

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF TEACHERS

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Abstract. Numerous research projects show that teachers' professional behavior is one of the key factors in the effectiveness of teaching and students' educational achievements. Also, modern trends in education put more and more complex demands on teachers. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to the success of teachers' work with students. In the study presented in this paper, conducted on a sample of 148 teachers from elementary and secondary schools in Serbia, the relationship between teachers' personal and professional characteristics was examined, i.e. the possibility of predicting teachers' classroom management styles and self-efficacy by the measures of personality dimensions from the Big Five model, empathy and locus of control was investigated. As important predictors of teachers' classroom management styles, some personality dimensions were highlighted (Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness as important predictors of the Interactionist style, with the greatest particular contribution of the Openness dimension), as well as the locus of control (the external locus of control predicting a more pronounced Intervening and Non-intervening style). Lower Empathic Concern has a significant particular contribution to the prediction of the Noninterventionist style as well. Important predictors of teachers' self-efficacy are mostly some personality traits (the most often higher Extraversion and lower Neuroticism) and empathy dimensions (mostly Perspective Taking and Personal distress). It could be concluded that all investigated teachers' personal characteristics provide a significant contribution to their important professional features. The obtained results could be useful in creating ways to support teachers' professional development.

Key words: *personality traits, empathy, locus of control, classroom management styles, teachers' self-efficacy*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Numerous research projects confirm the importance of teachers' professional acting as one of the main factors of effective teaching and students' school achievement, especially taking into account factors from the school environment (Marzano and Marzano 2003). Also, a teacher is a factor which could be influenced and changed more easily and to a greater extent than other factors of school achievements, like students' abilities, school programs, educational policies etc. (Đigić 2017). For this reason, the investigation of teachers' professional characteristics and factors related to their professional roles performance is of great value.

Classroom management is a modern concept that represents a holistic approach to teacher psychology, linking together different aspects of teachers' acting aimed to create a stimulating learning environment, as well as teachers' personality characteristics, their competences, beliefs, with processes in the classroom and their effects. Classroom management is related to the use of teaching methods, working forms, teaching material and equipment, time and space management, organization of learning activities, as well as to the management of students' behavior and the contribution to students' personal growth (Đigić 2017; Marzano and Marzano 2003; Wang, Haertel and Walberg 1993).

Different aspects of classroom management could be observed through three broad dimensions (Martin and Baldwin 1993a, 1993b): *personality* (teacher's beliefs about students' personality and behavior aimed at students' personal growth and building a good psychological classroom climate), *instruction* (teacher's behavior aimed to initiate and maintain the learning activities of students) and *discipline* (the teacher's behavior that contributes to establishing positive discipline in the classroom). In each of these three domains, it is possible to recognize consistent patterns of the teacher's behavior that represent different classroom management styles. Also, three classroom management styles could be distinguished. These styles are arranged along the continuum which represents different modes of distribution of power and control over the situation in the classroom between the teacher and students. Also, the styles could be linked to teachers' beliefs corresponding to different psychological theories (Walfgang and Glickman 1980). At one end of the continuum, there is the *intervening style* that characterizes teachers who believe that the external environment has a crucial influence on the development of a human being and, in order to realize that influence, they hold all the power and control in their hands (behavioristic conception). The *non-intervening style* is at the opposite end of the continuum. It is based on a teacher's belief that students have their own internal drives, so the teacher leaves control over the situation to the students (humanistic conception). The *Interactionist style* is in the middle part of the continuum. It is characterized by the distribution of power and control between the teacher and students (the point of view of social and developmental psychologists). Performing their professional tasks, teachers manifest the features of all three classroom management styles in different situations; however, each teacher uses one most dominant and consistent set of behaviors (Martin and Baldwin 1993a, 1993b).

Successful classroom management reduces undesirable students' behaviors, ensures a quality teaching process and has significant effects on students' achievements (Marzano, Marzano and Pickering 2003; Oliver and Reschly 2007; Wang, Haertel and Walberg 1993). Existing research results show that the interactionist style is the most effective, it leads to students' better school achievement and positively affects the quality of the classroom climate (Djigić and Stojiljković 2011; Đigić 2017).

Teachers' self-efficacy (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2007) is the second teachers' characteristic related to their efficient professional work which is investigated through this study. The concept of self-efficacy was introduced by Albert Bandura (1977). It is defined as the belief in someone's own ability to organize and execute the actions needed to achieve a particular goal. Thereby, it does not refer to the real skills that one possesses, it is a self-estimation of what someone is able to do, regardless of the real skills that the individual has (Ivanov and Penezić 2001). Self-efficacy determines someone's behavior aimed at achieving a certain goal because it launches into action, it determines the amount of effort being invested, as well as the perseverance in dealing with obstacles and flexibility in adverse situations.

There are several factors that contribute to forming an individual's beliefs in self-efficacy (Bandura 1997), including: 1) previous achievements, i.e. the personal history of successes and failures that a person has experienced in similar situations; 2) indirect experience based on observation of other people's experiences in similar situations and on social comparison; 3) verbal persuasion by others that a person has the capacity to successfully face a problem; and 4) psychological reactions or emotional excitement in dealing with stressful situations. Some authors also add to these basic sources of self-efficacy the imaginary experiences acquired in hypothetical situations (Maddux and Gosselin 2003, according to Milanović Dobrota and Radić Šestić 2012).

