

The Mediating Role of Personality and Gender Roles on the Relationship Between Gender and Empathy: A Study on Preservice Teachers

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ABSTRACT Teacher empathy is an essential part of teacher professional role, related to various student outcomes. Research have shown that women are more empathetic than men. However, when personality traits or gender roles are included into regression models, gender no longer predicts empathy. Research have pointed to agreeableness and expressiveness as the strongest correlates of empathy among personality traits and gender roles respectively, but these determinants of empathy are still rarely studied in teachers. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to examine the role of agreeableness and expressiveness in the relationship between gender and empathy on a sample of preservice subject teachers. Two serial mediation models with gender as a predictor, agreeableness and expressiveness as mediators, and empathic concern and perspective taking as criterion variables were tested. Results showed that agreeableness and expressiveness mediated the relationship between gender and empathy. Significant serial mediation effects showed that female preservice teachers reported greater agreeableness, which had a positive effect on expressiveness, which then had a positive effect on empathic

concern and perspective taking. Our study indicates that a differentiated approach to empathy training should be used with different groups of preservice teachers, particularly with those who report lower agreeableness and expressiveness.

Key words: empathy, preservice teachers, personality, gender roles, serial mediation model.

1. Introduction

Over the last two decades, there has been a growing research interest in teachers' social and emotional competences. Teacher empathy, considered as a central component of social and emotional competences, is found significant in education (Aldrup, Carstensen & Klusmann, 2022). Empathy enables teachers to recognize, understand and feel their students' emotions and be able to react in a supportive way. As so, Meyers, Rowell, Wells and Smith (2019) emphasize that teacher empathy is not just empathy experienced by individuals who are teachers, but rather the integral part of a teacher role.

One of the most adopted empathy conceptualizations is by Eisenberg, Eggum and Di Gunta (2010), who defined empathy as the ability to understand another person's feelings and situation from their perspective and the ability to resonate with others' emotions. Empathy is a multidimensional construct with cognitive and affective aspects (Cuff, Brown, Taylor & Howat, 2016). Cognitive empathy or *perspective taking* is the ability to understand a situation, experience or emotion by taking the perspective of another person, and affective empathy or *empathic concern* is the ability to share the experienced or expressed emotions of others (Makoelle, 2019). Empathy is theoretically and empirically differentiated from other similar concepts such as emotional intelligence. In contrast to emotional intelligence, which is defined as knowledge of others' emotions, empathy is an ability to understand others' emotions from their perspective (Akamatsu & Gherghel, 2021). Empathy is considered as the result of both trait and state influences (Cuff et al., 2016) and is prone to change through different types of trainings (e.g. didactic, skill, experiential training; Lam, Kolomito & Alamparambil, 2011).

Empirical evidence supports the importance of empathy in teachers, both for themselves and for their students. According to the research synthesis by Aldrup et al. (2022), there is a consistent finding of a positive relationship between teachers' self-reported empathy and their tendency to help bullied students. In addition, teacher empathy contributes to fulfilling teacher's professional roles, such as the role of evaluator, motivational role and the role of partner in emotional interaction (Stojiljković, Djigić & Zlatković, 2012). Based on meta-analytical data (Cornelius-White, 2007), teacher empathy is among the strongest predictors of a range of positive student outcomes (cognitive, emotional, and behavioural).

1.1. Personality and empathy

Overview of the existing data highlights the role of agreeableness as the most consistent correlate of empathy across various cultural contexts, which is in line with the theoretical conceptualization of agreeableness as an interpersonal dimension indicating the quality of relations with others and a dispositional foundation of prosocial behaviour (Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997). Research suggests that the major aspect of agreeableness is compassion, reflecting a tendency towards empathy and concern for others (Wilmot & Ones, 2022). Experimental evidence provide support to the prosocial nature of agreeableness, showing that persons high in agreeableness display more empathic concern, which in turn leads to more helping behaviours across a range of situations (Graziano, Habashi, Sheese & Tobin, 2007). Agreeableness is correlated with trait emotional intelligence, indicating that agreeable people tend to have better emotional regulation, interpersonal skills and positive emotionality (O'Connor & Athota, 2013). Openness to experience also appears as a positive correlate of empathy, however in a less consistent manner. Broad conceptualization of the trait involves openness to feelings and a certain degree of emotional and intellectual flexibility (McCrae & Costa, 1997), which in turn could facilitate empathic concern and perspective taking.

