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Risk and Protective Factors of Emotional Exhaustion in Teachers. A Moderating Mediation on Emotional Exhaustion

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ABSTRACT

Emotional exhaustion negatively influences teachers' professional development. The main aim of this study was to analyze how the perception of attention to diversity, emotional dissonance, and social support were related to emotional exhaustion. To carry out this study, 567 teachers (64.9% women, mean age = 44.80, *SD* = 0.48) answered a questionnaire. Emotional dissonance mediated the relationships that established with emotional exhaustion the perception of attention to diversity (a) derived from special educational needs and (b) derived from cultural diversity. These mediations were moderated by social support, by confirming the interaction effect between social support and (a) the perception of attention to cultural diversity and (b) emotional dissonance. Teachers' perceptions of having to attend to diversity and not being able to express the real emotions they feel to students are stressor factors that influence emotional exhaustion levels. Moreover, social support acts as a protective factor that diminishes the negative effects of perception of attention to diversity and emotional dissonance on emotional exhaustion. These results highlight the need to promote strong support networks in educational settings within the center's cloister, to stimulate a healthier educational environment that reverts to lower levels of emotional exhaustion among teachers.

Los factores de riesgo y protectores del agotamiento emocional en el profesorado. Un modelo de mediación moderada del agotamiento emocional

RESUMEN

El agotamiento emocional influye negativamente en el desarrollo profesional de los docentes. El objetivo principal de este estudio fue analizar cómo se relacionaban con el agotamiento emocional la percepción de atención a la diversidad, la disonancia emocional y el apoyo social. Para llevar a cabo el estudio, 567 docentes (64.9% mujeres; edad media = 44.80, *DT* = 0.48) respondieron a un cuestionario. La disonancia emocional medió las relaciones establecidas entre la percepción de la atención a la diversidad derivada (a) de las necesidades educativas especiales y (b) de la diversidad cultural y el agotamiento emocional. Esta mediación fue moderada por el apoyo social, al confirmarse el efecto de interacción entre el apoyo social y (a) la apreciación de atención a la diversidad cultural y (b) la disonancia emocional. La apreciación de los docentes de que tenían que atender a la diversidad y de que no podían expresar al alumnado sus emociones reales constituye un factor estresante que influye en el grado de agotamiento emocional. Además, el apoyo social actúa como factor protector que disminuye el efecto negativo que ejercen la percepción de la atención a la diversidad y la disonancia emocional en el agotamiento emocional. Los resultados ponen de manifiesto la necesidad de promover fuertes redes de apoyo en los escenarios educativos en el claustro del centro para favorecer un ambiente educativo más saludable que revierta en un menor agotamiento emocional en los docentes.

Burnout, which arises with prolonged exposure over time to different factors that cause stress in the individual while carrying out their work activity (Almeida Freire et al., 2015; Forbes Álvarez, 2011; Shackleton et al., 2019), is recognized as being composed of three dimensions, namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalization or cynicism, and lack of personal fulfilment. Nevertheless, emotional exhaustion is the first dimension conceived by Maslach in the description of the burnout syndrome, with several authors describing it as the main factor of the syndrome, i.e., as the epicenter of burnout (Salanova & Llorens, 2008). Thus, in this study, we will focus on the emotional exhaustion factor.

Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of exhaustion, tiredness, and fatigue, a feeling of not being able to give more of oneself because of the high workloads suffered by the individual and the loss of emotional resources to face these loads. It arises when there is a high demand towards the subject and a perception of a lack of both emotional and physical resources to face said demands (Maslach, 2009). In that sense, different authors (e.g., Ilaja & Reyes, 2016) explain that emotional exhaustion refers to both physical and mental fatigue that could appear in professionals. In the same way, Mérida López and Extremera (2017) assert that emotional exhaustion refers to the deteriorated state of mind experienced by workers, which occurs as a consequence of their perception of excessive requirements, as well as a latent lack of resources.

Teaching Work and Emotional Exhaustion

Individuals whose job is teaching are especially prone to suffering emotional exhaustion (Esteras et al., 2014). The development of a profession is often conditioned by the level of demands in the tasks to be carried out, which in many cases hinder the correct performance of professional activity, which in turn leads the subjects involved to show feelings of frustration and disability (Chávez Orozco, 2016). Some researchers (Concha & Domínguez, 2014; Ruiz-Calzado, 2016) explain that an increase in workload, which is carried out both inside and outside classrooms, a longer workday without higher remuneration, the requirement for more training, an excessive number of administrative matters, and the position of loneliness that the teacher feels in the classroom are just some of the requirements that the society imposes on teachers. Inevitably, these elements are added stressors that, over time, can be set up as triggers for emotional exhaustion in teachers.