On the basis of Bandura's concept of self-efficacy, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2008) defined the concept of teachers' self-efficacy. It refers to the teacher's beliefs in his/her own ability to plan, organize and perform activities needed to achieve educational goals, i.e. to influence students' learning outcomes and progress. These teachers' beliefs affect the quality of teaching and the teachers' overall behavior in the classroom. Teachers with strong self-efficacy express a higher level of skills and commitment to planning and organizing instruction, they are more engaged in school tasks and more open to cooperation with colleagues, they are more willing to experiment with new ideas and to engage in dealing with the different needs of their students. In contrast to these teachers, teachers with low self-efficacy are less engaged, they are less satisfied with their job and more vulnerable to occupational stress (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2009; Betoret 2006; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca and Malone 2006).

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) distinguish six dimensions of teachers' self-efficacy which represent their beliefs related to their own capacities to be successful in the following domains: 1. instruction, 2. adapting instruction to individual student's needs, 3. motivating students, 4. maintaining positive discipline in the classroom, 5. cooperation with colleagues and parents, and 6. coping with changes.

In other words, teacher's self-efficacy could be understood as the teacher's self-estimation of his/her capacities to successfully perform key professional roles.

In addition to these teachers' characteristics that are directly related to their professional performance (classroom management styles and teachers' self-efficacy), some personal characteristics are also highlighted as the features of successful teachers (Bjekić 2000; Đigić 2017; Morgan 1977; Stojiljković 2014; Tatalović Vorkapić 2012). In this study, a set of personal characteristics that can be assumed to provide a significant contribution to classroom management styles and teachers' self-efficacy that are seen as determinants of their professional performance will be examined.

One group of teachers' personal characteristics analyzed in this study consists of Big Five personality dimensions. They refer to basic personality dimensions defined through research based on the lexical approach (Larsen and Buss 2008; Smederevac and Mitrović

2009; Pervin, Cervone and John 2008). Namely, reviewing numerous research results, Goldberg (1981, according to Pervin, Cervone and John 2008) concluded that all existing studies consistently point to the existence of the same five personality dimensions. Thus, the theoretical model of the Big Five was formulated, according to which these dimensions are not only a suitable means for describing personality, but they are also real factors that make up the structure of personality. The position of this personality model has been also strengthened by many intercultural research projects which confirmed that these dimensions are universal (Kaprara and Cervone 2003; Pervin, Cervone and John 2008).

The Big Five dimensions, defined on the basis of this Goldberg's study, are (Smederevac and Mitrović 2009):

- 1) *Extraversion* represents an individual's orientation towards an outside environment and towards other people; it is characterized by a tendency to action and a positive mood, as opposed to *introversion* that is characterized by closing into the person's inner world and low social engagement of the individual;
- 2) *Agreeableness* represents a dimension differing people in relation to cooperativeness, tendency to maintaining harmonious relationships with others, beliefs about positive human nature and interest for the well-being of other people;
- 3) *Conscientiousness* includes traits referring to the control of one's own impulses, or to the reliability and responsibility in fulfillment of obligations and performing tasks;
- 4) *Neuroticism* is a tendency of being in a bad mood and of experiencing negative emotions such as anxiety, fear and depression, in contrast to emotional stability that implies adequate regulation of one's own emotions.
- 5) *Openness to experience* is a dimension which refers to the intellectual functioning of an individual and differentiates between imaginative and independent mind, creativity and intellectual curiosity in opposition to conventionality and conformity.

The results of research conducted in Serbia point to the connection of the personality traits and teachers' professional characteristics that are discussed in this paper. There are some findings (Đigić 2017) that show a positive correlation between the interactionist style and extraversion, as well as that the interventionist style is in positive correlation with neuroticism and are in a negative correlation with extraversion and openness to experience. Also, conscientiousness and openness are identified as significant predictors of teachers' self-efficacy (Djigić, Stojiljković and Dasković 2014).

There is much research that stresses empathy as an important trait of successful teachers. Empathy helps teachers understand the way of thinking and emotional states of their students. Teachers' empathy is distinguished as a factor of the success in different aspects of their professional performance (Morgan 1977): higher teacher empathy contributes to reducing students' absence from school and problematic behavior; on the other hand, it contributes to students' better school achievement and higher learning motivation. Also, there are numerous researches conducted in Serbia that confirm the importance of empathy in many particular domains of teachers' professional engagement (Stojiljković, Stojanović and Dasković 2012), as well as its role in the context of inclusive education (Stanković Đorđević 2012; Todorović, Stojiljković, Ristanić and Đigić 2011).

