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Gender and socio-emotional development in boys and girls: implications for the 2030 Agenda

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Abstract

The goals of the sustainable goals in the 2030 agenda are translated into actions to be developed in research, so the objective of the study is to analyze whether there are statistically significant differences in basic education children based on anger, sadness and worry as part of socio-emotional skills. Quantitative research with a cross-sectional design used a non-probabilistic sample of 381 students, 194 girls and 187 boys, with an age range of 9 to 13 years, ($\bar{x} = 10.38$, $\sigma = 1.124$) enrolled in five basic education schools in the State of Mexico. To measure the variables of the study, three instruments were used ($\alpha = .80$). An analysis of percentages, as well as contrast of means between boys and girls, was carried out through the student's t statistic, identifying that there are no statistically significant differences according to sex. This study provides evidence of a positive change in the perception of gender roles. The reduction of stereotypes associated with the management of emotions, especially in children's education, represents progress towards gender equality with respect to the goals established in the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in the third, fourth and fifth goals.

Keywords: Social-emotional learning, Affective development, Life skills, Sustainable development goals, anger management.

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Género y desarrollo socioemocional en niños y niñas: implicaciones para la Agenda 2030

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Resumen

Las metas de los objetivos sostenibles en la agenda 2030, se traducen en acciones a desarrollar en investigación, por lo que el objetivo del estudio es analizar si existen diferencias estadísticamente significativas en niños y niñas de educación básica en función del enojo, tristeza y preocupación como parte de habilidades socioemocionales. Investigación cuantitativa con diseño transversal, utilizó una muestra no probabilística de 381 alumnos, 194 niñas y 187 niños, con un rango de edad de 9 a 13 años, ($\bar{x} = 10.38$, $\sigma = 1.12$) inscritos en cinco escuelas de educación básica del Estado de México. Para medir las variables del estudio, se emplearon tres instrumentos ($\alpha = .80$). Se hizo un análisis de porcentajes, así como contraste de medias entre niños y niñas, a través del estadístico t de student, identificándose que no existen diferencias estadísticamente significativas en función del sexo. Este estudio aporta evidencia de un cambio positivo en la percepción de roles de género. La reducción de estereotipos asociados a la gestión de emociones, especialmente en la educación de la niñez, representa un avance hacia la equidad de género respecto a las metas establecidas en los objetivos del desarrollo sostenible, especialmente en los objetivos tercero, cuarto y quinto.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje socioemocional, Desarrollo afectivo, Competencias para la vida, Objetivos de desarrollo sostenible, auto control de enojo.

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Gênero e desenvolvimento socioemocional em crianças: Implicações para a Agenda 2030

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Resumo

As metas dos objetivos sustentáveis da agenda 2030 são traduzidas em ações a serem desenvolvidas em pesquisa, portanto, o objetivo do estudo é analisar se existem diferenças estatisticamente significativas nas crianças da educação básica baseadas na raiva, tristeza e preocupação como parte das habilidades socioemocionais. A pesquisa quantitativa com delineamento transversal utilizou uma amostra não probabilística de 381 alunos, sendo 194 meninas e 187 meninos, com faixa etária de 9 a 13 anos, ($\bar{x} = 10,38$, $\sigma = 1,124$) matriculados em cinco escolas de educação básica do Estado do México. Para medir as variáveis do estudo, foram utilizados três instrumentos ($\alpha = .80$). Foi realizada uma análise das porcentagens, bem como do contraste de médias entre meninos e meninas, por meio da estatística t de student, identificando que não existem diferenças estatisticamente significativas de acordo com o sexo. Este estudo fornece evidências de uma mudança positiva na percepção dos papéis de gênero. A redução dos estereótipos associados à gestão das emoções, especialmente na educação infantil, representa um avanço rumo à igualdade de gênero no que diz respeito aos objetivos estabelecidos nos Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável, especialmente no terceiro, quarto e quinto objetivos.

Palavras-chave: Aprendizagem socioemocional, Desenvolvimento afetivo, Competências para a vida, Objetivos de desenvolvimento sustentável, autocontrole da raiva.

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Introduction

Research in the area of socio-emotional skills has allowed us to describe that they have a positive effect on childhood development, especially because they allow the healthy development of self-esteem, the establishment of positive relationships, strengthening social skills through assertive communication (Cacho et al., 2019), responsible decision-making and empathetic behavior towards others (Durlak et al., 2014; Villaseñor, 2018), so their lack is related to childhood maladjustments (Jung & Jin, 2019; Siddiqui & Ventista, 2018).

