



OPEN ACCESS

EDITED BY

Enrico Bocchiolesi,
University of Urbino Carlo Bo, DISTUM,
Italy

REVIEWED BY

Mohammad Sadegh Taghizadeh,
Golestan University, Iran
Mojtaba Esfandiyari,
Shahid Beheshti University of Medical
Sciences, Iran

*CORRESPONDENCE

Elena Stamouli
✉ eleni.stamouli@ur.de

RECEIVED 17 June 2026

REVISED 30 June 2026

ACCEPTED 02 July 2026

PUBLISHED 22 July 2026

CITATION

Stamouli E, Bakir A, Edenhart P,
Froehlich DE, Raberger J and
Gkaravelas K (2026) Manifestations of
emotional agency in teacher education:
a cross-national comparison of service-
learning experiences in Germany,
Austria, and Greece.
Front. Educ. 11:1911936.
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2026.1911936

COPYRIGHT

© 2026 Stamouli, Bakir, Edenhart,
Froehlich, Raberger and Gkaravelas. This
is an open-access article distributed
under the terms of the [Creative
Commons Attribution License \(CC BY\)](#).
The use, distribution or reproduction in
other forums is permitted, provided the
original author(s) and the copyright
owner(s) are credited and that the
original publication in this journal is
cited, in accordance with accepted
academic practice. No use, distribution
or reproduction is permitted which does
not comply with these terms.

Manifestations of emotional agency in teacher education: a cross-national comparison of service-learning experiences in Germany, Austria, and Greece

Elena Stamouli^{1*}, Ali Bakir¹, Pascal Edenhart¹,
Dominik E. Froehlich², Julia Raberger² and
Konstantinos Gkaravelas³

¹Faculty of Human Sciences, Department of Educational Sciences, University of Regensburg, Regensburg, Germany, ²Centre for Teacher Education, Department for Teacher Education, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria, ³Department of Philosophy, School of Humanities, University of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece

Background: Emotions play a central role in teacher education, yet research has primarily focused on emotional competence and less on how emotional experiences manifest in professional action. The concept of emotional agency offers a process-oriented perspective for understanding how preservice teachers mobilize emotions in authentic and socially embedded learning environments.

Purpose: This study investigates the manifestations of emotional agency in preservice teachers' service-learning (SL) experiences and examines how these manifestations vary across teacher education contexts in Germany, Austria, and Greece. Emotional agency is conceptualized as the enactment of emotional competence through professional action and operationalized through the dimensions of Action Regulation, Reflective Processing, and Social Embeddedness.

Methods: The study draws on 209 reflective diaries collected from preservice teachers participating in SL courses in Germany ($n = 94$), Austria ($n = 60$), and Greece ($n = 55$). Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis following Mayring's structuring approach and combining deductive and inductive coding procedures.

Findings: The findings show that emotional agency becomes visible when emotional experiences inform behavioral adaptation, professional reflection, and collaborative engagement. Across all three countries, social embeddedness emerged as the dominant manifestation of emotional agency, highlighting the central role of collaboration and interaction in professional learning. At the same time, distinct national profiles were identified. In Germany, manifestations of emotional agency were particularly associated with motivational engagement and collaborative participation. In Austria, emotional agency was more strongly characterized by reflective processing and engagement with emotional complexity. In Greece, manifestations of emotional agency were most evident in collaboration and adaptive responses to professional challenges.

Conclusion: The study provides a theoretically grounded and empirically applicable operationalization of emotional agency through Action Regulation, Reflective Processing, and Social Embeddedness. By making emotional agency observable and analyzable, the proposed framework offers a foundation for future research on emotions, professional learning, and teacher development across educational contexts.

KEYWORDS

cross-national comparison, emotional agency, emotional competence, preservice teachers, service-learning, teacher education

Introduction

Despite growing recognition of emotions as a central component of teacher learning and professional development (Aramburo and Zhang, 2026; Frenzel, et al., 2021), existing research has primarily focused on emotional competence, emphasizing teachers' abilities to perceive, understand, express, and regulate emotions (Gerbeth and Stamouli, 2023; Savina et al., 2025; Stamouli and Gerbeth, 2021). While these competencies are undoubtedly important, they provide only limited insight into how emotional experiences manifest in professional action in complex educational settings. Preservice teachers are not only required to recognize and manage emotions; they must also actively draw upon emotional experiences when making decisions, adapting to uncertainty and emotional tensions, collaborating with others, and responding to situational demands (Ji et al., 2022; K rkk  et al., 2024). Consequently, a competence-oriented perspective may overlook the dynamic and socially embedded processes through which emotions influence professional practice.

To address this limitation, recent scholarship has introduced the concept of emotional agency. Emotional agency refers to the capacity to perceive, interpret, regulate, and mobilize emotions as resources for context-sensitive and socially embedded action (Benesch, 2018; H kk  et al., 2019, 2022, 2023; Vanhanen et al., 2026). Unlike emotional competence, which focuses on individual competencies, emotional agency emphasizes the enactment of these competencies in practice and highlights how emotions shape decision-making, collaboration, behavioral adaptation, and professional engagement.

However, despite increasing attention to emotions in teacher education, emotional agency remains underexplored. Existing studies often investigate related constructs such as emotional labor, resilience, emotion regulation, or professional tensions rather than emotional agency itself (Lin, 2021; Nazari et al., 2024; Seyri and Ghiasvand, 2025). As a result, the mechanisms through which preservice teachers mobilize emotions for professional action remain insufficiently understood. Moreover, empirical research examining emotional agency in collaborative and practice-based learning environments is still limited, and comparative evidence across different teacher education contexts remains scarce.

This gap becomes particularly relevant in service-learning settings, where academic learning is combined with authentic professional experiences and collaboration with external partners (Carson and Domangue, 2013; Froehlich et al., 2021; Resch and Schritteser, 2023). Such environments, particularly encountering conflicting perspectives and uncertainty, confront preservice teachers with emotionally demanding situations that require them not only to regulate emotions but also to

transform them into productive resources for action (N  ez-Regueiro et al., 2024; Van Kessel, et al., 2022). Investigating emotional agency in these contexts therefore offers important insights into how emotional experiences contribute to professional learning and development.

Theoretical contribution

In response to the limited conceptual and empirical understanding of emotional agency, this study makes three contributions to research on emotions in teacher education. First, it advances the conceptualization of emotional agency by providing a clearer operationalization of the construct. Emotional agency is examined as the observable translation of emotional experiences into professional action and is analyzed through the dimensions of action regulation, reflective processing, and social embeddedness.

