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Correlation with the sex variable.**

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**Teaching English as a foreign language in higher education.
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Resumen

El estudio de las diferencias de género en la calidad de la enseñanza está muy extendido y revela resultados matizados que describimos. Los estudios sobre calidad se han incrementado en los últimos tiempos en el campo de la educación. Se han creado e implantado sistemas y procesos de acreditación para evaluar la excelencia de la enseñanza a nivel mundial. En este trabajo analizamos la correlación entre la variable sexo y la visión de la excelencia en los docentes de inglés como Lengua Extranjera para orientar su evaluación, formación y desarrollo. Utilizamos una metodología descriptiva- explicativa y aplicamos un cuestionario para conocer la visión que tienen sobre la excelencia universitaria. Después de una amplia revisión de aquellos indicadores que los profesionales consideran necesarios para el desempeño de su tarea docente hemos encontramos diferencias significativas de la variable sexo en distintas dimensiones: visión de la enseñanza, conocimiento del contexto, apoyo individual, desarrollo de la enseñanza, capacidad comunicativa, y evaluación profesional las que explicamos en profundidad en el presente trabajo.

Palabras clave: calidad; docencia, inglés, profesorado, sexo

Abstract

The study of gender differences in the quality of education is widespread and reveals nuanced results that we describe. Studies on quality have increased in recent times in the field of education. Accreditation systems and processes have been created and implemented to assess teaching excellence worldwide. In this paper we analyze the correlation between the gender variable and the vision of excellence in teachers of English as a Foreign Language to guide their evaluation, training and development. We used a descriptive-explanatory methodology and applied a questionnaire to find out their vision of university

excellence. After an extensive review of those indicators that professionals consider necessary for the performance of their teaching task, we found differences in the sex variable in different dimensions such as: vision of teaching, knowledge of the context, individual support, teaching development, communicative ability, and professional evaluation, which we explain in depth in this paper.

Keywords: English; Gender, Teachers; Teaching; Quality

1- Studies on gender differences in higher education teaching.

The study of gender differences in teaching quality is widespread. Research on teaching quality and gender reveals nuanced findings. Suarman (2014) found no significant differences in students' perceptions of teaching quality based on the gender of lecturers, although teaching quality significantly influenced student satisfaction. In contrast, Price et al. (2017) noted that while there were differences in ratings for male and female teachers, these were small and not of practical importance. Wallisch & Cachia (2019) also reported minimal gender differences in perceived teaching quality. However, Elstad & Turmo (2009) highlighted that teacher sex influenced student engagement and achievement in science, suggesting some gender interactions. Morgan et al. (2016) found that female physicians received lower teaching evaluations across clinical rotations. Korte et al. (2013) indicated that male and female students have different perceptions of teaching effectiveness, with females generally rating teachers higher. Lastly, Younger & Warrington (1999) discussed gendered perspectives on teacher quality, noting that boys and girls have differing expectations of teachers' roles. We have mentioned before, the research on gender differences among higher education English teachers reveals mixed findings. Some studies indicate that female teachers have more positive attitudes towards teaching (Sharbain & Tan, 2013) and are perceived as better language teachers by students (Taqi et al., 2015). However, other research shows no significant differences in burnout levels or teaching performance between male and female teachers (Shamsafrouz & Haghverdi, 2015). Gender-based differences in language policies and classroom interactions have been observed, with female teachers showing stronger commitment to English use (Alnasser, 2022) and asking more questions (Septiana et al., 2019). Students' perceptions of ideal teacher qualities show minimal gender-based differences (Al-Khairi, 2015). Some studies report gender bias in teacher-student interactions (Hassaskhah & Roshan Zamir, 2013), while others find no significant differences in teachers' beliefs about language policies (Alnasser, 2018). Overall, the research suggests that while some gender-based differences exist, they may not consistently impact teaching effectiveness or student perceptions.

Otherwise, recent studies in Spanish on gender differences in teaching quality in higher education reveal persistent inequalities. Women face barriers in accessing academic positions and leadership roles, with a double occupational segregation (horizontal and vertical) observed (Montes & Gallego, 2017; García, 2019). Gender stereotypes and sexist pedagogical practices continue to affect both students and faculty (Espinoza & Alborno, 2022). While some progress has been made in implementing gender equality policies, resistance to incorporating gender perspectives in university teaching remains (Merma et al., 2018). Studies highlight the need for gender-specific training and the inclusion of gender-related content in curricula (González, 2018; López et al., 2021). Additionally, research indicates that women's participation in academic-administrative positions is still limited, with differences in salary, seniority, and distribution across faculties (Lozano et al., 2016).