The simplest way to define empathy is to say that it means the enjoyment in emotional states of another person and understanding his/her position on the basis of the perceived or imagined situation the person is involved in (Petz 1992). Some authors (Davis 1980; Hofman 2003) stress that empathic behavior is to be considered both emotional and cognitive acting. They point out that the empathic *process* is mostly of a cognitive nature,

but the empathic content is mostly of an affective nature. According to this model (Davis 1980, 1983), empathy is seen as a complex cognitive and affective reaction on the experience of another person, which has four dimensions (the first two are related to the cognitive and the second two to affective aspect of empathy):

- 1) *Fantasy* (FS) is a dimension which refers to a person's tendency to enjoy the feelings and behavior of imagined characters from a movie or literature in certain circumstances;
- 2) *Role taking* (RT) involves the ability of taking a flexible position in social communication and the tendency to spontaneously taking a point of view of another person;
- 3) *Empathic concern* (EC) is a dimension related to individual differences in affective reactions (concern, emotional warmth) on perceived emotional expressions of other people and it represents feelings oriented towards others;
- 4) *Personal distress* (PD) refers to feelings directed towards someone's own self, even though they are caused by the perception of somebody else's emotional experiences (fear, anxiety).

Having in mind the described structure of empathy, it could be expected that teachers with a higher capacity for understanding feelings and the students' ways of thinking, simultaneously being led by their own affective experience based on their interaction with students, will be more inclined to professional behavior which represents an appropriate answer to recognized students' needs and feelings. It means that it could be expected for empathy to contribute to the teachers' choice of classroom management styles as well as to their experience of self-efficacy.

Finally, in addition to personality dimensions and empathy, the locus of control is involved in this research as a possible predictor of classroom management styles and self-efficacy that are seen as the predispositions for teachers' professional performance. This concept, based on the theory of social learning (Rotter 1975), refers to a person's beliefs that all that happens to him/her is caused by external factors out of his/her own control or, on the other hand, that he/she is responsible for what happens to him/her (Crnjaković, Stojiljković and Todorović 2008). It means that the locus of control could be represented as a continuum. People who believe they influence happenings and the outcomes of their actions (internal locus of control) occupy one end of the continuum. At the opposite end of the continuum, there are people who believe that some external circumstances and factors define what will happen to them (external locus of control).

Numerous studies (Duke and Lancaster 1976, Johnson and Kilmann 1975, Hetherington 1972, Davis and Phares 1969, Goldsmith, Veum and Darity 1996, according to Panić 2011) point out that the locus of control is formed during childhood. Namely, based on concrete experience, a child builds expectations that he/she or some external circumstances control his/her destiny. Even though it was originally thought that these expectations become a stable personality characteristic, the locus of control is, however, variable to a certain extent on the basis of new and different experiences (Goldsmith, Veum and Darity 1996, Oberle, 1991, according to Panić 2011).

Research results suggest that internally-oriented individuals have a greater confidence in their ability to solve problems than individuals with an external locus of control (Hjelle and Ziegler 1992). Generally, it could be said that internally-oriented individuals are better suited and more successful in solving life's problems. In that sense, it can also be expected that internally-oriented teachers have more confidence in their own efficiency in performing

their professional tasks, they are more willing to engage in solving the problems they face in their work and, as a result of this engagement, they use a more effective classroom management style.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research problem and objectives of the study

Taking into account numerous research findings that highlight the importance of teachers' personality characteristic for their effective professional performance (Đigić 2017; Stojiljković 2014), this study is aimed at examining the relations between particular personal and professional characteristics of teachers. More precisely, the research was aimed at investigating if it is possible to predict teachers' classroom management styles and teachers' self-efficacy (as variables that refer to teachers' professional acting) by the measures of their personal characteristics (personality dimensions defined by the Big Five Model, empathy and the locus of control). Before testing these prediction models, the expression level of measured variables in the teachers' sample as well as the intercorrelations among variables will be examined.

2.2. Research sample

The research sample consists of 148 teachers, 110 (74.3%) females and 38 (25.7%) males, 109 (73.6%) of them working in primary schools (38 classroom teachers and 71 subject teachers) and 39 (26.4%) of them working in secondary schools in Serbia.

2.3. Variables and instruments

The first group of criterion variables belonging to professional teachers' characteristics, classroom management styles, was measured by the *Inventory for Teachers' Self-assessment in Classroom Management Styles ITSCMS* (Đigić and Stojiljković 2014). The Inventory is based on a model of classroom management (Martin and Baldwin 1993a, 1993b) which distinguishes three styles: Interventionist, Interactionist and Non-interventionist. The Inventory consists of 30 items which describe teacher's behavior in everyday classroom situations, in the form of a five-level scale. Inventory items are related to ten particular situations covering three dimensions of classroom management (Personality, Instruction and Discipline). For each of ten situations, there are three descriptions of different teacher's behavior that refer to three classroom management styles. The measure of each style is expressed by the average score on items referring to this style. A higher score means a more expressed style. The reliability of the Inventory is quite satisfactory. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients range from .723 for the Interactionist style scale, over .790 for the Non-interventionist style scale, to .795 for the Interventionist style scale (Cronbach Alpha for the whole Inventory is .777).