Second, the study contributes to theory development by clarifying the relationship between emotional competence and emotional agency. While emotional competence refers to emotional competencies such as perceiving, understanding, expressing, and regulating emotions, emotional agency captures how these competencies are mobilized in professional practice (Cramer et al., 2023).

Third, the study adopts a cross-national perspective by examining emotional agency among preservice teachers in Germany, Austria, and Greece. By comparing different teacher education contexts, the study provides insights into both shared and context-specific manifestations of emotional agency.

The study conceptualizes emotional agency as the enactment of emotional competence through professional action and operationalizes it through action regulation, reflective processing, and social embeddedness.

Theoretical background

State of research on emotional agency

Research on emotional agency has expanded considerably across teacher education, workplace learning, and applied linguistics in recent years (Benesch, 2018; H kk  et al., 2017; Nguyen and Ngo, 2025). Across these fields, emotional agency is generally understood as the capacity to perceive, interpret, regulate, and mobilize emotions within socially embedded contexts (Benesch, 2018; H kk  et al., 2019, 2023). Existing studies consistently highlight that emotional agency is not a

fixed individual characteristic but a dynamic and relational process that emerges through interaction, reflection, and situated practice (Hökkä et al., 2022, 2023).

The classification presented in Table 1 emerged from a comparative review of the literature on emotional agency across educational and professional contexts. Studies were analyzed with respect to their primary theoretical focus, underlying assumptions about emotions, and the role attributed to emotional agency. This analysis revealed three recurring strands of research. While these strands are not mutually exclusive, they represent dominant perspectives through which emotional agency has been conceptualized and investigated.

Three major theoretical traditions can therefore be identified (see Table 1). The first conceptualizes emotional agency within broader discussions of professional agency and workplace learning, emphasizing the role of emotions in decision-making and professional action (e.g., Gentsch and Synofzik, 2014; Hökkä et al., 2017, 2019). The second focuses on emotions as socially and institutionally mediated, highlighting emotional labor, feeling rules, and power relations (Benesch, 2018; Naraian, 2015). The third examines emotional agency in teacher education and professional learning, linking emotional experiences to reflection, identity development, and collaborative engagement (e.g., Nguyen and Ngo, 2025; Tao et al., 2024 Yazan, 2025);

From emotional competence to emotional agency

One important source of conceptual fragmentation in the literature concerns the relationship between emotional competence and emotional agency. Although both concepts address emotional processes in professional contexts, their distinction and interrelation remain insufficiently clarified. Developing a clearer understanding of this relationship is therefore essential for advancing the conceptualization and operationalization of emotional agency.

Research on emotional competence provides an important foundation for understanding emotional processes in teacher education. Emotional competence refers to the ability to perceive,

understand, express, and regulate emotions and is regarded as a key professional resource supporting collaboration, well-being, and professional learning (Calandri et al., 2025; Gerbeth and Stamouli, 2023; Harris et al., 2022; Lozano-Peña et al., 2021; Mehler et al., 2024; Rauterkus et al., 2025; Savina et al., 2025; Schoon, 2021; Stamouli and Gerbeth, 2021). However, teaching is not only an emotional profession but also a profession of action. Preservice teachers are required to navigate uncertainty, respond to unexpected challenges, collaborate with diverse stakeholders, and make context-sensitive decisions in complex situations. These demands require more than the ability to perceive and regulate emotions; they require the ability to mobilize emotions as resources for professional action.

Teaching is a profession of action. Emotional competence explains what teachers can do emotionally; emotional agency explains how they actually use these emotional resources in professional practice.

To address this limitation, the concept of emotional agency extends beyond a competence-oriented perspective by focusing on how emotions manifest in action within socially embedded contexts (Benesch, 2018; Hökkä et al., 2019, 2022, 2023). Emotional agency therefore captures how emotional competence is enacted in practice and becomes visible when emotions inform decision-making, guide behavioral adaptation, support collaboration, and sustain professional engagement. Rather than viewing emotions solely as experiences to be managed, emotional agency conceptualizes emotions as resources that can be actively used to respond to professional challenges and support learning and development.

In the present study, emotional competence was included as a complementary analytical category rather than as an additional dimension of emotional agency. Its purpose was to distinguish participants’ emotional competences (e.g., perceiving, understanding, expressing, and regulation emotions) from the ways in which these competences were enacted in practice. This distinction enabled the analysis to examine not only whether preservice demonstrated emotional competence, but also whether and how these emotional resources manifested in professional action.

From this perspective, emotional competence can be understood as a necessary foundation for emotional agency, but not as a sufficient explanation of professional action. Whereas

TABLE 1 Overview of major research strands and conceptualizations of emotional agency across educational and professional contexts.

Research strand	Main focus	Representative studies
Professional agency and workplace learning	Emotional agency is conceptualized as a process through which emotions shape decision-making, professional action, workplace participation, and organizational engagement. Emotions are viewed as integral to the enactment of professional agency and learning.	Gentsch and Synofzik, 2014; Hökkä et al., 2017; Hökkä et al., 2019; Hökkä et al., 2022; Hökkä et al., 2023; Vanhanen et al., 2026
Socially mediated emotions and emotional labor	Emotional agency is understood as socially negotiated through feeling rules, emotional labor, institutional expectations, advocacy processes, and power relations. Emotions are viewed as embedded within social and institutional structures.	Naraian, 2015; Benesch, 2018
Teacher education and professional learning	Emotional agency is linked to reflection, identity construction, practicum experiences, collaboration, professional learning, and teacher development. Emotions are conceptualized as resources for learning, adaptation, and professional growth.	Tao et al., 2024; Castro Mosqueda, 2025; Nguyen and Ngo, 2025; Nazari et al., 2024; Toker-Bradshaw and Tezgiden-Cakcak, 2025; Yazan, 2025

emotional competence refers to what individuals can do emotionally, emotional agency explains how these emotional resources are mobilized and enacted in response to contextual demands. Accordingly, emotional competence serves as the underlying resource, while emotional agency represents its enactment through three interrelated dimensions: action regulation, reflective processing, and social embeddedness. This conceptual relationship provides the theoretical basis for the present study and guided both the analytical framework and the interpretation of the findings.

Operationalization of emotional agency

Building on the conceptual literature presented in Table 1, emotional agency is operationalized through three interconnected dimensions. Action regulation reflects findings from research on professional agency and workplace learning, where emotions influence decision-making and action. Reflective processing draws on studies emphasizing reflection, identity construction, and professional learning. Social embeddedness captures insights from research highlighting the socially negotiated and context-dependent nature of emotions (Mänty et al., 2023). Together, these dimensions represent recurring themes across the emotional agency literature and provide an analytical framework for examining how emotional competence is enacted in practice.

