

Ličnost i kompetencije odgajatelja za rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju kao prediktori njihovog profesionalnog sagorijevanja

/ Early Childhood Educators' Personality and Competencies for Teaching Children with Disabilities as Predictors of Their Professional Burnout

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Znanstvena istraživanja ukazuju da je preduvjet očuvanja dobrobiti djece i mladih očuvanje mentalnog zdravlja odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika. Stoga je važno sustavno proučavati korelate profesionalnog sagorijevanja odgajatelja, kao što su osobine ličnosti i kompetentnost, te mogućnosti njegova predviđanja, što je bio i cilj ovog istraživanja. Na uzorku od 203 odgajateljice s područja Istarske županije, Rijeke i Zagreba primijenjena su tri upitnika: Petofaktorski upitnik ličnosti, Ljestvica samoprocijenjenih kompetencija za rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju, te Upitnik profesionalnog sagorijevanja. Utvrđene su niske razine svih dimenzija profesionalnog sagorijevanja, srednja razina samoprocijenjenih kompetencija za rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju u redovnim skupinama, te visoke razine svih osobina ličnosti osim neuroticizma. Korelacijske su analize pokazale značajnu povezanost između snižene samoprocijenjene kompetentnosti za rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju u redovnim skupinama i povećanog neuroticizma i profesionalne opterećenosti, te značajno snižene ugodnosti. Sve dimenzije povišenog profesionalnog sagorijevanja pokazale su značajnu povezanost s povišenim neuroticizmom i značajno sniženom ugodnošću, dok je povišena ekstraverzija značajno povezana sa sniženom profesionalnom opterećenošću. Snižena razina samoprocijenjene kompetentnosti za rad s djecom s teškoćama i visoki neuroticizam su značajni prediktori svih dimenzija profesionalnog sagorijevanja, dok se ugodnost pokazala značajnim prediktorom samo za profesionalnu neispunjenost. Rezultati su raspravljani u svjetlu postojećih istraživanja, te implikacija za unaprjeđenje prakse rada odgajatelja s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju.

/ Scientific research and practical experience in teaching children with disabilities has shown that the preservation of mental health of educational workers is a prerequisite for the preservation of the wellbeing of children and young people. It is therefore important to systematically study the correlates of professional burnout of educators, such as personality traits and competencies, and the possibilities of its prediction, which was the aim of this study. Three questionnaires were applied on a sample of 203 educators from the area of Istria, Rijeka and Zagreb: the Big Five Inventory, the Scale of Self-Estimated Competencies for Teaching Children with Disabilities and the Professional Burnout Questionnaire. Low levels of all dimensions of professional burnout, medium levels of self-assessed competencies for teaching children with disabilities in regular settings and high levels of all personality traits (apart from neuroticism) have been established. Correlation analyses demonstrated significant correlations between reduced self-estimated competencies for teaching children with disabilities in regular settings and increased neuroticism and professional burden and significantly reduced agreeableness. All the dimensions of increased professional burnout showed significant association with high neuroticism and significantly reduced agreeableness, while increased extraversion is significantly associated with reduced professional burden. A reduced level of self-estimated competence for teaching children with disabilities and high neuroticism showed to be significant predictors of all dimensions of professional burnout, while agreeableness was shown to be a significant predictor for professional unfulfillment. The results were discussed in the light of existing studies and the implications for improving the practice of early childhood educators who are teaching children with disabilities.

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Implementacija inkluzivne odgojno-obrazovne politike u posljednja dva desetljeća promovira pravo svakog djeteta na odgoj i obrazovanje u redovnom sustavu sukladno njegovim sposobnostima, mogućnostima i potrebama. Da bi dijete moglo napredovati i razviti svoje potencijale odgajatelji trebaju poznavati odgojno-obrazovne potrebe djece s teškoćama. Time se odgojno-obrazovni sustav mijenja u odnosu na tradicionalni, kako u heterogenom sastavu djece tako i primjeni strategija odgajatelja čime odgovara na odgojno-obrazovne potrebe sve uključene djece. Odgajatelji trebaju biti kompetentni odgovoriti na potrebe djece s teškoćama u razvoju u suvremenim inkluzivnim skupinama. Slijedom, zahtjevi odgajateljskog posla u inkluzivnim okruženjima mogu biti povezani s pojačanim stresom i osobnim osjećajem slabije učinkovitosti. Stoga je od iznimne važnosti osnažiti profesionalni korpus kompetencija edukatora kojim će biti moguće adekvatno odgovoriti u radnom okruženju kako inicijalnim tako i cjeloživotnim obrazovanjem. McCallum i Price ističu značajnu poveznicu između dobrobiti djece i njihovih učitelja/odgajatelja, što je vidljivo u njihovoj poznatoj rečenici: „*Well teachers, well students*“ (1). Ostvarenje i njegovanje dobrobiti edukatora

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of an inclusive educational policy during the last two decades has promoted the right of every child to receive education within the regular system, according to their competencies, abilities and requirements. Educators should be familiar with the educational needs of children with disabilities to help them to make progress and develop their potential. In this way, the educational system changes in relation to the traditional concept, with heterogeneous groups of children and the use of teaching strategies appropriate to the educational needs of all involved children. Educators should be competent in responding to the educational needs of children with disabilities in contemporary inclusive classrooms. Consequently, the demands of the educators' profession in inclusive settings can result in increased stress and a personal feeling of lower self-efficacy. This is why it is exceptionally important to strengthen the professional range of competencies acquired by educators, which will enable adequate responses in the professional environment through both initial and continuous professional development. McCallum and Price pointed out a significant correlation between the wellbeing of the children and their teachers/educators, which is expressed in their famous sentence “*Well teachers, well students*” (1). The realisation and preservation

