

Teacher's attachment and mentalization as the predictors of classroom management styles

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The aim of this study is to examine whether a tendency towards a certain style of classroom management can be predicted based on teacher's attachment and mentalization, as well as whether training in the field of classroom management modifies the relationship between the predictor and criterion variables. The research included 100 1st-4th grade primary school teachers, 86 female and 14 male, aged from 28 to 64, and with 1 to 39 years of teaching experience. The data were collected using the following instruments: The Inventory for teachers' self-assessment in classroom management styles, ITSCMS; the Experience in close relationships questionnaire, the modified and adapted Serbian version, SM-ECR-R and the The Mentalization Scale (MentS). The results show that anxiety and mentalization of self-contribute to the tendency towards the non-interventionist and interventionist styles of classroom management, while the mentalization of others and number of trainings in the field of classroom management contribute to the tendency towards the interactionist style of classroom management. The moderating effect of the number of trainings on the relationship between the mentalization of others and the interactionist style of class management was also found.

Key words: attachment, mentalization, classroom management style, teacher

A meta-analytic study of various factors of student achievement in school showed that classroom management had the greatest impact on student achievement among the factors from the school environment (Marzano & Marzano, 2003; Wang et al. 1990). Classroom management refers to the efforts that teachers make in order to monitor learning, social interactions and student behaviour in the classroom (Martin & Baldwin, 1993), and encompasses the teacher's personality, his/her actions, performance competencies, as well as

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classroom processes (Đigić & Stojiljković, 2011). Doyle (2013) points out that the classroom is a complex environment in which many different events and tasks take place at the same time, in a rapid way, with high unpredictability of the situation and teacher's constant exposure to students, as on the stage, while experiences and routines accumulate during the classes, creating the basis for what will take place in the classroom until the end of the school year. This situation places demands and pressures on the participants, especially the teacher, who has the professional responsibility to plan and supervise the activities in the class and serves as the origin of the tasks of classroom management.

According to Martin and Baldwin (1993), classroom management is a broad concept, the aspects of which can be subsumed under three dimensions: person, instruction, and discipline. The person dimension refers to teachers' beliefs about students' personalities, as well as the efforts that teachers make in order to enable students to develop as persons. It involves the teachers' perception of students' abilities, as well as the psychosocial climate in the classroom. The instruction dimension is related to everything that teachers do to enable students to learn (Martin & Baldwin, 1993), i.e., to initiate and maintain the learning activity, and it encompasses the use of space, time, teaching aids, the way of giving instructions, etc. (Đigić, 2013). The discipline dimension comprises the teachers' actions aimed at establishing and maintaining the standards of classroom behaviour (Martin & Baldwin, 1993).

The characteristic set of behaviours of the teacher in the classroom is represented by his/her classroom management style, which manifests itself in different situations and includes all aspects of the management process (Đigić, 2013).

The democratic style implies that the teacher is a member of the working community who, without imposing or dominating, directs and encourages students, exchanges opinions with them and engages them in activities (Đigić & Stojiljković, 2011). Also, there is mutual respect and understanding between students and the teacher (Miller & Pedro, 2006). The democratic style contributes to emotional warmth and support and increased mutual interactions between students and teachers, which results in students' reactions and success (Đigić, 2013). In a democratic atmosphere, students are more ready to cooperate with the teacher, take responsibility for their duties, achieve better learning results (Đigić & Stojiljković, 2011); they are also more motivated for learning (Miller & Pedro, 2006; Đigić & Stojiljković, 2011). A positive and close relationship between students and their teacher, perceiving the teacher as approachable and helpful, as in the democratic style, contributes to better academic achievement (Ma et al., 2018; Ma et al 2022; Yunus et al., 2011) and motivation to learn (Yunus et al., 2011). On the other hand, teacher's authoritarian style, where the teacher manages and

decides on everything, implies, to a greater extent, a one-way communication and weaker emotional support, seeking unquestioning obedience, more reprimanding and less praising of students and the attitude that they cannot be trusted, which causes students' submission, a dislike towards the teacher, weaker willingness to participate and a lack of interest (Đigić, 2013).

The characteristics of teacher's personality contribute to his/her tendency towards a certain style of classroom management (Đigić, 2013). This study examines the tendency towards a specific style of classroom management from the perspective of the attachment theory. It is aimed at exploring the connection between the dimensions of teachers' attachment and the development of mentalization capacity with a tendency towards a certain style of classroom management.

