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Emotional competencies and psychological well-being of educational science professionals: integrating quantitative and qualitative methods

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Objective: In the post-pandemic context, positive mental health indicators for professionals working in schools have not been frequently researched. This study's principal objective is to determine the relationship between emotional competencies and psychological well-being among educational science professionals enrolled in continuing education programs during the post-pandemic period in Chile. A secondary objective is to describe the qualitative perceptions of the relationship between emotional competencies and psychological well-being in this sample of Chilean professionals.

Method: A mixed convergent, non-experimental, cross-sectional approach was used. The initial phase was quantitative, correlational, and comparative, while the subsequent phase was qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive. The sample consisted of 193 educational science professionals, with an average age of 38.56 years ($SD = 8.52$), including 61.7% of women. Participants completed an online questionnaire that featured the Emotional Competencies Inventory for Adults (ICEA), Scale of Psychological Well-being (SPWB), open-ended questions, and sociodemographic data. Scale reliability, descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and t-tests for mean differences were performed for analysis. Qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis, which identified codes and themes to enrich the quantitative findings.

Results: Validity evidence was reported for the ICEA and SPWB. The findings revealed a connection between emotional competencies and psychological well-being. Differences in emotional regulation and positive relationships were observed, favoring women. Other educational science professionals achieved higher average scores in emotional awareness, which was qualitatively described as a process of personal transformation. Teachers demonstrated elevated levels of emotional autonomy and personal growth. Qualitative accounts indicated that recognizing strengths and weaknesses facilitated personal growth and improvement. It was found that professionals in virtual programs attained higher scores for ICEA, autonomy, and emotional regulation.

Conclusion: This research adds to the growing body of evidence supporting the relationship between emotional competencies and psychological well-being. Its specific contribution focused on professionals currently enrolled in postgraduate programs while working in schools. The findings provide insights to inform the design of policies and training practices that foster the comprehensive development of these professionals in the post-pandemic context.

KEYWORDS

teacher professional, psychological well-being, emotional competencies, postgraduate programs, mixed method

1 Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, educational science professionals worldwide (Bulás Montoro et al., 2022; Huepe et al., 2023; Gallardo Jaque et al., 2023; United Nations Educational, 2020) faced numerous work-related challenges that highlighted the need to enhance their personal and professional resources. In the post-pandemic context, there was a growing interest in emotional education training to develop emotional competencies and promote the psychological well-being of educational science professionals, including teachers, psychologists, counselors, therapists, and others. Emotional education not only fosters the comprehensive development of individuals but also serves as a crucial element for addressing social and educational challenges (Calderón, 2024; Lagos San Martín, 2024) and enhances the quality of relationships among professionals (Molina-Moreno et al., 2024; Rivera Campos, 2025) within educational communities.

Despite its importance, training in emotional education remains limited, fragmented, or only superficially covered in university programs (Bracamontes et al., 2024; Lliempe et al., 2025; Ortiz, 2024; Salas-Hernández et al., 2023). Bracamontes et al. (2024) caution that advanced training programs frequently neglect emotional education, treating it as secondary or incidental, which can create a structural weakness in the preparation of professionals working directly in schools. Universities must assess their student support policies and adjust the curriculum to incorporate life skills education, covering cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, and social aspects, into educational content. This could help students build skills that enhance their mental health (Lesunyan et al., 2024).

Emotional education has been strengthened through theories and research on emotional intelligence and emotional competencies. Mayer and Salovey (1997) agree that emotional intelligence is defined as a set of abilities that allow individuals to: (1) identify, (2) express, (3) understand, (4) use, and (5) regulate emotions in themselves and others. Tommasi et al. (2023) found that emotional intelligence is more closely related to personality traits than to cognitive abilities. Bisquerra and Chao (2021) argue that there is some overlap and potential confusion between the concepts of intelligence, ability, competence, and skill in literature. The authors define emotional competencies as “a set of knowledge, capacities, skills, and attitudes necessary to appropriately understand, express, and regulate emotional

phenomena and their effects and interrelationship with the sphere of coexistence and interpersonal relationships” (p. 7). Particularly in the field of education, emotional competencies play a strategic role. As Anabalón et al. (2024) state, their presence enables professionals to better understand their own emotions and those of others, resulting in more empathetic, reflective, and transformative teaching practices. Caires et al. (2023) emphasize that initial teacher training programs incorporating emotional education components enhance students’ self-awareness, emotional self-regulation, and social awareness.

Emotional education also involves enhancing well-being. As a polysemic concept, well-being can be defined in various ways depending on each theoretical tradition. Keyes et al. (2002) used the constructs of subjective well-being to represent the hedonic tradition and psychological well-being to signify the eudaimonic tradition. Ryff (1989a) argues that psychological well-being is rooted in the processes and achievements of values that make us feel alive and authentic, enabling personal growth while emphasizing activities that are both pleasurable and alleviate pain. Ryff (1989a,b) developed a multidimensional model of psychological well-being composed of six dimensions, which has been reiterated subsequently (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). This model includes self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, mastery of one’s environment, a sense of purpose in life, and personal growth. Ryff (1989c) argued that psychological well-being can vary across different age groups, genders, and cultures. In this context, she determined that as individuals approach adulthood, they experience increased autonomy, greater mastery of their environment, and more positive feelings toward personal growth.

Emotional competencies are critical for psychological well-being, social interaction, and professional performance (Cristóvão et al., 2023; Leal et al., 2025). Research by Morales-Rodríguez et al., 2020 revealed that psychological well-being is associated with various psychological and educational constructs, both intrapersonal and interpersonal in nature. Urbón et al., 2025 found that Spanish female university students associated psychological well-being with emotional skills related to interpersonal relationships, while male students connected it to individual emotional skills. Arhuis-Inca and Ipanaqué-Zapata, 2023 demonstrated a positive and significant correlation between social skills and psychological well-being among university students in Peru.