ključno je u nastojanjima održavanja visoke kvalitete odgojno-obrazovnog procesa, posebice s aspekta rada u inkluzivnim skupinama. Koncept dobrobiti edukatora je multidimensionalan (2), te uključuje koncepte kao što su samoučinkovitost i otpornost, socio-emocionalna kompetentnost (emocionalnu inteligenciju) te osobne odgovore na radne uvjete (profesionalno sagorijevanje umor, iscrpljenost i stres). Stoga se dobrobit edukatora najčešće definira kao „*pozitivno emocionalno stanje koje je rezultat harmonije između svih okolinskih faktora s jedne strane, te osobnih potreba i očekivanja edukatora s druge strane*“ (3). S obzirom na dinamičnost različitih interpersonalnih i intrapersonalnih faktora edukatora koji značajno utječu na njegovu dobrobit, izazov je istražiti na koji način su povezane kompetencije edukatora za rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju, njihove osobine ličnosti te profesionalno sagorijevanje. Naime, pored kompetencija za rad s djecom u inkluzivnim skupinama, kao predstavnika eksplicitnog aspekta odgojno-obrazovnog rada (4) potrebno je uzeti u obzir i jedan od temeljnih elemenata implicitne pedagogije koji se odnosi na osobine ličnosti odgajatelja (6,7-9,10). Dosadašnja su istraživanja pokazala da ličnost edukatora ima značajnu ulogu u odgojno-obrazovnom procesu, kako s obzirom na dobrobit edukatora, tako posredno s obzirom na dobrobit djece (2). Istraživanja su do sada u najvećoj mjeri primjenjivala teorijski okvir Petofaktorskog modela ličnosti (10), te je utvrđeno da odgajatelji imaju povišene razine ekstraverzije, ugodnosti, savjesnosti i otvorenosti prema iskustvu, a značajno snižene razine neuroticizma, kao što je bilo za očekivati (6-8,11-13). Istraživanja su pokazala da odgajatelji koji imaju visoko izražene sve osobine ličnosti, osim neuroticizma, najučinkovitije udovoljavaju očekivanjima u svojoj odgojno-obrazovnoj sredini, te imaju najzadovoljniju djecu (9).

of the wellbeing of educators is essential when trying to preserve a high quality of the educational process, especially from the standpoint of working in contemporary inclusive classrooms. The wellbeing of educators as a concept is multi-dimensional (2), and it includes concepts like self-efficacy and resistance, socio-emotional competence (emotional intelligence), as well as personal reactions to the professional environment (professional burnout, fatigue, exhaustion, and stress). That is why the wellbeing of educators is most commonly defined as “the positive emotional state resulting from the harmony between all the environmental factors on the one hand and the personal needs and expectations of the educators on the other” (3). Considering the dynamic nature of various interpersonal and intrapersonal factors for the educators, which have a significant effect on their wellbeing, the challenge is to investigate the correlation between the educators’ professional competencies for teaching children with disabilities, their personality traits, and their professional burnout.

Namely, aside from the competencies for teaching children in inclusive classrooms, as an example of the explicit aspect of educational work (4), we must also consider one of the fundamental elements of implicit pedagogy related to the educators’ personality traits (6-10). Previous research has shown that an educator’s personality plays an important role in the educational process, for the wellbeing of the educator, but also indirectly for the wellbeing of the children (2). So far, the theoretical framework of the five factor model has been mostly used in research (10), and it was determined that educators possess higher levels of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience, and the levels of neuroticism were significantly lower, as was to be expected (6-8,11-13). Research has shown that educators who have a high level of all the personality traits, aside from neuroticism, are most efficient in meeting the expectations in their educational environment, and the children under their care are most satisfied (9).

Profesionalno sagorijavanje odgajatelja i inkluzija

Profesionalno sagorijevanje je metafora za „stanje ili proces mentalne iscrpljenosti, slično kao što je prigušenje vatre ili gašenje svijeća“ (14:384). Kao koncept javlja se u domeni „socijalnog problema, a ne znanstvenog koncepta“ i u početku razvoja ovog koncepta istraživanja su se bavila njegovim kliničkim opisom (15). Profesionalno sagorijevanje može se opisati kao kronično stanje iscrpljenosti radi trajnog interpersonalnog stresa u profesijama koje rade s ljudima (16). Vodeći autor u ovom području, Maslach, profesionalno sagorijevanje definira kao kontinuirani stresni odgovor kod pojedinaca koji rade s ljudima u tri komponente: emocionalne iscrpljenosti (primjerice osjećaj emocionalne preplavljenosti, umora, nesanice), depersonalizacije (poput cinizma, iritabilnosti, nedostatka entuzijazma, negativnih stavova prema korisnicima) i osjećaja smanjenog osobnog postignuća. Među profesijama koji se smatraju rizičnima za profesionalno sagorijevanje su i edukatori koji neposredno rade s djecom, a posredno i s njihovim roditeljima i drugim kolegama. Edukatori imaju odgovornost za dobrobit drugih kao i druge pomažuće profesije, primjerice liječnici, medicinske sestre, socijalni radnici/savjetovatelji i policajci (17). Iako većina edukatora nema sindrome profesionalnog sagorijevanja (17), pojavnost profesionalnog sagorijevanja među edukatorima u SAD procjenjuje se u rasponu od 5 % do 20 %, a u Finskoj su Kalimo i Hakanen (2000) utvrdili najveću stopu profesionalnog sagorijevanja edukatora u usporedbi s ostalim pomažućim profesijama (19). Također, dobiveni su viši rezultati na dimenzijama iscrpljenosti i cinizma edukatora (20,21). S druge strane, u istraživanju ove tematike prevladavaju metodološke i konceptualne slabosti o povezanosti profesionalnog sagorijevanja s profesijom edukatora (17).