Given the interpersonal nature of teaching, the lack of studies examining relations of empathy and personality in teachers is somewhat surprising. Empirical evidence on personality correlates of empathy mainly come from research involving medical students. Abe, Niwa, Fujisaki and Suzuki (2018) find positive relations between empathy and interpersonal traits of extraversion and agreeableness in a sample of Japanese medical students, while positive relations of empathy with agreeableness and openness to experience were reported for medical students in Portugal (Costa, Alves, Neto & Marvao, 2014; Magalhães, Costa & Costa, 2012). Agreeableness, openness and conscientiousness are major personality correlates of different empathy traits in a sample of Spanish medical students (Guilera, Batalla, Forné & Soler-González, 2019). Openness to experience proved to be a significant predictor of various aspects of empathy in German dentistry students (Lermen et al., 2022), and empathy trajectory during medical studies for a sample of Swiss students (Piumatti, Abbiati, Baroffio & Gerbase, 2020). Agreeableness and conscientiousness were found to be cross-culturally stable correlates of empathy in university students from China, Germany, Spain and US (Melchers et al., 2016).

1.2. Gender perspective on empathy

Meta-analyses examining gender differences in empathy show that women are more empathetic than men, and that these differences are stable (Feingold, 1994; Thompson & Voyer, 2014). Developmental perspective also points out that girls are more empathetic than boys, both in childhood and adolescence (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013).

It is also important to notice that the extent of gender differences varies depending on the method of assessment. Gender differences in empathy are larger when self-reported questionnaires are used, compared to experimental and neuropsychological measuring, which usually result in small or no sex/gender differences (e.g. Baez et al., 2017; Derntl et al., 2010).

The literature review reveals two explanations of gender differences in empathy, especially when empathy is self-reported. The first explanation lies in a stereotype-confirming bias (Lennon & Eisenberg, 1987). Stereotypes about women as warmer, more understanding and compassionate than men are known, and largely accepted by both men and women (e.g. Eagly, 2001; Lopez-Saez, Morales & Lisbona, 2008). Hence, Eisenberg and Lennon (1983) presumed that women could have a stronger tendency to answer in a direction of higher empathy than men, in order to confirm these gender stereotypes and adhere to the traditional gender-role expectations. Thomas and Maio (2008) have pointed out that women are more motivated to present themselves as empathetic than men are, since being nurturing and interpersonally oriented are both part of the stereotypical feminine role. Social role theory (Eagly, 2001) is also in line with the findings from these studies, stressing out the importance of social roles and gendered expectations for women's and men's behaviours, traits, and beliefs.

The second possible explanation for gender differences in empathy lies in different socialization of boys and girls in the domain of emotions (Kuebli, Butler & Fivush, 1995). Empirical evidence show that parents encourage different types of emotions in boys and girls, and teach boys more than girls to suppress the expression of emotions (Birnbaum & Croll, 1984; Weinberg, Tronick, Cohn & Olson, 1999). This is evident later in life in gender roles of women and men. From a theoretical point of view, Gilligan and Attanucci (1988) stated that girls and boys experience different socialization regarding moral judgment. They have argued that boys are more socialized into the ethics of justice, whereas girls are more socialized into the ethics of caring, which encompasses empathic concern over misfortunes of others.

An important question that has emerged from the literature is whether gender roles, rather than one's gender, are more important in the explanation of empathy. Gender-role orientation of Canadian university students was a better predictor of care-oriented moral reasoning than gender (Söchting, Skoe & Marcia, 1994). Gender and femininity, but not masculinity, were correlated to empathy in a study on Israeli adolescents (Karniol, Gabay, Ochion & Harari, 1998). Additionally, when the contribution of gender roles was covaried, empathy was unrelated to gender. In a study on postgraduate psychology students in the United Kingdom, empathy was strongly associated with femininity, regardless of gender (Ivtzan, Redman & Gardner, 2012). In a more recent study conducted in Germany, empathy was positively associated with female gender and feminine gender-role orientation (Löffler & Greitemeyer, 2021). Relation between gender and empathy was fully mediated by gender role orientation in the same study.