The systematic review conducted by Lliempe et al. (2025) indicates that most empirical studies on emotional competencies and psychological and educational constructs in higher education focus on the undergraduate level, with limited evidence regarding their development in graduate programs. This phenomenon is also observed in research conducted in the Spanish-speaking context (Anabalón et al., 2024; Concha Toro et al., 2023; Lagos San Martín et al., 2023; López-López et al., 2025). This gap is particularly relevant for graduate students in Educational Sciences, who face not only demanding academic and professional requirements but also play a crucial role in generating pedagogical knowledge and educating the next generation. The lack of empirical research at this level of postgraduate education limits the understanding of the current state of emotional competencies and psychological well-being, making it challenging to design interventions and assess their impact in complex educational contexts.

Although there is growing consensus on the need to integrate emotional education into initial teacher training (Calderón, 2024; Caires et al., 2023) and in fields such as engineering (Salas-Hernández et al., 2023), social sciences (Concha Toro et al., 2023), and health sciences (López-López et al., 2025), few studies address this aspect at the postgraduate level. Moreover, limited information exists to identify the levels of emotional skills and psychological well-being present and how they manifest in academic and professional contexts during the post-pandemic period when educational communities face challenges related to mental health (Fragoso-Luzuriaga, 2018; Ortiz, 2024).

Rivera Campos (2025) emphasizes that socio-emotional skills and well-being among teachers—and by extension those who work in schools—are a determining factor in managing work-related stress, fostering positive classroom climates, and promoting meaningful learning. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2021) argues that teachers play a crucial role in prevention within the classroom, as they are uniquely positioned to enhance students' well-being. In this role, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021, 2022) recommends adopting a progressive approach to promote mental health and well-being, prevent mental health problems, and identify and support students with psychosocial difficulties. Molina-Moreno et al. (2024) suggest that emotional training should be viewed as a fundamental professional skill for teachers, on par with disciplinary or pedagogical expertise.

This knowledge gap is particularly important, given that postgraduate programs in education function as training grounds for future educational leaders, researchers, and policymakers. These individuals need not only cognitive and technical skills but also emotional competencies and optimal levels of psychological well-being to enable effective decision-making, collaboration, and conflict management in educational settings. In Chile, Bonhomme and Rojas (2024) noted that ministerial demands have resulted in requirements for continuing education. Teachers' commitments are updated through situated practices, shaped by state-imposed guidelines that prioritize student well-being and learning; however, these guidelines barely focus on the well-being of school staff.

Despite the growing relevance of emotional education in the post-pandemic context, significant research gaps persist. There is a paucity of empirical studies addressing the development of emotional competencies and psychological well-being in graduate

students in the educational sciences, in contrast to the abundant literature available at the undergraduate level (Anabalón et al., 2024; Arhuis-Inca and Ipanaqué-Zapata, 2023; Fragoso-Luzuriaga, 2018; Lagos San Martín et al., 2023; Leal et al., 2025; Lliempe et al., 2025; López-López et al., 2025; Morales-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Ortiz, 2024; Salas-Hernández et al., 2023; Urbón et al., 2025). Likewise, there is a lack of studies on how emotional competencies manifest in relation to psychological well-being within current academic and professional contexts. This lack of evidence limits the comprehensive training of future educational leaders and hinders the design and implementation of effective interventions, as well as their impact in primary and secondary education settings, especially in complex post-pandemic scenarios.

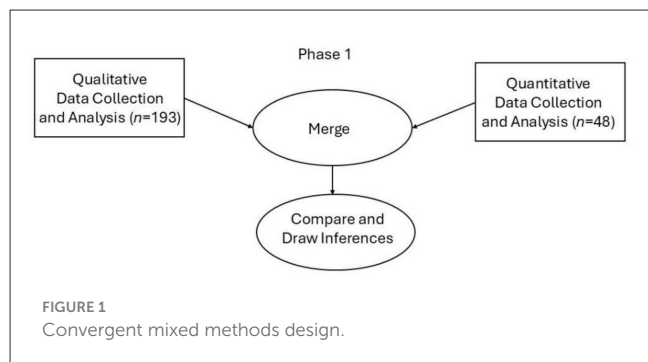
1.1 Present study

In response to the gaps identified in the specialized literature, this article's main to principal objective is to determine the relationship between emotional competencies and psychological well-being among educational science professionals enrolled in continuing education programs during the post-pandemic period in Chile. A secondary objective is to describe the qualitative perceptions of the relationship between emotional competencies and psychological well-being in this sample of Chilean professionals. The hypothesis that is sought to answer is: There is a positive and statistically significant correlation between the level of emotional competencies and the psychological well-being of education professionals who participate in continuing education programs.

2 Materials and methods

This study utilized a mixed convergent method (Figure 1) integrated quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2022). In this non-experimental design, data were collected cross-sectionally, analyzed separately² and then compared and integrated. The first quantitative phase was correlational and comparative in scope, while the second qualitative phase was exploratory and descriptive. The quantitative and qualitative data were combined to determine whether they converged or diverged. From this mixed analysis, conclusions were drawn from the data. Ramli and Yahya (2025) argue that the mixed-methods approach is beneficial for capturing multiple perspectives at a single point in time, enabling the research team to generate meta-inferences that enhance the understanding of the problem in the education field within Spanish-speaking contexts.

Inclusion criteria for the quantitative sample included: (1) professionals with a background in education (teachers, psychologists, social workers, educational psychologists, occupational therapists, among others), (2) currently enrolled in a postgraduate or post-degree program focused on emotional education, coexistence, or school well-being in Chile, and (3) employed at a national educational institution. The inclusion



criteria for the qualitative sample were the same as for the quantitative sample, in addition to having previously completed the form with the research interest scales.