This fact is even more accentuated when the work to be carried out is based on interaction with other individuals. Working with people has a series of benefits that tend to improve an individual's abilities. However, it can also cause the development of physical and mental ailments, as well as feelings of anxiety, fatigue, and frustration, typical symptoms of development of burnout (Chávez Orozco, 2016). Thereby, burnout seems to have a higher prevalence in those jobs that involve continuous and direct contact with the beneficiaries of the service they offer, such as teaching (Gil-Monte, 2005; Pérez, 2013; Vlăduţ & Kállay, 2010). In other words, this continuous contact between worker and beneficiaries of the service would imply a high emotional burden and a need for continuous adjustment to others' needs, which could easily result in stress and eventually emotional exhaustion (Gil-Monte, 2005). In this sense, work relationships with a high emotional burden are often the cause of the development of this syndrome. That is why teachers, along with those whose job relates to the health field, are usually the most affected ones (Almeida Freire et al., 2015).

Therefore, it becomes of vital importance to analyze variables that may affect the high probability that teachers suffer from emotional exhaustion. Thus, the main aim of this study was to analyze how some potential determinant variables of emotional exhaustion are related to each other and to emotional exhaustion. This would allow us to suggest some intervention guidelines to reduce its effect on these professionals.

Predictive Variables of Emotional Exhaustion in the Classroom

Attention to Diversity

Teachers must be prepared to tackle the wide range of difficulties and differences that can be found in a classroom, attending and paying attention to the specific needs of educational support (SNES) that each of their students may present (Berry, 2011), which in turn can lead to high levels of exhaustion. In this sense, studies have shown that teachers who work with children with disabilities report high levels of burnout (Llorent & Ruiz-Calzado, 2016; Ruiz-Calzado & Llorent, 2018), and that teachers who work with people with special educational needs (SEN) have a greater probability of suffering high levels of stress and exhaustion (Chang, 2009).

Inevitably, having to attend to diversity, having to adapt teaching to each of the specificities of the students, and having to prepare curricular diversifications are added elements that increase teaching tasks, and thereby can influence the stress and emotional exhaustion of teachers. Moreover, attention to diversity is not only manifested by having to diversify the contents and methodologies at the cognitive and developmental levels of the students, which can be very diverse, but also refers to the attention to cultural diversity. Currently, classrooms show an increase in ethnic and cultural diversity, which has been enhanced by the rise in immigration, a product of an increasingly globalized world (Fernández Pérez, 2016; Marin et al., 2016). In classrooms, this has resulted in the disappearance of the traditional model to make way, as different authors explain (Dubbeld et al., 2017, 2019; Vedder, 2006), for new student profiles marked by ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity. As explained by different authors (Dubbeld et al., 2017; Vedder et al., 2007), cultural diversity is considered one of the factors that affects teacher burnout, to such an extent that Tatar and Horenczyk (2003) speak of burnout derived from cultural diversity. It has been shown that an attitude in teachers that does not assimilate this new changing reality can cause an increase in the levels of exhaustion shown by professionals (Tatar & Horenczyk, 2003). Moreover, the lack of change in the educational institution itself obliges the teacher not to have more resources than their own previous experience, this being often insufficient since it is a still recent challenge (Dubbeld et al., 2019).

All in all, and in accordance with the previous literature presented here, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H*1: A greater perception of attention to diversity (for specific educational needs in general, and for cultural diversity in particular) will be related to greater emotional exhaustion in teachers.

Emotional Dissonance

Emotional dissonance is defined as the discordance between the emotions felt by an individual and those that he/she shows to adapt to the established rules (Gracia et al., 2014). This situation causes a worker to express different emotions from emotions evoked by the situation he/she is experiencing, which may differ from his/her personal characteristics (Gracia et al., 2014).

Several studies relate dissonance and emotional exhaustion. For instance, Kwak et al. (2018) showed that police officers who were exposed to more demanding emotional roles presented higher levels of exhaustion. In the same way, various studies carried out with health professionals confirmed the aforementioned relationship between emotional dissonance and exhaustion (Andela & Truchot, 2017; Andela et al., 2016; Bakker & Heuven, 2006).

Even more pertinent in relation to this study, the relationship between teachers' emotional dissonance and professional well-being has also been analyzed. In this sense, there is evidence that those subjects who show emotions that they do not really feel have lower levels of professional well-being (Taxer & Frenzel, 2017). Moreover, the relationship between emotional dissonance and exhaustion has been confirmed, highlighting that a state of tension caused by emotional dissonance reduces the emotional resources available to teachers, which can lead to an increase in the levels of emotional exhaustion (Simbula et al., 2019).

Therefore, we propose the following study hypothesis:

*H*2: Higher levels of emotional dissonance will be related to higher levels of emotional exhaustion in teachers.

Moreover, it should be noted that emotional dissonance not only influences emotional exhaustion, but can also be determined by

attention to diversity (Näring et al., 2012; Tuxford & Bradley, 2014), which also influences emotional exhaustion, as we have explained previously. Therefore, we could argue that emotional dissonance mediates the relationships established between attention to diversity and emotional exhaustion.