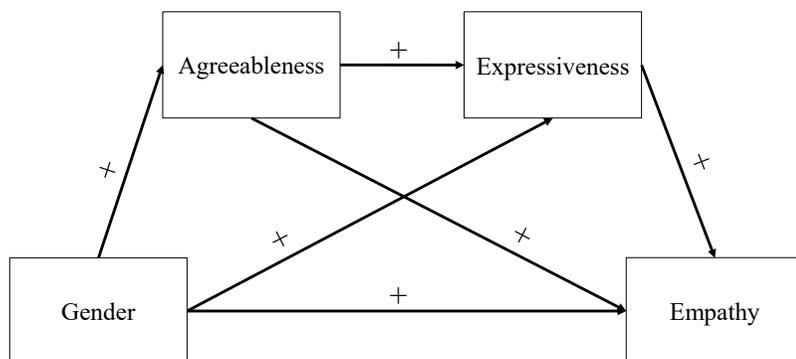
1.3. *The present study*

Previous studies indicate that personality dispositions and gender roles mediate the relationship between gender and empathy (Costa et al., 2014; Löffler & Greitemeyer, 2021). We chose to focus on agreeableness and expressiveness, given that agreeableness, as an interpersonal dimension, is the most consistent determinant of empathy among five personality traits (Abe et al., 2018, Melchers et al., 2016), and that expressiveness, but not instrumentality, strongly correlates with empathy (Karniol et al., 1998). Still, it has not been tested yet whether both agreeableness and expressiveness serially mediate the relationship between gender and empathy. Given the Smith and Snell's (1996) postulate that agreeableness predicts expressiveness, and that personality traits are stable characteristics, while gender roles are products of socialization and develop later in life, we were interested in exploring a serial mediation of agreeableness and expressiveness in the relationship of gender and empathy. In addition, our study follows the conceptual understanding of empathy as consisting of cognitive and affective aspects, namely cognitive empathy or *perspective taking* and affective empathy or *empathic concern* (Cuff et al., 2016; Makoelle, 2019).

There is still a lack of research on personality and gender roles determinants of teacher empathy. Most of the research on the relationship between personality and empathy was conducted on samples of medical students. At the same time, there is growing evidence on the importance of teacher social and emotional competences for a successful delivery of social and emotional education in schools, which is in turn related to a range of positive academic and behavioural outcomes in children (Cefai, Bartolo, Cavioni & Downes, 2018). Teachers' personality could be an important moderator of social and emotional learning in schools, with implications for students' well-being (Kim, Dar-Nimrod & MacCann, 2018). Therefore, we wanted to test these relationships in an educational context with preservice teachers.

The aim of the present study was to examine the role of agreeableness and expressiveness in the relationship between gender and empathy in preservice teachers. Based on previous research, we hypothesised a serial mediation model presented in Figure 1. We expected that (H1) female preservice teachers had more empathy than male preservice teachers. We also expected that (H2) the relationship between gender and empathy was mediated by agreeableness, and (H3) by expressiveness. Finally, we expected that (H4) the relationship between gender and empathy was serially mediated by agreeableness and expressiveness.

Figure 1.
Hypothesised serial mediation model



2. Method

2.1. Sample and Procedure

The sample consisted of 279 four- and fifth-year preservice subject teachers from different higher education institutions at the largest Croatian university, the University of Zagreb. There were 157 women in the sample (56.3%) and 122 men (43.7%). Participants' average age was 23.35 years ($SD=1.42$), ranging from 21 to 30, with no age difference between students from different faculties. Questionnaires were administered during one regular class at the end of the academic year, after participants had provided informed consent. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with 100% response rate. The research was conducted according to ethical standards and with the approval obtained by the Ethics Committee of the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb.