2.1 Instruments

2.1.1 Emotional competence inventory for adults

This self-report tool assesses emotional competence and has been validated for use with both young people and adults (López et al., 2022). The ICEA features 23 items, organized into five dimensions: emotional awareness (5 items), autonomy (5 items), emotional regulation (4 items), social competence (5 items), and competence for life and well-being (4 items). The response scale ranges from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). The minimum possible score is 23 points, while the maximum score is 115 points. In a study involving young people and adults in Chile, the ICEA demonstrated good psychometric properties for the entire instrument (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.94$) and its dimensions (López-López et al., 2022). In Chile, the ICEA can be used as a tool to assess each aspect of emotional competence, helping to identify which areas have reached the highest levels of mastery and which need more attention in an educational context (Ossa and Lagos, 2022). ICEA's responses contributed to answering the main objective of the research. In this case, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to be $\alpha = 0.896$, while the omega coefficient was determined to be $\omega = 0.895$. Likewise, its five dimensions exhibited acceptable values: emotional awareness ($\alpha = 0.777$, $\omega = 0.775$), emotional regulation ($\alpha = 0.779$, $\omega = 0.777$), autonomy ($\alpha = 0.652$, $\omega = 0.650$), social competence ($\alpha = 0.760$, $\omega = 0.759$), and competence for life and well-being ($\alpha = 0.785$, $\omega = 0.784$).

2.1.2 Scale of psychological well-being

A self-report instrument developed by Ryff (1989a) to assess psychological or eudaimonic well-being. This 29-item scale has been validated for use with adults in Chile by Véliz Burgos, 2012. It includes six dimensions: self-acceptance (4 items), positive relationships with others (5 items), autonomy (6 items), mastery of the environment (5 items), purpose in life (5 items), and personal growth (4 items). The response format ranges from 1 to 6 points, where 1 = totally disagree and 6 = totally agree. Ten items are reverse-coded and must be considered in score calculation. The maximum achievable score with this instrument

is 174 points. The total scale exhibits good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.79$) and reliability across its dimensions. Confirmatory factor analysis shows strong goodness-of-fit indices (Véliz Burgos, 2012). In another study involving Chilean youth, the scale also demonstrated a good fit in confirmatory factor analysis, along with high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.92$ and $\omega = 0.94$) (Assar et al., 2024). SPWB's responses contributed to answering the main objective of the research. In this case, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to be $\alpha = 0.888$, while the omega coefficient was determined to be $\omega = 0.887$. Similarly, most of its dimensions exhibited acceptable values: self-acceptance ($\alpha = 0.791$, $\omega = 0.790$), positive relations with others ($\alpha = 0.752$, $\omega = 0.752$), autonomy ($\alpha = 0.776$, $\omega = 0.776$), and purpose in life ($\alpha = 0.768$, $\omega = 0.767$). Although the environmental mastery ($\alpha = 0.596$, $\omega = 0.596$) and personal growth ($\alpha = 0.681$, $\omega = 0.681$) dimensions displayed the lowest internal consistency, removing certain items did not significantly.

2.1.3 Sociodemographic variables

The online form included the instruments ICEA and SPWB used in the study and gathered information about participants' age, gender, and region of residence. Additionally, participants were asked to provide their profession, the educational institution where they work, and the geographical area of that institution. The survey also featured questions regarding the continuing education program, including whether it was classroom-based or online, the program's name to verify its focus on emotional education, and the type of higher education institution where they were enrolled.

2.1.4 Asynchronous interview

A technique defined by the lack of simultaneity between the interviewee's responses and the researcher's questions, allowing both participants to reflect and reply at different times (Ratislavová and Ratislav, 2014). This asynchronous process facilitates flexible and controlled interaction, enabling participants to take the time needed to formulate more elaborate and thoughtful responses. It also addresses physical barriers or living in remote areas (Amri et al., 2021), which can enhance the data collected (Dahlin, 2021), especially when discussing sensitive topics that require introspection, such as emotional competencies and psychological well-being. The asynchronous interview consisted of six open-ended questions that could be understood without oral mediation, as there was no immediate opportunity for clarification during the application. Participants' responses to the asynchronous interview contributed to answering the secondary objective of the research.

2.2 Procedure

The data collection was carried out between January and June 2025 (Figure 2). The procedure involved contacting education professionals enrolled in continuing education programs focused on emotional education, coexistence, or school well-being in Chile by email. To ensure that the sample met these criteria, the research team sent invitations to participate in the study to four postgraduate and post-degree programs at two private and two

public universities in Chile. Participants accepted the informed consent form online and downloaded a digital copy. Participants registered their information and completed the instruments ICEA, SPWB, and sociodemographic variable in an average time of 15 min and at the time that each participant considered convenient. This first form included a link to complete the asynchronous interview. A smaller sample agreed to complete the asynchronous interview, which took an average of 20 min. Both forms were open for a period of 2 months. The research team reiterated the invitation to participate in the study via two emails to participants. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed separately. The quantitative and qualitative databases were merged or combined. Once the results were merged, a comparison of both datasets was made to determine whether they converged or diverged. From this comparison, the research team drew interpretations or conclusions by merging the two databases.

2.3 Ethical considerations

The Scientific Ethics Committee of the Central University of Chile approved the research protocol. Additionally, the research adhered to the ethical standards established in Chile by [Law No. 19.628 \(1999\)](#) and [Law No. 20.120 \(2006\)](#), which govern the rights and obligations of individuals participating in research activities ([Agencia Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo, 2022](#)). Participants reviewed and accepted the informed consent and downloaded a digital copy by completing the first research form and the asynchronous interview was completed by some participants in this sample.

2.4 Data analysis plan

Before integrating both databases, the research team collected and analyzed each one separately. Quantitative analyses were performed using IBM SPSS v24.0 to address the primary objective and hypothesis of the quantitative phase of this mixed-method study. No missing data were recorded in the database for responses to the scale items or for sociodemographic data, as the online form required all questions to be answered before submission. Therefore, the missing data regression procedure in IBM-SPSS v24 was not used. First, Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega were calculated for ICEA and SPWB. Descriptive statistics were computed for the instruments, dimensions, items, and sociodemographic data, including assumption checks (skewness, kurtosis, normality data). Pearson's correlation was utilized to explore the relationships among the variables with a significance level of $p \leq 0.05$. *T*-tests for mean differences were performed for analysis and previously Kolmogorov–Smirnov was calculated. The effect-size is reported as Cohen's *d* and its confidence interval (CI) is at 95% ([Field, 2024](#)).

