Original research paper

HOW DO TEACHERS IN SERBIA MANAGE THEIR CLASSROOMS?

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Abstract. *The purpose of the current study was to first examine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the importance of the styles teachers use in managing their classrooms (interventionist, interactionist, and non-interventionist). Considering that these styles are also influenced by and involve teacher personality, the second aim of this study was to investigate whether there is a relationship between management styles, teachers' resilience and aspects of their emotional competence (perception and understanding of emotions, their expression and naming, and their regulation), but also with their gender and professional experience. The sample consisted of 100 elementary school teachers of both sexes (86 of them were women) with an average professional experience of 23.12 years. The following instruments were used: The Teacher Self-Assessment of Classroom Management Styles Inventory, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, and the Emotional Competence Inventory. The results of the repeated measures ANOVA showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the expression of the different management styles. Further comparison showed that the interactionist style was the most pronounced, followed by the interventionist and non-interventionist styles. The results also showed that there was a positive, statistically significant correlation between the interventionist management style and resilience, and the same type of correlation was found between the interactionist management style, resilience, and all three aspects of emotional competence. No correlation was found with gender and work experience. Since resilience is positively related to both the interventionist and interactionist management styles, which imply some degree of control over the classroom situation, it can be considered a factor that enables the teacher to act in this manner. The interactionist style, which is the most pronounced, requires shared control, so the current results support the claim that teachers must have adequate emotional competencies.*

Key words: *teacher, classroom management styles, resilience, emotional competence aspects, gender, work experience*

1. INTRODUCTION

Classroom management can be considered one of the first aspects of teaching that an educator must master in order to provide the best and most effective instruction. Managing the classroom refers to managing time, space, equipment, learning materials, and students' behaviour and relationships so that they can participate in learning activities and achieve desired outcomes (Babkie, 2006; Pedota, 2007; Woolfolk Hughes & Walkup, 2008). At the same time, the teacher should take into account the different conditions in which the teaching process takes place in a given class (the size of the class, the heterogeneity of the students and their individual characteristics in relation to learning, their age, mutual (un)familiarity and possibly pre-existing relationships and climate in the class, the habits of the students and other characteristics of their behaviour, the emotional state of the students, etc.)

As one can see, this concept is a complex process that involves several components, so all of this is very challenging for teachers. The teaching profession is generally considered to be very stressful. Therefore, the teacher's classroom management skills and competencies and his or her ability to cope with stress are important factors that determine the extent to which the teacher will be successful in classroom management. Therefore, the psychological strength of the teacher to deal with stress and adverse situations in the profession and to overcome the difficulties in the profession plays an important role in classroom management (Murthy, 2017).

Classroom management is often considered the first aspect of teaching that an educator must master in order to provide the best and most effective instruction. The same standards for curriculum delivery and student safety apply to every teacher. However, teachers achieve these standards in different styles. The purpose of this study was to first examine if there is a difference in the prominence of the styles teachers use in managing their classrooms (interventionist, interactionist, and non-interventionist). Considering that these styles are also influenced by and encompass a teacher's personality, the second goal of this study was to examine whether there is a relationship between these management styles and teachers' resilience and aspects of their emotional competence (perception and understanding of emotions, their expression and naming, and their regulation).

1.1. Classroom management

According to Martin and Baldwin (1998), classroom management is a broad umbrella term that describes a teacher's efforts to monitor classroom activities such as learning, social interaction, and student behavior. Martin and Sass (2010) determined classroom management as the teacher's efforts to monitor classroom activities, including student behavior, student interactions, and learning. According to Brophy (1999), classroom management can be described as establishing of safe and stimulating learning environment, i.e. building positive classroom climate based on principles of learning community. Determined in this way, this concept unites the personality of the teacher, his actions and competences for the successful performance of his role, but also the processes in the classroom itself and the effects of these processes (Đigić, 2013).