Martin and Baldwin (1993) distinguish among three styles of classroom management: the interventionist, non-interventionist, and interactionist. These styles differ in the degree and distribution of power and control between the teacher and students in the classroom. The fully interventionist style implies unilateral control by the teacher. It is based on the belief that the external environment influences human beings and thus affects their development. The non-interventionist style presupposes classroom control by students and it is centred on the teacher's belief that students have their own inner drivers, and that they should find their way of expressing themselves. The interactionist style refers to the distribution of power and control between the teacher and students (Martin & Baldwin, 1993). It is characterized by joint decision-making, problem solving, mutual responsibility, respecting students' personalities, initiatives and ideas, and freedom of choice, but also setting boundaries and defining the situation by the teacher (Đigić, 2013). Although there are no clear boundaries among the classroom management styles, and the characteristics of each style can be found in the actions of most teachers, their tendency towards a certain style is recognized in most classroom situations (Đigić, 2013).

The quality of attachment develops depending on the mother's responsiveness to the child's signals. In a secure attachment, the child perceives himself/herself as worthy of attention and love and the significant others as available and reliable support. In an insecure attachment style, the child thinks of himself/herself as insufficiently valuable and perceives others as unavailable or intermittently available (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Bowlby, 1973; Bretherton & Munholland, 2008). Based on these internal representations of oneself and parents, internal working models of oneself and significant others are formed to interpret the consequences of one's own behaviour, and predict the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of others based on earlier experiences of mutual interaction. It is assumed that the first affective relationships throughout life are relatively stable, by means of internal working models and their influence on shaping the future relationships with others (Bowlby, 1973).

Researchers describe attachment through the dimension of anxiety, which indicates the need for approval and fear of abandonment in relationships with others, and the dimension of avoidance, which refers to avoidance of closeness and dependence on others (Brennan et al., 1998). An increase in the anxiety dimension indicates anxious insecure attachment, based on a negative model of self and a positive model of others. These people are characterized by a feeling of inferiority that they try to compensate for through extreme closeness in relationships with others, and vulnerability if such closeness is not realized (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). An increase in the avoidance dimension indicates insecure avoidant attachment, in which closeness in relationships is avoided due to negative expectations (a negative model of others) and its importance is denied with a defensive attitude, while the importance of independence and self-sufficiency is emphasized (a positive model of self) (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). Securely attached individuals, who exhibit low anxiety and low avoidance, have developed a positive attitude towards themselves and others. They are characterized by self-confidence and general trust in other people and their goodwill (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003), openness to closeness and intimacy with a feeling of mutual trust and satisfaction (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Simpson, 1990), better communication skills (Guerrero, 1996) and more constructive conflict resolution strategies, compared to the insecurely attached persons (Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1995).

Theorists and researchers indicate that teachers' attachment style reflects on their relationship with students in the classroom by shaping their feelings and expectations regarding their interaction with children, as well as motivational goals and behaviour patterns (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004). Teachers with avoidant attachment may appear emotionally distant, less approachable, sensitive, trustworthy, and responsive to students' needs. Further, since these teachers foster independence and self-reliance in interpersonal relationships, they may have unrealistic expectations of students' maturity and independence (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004). Anxiously attached individuals tend to focus on their own problems and the need for security, which can reduce their mental capacity for caregiving and reacting responsively to the needs of others (Lifshin et al., 2020). Anxiously attached teachers may at times adapt to the needs of students and become involved in dealing with observable behaviour, without solving the problem (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004). Securely attached teachers use direct and open communication with students, while the insecurely attached ones use defensive or repressive communication, which can create a hostile environment in the classroom (Howes & Ritchie, 2002). Research has shown that teachers' anxious and avoidant attachment styles are negatively related to the use of conflict resolution strategies that involve caring for self and others, and that teachers with an avoidant attachment style may tend not to use the strategies that take the students' point of view into account (Morris-Rothschild & Brassard, 2006). Moreover, a negative

relationship was observed between teacher's avoidant attachment and positive classroom climate (Sher-Censor et al., 2019).