2- Quality of teaching in higher education

Today's universities face the challenge of inserting themselves into a complex world, with new demands for professionalism and emerging competencies associated with the knowledge society. According to González (2008) and Clavijo (2020), to this must be added the new pedagogical tasks and the requirements of accountability and efficiency in institutional management. It is a matter of building a university that has good relations with the academic community, that incorporates added value to the experience of its students, that has adequate environments, that has an appropriate curriculum, that implements relevant research, that carries out pertinent evaluation and that generates quality management in higher education.

The concept of quality in education (Torche et al. 2015); (Cano, 1998); (Donoso-Vázquez, et al. 2014) and (Moreno et al. 2020) is a multidimensional concept of great relativity, complexity, subjectivity and ambiguity. It is multidimensional because it can be operational according to very diverse variables such as by exception when it is considered something special that distinguishes it from the rest; by perfection as consistency of things well done that respond to demanded requirements or that promote the culture of quality to continue improving; as suitability for purposes when it is based on a functional definition of what is good or adequate for something or someone or when they satisfactorily cover the established objectives; as an economic product from the perspective of the price involved in obtaining it and finally as transformation and change when it is focused on evaluation and improvement. Ocampo (2017); (Vega, 2020) is also characterized by its variability, diversity, substantivity and temporality.

Foreign language training in higher education is a direct contribution to the development of the production of the new society. The mastery of one or more foreign languages has become an indispensable condition for a professional. Current foreign language programs are distinguished by the way they represent knowledge and skills. According to López, (2024) they emphasize the use of task-based and project-based learning because they emphasize the interaction

generated in the classroom, which provides opportunities for learning, prioritizes communicative competence and enables the student to be precise, adequate and effective and thus investigate, interpret, express and negotiate meanings. In our context, foreign language teaching is characterized by an integrated approach to the four language skills: listening, speaking, writing and reading.

3- Teacher training

Contemporary Higher Education has the mission to educate highly trained professionals who act as responsible citizens, competent and committed to social law, a mission that is not possible to fulfill from the postulates of a traditional teaching that focuses attention on the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge and values that are reproduced by students in an uncritical way and decontextualized from professional practice (Licandro and Yepes 2018).

The formation of the responsible, competent and committed citizen, which today's society needs, is only possible from a conception of the teacher as a person who accompanies the student in the process of construction of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, in which he/she assumes new functions that are expressed in his/her condition of information manager, guide of the learning process of students and as a model of ethical and professional performance and that are summarized in his/her condition of educational model (Latorre et al. 2019). For Ramos and López, (2019) university teacher training is a permanent, continuous and gradual process of transit towards self-determination in the exercise of teaching that necessarily involves the critical and committed reflection of the teacher with the transformation of educational practice and the quality of their performance, in an environment of dialogue and participatory in the context of their professional performance.

4- The language teacher in today's society

According to Arroyo et al. (2015), the action plan on the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity established by the European Commission for the 2004-2006 biennium (COM 2003 449final, 24-7-2003) addresses, in one of its sections, teacher training. According to this text, language teachers have a crucial role to play in the creation of a multilingual society and are called upon to illustrate values such as openness towards others, acceptance of differences and willingness to communicate. To this end, they need to have adequate experience in the use of the foreign language and an understanding of the culture associated with it. Among the measures to be adopted to achieve this goal, the following are noted: 1) every foreign language teacher should have had an extended stay in one of the countries where the language he or she teaches is spoken, and should be able to update his or her knowledge regularly; 2) initial training should provide him or her with a set of practical skills and techniques through classroom training. At the same time, they should be able to update their linguistic and pedagogical skills through e-learning and distance learning; 3) contacts between professionals should be encouraged and networks should be created at regional, national and

international levels; 4) the results of research in the field of foreign language teaching and innovative experiences, as well as examples of good practice, should be disseminated among these professionals. In addition, more attention needs to be paid to the role of language teacher trainers and supervisors. Foreign language teachers should prepare students to establish relationships with people from other cultures, encourage them to understand and accept these different people as individuals who have different views, values and behaviors, help them understand how cultural interactions work, show that social identities are an integral part of any relationship, demonstrate the influence of one's perception of others and others' view of oneself on the success of communication, lead them to know more about the people with whom one communicates, and lead them to know more about the people with whom one communicates, demonstrate the influence of one's perception of others and others' view of oneself on the effectiveness of communication, lead them to know more, for themselves, about the people with whom they communicate, and contribute to learning the enriching nature of these types of experiences and relationships Castellotti (2021).