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, as proposed by [Braun et al. \(2024\)](#), which is understood as an interpretive and systematic process validated through triangulation by the research team. The process was conducted in phases of thematic analysis using ATLAS.ti v.24 software. The stages

included familiarizing with the data, initial coding, identifying and redefining themes, and categorizing them around the emotional competencies and psychological well-being of education science professionals, followed by writing up the results.

A mixed-methods analysis was conducted using procedures such as parallel comparisons and joint visualizations. Mixed analysis considered the integration of data, which carried out a comparative analysis to assess whether they presented similarities or discrepancies ([Creswell, 2022](#)). Based on this comparison, the research team formulated the results, interpretations, and conclusions by combining the information from both data sources.

3 Results

3.1 Participants

[Table 1](#) displays the sociodemographic and educational attributes of the participants involved in the study. The quantitative sample, comprising 193 educational science professionals. Of these, 61.7% were women and 38.3% were men. The participants' average age was 38.56 years ($SD = 8.52$), with a minimum age of 23 and a maximum age of 58. The distribution was similar between teachers (49.2%) and other education professionals (50.8%). Employment was observed primarily in public (43.1%) and subsidized (42%) educational institutions, mostly located in urban areas (91.7%). The highest percentage of the population came from the Metropolitan Region, accounting for 39.4% of the sample. Regarding continuing education, the majority studied at private universities (77.7%), with a strong preference for online graduate programs (78.8%).

The qualitative sample consisted of 48 education professionals. Of these, 36 were women and 12 were men. The average age of the participants was 39.3 years ($SD = 8.18$), with a minimum age of 25 and a maximum of 57. The majority were teachers (52.6%) in school education. Nineteen participants resided and worked in the Metropolitan Region, and the remaining participants resided in different regions of Chile. Participants worked primarily in subsidized educational institutions (48%) located in urban areas (93.7%). Regarding continuing education, the majority studied at private universities (4.2%), with a strong preference for online graduate programs (87.5%) ([Table 1](#)).

3.2 Quantitative results

[Table 2](#) presents the descriptive statistics for the scales and dimensions. Mean ICEA scores were ($M = 95.54$, $SD = 7.91$, range 23–115). Participants, on average, demonstrated a moderately high level of emotional competence. The distribution was slightly negatively skewed (0.531), indicating that more individuals scored higher than lower in the skewness indices, and the distribution kurtosis indices were mesokurtic, or approximately normal (0.051). For the ICEA dimensions, emotional autonomy achieved a mean score of $M = 20.01$ ($SD = 1.32$), reflecting high scores with minimal variation. The lowest mean score among the dimensions was for emotional regulation ($M = 13.12$, $SD = 1.73$), with minimum scores of 9 and maximum scores of 16, indicating a moderate to high range.

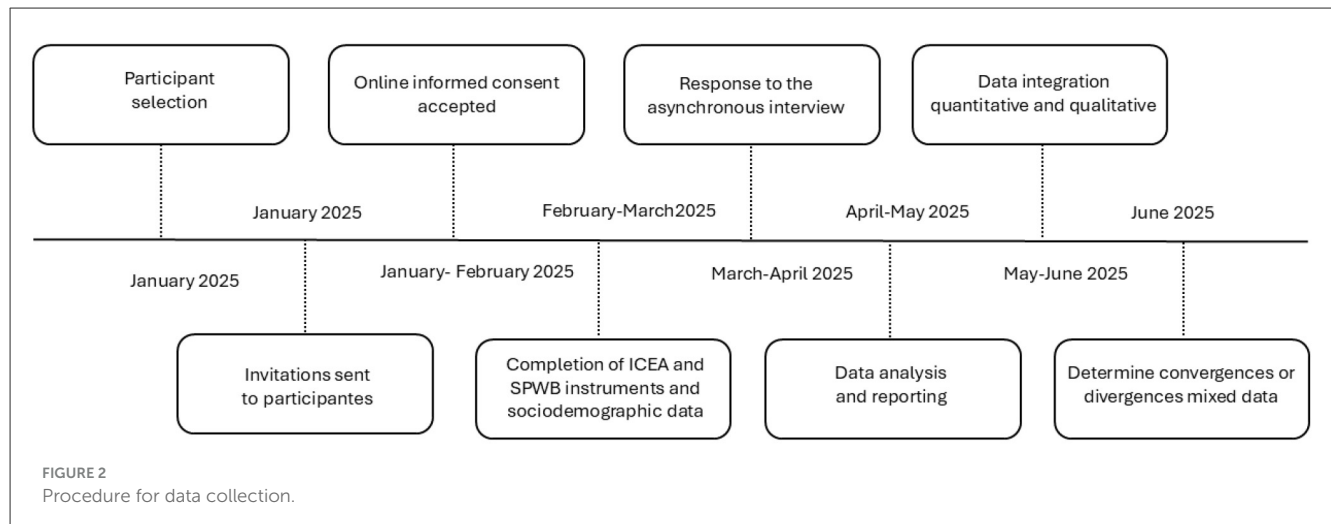


TABLE 1 Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants.

Characterist	Quantitative sample ($n = 193$)		Qualitative sample ($n = 48$)	
	n	%	N	%
Gender				
Female	119	61.7	36	75
Male	74	38.3	12	25
Profession				
Professor	95	49.2	27	56.2
Other professionals	98	50.8	21	43.8
Work institution				
Public	87	45.1	17	37
Subsidized	81	42	23	48
Private	25	13.0	8	15
Other	4	2.1	0	
Work area				
Urban	177	91.7	45	93.7
Rural	16	8.3	3	6.3
University				
Public	43	22.3	46	95.8
Private	150	77.7	2	4.2
Postgraduate				
Online	152	78.8	42	87.5
In-person	41	21.2	6	12.5

Overall, participants reported moderately high levels of psychological well-being. The mean SPWB score was $M = 137.52$, $SD = 14.80$, with a range of 29 to 174. The data exhibited a slight leftward skew (-0.34), indicating a prevalence of high scores in the skewness indices, along with a mesokurtic distribution (-0.08) the kurtosis indices that were close to normal. Regarding SPWB dimensions, the highest mean score was found for autonomy (M

$= 22.02$, $SD = 4.51$), suggesting good and stable levels, although there was a greater dispersion of responses. The lowest score was recorded in the self-acceptance dimension ($M = 16.02$, $SD = 2.02$), where most participants demonstrated high self-acceptance, resulting in a symmetrical and centralized distribution.