The second investigated aspect of the professional teachers' profile is their self-efficacy. It was measured by the *Norwegian Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scale NTSEF* (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2007) which includes 24 items in the form of a seven-level scale. The instrument has six subscales (referring to teacher's self-efficacy dimensions: Instruction, Adapting instruction to individual needs of students, Motivating students, Maintaining discipline in the classroom, Cooperation with colleagues and parents and Coping with changes), each

consisting of four items. The average score on items belonging to one subscale represents the measure of a particular self-efficacy dimension (a higher score means higher self-efficacy). The reliability measures (Cronbach Alpha coefficients) obtained in our research sample are: .931 for the whole scale, .704 for the Instruction dimension, .784 for Adapting instruction to individual students' needs, .744 for the Motivating students scale, .768 for Maintaining discipline, .716 for dimension related to Cooperation with colleagues and parents, and the lowest Cronbach Alpha is .678 for the scale of Coping with changes.

Personality traits based on the Big Five model, empathy and locus of control, are examined as the predictors of classroom management styles and teacher self-efficacy.

Personality traits were measured by the *Big Five Inventory BFI* (John and Srivastava 1999), based on the personality model bearing the same name. The Inventory consists of 44 items – short descriptions of personality traits that represent the key attributes of dimensions from the Big Five model (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness) with a five-point scale which shows how much the statement refers to the participant. The measures of dimensions are expressed as the average scores on the subscales. A higher score means a more expressed dimension. The reliability coefficients of the Inventory subscales obtained on our sample range from .740 to .811, except for the agreeableness scale ($\alpha=.608$).

Empathy was examined by using the *Interpersonal Reactivity Index IRI* (Davis 1983). The scale has 28 items classified into four subscales (each consisted of seven items in the form of a five-level scale) measuring four empathy dimensions. Fantasy (FS) and Perspective Taking (PT) dimensions refer to the socio-cognitive aspects of empathy; Empathic Concern (EC) and Personal Distress (PD) dimensions refer to the emotional aspect of empathy. As the average score on the subscale is higher, the dimension of empathy is more expressed. Our results show a good reliability for the entire scale ($\alpha=.733$), for the FS ($\alpha=.767$) and PD scale ($\alpha=.762$), while PT ($\alpha=.602$) and EC ($\alpha=.574$) scales showed reliability under the acceptance limit.

The locus of control is measured by the Rotter's *Externality Scale*, adapted by Beznović (Beznović 1988), which consists of ten items in the form of a five-level scale. Items describe beliefs that exclusively external factors (like good or bad luck and destiny) are responsible for the outcomes of our behavior. It means that a person with high Externality (external locus of control) believes that he/she does not control any consequences of his/her own acts and cannot do anything to stop something that has to happen. A higher average score on the Externality scale refers to the external locus of control and a lower average score indicates the internal locus of control. The scale achieved high reliability on our sample ($\alpha=.891$).

2.4. Research procedure

Teachers involved in this research were examined by prepared instruments during their attendance of professional training programs. Training groups were composed of teachers from different schools and different cities and regions of Serbia. All participants were informed about the aims of the study and then invited to fulfill questionnaires anonymously. It was explained that the test results will be used exclusively for research purposes.

2.5. Data processing

The obtained data were processed in the statistical package SPSS 21. Cronbach Alpha coefficient of internal consistency is used as a measure of the reliability of instruments. Descriptive measures are used to establish the level of expression of the examined

variables. Correlations among variables related to personal and professional teachers' characteristics are computed using Pearson's r coefficient. Predicting models were tested by the hierarchical regression analysis (enter procedure).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Descriptive measures of examined variables

First of all, average values of the examined variables obtained on the sample are presented (Table 1).

Table 1 Descriptive measures of the examined variables

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
ITSCMS_interventionist	1.00	4.50	2.64	.678
ITSCMS_interactionist	3.30	5.00	4.49	.376
ITSCMS_noninterventionist	1.10	4.50	1.92	.599
NTSEF_instruction	4.00	7.00	5.85	.789
NTSEF_individual students' needs	3.00	7.00	5.53	.933
NTSEF_motivating students	2.33	7.00	5.47	.906
NTSEF_discipline	3.50	7.00	5.57	.963
NTSEF_cooperation	3.00	7.00	5.63	.878
NTSEF_coping with changes	4.00	7.00	5.54	.841
NTSEF_total	3.91	7.00	5.60	.738
BFI_N	1.00	4.13	2.39	.667
BFI_E	2.50	5.00	3.79	.559
BFI_O	2.20	5.00	4.01	.545
BFI_A	2.67	5.00	3.92	.453
BFI_C	2.33	5.00	4.19	.518
IRI_PTscale	2.57	5.00	3.70	.490
IRI_FSscale	1.43	5.00	3.46	.701
IRI_ECscale	2.29	5.00	3.77	.526
IRI_PDscale	1.00	4.71	2.66	.683
IRI_total	2.43	4.43	3.40	.359
Locus of control	1.00	4.00	2.32	.725

Among three classroom management styles, the interactionist style is most expressed in our teachers' sample, the second one is the interventionist style and the lowest measure is obtained for the noninterventionist style. On the basis of the obtained results, it could be said that teachers from the research sample predominantly use the most effective classroom management style. These results are quite similar to previous research conducted in Serbia (Djigic and Stojiljkovic 2011, 2014).