Theory and research indicate that secure attachment is associated with a more developed mentalization capacity (Banjac et al., 2013; Bateman & Fonagy, 2010; Fonagy et al., 1991; Fonagy et al., 1998). Mentalization is an imaginative mental activity by means of which we interpret the behaviour of others through their feelings, needs, desires, beliefs, goals, purposes, and reasons, and also interpret one's own behaviour and experiences (Fonagy & Allison, 2012).

Mentalization enables quick and efficient interpretation of other people's behaviour (Fonagy & Allison, 2012). It is associated with better self-control, emotion regulation (Fonagy et al., 1991) and attention (Bateman & Fonagy, 2010), as well as more positive relationships with others (Fonagy & Target, 1997). It facilitates the appreciation of different points of view in interpersonal relationships, and better resolution of interpersonal problems (Allen, 2006), and it also enables greater sensitivity to other people's feelings, desires, and attitudes (Recktenvald & Donelli, 2019). The importance of teacher's mentalization capacity, as a secondary figure of students' attachment, is reflected in the fact that it contributes to the healthy development of students, the establishment of healthy relationships with students, as well as the motivation of students to learn (Swan & Riley, 2015). Teachers' mentalization is the process through which they understand the student, but also their own mental states, which facilitates the manifestation of empathy towards students. Teachers engage or disengage from the mentalizing mode, depending on their motivation to understand students' internal mental states. Engaging teachers to become aware of students' internal states and respond with care is essential for effective classroom interaction (Swan & Riley, 2015). When people interact with each other in the mentalizing mode, they tend to understand each other, as well as to influence each other in accordance with the understanding. In the non-mentalizing mode, people dehumanize others and perceive them as objects, which leads them to exhibit coercive and controlling behaviour (Allen, 2006).

The importance of observing the relationship between students and teachers from the perspective of the attachment theory lies in the fact that teachers often provide students with a secure base and secondary attachment figures (Kesner, 2000). A student-teacher relationship characterized as a secure attachment predicts greater success in school and greater student academic motivation (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). Based on the results of this research, it is possible to construct interventions that would help teachers understand their internal reasons for preferring a certain style of classroom management, as well as the interventions that would encourage them to adopt a classroom management style more oriented towards the interactionist style, through teacher training and development programmes.

The main goal of this study is to establish whether and in what way teachers' personality traits, attachment and mentalization capacity can contribute to predicting their tendency towards a certain style of classroom management. In addition, our aim is to examine the importance of training in the field of classroom management, i.e., to determine to what extent the number of training sessions related to classroom management style modifies the relationship between attachment and mentalization, on the one hand, and the tendency towards a certain style of classroom management, on the other.

Having this in mind, we expect that insecurely attached teachers will show a greater inclination towards the interventionist or non-interventionist style of classroom management, while securely attached teachers will show a greater tendency towards the interactionist style of classroom management. Also, it is assumed that teachers with a more developed mentalization capacity will be more oriented towards the interactionist style of classroom management. We presume that the relationship between attachment and mentalization, on the one hand, and classroom management style on the other will be modified depending on the number of training sessions in the field of classroom management that teacher has attended, i.e., that those teachers trained in classroom management skills will show a greater tendency towards the interactionist style of classroom management.

Method

Sample

The sample of the survey consisted of the 1st-4th grade primary school teachers. The sample was non-random and included a total of 100 teachers, 86 female and 14 male, aged from 28 to 64 ($M=51.20$; $SD=8.08$), with work experience ranging from 1 to 39 years ($M= 24.06$; $SD=9.30$), employed in seven primary schools in Niš.

Procedure

We collected data on the tendency towards a certain style of classroom management, attachment, mentalization and the number of completed training sessions in the field of classroom management. The participants were informed that the survey was anonymous and voluntary, as well as that the results would be analysed in a group form and used for research purposes. The participants were also informed that, if they wanted to receive feedback about their own testing, they should provide their e-mail address to the researcher along with the questionnaires so that the results can be delivered to them. There were no respondents interested in the results of their testing. The study was conducted during 2022. Preliminary results were presented at the 71st Congress of Psychologists of Serbia "New Horizons of

Cyber Psychology”, May 24–27, 2023 under the title “Teacher mentalization as a predictor of classroom management style”.

