Article

Emotions of Educators Conducting Emergency Remote Teaching during COVID-19 Confinement

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Abstract: The home confinement of the population in Spain caused by the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted face-to-face teaching and led teachers of all educational levels to perform their activities remotely. This represented a radical change in daily tasks. The goal of this study is to analyse and understand the emotions teachers experienced while performing Emergency Remote Teaching during home confinement. We performed a descriptive quantitative analysis and a comparison of the means (ANOVA) related to the independent sociodemographic variables (age, gender, and educational stage). The study sample consisted of 4589 teachers from the Basque Country, and represents the largest study with these characteristics conducted in Spain. The results obtained in the research show that, despite suffering great stress, teachers also felt pride in the work they had done. The study concludes that the teachers in the group who suffered the most negative feelings were women, primary school teachers, and middle-aged educators.

Keywords: emotions; emergency remote teaching; teachers; COVID-19

1. Introduction

On 14 March 2020, the Government of Spain decreed 'Alarm State' [1] throughout its territory, limiting the free movement of the population and establishing mandatory home confinement. The health crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic unexpectedly and urgently led to the entire academic population (i.e., teachers and students) to be confined at home [2].

In order to overcome this situation, the institutions and centres of all levels of education across the various autonomous communities of Spain decided to implement telematic teaching via the Internet [3]. This re-adaptation of the teaching–learning process to an alternative mode of teaching, in an unplanned way, led to the performance of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) [4]. This method has nothing to do with the different types and modalities of online training, which tend to have a careful instructional design and proven efficacy [5–7].

For a significant amount of time, the current 'knowledge society' [8] has allowed teachers to take advantage of technology and perform their educational activities virtually through different interactive and collaborative resources. The Internet allows searching, creating, or sharing educational content [9–11]. Thus, during home confinement, it allowed teachers and students to remain in contact. In addition, students could retrieve their learning material from educational platforms and Web 2.0 resources [12]. However, teachers have experienced difficulties and doubts when implementing digital educational resources in teaching–learning processes [13–16]. Not surprisingly, the training for teaching digital competence has been traditionally linked closely to aspects of a more technical and instrumental nature, and not so much to pedagogical and methodological development [17,18], which was what the situation demanded.

During ERT, a significant part of the educational community, and society in general, disregarded teachers' conditions, difficulties, and their limitations to perform their educational activities whilst confined. All of the attention was focused on how the teachers taught curricular content, how they assessed the students [4] and the pressures that these activities might entail. Maintaining the demands imposed by teaching may have generated, beyond physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion [19,20].

2. Teachers' Emotional Experiences

Given the scientific discussion on the conceptualisation of the meaning of emotions [21,22], in the present study we started from the idea coined by [23], based on the following conception: in teachers' professional field, emotions are constituted of teachers' emotional states, which are the responses they give to exceptional situations that involve synchronised patterns of experiences, assessments, physiological changes, and expressions and/or behaviour tendencies, whose interpretation depend on the socio-cultural meaning of the context in which they occur [24].

The interconnectedness between emotional well-being and labour performance is widely acknowledged in both scientific and institutional spheres, substantiated by their inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the third objective: Health and Wellbeing [25]. Achieving a state of well-being encompassing physical, emotional, and mental health is indispensable for optimal performance in both personal and professional domains. This principle is universally applicable, irrespective of individual characteristics such as race, ethnicity, or gender, and extends to all roles and occupations.

In the realm of education, educators are expected to operate at their highest standards, a commitment underscored by the fourth SDG objective emphasizing Quality Education [25]. Despite the prevalence of negative emotions during the COVID era, teachers expressed satisfaction for their efforts, even amidst emotional and physical challenges [26]. Considering these factors, the fulfilment of teachers' health and well-being becomes crucial for delivering the quality education necessary for societal development. Whereas these concerns held priority before COVID, the profound implications of the pandemic have underscored the heightened clarity of this imperative.

It is possible for confined teachers, depending on their experience in the development of their professional performance, to experience positive emotions such as pride, satisfaction, enthusiasm, confidence, and relief. Concomitantly, they may experience negative feelings such as insecurity, stress, concern, anger, and frustration [27–29].