Table 2 also presents Pearson's bivariate correlations among various scales and dimensions. The total ICEA score correlated

TABLE 2 Descriptive statistics and correlations for study variables.

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 ICEA	95.54	7.91	-												
2 Emotional awareness	13.12	1.73	0.81**	-											
3 Emotional regulation	20.01	1.31	0.72**	0.49**	-										
4 Autonomy emotional	17.29	2.24	0.73**	0.49**	0.50**	-									
5 Social competence	18.97	1.77	0.72**	0.46**	0.38**	0.39**	-								
6 Competence for life and well-being	13.43	1.99	0.74**	0.53**	0.37**	0.48**	0.47**	-							
7 SPWB	137.52	14.79	0.46**	0.39**	0.27**	0.49**	0.16*	0.44**	-						
8 Self-acceptance	16.02	2.02	0.53**	0.40**	0.41**	0.45**	0.27**	0.48**	0.69**	-					
9 Positive relations with others	20.10	4.03	0.27**	0.17*	0.14*	0.29**	0.15*	0.32**	0.75**	0.34**	-				
10 Autonomy	22.02	4.51	0.32**	0.35**	0.19**	0.36**	0.04	0.31**	0.70**	0.35**	0.40**	-			
11 Environmental mastery	20.40	3.05	0.33**	0.27**	0.15*	0.42**	0.06	0.35**	0.82**	0.57**	0.59**	0.41**	-		
12 Personal growth	21.72	2.80	0.19**	0.11	0.08	0.28**	0.08	0.18*	0.64**	0.37**	0.46**	0.32**	0.50**	-	
13 Purpose in life	17.76	1.85	0.35**	0.29**	0.17*	0.38**	0.16*	0.29**	0.68**	0.58**	0.36**	0.24**	0.60**	0.44**	-

p* < 0.05. *p* < 0.01.

positively and significantly, with moderate to high strength, across all dimensions of emotional competencies. The highest correlation was observed between autonomy and emotional regulation ($r = 0.50^{**}$, $p = 01$), while the lowest occurred between competence for life and well-being and emotional regulation ($r = 37^{**}$, $p = 01$). SPWB also correlated positively and significantly, with moderate to high strength, among all dimensions of psychological well-being. Environmental mastery and purpose in life ($r = 60^{**}$, $p = 01$) exhibited the highest correlation among the dimensions, whereas autonomy and purpose in life ($r = 24^{**}$, $p = 01$) showed the lowest.

The correlation between ICEA and SPWB was statistically significant, moderate, and positive ($r = 46^{**}$, $p = 01$). Within each dimension of both scales, emotional competencies were positively associated with psychological well-being. This indicates that individuals who score higher on emotional competencies tend to experience greater levels of psychological well-being, particularly in dimensions such as self-acceptance, environmental mastery, and life purpose.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to identify statistically significant differences between men and women in ICEA and SPWB scores, as well as their dimensions (Table 3). Previously, Kolmogorov–Smirnov was calculated, whose $n\ p$ -value > 0.05 suggests that there is no statistically significant evidence against normality, so a normal distribution is assumed. Levene’s test was also performed to assess homogeneity of variance. The effect-size is reported as Cohen’s d and its confidence interval (CI) is at

95%. The results did not indicate statistically significant differences in overall ICEA scores, $t_{(191)} = 1.22$, $p = 0.223$. However, a notable difference was found in the emotional regulation dimension, $t_{(189.79)} = 2.16$, $p = 0.000$, with the women’s group achieving a higher average score than the men.

In terms of psychological well-being, no statistically significant differences were found in the total SPWB score, $t_{(191)} = 0.91$, $p = 0.366$. However, a notable difference was detected for positive relationships with other dimensions, $t_{(191)} = 2.66$, $p = 0.009$, favoring the female group. The mean difference was 1.56 points, indicating that women reported higher-quality interpersonal relationships than men.

Table 4 indicates a significant difference in the emotional awareness dimension for the profession variable [$t_{(191)} = -2.08$, $p = 0.000$]. Other educational science professionals had a higher ($M = 17.61$, $SD = 2.36$) compared to teachers ($M = 16.94$, $SD = 2.07$). For the emotional autonomy dimension, teachers scored significantly higher than other educational science professionals [$t_{(191)} = 2.18$, $p = 0.000$], with a mean of 20.22 ($SD = 1.34$) compared to 19.81 ($SD = 1.26$). A significant difference was also found in the personal growth dimension of psychological well-being, favoring teachers [$t_{(191)} = 3.34$, $p = 0.000$].

For the training modality variable, the results in Table 5 showed that professionals who completed their continuing education studies through online training reported significantly higher levels of emotional competencies (ICEA) ($M =$

TABLE 3 Group differences between women and men.

Variables	Woman		Men		<i>Gl</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d Cohen</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
ICEA	96.09	7.74	94.66	8.15	148.90	1.207	0.229	0.10
Emotional awareness	17.53	2.17	16.89	2.32	189.78	−2.15	0.050	0.15
Emotional regulation*	13.43	1.93	12.93	1.30	191	1.97	0.009	0.14
Autonomy emotional	20.08	1.38	19.88	1.19	171.24	1.06	0.290	0.08
Social competence	19.14	1.69	18.70	1.89	142.17	1.62	0.107	0.13
Competence for life and well-being	13.61	1.73	13.14	2.33	123.11	1.48	0.141	0.13
SPWB	138.28	14.82	136.30	14.76	155.41	0.90	0.366	0.07
Self-acceptance	15.94	2.15	16.16	1.80	174.69	−0.78	0.435	0.06
Positive relations with others*	20.70	3.95	19.14	3.99	191	2.65	0.009	0.19
Autonomy	22.09	4.62	21.90	4.35	161.90	0.28	0.778	0.02
Environmental mastery	20.61	3.14	20.06	2.87	165.61	1.25	0.212	0.10
Personal growth	17.87	1.86	17.59	1.84	156.37	1.02	0.307	0.08
Purpose in life	21.58	2.76	21.93	2.87	150.48	−0.81	0.416	0.07

*The difference in means is significant at the 0.05 level.

