

# Student attachment and well-being are greater in classrooms with higher emotional intelligence

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The UPV/EHU's Qualiker research group has proposed a new combination of variables to study the psychological well-being of adolescent students. After testing a methodology that studies group and individual variables together on over 2000 adolescents, the researchers have been able to show that this is valid in predicting psychological well-being. The variables studied were group emotional intelligence and peer attachment, respectively.

Group emotional intelligence represents the emotional intelligence shared by the students of a classroom—in other words, “the atmosphere in the group, the way the group addresses a problem, the capacity it has to understand the emotions being experienced in the classroom,” explained Arantxa Gorostiaga, a member of the UPV/EHU's Qualiker research group. In the classroom context, apart from academic content, adolescents acquire important personal and emotional competences to preserve their present and future well-being, so “it is interesting to analyse the influence of the emotions of the peer group on the well-being of adolescents. Furthermore, in a previous study, the researchers demonstrated that group emotional intelligence is related to higher levels of academic performance.”

As regards adolescent attachment, “there are many studies in the scientific literature proving that this variable is a predictor of [psychological well-being](#),” remarked Gorostiaga. “At that age,

youngsters experience distancing from their parents and move closer toward their peers, their friendships. So attachment provides them with protection, and is used as a support when facing problems. Thus, it is related to adolescent well-being<sup>[1]</sup>.

Since producing and adapting tools for evaluation and diagnostic purposes is one of the lines of research of the Qualiker group, they firstly created a tool to measure group emotional intelligence and translated into Basque a tool for determining attachment so that they could conduct the study explaining and predicting psychological well-being through a combination of them. After that, using a methodology known as multilevel analysis, they conducted an analysis of group and individual variables, simultaneously studying peer attachment and group emotional intelligence. The study was carried out on 2,182 adolescents (1,127 girls and 1,055 boys), students grouped into 118 classrooms at 14 secondary education schools.

### **Interconnected variables**

As the results showed, attachment and group emotional intelligence emerge positively related to psychological well-being; in other words, <sup>[2]</sup>the students with the greatest attachment have the highest well-being, just as the students in classrooms with greater emotional intelligence do,<sup>[2]</sup> explained the researcher. But beyond this, they saw that group emotional intelligence influences the relation between the other two variables: In the classrooms with greater emotional intelligence, the relation between [attachment](#) and psychological well-being is stronger,<sup>[2]</sup> she added.

This research could be used to identify the classrooms that need intervention. This is how Gorostiaga explained it: <sup>[2]</sup>"In the diagnosis, we can spot the classrooms that need to reinforce their emotional intelligence, and design some intervention. Having proved that group

[emotional intelligence](#) helps not only to achieve better results but also to improve student well-being, it may be interesting to implement a programme to work on it[?]."

**More information:** Nekane Balluerka et al. Peer attachment and class emotional intelligence as predictors of adolescents' psychological well-being: A multilevel approach, *Journal of Adolescence* (2016). [DOI: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2016.08.009](#)

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