The fact of unexpectedly having to perform ERT [4] and in an unplanned manner could have led teachers to greater psychological stress and, consequently, influenced their emotional states [30,31]. The forced inclusion of technology as a resource for teaching can cause burnout syndrome in some teachers [32], which is characterised by physical fatigue, loss of motivation, and emotional exhaustion [33,34]. Moreover, this can become exacerbated in a scenario of uncertainty, fear, and insecurity, such as the one which occurred during confinement. However, when teachers perform adequately using technological instruments in education, they tend to value their emotions in a more satisfactory way, and vice versa [35,36].

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced the mental health of those individuals who were overwhelmed by the stressors to which they were exposed [37]. As some studies point out, organisational changes influence the emotional state of teachers [38–41] and affect some aspects of their professional performance, such as the academic results of students and the quality of the relationships they establish with them [42–44]. In this respect, the resistance that some teachers may experience, when they have to change [45] to ERT, can also contribute to their perception of negative emotions.

From the teachers' perspective, the implications of COVID-19 in education are still scarce. Most of the studies conducted have addressed this topic from the students' perspective [46,47]. Despite the fact that different authors [48–50] emphasise the influence of emotions on learning and technology-mediated teaching, the studies have been mainly lim-

ited to analysing the feelings of students in the educational field, the emotions of students related to the teaching-learning process, and how they feel when they are assessed [51–54].

The analysis of the emotional experience of the confined teachers performing their educational activities through ERT allows us to know their emotional responses, and identify whether negative or positive emotions prevail [53].

Therefore, the interest of the present study is based on knowing the affective states of the teaching staff in terms of emotional experience linked to ERT, within the home confinement context. Moreover, this study also contributes to visualising the efforts made by teaching staff during home confinement while performing telematic teaching.

3. Objectives and Hypotheses

The main goal of the present study is to analyse the emotional response of teachers during home confinement caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Basque Country, Spain. To that end, the following research hypotheses (H) was proposed:

H1. *Teachers consider negative emotions more than positive ones.*

As a secondary objective, we want to know the characteristics of the teachers that exhibited the most negative emotional response. The independent variables in the analysis allow for segmenting the population into more homogeneous groups, thus enabling a more detailed and specific study. In this way, gender was analysed under the criteria of equity and social justice. The age of teachers was examined considering generational contexts, and the level at which they teach was explored due to the diversity in pedagogical practices. In this regard, the following research hypotheses (H) were proposed:

H2. *There are no significant differences in negative emotional responses between men and women.*

H3. *There are significant differences in negative emotional responses depending on age.*

H4. *There are significant differences in negative emotional responses depending on the educational level in which the teachers perform.*

In the comparison of variables, a null hypothesis (H0) is presented, which refers to the non-existence of significant differences (0.5% significance level or lower); whereas the alternative hypothesis (H1) refers to the existence of significant differences at the aforementioned significance level. In this way, if H0 was rejected, Cohen's g would be applied to determine the effect size of such differences [55,56].

4. Method

4.1. Sample

A non-random and non-probabilistic convenience sampling was performed to conduct the present study. We sent a questionnaire to all the teachers that were performing in research fields. The universe of our study was the teaching staff of the Basque Country, Spain (N = 42,772), of which 36,934 were non-university teachers, and 5838 were from the university. With an error of $\pm$ 4%, a confidence interval of 99%, and p = q = 0.5, the sample size estimated was 1008 teachers [57,58]. Finally, the sample was composed of 4589 teachers who answered the questionnaire satisfactorily, of which 23.3% were men, 75.5% women, and 0.8% non-binary, with a mean age of 37 years (SD = 6.24).

The surveyed individuals worked professionally as teachers in the following fields: early childhood education stages (10.8); primary education (31.6%); compulsory secondary education (38.3%); vocational training (5.3%); higher education (8.6%); state-owned education and training centres (77.2%); subsidised centres (20.6%); and private centres (2.2%).

4.2. Instrument

The emotional responses of teachers who were performing ERT were measured using a scale composed of ten items. Half measured positive emotions (pride, satisfaction, confidence, enthusiasm, and security) and the other half measured negative emotions (insecurity, stress, concerns, anger, and frustration) [27].