To understand and interpret classroom management styles, this study used the theoretical framework developed by Martin & Baldwin (Martin & Baldwin, 2008a; 2008b). This model is based on an understanding of classroom management as a multi-aspect process that includes three major dimensions: 1) teachers' beliefs about students' personalities and what teachers do to contribute to students' personal development, as

well as the general psychological climate; 2) teachers' actions that contribute to the creation of learning conditions, such as the establishment and maintenance of classroom activities, the design of space, and the use of time; and 3) teachers' actions related to discipline, i.e., teachers' actions aimed at establishing and maintaining certain norms of behavior. Each of these three dimensions of classroom management is distributed on a continuum on which there are three categories, i.e., three styles of classroom management: interventionist, interactionist, and non-interventionist.

These classroom management styles are based on Wolfgang and Glickman's (1980, according to Martin & Baldwin, 2008b) explanation of the relationship between teachers' behavioral patterns and their beliefs about the nature of student personality and motivation. They speak of a continuum on which three approaches to interacting with students are distributed – non-interventionist, interventionist, and interactionist. This division is based on the division of power between the teacher and his students and the balance of power between the teacher and the students is the basis for addressing disciplinary problems in the classroom. Each of the three categories includes a complete instructional model that helps the teacher create and maintain a disciplined classroom, and each of them denotes a unique set of beliefs that manifest themselves in appropriate models of classroom management, i.e., how discipline is established and maintained, and one can also say, of all the activities in the classroom. It should be noted that each teacher in his repertoire has all three styles, but usually one of them is dominant mode of teacher's behavior in the classroom. Below are the descriptions of the categories of teachers.

A teacher who believes in giving students a lot of power and exercising little power himself (because the less power you exercise, the more you support your students) uses the non-interventionist style. This teacher believes that students have their own inner drivers that need to find a way to express themselves in the real world, and sees his or her role as simply creating a supportive environment in which students can succeed. The teacher then achieves a minimum level of control and believes that the student is in control of his or her own destiny. In this environment, the teacher is no longer the central figure, but only a facilitator. He/she thus works to create an environment in which classroom routines and behavior can run smoothly. It should be emphasized at this point that this approach is not to be equated with a laissez-faire style of leadership. It is not a disinterested style. Teachers who lead the classroom using the non-interventionist model have their own strategies for all elements of the classroom situation, but all of these strategies are based on the belief that natural curiosity drives students to learn.

At the other end of the continuum is the interventionist approach, in which the teacher is the central figure who holds all power in his or her hands. This style is based on the belief that the external environment (the teacher sees himself as part of this environment) influences the person to develop in a certain way. Based on this belief, teachers tend to completely control the situation in the classroom. They believe that the less power students have, the easier it is for them to intervene in shaping the environment of their class. Because they view the responsibility for student learning and development as their own, by their logic they tend to gain complete control over what conditions are most conducive to achieving the desired changes. Teachers who hold this viewpoint use rewards and punishments to promote desired student activities. They believe they are doing this "for the good of the students"

Between these two extremes there is a third – the interactionist style, which is based on the constructivist view that development occurs through the interaction between the individual and the environment. Interactionist teachers share responsibility for the classroom

situation with students. They respect students' needs, suggestions, and initiatives, but at the same time set rules and limits in consultation with the students. Here, then, control over the situation is in the hands of both the teacher and the students. The teacher believes that collaboration between him, his students, and all others involved in the process is key to fostering a conducive environment for teaching and learning. In this way, the teacher gives students the power they need, but ensures that they use their power within the boundaries established in the classroom. Whenever possible, he offers students the opportunity to make their own decisions, thereby giving them responsibility for their own behavior.