The framework was not intended to propose a new taxonomy of emotional agency but rather to synthesize recurring elements across existing conceptualizations into an analytically applicable framework. The three dimensions were identified deductively through the literature review as the most consistently represented manifestations of emotional agency across previous conceptual and empirical work. During the qualitative analysis, the framework was iteratively refined by clarifying the operational definitions, coding rules, and indicators associated with each dimension in response to the empirical material, while the underlying theoretical structure remained unchanged. Consequently, the study refines the operationalization of emotional agency rather than proposing a new theoretical model.

To capture how preservice teachers mobilize emotions in practice, this study adopts the concept of emotional agency. From this perspective, emotions are viewed as resources that shape professional responses to challenges, uncertainty, and collaboration rather than merely experiences requiring regulation (Brosch and Steg, 2021; Colombo et al., 2021; Eder, 2023). Emotional agency becomes visible when emotional experiences inform actions, interactions, and professional decision-making. Recent research further highlights the importance of structured reflection and reflexive sensemaking in supporting professional learning and meaning-making processes (Chaseley and Abercrombie, 2025; McLay et al., 2023).

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework and operationalization of emotional agency used in this study. Building on the distinction between emotional competence and emotional agency, the framework assumes that emotional competence provides the resources for perceiving, understanding, expressing, and regulating emotions, whereas emotional agency captures how these resources are mobilized in response to authentic challenges encountered in service-learning contexts.

Based on this framework, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: How is emotional agency manifested in preservice teachers' service-learning experiences through action regulation, reflective processing, and social embeddedness?

RQ2: How do manifestations of emotional agency vary across teacher education contexts in Germany, Austria, and Greece?

Cross-national perspectives on emotional agency

Emotional experiences and professional learning are shaped by institutional, cultural, and educational contexts (Pekrun, 2024; Yang et al., 2022). As teacher education systems differ in their pedagogical traditions, practice-based learning opportunities, and expectations towards preservice teachers, manifestations of emotional agency may vary across national settings (OECD, 2025, 2026). Understanding emotional agency therefore requires attention not only to individual emotional processes but also to the contexts in which these processes are enacted.

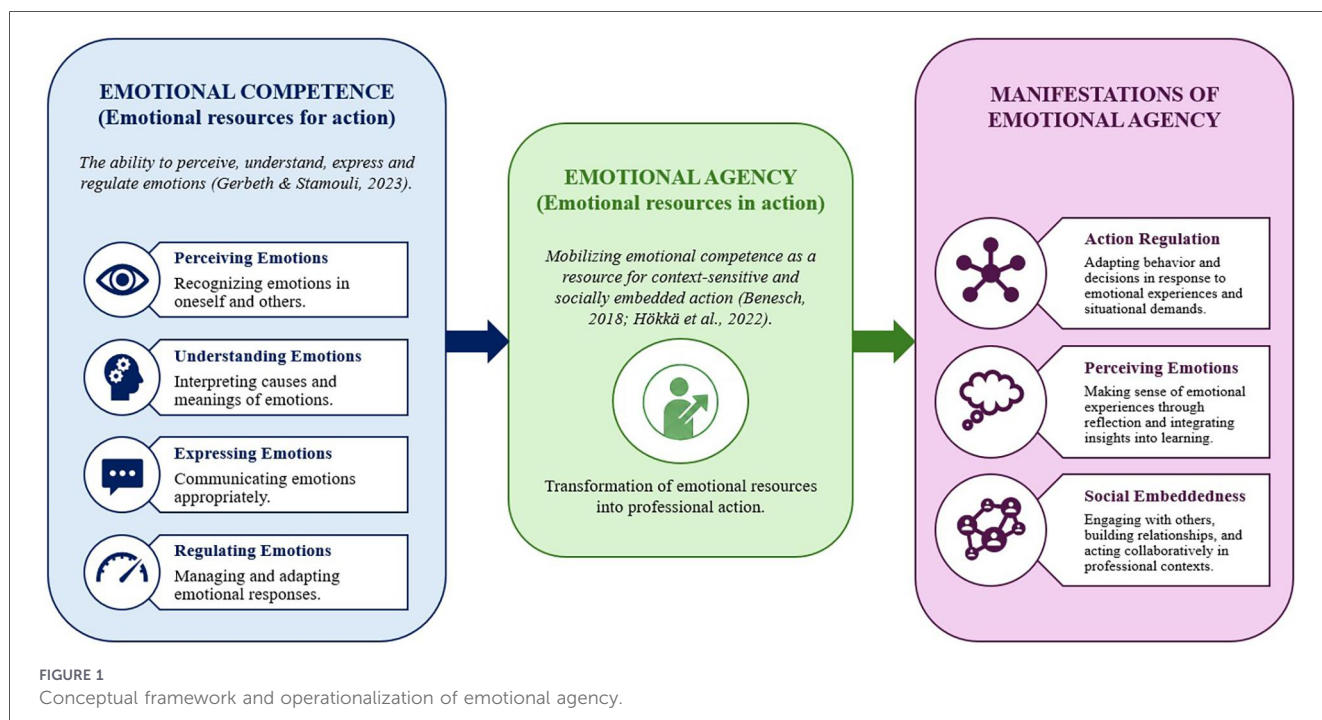
The present study adopts a cross-national comparative perspective by examining emotional agency among preservice teachers in Germany, Austria, and Greece. This comparative design is a central feature of the study and responds to the limited availability of cross-national research on emotional agency in teacher education (Kamali and Nazari, 2025; Kyriazopoulou et al., 2025). By moving beyond a single-country perspective, the study enables a more nuanced understanding of how emotional agency is shaped by different teacher education systems and learning environments.

Germany, Austria, and Greece provide a particularly relevant context for comparison. While all three countries are part of the European Higher Education Area and share a commitment to teacher preparation, they differ in teacher education traditions, institutional arrangements, and approaches to practice-oriented learning (Matsumoto-Royo et al., 2021; Resch et al., 2024). At the same time, the three countries included in this study collaborated within the Erasmus+ project *International Teaching Clinic Network*, which aimed to strengthen service-learning and practice-oriented teacher education across higher education institutions. The present study forms part of this collaborative project and therefore provides a unique opportunity to investigate emotional agency within a shared project framework while accounting for differences in national teacher education contexts.

Consequently, the study contributes not only to a deeper understanding of emotional agency in service-learning settings but also to knowledge about the extent to which manifestations of emotional agency are transferable across teacher education systems. This comparative perspective therefore strengthens both the theoretical relevance and the practical applicability of the study's findings.

Research design

The study follows a qualitative comparative research design. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because



emotional agency is understood as a socially embedded and context-dependent process that becomes visible through participants' interpretations, reflections, and descriptions of professional action (Hammarberg et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2017).