Instruments

The Mentalization Scale (MentS) (Dimitrijević et al., 2018). The questionnaire examines the overall mentalization capacity, as well as three aspects of mentalization capacity: the mentalization of one's own states (e.g., “When I get upset I am not sure whether I am sad, afraid, or angry”), mentalization of others (e.g., “When I make conclusions about other people's personality traits I carefully observe what they say and do”), and the motivation to mentalize (e.g., “I find it important to understand reasons for my behaviour”). Therefore, the questionnaire consists of three subscales and a total scale. The questionnaire includes 28 items, according to which participants evaluate the degree of agreement using a five-point scale ranging from 1 – *completely untrue* to 5 – *completely true*. The reliability of the instrument as a whole in this research is satisfactory ($\alpha = .840$), while the subscales have the following reliability: Mentalization of self $\alpha = .866$, Mentalization of others $\alpha = .638$, Motivation to mentalize $\alpha = .659$.

In order to examine attachment, we used the modified version of the questionnaire **Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR-R)** (Fraley et al., 2000), **Serbian version of the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised questionnaire, SM-ECR-R** (Hanak & Dimitrijević, 2013). The questionnaire consists of 36 items, half of which refer to the dimension of avoidance (e.g., “I prefer not to show how I feel deep inside”) and half to the dimension of anxiety (e.g., “I am afraid that close people will stop loving me”). The participants respond by assessing the extent to which they agree with each claim on a seven-point scale. The degree of agreement ranges from 1 – *I do not agree at all*; 2 – *I do not agree*; 3 – *I partially disagree*; 4 – *I neither agree nor disagree*; 5 – *I partially agree*; 6 – *I agree*; to 7 – *I completely agree*. In this study, satisfactory reliability of the subscales was determined, $\alpha = .896$ for anxiety, and $\alpha = .745$ for avoidance.

Inventory for teachers' self-assessment in classroom management styles (ITSCMS) (Đigić & Stojiljković, 2014). The questionnaire consists of 30 items according to which participants evaluate the degree of agreement using a five-point scale. The inventory distinguishes among three styles of classroom management: the interventionist (e.g., “When, during the class, one of the students loud laughs, or starts crying, I get angry because he/she disturbs the class and I scold him/her), the non-interventionist (e.g., “While students are working sitting at their desks, I do something else sitting in the pulpit.”), and the interactionist (e.g., “Students learn best when I allow them to freely express opinions, ideas, suggestions for work.”), with 10 items referring to each of the management styles. Each participant exhibits the elements of all three classroom management styles in his/her repertoire, but one style is

usually more dominant. All three dimensions of classroom management are covered by the items: 9 items each refer to the dimension of person and the dimension of discipline, while 12 items refer to the dimension of teaching. The reliability of the subscales in this study was the following: Interventionist style $\alpha = .765$; Non-interventionist style $\alpha = .808$; Interactionist style $\alpha = .664$.

The questionnaire on the number of the training sessions attended in the three areas of classroom management. The first question refers to training in the area of creating a positive psychosocial climate in the class (warmth, friendliness, paying attention to students) and providing opportunities for students to develop as persons. The second question refers to training in the field of giving instructions to students and the use of space, time and teaching aids. The third question refers to training in the field of discipline, i.e., establishing and maintaining the standards of behaviour in the classroom. The possible answers about the number of training sessions attended for each of the three areas of classroom management range from 0 to 6 – *more than 5 training sessions attended*.

Results

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 shows the results of means and standard deviations of all variables in the study. Average values of the dimensions of attachment are at a medium level, while they are at a high level when it comes to the mentalization dimensions, especially mentalization of others. Average values of the interventionist and non-interventionist classroom management styles are at a medium level and at a high level for the interactionist classroom management style.

Table 1

Descriptive analysis

Variables	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Anxiety	1.28	4.94	2.72	0.95
Avoidance	1.50	4.72	3.21	0.64
Mentalization	3.00	4.75	3.90	0.43
MentS	1.50	5.00	3.57	0.90
MentO	3.40	5.00	4.14	0.37
MentM	2.30	4.90	3.92	0.49
Style A	1.50	4.70	3.03	0.69
Style B	4.00	5.00	4.70	0.29
Style C	1.00	4.20	2.19	0.76
Training	0.33	6.00	3.80	1.63

Note: MentS – mentalization of self; MentO – mentalization of others; MentM – motivation to mentalize; Style A – interventionist classroom management style; Style B – interactionist classroom management style; Style C – non-interventionist classroom management style; Training – training in the field of classroom management

