

# Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy of Physical Education Teachers

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Teaching is recognized as a highly emotionally demanding profession. As a result, emotional competence is a crucial factor that influences teachers' professional development and the quality of their instruction. Given that physical education (PE) teachers play a crucial role in encouraging optimal motor development in children and adolescents and promoting a healthy lifestyle, this study aimed to examine perceived emotional intelligence and self-efficacy among PE teachers ( $N = 210$ ) from Slovenian primary and secondary schools. The Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue-SF) and the Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (NTSES) were used to assess these psychological variables. The Slovenian versions of the TEIQue-SF and NTSES demonstrated adequate psychometric properties. Overall, PE teachers reported relatively high levels of self-efficacy and perceived emotional intelligence. Gender differences emerged in the emotionality dimension of emotional intelligence, with female PE teachers scoring significantly higher than their male counterparts ( $p < 0.01$ ). However, no significant gender differences were observed in self-efficacy dimensions. Additionally, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy scores did not vary significantly among teachers of different educational levels. The length of service showed a weak but positive correlation ( $p < 0.05$ ) with the self-control and sociability dimensions of emotional intelligence, as well as with several aspects of self-efficacy, including adapting education to meet individual student needs, motivating students, maintaining discipline, and collaborating with colleagues and parents. Finally, regression analysis revealed that emotional intelligence accounted for 50% of the variance in the self-efficacy of PE teachers ( $R^2 = 0.50$ ;  $F(5, 204) = 40.86$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

*Keywords:* physical education, emotional competences, self-efficacy, teachers

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## Introduction

Teaching is a multifaceted and demanding profession. The role of teachers extends beyond the provision of a supportive learning environment that facilitates knowledge acquisition. It also involves fostering social-emotional

skills and promoting a positive self-concept among children and adolescents (Tuxford & Bradley, 2015). Teaching also requires the effective management of both the teacher's own emotions and those of their students. Given that students may experience a range of negative emotional states, such as frustration and anxiety, it is essential that teachers are equipped with the skills to manage these emotions effectively (Dobesova Cakirpaloglu et al., 2022).

### *Emotional Intelligence in Education*

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage our own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. This emotional competence plays a key role in guiding cognitive processes and behaviour (Mayer et al., 2008). Additionally, EI can be viewed as a personality trait, consisting of various self-perceptions and dispositions related to emotions, which are often evaluated through self-report measures (Petrides et al., 2016).

It plays a crucial role in a teacher's professional development and the overall quality of teaching (Abiodullah et al., 2020). Numerous studies have demonstrated that higher teachers' EI is linked to positive attitudes in the classroom and contributes to a more favourable classroom climate (Maamari & Majdalani, 2019). Moreover, it has a moderate correlation with students' academic achievement (Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2020). Teachers who possess higher EI create a supportive and inclusive learning environment and are more effective in managing classroom discipline (Valente et al., 2019). The EI of teachers plays a vital role in fostering empathy and understanding of students' emotional needs, which is essential for building and maintaining positive teacher-student relationships (Wang, 2023). Additionally, teachers' EI influences various aspects of their professional lives, including their overall well-being and health. Recent research suggests that higher perceived EI is linked to increased work engagement – characterized by enthusiasm, motivation, and perseverance (Su et al., 2022) – along with higher job satisfaction (Cejudo & López-Delgado, 2017; D'Amico et al., 2020) and a reduced likelihood of leaving the profession. Furthermore, teachers with high EI report lower levels of perceived occupational stress and burnout (D'Amico et al., 2020). They also experience greater well-being and assertiveness in their relationships within the school environment (Ávila Muñoz, 2019).