Educators' professional burnout and inclusion

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Professional burnout is a metaphor for “a condition or a process of mental exhaustion, similar to lowering the intensity of a fire or extinguishing candles” (14:384). As a concept, it is in the domain of a “social problem, instead of a scientific concept” and in the beginning stages of development of this concept research was focused on its clinical description (15). Professional burnout can be described as a chronic condition of exhaustion due to constant interpersonal stress in professions that involve human interaction (16). Maslach, a leading author in this area, defined professional burnout as a continuous stress response of individuals working with people in three components: emotional exhaustion (e.g. the feeling of being emotionally overwhelmed, fatigue, insomnia), depersonalisation (like cynicism, irritability, lack of enthusiasm, negative attitudes toward beneficiaries) and the feeling of reduced personal achievement. The professions considered to be at risk regarding professional burnout include educators, who work with children directly, and with their parents and other colleagues indirectly. Educators, just like other aid-providing professionals like physicians, nurses, social workers/councillors and police officers, are responsible for the wellbeing of others (17). Even though most educators do not exhibit symptoms of professional burnout (17), the incidence of professional burnout among educators in the USA is estimated to be in the range from 5% to 20%, and in Finland, Kalimo and Hakanen (2000) determined the highest rate of professional burnout of educators when compared to other aid-providing professions (19). Also, higher results were recorded for the dimensions of exhaustion and cynicism for educators (20,21). On the other hand, research into this topic is abundant in methodological and conceptual deficiencies regarding the correlation between professional burnout and the educators' profession (17).

Ličnost i kompetencije kao značajni korelati profesionalnog sagorijevanja odgajatelja

Osim ostalih značajnih korelata stresa kod odgajatelja (22), veliki broj dosadašnjih istraživanja pokazao je da su osobine ličnosti jedan od značajnih korelata kako dobrobiti različitih profesija u pozitivnom smjeru, tako i njihovog profesionalnog sagorijevanja u negativnom smjeru (23–29), što je utvrđeno i kod odgajatelja (11). Kao što je već napomenuto, najveći broj dosadašnjih istraživanja u odnosu na ulogu ličnosti, teorijski je utemeljen na Petofaktorskom modelu ličnosti (10) koji ljudsku ličnost opisuje u pet temeljnih dimenzija ličnosti: ekstraverziju (komunikativnost, druželjubivost, asertivnost); ugodnost (ljubaznost, toplina, razumijevanje); neuroticizam (razdražljivost, emocionalna nestabilnost, anksioznost); savjesnost (organiziranost, preciznost, praktičnost); otvorenost za nova iskustva (kreativnost, maštovitost, prilagodljivost). Pokazalo se da je navedena petofaktorska struktura ličnosti jednaka za muškarce i žene, ispitana na različite načine i replicirana u velikom broju studija na različitim uzorcima ispitanika (30,32,33). Također, replicirana je i na hrvatskom jeziku, te također na uzorku odgajatelja (6-8,12,13,39) pri čemu su utvrđene povišene razine svih osobina ličnosti u odnosu na vršnjačke skupine ispitanika, izuzev neuroticizma, za koji su utvrđene niske vrijednosti, kao što je bilo za očekivati.

S obzirom na odnos ličnosti i profesionalnog sagorijevanja najznačajnijim direktnim pozitivnim prediktorom profesionalnog sagorijevanja pokazao se neuroticizam bez obzira na to o kojoj se dimenziji profesionalnog sagorijevanja radi, a negativnim ekstraverzija, savjesnost i ugodnost. U istraživanju profesionalnog sagorijevanja odgajatelja, ekstraverzija je pokazala značajan učinak na smanjenje emocionalne iscrpljenosti, a neuroticizam na povećanje emocionalne iscrpljenosti i percepcije smanjenog osobnog postignuća. Otvorenost prema isku-

Personality and competencies as significant correlates of educators' professional burnout

Aside from the other significant stress correlates for educators (22), much of the research so far has shown that personality traits are one of the significant correlates for the wellbeing of various professions in the positive direction, as well as for their professional burnout in the negative direction (23-29), which was also determined for educators (11). As mentioned before, most of the research so far related to the role of personality is based on the theory from the five factor personality model (10), which describes human personality through five basic personality dimensions: extraversion (communicativeness, sociability, assertiveness); agreeableness (kindness, warmth, understanding); neuroticism (irritability, emotional instability, anxiety); conscientiousness (organisation, precision, practicality); openness to experience (creativity, imaginativeness, adaptability). It shows that the above-mentioned five factor structure is the same for men and women, examined in various ways and replicated in a large number of studies with various samples of study participants (30,32,33). It was also replicated in Croatia, also using a sample consisting of educators (6-8,12,13,39), where higher levels of all personality traits were determined, relative to peer groups of study participants, aside from neuroticism, for which lower values were determined, as was to be expected.

Considering the relationship between personality and professional burnout, neuroticism has been shown to be the most significant direct positive predictor of professional burnout, regardless of the dimension of professional burnout, and negative predictors were extraversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness. As part of the research into professional burnout of educators, extroversion has been shown to have a significant effect on the reduction of emotional exhaustion, and neuroticism on the increase of emotional exhaustion and the experience of

stvu i savjesnost pokazale su značajne učinke na povećanje percepcije osobnog postignuća kod odgajatelja (11). Također, nastavno na opisani odnos osobina ličnosti i profesionalnog sagorijevanja istraživanja su pokazala da je snižena percepcija kompetentnosti u radu značajno negativno povezana s profesionalnim sagorijevanjem (31). Drugim riječima, što se pojedinac osjeća manje kompetentnim za posao koji obavlja, to će biti vulnerabilniji profesionalnim sagorijevanjem.

CILJ ISTRAŽIVANJA

S obzirom na opisane teorijske modele i potrebe suvremenog inkluzivnog obrazovanja, cilj ovog istraživanja bio je ispitati osobine ličnosti, profesionalno sagorijevanje i samoprocijenjene kompetencije odgajatelja za rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju, njihov odnos, te mogućnost predviđanja profesionalnog sagorijevanja odgajatelja temeljem njihovih osobina ličnosti i samoprocijenjenih kompetencija za rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju. Iz općeg cilja istraživanja proizlaze njegovi specifični zadatci:

1. Deskriptivnom analizom istražiti će se razine profesionalnog sagorijevanja odgajatelja, njihove osobine ličnosti i kompetentnost za rad s djecom s teškoćama;
2. Korelacijskim analizama će se istražiti odnos između pet osobina ličnosti odgajatelja, tri dimenzije profesionalnog sagorijevanja i samoprocijenjene kompetentnosti za rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju;
3. Regresijskim analizama će se proučiti mogućnost predviđanja profesionalnog sagorijevanja odgajatelja temeljem njihovih osobina ličnosti i samoprocijenjene kompetentnosti za rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju.