Each of these three approaches can probably be seen in the behavior of any teacher. It should be emphasized again that the style of classroom management the teacher adopts in a given situation depends on many factors: the class itself and the students, their expectations and those of their parents, colleagues, school administrators, and the broader environment, current goals, the nature of the learning content, and the personality of the teacher himself. Nevertheless, there is a discernible tendency for most teachers to behave similarly in most situations, so that we can speak of a dominant style of teacher in classroom management that can be associated with the corresponding characteristic beliefs (Đigić, 2013).

If we summarize the many challenges and demands a teacher faces, we can conclude that whatever style he adopts, he must be resilient in order to successfully cope. As mentioned, classroom management styles are on a continuum, so there is no sharp boundary between them elements from all of these styles may be seen in a teacher's actions, but in most cases the actions that correspond to the elements of one of these styles dominate. Some of the key elements of teacher actions, by which we can identify the main category to which a particular teacher belongs: the ways he addresses the students, allows and responds to the students' emotional reactions, shows empathy and emotional warmth in communicating with the students, the way he listens and responds to the students' communications, the way he sends positive or negative messages to students, the way he avoids or tends to use communication-disrupting actions (Đigić, 2013), also direct us to separately observe its emotional competence, as one of the manifestation of resilience.

1.2. Resilience and emotional competence

Teaching is a profession in which members face many situations that cause stress and conflict, and is an emotionally demanding job. Teachers are expected to continue their work efficiently despite all adversities – they have to face and struggle with many difficulties in their professional life, so they need a high level of resilience (Lacaba, Lacaba, & Caliwan, 2020). According to Connor & Davidson (2003), resilience embodies the personal qualities that enable one to thrive in the face of adversity. The various understandings of resilience emphasize the return to original functioning after exposure to stressors or the return to a new state of optimal functioning in response to a stressor(s) (Boon, 2021). Because resilience is the ability to overcome adversity (Boniwell and Ryan, 2012), to demonstrate the personal strength necessary to survive difficulties or adversity, scholars believe that resilience must be developed to help teachers overcome challenges in their work. Bobek (2002) stated that resilient teachers are better able to assess adverse situations, determine coping options, and implement the appropriate solutions – teacher resiliency is a critical element in classroom success. Mansfield et al. (2016) elaborate that a resilient teacher can use personal characteristics and contextual elements to support their management of challenges, to develop and achieve professional satisfaction over time coupled with wellbeing. Teacher resilience is of paramount importance in all educational settings because it can have numerous positive

effects. More specifically, resilience leads to job satisfaction, responsiveness, effectiveness, self-efficacy, pride, agency, interpersonal relationships, competence, autonomy, optimism, positive interpersonal emotions, empathy, and emotionally intelligent teachers (Wang, 2021).

Existing literature suggests that teacher resilience is complex and dynamic, encompassing a range of personal and contextual factors. (Flores, 2018). One of the personal factors important in developing teaching resilience is emotional competence (Ee & Chang 2010). Knight (2007) proposed emotional competence as one of the three categories of the manifestations of resilience. He found that longitudinal studies illustrated similar qualities of emotional competence such as positive self-concept, internal locus of control, autonomous and sense of humor.

Saarni working definition of emotional competence is as follows: Emotional competence is the demonstration of self-efficacy in emotion-eliciting social transactions (Saarni, 1999, cited in Saarni, 1999). Self-efficacy here means that an individual is convinced that he or she has the skills and abilities to achieve a desired outcome. This is meant to describe how individuals can respond emotionally while strategically applying their knowledge of emotions and emotional expressiveness to their relationships with others so that they can navigate interpersonal encounters and regulate their emotional experiences toward desired outcomes or goals. Because the emphasis is on 'skills' rather than 'abilities," the concept of emotional competence focuses on skills that can be learned and developed, rather than abilities (intelligence) that can be inherited.