The analysis combines deductive and inductive procedures. Deductively, the coding framework was guided by the operationalization of emotional agency through action regulation, reflective processing, and social embeddedness. Inductively, the analysis remained open to emergent and context-specific forms of emotional agency within the data (Kuckartz and Rädiker, 2022; Mayring, 2015). This approach enabled a systematic examination of how preservice teachers enact emotional agency and how these manifestations vary across Germany, Austria, and Greece.

Data collection

Data were collected through reflective written diaries completed by preservice teachers participating in service-learning courses within the Erasmus+ project *International Teaching Clinic Network*. Data collection took place consecutively across the Summer Semester 2024, the Winter Semester 2024/2025 and the Summer Semester 2025. Table 2 provides an overview of the study sample and the diary corpus across the three participating countries. In total, 209 diaries were collected, comprising 94 from Germany, 60 from Austria, and 55 from Greece. Most of the participants were female ($n = 109$), while 96 were male and gender information was unavailable for four participants.

Regarding teacher education programmes, 44 diaries were contributed by students enrolled in primary teacher education and 165 by students in secondary teacher education. Germany contributed the largest number of diaries ($n = 94$), whereas Austria and Greece contributed 60 and 55 diaries, respectively.

The diary corpus comprised 13,917 individual references in total. Austria generated the largest number of references ($n = 6,539$), followed by Greece ($n = 4,130$) and Germany ($n = 3,248$). Consequently, the average number of references per diary differed considerably between countries, ranging from 35 in Germany to 75 in Greece and 109 in Austria. Across the entire sample, each diary contained an average of 67 references. Additional information on the study context, data collection procedures, and cross-national translation process is provided in [Supplementary Material S1](#).

Reflective diaries were methodologically selected because they provide access to participants' interpretations of emotionally demanding situations, emotional experiences, and professional learning processes (Barboza-Wilkes and Le, 2024; Boemo et al., 2022). The reflective prompts invited participants to describe experiences related to collaboration, uncertainty, professional challenges, and interactions within service-learning settings. To ensure comparability across countries, a common reflection framework was used while allowing sufficient flexibility for context-specific experiences and interpretations.

The diaries were completed at three points during the service-learning courses and captured participants' reflections throughout the learning process. Participants documented their experiences at the beginning, during the implementation phase, and towards the end of the course, allowing insights into the development of emotional experiences, professional learning, and manifestations of emotional agency over time.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using structuring qualitative content analysis according to Mayring, 2015, complemented by procedures proposed by Kuckartz and Rädiker, 2022 for category development and refinement. The analysis was

TABLE 2 Overview of the study sample and diary corpus.

Country	Diaries (N)	Female	Male	Unknown	Primary teacher education	Secondary teacher education	Total count of references	Average references per diary entry
Germany	94	56	38	–	30	64	3,248	35
Austria	60	18	38	4	3	57	6,539	109
Greece	55	35	20	–	11	44	4,130	75
Total	209	109	96	4	44	165	13,917	67

Average references per diary were calculated as the ratio of the total number of references to the total number of diaries.

supported by MAXQDA 24, which facilitated the systematic organization of the reflective diary entries, the management of hierarchical coding structures, and the comparison of data across national contexts.

The analytical process followed a deductive–inductive approach. In a first step, a theory-driven category system was developed based on the conceptual framework of emotional agency. Following Mayring’s structuring content analysis, coding categories, definitions, coding rules, and anchor examples were specified prior to the coding process and continuously refined throughout the analysis. To ensure transparency and traceability, the complete coding framework and further methodological details are provided in [Supplementary Material S1](#).

The deductive coding scheme was derived from the operationalization of emotional agency and consisted of three analytical dimensions: Action Regulation, Reflective Processing, and Social Embeddedness. Action Regulation captured instances in which emotions informed behavioral adaptation, persistence, problem-solving, or strategic responses to challenges. Reflective Processing referred to situations in which emotional experiences shaped interpretation, evaluation, meaning-making, and professional learning. Social Embeddedness captured manifestations of emotional agency in collaboration, communication, relationship-building, and collective action within professional contexts.

In addition to these dimensions, Emotional Competence was included as a complementary category. Segments were coded as emotional competence when participants described emotional awareness, understanding, expression, or regulation without explicitly linking these experiences to subsequent professional action. This distinction allowed the analysis to differentiate between emotional competence as an individual resource and emotional agency as the enactment of emotional competence in practice.

Following the deductive coding process, inductive category development was conducted within each analytical dimension to identify context-specific patterns, recurring themes, and emergent forms of emotional engagement across the dataset (Kuckartz and Rädiker, 2022). This procedure enabled the refinement of the theoretical framework while remaining sensitive to experiences that were not fully captured by the initial coding scheme. Accordingly, the analysis did not seek to generate a new conceptualization of emotional agency but to refine the empirical operationalization of a theoretically derived framework through iterative qualitative analysis.

The analytical strategy was directly aligned with the study’s research questions. The deductive category system provided the framework for examining how emotional agency was manifested

in preservice teachers’ service-learning experiences through action regulation, reflective processing, and social embeddedness (RQ1). The subsequent comparison of coded patterns across the German, Austrian, and Greek datasets enabled the identification of similarities and differences in these manifestations across teacher education contexts, thereby addressing RQ2: How do manifestations of emotional agency vary across teacher education contexts in Germany, Austria, and Greece?

Reliability and validity

Several measures were taken to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. Credibility was supported through systematic qualitative content analysis, iterative comparison of categories, and the combination of deductive and inductive coding procedures. The coding framework was developed based on the theoretical conceptualization of emotional agency and emotional competence and was continuously refined throughout the analytical process.

To strengthen analytical consistency, approximately 20% of the diary entries were independently coded by two members of the research team. Coding discrepancies were systematically discussed until consensus was reached, with discussions focusing on the interpretation of category boundaries and coding decisions rather than on calculating interrater agreement. This iterative consensus process contributed to the refinement of category definitions and coding rules while preserving the underlying theoretical framework. Analytical transparency was further enhanced through the systematic documentation of coding definitions, coding rules, and anchor examples provided in ([Supplementary Table S2](#)).

Furthermore, the cross-national dataset from Germany, Austria, and Greece enabled the identification of recurring patterns across different teacher education, thereby strengthening the robustness and transferability of the findings. Taken together, these procedures enhanced the credibility, dependability, and transparency of the qualitative analysis.

Results

The findings are presented according to the two research questions. First, the analysis examines how emotional agency is manifested in preservice teachers’ service-learning experiences (RQ1). Drawing on the proposed operationalization, manifestations of emotional agency are analyzed through the

dimensions of Action Regulation, Reflective Processing, and Social Embeddedness. Emotional Competence is subsequently presented as a complementary category to illustrate the distinction between emotional resources and their enactment in professional action. Second, similarities and differences in manifestations of emotional agency across Germany, Austria, and Greece are examined (RQ2).