The study of socio-emotional skills maintains the interest of governments and international organizations because they are made up of social competencies that promote respect for social rules, motivating respect for the rights and care of others, allowing to assertively communicate what is thought and felt, acquiring skills to identify and understand the emotional state of others (Mendoza, 2023), which facilitates the establishment of healthy social relationships (Cedeño et al., 2022) allowing them to face different situations in their lives, especially to solve everyday conflicts without violence (Olhaberry & Sieverson, 2022), demonstrating its effectiveness in peaceful social relationships, promoting healthy self-esteem and optimal personal development (Ersan, 2019; Sun et al., 2022; Treviño et al., 2019).

In contrast, the deficit of socio-emotional skills is associated with the development of risk behaviors such as bullying, violence (Cacho et al., 2019; Morales et al., 2022; Romero et al., 2019), use of weapons, delinquency (García, 2019) antisocial behavior (Amaral et al., 2015), abuse of alcohol, tobacco, psychotropic substances (Cedeño et al., 2022), low academic level and school dropouts (Amaral et al., 2015).

Since the deficit in socio-emotional skills is associated with behavioral, cognitive, academic, and public health problems, their teaching and development are part of international agendas such as the 2030 Agenda, which establishes for all its member countries, the development of these skills in childhood, as a goal of the third objective that establishes to guarantee well-being at any age, as well as the fourth and fifth objectives, which indicate equity as a right in school and family education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, [UNESCO], 2021a), so socio-emotional skills are essential for the achievement of these actions, since they are behaviors and skills that facilitate self-knowledge and promote the development of responsibility by assuming oneself as part of a group of belonging (UNESCO, 2020), which is why national government agendas also promote their formation from an early age (State Development Plan of the State of Mexico [PDEM], 2018).

Because socio-emotional skills develop throughout life in various contexts such as home and school, suggesting a multi-causal origin (Cedeño et al., 2022), laws have been developed that establish their development at early ages, for example, the General Education Law indicates the promotion of these skills to strengthen the ability to learn, make decisions and act responsibly while respecting the rights of the people with whom one lives to contribute to social and personal well-being (General Education Law, 2019).

Socio-emotional skills are closely associated with emotions, since they function to promote different ways of acting, making decisions and solving problems (Parlebas, 2018), so their study is essential for understanding socio-emotional skills (Cassielo & Barlow, 2016; Elhai et al., 2019). Basic emotions are classified as fear, anger, sadness, joy, surprise and disgust, identifying social emotions such as shame, guilt and envy (Mendoza, 2017b), all of which fulfill an adaptive function, which facilitates survival as the motivation for defensive and protective behavior when perceiving a threat (Cassielo & Barlow, 2016). However, the lack of control of them can stimulate destructive behaviors (Averill, 1982), so self-control of emotions is a pillar of socio-emotional skills (Román & Mendoza, 2023).

Self-control of anger and sadness are socio-emotional skills whose regulation promotes states of well-being and health, decreasing the likelihood of property damage, physical aggression and difficulties in relating to other people (Deffenbacher et. al., 1986; Hazaleus & Deffenbacher, 1986; Román & Mendoza, 2023), specifically self-control of sadness is a factor that protects people by helping them cope with episodes of loneliness, pessimism, and despair, avoiding lack of motivation for daily activities and decreasing the risk of attempting against one's own life (Vallés & Vallés, 2000).

Emotions such as sadness and anger have a direct relationship with academic functioning, friendships, and disengagement from daily life goals, so the lack of self-control of these emotions promotes aggressive relationships between schoolchildren, difficulties in academic performance (Corica et al., 2023; Kwon et al., 2022; Tan & Smith, 2018) and lower goal achievement, which is why it is associated with frustration (Crossman et al., 2009).

Socio-emotional skills allow children and adolescents to regulate their emotions, including those that generate worry and repetitive or catastrophic thoughts about future events (Borkovec et al., 1983; Borkovec et al., 1998; Van Der Linden, 2017). This emotional regulation is fundamental for well-being and interpersonal relationships, and prepares individuals to face the challenges of daily life.