According to Saarni (1999), the skills that constitute emotional competence are the following: awareness of one's own emotional state, including the possibility of experiencing multiple emotions, and at an even more mature level, awareness that one may be unaware of one's emotions due to unconscious dynamics or selective inattention; the ability to recognize the emotions of others based on situational and expressive cues about whose emotional meaning there is some cultural consensus; the ability to use the vocabulary for emotions and expressions common in one's (sub)culture and, at more mature levels, to acquire cultural scripts that link emotions to social roles; the ability to participate empathically and compassionately in the emotional experiences of others; the ability to recognize that one's internal emotional state need not match one's external expression, both in oneself and in others; the ability to understand that one's emotional expressive behavior may have an impact on others and to take this into account in one's self-expression strategies; the ability to adaptively manage aversive or distressing emotions through the use of self-regulatory strategies that mitigate the intensity or temporal duration of such emotional states; awareness that the structure or nature of relationships is determined in part by both the degree of emotional immediacy or genuineness of expression and the degree of reciprocity or symmetry within the relationship; the capacity for emotional self-efficacy-that is, accepting one's own emotional experience, whether it is unique and eccentric or culturally conventional, and that this acceptance is consistent with the individual's beliefs about what constitutes a desirable emotional "balance."

Mayer and Salovey (1997, cited in Korotaj, & Mrnjaus, 2021) stress that emotional competence is focused on knowledge and skills one can achieve in order to adequately function in different situations and that they tend to be more focused on the educational process and not on psychological abilities. According to Goleman (Goleman, 2005) people who acquire these skills can excel in interpersonal relationships, show strong leadership skills and perform well. The context surrounding emotional competence is the interaction between the person and the situation, which may involve other people. It describes how individuals respond emotionally while strategically applying their

knowledge of emotions and emotional expressiveness to relationships with others so that they can navigate interpersonal encounters and regulate their emotional experiences toward desired outcomes or goals. Given the emphasis on 'skills' rather than 'abilities', the concept of emotional competence is stressed towards skills that can be learned and developed rather that abilities (intelligence) that may be inherited (Marzuki, 2017).

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

2.1. Sample and procedure

The sample consisted of 100 elementary school teachers of both sexes (86 of whom were women) with an average work experience of 23.12 years. Written permission was obtained from the authors for all instruments used in this study. The survey was conducted online.

2.2. Instruments

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (*CD-RISC*; Connor & Davidson, 2003; Serbian version, approved by the author of the scale) measures the degree of expression of psychological resilience, based on the evaluation made by the individual him/herself. The task of a respondent is to evaluate, on a five-level Likert type scale, to what degree he/she has felt a certain way or has thought in a certain way during the previous month. If the given situation has not happened to him/her recently, then he/she is asked to respond in accordance to what he/she believes that he/she would feel. The instrument consists of 25 items, Scoring of the scale is based on summing the total of all items, each of which is scored from 0-4. For the CD-RISC-25, the full range is therefore from 0 to 100, with higher scores reflecting greater resilience. The reliability of the instrument on the current sample is medium ($\alpha = 0.89$).

The Inventory for teachers' self-assessment in classroom management styles (*ITSCMS*, Djigic & Stojiljkovic, 2014) consists of 30 items – 10 items, hypothetical situations encountered in the classroom, for each of three styles – interventionist, interactionist, and noninterventionist. Teachers self-rate by choosing the level on the Likert scale (from 1 to 5) for each item to determine which description best relates to them. The reliabilities of the subscales on the current sample respectively are: $\alpha = 0.75$, $\alpha = 0.57$, $\alpha = 0.74$. As it can be seen, except for the subscale interactionist style, other two coefficients are medium and satisfactory.