### *Self-Efficacy in Teachers*

Another important concept in quality teaching is self-efficacy (SE), which refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to plan, implement, and

manage actions required to achieve specific goals. This concept, rooted in Bandura's social cognitive theory, suggests that human achievement depends on the interactions between a person's behaviour, individual factors (such as beliefs), and environmental conditions (Bandura, 1997). In the context of teaching, SE refers to a teacher's belief in their ability to positively influence students' achievement and facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge (Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005). Research indicates that teacher SE is positively associated with various aspects of teaching, including motivating students, managing the classroom, and regulating student behaviour (Stephanou et al., 2013). Teachers who possess high SE are more receptive to new ideas and teaching methods, demonstrate greater levels of planning and organization, approach their students' mistakes in a more constructive manner, and show increased perseverance in problem-solving (Lazarides & Warner, 2020). Additionally, higher levels of SE in teachers are linked to increased job satisfaction and greater engagement in their teaching roles (Han & Wang, 2021).

Teacher SE is a crucial factor in the teaching profession. It is influenced by individual characteristics such as personality and social-emotional skills, as well as work environment factors like experience, school size, climate, and social support (Fackler & Malmberg, 2016).

### *Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy*

Some recent studies report a positive relationship between EI and teacher SE. In a study with Portuguese primary and secondary school teachers, Valente et al. (2020) reported that higher EI of teachers was related to more effective classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. Two studies conducted on foreign language teachers in Iran (Deng et al., 2022) and in Croatia (Kostić-Bobanović, 2020) revealed that teachers who manage emotions well are more likely to feel competent and confident in teaching. These findings confirm the assumption that teacher training in EI is crucial, as it can lead to positive professional and organizational changes in teachers' work (Dolev & Leshem, 2016).

There is limited research exploring EI and SE among PE teachers, particularly in the context of Slovenia. PE teachers play a key role in education by addressing the exercise needs of children and adolescents, promoting optimal motor development, and encouraging students to adopt healthy lifestyles (Lohmann et al., 2023). It is essential for PE teachers to develop positive attitudes toward their students and to create innovative, engaging learning environments that increase student motivation and facilitate the acquisition of new skills. Establishing a supportive, respectful, and inclusive classroom

environment is essential for fostering quality learning. At the same time, it is important to respond effectively to frustrations and challenging situations in the classroom while communicating appropriately with students (Puertas-Molero et al., 2018). Emotional and interpersonal skills are therefore essential for the effective functioning and professional development of PE teachers.

### **Aim of the Study**

Given the limited empirical research on emotional competencies among PE teachers, this study aimed to examine PE teachers' perceptions of their EI and SE, and explore whether these perceptions differ based on gender and years of work experience. We also examined the relationship between EI and SE, hypothesizing that teachers' EI would positively predict their SE in teaching, in line with previous research. As the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form (TEIQue-SF) (Petrides, 2009) was being introduced for the first time in the Slovenian educational context, we undertook its translation and validation. The TEIQue-SF has demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties across various linguistic and cultural settings (Pérez-Díaz & Petrides, 2021; Siegling et al., 2015; Stamatopoulou et al., 2018).

### **Methodology**

#### **Sample**

A total of 210 PE teachers from primary and secondary schools in Slovenia participated in the study, including 94 males and 119 females. Their mean age was 47 years ( $SD = 10.4$ ), with length of service ranging from 1 to 42 years ( $M = 19.7$ ;  $SD = 12.3$ ). This convenience sample included PE teachers from all the Slovenian regions.

#### **Instruments**

The original TEIQue-SF (Petrides, 2009) is a self-report measure consisting of 30 items that evaluates four dimensions of EI: well-being (six items, e.g. 'On the whole, I'm pleased with my life'); self-control (six items, e.g. 'I'm usually able to find ways to control my emotions when I want to'); emotionality (eight items, e.g. 'Expressing my emotions with words is not a problem for me'); and sociability (six items, e.g. 'I can deal effectively with people'). The remaining four items do not contribute to any specific dimension and are used to calculate global trait EI. The TEIQue-SF utilizes a 7-point Likert scale (ranging from 'completely disagree' to 'completely agree'), with higher scores indicating greater levels of EI. The questionnaire demonstrates adequate validity

and reliability, with a total score reliability of  $\alpha = 0.87$  and dimensional reliability ranging from 0.67 to 0.86 (Siegling et al., 2015).