When teachers perceive high levels of attention to diversity in their classrooms, either because of SEN or cultural diversity, there is an additional emotional burden in their teaching work that they must tackle. This fact is aggravated when considering the direct exposure of teachers to their students, since the teacher will not be able to show the emotions raised by the context, having to adapt them to it, which will cause emotional dissonance. This fact is confirmed in the study by Zembylas (2010), where it was shown that when teachers perceive an increase in diversity and multiculturalism, they experience an increase in uncomfortable emotions. Therefore, taking into account the previously described relationships, according to which (a) attention to diversity influences emotional dissonance (Näring et al., 2012; Tuxford & Bradley, 2014) and emotional exhaustion (Glock et al., 2019; Mónico et al., 2017; Tatar & Horenczyk, 2003), and (b) emotional dissonance influences emotional exhaustion (Diestel & Schmidt, 2011; Heuven & Bakker, 2003; Karatepe & Dare Aleshinloye, 2009; Kenworthy et al., 2014; Molino et al., 2016; Van Dijk & Kirk Brown, 2006), we propose the following study hypothesis:

*H*3: Emotional dissonance mediates the relationship between attention to diversity and emotional exhaustion.

Emotional Support

Emotional support has been identified as a protective factor against diseases that present symptoms such as stress or exhaustion (Heaney & Israel, 2008; Marenco Escuderos & Ávila Toscano, 2016). Teachers who are supported by students' parents, classmates, or directors show a lower level of exhaustion (Brittle, 2020; Zabel & Zabel, 2002). In the same way, a previous review confirmed that a good social climate in the workplace prevents the appearance of burnout in workers (Colino & Pérez De León, 2015; Jiménez Figueroa et al., 2012).

Furthermore, Doménech (2005) sets out the idea of support as a protective factor against exhaustion, highlighting it, among others, as a moderating variable. In this work, it is advocated that the exhaustion of the teaching staff will decrease when more emotional and social support resources are available to professionals from schools. Also, the buffering effect of social support in the face of exhaustion produced by burnout in the workplace stands out.

Moreover, emotional support has been found to moderate the relationship established between emotional dissonance and organizational commitment: high emotional support decreases the negative impact of emotional dissonance on the staff's organization commitment (Abraham, 1999). More interestingly, the perception of high specific social support (called the primacy of human resources) has been shown to reduce the negative impact of emotional dissonance on emotional exhaustion (Indregard et al., 2018).

Thus, the protective role of support against burnout has been shown in different studies, so that it is established as an element that reduces the harmful effects of other variables on burnout, or, on the contrary, improves the beneficial elements of other variables on burnout. Here, we propose that this protective role could also appear in the relationship established by attention to diversity and emotional dissonance with emotional exhaustion, thus posing the following study hypothesis:

*H*4: Emotional support moderates the relationship established between (a) attention to diversity and emotional exhaustion and (b) dissonance and emotional exhaustion.

Finally, by incorporating this last hypothesis with the previous ones, we can propose that the mediations specified in *H*3 will be moderated by emotional support:

*H*5: Emotional dissonance mediates the relationship between attention to diversity and emotional exhaustion, a mediation relationship that in turn is moderated by emotional support, which reduces the harmful effect of (a) perception of high levels of attention to diversity and (b) high emotional dissonance on emotional exhaustion.

As a summary of the foregoing, the present study aims to analyze the interactions between attention to diversity present in classrooms, emotional dissonance, emotional support, and emotional exhaustion. Specifically, we propose the moderated mediation specified in *H*5, as can be seen in Figure 1.
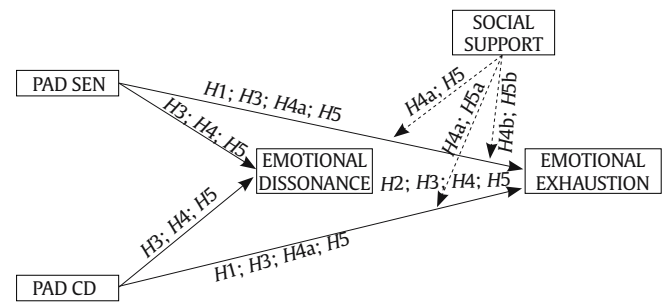

Figure 1. Predictive Model of Hypothesized Emotional Exhaustion.
Note. PAD SEN = perception of attention to diversity due to specific educational needs; PAD CD = perception of attention to diversity due to cultural diversity.

Method

Participants

A sample of 567 subjects (64.9% women and 35.1% men) with ages between 23 and 69 years, and a mean of 44.80 years, was used (*SD* = 0.48). Regarding participants' job, 10.4% were pre-school teachers, 39.2% primary school teachers, 49.9% secondary school teachers, and finally, 0.5% were adult education teachers. More details regarding the sample can be found in Supplementary Table 1.