The instrument used was generated by adapting the questionnaire for virtual learning environments (WebCT) proposed by [59], which features an internal consistency of 0.845 according to the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient. In this respect, in order to achieve the objectives proposed in the present study, the scale was adapted to the situation produced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to assess the aspects addressed in each item (IT), we used a Likert-type scale, with response options from 1 (little) to 5 (much). Similarly, the surveyed teachers valued the following items relating to how they felt emotionally during COVID-19 in their professional performance as teachers. On the one hand, the that items related to positive emotions were: (IT1) I am proud of the work done during the confinement; (IT2) I am satisfied with the work performed during the confinement; (IT3) I am confident that my work is adequate; (IT4) I feel encouraged when I finish my work activity; and (IT5) I feel safe when I work in confinement. On the other hand, the items related to negative emotions were: (IT6) I feel stress while teaching; (IT7) My work worries me during confinement; (IT8) I feel irritated doing my job in this situation; (IT9) Working in this situation makes me feel frustrated; and (IT10) Working in this confined situation causes me general stress.

To obtain the sociodemographic data of the teaching staff, an ad hoc tool was created taking into account the defining variables of the profession, such as age, gender, educational stage in which they were working, and profile of the centres in which they worked. The assessment of the validity of the instrument adapted and used to analyse how confined teachers performing ERT felt emotionally was carried out by calculating the factor load of the questionnaire, and through a confirmatory factor analysis [60]. The other tests, which determined the psychometric properties of the questionnaire used, are specified in the results section.

4.3. Process

The distribution of the questionnaire among teachers of different educational levels was carried out by means of bulk sending to their institutional email accounts, which belong to the educational centres of the entire Basque Country. The snowball or recruitment network technique was used through successive steps [61,62], making use of social networks (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) and other educational networks articulated through WhatsApp groups. Data collection was performed over three weeks.

We performed a descriptive quantitative analysis and a comparison of means (ANOVA) of the independent variables (age, gender, educational stage) relating to the research topic, i.e., the emotional response of the teaching staff that was performing ERT. The data were exported and adapted to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 software to perform the statistical analysis.

4.4. Data Analysis

First, we assessed the psychometric properties of the Workload and Effort Questionnaire. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire was ensured with the methods most used by social researchers [58,63]: Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis of positive ($\alpha = 0.804$) and negative emotions ($\alpha = 0.868$); Cronbach's alpha if one item is removed, for each item (see Table 1); KMO test (0.835); and Bartlett's test of factor analysis ($p = 0.000$), test of the two halves.

The sample was randomly divided into two halves. A parallel analysis was performed with the first subsample (n = 2296) to assess the factorial structure of the instrument. In this case, we used the Factor 10.4.01 software [64]. The procedure selected for determining the number of dimensions was the optimal implementation of the parallel analysis [65]. The

parameter estimation method was the diagonal weighted least squares (DWLS), given that it is the best method when the variables analysed are ordinal, as in the case of Likert-type scales [66]. Finally, the rotation method used to find the factorial solution was Direct Oblimin, since the factors were expected to correlate significantly with each other. In this respect, the results of this first analysis suggested a bi-factorial structure, so that the items related to positive emotions were saturated within one factor, and the items related to negative emotions were saturated within another factor.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the items and factors of the Emotions Questionnaire (*n* = 4589).

	M	SD	Asymmetry	α of Cronbach	α If the Element Is Eliminated
Positive Emotions	18.32	3.87	−0.42		-
(IT1) I am proud of the work done during the confinement.	4.14	0.89	−0.88		0.77
(IT2) I am satisfied with the work performed during the confinement.	3.89	0.95	−0.64		0.74
(IT3) I am confident that my work is adequate.	3.84	0.94	−0.57	0.804	0.74
(IT4) I feel encouraged when I finish my work activity.	3.46	1.28	−0.33		0.82
(IT5) I feel safe when I work in confinement.	2.99	1.06	0.07		0.77
Negative Emotions	19.40	4.47	−0.80		-
(IT6) I feel stress while teaching.	4.12	1.00	−1.07		0.85
(IT7) My work worries me during confinement.	4.00	1.01	−0.89		0.86
(IT8) I feel irritated doing my job in this situation.	3.41	1.25	−0.36	0.868	0.84
(IT9) Working in this situation makes me feel frustrated.	3.72	1.19	−0.67		0.82
(IT10) Working in this confined situation causes me general stress.	4.14	1.05	−1.17		0.82
Total Emotions (Positive—Negative)	1.08	6.79	−0.22		-