For this study, the TEIQue-SF was translated into Slovenian using the back-translation method. The measurement characteristics of the Slovenian version of the TEIQue-SF are presented in the Results section.

The Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (NTSES) (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Slovenian translation by C. Peklaj and M. Marn) consists of 24 items that measure six dimensions of a teacher's SE: instruction (example item: 'Explain central themes in your subjects so that even the low-achieving students understand'), adapting education to individual students' needs ('Provide realistic challenges for all students, even in mixed-ability classes'), motivating students ('Encourage all students in the class to work hard on their schoolwork'), keeping discipline ('Get students with behavioural problems to follow classroom rules'), cooperating with colleagues and parents ('Cooperate well with most parents'), and coping with changes and challenges ('Successfully implement any instructional method that the school decides to adopt'). Participants rate each item on a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 – not certain at all, to 7 – absolutely certain). The original scale demonstrated adequate internal reliability ( $\alpha > 0.83$ ) as reported by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007). Žagar Rupar (2018) confirmed the validity and reliability of the NTSES within a Slovenian sample of teachers. In our study, the  $\alpha$  coefficients ranged from 0.76 to 0.88.

### *Procedure*

Data were collected between March and June 2024. An online questionnaire was distributed to various primary and secondary schools across Slovenia, with a request to forward it to PE teachers. Participants were provided with detailed information about the purpose and procedures of the study. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to participation.

### *Statistical Analysis*

The data were analysed using SPSS statistical software, and the factor structure of the TEIQue-SF was examined through confirmatory factor analysis using JASP (JASP Team, n. d.). The reliability of the instruments was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ). In addition to descriptive statistics, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed to examine group differences, while Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationships between variables. A regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which PE teachers' EI predicted their SE.

## Results

### *Psychometric Properties of the Slovenian Version of the TEIQue-SF*

The assumed 4-factor structure of the TEIQue-SF questionnaire was evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with maximum likelihood estimation. The model fit was assessed using several fit indices, including the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom ( $\chi^2/df$ ), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) with a 90% confidence interval, and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). The following thresholds were used to determine model fit:  $\chi^2/df < 3$ , CFI and TLI  $\geq 0.90$ , RMSEA  $< 0.08$ , and SRMR  $< 0.08$  (Kline, 2016).

The 4-factor model of the TEIQue-SF, which includes six items for the well-being factor, six items for the self-control factor, eight items for the emotionality factor, and six items for the sociability factor, did not demonstrate a satisfactory fit to our data based on the CFI and TLI indices (Model 1 in Table 1). This poor model fit can be attributed to certain weak items within the dimensions. Specifically, four items (TEIQue\_2 and TEIQue\_23 from the emotionality factor, and TEIQue\_10 and TEIQue\_25 from the sociability factor) exhibited low standardized loadings (below 0.40). Consequently, these items were eliminated, and the CFA was re-run for the Slovenian adapted 4-factor model, which included six items for the well-being, self-control, and emotionality factors, and four items for the sociability factor. This model (Model 2 in Table 1) showed an adequate fit to the data.

The standardized factor loadings ( $\lambda$ ) for the items in the Slovenian version of the TEIQue-SF are presented in Table 2. The factor loadings vary between 0.422 and 0.731, which are sufficiently high and meet the recommended threshold of above 0.40.

The reliability of the Slovenian version of the TEIQue-SF was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which indicates that the overall questionnaire demonstrates adequate internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ). The individual dimensions also exhibit sufficient reliability: well-being ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ), self-control ( $\alpha = 0.68$ ), and emotionality ( $\alpha = 0.72$ ). However, the dimension of sociability shows a slightly lower internal consistency with an alpha of 0.55. Due to the favour-

**Table 1** Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Fit Indices of k-Tested Models

Measurement model	$\chi^2/df$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA (90% CI)	SRMR
Model 1	1.99	0.82	0.80	0.079 (0.071–0.087)	0.077
Model 2	1.64	0.91	0.90	0.055 (0.044–0.066)	0.060