Several factors influence the development of social-emotional skills, including educational level, age, sex, and quality of social relationships. Regarding age, younger children tend to be less proficient in these skills, and research has shown that high school students generally show greater competence than elementary school students (Gregory et al., 2021). Regarding sex, boys tend to show less self-control when facing anger than girls, which translates into greater emotional dysregulation and aggressive behavior. In contrast, girls tend to handle anger with greater calmness and non-aggressive coping strategies (Ortega et al., 2021). Regarding social relationships, studies suggest that a large social group is associated with a greater ability to cope with sadness and worry (Hale & Zeman, 2023).

Although anger, sadness and worry coexist in the daily lives of children and adolescents, in research these variables are generally studied independently, which shows that there are few studies that have been developed with the study variables of socio-emotional skills in boys and girls in primary education, so the objective of this research is to analyze if there are statistically significant differences in anger, sadness and worry as part of socio-emotional skills based on sex, in students in basic education.

Method

General Objective:

To analyze whether there are statistically significant differences in anger, sadness and worry as part of socio-emotional skills based on sex, in students in basic education.

Specific objectives

1. Identify the prevalence of anger, sadness and worry as part of the socio-emotional skills in the total number of participating students.
2. Identify the prevalence of anger, sadness and worry as part of socio-emotional skills based on the sex of the students.
3. Analyze whether there are statistically significant differences in anger, sadness and worry based on sex, which would allow us to understand the progress made in overcoming sexist stereotypes.

Participants

381 students participated, 194 (51%) were girls and 187 (49%) were boys, the age range was 9 to 13 years, ($\bar{x}=10.38$, $\sigma=1.124$) enrolled in 5 primary schools in the center of the State of Mexico. The parents of the participating students and the corresponding authorities of the school institution provided their authorization for the participation of the schoolchildren. The sample was intentional and non-probabilistic, with inclusion criteria being that the children were enrolled in a primary school in the State of Mexico and that the parents signed the informed consent, as well as the assent of the children. Through the consent forms, the children were informed about the objectives, about free and voluntary participation, protection of identity and the confidentiality of the information provided.

Tools

Anger Emotional Management Scale (Mendoza, 2010), evaluates three patterns of control of the emotion of anger, is made up of 11 items, with a three-level Likert scale (1 almost never, 2 sometimes, 3 almost always), with $\alpha = 0.80$. The scale has three factors, Emotional Inhibition (behaviors to mask their emotion, items 2, 5, 7 and 11),

Coping (strategies to manage emotion, items: 1, 3, 8 and 10),

Dysregulation (emotional outbursts that cannot be controlled, items 4, 6, and 9).

It is an instrument aimed at Mexican schoolchildren; its approximate response time is 10 minutes.

Worry Management Scale (Mendoza, 2010), evaluates three patterns of control of the feeling

of worry, is composed of 10 reagents, with a three-level Likert scale (1 almost never, 2 sometimes, 3 almost always, with the exception of item 2 which receives a reverse score), with $\alpha = 0.81$. It has three factors, Inhibition (items 2, 5, 7 and 11) Coping (items 1, 3, 8, 10), Dysregulation (items 4, 6 and 9 41), Its application time does not exceed 10 minutes, aimed at being answered by Mexican schoolchildren.

Emotional Management of Sadness Scale (Mendoza, 2010), evaluates three patterns of coping with the emotion of sadness, is structured by 12 items, with a three-level Likert scale (1 almost never, 2 sometimes, 3 almost always), with $\alpha = 0.80$. The emotional coping subscale with three items (1,4,10), the emotional inhibition subscale made up of four items (2,3,6, 8) and the dysregulation subscale with three items (5, 7, 9).

Procedure

Primary schools were visited with the aim of presenting the research project to school authorities and obtaining the necessary permits for their incorporation into the project. Once they agreed to participate, the logistics for the application of the instruments were established with the authorities of the participating schools.

The applications of the instruments were done in person in the school classroom with adequate lighting and ventilation. The students answered the instruments on paper, in a single session with an approximate application time of 30 minutes. The questionnaires were answered only by the students whose parents signed the informed consent through which they were informed about the objectives of the research, notifying that their children would not suffer any type of damage or harm for participating. In addition to the signature of the parents, each participating boy and girl was informed of the objectives of their participation, so they gave their consent to participate freely, autonomously and voluntarily.