The Emotional Competence Inventory (Takšić, 2002) consist of 45 items measuring the tree dimensions of emotional competence: ability to Perceive & Understand emotion Subscale (15 items), ability to Express & Label emotion Subscale (14 items), Ability to Manage & Regulate emotion Subscale (16 items). The task of a respondent is to evaluate, on a five-level Likert type scale, to what degree given item refers to them. The reliabilities of the subscales on the current sample are satisfactory: for the first subscale $\alpha = 0.92$, for the second $\alpha = 0.84$, and for the third $\alpha = 0.81$.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Our first goal was to examine if there is a difference in the prominence of the styles teachers use in managing their classrooms (interventionist, interactionist, and non-interventionist). The results of the repeated measures ANOVA have shown that there was

a statistically significant difference in the prominence of the different management styles (F (2) = 777.478, p < .001). Further comparison of this prominence shows that the interactionist style is the most prominent, followed by the interventionist and the non-interventionist (Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1 Classroom management styles descriptive statistics

Classroom management style	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Interventionist	11	45	28.86	6.521
Interactionist	38	50	46.60	2.881
Non-interventionist	10	51	19.62	6.050
N	100			

Table 2 Pairwise comparison

Classroom management styles		Mean Diff.
Interventionist	Interactionist	-17.740[*]
	Non-interventionist	9.240[*]
Interactionist	Non-interventionist	26.980*

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

These results are consistent with those obtained for the domestic population of teachers. Djigić (2018) found that among the three classroom management styles, the interactionist style was the most prominent in the teacher sample, followed by the interventionist style, and the lowest score was obtained for the non-interventionist style. Based on the obtained results, it could be said that teachers from the research sample predominantly use the most effective classroom management style. These results are very similar to previous studies in Serbia (Djigic & Stojiljkovic 2011, 2014) and abroad. For example, Sahin (2015) reports that a large majority of teachers who participated in the study (72.3%) use the medium control approach. This approach is followed by teachers using the high control approach (21%) and teachers using the low control approach (6.7%)

As stated, these styles are characterized by varying degrees and distribution of power and control over the classroom situation (Martin & Baldwin, 1993b). Interactionists balance between the interventionist and non-interventionist extremes. In this style, there is constant interaction between the teacher and the student and the responsibility for controlling behaviour is shared between the two (Sert, 2007). This relationship is key to holding the student accountable for his or her actions, thus fostering independence. In addition, the modern approach to education assumes that knowledge is constructed through the negotiation of meaning (Cole & Wertsch, 2002; Wertsch, 2008), through the negotiation of different perspectives of understanding in interaction with others with different levels of knowledge (Pešikan, 2010). The interactionist style of classroom management provides the opportunity to cross different perspectives of understanding, not only about the content being studied but also about the attitudes and values manifested in social and affective situations in the field. The predominant presence of an interactionist leadership style in our sample confirms the movement of education toward interactivity as a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for effective teaching (Pešikan, 2010), as well as the organization of schools as a good place for all students.

The second aim of this study was to investigate whether there is a relationship between classroom management styles, teachers' resilience, and aspects of their emotional competence (perception and understanding of emotions, their expression and naming, and their regulation). It was also investigated whether there was a relationship between management styles and teachers' gender and work experience.

The results showed a positive, statistically significant correlation between interventionist management style and resilience, and the same correlation was found between interactionist management style, resilience, and all three aspects of emotional competence (Table 3). None of the correlations of management styles with gender or work experience proved statistically significant.

Table 3 Correlation between Classroom management styles, Resilience and aspects of Emotional competence

Classroom management styles	Resilience	Perception and understanding	Expression and naming	Regulation
Interventionist	.241[*]	.071	.153	.188
Interactionist	.355[**]	.404[**]	.374[**]	.393[**]
Non-interventionist	-.065	-.040	-.034	.109

[*]. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A growing body of research points to the need to integrate teacher resilience into education systems and teacher education programs to prepare teachers to cope with the realities of their work. The current findings support this call. A person's ability to adapt to negative life events is positively related to both interventionist and interactionist management styles. Both styles imply that the teacher is more or less in control of the situation in the classroom, and resilience can be considered one of the factors that enable him or her to act that way. Moreover, the style that is most strongly expressed by teachers, the interactionist style, is additionally positively and statistically significantly correlated with all aspects of emotional competence. To be able to share control over the classroom situation in a meaningful way with students in a democratic manner, the teacher must, among other things, demonstrate self-efficacy in emotion-triggering social transactions. In other words, he or she must develop the skills that constitute emotional competence, enabling him or her to properly perceive, understand, express, and regulate his or her own emotions, as well as to appropriately perceive, understand, and regulate the emotions of others.