Temeljem prethodnih istraživanja opisanih u uvodu rada, očekuje se da će odgajatelji procijeniti sve osobine ličnosti na povišenim razina-

reduced personal achievement. Openness to experience and conscientiousness have shown significant effects on the increase of the experience of personal achievement for educators (11).

Also, further related to the described relationship between personality traits and professional burnout, research has shown that a lower perception of professional competency has a significant negative correlation with professional burnout (31). In other words, the less competent an individual feels at their job, the more vulnerable they will be to professional burnout.

STUDY AIM

Considering the described theoretical models and the requirements of inclusive education, the aim of this study was to examine the personality traits, professional burnout and self-estimated competencies of educators for teaching children with disabilities, their relationship and their ability to anticipate professional burnout of educators based on their personality traits and their self-estimated competencies for teaching children with disabilities. The specific tasks of the study and relevant statistical procedures are developed from the general goal of the study:

1. Descriptive analysis will be used to explore the levels of professional burnout of educators, their personality traits and their competency for teaching children with disabilities;
2. Correlation analyses will be used to investigate the relationship between the five personality traits of the educators, the three dimensions of professional burnout, and the self-estimated competency for teaching children with disabilities;
3. Regression analyses will be used to study the possibility of anticipating professional burnout of the educators based on their personality traits and the self-estimated competency for teaching children with disabilities.

ma, osim neuroticizma za koji se očekuje da će biti procijenjen na nižim razinama. S obzirom na samoprocjenu kompetencija za rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju očekuje se da će se odgajatelji procijeniti umjereno kompetentnima. Naposljetku, budući da profesionalno sagorijevanje obuhvaća često manji broj odgajatelja, na razini srednjih vrijednosti, kod ispitanog uzorka odgajatelja očekuje se utvrđivanje niže razine emocionalne iscrpljenosti, profesionalne opterećenosti i profesionalne neispunjenosti.

METODE

Ispitanici

U ovom je istraživanju sudjelovao prigodni uzorak od ukupno 203 odgajatelja iz ustanova za rani i predškolski odgoj i obrazovanje s tri područja: grada Zagreba (43,8 %), Primorsko-goranske županije (29,6 %) i Istarske županije (26,6 %). Svi su ispitanici ženskog spola. Odgajatelji su prosječne dobi $M = 38,73$ ($SD = 10,69$) u rasponu dobi od 22 do 61 godine, te prosječnog radnog staža $M = 14,34$ ($SD = 11,78$) u rasponu od 2 mjeseca do 42 godine radnog staža.

Instrumentarij

U istraživanju su primijenjena tri mjerna instrumenta. Za mjerenje osobina ličnosti primijenjen je *Petofaktorski upitnik ličnosti* (32,33), točnije njegova adaptirana i validirana verzija na hrvatskom jeziku (25,34,35). Ovaj se upitnik sastoji od 44 čestice koje mjere pet dimenzija ličnosti: ekstraverziju, ugodnost, savjesnost, neuroticizam i otvorenost prema iskustvu. Ispitanici procjenjuju svoje osobine ličnosti na ljestvici Likertova tipa od 5 stupnjeva (od 1-potpuno se ne slažem do 5-potpuno se slažem). U ovom su istraživanju utvrđene umjerene ali zadovoljavajuće razine unutarnje pouzdanosti: $\alpha E = ,749$, $\alpha U = ,560$, $\alpha S = ,780$, $\alpha N = ,771$ i $\alpha O = ,792$.

Based on the previous research described in the introduction to the study, it is expected that the educators will estimate all the personality traits at a higher level, aside from neuroticism, which is expected to be estimated at lower levels. Considering the self-estimated competency for teaching children with disabilities, according to previous research (36) it is expected that the educators will estimate themselves to be moderately competent. Finally, considering that professional burnout often affects a lower number of educators, at the mean values level, it is expected that a lower level of emotional exhaustion, professional burden, and professional unfulfillment will be determined for the examined sample of educators.

METHODS

Study participants

This research study included a non-random sample of 203 educators in total, from institutions for early and preschool education from three areas: the City of Zagreb (43.8%), Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (29.6%), and Istria County (26.6%). All the study participants were female. The average age of the educators is $M = 38.73$ ($SD = 10.69$) in the age range of 22 to 61, and with an average pensionable service of $M = 14.34$ ($SD = 11.78$) in the range from 2 months to 42 years of teaching experience.

Instruments

Three measuring instruments were used in the research study.

The *Big Five Inventory* (32,33) was used for measuring personality traits, to be more precise its adapted and validated version in Croatian was used (25,34,35). This inventory consists of 44 items used to measure the five personality traits: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience. The study participants were asked to estimate their personality traits on a 5-point Likert scale (from

S ciljem mjerenja kompetencija za rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju, primijenjena je *Ljestvica samoprocjene kompetentnosti za rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju* (36), koja je podljestvica ljestvice spremnosti odgajatelja za rad u inkluzivnim skupinama (37). Ta se ljestvica sastoji od čestica koje ispituju generalno samoprocijenjenu razinu kompetencija za rad s djecom s teškoćama kao i aspekte motiviranosti i sposobljenosti za rad s djecom s teškoćama u redovnoj skupini, informiranosti o značajkama djece s teškoćama i načinu rada s njima, te mišljenju da mogu i znaju raditi sa svom djecom i da s djecom s teškoćama trebaju raditi u redovnim skupinama. Stupanj slaganja s navedenim tvrdnjama odgajatelji su također procjenjivali na Likertovoj ljestvici od pet stupnjeva. Ljestvica je pokazala jednofaktorsku strukturu s utvrđenim Cronbach alfa koeficijentom od $\alpha = .84$.