Analysis of Results

For data analysis, a database was created in the statistical program SPSS version 27.

1. To meet specific objective one, a percentage analysis was developed based on the frequency of responses for the three-level Likert scale, taking into account the participation of the total number of participants (without distinguishing between men and women).

2. To meet specific objective two, the students' responses were analyzed based on sex, so a percentage analysis of the responses of girls and boys was made.

3. To meet the third specific objective, a contrast of means of the responses of boys and girls was made, identifying statistically significant differences through the student t test.

Results

The results are divided into three sections, the first shows the results of the total number of participants, describing the percentages for each of the items of the instruments that measure sadness, anger and worry; the second section shows percentages of the answers differentiating between boys and girls, the third section shows the contrast of the arithmetic means according to sex, through the student t test.

Tabla 1. Sadness variable: Percentages with the total number of participants

Sadness Instrument Reagents	Hardl y ever	Somet imes	Almost always
1. When I'm feeling sad, I can control myself	18 %	56%	26%
2. I hold back my feelings of sadness	27%	46%	27%
3. When I feel sad, I remain calm and it doesn't affect me.	26%	47%	27%
4. I cry when I'm sad	22%	40%	38%
5. When something makes me very sad, I hide my sadness	33%	37%	31%
6. When I'm sad, I do something until I calm down	23%	42%	34%
7. When I'm sad, I get sad "inside" and I don't show it.	27%	40%	33%
8. When I'm sad I don't let it make me lose control	31%	40%	29%
9. When I'm sad, I cry and make a scene	76%	16%	8%
10. When something is making me sad, I notice it and calm down.	16%	46%	38%
11. When I'm sad, I can't calm down and I get discouraged.	35%	44%	21%
12. When I'm sad, I'm afraid to show feelings and I hide them.	37%	29%	34%

Source: Own elaboration

31% of students say that when they are sad, they almost always hide their sadness, 34% say that they are almost always afraid to show their sadness, 38% acknowledge that when a situation makes them sad, they almost always realize it, try to control themselves and remain calm, 38% say that they almost always cry, and 76% accept that when they are sad, they never make a scene (see table 1).

The percentages of responses from all participants in the anger instrument are presented in Table two below.

Tabla 2. Anger variable: Percentage of total participants

Anger Instrument Reagents	Hardl y ever	Somet imes	Almost always
1. When I'm feeling angry, I control my temper.	22%	48%	30%
2. When I'm angry I hold back my anger	32%	48%	21%
3. When I'm feeling angry, I stay calm	26%	45%	30%

Anger Instrument Reagents	Hardl y ever	Somet imes	Almost always
4. When I'm angry, I do things like slam doors.	64%	25%	12%
5. When I'm angry I hide my anger	37%	41%	23%
6. I break and destroy what makes me angry	75%	15%	11%
7. I get angry inside but I don't show it	31%	47%	22%
8. When I'm angry I've learned to control myself	25%	42%	33%
9. When I'm angry, I say bad things to others	70%	19%	11%
10. When I feel angry, I calm down and control myself	18%	45%	38%
11. I'm afraid to show my anger.	47%	34%	18%

Source: Own elaboration

11% of students report that when they are angry, they almost always break and destroy whatever makes them angry, 23% mention that they almost always hide their anger, 18% report that they are afraid to show their anger, 29% accept that when they are angry, they remain calm and 33% report that almost always when angry they have learned not to lose control (see table 2).

Table three below contains the percentages of responses from all participants in the concern instrument.

Tabla 3. Concern variable: Percentage of total participants

Reagents of the Concern instrument	Hardl y ever	Somet imes	Almost always
1. When I feel worried, I don't lose control	27%	48%	25%
2. I show my feelings of concern	31%	42%	27%
3. I hold back my feelings of worry	38%	34%	28%
4. If I'm worried, I talk until I get better	28%	34%	38%
5. When I'm worried, I cry in scandal	83%	13%	4%
6. I hide my feelings of worry	34%	42%	24%
7. When I'm worried about something, I complain	64%	27%	9%
8. I worry inside but I don't show it	33%	41%	26%
9. When I'm worried, I can't control myself	41%	42%	17%
10. When I'm worried, I calm down	16%	39%	46%

Source: Own elaboration

28% of students report that they almost always hold back their feelings of worry so that others do not notice, 4% report that they almost always cry and make a scene when they are worried, 24% of participants accept that they almost always hide their feelings of worry, 26% report that they almost always worry inside, but do not show it to others, and 16% of boys and girls almost never try to stay

calm (see table 3).