Teachers from the sample also showed high self-efficacy in all dimensions. They self-estimated their self-efficacy in the instruction dimension as the highest and the dimension related to motivating students as the lowest. These measures are also in accordance with previous research results (Djigić, Stojiljković and Dosković 2014) that mean that our teachers perceive their capacities for performing professional roles as very high.

When it comes to personality dimensions, the obtained measures could be compared with the measures of five basic personality dimensions from the normative study conducted in Serbia, using NEO PI-R inventory (Đurić Jočić, Džamonja Ignjatović and Knežević 2004, Knežević, Džamonja Ignjatović and Đurić Jočić 2004). All the measures obtained in our research sample are higher in comparison with the measures obtained by NEO PI-R in the Serbian normative sample. Similar results were found in prior research involving teachers in Serbia (Đigić 2017). Despite using different instruments, these differences between our teachers' sample and the Serbian normative sample could be explained by a different structure of the samples (the normative sample refers to the whole population and our sample is related to a particular profession which requires higher Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness). Higher Neuroticism could be explained by the general social transition and intensive educational reform processes in Serbia, which produce the experience of insecurity, fears and anxiety in teachers required to perform a more and more complex working role.

The examined teachers show a moderate level of empathy, which is similar to other results obtained in previous research in Serbia (Bjekić 2000; Stanković Đorđević 2012; Stojiljković, Stojanović and Dasković 2012). The most expressed empathy dimensions are Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking. Both dimensions are important for the teachers' work with students. Perspective Taking helps teachers to better understand the way of thinking of their students and to conduct the teaching process in the appropriate manner. Empathic concern could stimulate teachers to help students who need a kind of support.

Finally, the average score on the Externality scale shows that the examined teachers are a little bit closer to the internal than to the external locus of control, even though the obtained measure is almost equal for both the internal and external locus of control. For teachers as professionals, it is desirable to be more internally controlled, but a possible reason that could explain the obtained results is teachers' dissatisfaction with their economic status which contributes to the development of the external locus of control, as it is found in some previous researches (Bezinović 1988).

3.2. Intercorrelations among examined variables

Before testing the possibility of predicting classroom management styles and teachers' self-efficacy by their personality traits, correlations among these variables were calculated (Table 2).

It is clear that all personality dimensions from the Big Five model have significant correlations of an expected direction with almost all dimensions of two variables related to the professional acting of teachers. Among personality dimensions, Extraversion and Openness are in the most consistent correlations with classroom management styles and self-efficacy dimensions. Conscientiousness achieves the highest significant correlation coefficients with dimensions of variables referring to the teaching profession, except with the Interventionist classroom management style. As expected, Neuroticism is in a negative correlation with all dimensions of self-efficacy and in a positive correlation with the Interventionist style, but there is no significant correlation with the Interactionist and Noninterventionist style. Agreeableness has the highest correlation with the Interactionist classroom management style, its correlations with other two styles and self-efficacy dimensions are significant, except for the self-efficacy dimension Instruction.

Table 2 Intercorrelations among examined personal and professional teachers' characteristics (Pearson's r coefficients)

		ITSCMS_ interventionist	ITSCMS_ interactionist	ITSCMS_ non interventionist	NTSEF_ instruction	NTSEF_ ind. needs of students	NTSEF_ motivating students	NTSEF_ discipline	NTSEF_ cooperation	NTSEF_ coping with changes	NTSEF_ total
BFI_N	r	.197*	-.024	.108	-.171*	-.313**	-.183*	-.262**	-.354**	-.272**	-.314**
	p	.017	.778	.194	.040	.000	.028	.002	.000	.001	.000
BFI_E	r	-.275**	.246**	-.259**	.364**	.364**	.294**	.327**	.348**	.387**	.417**
	p	.001	.003	.002	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
BFI_O	r	-.270**	.441**	-.253**	.334**	.383**	.296**	.222**	.300**	.296**	.368**
	p	.001	.000	.002	.000	.000	.000	.007	.000	.000	.000
BFI_A	r	-.205*	.380**	-.201*	.162	.345**	.212*	.216**	.351**	.189*	.299**
	p	.013	.000	.015	.052	.000	.011	.009	.000	.023	.000
BFI_C	r	-.127	.378**	-.258**	.257**	.346**	.273**	.429**	.420**	.289**	.409**
	p	.125	.000	.002	.002	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000
IRI_PT	r	-.198*	.251**	-.259**	.269**	.366**	.219**	.198*	.347**	.167*	.314**
	p	.016	.002	.002	.001	.000	.008	.017	.000	.046	.000
IRI_FS	r	-.114	.204*	-.120	.217**	.199*	.139	.100	.193*	.121	.194*
	p	.169	.013	.150	.009	.017	.097	.231	.020	.148	.020
IRI_EC	r	-.156	.281**	-.315**	.204*	.149	.108	.147	.082	.140	.166*
	p	.061	.001	.000	.014	.075	.197	.078	.331	.095	.046
IRI_PD	r	.189*	.012	.162	-.136	-.084	-.019	-.167*	-.100	-.071	-.116
	p	.022	.887	.051	.105	.319	.822	.046	.234	.399	.166
IRI_total	r	-.092	.293**	-.191*	.209*	.231**	.168*	.081	.187*	.130	.201*
	p	.271	.000	.021	.012	.005	.044	.336	.025	.120	.016
Locus of control	r	.323**	-.088	.404**	-.210*	-.108	-.053	-.163*	-.143	-.116	-.156
	p	.000	.289	.000	.011	.196	.529	.049	.086	.164	.060