In order to develop this intercultural dimension, we suggest working with authentic materials drawn from the target community, establishing links with foreign centers through the Internet and/or using e-mail, making contact with native speakers in one's own country, identifying with the perspectives and experiences of the people who live in the countries and communities where the target language is spoken through simulations, role-playing, etc., researching and learning about some particular aspect of the communities or countries where the foreign language is spoken, among others. For all of the above reasons, the mission of language teachers goes beyond the development of a set of purely linguistic skills or abilities in students to adopt a more educational or formative approach, in which the acquisition of skills, extended to capabilities that go beyond learning grammar, phonetics and vocabulary or being socio-linguistically appropriate, becomes an instrument at the service of a more important educational goal: developing a critical spirit and promoting the understanding of cultural differences as a key to improving communication among human beings. In summary, we believe that teachers of English as a foreign language or any other language should instruct their students in the linguistic aspects of the language and nurture them with the most positive values of the country or countries that speak it, fostering respect for the cultures of those countries by establishing points of coincidence and valuations in a positive sense with their national culture in order to achieve an international culture that allows for better communication between peoples.

5- Methodology

5.1- Objective

Within the framework of a broader research on the characteristics and dimensions of university excellence and quality teaching in English teaching, it is

relevant for us to know whether there are significant differences between the perception of teaching quality held by male and female teachers, and in which dimensions of university teaching these differences are found. The empirically based answers to this question will contribute to the development of knowledge about the differences in the quality of teaching in higher education according to the gender variable.

In our research we set the following objective: to examine the significant differences that may exist in the perception of the quality of university teaching between male and female teachers of English as a foreign language.

5.2. Procedure

The research was carried out in the Higher Education Centers of Cienfuegos, Cuba. A proposal of 100 indicators was submitted to a survey to evaluate the professional performance of teachers of English as a foreign language with the intention of creating and validating a system of indicators to evaluate their performance, as well as to guide their professional development and at the same time allow us to know their vision of teaching excellence. A similar questionnaire has been used by García-Ramírez (2012).

To develop the research, we adopted a model of an exploratory, descriptive and explanatory nature with the use of quantitative techniques that complement each other and that allowed us to reach important conclusions about the issues addressed (Hernández 2015); (Raso et al. 2012). The research was designed in three stages.

STAGES	PHASES AND INSTRUMENTS	SOURCES AND DATA
1- Initial	Bibliographic review. Analysis of documents. Elaboration of instruments (adaptation of the questionnaire).	Official documents of the European Union, UNESCO and Ministry of Higher Education. Curriculum. Annual teacher evaluations
2- Implementation	Validation of the questionnaire for the definition of indicators. Application: of the: questionnaire to the sample of educators.	Expert Judgments, Cronbach's Coefficient Data from the questionnaire to selected teachers
3-Final	Analysis of the results obtained. Determination of the indicators of excellence for teachers of English as a foreign language.	SPSS

Table 1. Stages of the research. Own elaboration.

5.3. Instrument

During the empirical stage, the instrument was submitted to expert judgment to validate and refine it. Seven judges were selected considering their role as evaluators of professional development and their pedagogical experience.

The calculation of the reliability of the questionnaire was based on two procedures: a) Cronbach's alpha; and b) that of the Two Halves. With respect to the former, it was applied to scales of items with two or more values. This internal consistency coefficient increased according to the number of items. The second consisted of dividing the test into two parts and studying the correlation between them. Cronbach's alpha was 0.83. The test of the Two Halves, according to the Spearman Brown coefficient, was 0.81. We obtained an alpha for the first half of 0.68 and for the second half of 0.73. We can affirm that our questionnaire is reliable. This phase concludes with the application of the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 100 indicators. There is also a scale fixing the degrees of relevance that can be given to each indicator. This scale offers four degrees of acceptance: very relevant, relevant, not very relevant and not relevant at all. The 10 dimensions that make up the questionnaire are shown below. Each dimension is made up of 10 items.