2.2. Instruments

The *Interpersonal Reactivity Index* (IRI; Davis, 1980) is a self-report instrument measuring empathy. IRI consists of four subscales: Perspective taking scale, Fantasy scale, Empathic concern scale, and Personal distress scale. In this study, we have used Empathic concern and Perspective taking scales. Each subscale consists of seven items. The *Empathic concern* scale assesses feelings of sympathy and concern for unfortunate others (people who experience unfortunate/hard events/circumstances) (e.g. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me). The *Perspective taking* scale assesses the ability to adopt the perspectives of other people and see things from their point of view (e.g. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective). Participants indicated how well the items described them on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – “Not at all like me”, 5- “Very

much like me”). Cronbach’s alpha scores were .74 for Empathic concern and .81 for Perspective taking.

The ***Big Five Inventory*** (BFI; John, Naumann & Soto, 2008) is a 44-item self-report inventory measuring five basic dimensions of personality: neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness. Subjects rate themselves on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 5 (agree strongly). BFI is routinely used in research in Croatia, including with samples of student teachers (e.g. Jugović, Marušić, Pavin Ivanec & Vizek Vidović, 2012). Cronbach’s alpha scores were .78, .75, .83, .83, and .78, respectively for extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. In this study, we have used only agreeableness scores.

The ***Personal Attributes Questionnaire*** (PAQ, Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1975) is an instrument used for measuring gender roles. The scale has 24 items divided into three subscales: Masculinity subscale (M), Femininity subscale (F), and Masculinity-femininity subscale (M-F), each composed of eight items. The authors proposed that masculinity and femininity are separate traits that are desirable in both women and men but more typical of one than the other gender. Respondents assessed how well each item described them on a 5-point bipolar scale. Cronbach’s alpha scores were .82 for Femininity/Expressiveness scale and .71 for Masculinity/Instrumentality scale. In this study, we have used only Femininity subscale that reflects expressive characteristics and orientation on other people.

2.3. Data analysis

To test the role of agreeableness and expressiveness in the relationship between gender and empathy, we conducted two serial mediation models using PROCESS macro for SPSS IBM (Hayes, 2018). We used two indicators of empathy, empathic concern as an affective aspect and perspective taking as a cognitive aspect of empathy. The first model tested relationships with empathic concern as a criterion, and is presented in Figure 2. The second model tested relationships with perspective taking as a criterion, and is presented in Figure 3. To test significance of indirect effects in both models, we used bootstrap confidence intervals (CI) based on 5000 bootstrap samples, as suggested by Hayes (2018).

3. Results

3.1. General descriptive results

Table 1 summarizes the basic descriptive findings for gender differences. We performed a one-way MANOVA with gender as an independent variable, and with four dependent variables: empathic concern, perspective taking, agreeableness and expressiveness. The analysis was statistically significant ($F=14.527$, $p=.001$), allowing us to explore gender differences on each variable. The results of the tests of between-subjects' effects are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Basic Descriptive Statistics for Gender Differences in Empathic Concern, Perspective Taking, Agreeableness and Expressiveness

	Total sample		Women		Men		F(1/259)	η_p^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Empathic Concern	3.70	0.67	3.95	0.61	3.37	0.60	58.39***	.19
Perspective Taking	3.64	0.67	3.74	0.68	3.50	0.64	8.16**	.03
Agreeableness	3.65	0.58	3.74	0.59	3.53	0.55	8.77**	.03
Expressiveness	4.01	0.60	4.14	0.59	3.83	0.57	18.82***	.07

Note. M= arithmetic mean, SD=standard deviation, F=F-value of one-way MANOVA, η_p^2 =partial eta-squared, ** $p<.01$. *** $p<.001$.

Compared to men, women reported more empathic concern and perspective taking. In addition, women were more agreeable and more expressive than men. Pearson's correlation coefficients between measured variables are displayed in Table 2. Relationships between all variables were significant and positive.