Table 1. Conditional Direct and Indirect Effect of the Perception of Attention to Specific Educational Needs on Emotional Exhaustion at the Social Support (moderator) Values

Direct Effect				
Social support values	Effect	*SE*	*LLC*I	*ULC*I
3.00	.247	.08	.091	.402
4.00	.182	.06	.065	.300
4.67	.139	.08	-.027	.305
Indirect Effect (emotional dissonance as mediator)				
Social support values	Effect	*SE*	*LLC*I	*ULC*I
3.00	.167	.04	.104	.243
4.00	.123	.03	.078	.177
4.67	.093	.02	.048	.145

Note. ES = standard error; *LLC*I = lower limit confidence interval; *ULC*I = upper limit confidence interval.

Instruments

Perception of Attention to Diversity Scale (PADS)

To assess the extent to which participants perceived that they should consider the diversity derived from SEN and cultural diversity in their classrooms, the PADS (Cuadrado et al., 2022) was created. The scale consists of nine items (four referring to perceived cultural diversity and the remaining five to attention to SEN at a general level) that follow a five-point Likert structure. The reliability of both
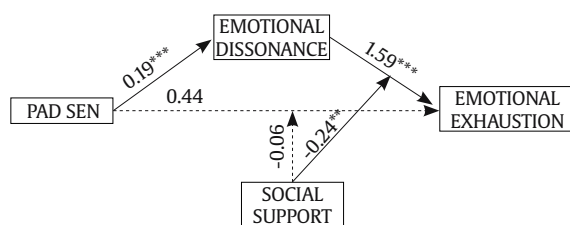
a. Model of moderated mediation and its coefficients   a. Observed moderating role of social support in the link between emotional dissonance and amotional exhaustion

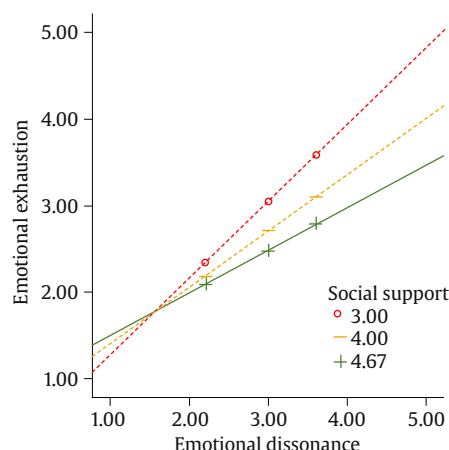**Figure 2.** Mediation of Emotional Dissonance in the Relationship Established Between the Perception of Attention to Diversity Due to Special Educational Needs and Emotional Exhaustion, Moderated by Perceived Social Support.
Note. Coefficients in the model are unstandardized. PAD SEN = perception of attention to diversity due to Specific Educational Needs.

factors, perception of attention to diversity by SEN (α = .91) and perception of attention to diversity (α = .80) was high.

Emotional Exhaustion

To evaluate the levels of emotional exhaustion, the participants responded to the five items with a seven-point Likert structure, of the emotional exhaustion factor of the adaptation to Spanish of the Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey scale (Gil-Monte, 2002). The reliability of the scale was high (α = .87).

Perceived Social Support

To measure the extent to which participants felt supported in their work, a short six-item version of the social support factor of Karaseck's Job Content Questionnaire was used in its Spanish validation (Escribà-Agüir et al., 2001). The reliability of this scale was high (α = .89).

Emotional Dissonance

To measure the extent to which participants perceived that there was decompensation between the emotions they feel and those shown to the students at work, the Dissonance-Rule Scale validated by Xanthopoulou et al. (2013) was used. Participants answered the five items on a five-point Likert scale. The reliability of this scale was high (α = .80).

Procedure

After obtaining approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Regional Government of Andalusia, the research team sent an email containing a link to the questionnaire to the different Andalusian educational centers, from where the questionnaire was distributed among the teachers of the cloister. Informed consent was obtained, and the anonymity of the participants was ensured.

Statistical Analyses

Hierarchical linear regression analyses were performed to determine what percentage of variance was explained by the predictive variables. To evaluate the mediation and moderation hypotheses, two moderated mediation analyses were performed, by using model 15 of Process for SPSS (Hayes & Preacher, 2013), with 10,000 bootstrap resamples and a confidence interval of 95%. Emotional exhaustion was introduced as the dependent variable, the two factors of perception of attention to diversity as the independent variables, emotional dissonance as the mediating variable, and social support as the moderating variable.

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Pearson's correlation analyses showed that the variables were related in the expected sense (Supplementary Table 2). The relation between the perception of attention to diversity and emotional exhaustion (*H*1) was supported for both perception of attention to diversity related to SEN and to cultural diversity. The relation between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion (*H*2) was supported.

A linear regression analysis (Supplementary Table 3) showed that all the variables studied contributed significantly to the equation, except for perception of attention to cultural diversity, whose effect was only marginal. This could be explained because of the mediating and moderating role of other variables in the relation established between perception of attention to diversity and emotional exhaustion, as shown in the next analyses. All the variables together explain 22% of the variance of emotional exhaustion. These results partially confirm *H*1 (perception of attention to SEN significantly explained emotional exhaustion, but not perception of attention to cultural diversity) and fully confirm *H*2 (emotional dissonance significantly explained emotional exhaustion).