*correlations significant at the level of 0.05

**correlations significant at the level of 0.01

Among empathy dimensions, Perspective Taking is in the highest and most consistent significant correlation with all classroom management styles and self-efficacy dimensions. The most empathy-related measures are in a significant correlation with the Interactionist classroom management style and with the self-efficacy dimension Instruction. The least significant are the correlations between Personal distress and dimensions of teachers' professional acting. These correlations could mean that teachers' empathy is mostly in the function of the instruction: the capacity of teachers to understand their students' states helps them conduct the teaching process in accordance with the students' way of thinking and their educational needs. The absence of significant correlations between Personal distress and teachers' professional characteristics might be interpreted by teachers' attempts to establish professional distance in relation to affective processes obtained in the classroom and to protect themselves from intensive personal emotional investment into professional relations with students.

The measures of Externality (locus of control) are in a significant positive correlation with the Interventionist and Noninterventionist style. When it comes to the relationship between Externality and the Interventionist style, it could be said that the external locus of

control is in accordance with the teachers' belief that some external factors are responsible for students' growth and behavior, which is the basis of the interventionist approach to classroom management. On the other hand, the Noninterventionist style is characterized by leaving control over the situation in the classroom to students, i.e. the control is out of the teacher's him/her self and this makes sense of the connection between such classroom management approach and Externality. A negative correlation of Externality with only two self-efficacy dimensions (Instruction and Discipline) is also found. The finding of only sporadic correlations between the locus of control and teachers' self-efficacy is in accordance with some previous research results that deny significant connection between these variables (Toussi and Ghanizadeh 2012).

The conducted correlation analysis confirmed that examined personality variables could be significant predictors of classroom management styles and teachers' self-efficacy. The most consistent and the highest correlations were found between personality dimensions (among investigated personality features of teachers) and variables related to teachers' professional acting. So, the next step was the regression analysis aimed to test the set of predictive models.

3.3. Prediction of teachers' classroom management styles by the measures of personal characteristics

Prediction models were tested by the procedure of hierarchical regression analysis. The criterion variables were particular classroom management styles. For each style, there were particular prediction models organized in three steps which were tested. The first step involved five personality dimensions as predictors of classroom management styles. The second step involved personality and empathy dimensions as predictors and, in the third step, the locus of control was added to the previous list of predictors. Every time, predictive models were statistically significant in all three steps, but the third step gave the highest variance percent explained by the set of predictors. Also, from one step to the next one, there were no significant changes in the particular contribution of predictors. From these reasons, only the results of the third step of hierarchical regression analysis will be presented for each criterion variable (Table 3).

The conducted regression analysis confirmed the possibility of prediction of teachers' classroom management styles by the Big Five personality traits, empathy dimensions and locus of control. Externality is a significant particular predictor of the Interventionist and Noninterventionist style, i.e. as the locus of control is more external, the teacher is more inclined to show the Interventionist or Noninterventionist style. The Noninterventionist style is partly predicted by lower Empathic concern, as well. Also, the analysis showed that higher measures of personality dimensions Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness predict a more expressed Interactionist style.

Table 3 Regression of Big Five personality dimensions, empathy dimensions and locus of control with regard to teachers' classroom management styles

Criterion variable	Significant predictors	Beta	t	p	Model summary
Interventionist style	Externality	.222	2.463	.015	$R=.440$
	(locus of control)				$R^2=.194$ $p<.001$
Interactionist style	BFI Openness	.309	3.552	.001	$R=.586$
	BFI Agreeableness	.221	2.479	.014	$R^2=.344$
	BFI Conscientiousness	.209	2.327	.021	$p<.000$
Noninterventionist style	IRI Empathic concern	-.257	-2.807	.006	$R=.524$
	Externality (locus of control)	.304	3.576	.000	$R^2=.275$ $p<.000$
Predictors included in presented predictive models: BFI_N, BFI_E, BFI_O, BFI_A, BFI_C, IRI_PT, IRI_FS, IRI_EC, IRI_PD, Externality					

The regression analysis confirmed expectations based on the previously presented correlation analysis. When talking about the most effective classroom management style (Interactionist), it might be concluded that differences in its expression among teachers could be partly (34.4% of variance) explained by the level of the teachers' creativity and intellectual curiosity, by their cooperativeness, tendency to maintain harmonious relationships with others, beliefs about positive human nature and interest for the well-being of other people and by teachers' responsibility in the fulfillment of obligations and performing of tasks.

There are previous research results (Đigić 2017) showing that basic personality dimensions from the Five-factor model are significant predictors of classroom management styles, but with different particular contributions of dimensions, which could be understood having in mind that the combination of other predictors involved was different.