TABLE 4 Group differences between teachers and other professionals.

Variables	Teachers		Other professionals		<i>Gl</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>d Cohen</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
ICEA	95.50	8.039	95.58	7.83	189.85	−0.06	0.946	0.00
Emotional awareness*	16.94	2.07	17.61	2.36	191	2.08	0.000	0.15
Emotional regulation	13.16	1.82	13.08	1.64	186.44	0.31	0.754	0.02
Autonomy emotional*	20.22	1.34	19.81	1.26	191	2.18	0.000	0.16
Social competence	18.97	1.77	18.97	1.79	190.72	−0.00	0.995	0.00
Competence for life and well-being	13.47	2.24	13.39	1.73	175.15	0.24	0.805	0.02
SPWB	138.47	14.83	136.62	14.78	190.41	0.86	0.386	0.06
Self-acceptance	16.06	1.90	15.99	2.14	190.10	0.25	0.800	0.02
Positive relations with others	20.01	4.05	20.18	4.02	190.30	−0.28	0.780	0.02
Autonomy	21.96	4.56	22.08	4.48	190.09	−0.18	0.856	0.01
Environmental mastery	20.73	3.04	20.08	3.03	190.45	1.48	0.139	0.11
Personal growth	18.21	1.53	17.34	2.03	191	3.34	0.000	0.23
Purpose in life	21.83	2.69	21.61	2.91	190.85	0.52	0.598	0.04

*The difference in means is significant at the 0.05 level.

96.14, $SD = 7.95$), as well as regulation ($M = 13.23$, $SD = 1.81$) and emotional autonomy ($M = 20.13$, $SD = 1.26$), compared to those who attended classroom-based training. Psychological well-being and its dimensions did not exhibit statistically significant differences between the two continuing education modalities. However, self-acceptance and personal growth indicated a favorable trend toward virtual modality.

3.3 Qualitative results

The qualitative data analysis revealed similarities with the results of the quantitative analyses, particularly in the relationship between the dimensions of emotional competencies, the dimensions of psychological well-being, and the dimensions of both constructs. These relationships are presented in Table 6, accompanied by examples of participants' quotes.

TABLE 5 Group differences in virtual and in-person study modalities.

Variables	Virtual		In-person		<i>G</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>d</i> Cohen
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
ICEA*	96.14	7.95	93.35	7.44	191	2.01	0.000	0.14
Emotional awareness	17.38	2.28	16.95	2.10	67.63	1.14	0.257	0.14
Emotional regulation*	13.23	1.81	12.71	1.35	191	1.72	0.000	0.12
Autonomy emotional*	20.13	1.26	19.54	1.43	191	2.57	0.000	0.18
Social competence	19.08	1.79	18.56	1.69	66.33	1.71	0.090	0.21
Competence for life and well-being	13.50	2.09	13.18	1.56	82.69	1.07	0.286	0.12
SPWB	138.03	15.43	135.63	12.12	78.60	1.05	0.294	0.12
Self-acceptance	16.14	2.14	15.58	1.44	93.00	1.98	0.051	0.20
Positive relations with others	20.16	4.18	19.86	3.44	75.03	0.46	0.640	0.05
Autonomy	21.97	4.73	22.21	3.60	81.24	−0.36	0.720	0.04
Environmental mastery	20.51	3.18	20.00	2.47	79.71	1.08	0.280	0.12
Personal growth	17.89	1.86	17.31	1.75	66.63	1.84	0.070	0.22
Purpose in Life	21.77	2.90	21.53	2.42	74.19	0.52	0.601	0.06

*The difference in means is significant at the 0.05 level.

The relationship between awareness and emotional regulation illustrates a process of emotional development that has a strong subjective component. The conscious recognition of one's affective states signifies a significant turning point in how individuals interpret and manage their daily experiences. In this context, emotional awareness aids in reorganizing the internal emotional universe, making it easier to manage emotions in a more adaptive manner. Thus, the ability to regulate is not an isolated occurrence but rather the outcome of a sustained process of self-knowledge, learning through experience, and reframing emotional experiences. The link between the two emotional dimensions is rooted in life experiences, where recounting one's emotional history enables us to step back, reflect, and adjust our responses to future experiences.

Qualitative results revealed a relationship between emotional and autonomy regulation, indicating that individuals who effectively manage their emotions also tend to develop a greater ability to act based on their judgment. Regulating emotions serves as a tool for promoting more balanced decision-making, free from intense or unstable emotional impulses, leading to a greater sense of control over one's life. For participants in the study, the relationship between both dimensions serves as a source of inner strength, empowering them to face challenging situations with emotional independence while maintaining their emotional balance. From this perspective, emotional autonomy is not viewed as a natural or fixed condition, but rather as a skill developed over time by enhancing one's ability to manage emotions in real and complex environments. In practice, this means that emotional autonomy emerges from a consciously regulated process shaped by life experiences.

The relationship between self-acceptance and life purpose reflects a subjective process of identity reconstruction. Accepting oneself involves recognizing both strengths and weaknesses, which

enables us to face life with greater coherence and a more profound sense of meaning. This transition allows us to move toward a more integrative view, fostering the emergence of a life purpose, which is understood as the ability to project ourselves into the future with direction and meaning.

The relationship between life purpose and mastery of the environment highlights a connection between an introspective process and adaptive capacity. Clear goals provide meaning to everyday actions, which in turn enhance the sense of control and effectiveness in navigating the environment. Setting clear goals in life is associated with a greater ability to recognize and mobilize personal resources in challenging situations. From this standpoint, purpose guides the ability to influence the environment, moving toward the achievement of life goals. This process fosters mutual reinforcement between life's meaning and contextual management.