Social Support as a Moderator in the Mediating Effect of Emotional Dissonance in the Relationship Established Between Attention to Specific Educational Needs and Emotional Exhaustion

As shown in Figure 2a, moderated mediation analyses confirmed the moderated mediation of *H*5 when using perception of attention to SEN (moderated mediation index (bootstrap = -.044, 95% CI [-.085,

-.013]), explaining 24% of the variance, $R^2 = .24$, $F(5, 561) = 35.265$, $p < .001$. The analysis showed that:

a) Emotional dissonance mediated the relationship established between perception of attention to SEN and emotional exhaustion. The conditional effects (see Table 1) show that the mediating role of emotional dissonance remained at all values of the moderator.

b) Emotional support moderated the relationship established between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion: unconditional interaction test, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $F(1, 561) = 7.655$, $p < .01$, confirming H4b.

However, the moderating effect of support could not be demonstrated in the relationship established between the perception of attention to SEN and emotional exhaustion: unconditional interaction test, $\Delta R^2 = .001$, $F(1, 561) = 0.862$, *ns.* Thus, H4a could not be confirmed when using perception of attention to SEN as the independent variable.

Table 2. Conditional Direct and Indirect Effect of the Perception of Attention to Cultural Diversity on Emotional Exhaustion at the Social Support (moderator) Values

Direct Effect				
Social support values	Effect	*SE*	*LL*CI	*UL*CI
3.00	.382	.09	.196	.568
4.00	.186	.07	.055	.317
4.67	.056	.09	-.129	.241
Indirect Effect (emotional dissonance as mediator)				
Social support values	Effect	*SE*	*LL*CI	*UL*CI
3.00	.088	.04	.022	.164
4.00	.064	.03	.016	.118
4.67	.048	.02	.011	.093

Note. SE = standard error; *LL*CI = lower limit confidence interval; *UL*CI = upper limit confidence interval.

The moderating role of social support in the relationship established between dissonance and emotional exhaustion can be seen in Figure 2b.

Social Support as a Moderator in the Mediating Effect of Emotional Dissonance in the Relationship Established Between Attention to Cultural Diversity and Emotional Exhaustion

As shown in Figure 3a, moderated mediation analyses confirmed the moderated mediation of H5 when using perception of attention to cultural diversity (moderated mediation index (bootstrap = -.024, 95% CI [- .052, -.005]), explaining 25% of the variance, $R^2 = .25$, $F(5, 561) = 36.430$, $p < .001$. The analysis showed that:

a) Emotional dissonance mediated the relationship established between the perception of attention to cultural diversity and emotional exhaustion. The conditional effects (see Table 2) show that the mediating role of emotional dissonance remained at all values of the moderator.

b) Emotional support moderated the relationship established between perception of attention to cultural diversity and emotional exhaustion: unconditional interaction test, $\Delta R^2 = .008$, $F(1, 561) = 5.683$, $p < .02$, confirming H4a when using perception of attention to cultural diversity as the independent variable.

c) Emotional support moderated the relationship established between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion: unconditional interaction test, $\Delta R^2 = .014$, $F(1, 561) = 10.110$, $p < .01$, again confirming H4b.

The moderating role of social support in the relationship established between attention to cultural diversity and emotional exhaustion, and between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion, can be seen Figure 3b.