RQ1: how is emotional agency manifested in preservice teachers' service-learning experiences through action regulation, reflective processing, and social embeddedness?

Action regulation

Action Regulation emerged as a central manifestation of emotional agency across the dataset. Preservice teachers frequently described how emotions informed behavioral adaptation, persistence, and responses to challenges encountered during service-learning activities. Experiences of uncertainty, frustration, or initial difficulties often prompted students to modify their approaches, seek solutions, or persist despite setbacks.

Participants frequently reflected on how challenges became opportunities for adaptation and professional growth:

"The initial difficulties taught me that it's worth persevering despite setbacks and unexpected challenges. I've also realized that I'm capable of finding creative solutions and responding flexibly to change." (exkama, Pos. 108)

These accounts illustrate how emotions were not merely experienced but mobilized to guide action and support professional learning.

Reflective processing

Reflective processing was evident when participants described how emotions informed interpretation, evaluation, and professional decision-making. Emotional experiences frequently served as a basis for analyzing situations, reconsidering assumptions, and developing future strategies. This dimension was particularly visible in reflections on collaboration and project work. Students described how emotional tensions and challenges encouraged deeper consideration of professional practices and interpersonal dynamics.

"One challenge I faced was collaborating within the group. Very different working styles became apparent here. However, this also led to some positive insights for me. For future projects, I intend to discuss how we will work together right at the start." (eljuma, Pos. 166)

Such reflections demonstrate how emotions contributed to professional judgment and learning rather than functioning solely as reactions to events.

Social embeddedness

Social Embeddedness represented the most prominent manifestation of emotional agency across the dataset. Emotional experiences were consistently described in relation to interactions with peers, teachers, school partners, and project teams. Participants frequently emphasized collaboration, communication, and shared problem-solving as sources of motivation, engagement, and professional development.

Participants frequently highlighted the value of collaborative exchanges:

"I found the interaction with my project partners particularly valuable. Everyone in the group had their own views on our project and suggested different ways of tackling the challenges." (calude05, Pos. 30)

Similarly, teamwork was often described as a source of inspiration and professional learning:

"The best part of the project was working as a team. Everyone contributed their own ideas and perspectives, which led to a rich discussion." (dafire21, Pos. 76)

These findings suggest that emotional agency is most frequently manifested through socially embedded forms of professional action, where emotions are mobilized in interaction with others.

Emotional competence as a complementary category

Emotional Competence was included as a complementary category to clarify the distinction between emotional competence and emotional agency. Across the dataset, participants frequently demonstrated emotional awareness, described emotional reactions, and reflected on strategies for understanding or regulating emotions. These accounts indicated that preservice teachers possessed important emotional resources for dealing with emotionally demanding situations.

However, many of these reflections remained at the level of emotional experience and regulation. While participants recognized and managed their emotions, they did not always describe how these emotions informed subsequent decisions, behavioral adaptations, collaboration, or professional action. In contrast, manifestations of emotional agency became visible when emotional experiences were actively mobilized to guide responses to challenges, support learning, or shape interactions with others.

The comparison between emotional competence and emotional agency therefore highlights an important finding of the study. Emotional competence alone does not fully explain how preservice teachers respond to complex professional situations. Rather, emotional agency captures the process through which emotional competence manifest in professional action. This distinction supports the study's theoretical argument that emotional competence serves as a foundation for

professional practice, whereas emotional agency explains how emotional resources are enacted in situated learning contexts.

RQ2: how do manifestations of emotional agency vary across teacher education contexts in Germany, Austria, and Greece?

To address RQ2, the findings are presented separately for Germany, Austria, and Greece before similarities and differences across the three contexts are synthesized.

Manifestations of emotional agency in German dataset

The German dataset reveals a profile of emotional agency characterized primarily by social embeddedness and motivational engagement. Emotional experiences were closely connected to collaboration, positive group dynamics, and supportive relationships. Emotions frequently functioned as motivational resources that sustained participation and commitment to project goals. Reflective processing and action regulation were present but less prominent than collaborative and relational dimensions.

Table 3 presents the distribution of emotional agency and emotional competence within the German reflective diaries ($N = 94$). Both constructs were highly prevalent throughout the service-learning experiences, although emotional competence appeared more frequently than emotional agency.

Within emotional agency, Social Embeddedness emerged as the most prominent dimension. A total of 499 references were identified, reported by 92 of the 94 preservice teachers. Participants frequently described how interactions with peers, supervising teachers, and school partners shaped their engagement and learning. Emotional experiences were therefore closely connected to collaboration, communication, and collective problem-solving. The anchor examples illustrate that professional action was often guided by ongoing social interactions and supportive relationships.

The second most prominent manifestation of emotional agency was Reflective Processing through motivation, with 149 references reported by 69 participants. Students frequently described how authentic tasks and perceived relevance motivated their engagement and sustained their commitment throughout the service-learning process. In addition, emotions informed professional decision-making (50 references; 31 participants), indicating that emotional experiences played an important role in interpreting situations and shaping subsequent actions.

Action Regulation was also evident across the diaries (94 references; 57 participants). Participants described how emotional experiences prompted behavioral adaptation, persistence, and problem-solving in response to challenges. These findings suggest that emotions functioned not only as reactions to events but also as resources guiding professional action.

The analysis of Emotional Competence revealed particularly high levels of emotional awareness and sensitivity. Positive emotions represented the most frequently reported category (896

references; 94 participants), followed closely by sensitivity to supportive conditions (884 references; 94 participants). These findings indicate that participants were highly aware of emotional experiences associated with collaboration, achievement, and support within the service-learning environment.

Negative emotions were also frequently reported (129 references; 59 participants), particularly in relation to workload, time pressure, and group dynamics. However, ambivalent emotions (50 references; 37 participants) and sensitivity to contradictory conditions (22 references; 18 participants) appeared less frequently, suggesting that emotionally complex experiences were reflected upon less often than positive or stressful experiences.

Finally, many participants perceived themselves as capable of managing emotional challenges. Perceived emotional control was reported by 64 participants, whereas limited emotional control was reported by 43 participants. This pattern suggests that emotional regulation constituted an important emotional resource within the learning process.

Overall, the German dataset is characterized by strong manifestations of Social Embeddedness alongside high levels of emotional awareness, sensitivity, and regulation. While Emotional Competence reflects the emotional resources available to participants, Emotional Agency became visible when these resources informed collaboration, motivation, professional decision-making, and behavioral adaptation. These findings provide the basis for the subsequent comparison with the Austrian and Greek datasets.