In the case of other two classroom management styles, the best particular predictor of their higher representation is higher Externality, which is associated with lower Empathic concern as one additional particular predictor of the nonintervening approach.

3.4. Prediction of teachers' self-efficacy by the measures of personal characteristics

A similar procedure was used with the aim to test the prediction of teachers' self-efficacy by the measures of the examined personal characteristics. The hierarchical regression analysis was conducted through three steps in the same way as previously described. The prediction models involved personality traits in the first step, personality and empathy dimensions in the second step, and these two groups of dimensions with the locus of control in the third step. All prediction models were statistically significant, but every time the amount of explained variance of the self-efficacy dimensions was the highest in the third step. Also, there were no important changes in the particular contribution of predictors from one step to the other. So, only the third step of each predictive model is presented, including only statistically significant particular predictors (Table 4). The exception is the prediction model related to the dimension Motivating students. In this case, the second step, including personality and empathy dimensions as predictors, was the only model with a significant particular predictor.

Table 4 Regression of Big Five personality dimensions, empathy dimensions and externality (locus of control) with regard to teachers' self-efficacy and its dimensions

Criterion variable	Significant predictors	Beta	t	p	Model summary
NTSEF - total	BFI Neuroticism	-.226	-2.178	.031	$R=.569$
	BFI Extraversion	.260	2.817	.006	$R^2=.324$
	IRI Perspective taking	.187	2.054	.042	$p<.000$
NTSEF - Instruction	BFI Extraversion	.239	2.391	.018	$R=.454$ $R^2=.206$ $p<.001$
	BFI Neuroticism	-.255	-2.465	.015	
NTSEF – Individual students' needs	BFI Extraversion	.230	2.495	.014	$R=.573$
	BFI Openness	.198	2.227	.028	$R^2=.329$
	IRI Perspective taking	.258	2.849	.005	$p<.000$
	IRI Personal distress	.234	2.317	.022	
NTSEF – motivating students*	IRI Personal distress	.223	2.063	.041	$R=.414$ $R^2=.172$ $p<.002$
	BFI Conscientiousness	.311	3.195	.002	$R=.488$ $R^2=.238$ $p<.000$
NTSEF – Cooperation	BFI Neuroticism	-.268	-2.596	.011	
	BFI Extraversion	.202	2.198	.030	$R=.576$
	BFI Conscientiousness	.190	2.078	.005	$R^2=.332$
	IRI Perspective taking	.257	2.848	.005	$p<.000$
	IRI Personal distress	.238	2.364	.020	
NTSEF – Coping with changes	BFI Neuroticism	-.287	-2.595	.011	$R=.423$
	BFI Extraversion	.272	2.766	.006	$R^2=.234$ $p<.000$
Predictors included in presented predictive models: BFI_N, BFI_E, BFI_O, BFI_A, BFI_C, IRI_PT, IRI_FS, IRI_EC, IRI_PD, Externality					
*Predictors included in presented predictive model: BFI_N, BFI_E, BFI_O, BFI_A, BFI_C, IRI_PT, IRI_FS, IRI_EC, IRI_PD (here the second step of hierarchical regression analysis is the only one model with significant particular predictor)					

The regression analysis used to test the prediction of teachers' self-efficacy showed that particular personality and empathy dimensions are significant predictors of the measures of self-efficacy. The locus of control is not shown as a significant particular predictor of any aspect of teachers' self-efficacy. Teachers with higher Extraversion tend to express higher self-efficacy in general and they believe that they are more efficient in instruction, in adapting instruction to individual students' needs, in cooperation with colleagues and students' parents, as well as in coping with changes. Lower Neuroticism is related to higher teachers' self-efficacy, especially in the domain of adapting instruction to individual students' needs, in cooperation with others and in coping with changes. Openness is a significant predictor of teachers' self-efficacy in adapting instruction to individual students' needs, and Conscientiousness contributes to self-efficacy in cooperation with colleagues and parents.

Among empathy dimensions, Perspective taking and Personal distress are significant particular predictors of teachers' self-efficacy. Both dimensions contribute to the prediction of teachers' efficacy in adapting instruction to individual students' needs and in cooperation with others. Personal distress is related to teachers' beliefs in their own efficacy in motivating students, as well as in general self-efficacy.

Externality is not shown as a significant predictor of any dimension of teachers' self-efficacy.

These results are similar (but not equal) to the findings of previous research (Djigić, Stojiljković and Dasković 2014) which show that there are correlations between all five basic personality dimensions and almost all teachers' self-efficacy dimensions. This research tested the prediction of teachers' self-efficacy on the basis of personality traits, also including empathy and the locus of control, so this time only some of personality dimensions achieved significant particular contribution to the prediction of several teachers' self-efficacy dimensions.

3. CONCLUSION

The study presented in this paper deals with teachers as one of the key actors in the educational process, who have a great influence on the quality of education and students' educational achievements. The relationship between classroom management styles and self-efficacy as teachers' features that determine their professional behavior in the classroom and some personality traits was investigated. The main goal of the study was to investigate the possibility to predict the mentioned teachers' professional characteristics by the set of variables that involve the Big Five personality dimensions, empathy and the locus of control.