Za mjerenje profesionalnog sagorijevanja odgajatelja korištena je *Ljestvica profesionalnog sagorijevanja odgajatelja* preuzeta uz dozvolu originalnog autora Friedman (1999) iz istraživanja "Factors relating to regular education teacher burnout in inclusive education" (38). Originalna ljestvica je konstruirana za učiteljsku profesiju pa su za potrebe ovog istraživanja modificirale čestice kako bi odražavale kontekst rada odgajatelja. Sadrži petnaest tvrdnji koje mjere tri dimenzije: dimenziju emocionalne iscrpljenosti ($\alpha = .873$), dimenziju profesionalne opterećenosti ($\alpha = .815$), te dimenziju profesionalnog neispunjenja ($\alpha = .947$). Odgajatelji su se procjenjivali na ljestvici Likertova tipa od 7 stupnjeva: 0 - nikad, 1 - manje od 2 puta godišnje, 2 - manje od 2 puta u mjesec dana 3 - više od 2 puta u mjesec dana, 4 - manje od 2 puta tjedno, 5 - više od 2 puta tjedno, 6 - svaki dan.

Postupak

Istraživanje je provedeno kao dio većeg istraživanja u okviru izrade diplomskih radova pri Učiteljskom fakultetu u Rijeci. Ravnateljima

1-I completely disagree to 5-I completely agree). This research study has determined medium but satisfactory levels of internal reliability: $\alpha E = .749$, $\alpha U = .560$, $\alpha S = .780$, $\alpha N = .771$, and $\alpha O = .792$.

The Scale of self-estimated competencies for teaching children with disabilities (36) was used for measuring the competencies for teaching children with disabilities, which is a subscale of the Scale of readiness for teaching in inclusive settings (37). It consists of items used for testing the general self-estimated level of competencies for teaching children with disabilities, as well as the aspects of motivation and training for teaching children with disabilities in a regular setting, the amount of information on the characteristics of children with disabilities and inclusive teaching strategies and the opinion whether they are able and know how to teach all children and whether they should teach children with disabilities in regular settings.

The educators also estimated their level of agreement with the aforementioned statements on the 5-point Likert scale. The scale indicated a single-factor structure with a determined Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .84$.

The Scale of professional burnout of educators, used with permission from the original author Friedman (1999) from the research study "Factors relating to regular education teacher burnout in inclusive education" (38) was used to measure the professional burnout of educators. The original scale was designed for the teaching profession, so, due to the requirements of this research study, the items were modified in order to reflect the context of the educators' profession. It contains fifteen items used for measuring three dimensions: the emotional exhaustion dimension ($\alpha = .873$), the professional burden dimension ($\alpha = .815$), and the professional unfulfillment dimension ($\alpha = .947$). The educators were estimated on a 7-point Likert scale: 0 – never, 1 – less than twice in a year, 2 – less than twice in a month, 3 – more than twice in a month, 4 – less than twice in a week, 5 – more than twice in a week, 6 – every day.

javnih ustanova za rani i predškolski odgoj i obrazovanje iz Istarske i Primorsko-goranske županije te grada Zagreba upućena je zamolba za sudjelovanje u istraživanju. Svi kontaktirani ravnatelji odazvali su se na istraživanje. Prikupljanje podataka bilo je potpuno povjerljivo i anonimno, a ispunjavanje upitnika trajalo je 20-tak minuta. Podatci su prikupljeni u obliku papir-olovka od odgajatelja koji su pristali sudjelovati u istraživanju. Ravnateljima ustanova ponuđena je povratna informacija o rezultatima istraživanja u diplomskim radovima. Ukupno je poslano 300 upitnika, a prikupljena su 203 valjana ispunjena upitnika.

REZULTATI

Slijedom prethodno definiranih istraživačkih zadataka provedena deskriptivna analiza, čiji su rezultati vidljivi u tablici 1, pokazala je povišene razine svih osobina ličnosti, osim neuroticizma, srednje razine samoprocijenjenih kompetencija, te niske razine svih triju dimenzija profesionalnog sagorijevanja, kao što je bilo za očekivati.

Povezano s ispitivanjem odnosa između profesionalnog sagorijevanja, osobina ličnosti i samoprocijenjenih kompetencija odgajatelja za rad s djecom s teškoćama rezultati korelacijske analize prikazani su u tablici 2. Izračunati Pearsonovi koeficijenti korelacija pokazali su značajnu povezanost između snižene samoprocijenjene kompetentnosti odgajatelja za rad s djecom s teškoćama i povećanog neuroticizma, te značajno snižene ekstraverzije. Također, značajno snižena kompetentnost za rad s djecom s teškoćama značajno je povezana s povišenim razinama svih dimenzija profesionalnog sagorijevanja (emocionalnom iscrpljenošću, profesionalnom opterećenošću i profesionalnom neispunjenošću). Sve dimenzije povišenog profesionalnog sagorijevanja pokazale su značajnu povezanost s povišenim neuroticizmom i značajno sniženom ugodnošću, dok

Procedure

The research study was implemented as part of a larger study, conducted within the process for working on diploma papers at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Rijeka. A request for participation in the research study was sent to the heads of public institutions for early and preschool education in the Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar Counties, and the City of Zagreb. Data gathering was completely confidential and anonymous, and the questionnaire could be filled in in about 20 minutes. The data was gathered in the paper-and-pencil form from educators who agreed to participate in the study. The heads of the institutions were granted access to the results of the study through the diploma papers. The total number of 300 questionnaires were sent out and 203 properly filled in questionnaires were gathered.