- Vision of university education
- Perception of the educational needs of the students.
- Knowledge of the context
- Planning and organization of the subject
- Teaching development
- Communication skills
- Individual learning support
- Evaluation
- Teaching innovation and teacher development
- Professional evaluation

5.4. Sample

The questionnaire was applied at different times in the different higher education centers of the province. Of all the teachers invited to complete the questionnaire, 43 filled it out. The guest sample and the productive sample are presented below. In this paper, we will highlight the results obtained in the correlation analysis.

Stratos	Guest Sample	Productive Sample	Percentage
Technical University English teachers	13	13	100%
Health Sciences University English teachers	20	18	90%
Education University English teachers	18	13	72,22%

Total	51	43	84,3%
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Table 2. Invited sample and productive sample. Own elaboration.

6- Results

The table shows the results of the analysis of correlations between the sex variables and each of the 100 indicators of university excellence subjected to scrutiny and grouped by dimensions.

Gender			
A6	Pearson's correlation Sig. (bilateral) N	-,338 ,027* 43	
C4	Pearson's correlation Sig. (bilateral) N	-,403 ,007** 43	
C5	Pearson's correlation Sig. (bilateral) N	-,316 0.39* 43	
E4	Pearson's correlation Sig. (bilateral) N	-,316 0.39* 43	
E5	Pearson's correlation Sig. (bilateral) N	-,411 ,006**	
E9	Correlación de Pearson Sig. (bilateral) N	-,316 0.39* 43	
E10	Pearson's correlation Sig. (bilateral) N	-,437 ,003** 43	
F3	Pearson's correlation Sig. (bilateral) N	-,350 ,022* 43	
G1	Pearson's correlation Sig. (bilateral) N	-,471 ,001** 43	
H7	Pearson's correlation Sig. (bilateral) N	-,341 0,25* 43	
J3	Pearson's correlation Sig. (bilateral) N	-,361 ,017* 43	

J4	Pearson's correlation Sig. (bilateral) N	-,332 ,030* 43
J10	Pearson's correlation Sig. (bilateral) N	-,310 ,043 43

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 3. Analysis of correlations. Own elaboration.

In dimension C. "Knowledge of the context" there is a significant relationship at a level higher than 99% between indicator C4, which guarantees the development of the process independently of social recognition, and gender, since males scored this indicator higher as valid for evaluating university excellence. Males give more importance to knowledge of the context. Likewise, there was a significant relationship of over 99% between sex and indicator E5 related to offering information in an orderly fashion. In this case, it was the males (12 out of 14) who scored the indicator highest as valid for evaluating university excellence. Females ranged between grades 2 and 4 on the scale. Men attach more importance to providing information in an orderly way.

In dimension E, indicator E10, integrating the use of new information and communication technologies, also has a significant relationship since males continue to be the highest scorers, with 12 out of a total of 14 classifying it as Very Relevant, the remaining two classifying it as Relevant. In this indicator the relationship was significant at a level above 99%. The females are grouped very much between Not very relevant and Very relevant, with the majority of them at grade 3 (Relevant) and none scored it as Not at all relevant. Men attach more importance to the integration of new technologies in teaching.

In dimension G. "Individual support for learning" there is a significant relationship with a confidence range higher than 99% between gender and indicator G1 related to considering the consultation as an excellent resource to complete the work in the classroom. Males are grouped when considering this indicator as valid for evaluating university excellence. Females have criteria that, although not negatively important, oscillate between the maximum and minimum on the

acceptance scale. Males attach more importance to individual support for learning.

It also presents correlation, although at a lower level, in dimension A. Vision of teaching" indicator A6, modestly assuming the students' assessment of their performance and the sex of the teachers surveyed, which is significant at a confidence margin greater than 95%. Males (14 out of 14) scored this indicator highest as valid for evaluating teaching excellence. Women, on the other hand, were very dispersed in their criteria, even classifying it as Not at all relevant. Men attach more importance to the assumption of the assessment made by their students.