Table 2

Pearson's Correlation Matrix on the Total Sample

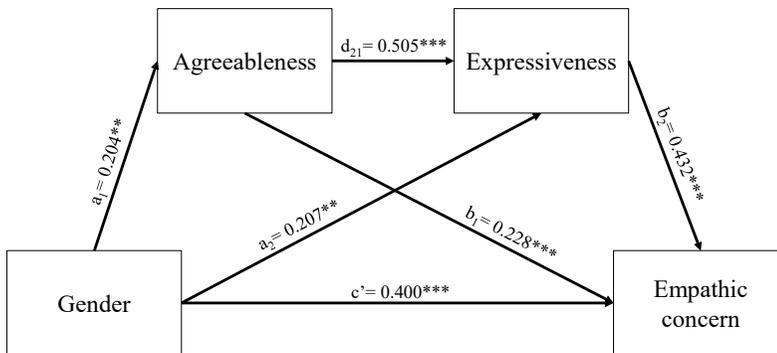
	1	2	3	4
1. Empathic concern	-			
2. Perspective-taking	.46***	-		
3. Gender	.44***	.18**	-	
4. Agreeableness	.46***	.50***	.19**	-
5. Expressiveness	.58***	.42***	.26***	.53***

Note. ** $p<.01$. *** $p<.001$.

3.2. Serial mediation model of the relationship between gender and empathic concern

The results of the first model (Figure 2) showed that female preservice teachers reported higher empathic concern than male preservice teachers, with a significant and positive direct effect of gender on empathic concern ($c' = 0.4$, $p < .001$). Gender also affected empathic concern indirectly through agreeableness and expressiveness, with both CIs not including zero (see Table 3). Female preservice teachers had higher agreeableness, which then led to higher empathic concern. In addition, they had higher expressiveness, which led to higher empathic concern. Serial indirect effect was also significant, showing that female preservice teachers were more agreeable, which led to higher levels of expressiveness, which additionally led to higher rates of empathic concern (Table 3).

Figure 2. Serial Mediation Model of the Effects of Gender on Empathic Concern through Agreeableness and Expressiveness



Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

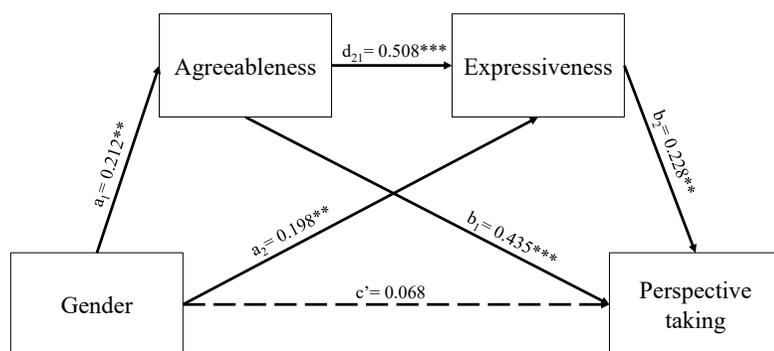
We tested if indirect effects differed in their strength using specific indirect effect contrast, implemented in PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2018). Since all three effect CIs included zero, indirect effects did not significantly differ in their strength (Table 4). This model explained 43.8% of the total variance of empathic concern with a significant total effect of gender on empathic concern ($c = 0.581$, $p < .001$).

3.3. Serial mediation model of the relationship between gender and perspective taking

In the second model, gender did not directly affect perspective taking when mediators were included in the model (Figure 3). However, all three indirect effects were significant (Table 3). Female preservice teachers were more agreeable, which led to higher perspective taking. Additionally, they were more expressive, which led to higher perspective taking. Serial indirect effect suggested that female preservice teachers were

more agreeable which led to higher expressiveness, which then led to higher perspective taking.

Figure 3. Serial Mediation Model of the Effects of Gender on Perspective Taking through Agreeableness and Expressiveness



Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

The contrasts of indirect effects strength showed that indirect effect of gender on perspective taking through agreeableness was significantly greater than through both agreeableness and expressiveness (Table 4). Other indirect effects did not significantly differ in strength. The whole model explained 27.7% of variance of perspective taking with a significant total effect of gender on perspective taking ($c = 0.230$, $p < .01$).