The results of the Spearman's correlation coefficient test are shown in Table 2. The interventionist style has a moderate-intensity positive correlation with Anxiety and medium-intensity negative correlations with Mentalization of self and the overall mentalization capacity. The interactionist style is related to Avoidance by a low-intensity negative correlation. The correlation between this style and the overall mentalization capacity is positive and of medium intensity, whereas the correlation with Mentalization of others and Motivation to mentalize is positive and of low intensity. The non-interventionist style achieves a medium-intensity positive correlation with Anxiety and Avoidance, as well as a medium-intensity negative correlation with the overall mentalization capacity, Mentalization of self and Motivation to mentalize.

Table 2

The relationship of classroom management styles with training, attachment and mentalization

	Style A	Style B	Style C
Training	-.032	.126	.003
Anxiety	.420**	-.070	.520**
Avoidance	.132	-.211*	.423**
Mentalization	-.302**	.308**	-.534**
MentS	-.429**	.172	-.586**
MentO	0.73	.298**	-.140
MentM	-.153	.253*	-.378**

Note: MentS – mentalization of self; MentO – mentalization of others; MentM – motivation to mentalize; Style A – interventionist classroom management style; Style B – interactionist classroom management style; Style C – non-interventionist classroom management style

Predictive models

The predictive power of attachment, mentalization and training of each of the three classroom management styles was tested using the regression analysis in order to establish which variables contribute most to the prediction of styles, as well as which style's value can be determined to the highest extent based on these predictors. Initially, the dimensions of attachment which correlate most with a particular style were introduced, followed by the dimensions of mentalization and training.

Attachment and mentalization contribute most to the predicted score of Style C, i.e., the non-interventionist style of classroom management, since, of all the styles, they explain the highest proportion of variance of Style C .

Table 3
The regression coefficient for Style C

Model C	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.		
	B	Standard error	β			<i>R</i> ²	Sig.
Constant	2.722	.495		5.504	.000		
Anxiety	.245	.082	.311	2.990	.004	.410	.000
MentS	-.334	.088	-.393	-3.783	.000		

Note: MentS – mentalization of self; Dependent variable: Style C – non-interventionist classroom management style

In Table 3, we can see that Anxiety is a significant predictor of the non-interventionist classroom management style, i.e., Style C. Of all the variables from the mentalization domain, we found that Mentalization of self contributes most to the improvement of this predictive model. Higher Anxiety and lower capacity for mentalization of self contribute to a greater tendency towards the non-interventionist style of classroom management. Mentalization of self and Anxiety explain 41% of the variance of Style C.

Table 4
The regression coefficient for Style A

Model A	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.		
	B	Standard Error	β			<i>R</i> ²	Sig.
Constant	3.378	.510		6.619			
Anxiety	.187	.085	.257	2.210	.030	.262	.000
MentS	-.240	.091	-.306	-2.630	.000		

Note: MentS – mentalization of self; Dependent variable: Style A – interventionist classroom management style

According to its predictive power, the following model (Table 4) interprets the interventionist style of classroom management, since Mentalization of self and Anxiety explain 26% of variance of this style. Higher Anxiety and lower capacity for Mentalization of self predict a greater tendency towards the interventionist style of classroom management, and Mentalization of self proves to be a more significant predictor than Anxiety.

The predictor variables contribute least to the predicted score of the interactionist classroom management style. Since no dimension of attachment contributes significantly to the prediction of the tendency towards the interactionist style of classroom management, we set up the basic predictive model of this style based on Mentalization of others, the dimension from the overall scale of mentalization that correlates most with Style B (Table 5). A

greater capacity for Mentalization of others contributes to a greater tendency towards the interactionist style of classroom management. By introducing the number of training sessions in the field of classroom management in the basic predictive model, we found that the predictive power of the model increased significantly, since the number of training sessions contributed to an increase in the tendency towards the interactionist style of classroom management. Through further testing, we established the existence of a moderating effect of the number of training sessions on the relationship between the Mentalization of others and Style B. In this predictive model, the interaction between the Mentalization of others and the number of training sessions led to a decrease in the predicted score of the interactionist classroom management style. The model explains 21% of the variance of Style B, i.e., the interactionist style of classroom management.