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

Based on these first exploratory results, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed with the second subsample (n = 2294). This analysis was carried out using the Lisrel 8.80 software [67] using the DWLS parameter estimation method. Fit quality was assessed using the following goodness-of-fit indices: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) fit index, whose value should be less than 0.08 [68]; and the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), whose values should be greater than 0.90 [69]. The results of this analysis indicated that the two-factor model was a poor fit to the data (RMSEA = 0.13; NNFI = 0.91; CFI = 0.93; GFI = 0.97). Consequently, the adjustment of the bi-factorial model was assessed in two dimensions so the two initial factors (i.e., positive emotions and negative emotions) were maintained, in addition to a third factor common to all items, which was representative of the construct 'emotions'. In this case, the model achieved a satisfactory fit according to the assessed indices (RMSEA = 0.81; NNFI = 0.97; CFI = 0.98; GFI = 0.99). The results are illustrated in Figure 1. As can be seen in the case of factor 1 (Positive emotions, α = 0.80), the factorial weights with the primary factor ranged between 0.43 (item 5) and 0.83 (item 1); whereas in the case of factor 2 (Negative emotions, α = 0.87), the weights ranged between 0.31 (item 9) and 0.93 (item 6). Regarding the second-order factor, the weights (in absolute terms) ranged between 0.14 and 0.91.
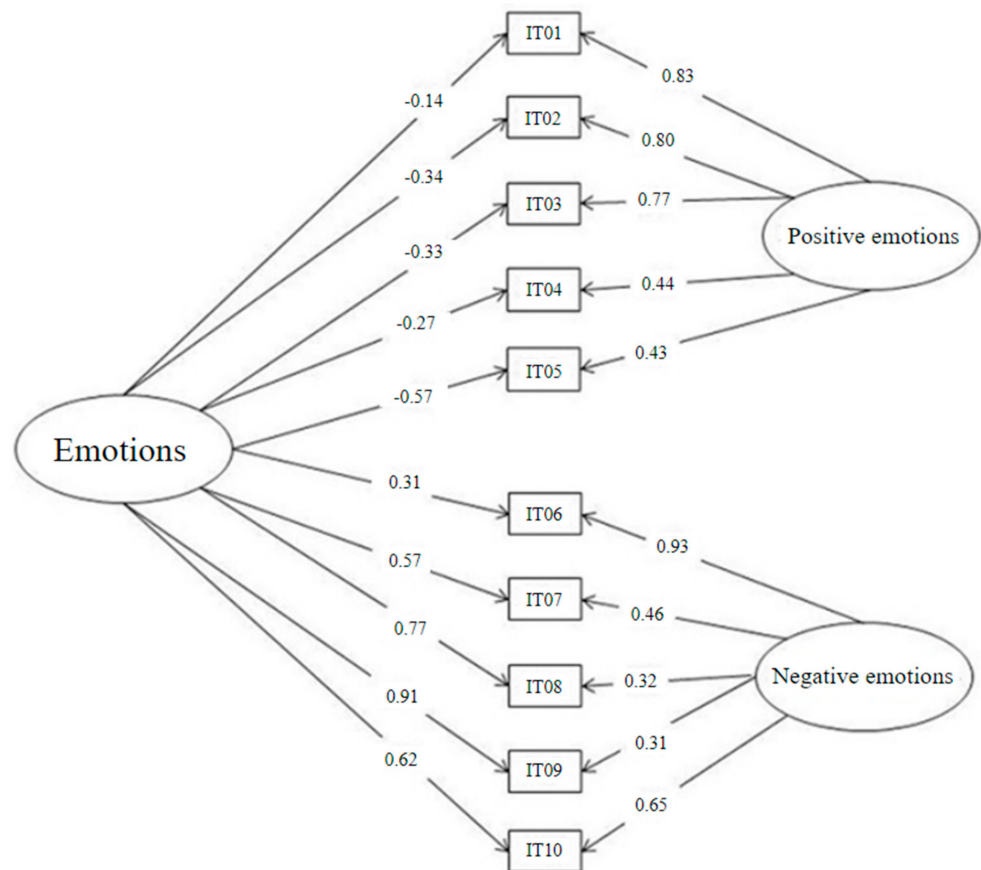
Figure 1. Flowchart of the confirmatory factor analysis of the Emotions Questionnaire.

5. Results

5.1. Positive and Negative Emotions

Next, we assessed the descriptive statistics of the items, along with the factors whose results are illustrated in Table 1. The data obtained indicate that the teachers scored more the negative emotions (19.4) than the positive ones (18.32). In this respect, it is possible to accept the first research hypothesis, which states that teachers value the negative emotions more than the positive emotions.