a. Model of moderated mediation and its coefficients

b. Observed moderating role of social support in the link between (1) the perception of attention to diversity to cultural diversity and emotional exhaustion, and (2) emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion
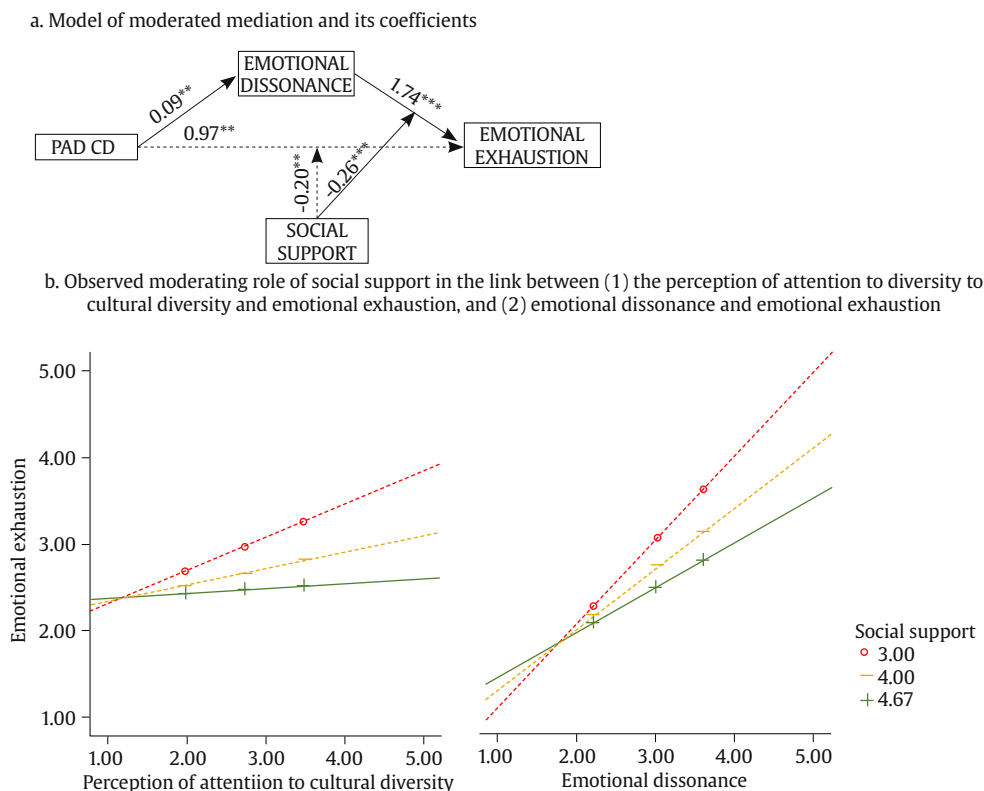

Figure 3. Mediation of Emotional Dissonance in the Relationship Established Between the Perception of Attention to Diversity Due to Cultural Diversity and Emotional Exhaustion, Moderated by Perceived Social Support.
Note. Coefficients in the model are unstandardized. PAD CD = perception of attention to diversity due to cultural diversity.

Discussion

School and teachers should progress as society moves forward. In an activity such as teaching, where teachers are involved not only in work, but also emotionally, it is necessary to be aware of the risks they may face while carrying out their profession. As teachers are especially prone to suffering from emotional exhaustion (Esteras et al., 2014; León Rubio et al., 2011), it seems relevant to know the possible triggers for said exhaustion, as well as the factors that help to reduce its effects. In this sense, the present study aimed to analyze the relationship of attention to diversity perceived by teachers in the classroom, emotional dissonance and social support establish with each other, and with emotional exhaustion.

Linear regression analyses showed that all the study variables had a direct impact on emotional exhaustion, except for the perception of attention to cultural diversity, whose effect was only marginal. This latter insignificant relationship could be explained, as shown in the moderated mediational analyses carried out subsequently, by the mediating role of emotional dissonance and the moderating role of social support. In this sense, as we will see later, moderated mediation analyses confirmed (1) that emotional dissonance mediated the relationship of perception of attention to diversity derived from SEN and from cultural diversity with emotional exhaustion and (2) that social support acts as a moderating variable in the relationships of perception of attention to diversity and emotional dissonance with emotional exhaustion.

Thanks to these results, and in accordance with previous studies (Dubbeld et al., 2019; Tatar & Horenczyk, 2003; Vedder et al., 2007), the first study hypothesis was partially confirmed. The results show that the greater the perception of attention to diversity derived from SEN, the higher the level of emotional exhaustion suffered by teachers. These results support the arguments according to which the task of attending to the diversity derived from SEN involves a job that, while essential on the part of teachers for quality teaching (Díaz Arce et al., 2007; Tenorio, 2011; Williams & Gersch, 2004), also implies an increased workload that can lead to higher levels of emotional exhaustion (Castro, 2005; Chávez Orozco, 2016; Concha & Domínguez, 2014; Ruiz-Calzado, 2016).

However, linear regression analyses did not allow us to confirm that the perception of attention to cultural diversity is directly related to higher levels of emotional exhaustion in the presence of the other study variables; only a marginal relationship between perception of attention to diversity and burnout was found. However, it should be noted that correlation analyses did show a significant relationship between both variables. This marginal relationship found in linear regression analyses may be explained because the effect of perception of attention to diversity on emotional exhaustion is lower than that of the other variables included in the equation, losing its effect in the presence of the rest. However, it does not imply that there cannot be an indirect relationship between this perception of attention to cultural diversity and emotional exhaustion, just as we found in the mediation analyses carried out later. Thus, this result could imply that the effect of perception of attention to diversity on emotional exhaustion is indirect, through its effect on emotional dissonance. This result shows how teachers who perceive that they must attend to high cultural diversity in the classroom present higher levels of exhaustion, in part as a consequence of emotional dissonance. The more teachers perceive that they must attend to cultural diversity in the classroom, the more they feel that they cannot show the emotions they really feel, as the study by Zembylas (2010) seems to point out, which in turn leads them to greater emotional exhaustion (Näring et al., 2012; Simbula et al., 2019; Tuxford & Bradley, 2014). This result seems to confirm that teachers' perceptions of having to attend to cultural diversity produce an additional emotional burden that, by not being able to show it to their students, will generate high levels of emotional dissonance, which will ultimately result in high levels of emotional exhaustion.