In dimension C we can see a significant relationship at a level above 95% between sex and indicator C5, professional growth in response to the problems that hinder the process. This time, although women were more clustered, it was the men who scored this indicator higher as valid for evaluating university excellence, placing it, 12 of them, on the scale of Very relevant. Men attach more importance to growing professionally in the face of problems and difficulties.

In dimension E. "Teaching development" we can appreciate a significant relationship at a level higher than 95% between indicator E4 related to maintaining an exemplary professional ethical image, and sex, since males (13 out of 14) are the ones who value this question the highest as valid for evaluating university excellence. Within this same dimension there are other significant relationships related to sex, also at a significance level above 95%. Men give more importance to maintaining an exemplary professional ethical image.

This is followed by indicator E9 related to the use of interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinarity, where men continue to be the highest scorers. Females are grouped much closer to the high scores in this indicator, but not in the majority, although we can point out that none of them scored it as Not at all relevant. Men attach more importance to the use of inter/multi and transdisciplinarity.

In dimension F. "Communicative skills" a significant relationship higher than 95% is observed between indicator F3, establishes adequate communication channels to provide information about the teaching process, and gender. In this case, females oscillated between Not at all relevant and Very relevant, while males concentrated between Relevant and Very relevant, considering it valid for evaluating university excellence. Men consider more important the establishment of adequate communication channels to provide information on teaching.

In dimension H. "Evaluation" a significant relationship higher than 95% is observed between indicator H7, informs students about the problems presented in the evaluation, and sex. Although this time women are more grouped, two of them value it as Not very relevant, the men all classified it as valid for evaluating university excellence. Males give more importance to the information on the problems derived from the evaluation.

In dimension J. "Professional evaluation" three indicators establish a significant relationship in relation to gender at levels higher than 95%. Indicator J3, having

high self-esteem, was evaluated as Not very relevant by two women, and the rest were mostly in Relevant, while among the men none evaluated it negatively, all agreed in considering it as valid to evaluate university excellence by placing it mostly in the scale of Very relevant. Males attach more importance to having high self-esteem.

Indicator J4, which reflects the results of their self-evaluation in their teaching planning, is the only one in which all the women grouped together to consider it as valid for evaluating teaching excellence. The difference is that absolutely all the men (14 out of 14) classified it as very relevant while the women were divided between Very relevant and Relevant. Men attach more importance to the reflection of self-evaluation in teaching planning.

In indicator J10, which assumes teacher evaluation as a sense of improvement, two women considered it not Very relevant, the rest of these (27) oscillated between Relevant and Very relevant, while all the men considered it valid for evaluating university excellence, classifying it as Very relevant. Men attach more importance to teacher evaluation as an element of improvement.

7- Conclusions

In our work we were able to note the difference in terms of the vision of excellence for teachers according to gender since males score significantly higher on the items:

- knowledge of the context
- providing information in an orderly way
- integration of new technologies in teaching.
- individual support for learning
- assumption of the assessment made by their students
- professional growth in the face of problems and difficulties.
- maintaining an exemplary professional ethical image.
- use of inter / multi and transdisciplinarity.
- establishment of appropriate communication channels to provide information on teaching.
- information about problems arising from evaluation.
- high self-esteem.
- reflection of self-evaluation in teaching planning.
- teacher evaluation as an element of improvement

Two of the indicators that show a difference due to gender, the use of new technologies and the use of inter/multi/transdisciplinarity, refer to purely methodological aspects of higher education. It seems that in our teaching community, which still drags differential visions due to gender, men are more focused on the use of advanced technology and intercommunication with colleagues and fields of knowledge other than their own. Women maintain a reserve in the use of new technologies and are less focused on opening to the outside world.

The rest of the indicators where we found differences due to gender are related to professional self-image. Both the one that refers to self-esteem and those that clearly refer to aspects that have an impact on self-esteem, such as the image projected to the outside world and, specifically, the image projected to the students themselves. Therefore, it is the aspects related to self-evaluation and the feedback it produces in teaching performance, as well as in the channels of information and relationship with students, in which one's own image is at stake, that are more important for men than for women.

We are not discovering anything if we state that, in the integrated set of personal identity, professional aspects play a more central role in men than in women, in whom the professionalism component plays a more balanced role with the other identity elements.

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