Percentages based on sex

Table 4 below shows the percentage of girls' responses regarding the sadness variable.

Tabla 4. Below shows the percentage of girls' responses regarding the sadness variable

Variable sadness: Percentage of girls' responses

Sadness instrument reagents	Hardly ever	Some times	Almost always
1. When I'm sad, I can control myself	20%	56%	24%
2. I hold back my feelings of sadness	29%	44%	27%
3. When something makes me very sad, I calm down	26%	49%	26 %
4. I cry when I'm sad	16%	42%	42%
5. When something makes me very sad, I hide my sadness	37 %	35%	28%
6. When I'm sad, I do something to calm myself down	24%	44%	31 %
7. When I'm sad, I get sad without showing it	24%	43%	33%
8. When I'm sad I don't lose control	33%	43%	25%
9. When I'm sad, I cry and make a scene	78%	14%	7%
10. When something is making me sad, I control myself	17%	49%	34%
11. When I'm sad, I can't calm down	31%	50%	19%
12. When I'm sad I hide what I feel	37%	27%	36%

Source: Own elaboration

In Table 4, it is indicated that 28% of girls report that when they are sad, they almost always hide their sadness, 42% almost always cry when they are sad, 36% almost always when they are sad, they are afraid to show their feelings, 25% of girls report that almost always being sad does not make them lose control.

Table 5. Summarizes the girls' responses to the sadness instrument

Variable sadness: Percentage of children's response

Sadness instrument reagents	Hardly ever	Some times	Almost always
1. When I'm sad, I can control myself	16%	57%	27%
2. I hold back my feelings of sadness	26%	49%	26%
3. When something makes me very sad, I calm down	27%	46%	27%
4. I cry when I'm sad	27%	39%	34%
5. When something makes me very sad, I hide my sadness	28%	38%	34%
6. When I'm sad, I do something to calm myself down	22%	41%	37%
7. When I'm sad, I get sad without showing it	30%	37%	33%

Sadness instrument reagents	Hardly ever	Some times	Almost always
8. When I'm sad I don't lose control	30%	37%	33%
9. When I'm sad, I cry and make a scene	74%	18%	8%
10. When something is making me sad, I control myself	14%	43%	43%
11. When I'm sad, I can't calm down	39%	39%	23%
12. When I'm sad I hide what I feel	37%	31%	32%

Source: Own elaboration

26% of children report that they almost always hold back their feelings of sadness, 27% of children almost never cry when they are sad, 34% report that they almost always hide their sadness, and 33% of children mention that almost always when they are sad, they do so inside, but they do not show it to anyone, 8% mention that when they are sad they almost always cry and make a scene (see table 5).

Table 6 . Shows the girls' responses to the instrument that measures anger.

Anger variable: Percentage of girls' responses			
Anger Instrument Reagents	Hardly ever	Somet imes	Almost always
1. When I'm feeling angry, I control my temper.	21%	52%	27%
2. When I'm angry I hold back my anger	31%	51%	19%
3. When I'm feeling angry, I stay calm	30%	42%	28%
4. When I'm angry, I do things like slam doors.	67%	22%	12%
5. When I'm angry I hide my anger	37%	42%	21%
6. I break and destroy what makes me angry	75%	15%	10%
7. I get angry inside but I don't show it	28%	49%	23%
8. When I'm angry I've learned to control myself	26%	44%	30%
9. When I'm angry, I say bad things to others	72%	18%	10%
10. When I feel angry, I calm down and control myself	17%	46%	37%
11. I'm afraid to show my anger.	47%	36%	17%

Source: Own elaboration

28% of girls mention that they almost always stay calm when they are angry, 21% say they almost always hide their anger, 10% accept making a mess and breaking what makes them angry, and 30% mention that when they are angry, they have almost always learned not to lose control (see table 6).

Table 7. Shows the percentage of responses given by children to the instrument that measures anger.