Moreover, mediational analyses also show that the relationship between perception of attention to cultural diversity with emotional exhaustion also depend on social support levels, as we will explain more in depth later. Although a direct relationship was found when social support levels were low or average, with a high level of social support, the perception of attention to cultural diversity did not directly impact emotional exhaustion. Thus, social support seems to be a relevant variable to consider in psychosocial interventions oriented to emotional exhaustion, as it buffers the negative effect of perception of attention to cultural diversity on emotional exhaustion.

Moreover, linear regression analyses and moderate mediation analyses also confirmed the second study hypothesis, according to which higher levels of emotional dissonance are associated with greater levels of exhaustion (Simbula et al., 2019). This fact shows how emotional dissonance is related to teacher well-being, so professionals who find themselves in situations where they cannot express what they really feel and are forced to modify their emotions to adapt to the context will also present a lower level of professional well-being (Taxer & Frenzel, 2017), a fact that has been shown to increase levels of emotional exhaustion.

In addition, *H*3, according to which emotional dissonance mediates the relationship established by the perception of attention to diversity with emotional exhaustion, was also confirmed. When the independent variable was perception of attention to diversity derived from SEN, the mediating role of emotional dissonance was partial, with a direct effect of the perception of attention to diversity derived from SEN on emotional exhaustion together with an indirect effect exerted through emotional dissonance. However, when the independent variable was perception of attention to cultural diversity, the mediating role of emotional dissonance was full, with no longer a direct effect of perception of attention to cultural diversity on emotional exhaustion when introducing the mediating variable. Thus, although the effect of perception of attention to diversity derived from SEN was both direct and indirect, through its effect on emotional dissonance, the effect of perception of attention to cultural diversity was only indirect, emphasizing the relevance of the role of emotional dissonance in emotional exhaustion. In any case, the results reveal that the fact that teachers perceive that they must attend to diversity, whether it is derived from SEN or cultural diversity, involves an added emotional burden and generates emotions that they do not want to show to their students, thus leading to higher levels of emotional dissonance, in accordance with the results found by Zembylas (2010). Thus, both perception of attention to diversity and emotional dissonance can be considered risk factors for emotional exhaustion.

The moderated mediation analyses also partially confirmed *H*4 and *H*5. On one hand, *H*4a was only partially confirmed: although the moderating role of social support was confirmed in the relationship established between perception of attention to cultural diversity and emotional exhaustion, it was not confirmed in the relationship established between the perception of attention to diversity derived from SEN and emotional exhaustion. It is likely that the moderating role in the relationship between perception of attention to diversity derived from SEN and emotional exhaustion could not be confirmed because the direct relationship between perception of attention to diversity derived from SEN did not directly predict emotional exhaustion, but rather only indirectly, through its effect on emotional dissonance, which in turn directly affects emotional exhaustion.

However, as previously stated, it was confirmed that perceived emotional support moderates the relationship between attention to perceived cultural diversity and emotional exhaustion. The results show that when teachers receive low and average levels of social support, and their levels of perception of attention to cultural diversity are higher, the more their levels of emotional exhaustion increase. However, when they receive a high level of social support, their levels of perception of attention to cultural diversity do not affect their levels of emotional exhaustion. This fact becomes of

vital importance since it highlights the relevant role played by the educational community. A lot of studies (Brittle, 2020; Zabel & Zabel, 2002) have pointed out the importance of supporting teachers to avoid emotional exhaustion. If teachers are supported by their peers, superiors, students, and families, they will present lower levels of emotional exhaustion and will be able to develop their professional work more efficiently.

Moreover, the results also confirmed *H*4b: emotional support moderated the relationship established between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion. When emotional dissonance levels were high, emotional exhaustion was elevated, consistently with previous research (Diestel & Schmidt, 2011; Heuven & Bakker, 2003; Karatepe & Dare Aleshinloye, 2009; Kenworthy et al., 2014; Molino et al., 2016; Van Dijk & Kirk Brown, 2006). However, higher levels of social support lowered the effect of emotional dissonance on emotional exhaustion. These results are consistent with previous studies that have presented social support as a moderator of the relationship of different variables with emotional exhaustion or burnout (Heaney & Israel, 2008; Marenco Escuderos & Ávila Toscano, 2016). Thus, once again, the results highlight the relevance of social support in the psychosocial intervention oriented to reduce emotional exhaustion in teachers.

The results of the present study highlight how social support can reduce the negative effects of attention to cultural diversity and high levels of emotional dissonance on emotional exhaustion. Bearing this in mind, it is relevant to highlight the need to create a support network for teachers in schools that allows a healthier educational climate, which benefits all the people involved in educational activity and especially teachers who will see their benefits decreased. It is therefore necessary to promote strong mutual support among all members of the teaching staff, which will have a positive impact in terms of a decrease in burnout levels, besides reducing the negative impact of perception of attention to diversity and emotional dissonance on emotional exhaustion.