RESULTS

Descriptive analysis was conducted in the course of previously defined research tasks and its results are shown in Table 1. It indicates high levels of all the personality traits, aside from neuroticism, medium levels of self-estimated competencies and low levels of all three dimensions of professional burnout, as was to be expected. Related to the examination of the relationship between professional burnout, personality traits, and self-estimated competencies of educators for teaching children with disabilities, the results of the correlation analysis are shown in Table 2. The calculated Pearson's correlation coefficients have shown a significant correlation between the lower self-estimated competency of the educators for teaching children with disabilities and increased neuroticism and significantly lower extraversion. Also, a significantly lower competency for teaching children with disabilities is significantly correlated to higher levels of all the dimensions of professional burnout (emotional exhaustion,

TABLE 1. Descriptive parameters (*M, SD, Range*) of personality traits, dimensions of professional burnout and self-estimated competencies for teaching children with disabilities

Descriptive parameters	Personality traits					Professional burnout			Self-estimated competency
	Extraversion	Neuroticism	Conscientiousness	Agreeability	Openness	Emotional exhaustion	Professional burden	Professional unfulfillment	
<i>M</i>	3.74	2.17	4.08	4.16	3.94	2.35	2.03	.86	3.07
<i>SD</i>	.54	.55	.49	.45	.46	1.36	1.22	1.14	.63
<i>Range</i>	2.38-4.88	1.00-4.25	2.44-5	3-5	2.50-5	0-5.60	0-5.71	0-4.67	1.43-4.71

TABLE 2. Correlation matrix of the personality traits, self-estimated competency, professional burnout, age and years of teaching experience of the early childhood educators

	Competency	Emotional exhaustion	Professional burden	Professional unfulfillment	Age	Teaching experience
Extraversion	.147*	-.171*	-.203*	-.120	-.086	-.104
Neuroticism	-.187*	.335**	.382**	.346**	-.118	-.158*
Conscientiousness	.046	-.115	-.109	-.115	.128	.155*
Agreeableness	.117	-.223**	-.219**	-.316**	.053	.075
Openness	.079	-.012	-.064	-.099	.205**	.182*
Competency	1	-.173*	-.181*	-.212**	-.022	-.007
Emotional exhaustion		1	.624**	.531**	.074	.056
Professional burden			1	.490**	.053	.049
Professional unfulfillment				1	.060	.046

p*<.05; *p*<.01

je povišena ekstraverzija značajno povezana sa sniženom profesionalnom opterećenošću i emocionalnom iscrpljenošću. Osobine ličnosti, savjesnost i otvorenost za nova iskustva nisu pokazale značajnu povezanost s bilo kojom od dimenzija profesionalnog sagorijevanja, kao ni sa samoprocijenjenim kompetencijama odgajatelja za rad s djecom s teškoćama.

Provjerom odnosa fokusnih varijabli sa socio-demografskim varijablama dobi i radnog staža pokazalo se da neuroticizam pada, a savjesnost i otvorenost rastu s godinama radnog staža. Otvorenost prema novim iskustvima značajno raste i s dobi odgajatelja, a značajne povezanosti dobi i radnog staža s profesionalnim sagorijevanjem i kompetentnošću nisu utvrđene.

professional burden and professional unfulfillment). All the dimensions of professional burnout have shown a significant correlation with higher neuroticism and significantly lower agreeableness, while higher extraversion is correlated to lower professional burden and emotional exhaustion. Personality traits conscientiousness and openness to experience have not shown a significant correlation to any of the dimensions of professional burnout, or to any of the educators' self-estimated competencies for teaching children with disabilities.

The examination of the correlation between the focus variables and the socio-demographic variables of years of teaching experience shows that neuroticism drops, and conscientiousness and openness rise as years of teaching experience

Sukladno provedenim i prikazanim korelacijskim analizama snižena razina samoprocijenjene kompetentnosti za rad s djecom s teškoćama i visoki neuroticizam su značajni prediktori svih dimenzija profesionalnog sagorijevanja, dok se ugodnost pokazala značajnim prediktorom samo za dimenziju profesionalne neispunjenosti. Rezultati triju provedenih stupnjevitih regresijskih analiza u dva koraka (Model 1: kompetentnost, Model 2: osobine ličnosti), prikazani su u tablici 3, samo sa značajnim prediktorima svih dimenzija profesionalnog sagorijevanja. Iako je samoprocijenjena kompetencija odgajatelja za rad s djecom s teškoćama značajan prediktor profesionalnog sagorijevanja u prvom koraku regresijskih analiza, unošenjem osobina ličnosti u regresijski model prestaje biti značajna. Neuroticizam kao osobina ličnosti ima statistički značajan utjecaj na višu razinu doživljaja profesionalnog sagorijevanja odgajatelja, na doživljaj više razine emocionalne iscrpljenosti i profesionalnog opterećenja, kao i osjećaj profesionalne neispunjenosti.

rience increases. Openness to experience also rises with the age of the educator, and no significant correlation was determined between the age and years of teaching experience, and professional burnout and competency.

According to the implemented and shown correlation analyses, a lower level of self-estimated competency for teaching children with disabilities and high neuroticism are significant predictors of all dimensions of professional burnout, while agreeableness was shown to be significant only for the dimension of professional unfulfillment. The results of the three conducted stepwise two-step regression analyses (Model 1: competency, Model 2: personality traits) have been shown in Table 3, only with the significant predictors of all dimensions of professional burnout.

Even though the self-estimated competency of the educators for teaching children with disabilities is a predictor of professional burnout in the first step of regression analyses, after entering the personality traits in the regression model, it stops being significant. Neuroticism,

TABLE 3. Results of the three regression analyses for dependent variables of the three dimensions of professional burnout with significant predictors

Professional burnout			B	Beta	R2	F change (df)
Emotional exhaustion	Model 1	Constant	3.420***		.031*	4.727* (1.150)
		Competency	-.368*	-.175*		
	Model 2	Constant	2.037		.169**	4.458*** (5.145)
		Neuroticism	.738**	.299**		
Professional burden	Model 1	Constant	3.006***		.003*	4.319* (1.136)
		Competency	-.313**	-.175**		
	Model 2	Constant	.764		.015**	3.824** (5.131)
		Neuroticism	.754**	.325**		
Professional unfulfillment	Model 1	Constant	1.883*		.007*	5.963* (1.154)
		Competency	-.343*	-.193*		
	Model 2	Constant	3.062		.157**	4.641** (5.149)
		Neuroticism	.383	.188		
		Agreeableness	-.549*	-.236**		