Anger variable: Percentage of children's response

Anger Instrument Reagents	Hardl y ever	Somet imes	Almost always
1. When I'm angry, I control my temper.	24%	44%	32%
2. When I'm angry I hold back my anger	32%	45%	23%
3. When I'm angry, I stay calm	21%	48%	31%
4. When I get angry, I do things like slam doors.	60%	28%	12%
5. When I'm angry I hide my anger	36%	40%	24%
6. I break and destroy what makes me angry	74%	15%	11%
7. I get angry inside but I don't show it	34%	44%	21%
8. When I'm angry I've learned to control myself	24%	40%	36%
9. When I'm angry, I say bad things to others	67%	21%	12%
10. When I feel angry, I calm down and control myself	18%	43%	38%
11. I'm afraid to show my anger.	47%	33%	20%

Source: Own elaboration

12% of children report that when they are angry, they almost always do things like slamming doors, 11% admit that they almost always break and destroy what makes them angry, 12% report that when they are angry, they almost always say bad things to others, and 20% of children admit that they are almost always afraid to show their anger (see table 7).

Table 8. Describes the responses that the girls gave to the instrument that measures concern.

Variable Concern: Percentage of girls' response

Concern Instrument Reagents	Hardl y ever	Somet imes	Almost always
1. When I feel worried, I don't lose control	27%	53%	21%
2. I show my feelings of concern	33%	39%	28%
3. I hold back my feelings of worry	36%	35%	29%
4. If I'm worried, I talk until I get better	24%	39%	37%
5. When I'm worried, I cry in scandal	81%	17%	3%
6. I hide my feelings of worry	37%	40%	23%
7. When I'm worried about something, I complain	66%	24%	10%
8. I worry inside but I don't show it	34%	39%	27%
9. When I'm worried, I can't control myself	42%	42%	16%
10. When I'm worried, I calm down	14%	43%	43%

Source: Own elaboration

43% of girls report that when they are worried, they almost always remain calm and calmly solve the problem, 16% accept that their concern is almost always very noticeable, 23% mention hiding their feelings of concern almost always and 3% report almost always crying and making a scene when they are worried (see table 8).

Table 9. Below shows the percentages of participants' responses to the instrument that measures concern.

<i>Concern variable: Percentage of children's responses</i>			
Concern Instrument Reagents	Hardl y ever	Someti mes	Almost always
1. When I feel worried, I don't lose control	28%	43%	29%
2. I show my feelings of concern	29%	46%	25%
3. I hold back my feelings of worry	41%	33%	26%
4. If I'm worried, I talk until I get better	32%	29%	39%
5. When I'm worried, I cry in scandal	84%	10%	5%
6. I hide my feelings of worry	31%	43%	2%
7. When I'm worried about something, I complain	62%	29%	9%
8. I worry inside but I don't show it	32%	43%	25%
9. When I'm worried, I can't control myself	40%	42%	18%
10. When I'm worried, I calm down	17%	35%	49%

Source: Own elaboration

28% of children report that when they feel worried, they almost never act calm, so they tend to lose control, 26% accept that they almost always hold back their feelings of worry so that others do not notice, 32% of children almost never talk to someone when they feel worried and 18% report that they almost always do not control themselves when they feel worried (see table 9).

Contrast of means based on sex

Below is Table 10 showing the contrast of the means between girls and boys in the instrument that measures sadness.

Tabla 10. Sadness: Contrast of averages based on sex.

<i>Reagent</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Girls</i> \bar{x}	<i>Children</i> \bar{x}	<i>gl</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1	330	2.02	2.06	328	-.648	.518
2	330	1.94	1.96	328	-.311	.756
3	330	2.01	1.94	328	.875	.382
4	330	2.29	2.12	328	2.045	.042
5	330	1.88	2.01	328	-1.470	.142
6	330	2.07	2.13	328	-.705	.481
7	330	2.04	2.01	328	.328	.743
8	330	1.90	2.00	328	-1.149	.251
9	330	1.29	1.34	328	-.644	.520
10	330	2.17	2.29	328	-1.545	.123
11	330	1.86	1.89	328	-.298	.766
12	330	1.95	1.90	328	.535	.593

Source: Own elaboration

Table 10 identifies that the analysis of the contrast of means indicates that there are no statistically significant differences between boys and girls in the statistical means of the responses in the instrument that measures sadness.

Table 11. below shows the contrast of means (Student t test) between girls and boys in the instrument that measures anger.

