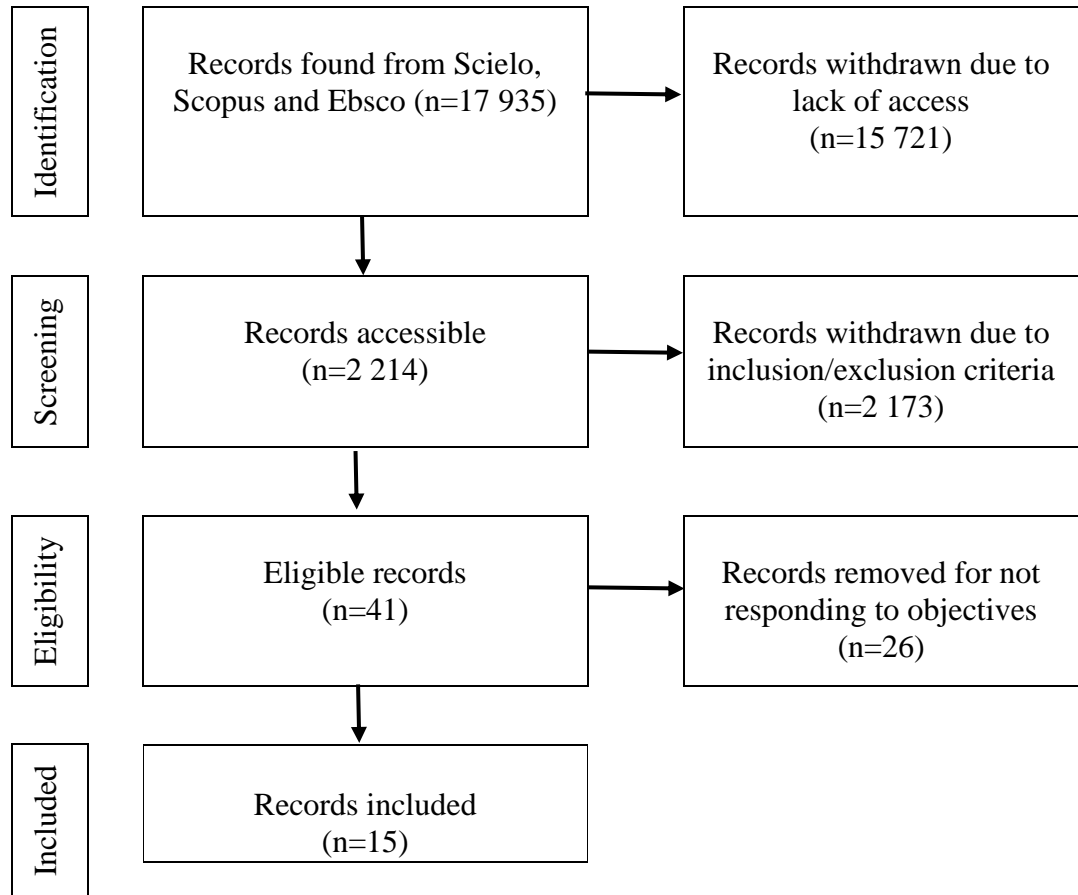
Table 1 shows the criteria taken into account for the selection of scientific articles.

The search was carried out using the terms “inteligencia emocional+ universitarios” (“emotional intelligence+university students” in English), in the databases Scielo, Scopus and Ebsco.

The research was developed under ethical aspects, academic freedom, respect for knowledge and the quality of the research process, using APA standards, avoiding plagiarism and erroneous or false data (Espinoza Freire & Calva Nagua, 2020).

The record search route is detailed in Figure 1, using the PRISMA methodology (Liberati et al., 2009; Moher et al., 2009).

**FIGURE 1
PRISMA FLOW CHART**



RESULTS

The scientific evidence on emotional intelligence has been grouped according to the following objectives (a) Emotional intelligence of university students in Latin America, distributed by author, year, approach, country and journal (Table 2) (b) definitions (Table 3) (c) dimensions (Table 4) and (d) instruments (Table 5).

Table 2 shows the list of authors who have researched on emotional intelligence, with the country they represent or where the research was carried out, focus and journal. It shows 15 authors who researched on emotional intelligence, being Peru (5) and Colombia (5) the countries with the highest scientific production, followed by Mexico (2), Chile (1), Argentina (1) and Paraguay (1). The approaches developed are quantitative (13) and mixed (2). Likewise, the journals that publish on the subject are psychological and medical, followed by education.