The relationship between self-acceptance (psychological well-being) and competence for life and well-being skills (emotional skills) underscores how individuals value themselves and their capacity to act responsibly and effectively when facing life's challenges. Accepting oneself encompasses not only maintaining a positive self-view but also integrating past experiences and acknowledging mistakes. Individuals who develop greater self-acceptance are better equipped to harness both internal and external resources to address personal, family, or social issues. It is not just about feeling good about oneself; rather, it involves transforming that internal assessment into concrete actions that lead to a better life and make a positive contribution to the environment.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data led to the conclusion that participants' emotional competencies and psychological well-being are not only manifested at measurable levels but are also constructed through subjective processes and

TABLE 6 Relationships between dimensions of emotional competencies and psychological well-being.

Dimension	Example quote
Awareness and emotional regulation	"I became more aware of my weaknesses and areas for improvement, and I also managed to identify strengths in my behavior and attitudes in certain situations. I recognized that I had a very self-critical view of myself, which sometimes affected how I dealt with certain events and experiences, both at work and in my personal life" (Female, Management Team). "I have learned to recognize different emotions resulting from life experiences and feelings during childhood and adolescence, allowing me to get to know myself better, identify emotions more easily, and regulate them in situations and moments of conflict resolution" (Female, Teacher).
Emotional and autonomy regulation	"The more I know my emotions and manage them, the more I feel I am in control of myself, and that allows me to decide better what to do" (Female, Education Assistant). "My inner strength enriches my emotional balance. I feel that I can solve things by myself, not depending emotionally on others" (Female, teacher).
Self-acceptance and life purpose	"I achieved self-acceptance, became more aware of my weaknesses and areas for improvement, and managed to highlight my strengths in behavior and attitudes in certain situations. I recognized that I had a very self-critical view of myself, which sometimes affected how I dealt with various events and experiences, both professional and personal" (Female, Management Team).
Life purpose and mastery of the environment	"I was able to identify both personal and professional goals that give meaning to my work overall. Furthermore, I mastered my environment, recognized all my strengths and resources, and used them to face complex or adverse situations better" (Man, Teacher).
Self-acceptance (psychological well-being) and competence for life and well-being skills (emotional skills)	"I used to find it difficult to recognize my achievements; instead, I focused more on my mistakes. Over time, I've learned to value who I am, including both my strengths and weaknesses. This has allowed me to feel more confident in making decisions, to resolve difficult situations without feeling inferior, and to understand that making mistakes is also part of growing up" (Male, Teacher).

personal experiences. The relationships between both constructs made sense in the participants’ accounts, who described how the development of autonomy, regulation, and emotional awareness were positively related to their psychological well-being. In sum, the mixed analysis showed that the relationships between both variables facilitate facing the challenges of professional and personal life for graduate students in the areas of emotional education, coexistence, and school well-being.

4 Discussion

In this mixed-methods study the primary objective was to determine the relationship between emotional competencies and psychological well-being among educational science professionals enrolled in continuing education programs during the post-pandemic period in Chile. A secondary objective was to describe the qualitative perceptions of the relationship between emotional competencies and psychological well-being in this sample of Chilean professionals. The novel contributions of this mixed-method study are that it focused on examining positive mental health indicators—emotional competencies and psychological well-being—in diverse education professionals, not just teachers, pursuing postgraduate programs while working in educational centers in the post-pandemic context in Chile. This is unlike previous studies (Anabalón et al., 2024; Arhuis-Inca and Ipanaqué-Zapata, 2023; Concha Toro et al., 2023; Lagos San Martín et al., 2023; Lliempe et al., 2025; López-López et al., 2025; Urbón et al., 2025) that have focused on university students in higher education institutions.

First, this research shows that the ICEA is valid for a sample of educational science professionals in Chile. These findings are supported by López-López et al. (2022), who established the ICEA’s validity and reliability, and Fernández-Guajardo et al., 2024, who demonstrated its practical usefulness in educational settings.

This reinforces the ICEA’s relevance as a robust instrument for research and intervention in developing emotional competencies in adults, particularly in the field of education in Chile (Ossa and Lagos, 2022). SPWB results align with those of Véliz Burgos, 2012 and Assar et al. (2024), confirming the scale’s overall reliability. Additionally, we observed a trend toward lower consistency in the environmental mastery and personal growth dimensions among Chilean samples. These results support the validity and usefulness of the psychological well-being scale in higher education contexts. However, they suggest that both dimensions could benefit from further research to enhance their internal consistency.

The results of this research, which employs a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2022) in the field of education (Ramli and Yahya, 2025), reveal a dynamic relationship between emotional competencies and psychological well-being among educational science professionals in Chile. Quantitative data indicates a moderate positive correlation between the two scales, which is qualitatively supported by accounts linking each construct. In alignment with recent studies by Anabalón et al. (2024) and Concha Toro et al. (2023), a moderate positive correlation is noted between both scales, reinforcing the notion that the development of emotional competencies significantly contributes to dimensions of psychological well-being such as autonomy, personal growth, and positive relationships (Ryff and Keyes, 1995; Redondo-Trujillo et al., 2023).

In terms of gender, statistically significant differences were found in emotional regulation and positive relationships, with women scoring higher than men. This pattern is framed within differential socialization processes that have historically promoted greater emotional expression in women, as argued by Lagos San Martín et al. (2023) and Rivera Campos (2025). Furthermore, this pattern is consistent with previous studies that highlight greater emotional socialization in women, influenced by sociocultural gender mandates (Urbón et al., 2025). Female participants emphasized the role of emotional regulation in building bonds,

consistent with theoretical models that link this competence to sociocultural expectations of the caregiving role (Torrijos Fincias and Serrate González, 2021). However, the absence of differences in the overall ICEA score suggests that these gaps do not extend to the general construct, allowing for more nuanced interpretations of gender differences, as also indicated by Lliempe et al., 2025.