Anger: Contrasting averages by sex

<i>Reagent</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Girls</i> \bar{x}	<i>Children</i> \bar{x}	<i>gl</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1	330	2.08	2.07	328	.139	.890
2	330	1.88	1.89	328	-.012	.990
3	330	1.99	2.06	328	-.850	.396
4	330	1.44	1.52	328	-1.008	.314
5	330	1.85	1.86	328	-.121	.904
6	330	1.33	1.38	328	-.718	.473
7	330	1.94	1.83	328	1.286	.199
8	330	2.10	2.10	328	-.044	.965
9	330	1.34	1.45	328	-1.407	.160
10	330	2.24	2.20	328	.501	.617
11	330	1.71	1.76	328	-.633	.527

Source: Own elaboration

Table 11 identifies that, when comparing the arithmetic means of boys and girls, there are no significant differences in the responses to the items of the instrument that measures anger.

Table 12. Below shows the analysis of the student *t* statistic to contrast the means of the responses of boys and girls in the instrument that measures concern.

Concern: Contrast of averages based on sex

<i>Reagent</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Girls</i> \bar{x}	<i>Children</i> \bar{x}	<i>gl</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1	330	1.92	1.99	328	-.786	.432
2	330	1.99	1.99	328	-.062	.950
3	330	1.87	1.83	328	.372	.710
4	330	2.13	2.11	328	.215	.830
5	330	1.20	1.21	328	-.147	.884
6	330	1.83	1.93	328	-1.162	.246
7	330	1.45	1.49	328	-.617	.538
8	330	1.90	1.92	328	-.185	.854
9	330	1.75	1.82	328	-.800	.424
10	330	2.31	2.32	328	-.160	.873

Source: Own elaboration

As identified in the description of Table 12, there are no significant differences in the arithmetic means of the responses of boys and girls in the questions of the instrument that measures concern.

Discussions

The general objective of the study was met by analyzing the statistically significant differences in anger, sadness and worry as part of the socio-emotional skills based on sex, concluding that there are no statistically significant differences between boys and girls in the way of showing anger, sadness and worry.

Analysis of research in the area shows that these results do not coincide with what was reported a few decades ago in scientific research, which consistently indicated that women. They had a greater ability than men to identify emotions through facial expressions, they were described as more empathetic, and as having greater social skills, however, it was identified that women masked their emotions more than men (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013; Gordillo et al., 2021).

Therefore, these results demonstrate progress in gender equity, especially with regard to overcoming the sexist dichotomy of feminine and masculine stereotypes, through which only women were assigned behaviors associated with emotional expression, such as crying to show sadness, assigning to men the ability to express anger especially through aggression, giving society a justification by establishing their masculinity through "macho" behaviors by masking their emotions,

thus avoiding crying, caring for others (empathy), so these results demonstrate progress in the goals established in the 2030 agenda, especially those associated with gender equity, by demonstrating evidence that. She points out that progress is being made in dissolving gender stereotypes, as it has been identified that boys no longer feel limited to activities considered "masculine" and girls feel more empowered to explore various options, especially those associated with emotional management.

The findings of this research are similar to those recently found in other research, which begins to demonstrate progress in overcoming the female-male dichotomy by identifying that there are no differences in the way of managing emotions, nor in empathy based on sex (Cruz & Mendoza, 2023;González-Moreno & Molero-Jurado, 2022), in other current research it has been identified that they do not show differences in the ability to identify emotions in others through signals such as facial expression or tone of voice, skills that were previously exclusively intended for the female gender and not the male (Fidalgo et al., 2018), findings that are strengthened by the evidence of this article, when reporting that both sexes are able to identify sadness, worry and anger when interacting with other peers, having the ability to identify them through tone of voice, facial expressions and other non-verbal signals emitted by peers, results that can be explained due to the promotion of gender equality from early childhood through education at home and at school, in both socializing contexts attention has been insisted on, especially through the goals of the 2030 agenda.

Regarding the suppression of expressions of sadness, worry and anger, it was identified that there are no differences based on gender, so boys and girls mask their emotions to an equal extent to prevent other people from identifying their emotional state. Similar results were recently identified by Zhang et al. (2020), who report that there were no significant gender differences in emotional suppression.