Table 3. Indirect Effects of Gender on Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking through Agreeableness and Expressiveness

	X	M	Y	Effect	LLCI	ULCI
Ind1	Gender	→Agreeableness→	Empathic Concern	0.047	.009	.096
Ind2	Gender	→Expressiveness→	Empathic Concern	0.089	.032	.168
Ind3	Gender	→Agreeableness→ Expressiveness→	Empathic Concern	0.045	.013	.084
Ind1	Gender	→Agreeableness→	Perspective Taking	0.092	.032	.158
Ind2	Gender	→Expressiveness→	Perspective Taking	0.045	.012	.090
Ind3	Gender	→Agreeableness→ Expressiveness→	Perspective Taking	0.025	.006	.049

Note. LLCI=lower limit confidence interval, ULCI=upper limit confidence interval; serial mediation in PROCESS (Model 6)

Table 4.
Specific Indirect Effect Contrasts

	Empathic concern			Perspective taking		
	C	LLCI	ULCI	C	LLCI	ULCI
Ind1-Ind2	-.043	-.142	.039	.047	-.033	.124
Ind1-Ind3	.002	-.047	.048	.068	.017	.129
Ind2-Ind3	.045	-.014	.123	.021	-.012	.061

Note. C=contrast effect, LLCI=lower limit confidence interval, ULCI=upper limit confidence interval, Ind1=effect through agreeableness, Ind2=effect through expressiveness, Ind3=effect through agreeableness and expressiveness; serial mediation in PROCESS (Model 6)

4. Discussion

In the present study, we have confirmed our hypotheses that agreeableness and expressiveness mediate the relationship between gender and empathy of preservice teachers. More precisely, female preservice teachers expressed greater agreeableness, which had positive effects on both empathic concern and perspective taking. They also had greater expressiveness, which had positive effects on both empathic concern and perspective taking. Female preservice teachers reported greater agreeableness, which had a positive effect on expressiveness, which then had a positive effect on empathic concern and perspective taking.

This study is a step towards a better understanding of gender differences in empathy measured by self-report questionnaires, suggesting that the participants' agreeableness and expressiveness underlie the relationship between gender and self-reported empathy. This implies that gender roles, rather than one's gender, are responsible for gender differences in empathy. Similar results are obtained in empirical studies that have shown that gender-role orientation was a better predictor of care-oriented moral reasoning than gender (Söchting et al., 1994) and that empathy was unrelated to gender when the contribution of gender roles was covaried (Karniol et al., 1998). Bem (1974, 1984) has additionally stated that acceptance and enactment of gender roles can have stronger impact on psychological functioning than the gender of the person. Our results are also in line with theoretical considerations and previous research on gender socialization regarding emotions and caring for others. According to Gilligan's theory of moral development, girls are more socialized into the ethics of care that includes empathic concern for others, whereas boys are more socialized into the ethics of justice (Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988). Studies show that parents discuss and encourage different types of emotions in their sons (e.g. anger) and daughters (e.g.

fear and grief), and teach boys more than girls not to show their emotions (Birnbaum & Croll, 1984; Brody, 1999; Fivush, Brotman, Buckner & Goodman, 2000; Weinberg et al., 1999). This is reflected later in life in gender roles: femininity, manifested in expressive qualities like being emotional, kind, sympathetic, and oriented toward others and their feelings, and masculinity, manifested in instrumental qualities like dominance, independence and competitiveness (Bem, 1974; Choi & Fuqua, 2003; Spence et al., 1975). Given that empathy is measured with a self-reported questionnaire in our study, we can also presume that women are more motivated than men to show themselves as highly empathic, because showing empathy is in line with the female gender role, as shown by Thomas and Maio (2008).

Our results show that gender has only indirect effects on perspective taking, with the strongest mediating effect through agreeableness. The findings are consistent with the theoretical perspective on agreeableness as a personality trait encompassing altruistic and prosocial behaviours, and being related to empathy (Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997; Tobin & Graziano, 2020). Persons high in agreeableness are more emotionally responsive to others and more readily display helping behaviours (Graziano et al., 2007). A synthesis of robust meta-analytic findings across a diversity of samples shows that agreeableness is related to a number of positive occupational and life outcomes, one of them being a capacity to build positive relations and cooperate with others (Wilmot & Ones, 2022). The pattern of relations between agreeableness, expressiveness and empathy obtained on a sample of preservice teachers in our study is in line with the importance of the prosocial, altruistic motivation for the teaching profession obtained across diverse samples of teachers (Watt, Richardson & Smith, 2017). It could be hypothesised that more agreeable, prosocially oriented persons with more feminine gender role orientations are more inclined to select teaching as a profession in which they can express their interpersonal orientation and altruistic motivations. Given the interpersonal nature of teaching as a profession, our findings could be relevant for the planning of tailored interventions aimed at strengthening social and emotional competences in future teachers, particularly those with low agreeableness. These competences are a crucial element for the successful implementation of social and emotional learning in schools (Cefai et al., 2018).