From a quantitative analysis, other education professionals (psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists) achieved higher scores in emotional awareness, a key competency that, according to López-López et al. (2022), constitutes the starting point for effective management of affective states. This finding aligns with their educational backgrounds, where the affective component plays a central role (Lagos San Martín, 2024; Leal et al., 2025). Qualitatively, this dimension was seen as the beginning of a process of personal transformation, consistent with Bracamontes et al. (2024), who highlight emotional awareness as a fundamental element in self-knowledge and self-management.

On the other hand, teachers achieved higher levels of emotional autonomy. This quantitative finding is supported by testimonies that highlight the significance of acting according to one's own criteria and values, even in high-pressure work environments within educational institutions. This perspective aligns with Calderón, 2024 views on the role of autonomy in teacher ethical training and with Fernández et al.'s (2024) proposals, which argue that emotional self-regulation enhances self-efficacy and pedagogical decision-making.

In terms of personal growth, teachers also achieved significantly higher scores than other professionals. This result reinforces the connection between reflective teaching practice and the development of a positive identity (Gallardo Jaque et al., 2023). Qualitative accounts suggest that acknowledging strengths and weaknesses allows for a cohesive reworking of the professional self, which is a vital process in fostering psychological well-being, in accordance with Ryff, 1989c concepts.

Regarding the training modality, quantitative data indicate that professionals enrolled in virtual programs have higher ICEA scores, particularly in emotional autonomy. This finding, which aligns with qualitative reports, suggests that flexible schedules and the ability to organize time autonomously promote emotional self-reflection processes. In this sense, less structured training environments could enhance metacognition, consistent with the proposals of Salas-Hernández et al. (2023) and Caires et al. (2023). However, it is important to note that this advantage does not directly translate into significant differences in the dimensions of psychological well-being, indicating that the development of emotional competencies does not always result in immediate or direct effects on other well-being dimensions (Keyes et al., 2002).

These mixed results reflect similar progress and challenges highlighted in international literature. For example, Bulás Montoro et al., 2022 identified that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers developed emotional resources in adverse contexts, while Molina-Moreno et al. (2024) pointed out that emotional competencies must be systematically strengthened in higher education training plans. Similarly, Cristóvão et al. (2023) advocate for the cross-cutting incorporation of emotional education into teaching training curricula, a strategy also suggested by Orrego et al. (2020) and López-López et al. (2025), which should also be included in education-related undergraduate and postgraduate curricula.

The study's limitations primarily involve the cross-sectional design of the research and hinders the establishment of causal relationships between emotional competencies, and psychological well-being, limiting inferences to descriptive associations. Therefore, longitudinal designs should be applied to strengthen causal evidence and results analyzed using multivariate models (e.g., MANOVA, SEM) to examine latent relationships and control for confounding factors. Another limitation is the type of sampling and the possible selection bias of participants derived from recruitment carried out through specific postgraduate programs. Furthermore, its small sample size restricts the ability to generalize the results. This limitation is especially important in comparative analyses between subgroups, such as those based on the type of training (virtual or in-classroom), due to the uneven distribution of participants in each category, which may affect the statistical reliability of the findings. Finally, although a mixed-methodological strategy was used, the qualitative results were based on the participant's perceptions, which, in some instances, were presented as brief responses, thus limiting the analytical depth regarding the subjective processes involved.

Future research should focus on deepening our understanding of the relationship between emotional competencies and psychological well-being among education professionals, addressing the methodological limitations of this study. In this regard, research with larger and more representative samples is essential to enhance the external validity of our findings and enable robust comparisons across genders, professional profiles, and training modalities. Additionally, employing longitudinal designs would facilitate the analysis of the temporal evolution of these variables, allowing for the establishment of causal relationships. From a qualitative perspective, incorporating techniques such as in-depth interviews or focus groups could deepen our understanding of the subjective processes involved in the mental health of education science professionals.

Ultimately, the implications of this research are pertinent at both theoretical and practical levels, as they underscore the significance of assessing the impact of training interventions on emotional competencies in specific areas of psychological well-being. It is essential to focus this assessment on professionals working in various educational contexts where they engage with children and adolescents who have faced emotional, cognitive, and social consequences stemming from the pandemic. In the post-pandemic environment, these students encounter new challenges, including delays in socio-emotional development and the rebuilding of interpersonal connections, among others. Therefore, training education professionals in emotional skills will not only enhance their psychological well-being but will also indirectly affect the quality of school climates and cultures.

5 Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to determine the relationship between emotional competencies and psychological well-being among educational science professionals enrolled in continuing education programs during the post-pandemic period in Chile. The findings of the study revealed the quantitative results show a significant, positive, and moderate correlation

between emotional competencies and psychological well-being. With this result, the hypothesis of this study is confirmed. Statistically significant differences were identified in emotional regulation and positive relationships, with women scoring higher than men. However, the absence of variations in the overall ICEA score indicates that these gender differences do not affect the overall construct. Regarding the profession, psychologists, social workers, and occupational therapists stood out with higher levels of emotional awareness, while teachers obtained higher scores in emotional autonomy and personal growth. Likewise, professionals enrolled in virtual programs performed better on the ICEA scale, especially in emotional autonomy, with no significant differences found in the dimensions of psychological well-being.

A secondary objective was to describe the qualitative perceptions of the relationship between emotional competencies and psychological well-being in this sample of Chilean professionals. The findings are qualitatively reinforced by the connections established between the constructs and their dimensions among professionals in the educational sciences in Chile. Emotional awareness and regulation comprise a subjective development process that allows us to recognize, reorganize, and adaptively manage emotional states. This relationship fosters emotional autonomy, understood as the ability to make informed and balanced decisions in the face of intense impulses. Self-acceptance, linked to life purpose, fosters identity and the projection toward meaningful goals, strengthening mastery of one's environment. Together, emotional competencies and psychological well-being are built through life experiences, facilitating the coping of academic, professional, and social challenges in complex educational contexts.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/[Supplementary material](#), further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving humans were approved by Ethics Committee Central University of Chile. The studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study. Written informed consent was obtained from the individual(s) for the publication of any potentially identifiable images or data included in this article.

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Author contributions

DO: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Software, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. CD: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Software, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. CE: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Software, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

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Supplementary material

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2025.1647597/full#supplementary-material>

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