In a prospective manner, the results of the research provide information that strengthens the theoretical foundation of prevention and intervention programs for strengthening socio-emotional skills, identifying that both girls and boys respond similarly in the cognitive dimension (masking and evaluation), the emotional dimension (identifying one's own and others' emotions), the behavioral dimension (self-control, coping and deregulation) and the interpersonal dimension. The latter provides valuable information to improve interaction skills based on the three antecedent dimensions (cognitive, emotional and behavioral), demonstrating that together they allow improving social, school and family adjustment, as well as facilitating the development of self-concept and identity (Basile et al., 2015), promoting the acquisition of socio-emotional skills. For all the above, it is concluded that the results of this research strengthen the goals of the third objective of the 2030 Agenda, which establishes the guarantee of a healthy life, facilitating well-being for all at all ages.

Theoretical contributions and practical applications of the findings

The importance of boys and girls managing effective strategies to communicate what they feel and choose how to behave based on the emotional recognition of their peers is imperative, since the regulation of emotions in school stages predicts prosocial behavior (Barrero-Toncel et al., 2021).

The cognitive and behavioral components associated with the recognition of one's own emotions and those of others facilitate the quality of interactions by helping to resolve conflicts without aggression, promoting empathy by identifying the emotions that peers demonstrate during their interactions (Cruz & Mendoza, 2023). In fact, identifying the emotional state of other people provides valuable information to know effective strategies to interact and make decisions, in such a way that behavior is chosen, especially when a partner shows sadness or demonstrates some other emotional state that facilitates aggressive behavior such as anger.

Lack of anger control is associated with a deficit in control of other emotions, such as sadness or fear, establishing a generalized state of lack of emotional self-control (Liu et al., 2018), which makes it difficult for boys and girls to adapt to the social demands framed in the different contexts in which they develop, particularly in the school context, showing that the deficit in the management of emotions is associated with aggression among peers (Filella, et al., 2018).

Research on emotional control has shown that until a few decades ago, it was men who demonstrated less emotional self-control in contrast to women, differences that were explained due to the social and cultural pressure in which men were expected to be more aggressive than women (Veijalainen, 2021), so the cultural factor is decisive, especially the family as the socializing institution par excellence, through which values, behaviors, attitudes, as well as gender stereotypes are transmitted (Mendoza et al., 2020).

Regarding the influence of family education, it has been shown that the type of upbringing is decisive for children to learn to control their emotions (Mendoza, 2017a). In aggressive and negligent upbringing, parents function as ineffective agents in modeling emotional control. In fact, it has been shown that boys and girls demonstrate less emotional self-control in the presence of their parents, so they lose more control with them than when they interact with strangers (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013). This can be explained by identifying that they gain more from them, for example, by throwing tantrums.

Lack of anger self-control is a factor that increases the risk of developing problems in childhood such as academic and behavioral deficiencies, problems accompanied by externalizing behaviors such as tantrums, aggressive behavior, and problems with authority (Liu et al., 2018), being a risk factor for the development of psychopathologies in childhood (Sanchis-Sanchis et al., 2020), so emotional self-control as a dimension of socio-emotional skills is a component in cognitive behavioral therapy for reducing aggression and tantrums (Mendoza, 2017b; Mendoza, 2023).

Regarding the study of the worry variable, its analysis is imminent since it is a feeling that acts as a regulatory mechanism for anxiety, which is why it is considered an essential component in thought control training, especially those of recurrent worry, since it is an alternative to modify the management and coping with anxiety (Basile et al., 2015).

For the above reasons, the need to teach boys and girls to develop socio-emotional skills becomes urgent (UNESCO, 2021b), since emotional coping, self-control and non-verbal communication in general provide valuable and necessary information for interactions between peers, facilitating decision-making, especially when schoolchildren find themselves in conflict situations in

which it is necessary to resolve without aggression (Mendoza, 2023). Therefore, learning to communicate what one thinks and feels assertively will help strengthen support networks, avoiding social isolation.

Conclusiones

It is concluded that there are no differences in the way of demonstrating anger, sadness and concern when contrasting boys and girls, so this study reveals a significant advance towards gender equity specifically in the expression and management of emotions in the infant stage. The results of the study suggest a dissolution of traditional gender stereotypes with regard to the expression and management of emotions, this change could be influenced by the promotion of gender equality established from curricula and programs in basic education schools driven by the goals of the sustainable development goals established in the 2030 Agenda.

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