TABLE 2
RECORDS IDENTIFIED

Code	Citation	Country	Journal
1	(Palomino Flores & Almenara, 2019)	Peru	Revista Digital de Investigación
2	(Martínez Rodríguez et al., 2020)	Colombia	Universitas Psychologica
3	(Chero Pisfil et al., 2020)	Peru	Medisur
4	(Ayala Servín et al., 2021)	Paraguay	Neurology
5	(Tisocco et al., 2019)	Argentina	Revista de Investigación
6	(Martín del Campo & Patiño Domínguez, 2021)	México	Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Educativos
7	(Arias-Chávez et al., 2020)	Peru	Propósitos y Representaciones
8	(Arntz Vera & Trunce Morales, 2019)	Chile	Investigación en Educación Médica
9	(Merino-Soto et al., 2019)	Peru	Educación Médica Superior
10	(Arciniegas Paspuel et al., 2021)	Colombia	Revista Conrado
11	(Luy-Montejo, 2019)	Peru	Propósitos y Representaciones
12	(Torres-Estrada & Sosa-Rosas, 2020)	México	Propósitos y Representaciones
13	(Bata & Castro, 2021)	Colombia	Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development
14	(Gómez Tabares et al., 2020)	Colombia	Terapia Psicológica
15	(Angarita-Ortiz et al., 2020)	Colombia	Archivos Venezolanos de Farmacología y Terapéutica

Table 3 shows the different definitions assumed in each research, all of which agree with the ability to manage emotions.

TABLE 3
PROPOSED DEFINITIONS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Code	Definition of emotional intelligence
1	It is a competency that professionals must present in order to develop efficiently.
2	The author(s) do not specify it.
3	It is an indicator of mental, physical and psychosomatic health.
4	It is the ability to perceive, understand and control emotions.
5	Skills related to the management of emotions, personal knowledge and knowledge of others.
6	The author(s) do not specify.
7	The author(s) do not specify.
8	Not specified by the author(s).
9	The author(s) do not specify.
10	It is the ability to establish friendly relationships, work, academic, behavioral, and emotional management.
11	It is the use of social skills providing students with resources for personal development.
12	Ability to perceive, assimilate and regulate one's own emotions.
13	The author(s) do not specify.
14	The author(s) do not specify.
15	The author(s) do not specify.

Table 4 shows the various dimensions developed in the research. The range of dimensions is from 3 to 5 according to the instrument used.

**TABLE 4
DIMENSIONS EXPLORED**

Code	Dimensions of emotional intelligence
1	(1) Ability to appraise and express own emotions. (2) Ability to appraise and recognize emotions of others. (3) Ability to self-regulate emotions. (4) Ability to use emotions in constructive activities.
2	(1) Cognitive restraint. (2) Disinhibition. (3) Emotional intake.
3	(1) Attention. (2) Clarity. (3) Emotional repair.
4	(1) Emotional attention. (2) Clarity of feelings. (3) Emotional repair.
5	(1) Ability to recognize, understand and express emotions and feelings. (2) Understanding of emotions. (3) Ability to control emotions. (4) Self-motivation ability. (5) Intra- and interpersonal problem-solving ability.
6	(1) Attention. (2) Clarity. (3) Repair.
7	(1) Non-cognitive skills. (2) Competencies. (3) Skills.
8	(1) Attention or perception. (2) Clarity or understanding. (3) Repair or regulation.
9	(1) Assessment of own emotions. (2) Assessment of others' emotions. (3) Use of emotions. (4) Emotion regulation.
10	(1) Intrapersonal intelligence. (2) Interpersonal intelligence.
11	(1) Intrapersonal. (2) Interpersonal. (3) Adaptability. (4) Stress management. (5) Mood.
12	(1) Emotional awareness. (2) Emotional control. (3) Empathy. (4) Motivation. (5) Social skills.
13	(1) Clarity of feelings. (2) Emotional repair. (3) Emotional attention.
14	(1) Emotional attention. (2) Emotional clarity. (3) Emotional regulation.
15	(1) Emotional attention. (2) Emotional clarity. (3) Emotional repair.

Table 5 describes the various scales that are used in the research on emotional intelligence: the Bar-On Test, the Trait Meta Mood Scale TMMS-24, and the Wong-Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), among others.