4. CONCLUSION

It seems that the most important condition for the success of teaching is process management, in which the teacher plays the most important role. Teaching will be successful to the extent that the teacher, using all his or her personal and professional skills, plans, initiates, and maintains appropriate processes in collaboration with all relevant actors in the educational process. How successful the teacher is in this further depends on his knowledge, skills, competencies, motivation and other personal characteristics. The interactionist leadership style, through the implied intense exchange in communication, requires the intense intellectual and affective engagement of the teacher, as a person responsible for the quality of the exchange itself. The association of resilience and aspects of a teacher's emotional competence with the interactionist style of teaching indicates this style's high intellectual,

social, and affective demands. The results of our research confirm the need to integrate resilience and emotional competence strengthening into the process of teacher professional preparation and professional development so that teachers can use and perfect the interactionist style to guide the teaching process and other aspects of school life.

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KAKO NASTAVNICI U SRBIJI UPRAVLJAJU SVOJIM RAZREDIMA?

Prvi cilj ovog istraživanja odnosio se na ispitivanje postojanja statistički značajnih razlika u izraženostii stilova koje nastavnici koriste prilikom upravljanja svojim razredima (intervenišući, interakcionistički i neintervenišući). S obzirom na to da su ovi stilovi takođe pod uticajem i uključuju ličnost nastavnika, drugi cilj ovog istraživanja je bio da se ispita da li postoji povezanost stilova upravljanja sa rezilijentnošću nastavnika i aspektima njihove emocionalne kompetencije (percepcija i razumevanje emocija, njihovo izražavanje i imenovanje i njihova regulacija), ali i njihovim polom i godinama radnog staža. Uzorak je činilo 100 nastavnika osnovnih škola oba pola (od kojih 86 žena) sa prosečnim radnim iskustvom od 23.12 godina. Korišćeni su sledeći instrumenti: Inventar stilova u upravljanju razredom zasnovan na samoproceni nastavnika, Konor-Dejvidsonova skala rezilijentnosti i Inventar emocionalne kompetencije. Rezultati ANOVA-e sa ponovljenim merenjem ukazali su na postojanje statistički značajne razlike u izraženosti stilova upravljanja. Rezultat dobijen daljim poređenjem ovih izraženosti ukazao je na to da je najizraženiji stil interakcionistički, a zatim slede intervenišući i neintervenišući i stil. Rezultati takođe pokazuju da postoji pozitivna, statistički značajna korelacija između intervenišućieg stila upravljanja i rezilijentnosti, a ista takva korelacija pronađena je između interakcionističkog stila upravljanja, rezilijentnosti i sva tri aspekta emocionalne kompetencije. Nijedna od koralacija stilova upravljanja nastavnika sa njihovim polom i godinama radnog iskustva nije se pokazala statistički značajnom. S obzirom na to da je rezilijentnost pozitivno povezana i sa intervenišućim i sa interakcionističkim stilovima upravljanja, a oba podrazumevaju određeni stepen kontrole nad situaciome u učionici, ona se može posmatrati kao jedan od faktora koji omogućavaju nastavniku da deluje na ovaj način. Najizraženiji - interakcionistički stil zahteva deljenje kontrole, tako da sadašnji nalazi podržavaju tvrdnju da nastavnici poseduju odgovarajuće emocionalne kompetencije.

Ključne reči: *nastavnik, stilovi upravljanja razredom, rezilijentnost, aspekti emocionalne kompetencije, pol, radni staž*