Manifestations of emotional agency in the Austrian dataset

The Austrian dataset revealed a profile of emotional agency characterized by a particularly strong emphasis on Reflective Processing. Participants frequently described ambivalent emotions, contradictory experiences, and emotionally complex situations. Emotional experiences were not only reported but also critically examined, interpreted, and integrated into professional learning and future-oriented decision-making. As a result, emotional agency was frequently manifested through reflective engagement with challenges, uncertainty, and changing perspectives.

Table 4 presents the distribution of emotional agency and emotional competence within the Austrian reflective diaries ($N = 60$). Similar to the German dataset, both emotional competence and emotional agency were evident throughout the reflections. However, the Austrian data suggest a particularly strong focus on emotional complexity, uncertainty, and the reflective interpretation of emotional experiences. These patterns indicate that emotional experiences frequently served as a basis for professional learning and meaning-making processes.

Within emotional agency, Social Embeddedness emerged as the most frequently occurring dimension, with 435 references reported by 59 of the 60 preservice teachers. Emotional experiences were closely linked to interactions with peers, teachers, and project partners. Participants frequently emphasized the importance of collaboration, feedback, and mutual support in shaping their learning and professional actions.

TABLE 3 German reflective diaries: dimensions of emotional agency and emotional competence.

Theme	Category	Subcategory	References (n)	Preservice Teachers (N)	Anchor example
Emotional Agency	Action Regulation	Emotion as a driver of action	94	57	"We were able to receive immediate feedback from the students and refined the lesson afterwards." (clvede30, p. 86)
	Reflective Processing	Emotions as decision-making factors in service-learning	50	31	"Our first meeting helped clear up some uncertainties. The friendly exchange made it easier to understand certain points and thus to narrow down the focus to a specific topic." (cek02, p. 52)
		Emotions as motivation in the service-learning process	149	69	"Working on authentic case studies motivated me because I could see the benefits and relevance of my work. It was encouraging to see how our efforts can actually help solve real-world problems and bring about positive change." (nilake15, p. 76)
	Social Embeddedness	Socially embedded emotion-guided action in the school context	499	92	"Throughout our project, we interacted particularly closely with the supervising teachers. The regular exchanges were helpful to me not only in gaining a better understanding of school procedures and needs, but also in addressing the practical requirements in a targeted manner." (bipala06, p. 49)
Emotional Competence	Perception of emotions	Perception of positive emotions	896	94	"Seeing the kind of project we created, as well as its impact on the future and on other teachers, is more than inspiring—it's a feeling of pride that will stay with me forever." (anjare06, p. 86)
		Perception of negative emotions	129	59	"At times, I found the collaboration frustrating, as one member of my group seems to be unable to understand even simple instructions and it is often difficult to communicate with her." (anstvi04, p. 55)
		Perception of ambivalent emotions	50	37	"It's not always easy, and it's also very time-consuming, which can be a challenge when you have to prepare for other classes. But you just power through it, and it's actually fun to learn something new." (indamü09, p. 55)
	Emotional Sensitivity	Sensitivity to supporting conditions	884	94	"Particularly important to me was the interaction with the group members, who were able to answer any questions I had." (sarach07, p. 30)
		Sensitivity to stressful conditions	160	66	"I find this seminar very exhausting, as I constantly feel like I don't have enough time to complete the assignments, both in the project itself and in the workbook." (minire07, p. 64)
		Sensitivity to contradicting conditions	22	18	"A major challenge is the time pressure, since we have to finish the advent calendar before December. However, this also presents an opportunity, as it means we engage with the subject matter very intensively almost every day, allowing us to see our own progress more quickly." (pealpa27, p. 53)
	Expression of emotions	Sharing emotions	102	55	"The group discussions were very productive. Honest feedback was given; if someone tried to implement something unrealistic, it was addressed immediately, but the idea was still praised. If someone had better information and found good ways to summarize something or, for example, how to divide the work effectively." (baanba04, p. 41)

(Continued)

TABLE 3 Continued

Theme	Category	Subcategory	References (n)	Preservice Teachers (N)	Anchor example
	Emotion Management	Perceived control of emotions	136	64	"Although we didn't have a direct point of contact since our teacher didn't get back to us, we came up with a solution as a group and all pulled together." (sujofr17, p. 86)
		Limited emotional control	78	43	"I was overwhelmed by all the information and by the fact that we initially had to come up with a research question on our own and find relevant literature and studies." (aledmü20, p. 22)

N = 94 Preservice teachers; n = References/number of the mentioned subcategory across all reflective diaries; Anchor examples are anonymized by participants themselves; p = position of statement in their reflective diary.

At the same time, the Austrian dataset was characterized by a particularly strong emphasis on Reflective Processing. Emotions as motivational resources were reported in 132 instances by 47 participants, while emotions as decision-making factors appeared in 67 references across 36 participants. Participants frequently reflected on emotional complexity, uncertainty, and contradictory experiences, using these reflections to inform professional learning and future actions.

Action Regulation was also strongly represented (106 references; 42 participants). Participants described how emotional challenges encouraged persistence, flexibility, and behavioral adaptation, often viewing difficulties as opportunities for growth.

The analysis of Emotional Competence revealed high levels of emotional awareness and sensitivity. Positive emotions were reported by all participants (530 references; 60 participants), while negative emotions (168 references; 46 participants) and ambivalent emotions (105 references; 43 participants) also appeared frequently, indicating a strong awareness of emotional complexity. Participants likewise reported high sensitivity to both supportive and stressful conditions and generally perceived themselves as capable of managing emotional challenges.

Overall, the Austrian dataset is characterized by strong manifestations of Social Embeddedness combined with a pronounced engagement in reflective meaning-making. While Emotional Competence was evident through emotional awareness, sensitivity, and regulation, Emotional Agency became visible when these emotional experiences informed reflection, behavioral adaptation, collaborative action, and professional learning.

Manifestations of emotional agency in the Greek dataset

The Greek dataset revealed distinct manifestations of emotional agency across service-learning experiences. Emotional agency became particularly visible in situations involving uncertainty, unfamiliar demands, collaboration, and collective problem-solving. Participants frequently described how emotional experiences informed their engagement with challenges, interactions with others, and professional learning processes.

Table 5 presents the distribution of emotional agency and emotional competence within the Greek reflective diaries (N = 55). Similar to the German and Austrian datasets, both

emotional agency and emotional competence were evident throughout the reflections. The findings indicate that emotional experiences contributed to adaptation, collaboration, and engagement with professional challenges, highlighting the role of emotions as resources for professional action and learning.