The most highly rated negative emotional response was general stress from working in confinement (4.14), followed by stress in the provision of teaching (4.12), and concern about teacher performance (M = 4). However, it is noted that teachers were proud of the work they did (M = 4.14) while performing emergency remote teaching.

The differences in a series of sociodemographic variables in the two resulting factors were also examined. Specifically, the differences analysed were related to gender, age, and educational level to which teaching was provided. The analyses were carried out by means of ANOVA. Both statistical significance and effect size (η^2) were calculated, which was interpreted as follows: values between 0.01 and 0.04 were considered small; between 0.04 and 0.14 medium; and above 0.14, large [70].

5.2. Gender

Concerning the gender, it is observed that women felt more stress, worry, and frustration than men while performing their work, as shown in Table 2. The results indicated a significant and small effect for positive emotions (F [2, 4589] = 6.18, p = 0.002, η^2 = 0.01) with men (M = 18.55) scoring above women (M = 18.26). However, in negative emotions (F [2, 4589] = 48.59, p < 0.61001, η^2 = 0.16), women (M = 19.74) scored higher than men (M = 18.24) and this is statistically significant. Regarding total emotions (F [2, 4589] = 32.33, p < 0.001, η^2 = 0.09) women (M = 1.48) also scored above men (M = −0.31). In this way, with

respect to the second research hypothesis, the values obtained allowed rejecting the H0 and accepting the alternative hypothesis related to negative emotional responses, since there were significant differences between men and women.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the items and factors in the questionnaire on emotions from the point of view of sex (n = 4589).

	Sex	N	M	SD	F	Sig
Positive Emotions						
(IT1) I am proud of the work done during the confinement.	Man	1071	4.11	0.912	0.14	0.702
	Woman	3475	4.15	0.881		
(IT2) I am satisfied with the work performed during the confinement.	Man	1071	3.86	0.965	0.92	0.336
	Woman	3475	3.90	0.942		
(IT3) I am confident that my work is adequate.	Man	1071	3.85	0.955	0.32	0.568
	Woman	3475	3.83	0.939		
(IT4) I feel encouraged when I finish my work activity.	Man	1071	3.63	1.214	17.96	0.000
	Woman	3475	3.42	1.289		
(IT5) I feel safe when I work in confinement.	Man	1071	3.10	1.094	9.24	0.002
	Woman	3475	2.97	1.041		
Negative Emotions						
(IT6) I feel stress while teaching.	Man	1071	3.86	1.061	15.30	0.000
	Woman	3475	4.20	0.961		
(IT7) My work worries me during confinement.	Man	1071	3.81	1.054	16.76	0.000
	Woman	3475	4.05	0.985		
(IT8) I feel irritated doing my job in this situation.	Man	1071	3.26	1.282	2.75	0.097
	Woman	3475	3.46	1.234		
(IT9) Working in this situation makes me feel frustrated.	Man	1071	3.50	1.243	21.76	0.000
	Woman	3475	3.79	1.166		
(IT10) Working in this confined situation causes me general stress.	Man	1071	3.82	1.172	46.94	0.000
	Woman	3475	4.24	0.990		

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; F = continuous probability distribution; Sig = significance.

5.3. Age

Regarding the age, the study of the data shows that middle-aged teachers (36–40 years) were the most stressed (M = 4.22). These teachers felt that working in the confined situation caused them general stress (M = 4.25) and their level of irritability was higher than any other age group (M = 3.51).

In the means comparison analysis, we did not find any significant effect on positive emotions (F [7, 4589] = 1.84, p = 0.075). On the contrary, there was a significant effect on negative emotions (F [2, 4589] = 4.34, $p < 0.001$, η^2 = 0.17), and on the total emotions (F [2, 4589] = 2.77, p = 0.007, η^2 = 0.14).

Hochberg's post hoc test of WG2 reveals significant differences between middle-aged and younger teachers, as seen in Table 3. Thus, the stress in teacher performance (M = 3.87, ng 0.18), the stressful feeling of being confined (M = 3.91, ng 0.045), and the perception of irritability (M = 3.20, ng 0.001) had less incidence among younger teachers.