Table 5
The regression coefficient for Style B

Model B	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.		
	B	Standard error	β			R ²	Sig.
Constant	1.513	.796		1.901	.060		
MentO	.741	.192	.927	3.856	.000		
Training	.598	.199	3.341	3.008	.003	.201	.000
MentOxTraining	-.136	.048	-3.246	-2.843	.005		

Note: MentO – mentalization of others; Dependent variable: Style B – interactionist classroom management style

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine whether, on the basis of attachment and mentalization capacity, it was possible to predict the teacher's tendency towards a certain style of classroom management. Another aim was to examine whether the number of training sessions in the field of classroom management contributed to the prediction and possibly modified the relationship between attachment and mentalization on the one hand, and classroom management styles, on the other.

The results show that the dimensions of attachment, anxiety, and mentalization of self are significant predictors of the non-interventionist classroom management style. Greater anxiety indicates a greater tendency towards the non-interventionist style of classroom management, whereas, of all mentalization dimensions, mentalization of self contributes most to the prediction of this style and has a greater contribution compared to anxiety. Greater teacher anxiety, i.e., a greater need for approval and fear of

abandonment in the relationships with others, as well as a lower capacity of teachers to mentalize their own internal states, actions and experiences, indicate a greater tendency towards the non-interventionist style. The negative internal working model of self and positive model of others, which develop during growing up with parents (Bowlby, 1973), contribute to shaping teacher-student relationships. Anxiously attached teachers, who focus on their own sense of security and problems (Lifshin et al., 2020), show less capacity to provide emotional support to students and engage less in interactions, occasionally involving with observable student behaviour, but without solving the problem (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004). It is possible that teachers' greater focus on themselves and their own problems contributes to their orientation towards the non-interventionist style, since this style implies the control of the classroom situation by students. Teachers' lower capacity for mentalization of self is also associated with the non-interventionist style, since this style is characterized by teachers' belief that students have their own internal drivers and that they should find their own way of expressing themselves (Martin & Baldwin, 1993). Although this style cannot be equated with an indifferent attitude towards students, it does imply reduced engagement with students and lower motivation for mentalisation, which is probably related to the reduced mentalization of one's own internal states.

Greater anxiety and reduced capacity for self-mentalization also indicate a greater tendency towards the interventionist style of classroom management. Greater anxiety reduces the capacity to provide care and react responsively to students (Lifshin et al., 2020). If we observe the interventionist style in the context of the classroom climate, emotional atmosphere and interaction, this finding supports the assumption that teacher's insecure attachment contributes to his/her tendency towards the interventionist or authoritarian style, since this style implies a weaker emotional support from the teacher to the students (Đigić, 2013). A lower capacity for self-mentalization indicates a greater tendency towards the interventionist style of classroom management, which implies unilateral teacher control and the belief that an external environment influences human beings to develop (Martin & Baldwin, 1993). Such beliefs of teachers imply not taking into account the internal mental states, i.e., acting in a non-mentalizing mode, which leads to coercive and controlling behaviour (Allen, 2006). A lower capacity to mentalize one's own internal states, and, therefore, to understand students through their mental states, makes it difficult to show empathy towards students (Swan & Riley, 2015), and possibly contributes to a tendency towards the interventionist style of classroom management, since this style implies less emotional warmth and support for students, i.e., less empathy and more frequent one-way communication between teachers and students (Đigić, 2013).

Teachers' attachment does not contribute significantly to the prediction of the interactionist classroom management style. The correlation between avoidance and the interactionist classroom management style is negative, which is in line with our expectations, but its significance in the predictive model of the interactionist style tendency is lost. A significant predictor of interactionist classroom management style is mentalization of others. These findings are in accordance with our assumptions, since the interactionist style implies respect for the personality and opinions of students, a democratic relationship and way of communicating with students, as well as a classroom climate in which there is emotional warmth and support from the teacher (Đigić, 2013). This style indicates acting in a mentalizing mode in the classroom, that is, dealing with students' mental states and understanding them. Teachers with a developed capacity for mentalization of others understand the internal states and needs of their students and interact with them more effectively in the classroom (Swan & Riley, 2015). The results show that the number of training sessions in the field of classroom management is associated with a greater tendency towards the interactionist style. Furthermore, we noticed the existence of a moderating effect of the number of training sessions in the field of classroom management on the relationship between the mentalization of others and the interactionist classroom management style. In the participants who had attended training, a more emphasized mentalization of others did not contribute to a greater tendency towards the interactionist style, as it did in the participants who had not attended training.