Within emotional agency, Social Embeddedness emerged as the most prominent dimension, with 166 references reported by 47 participants. Emotional experiences were closely connected to teamwork, communication, and the exchange of ideas within project groups. Participants frequently emphasized the importance of collaboration for achieving common goals and overcoming challenges, suggesting that emotions were often mobilized through collective engagement and shared learning processes.

Reflective Processing was also strongly represented. Emotions as decision-making factors were reported in 66 references by 34 participants, while emotions as motivational resources appeared in 55 references across 26 participants. Participants described how communication, feedback, and collaboration encouraged reflection and contributed to professional learning. Action Regulation was evident in 63 references reported by 32 participants. Emotional experiences informed behavioral adaptation, role negotiation, and responses to challenges arising during project work, often supporting constructive responses to unfamiliar situations and difficulties.

The analysis of Emotional Competence revealed that positive emotions were the most frequently reported emotional experiences (162 references; 51 participants). Feelings of satisfaction, achievement, and enjoyment were commonly associated with successful collaboration and project completion. Negative emotions (29 references; 19 participants) and ambivalent emotions (36 references; 26 participants) were reported less frequently.

A similar pattern emerged for emotional sensitivity. Sensitivity to supportive conditions was highly prevalent (146 references; 47 participants), whereas sensitivity to stressful conditions (24 references; 15 participants) and contradictory conditions (11 references; 9 participants) occurred less often. Regarding emotion management, perceived emotional control was reported by 35 participants (71 references), while limited emotional control appeared in 17 participants' reflections (24 references). Participants frequently described developing confidence, adapting to unfamiliar situations, and approaching challenges as opportunities for personal and professional growth.

TABLE 4 Austrian reflective diaries: dimensions of emotional agency and emotional competence.

Theme	Category	Subcategory	References (n)	Preservice teachers (N)	Anchor example
Emotional Agency	Action Regulation	Emotion as a driver of action	106	42	“The most positive experience actually came out of what was probably the most difficult phase. Due to circumstances beyond my control, I was forced to rely on others in my learning environment (colleagues, peers, family) and seek their help. Instead of being rejected, I was met with understanding and support, which was a very positive learning experience for me.” (saxpo, p. 240–243)
	Reflective Processing	Emotions as decision-making factors in service-learning	67	36	“So far, I’ve interacted most with my group members. They’ve been very helpful: I was unsure about the structure of our project, but during our discussion we’ve already identified some good approaches and have a solid plan for how to carry out the project.” (kasaob, p. 43)
		Emotions as motivation in the service-learning process	132	47	“It’s motivating not only to explore theoretical concepts and skills, but also to put them into practice in a real-world project and feel that your own ideas are actually adopted and tested.” (ritiwi, p. 20)
	Social Embeddedness	Socially embedded emotion-guided action in the school context	435	59	“Another key element was the feedback from LV. He provided us with constructive feedback on how to revise and improve our project results. His feedback was particularly helpful because it helped us improve the structure and precision of our analysis. His comments led to a clearer and more coherent presentation of our results, which strengthened the validity and reliability of our conclusions.” (heniwi, p. 189)
Emotional Competence	Perception of emotions	Perception of positive emotions	530	60	“I really appreciated how well we supported each other as a group toward the end of the project and how smoothly our collaboration went. We proofread each other’s sections, provided feedback, and, when necessary, contributed ideas and suggestions to improve the quality of our work.” (kasibr, p. 122)
		Perception of negative emotions	168	46	“I am currently disappointed and a little frustrated that our teacher did not use this in the way I had envisioned, since the escape room we developed is, in the end, useless to her and her class. Since she also showed little interest in the survey results (and her primary goal was to have a ready-to-use escape room; she didn’t care whether we were researching motivation or knowledge gain), I also don’t feel that the teacher derived much benefit from the project.” (elmawi, p. 131)
		Perception of ambivalent emotions	105	43	“The project caused mixed feelings, especially when it comes to communication and collaboration. On the one hand, I had a very positive experience working with NN in particular; on the other hand, I’m a bit disappointed by the lack of communication and support from L.” (ritiwi, p. 86)

(Continued)

TABLE 4 Continued

Theme	Category	Subcategory	References (n)	Preservice teachers (N)	Anchor example
	Emotional Sensitivity	Sensitivity to supporting conditions	527	60	"The close collaboration with my group members was particularly helpful. Together, we discussed which points were relevant for the poster, how to present the data visually, and how to formulate the key messages. This teamwork not only helped clarify the technical aspects but also showed me how important clear communication and reliability are during project phases with tight deadlines." (anlaba, p. 285)
		Sensitivity to stressful conditions	178	46	"Two people in my group, who contributed less to the presentation than I had hoped, have once again confirmed my view that, for a research project carried out within a group, every member of the group is fundamentally important. As soon as one person fails to fulfill the tasks and expectations assigned to them, it creates an additional burden for someone else in the group." (suluwi, p. 209)
		Sensitivity to contradicting conditions	90	40	It seems like an interesting way to combine theory and practice. At the same time, though, it seems a little overwhelming at first glance, since I wasn't entirely sure what to expect at the beginning." (tiviei, p. 20)
	Expression of emotions	Sharing emotions	86	41	"I communicated regularly with my project group, which included meetings and discussions about planning and implementing the project. This collaboration allowed us to share different perspectives and ideas." (heniwi, p. 188)
	Emotion Management	Perceived control of emotions	139	53	"The initial difficulties taught me that it's worth persevering despite setbacks and unexpected challenges. I've also realized that I'm capable of finding creative solutions and responding flexibly to change." (evkama, p. 108)
		Limited emotional control	34	22	"Since communication with the teacher on the one hand, and communication within the group on the other, wasn't always very easy, I sometimes felt a bit uncertain and as if our project were up in the air." (kasibr, p. 96)

N = 60 Preservice teachers; n = References/number of the mentioned subcategory across all reflective diaries; Anchor examples are anonymized by participants themselves; p = position of statement in their reflective diary.

Overall, the Greek dataset is characterized by strong manifestations of Social Embeddedness, positive emotional experiences, and adaptive responses to challenges. While Emotional Competence was evident through emotional awareness, sensitivity, and regulation, Emotional Agency became visible when these emotional resources informed collaboration, adaptation, and engagement with professional tasks.

Cross-national synthesis

The cross-national comparison revealed both common and context-specific manifestations of emotional agency across

Germany, Austria, and Greece. Across all three countries, Social Embeddedness emerged as the dominant dimension of emotional agency. Emotional experiences were primarily mobilized through collaboration, communication, and interaction with peers, teachers, and project partners, highlighting the fundamentally relational nature of emotional agency in service-learning settings. Figure 2 illustrates the relative distribution of the three dimensions of emotional agency across the national samples.