Regarding the feeling of frustration, middle-aged teachers (36–40 years) also rated the higher (M = 3.88). However, in contrast to the previous emotional states, older teachers (61–70 years; M = 3.44) were significantly less frustrated, as can be seen from Table 3. Despite this, older teachers showed the greatest concern for the work done during confinement (56–60 years; M = 4.12). These data allow us to assume the third alternative hypothesis, which referred to the fact that there might be significant differences in negative emotional responses depending on age.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the items and factors in the questionnaire on negative emotions from the point of view of sex (n = 4589).

	Age Range	N	M	SD	F	Sig
(IT6) I feel stress while teaching.	21–25	106	3.87	1.015		
	26–30	440	3.92	1.034		
	31–35	522	4.03	1.077		
	36–40	670	4.22	0.925		
	41–50	651	4.20	0.958	6.226	0.000
	46–50	665	4.12	0.941		
	51–55	697	4.12	1.018		
	56–60	705	4.14	0.991		
	61–70	133	4.06	1.057		
	Total	4589	4.12	0.997		
(IT7) My work worries me during confinement.	21–25	106	3.75	1.005		
	26–30	440	3.93	0.958		
	31–35	522	3.96	1.013		
	36–40	670	3.98	1.020		
	41–50	651	3.99	1.006	3.145	0.003
	46–50	665	3.88	1.020		
	51–55	697	4.03	1.013		
	56–60	705	4.12	0.976		
	61–70	133	3.94	1.140		
	Total	4589	4.00	1.007		
(IT8) I feel irritated doing my job in this situation.	21–25	106	3.23	1.197		
	26–30	440	3.20	1.258		
	31–35	522	3.34	1.238		
	36–40	670	3.51	1.219		
	41–50	651	3.48	1.255	3.970	0.000
	46–50	665	3.41	1.19		
	51–55	697	3.37	1.263		
	56–60	705	3.47	1.239		
	61–70	133	3.38	1.283		
	Total	4589	3.41	1.249		
(IT9) Working in this situation makes me feel frustrated.	21–25	106	3.61	1.109		
	26–30	440	3.77	1.146		
	31–35	522	3.75	1.187		
	36–40	670	3.88	1.121		
	41–50	651	3.76	1.202	4.753	0.000
	46–50	665	3.61	1.201		
	51–55	697	3.59	1.217		
	56–60	705	3.67	1.213		
	61–70	133	3.44	1.269		
	Total	4589	3.72	1.191		
(IT10) Working in this confined situation causes me general stress.	21–25	106	3.91	1.100		
	26–30	440	4.00	1.094		
	31–35	522	4.06	1.100		
	36–40	670	4.25	0.983		
	41–50	651	4.22	1.004	4.917	0.000
	46–50	665	1.19	0.992		
	51–55	697	4.10	1.077		
	56–60	705	4.14	1.067		
	61–70	133	3.98	1.128		
	Total	4589	4.14	1.051		

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; F = continuous probability distribution; Sig = significance.

5.4. Educational Levels

With respect to the educational levels to which teaching was provided, a significant effect of small magnitude was observed in the three variables analysed, namely: positive

emotions (F [6, 4560] = 6.19, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$); negative emotions (F [2, 4589] = 13.39, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$); and total emotions (F [2, 4589] = 15.75, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$). The Hochberg's GT2 post hoc test revealed that, in general terms, primary school teachers (M = 17.98) scored lower in positive emotions than secondary school teachers (M = 18.73) and university teachers (M = 18.98). In the case of negative emotions, primary school teachers (M = 20.25) scored significantly higher than the rest of the educational levels: childhood education (M = 19.08); compulsory secondary education (M = 19.24); baccalaureate (M = 18.83); university (M = 18.72); and vocational training (M = 18.09).

Finally, regarding total emotions, primary education teachers (M = 2.27) also scored higher than teachers of the remaining educational levels: childhood (M = 0.52); compulsory secondary education (M = 1.07); baccalaureate (M = 0.10); university (M = −0.26); and vocational training (M = −0.70). These results allowed us to accept the alternative hypothesis, which stated that there would be significant differences in negative emotional responses depending on the educational level in which the teachers performed.

6. Discussion

The present research has facilitated the understanding of the emotional response of teachers in the Basque Country while performing Emergency Remote Teaching, which was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It represents the largest study carried out on teachers in confinement in Spain.