Limitations

These results should be taken with caution. The research was conducted on a small non-random sample, uneven by gender, in which 86% teachers were female. The study was implemented only in primary schools from the central city core, while schools from the outskirts of the city were not included. Self-assessment questionnaires were used, which carry a risk of providing socially desirable answers. The training variable provides information on the number of completed training sessions in three areas of classroom management, which are related to teacher's perception of the student's personality and providing opportunities for development, the area related to giving instructions to students and disciplines. However, it does not provide information on the quality, length, goals and methods of these training sessions. Additionally, some subscales showed low reliability. A more complete picture of the preference for a particular classroom management style could be obtained from extensive observations of classes.

Practical implications of the study and guidelines for future research

Our research findings indicate that higher anxiety and lower capacity to mentalize oneself contribute to a greater tendency towards the interventionist and non-interventionist styles of classroom management, while a higher capacity to mentalize others and a higher number of completed teacher training sessions in the field of classroom management contribute to a greater tendency towards an interactionist style of classroom management. Based on the results of the current study, it is possible to construct interventions through which teachers would explore their internal reasons for a greater tendency towards a certain style of classroom management. Further, there is a possibility of constructing the interventions aimed at strengthening the ability of teachers to mentalize, especially to mentalize others, which would be beneficial to teachers' capacities for effective classroom management and would encourage them to adopt an interactionist management style. This paper provides a good basis for further research using classroom observation protocols. Future research should use more comprehensive information on the type and quality of classroom management training, not just the number of training sessions. It is also recommended to explore the attachment of students, as well as their perception of teachers' responsiveness and classroom management styles.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that one dimension of attachment, anxiety, significantly contributes to the prediction of the interventionist and non-interventionist classroom management styles, as well as that mentalization of self significantly improves the prediction of these styles. Preoccupation with oneself, one's own problems, a sense of one's own security and a greater need for approval in the relationships with others contributes to a greater tendency towards these styles, which indicate less emotional support and interaction with students. Even though anxiety in the relationships with others developmentally precedes the development of mentalization capacities, the mentalization of self has a more significant effect on the relationship that teachers have with their students. A lower capacity to mentalize one's own mental states contributes to lower understanding of students through the lens of their own mental states and a greater tendency towards the styles with less emotional warmth and empathy. Mentalization of others is a significant predictor of the interactionist classroom management style. A more developed capacity to understand students' internal states in teachers contributes to their tendency towards a classroom management style that entails more emotional warmth, empathy, support, and interaction with students. The number of training sessions in the field of classroom management is associated with a greater tendency of teachers towards the interactionist style of classroom management.

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Afektivna vezanost i mentalizacija nastavnika kao prediktor stilova upravljanja razredom

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Cilj ovog istraživanja je ispitivanje da li se na osnovu afektivne vezanosti i mentalizacije nastavnika može predvideti sklonost ka određenom stilu upravljanja razredom kao i da li usavršavanje u oblasti upravljanja razredom modifikuje odnos između prediktorskih i kriterijumskih varijabli. Istraživanje je obuhvatilo 100 nastavnika razredne nastave, 86 ženskog i 14 muškog pola, starosti od 28 do 64 godina i radnim stažom od 1 do 39 godina. Podaci su prikupljeni instrumentima i to: Inventar za samoprocenu stilova nastavnika u upravljanju razredom – ISNUR; upitnik „Iskustvo u bliskim odnosima”, srpska modifikovana i adaptirana verzija, SM-ECR-R; Upitnik za ispitivanje mentalizacije UM. Rezultati pokazuju da dimenzija afektivne vezanosti, anksioznost i mentalizacija sebe doprinose sklonosti ka neintervenišućem i intervenišućem stilu upravljanja razredom dok mentalizacija drugih i broj pohađanih edukacija u oblasti upravljanja razredom doprinose sklonosti ka interakcionističkom stilu upravljanja razredom. Ustanovljen je i moderatorski efekat broja pohađanih edukacija u oblasti upravljanja razredom na odnos mentalizacije drugih i interakcionističkog stila upravljanja razredom.

Ključne reči: stilovi upravljanja razredom, afektivna vezanost, mentalizacija, nastavnik