**Table 2** Standardized Factor Loadings for the Slovenian Version of the TEIQue-SF

TEIQue-SF	Items	SFL	TEIQue-SF	Items	SFL
Well-being	TEIQue_5	0.647	Emotionality	TEIQue_1	0.727
	TEIQue_9	0.467		TEIQue_8	0.511
	TEIQue_12	0.430		TEIQue_13	0.455
	TEIQue_20	0.731		TEIQue_16	0.588
	TEIQue_24	0.581		TEIQue_17	0.503
	TEIQue_27	0.722		TEIQue_28	0.574
Self-control	TEIQue_4	0.482	Sociability	TEIQue_6	0.543
	TEIQue_7	0.463		TEIQue_11	0.475
	TEIQue_15	0.659		TEIQue_21	0.496
	TEIQue_19	0.650		TEIQue_26	0.422
	TEIQue_22	0.439			
	TEIQue_30	0.588			

**Notes** SFL – Standardized factor loadings.

able measurement properties of the questionnaire, it was included in further statistical analyses.

### *Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy of PE Teachers*

Table 3 presents the results for the individual dimensions of EI and SE for the entire sample. The arithmetic means indicate that overall EI scores are relatively high, with the highest scores observed for well-being ( $M = 6.01$ ;  $SD = 0.66$ ) and emotionality ( $M = 5.94$ ;  $SD = 0.66$ ).

The arithmetic means of the NTSES ranged from 5.51 to 6.07, suggesting that participants tended to evaluate their SE positively. Among the various dimensions assessed, instruction received the highest rating, while coping with changes and challenges received the lowest. Additionally, the results from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test suggest that the data are generally not normally distributed.

### *Differences in Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy of PE Teachers*

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to assess gender differences in EI and SE. Among the TEIQue-SF dimensions, only the emotionality showed a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.01$ ), with female teachers exhibiting higher values than male teachers (Table 4).

Moreover, the results revealed no statistically significant differences in the SE dimensions (NTSES) based on the gender of PE teachers (Table 5).

The Spearman correlation coefficients between the dimensions of EI and

**Table 3** Descriptive Statistics for the Dimensions of the TEIQue-SF

Category	Dimension	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>K-Sp</i>
TEIQue-SF	Well-being	3.33	7.00	6.01	0.66	< 0.001
	Self-control	4.00	7.00	5.54	0.65	0.210
	Emotionality	4.00	7.00	5.94	0.66	< 0.001
	Sociability	3.00	7.00	5.24	0.65	0.023
NTSES	Instruction	4.00	7.00	6.07	0.65	< 0.001
	Adapting education to students' needs	2.50	7.00	5.64	0.88	< 0.001
	Motivating students	3.50	7.00	5.64	0.75	< 0.001
	Keeping discipline	2.00	7.00	5.53	0.88	< 0.001
	Cooperating with colleagues and parents	3.25	7.00	5.82	0.75	< 0.001
	Cooperating with colleagues and parents	2.50	7.00	5.51	0.80	< 0.001

**Notes** *K-Sp* – statistical significance of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test.

**Table 4** Differences in Emotional Intelligence Dimensions by Gender

TEIQue-SF	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>
Well-being	Female	6.06	0.61	5109.00	0.431
	Male	5.95	0.71		
Self-control	Female	5.52	0.65	5173.50	0.523
	Male	5.56	0.65		
Emotionality	Female	6.06	0.61	4294.00	0.008
	Male	5.79	0.68		
Sociability	Female	5.27	0.65	5223.00	0.598
	Male	5.21	0.72		

SE and teachers' work experience are presented in Table 6. Among the EI dimensions of the TEIQue-SF, self-control and sociability showed a weak positive correlation with teachers' work experience ( $p < 0.05$ ). Regarding SE dimensions measured by NTSES, teachers' work experience was weakly and positively related to adapting education to individual students' needs, motivating students, keeping discipline, and cooperating with colleagues and parents ( $p < 0.05$ ).