The results show that the interactionist approach to classroom management is the most expressed in the sample of studied teachers. The measures of this style are much higher than the measures of the other two styles. Also, the teachers from our sample gave high marks to their self-efficacy in all dimensions related to different aspects of teachers' professional work (the highest assessed dimension is Instruction and the lowest, but still with a high score, is dimension Motivating students). These results are encouraging because they point to teachers' high capacities for quality performing of their professional roles, but they should be taken with a certain reserve. On the one hand, it could be said that teachers involved in this research are dedicated to their professional development. Namely, they were examined while attending a professional training aimed at the development of teachers' competences needed for the quality education of all children. When introducing themselves, they reported that they regularly attend professional trainings. Also, they exchanged practical experiences that indicate their high capacities to resolve different practical problems in everyday teaching work. Nevertheless, the obtained measures are similar to previous research results, so they could be taken as a real picture describing teachers in Serbia. Another reason that requires caution is the nature of the instruments themselves. These two variables were examined using the inventory and self-assessment questionnaire, which always raises the question of objectivity of the assessment due to the tendency of giving the desired answers and self-representation in the best light.

When it comes to the relationship between the studied teachers' professional and personal characteristics, the research results confirmed the expectation that personal characteristics were significant predictors of professional ones. Personality dimensions

based on the Big Five model have the most significant particular contribution to the tested prediction models, although all tested variables are involved in the prediction. The only dimension that has not proven to be an important single predictor in any model is the empathy dimension Fantasy, which is understandable if we take into account that it refers to the ability to enjoy the state of imaginary characters (not real persons) under certain circumstances. The greatest predictive power of basic personality dimensions in relation to teachers' professional features is quite a logical result because it is about permanent and stable characteristics that have the power to initiate and maintain consistent patterns of individual's behavior in different situations.

Practical implications of this research could be related to the process of professional orientation of young people and the selection for the teaching profession, which should be based on the knowledge about personal characteristics that are important for the successful performance of teaching roles. The results of this research also highlight the importance of supporting the development of personal characteristics of future and current teachers, such as empathy and the internal locus of control. It can be partially achieved during initial (pre-service) teachers' education which should be clearly aimed at achieving teachers' professional competences, especially those related to teaching and learning, supporting students' personal growth and development, as well as to communication and cooperation (Rules on competency standards for the teaching profession and its professional development 2011). Learning activities conducted through formal teachers' education which involve problem solving tasks, various practical performance, simulations of real classroom situations and other procedures of active learning, have capacities to develop students' openness for new experiences, their curiosity, flexibility and creativity, ability to undertake different perspectives, to take an active role in interpersonal situations, as well as to develop skills for effective management of their own personal resources for effective professional acting. In other words, initial teachers' education could support their openness, empathy, internal locus of control and other personal characteristics shown as significant predictors of effective classroom management styles and high self-efficacy of future teachers. Of course, the same kind of support should be offered to teachers through appropriate in-service training programs aimed to professional development during their working career.

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POVEZANOST LIČNIH I PROFESIONALNIH KARAKTERISTIKA NASTAVNIKA

Brojna istraživanja pokazuju da je profesionalno ponašanje nastavnika jedan od ključnih faktora efikasnosti nastave i obrazovnih postignuća učenika. Takođe, savremeni tokovi u obrazovanju postavljaju pred nastavnike sve složenije zahteve. Stoga je važno razumevanje faktora koji doprinose uspešnosti nastavnika u radu sa učenicima. U istraživanju predstavljenom u ovom radu, sprovedenom na uzorku od 148 nastavnika iz osnovnih i srednjih škola u Srbiji, ispitivan je odnos između ličnih i profesionalnih karakteristika nastavnika, odnosno ispitivana je mogućnost predviđanja stilova nastavnika u upravljanju razredom i njihovog doživljaja samoefikasnosti na osnovu mera dimenzija ličnosti iz modela Velikih pet, empatičnosti i lokusa kontrole. Kao značajni prediktori stilova

nastavnika u upravljanju razredom izdvajaju se neke dimenzije ličnosti (otvorenost, prijatnost i savesnost kao značajni prediktori interakcionističkog stila, pri čemu najveći pojedinačni doprinos ima dimenzija otvorenosti) i lokus kontrole (spoljašnji lokus kontrole predviđa izraženiji intervenišući i neintervenišući stil). Niža empatijska brižnost takođe ima značajan pojedinačni doprinos predviđanju neintervenišućeg stila. Kao značajni prediktori samoefikasnosti nastavnika uglavnom se izdvajaju neke osobine ličnosti (najčešće izraženija ekstraverzija i manje izraženi neuroticizam) i dimenzije empatije (uglavnom zauzimanje tuđe perspektive i lična nelagoda). Može se zaključiti da sve ispitivane lične karakteristike nastavnika značajno doprinose njihovim važnim profesionalnim svojstvima. Dobijeni rezultati mogu biti korisni u kreiranju podrške profesionalnom razvoju nastavnika.

Ključne reči: osobine ličnosti, empatija, lokus kontrole, stilovi upravljanja razredom, samoefikasnost nastavnika