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

RASPRAVA

S obzirom na utvrđene deskriptivne pokazatelje osobina ličnosti, samoprocijenjene kompetentnosti za rad s djecom s teškoćama u inkluzivnim skupinama i razine profesionalnog sagorijevanja, kao što je i pretpostavljeno, utvrđene su povišene razine svih osobina ličnosti, osim neuroticizma, srednje procijenjena kompetentnost za rad s djecom s teškoćama, te niske razine svih triju dimenzija profesionalnog sagorijevanja. Premda je riječ o prigodnom uzorku, bilo je za očekivati da će najveći broj odgajatelja u populaciji imati izražene osobine otvorenosti, komunikativnosti, pristupačnosti, vedrine, emocionalne stabilnosti, dobre organiziranosti i ugodnosti. Ovaj je nalaz samo potvrda prethodno utvrđenih rezultata (13,6,39). Također, kao i prije (11) utvrđene su niske razine ispitanih triju dimenzija profesionalnog sagorijevanja odgajatelja. No, zanimljiv je nalaz o srednje utvrđenoj razini kompetentnosti odgajatelja za rad s djecom s teškoćama u ovom istraživanju, koji ima svoje jasne implikacije za praksu. Identični rezultat dobiven je u istraživanju na reprezentativnom uzorku odgajatelja u Primorsko-goranskoj županiji provedenom prije 7 godina, što ukazuje da je odgajateljska percepcija kompetencija za rad s djecom s teškoćama u inkluzivnim skupinama ujednačena u osrednjoj vrijednosti (37). Drugim riječima, iako implementacija inkluzivne obrazovne politike ima praksu u predškolskom sustavu najmanje dva desetljeća, a posebno intenzivno u zadnjem desetljeću i to radi usuglašavanja domaće s regulativom Europske unije, samo procjena osobnih kompetencija odgajatelja za inkluzivnu praksu zadržava se na osrednjoj razini. Samoprocjene artikuliraju i potrebu procjenjivača za razvojem kompetencija na području u ovom slučaju kompetencija za inkluzivan odgoj i obrazovanje. Uzimajući u obzir oba nalaza evidentno je da postoji jasna potreba za edukacijom odgajatelja za rad s djecom s teškoćama u inkluzivnim skupinama,

as a personality trait, has a statistically significant influence on the higher level of experience of professional burnout of the educators, the experience of higher level of emotional exhaustion and professional burden, as well as the feeling of professional unfulfillment.

DISCUSSION

Considering the determined descriptive indicators of personality traits, self-estimated competency for teaching children with disabilities in inclusive settings and the level of professional burnout, as expected, higher levels of all personality traits were determined, apart from neuroticism, the competency for teaching children with disabilities was estimated as medium and there were low levels of all three dimensions of professional burnout. Even though this was a convenience sample, it was to be expected that the large majority of the educators in the population would be expressly open, communicative, approachable, cheerful, emotionally stable, well organised and agreeable. These results only confirm the results determined earlier (13,6,39). Also, as before (11), lower levels of the three tested dimensions of professional burnout of educators were determined. But the results regarding the mean determined level of competency of the educators for teaching children with disabilities in this research study are interesting and they have clear implications for those working in the field. Identical results were recorded in a research study with a representative sample of educators in the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County implemented 7 years ago, which indicated that the perception of educators regarding teaching children with disabilities in inclusive settings is level on the medium value (37). In other words, even though the implementation of an inclusive educational policy has been present in the preschool system for at least two decades, and with particular intensity in the previous decade, due to the harmonisation

promjenama postojećih studijskih programa u inicijalnom obrazovanju i trajnim profesionalnim razvojem.

Razmatrajući odnos između osobina ličnosti, samoprocijenjene kompetentnosti za rad s djecom s teškoćama u inkluzivnim skupinama i triju dimenzija profesionalnog sagorijevanja, utvrđene su očekivane povezanosti. Implementacija inkluzivne obrazovne politike povećava zahtjeve edukatorima u inkluzivnim okruženjima, a ne osigurava dostatnu educiranost u inicijalnom obrazovanju ni osiguranoj profesionalnoj podršci (40,41). Od osobina ličnosti neuroticizam je pokazao svoju značajnu pozitivnu povezanost sa svim dimenzijama profesionalnog sagorijevanja, a ekstraverzija i ugodnost pokazale su značajnu negativnu povezanost. Oni odgajatelji koji imaju visoko izraženi neuroticizam, značajno su više skloniji ukupnom profesionalnom sagorijevanju. S druge strane, ekstraverzija i ugodnost pokazale su se zaštitnim osobinama ličnosti u doživljavanju profesionalnog sagorijevanja, jednako kao i samoprocijenjena visoka razina kompetentnosti u radu s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju. Zahvaljujući najvišim korelacijama, u kasnijim regresijskim analizama, značajnim prediktorima za sve dimenzije profesionalnog sagorijevanja pokazali su se samoprocijenjena kompetentnost za rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju kao negativan prediktor i neuroticizam kao pozitivan prediktor. Osobina ugodnosti pokazala se značajnim negativnim prediktorom jedino kod dimenzije profesionalne neispunjenosti. Ugodnost uz neuroticizam značajno predviđa razinu osjećaja nezadovoljstva postignućima u odgajateljskoj profesiji. Tako su osobina ličnosti niže razine ugodnosti i više razine neuroticizma odgajatelja značajni prediktori doživljaja profesionalnog neispunjenja odgajateljskim poslom. Drugim riječima, odgajateljima je prenaporan rad s djecom u vrtiću, ne bi ponovno birali odgajateljsku profesiju i smatraju da bi na drugom radnom mjestu bolje iskoristili svoje sposobnosti. U ši-

of the local regulations with European Union regulations, self-estimated personal competencies of the educators for inclusive practice have remained on the medium level. The self-estimations also articulate the required development of competencies in the area of competencies for inclusive education in this case. Taking both sets of results into consideration, it is evident that there is a clear requirement for educating educators for teaching children with disabilities in inclusive settings through changes in the existing study programmes in initial education and continuous professional development.