### *The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy in PE Teachers*

Spearman correlation coefficients (Table 7) indicate that all dimensions of the TEIQue-SF are moderately related to the dimensions of the NTSES, with the

**Table 5** Differences in the Dimensions of Teacher Self-Efficacy by Gender

NTSES	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>
Instruction	Female	6.11	0.60	5086.50	0.401
	Male	6.02	0.69		
Adapting education to students' needs	Female	5.73	0.83	4807.00	0.139
	Male	5.52	0.93		
Motivating students	Female	5.70	0.76	4750.50	0.107
	Male	5.55	0.74		
Keeping discipline	Female	5.50	0.94	4957.50	0.256
	Male	5.58	0.81		
Coop. with colleagues and parents	Female	5.88	0.70	5378.50	0.866
	Male	5.58	0.81		
Coping with changes and challenges	Female	5.58	0.72	4861.00	0.174
	Male	5.41	0.87		

**Table 6** TEIQue-SF and NTSES Dimensions in Relation with Work Experience of PE Teachers

Category	Dimension	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
TEIQue-SF	Well-being	0.08	0.248
	Self-control	0.16	0.023
	Emotionality	0.09	0.190
	Sociability	0.17	0.014
NTSES	Instruction	0.12	0.077
	Adapting education to students' needs	0.18	0.010
	Motivating students	0.16	0.018
	Keeping discipline	0.14	0.042
	Cooperating with colleagues and parents	0.14	0.044
	Coping with changes and challenges	0.13	0.060

strongest correlations observed between the well-being and emotionality (TEIQue-SF) and the instruction (NTSES).

### *Predicting Self-Efficacy based on the Emotional Intelligence*

To assess the predictive value of EI dimensions in the overall SE of PE teachers, multiple regression analysis was conducted using the enter method. Since length of service correlated with specific dimensions of SE, it was included as a control variable in the regression model. Preliminary analyses showed that the assumptions for performing the regression were met as tolerance (0.53–0.93) and variance inflation factor (1.06–1.89) indicated that multicollinearity was not a concern. The findings (Table 8) indicate that when accounting for

**Table 7** Correlations between the TEIQue-SF and the NTSES Dimensions

NTSES	TEIQue-SF			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Instruction	0.58**	0.55**	0.60**	0.44**
Adapting education to students' needs	0.52**	0.49**	0.52**	0.47**
Motivating students	0.49**	0.45**	0.47**	0.44**
Keeping discipline	0.49**	0.46**	0.48**	0.47**
Cooperating with colleagues and parents	0.48**	0.55**	0.51**	0.46**
Coping with changes and challenges	0.49**	0.48**	0.45**	0.44**

**Notes** Column headings are as follows: (1) well-being, (2) self-control, (3) emotionality, (4) sociability. \*\* $p < 0.001$ .

**Table 8** Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Item	Self-efficacy (NTSES)		
	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Length of service	0.07	1.36	0.176
Well-being (TEIQue-SF)	0.14	1.99	0.048
Self-control (TEIQue-SF)	0.24	3.64	<0.001
Emotionality (TEIQue-SF)	0.31	5.35	<0.001
Sociability (TEIQue-SF)	0.20	3.15	0.002

work experience, all dimensions of EI significantly predict overall teaching SE ( $R^2 = 0.50$ ;  $F(5, 204) = 40.86$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

## Discussion

Psychometric validation supported the construct validity of the Slovenian version of the TEIQue-SF, confirming its four distinct dimensions: well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability. These results align with previous validation studies that also identified the four-factor structure of the TEIQue-SF (Siegling et al., 2015; Pérez-Díaz & Petrides, 2021). The instrument demonstrated good internal consistency for both the total TEIQue-SF score and the individual dimensions, with the exception of the sociability dimension, which – consistent with findings from other studies (e.g. Pérez-Díaz & Petrides, 2021) – exhibited slightly lower reliability than the other dimensions. Overall, the Slovenian TEIQue-SF appears to be a reliable and valid measure of EI among PE teachers. Nevertheless, further validation is recommended to confirm its applicability across a broader adult population.