**TABLE 5
INSTRUMENTS APPLIED**

Code	Instruments applied
1	Wong-Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS)
2	The author(s) do not specify.
3	Trait Meta Mood Scale TMMS-24
4	Trait Meta Mood Scale TMMS-24
5	Bar-On Test
6	Trait Meta Mood Scale TMMS-24
7	Test EQI Bar-On Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9)
8	Trait Meta Mood Scale TMMS-24
9	Wong-Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS)
10	The author(s) do not specify.
11	Bar-On Test
12	(1) EIE-25 (2) GQH-12 (3) PANAS (4) ECE (5) MBI-SS (5) UWES-S
13	Trait Meta Mood Scale TMMS-24
14	Trait Meta Mood Scale TMMS-24
15	Trait Meta Mood Scale TMMS-24

DISCUSSION

Among the origins of the identified antecedents, Ecuador (Ortiz Mancero & Núñez Naranjo, 2021) is recognized as representative of Latin America, while the other experiences come from Europe (Delgado-Gómez et al., 2019; Estrada et al., 2019; García-Martínez et al., 2021; Pérez-Bonet et al., 2021), Asia (Shafait et al., 2021) and North America (Hamzah et al., 2021). These previous works call for reflection on the need to publish research to increase scientific production at the Latin American level. Likewise, the gaps in knowledge about this phenomenon were identified, which requires further qualitative research that explores emotions and related variables to clarify human behavior as a social being. The journals that publish on the subject are psychological and medical, followed by education.

In relation to the definitions of emotional intelligence, according to the authors, there are coincidences. A generalization was identified in its definition, since it is an ability to perceive, understand and control personal emotions as well as those of others. Emotional intelligence is of great importance in the university environment, where students are academically formed and shape their identity towards society, coinciding with the theoretical references and literature reviews reviewed (Alviárez & Pérez, 2009; Belykh, 2018; Blanc et al., 2010; Carrasquero Rosario, 2011; Costa-Rodríguez et al., 2021; García-Ancira, 2020; García-Tudela & Marín-Sánchez, 2021; Goleman, 2004; Salcedo Rodríguez & Pérez Vázquez, 2020).

In relation to the dimensions, there are various proposals. As shown in Table 4, the dimensions studied by each author are closely related to the instrument applied and the perspective of the study. Research on emotional intelligence becomes a priority, since the solution to the various problems presented by professionals related to social issues depends on it. The purpose of their study is the assertive management of emotions and empathy.

Regarding the instruments used in Latin American research, two instruments are identified as the most commonly used. One of them is the TMMS-24 scale with Likert scale (1 to 5, from not at all agree to totally agree) (Angarita-Ortiz et al., 2020; Arntz Vera & Trunce Morales, 2019; Ayala Servín et al., 2021; Bata & Castro, 2021; Chero Pisfil et al., 2020; Gómez Tabares et al., 2020; Martín del Campo & Patiño Domínguez, 2021). The other most commonly used instrument is the Bar-On Test of 60 items (Luy-Montejo, 2019; Tisocco et al., 2019) and its adaptation of 9 items called EQI Bar-On UWES-9 (Arias-Chávez et al., 2020). While other authors used other scales or don't mention it (Arciniegas Paspuel et al., 2021; Martínez Rodríguez et al., 2020; Merino-Soto et al., 2019; Palomino Flores & Almenara, 2019; Torres-Estrada & Sosa-Rosas, 2020).

These instruments coincide with the research as referents of the present investigation and with the theoretical framework (Ortiz Mancero & Núñez Naranjo, 2021). Scientifically, it is necessary to indicate that the instruments referring to emotional intelligence must be correctly submitted to exploration, validity, reliability and confirmation before being used in a new geographic-temporal context.

CONCLUSION

The systematic review makes visible the need to scientifically explore the phenomenon of emotional intelligence worldwide, in the various stages of life in relation to their environment, arising the need to implement possible interventions to mitigate the lack of emotion management skills, which become negative behavior, with risk of violence behaviors. It is a priority to investigate the emotional intelligence of university students, to improve attitudes, empathy, mitigate recurring conflicts, improve vocabulary and management of emotions of the citizen inside and outside the field that is developed.

The most commonly used instruments are the Trait Meta Mood Scale TMMS-24 test and the Bar-On and for research with a quantitative approach. Each instrument used is disaggregated into dimensions related to emotions, feelings, skills and emotional attention.

The need arises to publish the scientific findings at Latin American level, with the aim of providing new knowledge, research with practical applications that will benefit not only university students, but also society as a whole.

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