4.1. Limitations, implications and future directions

The main methodological limitation of this study is a cross-sectional research design, which does not support causality conclusions of the effects in the models. To test the causality effects, it is necessary to use a longitudinal design, ideally with four time points. Longitudinal research design would enable testing the hypothesized direction and temporal order of the relations between variables (Spector, 2019). The second limitation refers to the use of self-report measures, which are the source of common method bias. In their systematic review, Aldrup et al. (2022) report that research evi-

dence based on combined self-reports and other ratings provide stronger support for the positive relations between teacher empathy and student-teacher relations in comparison to studies relying only on self-reported empathy. In addition, other-reported personality has stronger predictive validity for a number of behavioural outcomes in personality studies (Connelly & Ones, 2010). This methodological issue could be addressed by adding other-reports for personality and some objective measures of empathy in future studies. The third limitation is the use of manifest variables in the model that was tested on a limited sample size, exposing results to measurement error. Future studies should implement a longitudinal research design and use latent path models to test causality effects on a larger sample of future teachers.

Research evidence show that empathy is trainable to a certain degree (Lam et al., 2011). Our study indicates that a differentiated approach to empathy training should be used with different groups of preservice teachers, particularly with those who report lower agreeableness and expressiveness. Future studies could further identify specific groups of teachers who are lower in empathy, in order to maximize the possible benefits of empathy training as an important aspect of social and emotional education for teachers. Although policy initiatives aiming at teacher well-being as well as at reducing the negative impact of traditional gender roles in education are emerging (e.g. Council of Europe, 2018; European Commission, 2021), usually they are not brought together. We therefore propose to develop educational programmes for teachers for supporting their empathy that would include both aspects: well-being and gender. For example, trainings for supporting teacher empathy could include self-awareness exercises, e.g. related to own personality traits. They could additionally incorporate awareness raising activities about gendered expectations regarding behaviours and roles, including emotional expression and caring for others.

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Medijacijska uloga osobina ličnosti i rodni uloga u povezanosti roda i empatije kod budućih nastavnica i nastavnika

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Sažetak

Nastavnička empatija važan je dio profesionalne uloge nastavnika i povezana je s brojnim ishodima kod učenika. Istraživanja pokazuju da su žene empatičnije od muškaraca, ali rod prestaje biti prediktorom empatije nakon što se u regresijske modele uključe osobine ličnosti ili rodne uloge. Ugodnost i ekspresivnost pokazale su se najsnažnijim korelatima empatije među osobinama ličnosti odnosno rodni ulogama, no te su determinante empatije još uvijek rijetko istražene kod nastavnika/ca. Stoga je cilj ovog istraživanja ispitati ulogu ugodnosti i ekspresivnosti u odnosu između roda i empatije na uzorku studenata/tica nastavničkog smjera različitih fakulteta. Testirana su dva serijalna medijacijska modela s rodom kao prediktorom, ugodnošću i ekspresivnošću kao medijatorima te aspektima empatije kao kriterijskim varijablama. Rezultati su potvrdili medijacijsku ulogu ugodnosti i ekspresivnosti u odnosu između roda i empatije. Značajni učinci serijalne medijacije pokazali su da su buduće nastavnice iskazale veću ugodnost što je imalo pozitivan učinak na ekspresivnost, a to je potom imalo pozitivan učinak na empatičnu brigu i zauzimanje tuđe perspektive. Rezultati istraživanja ukazuju na potrebu za diferenciranim pristupom treninzima empatije s različitim skupinama budućih nastavnika/ca, posebno s onima koji imaju manje izraženu ugodnost i ekspresivnost.

Ključne riječi: empatija, budući nastavnici/e, ličnost, rodne uloge, serijalna medijacija.