When considering the correlation between the personality traits, the self-estimated competency for teaching children with disabilities in inclusive settings and the three dimensions of professional burnout, the expected connections were determined. The implementation of an inclusive education policy increases the demands from educators in inclusive environments, but it does not ensure sufficient education through initial education, nor does it provide the necessary professional support (40,41). Of all the personality traits, neuroticism has shown to be significantly correlated to all the dimensions of professional burnout, and extraversion and agreeableness have shown to be negatively correlated. Those educators with highly expressed neuroticism are significantly more susceptible to comprehensive professional burnout. On the other hand, extraversion and agreeableness were shown to be protective personality traits in the experience of professional burnout, same as the high self-estimated level of competency for teaching children with disabilities. Because of the highest correlations, in later regression analyses a self-estimated level of competency for teaching children with disabilities as a negative predictor and neuroticism as a positive predictor were shown to be significant predictors for all the dimensions of professional burnout. The trait of agreeableness was shown to be a significant negative predictor only for the dimension of professional unfulfillment. Agreeableness and neuroticism are signif-

rem diskursu otvara se prostor za promišljanja o kvaliteti selekcijskih postupaka za upis odgajateljskog studija. Naime, iako je doživljaj profesionalnog sagorijevanja odgajatelja prisutan kod manjeg dijela ove struke važan je za svakog pojedinog profesionalca koji pruža odgoj i obrazovanje djeci rane i predškolske dobi kao ranjivoj skupini. Mentalno zdravlje edukatora koji i uz roditelje imaju ključnu ulogu u osiguravanju dobrobiti djece, trebalo bi promotriti u diskursu od osiguravanja kriterija pri selekcijskom postupku i mogućnosti kvalitetne podrške stručnih suradnika i drugih profesionalaca, osobito za djecu s teškoćama u razvoju i njihove roditelje, za zahtjevne situacije u radnom okruženju. Naposljetku, osim raspravljenih utvrđenih nalaza ovog istraživanja neophodno ih je promotriti i u svjetlu postojećih nedostataka istraživanja, kao što su: prigodan i relativno mali uzorak odgajatelja, te zadovoljavajuće ali umjerene razine pouzdanosti Petofaktorskog upitnika ličnosti, o čemu bi trebalo voditi računa u budućim istraživanjima.

ZAKLJUČAK

Rezultati ovog istraživanja potvrdili su prethodne nalaze utvrđivanjem povišenih razina svih osobina ličnosti osim neuroticizma, umjereno procijenjene kompetentnosti za rad s djecom s teškoćama i niske razine dimenzija profesionalnog sagorijevanja. Ekstraverzija, ugodnost i kompetentnost pokazali su značajne negativne korelacije, a neuroticizam značajnu pozitivnu korelaciju s dimenzijama profesionalnog sagorijevanja. U konačnici značajnim prediktorima profesionalnog sagorijevanja odgajatelja pokazali su se neuroticizam (kao pozitivni značajan prediktor), te kompetentnost i ugodnost kao značajni negativni prediktori. Rezultati ukazuju, kao i do sada, na značenje istraživanja osobina ličnosti i kompetencija odgajatelja kao značajnih korelata njihovog profesionalnog sagorijevanja, kao i

ificant predictors for the level of dissatisfaction with achievements in the educators' profession. So, the personality traits of lower agreeableness and higher neuroticism of educators are significant predictors for the feeling of professional unfulfillment in the educators' profession. In other words, educators find working in kindergartens to be overly strenuous, they would not choose the educators' profession if they were making the choice again and they believe that their abilities would be better utilised in another job. The wider discourse offers some more space for considerations about the quality of the selection procedures for enrolment in the study programme for educators. Namely, even though the experience of professional burnout is present in a small portion of professionals in this area, it is important for every single professional who provides education for children of early and preschool age as a vulnerable group. The mental health of educators, who, after parents and with parents, have a key role in providing for the wellbeing of children under their care, should be observed in the discourse regarding the design of the criteria for the selection process and the options for quality support from professional assistants and other professionals, especially for children with disabilities and their parents, with regard to a demanding situation in the professional environment. Finally, apart from the determined results of this research study that were discussed, it is also necessary to observe them in the light of the existing limitations of the research study. The employed non-random and relatively small sample of educators, and the satisfactory but medium level of reliability of the Big Five Inventory subscales, should be taken into account in further research studies.

CONCLUSION

The results of this research study confirmed the previous results by determining higher levels of all personality traits apart from neuroticism,

na jasne implikacije za unaprjeđenje prakse rada odgajatelja osobito kompetencija za inkluzivnu praksu i rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju. Osim značajnog doprinosa provedenog istraživanja s jasnim implikacijama za praksu, utvrđene rezultate treba sagledavati i u svjetlu prije navedenih nedostataka. Dakle, u budućim je istraživanjima ključno provesti istraživanje na slučajnom i većem uzorku odgajatelja, s psihometrijski kvalitetnijim ljestvicama, koje bi po mogućnosti uključivale i pitanja otvorenog tipa s ciljem kvalitativne analize i uvida u izvore profesionalnog sagorijevanja.

medium estimated competency for teaching children with disabilities and low levels of the dimensions of professional burnout. Extraversion, agreeableness and competency showed significant negative correlations, and neuroticism showed a significant positive correlation with the dimensions of professional burnout. Ultimately, the significant predictors of professional burnout of educators were shown to be neuroticism (as a significant positive predictor) and competency and agreeableness as significant negative predictors. The results demonstrate, same as previously, the importance of research into personality traits and competencies of educators as significant correlates of their professional burnout, as well as the significant implications for advancing the practical aspect of the educators' work, particularly for the inclusive practice and teaching children with disabilities. Apart from the significant contribution of the implemented research with clear implications for practical application, the obtained results should also be viewed in the light of the deficiencies mentioned earlier. Therefore, it is essential for future research studies that they be implemented using a random and larger sample of educators, with higher-quality psychometric scales, which would include open-ended questions if appropriate, with the purpose of conducting a qualitative analysis and gaining insight into the sources of professional burnout.

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