The results obtained in this research show that the teachers had more negative than positive emotions during the abovementioned confinement period. Teachers were basically under great stress while teaching and were concerned about student learning during confinement. It is worth mentioning that different studies have argued that the design of the physical work environment, as well as the scarcity of resources—in this case, teachers' homes—can enhance that stress [71,72]. Similarly, paradoxically, the study also evidences that the teachers felt pride and satisfaction with the work carried out.

Identification of teachers with more negative emotional responses regarding ERT performed during confinement was also possible. In this regard, it was observed that women had significantly more negative emotions than men, which is consistent with results obtained by other studies [73,74], according to which women tend to have higher rates of fatigue and emotional exhaustion than men. It is worth noting that women suffer greater vulnerability to social stress, because they develop professionally and, at the same time, they are involved in raising or caring for the family to a greater extent than men [75,76]. It is possible that this aspect has increased during the confinement resulting from the health alarm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, intra-work conditions—like extra-work conditions—promotes the emergence of stress when, for example, responsibility or excessive work increases [77], as happened during confinement with ERT.

Moreover, women may have experienced more negative than positive feelings due to the fact that they tend to report their emotional states more than men [78]. Similarly, it should be taken into account that women manifest coping strategies based on inter-social competencies [79–81] and on the search for social support to overcome stressful situations [82]. It is likely, during confinement, they encountered limitations in supporting their colleagues and being supported themselves.

Furthermore, the study reveals that the age of the teachers had a significant impact on the perception of negative emotions. Specifically, teachers between the ages of thirty and thirty-five suffered the most frustration, irritation, and stress while teaching during confinement. It can be assumed that they found more difficulties to reconcile family care and work activities during confinement. Not surprisingly, this age range is the most common in Spain for having children for the first time, and those activities related to raising children are more demanding at this stage [83].

The youngest teachers (under 30 years of age) had, in general, the least negative feelings; on the contrary, the older ones showed more concern about their teaching perfor-

mance. The explanation for this issue can be found in the fact that younger teachers have a higher digital competence [16,84] and remote teaching requires of such skills.

Regarding the educational level in which teachers performed, primary education teachers perceived a more negative emotional state than the rest. Similarly, it is necessary to underline that studies addressing teachers who perform in early childhood education is still very scarce [85,86]. In addition, with regards to negative emotions, from the perspective of the type of educational centre, the assessment of teachers were practically the same, so no differences were found.

7. Conclusions

Research on Basque Country teachers who participated in Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) during the COVID-19 pandemic reveals a predominantly negative emotional response. Levels of worry and stress during the confinement period were high. Despite this, they also expressed pride and satisfaction in the work they performed under these special circumstances.

The study also concluded that women expressed more negative emotions than men because they tend to have more work and family responsibilities, and this situation was aggravated in confinement. Age was another factor that influenced the emotional experiences of the teachers. Those between the ages of thirty and thirty-five suffered the most frustration and stress since they have to reconcile family care and work in addition to facing the situation of confinement. Younger teachers, being more digitally competent, are more adaptable to remote teaching environments, and therefore were likely to have fewer negative feelings and stress than their older peers. This study sheds light on teachers' emotional responses during emergency remote teaching, providing valuable insights for future educational strategies and development of teachers' digital competence.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented an unprecedented global challenge, compelling nations and institutions to make decisions that had not been made before, including the imposition of widespread lockdowns. Consequently, a significant shift towards remote work occurred, and even after the lifting of lockdowns, remote work persisted. This transformation has ignited a societal debate on the possibility and efficacy of delivering certain services, traditionally administered by public institutions, through in-person, remote, or hybrid modalities.

In the realm of education, the conducted study highlights that online teaching is not accessible to everyone and remote teaching cannot be successfully implemented in all knowledge areas, educational levels, etc., without negatively affecting the emotions of educators.

Moreover, our research brings to light that women, teachers aged 30 to 35, and those in primary education are particularly vulnerable demographics, experiencing heightened negative emotions in this context. In anticipation of similar situations in the future, it is recommended that administrations and educational institutions formulate action protocols or best practices, with a primary focus on enhancing teacher training in e-teaching and digital teaching competences. Such initiatives are poised to alleviate the negative emotional experiences of educators.

Recognizing that emotional, physical, and mental well-being is intrinsic to optimal professional performance, it is imperative to acknowledge that without adequate training, educators may struggle to adapt to unforeseeable future scenarios, including health emergencies and technological advancements. The holistic care of educators significantly contributes to societies attaining the educational standards they aspire to provide for their citizens.

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