We further examined the expression of EI and SE among PE teachers. Based on arithmetic means, all EI dimensions scored above the midpoint of the rat-

ing scale, suggesting that teachers generally report relatively high levels of EI. These findings align with previous studies assessing EI among PE teachers (Mouton et al., 2013; Watson & Kleinert, 2017), which also documented similarly high self-reported EI levels. When evaluating SE using the NTSES scale, we found that teachers generally hold positive perceptions of their professional effectiveness. Comparable trends have been reported in studies involving Italian primary and secondary school teachers (Avanzi et al., 2013) and Serbian primary school teachers (Djigić et al., 2014).

When examining gender differences in perceived EI, female teachers reported significantly higher levels of emotionality compared to their male counterparts. This suggests that women are more likely to perceive themselves as capable of expressing emotions, demonstrating affection, and engaging in empathic understanding. These results are consistent with those of Puertas-Molero et al. (2018), who also found gender differences in EI among Spanish PE teachers, with women scoring higher. Similar findings were reported by Pongrac et al. (2019) in a cross-cultural study of Croatian and Portuguese adults, where women outperformed men in emotional perception, understanding, and empathy – particularly in empathic concern and perspective-taking. The observed gender differences in EI may be attributed to traditional societal gender stereotypes, which commonly associate traits such as nurturing, empathy, and caring with females, and attributes like ambition, power, and competitiveness with males. These stereotypes suggest that from an early age, girls are socialized to be more emotionally and interpersonally oriented (Stewart et al., 2021). Furthermore, our study found no gender differences in the SE of PE teachers. Previous research on this topic has yielded mixed results: some studies suggest that gender does not significantly influence teachers' SE (Yada & Savolainen, 2017), while others report that men tend to perceive themselves as more effective in managing classroom behaviour (Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

Based on the analysis of the relationship between EI and work experience, our findings indicate that PE teachers with longer teaching tenure exhibit higher levels of self-control and sociability compared to their less experienced colleagues. Similar results were reported by Kostić-Bobanović (2020), who found that more experienced foreign language teachers scored higher on the self-control and sociability dimensions than those with less experience. However, other studies have found no significant association between EI and teachers' work experience (D'Amico et al., 2020; Galanakis et al., 2021).

The dimension of self-control refers to the ability to manage one's impulses and desires, as well as the capacity to cope with challenging situa-

tions. Individuals with high levels of self-control demonstrate a greater ability to regulate external pressures and maintain composure under stress. It appears that more experienced teachers display greater confidence in managing their emotions and handling stress compared to novice teachers, likely due to their prolonged exposure to diverse classroom demands and refined coping strategies.

Sociability, on the other hand, refers to interpersonal skills and their impact within various social contexts. Individuals with high sociability tend to be effective communicators and attentive listeners. It can be assumed that the emotional and social skills acquired through teachers' pedagogical experience, combined with opportunities for professional development, are important factors that may enhance certain aspects of EI, such as self-control and sociability.

In examining the relationship between teachers' SE and their professional experience, the present findings reveal a positive, though relatively weak, correlation between years of teaching experience and certain SE dimensions. Specifically, more experienced teachers reported greater confidence in their ability to effectively motivate students, adapt teaching to meet individual learner needs, maintain classroom discipline, and collaborate with colleagues and parents. In contrast, no statistically significant association was found between teaching experience and SE related to instructional delivery or managing educational changes. These results partially corroborate the findings of Kostić-Bobanović (2020), who found that more experienced teachers demonstrated higher self-perceptions in classroom management, while no significant differences emerged in other SE domains.

Furthermore, our results are also consistent with the study conducted by Wolters and Daugherty (2007), who demonstrated that overall levels of perceived SE tend to increase with teaching experience. However, our results are not consistent with those reported by Mouton et al. (2013), who found no significant relationship between the amount of teaching experience and the SE beliefs of Belgian PE teachers. These discrepancies may be attributed to contextual factors such as differences in educational systems, teacher training programmes, subject areas, or the specific measures of SE employed across studies. Additionally, international comparative research must consider the influence of diverse cultural and sociocultural contexts, as these factors can shape both the interpretation of SE and the criteria used to assess teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness.