Limitations and Future Research Lines

After carrying out the present work, some limitations have been observed. This research was carried out with a cross-sectional design, from which data extracted at a single moment were assessed. Future research should replicate the present study in a longitudinal design that could confirm the results of the present study. However, we want to emphasize that the meaning of the relationships was not established at random, but was elaborated based on previous scientific literature, which makes us think that the meaning of the relationships may indeed be as it has been proposed in this study and suggests that a longitudinal study could confirm the results found here.

It should be noted that the sample used was composed mostly of women (64.9% women and 35.1% men); however, this can be extrapolated from the reality of the classrooms, where the number of women teaching is higher than the number of men (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2019). In spite of this, it could be expected that the results obtained here would be similar in male and female samples, because despite the fact that the sample does not present an equitable number of men and women, the results obtained from the performance of an ANOVA show that there were no significant differences between men and women in any of the study variables, with the exception of attention to diversity derived from perceived SEN, where the difference in means was significant, with women perceiving that they carried out more curricular diversification than men. However, the fact that they perceive more attention to diversity derived from SEN does not imply that the relationships found are not valid for both. However, future studies could be aimed at replicating the results found here by analyzing

whether there are differences between men and women in the relationships found.

Another potential future research line could be to explore if the social support perceived from different groups (colleagues, superiors, students, students' families, teachers' family, friends) affect in a different way the relationships found here.

Conclusion

The present work allowed us to analyze which variables affect teachers' emotional exhaustion when they carry out their professional activities. The results obtained from this study may help teachers to prevent the onset of exhaustion, thereby avoiding emotional exhaustion. The results have shown that teachers who perceive that they must attend to a lot of diversity (both derived from cultural diversity and SEN in general) and have a high emotional burden that they try to hide from their students suffer from high levels of emotional dissonance as well as high levels of emotional exhaustion. This study highlights the relevant role played by social support within the educational field, by moderating the negative impact of high levels of perception of attention to SEN and emotional dissonance on emotional exhaustion. The results imply the relevance of the need to create support networks not only among teachers, but also among all members of the educational community, which could reduce the levels of emotional exhaustion in students, and in turn promote a more encouraging climate in classrooms.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article declare no conflict of interest.

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Supplementary Materials

Supplementary Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Participants

	N	Valid %	M (SD)
Gender			
Women	368	64.9	-
Men	199	35.1	-
Age	-	-	44.80 (0.48)
Provinces of Andalusia			
Córdoba	158	27.9	-
Sevilla	96	16.9	-
Cádiz	73	12.9	-
Granada	70	12.3	-
Huelva	56	9.9	-
Jaen	54	9.5	-
Málaga	50	8.8	-
Almería	10	1.8	-
Type of center			
Public	547	96.5	-
Subsidized	18	3.2	-
Private	2	0.4	-
Marital status			
Having a partner	107	18.9	-
Married	355	62.3	-
Single	61	10.8	-
Separated, divorced, or widowed	44	7.8	-
Income variable			
Less than 10,800€ per year	9	1.6	-
Between 10,801€ and 22,000€ per year	137	24.2	-
Between 22,001€ and 43,000€ per year	407	71.8	-
More than 43,000€ per year	14	2.5	-
Level of studies			
University degree	253	90.0	-
Master's degree	21	7.5	-
Doctoral degree	7	2.5	-
Number of students in the center			
Less than 50 students	9	1.6	-
Between 50 and 99	25	4.4	-
Between 100 and 199	78	13.8	
Between 200 and 299	77	13.6	-
Between 300 and 399	58	10.2	-
400 students or more	320	56.4	-
Type of contract			
Temporary	82	14.5	-
Civil servant	457	80.6	-
Another type of contract	28	4.9	-
Average number of years reported in the teaching profession	-	-	16.75 (9.56)

Supplementary Table 2. Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of the Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5
1. PAD SEN	-				
2. PAD CD	.54***	-			
3. Emotional dissonance	.25***	.11*	-UL		
4. Perceived social support	-.02	-.03	-.23***	-	
5. Emotional exhaustion	.22***	.16***	.41***	-.28***	-
Mean	2.93	2.81	2.94	3.83	2.74
Standard deviation	0.92	0.79	0.69	0.79	1.40

Note. PAD SEN = perception of attention to diversity due to specific educational needs; PAD CD = perception of attention to diversity due to cultural diversity.
$^{\#}p < .09$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$.

Supplementary Table 3. Linear Regression of the Study Variables on Emotional Exhaustion

Model	β	F(gl)	Adjusted R^2
PAD SEN	.09*		
PAD CD	.07#	41.695***	
Emotional Dissonance	.34***	(4, 562)	.22
Perceived social support	-.20***		

Note. PAD SEN = perception of attention to diversity due to specific educational needs; PAD CD = perception of attention to diversity due to cultural diversity.
$^{\#}p < .09$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{***}p < .001$.