The present study also aimed to examine the relationship between EI and SE among PE teachers. The findings indicate that higher levels of EI dimen-

sions are associated with more favourable perceptions of SE across various domains of teachers' professional functioning. These results are consistent with numerous previous studies conducted with different teacher populations (Deng et al., 2022; Kostić-Bobanović, 2020; Valente et al., 2020). Furthermore, regression analysis was conducted to assess the extent to which specific dimensions of EI predict teachers' SE. The results revealed that all EI dimensions – well-being, emotionality, self-control, and sociability – significantly contribute to overall SE among PE teachers. This suggests that competencies such as the ability to express and regulate one's emotions, demonstrate empathy, understand the emotional states of others, and effectively cope with stressful situations are key determinants of teaching effectiveness. These findings are supported by previous research (Şahin, 2017; Wu et al., 2019).

## Conclusions

The findings of this study deepen our understanding of EI and SE among Slovenian PE teachers, as well as the role of EI in predicting SE in teaching. The results highlight the importance of fostering teachers' emotional competencies – particularly at the beginning of their careers – through targeted training and professional development programmes, as these skills are essential for effective teaching, classroom management, and the development of supportive interpersonal relationships within the school environment. Moreover, integrating emotional and social competence training into initial teacher education curricula for prospective PE teachers is strongly recommended. An additional valuable contribution of this study is the Slovenian adaptation of the TEIQue-SF, which offers a reliable tool for future research on EI among education professionals.

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### Čustvena inteligentnost in samoučinkovitost učiteljev športne vzgoje

Poučevanje velja za zelo čustveno zahtevno dejavnost. Čustvena kompetentnost zato predstavlja pomemben dejavnik stokovnega razvoja učiteljev in kakovostnega pedagoškega dela. Ker imajo učitelji športne vzgoje ključno vlogo

pri spodbujanju optimalnega gibalnega razvoja in zdravega načina življenja otrok in mladostnikov, je bil cilj raziskave preučiti zaznano čustveno inteligentnost in samoučinkovitost slovenskih osnovnošolskih ter srednješolskih učiteljev športne vzgoje ( $N = 210$ ). Za preverjanje omenjenih psiholoških sprememb smo uporabili Vprašalnik čustvene inteligentnosti (TEIQue-SF) in Norveško lestvico učiteljeve samoučinkovitosti (NTSES). Slovenski obliki TEIQue-SF in NTSES sta pokazali ustrezne psihometrične lastnosti. Učitelji športne vzgoje so v splošnem poročali o relativno visokih ravneh samoučinkovitosti in čustvene inteligentnosti. Razlike med spoloma so se pojavile v dimenziji čustvene inteligentnosti (TEIQue-SF), pri čemer so učiteljice športne vzgoje dosegle bistveno višje vrednosti kot njihovi moški kolegi ( $p < 0,01$ ), medtem ko pri dimenzijah samoučinkovitosti ni bilo ugotovljenih statistično značilnih razlik. Prav tako ni bilo opaziti razlik v čustveni inteligentnosti in samoučinkovitosti učiteljev glede na stopnjo poučevanja. Dolžina delovne dobe je bila šibko, vendar pozitivno povezana ( $p < 0,05$ ) s samonadzorom in z družabnostjo (dimenzijama čustvene inteligentnosti) ter vsemi vidiki samoučinkovitosti, kot so prilagajanje poučevanja individualnim potrebam učencev, motiviranje učencev, vzdrževanje discipline ter sodelovanje s sodelavci in starši. Z regresijsko analizo smo nadalje ugotovili, da čustvena inteligentnost pojasnjuje 50 % variance v samoučinkovitosti učiteljev športne vzgoje ( $R^2 = 0,50$ ;  $F(5, 204) = 40,86$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ).

*Ključne besede:* športna vzgoja, čustvene kompetence, samoučinkovitost, učitelji