References to socially embedded emotion-guided action accounted for the highest frequencies in Germany (499 references; 98% of participants), Austria (435 references; 98%), and Greece (166 references; 85%), a quantitative overview is provided in Table 6. This finding reinforces the qualitative

TABLE 5 Greek reflective diaries: dimensions of emotional agency and emotional competence.

Theme	Category	Subcategory	References (n)	Preservice teachers (N)	Anchor example
Emotional Agency	Action Regulation	Emotion as a driver of action	63	32	"I realized how important it is to form subgroups within a larger group in order to reduce the workload and avoid misunderstandings or friction that can arise in a group without clearly defined roles." (mageio, p. 81)
	Reflective Processing	Emotions as decision-making factors in service-learning	66	34	"Communication and feedback among us (as colleagues from various academic fields) led to improvements, reflection, and revisions, and gave rise to innovative perspectives." (doanth, p. 22)
		Emotions as motivation in the service-learning process	55	26	"Working with my teammates helped me develop a sense of team spirit and motivated me to actively contribute to achieving our ultimate goal." (maelde, p. 31)
	Social Embeddedness	Socially embedded emotion-guided action in the school context	166	47	"The exchange of ideas was crucial to the smooth progress of the process. The most valuable aspects were group collaboration, the expansion of subject knowledge, and the development of critical thinking skills in compiling the material." (aigeam, p. 64)
Emotional Competence	Perception of emotions	Perception of positive emotions	162	51	"The best part was when the program was finished, because there was a sense of joy and relief at having completed the work." (nieybo, p. 67)
		Perception of negative emotions	29	19	"What I didn't like the anxiety and stress that the entire process caused me, both because of the workload and, above all, because of the significance of the Teaching Clinic as a European program." (evgeio, p. 11)
		Perception of ambivalent emotions	36	26	"Although we didn't work well together at first, we eventually found a way to function as a team." (elstat, p. 21)
	Emotional Sensitivity	Sensitivity to supporting conditions	146	47	"When working on a group project, the most important thing is good communication and collaboration with your teammates and the instructors in charge—something we had in abundance." (elgaat, p. 48)
		Sensitivity to stressful conditions	24	15	"Time management was also a challenge. The many demands and deadlines sometimes caused stress and pressure." (jumaka, p. 22)
		Sensitivity to contradicting conditions	11	9	"Every group project comes with its own set of difficulties, and this one was no exception; it started off with some challenges because we were working with people we didn't know. I appreciated having the opportunity to engage with something different in the field of education, but I was disappointed by the delays we encountered." (eldhar, p. 9)
	Expression of emotions	Sharing emotions	38	22	"I learned to adapt to new situations, share my thoughts, and respect my colleagues' pace and rhythm." (baella, p. 47)
	Emotion Management	Perceived control of emotions	71	35	"I took on new roles outside my usual scope of work and learned that the 'new' is always a challenge that should be met not with fear, but with enthusiasm as an incentive to gain new experiences" (aievag, p. 83)

(Continued)

TABLE 5 Continued

Theme	Category	Subcategory	References (n)	Preservice teachers (N)	Anchor example
		Limited emotional control	24	17	"Although we had no problems whatsoever as a group, I constantly felt that I wasn't contributing much – though this was due to the topic we were covering, not to poor communication or any shortcoming on the part of the instructors." (makvse, p. 9)

N = 55 Preservice teachers; *n* = References/number of the mentioned subcategory across all reflective diaries; Anchor examples are anonymized by participants themselves; *p* = position of statement in their reflective diary.

TABLE 6 Quantitative overview of emotional agency and emotional competence.

Theme	Category	Subcategory	Germany	Austria	Greece
Emotional Agency	Action Regulation	Emotion as a driver of action	<i>n</i> = 94 (<i>N</i> = 57/61%)	<i>n</i> = 106 (<i>N</i> = 42/70%)	<i>n</i> = 63 (<i>N</i> = 32/58%)
	Reflective Processing	Emotions as decision-making factors in service-learning	50 (31/33%)	67 (36/60%)	66 (34/62%)
		Emotions as motivation in the service-learning process	149 (69/73%)	132 (47/78%)	55 (26/47%)
	Social Embeddedness	Socially embedded emotion-guided action in the school context	499 (92/98%)	435 (59/98%)	166 (47/85%)
Emotional Competence	Perception of emotions	Perception of positive emotions	896 (94/100%)	530 (60/100%)	162 (51/93%)
		Perception of negative emotions	129 (59/63%)	168 (46/77%)	29 (19/35%)
		Perception of ambivalent emotions	50 (37/39%)	105 (43/72%)	36 (26/47%)
	Emotional Sensitivity	Sensitivity to supporting conditions	884 (94/100%)	527 (60/100%)	146 (47/85%)
		Sensitivity to stressful conditions	160 (66/70%)	178 (46/77%)	24 (15/27%)
		Sensitivity to contradicting conditions	22 (18/19%)	90 (40/67%)	11 (9/16%)
	Expression of emotions	Sharing emotions	102 (55/59%)	86 (41/68%)	38 (22/40%)
	Emotion Management	Perceived control of emotions	136 (64/68%)	139 (53/88%)	71 (35/63%)
		Limited emotional control	78 (43/46%)	34 (22/37%)	24 (17/31%)

N(Germany) = 94; *N*(Austria) = 60; *N*(Greece) = 55 preservice teachers, *n* = references.

results, suggesting that emotional agency is enacted primarily through collaboration, interaction, and collective engagement.

The dimensions of Action Regulation and Reflective Processing were also evident across all three countries, although their relative prominence differed. Emotions as drivers of action were reported by 61% of German, 70% of Austrian, and 58% of Greek participants. Similarly, emotions informed professional decision-making for 33% of German, 60% of Austrian, and 62% of Greek participants. Motivation emerged as another important manifestation of emotional agency, particularly in Austria (78%) and Germany (73%), while being less pronounced in Greece (47%).

These findings indicate distinct national profiles of emotional agency. In Germany, manifestations of emotional agency were particularly characterized by motivational engagement and collaborative participation. In Austria, emotional agency was more strongly associated with Reflective Processing, with participants frequently using emotional experiences as a basis for professional reflection, meaning-making, and future-oriented decision-making. In Greece, manifestations of

emotional agency were most evident in collaboration and adaptive responses to challenges, with emotions supporting engagement, behavioral adjustment, and participation in collective learning processes.

Overall, the findings suggest that emotional agency is fundamentally relational and action-oriented. The three dimensions of emotional agency were evident across all countries, their relative prominence varied according to the respective educational environments and learning experiences.

Figure 2 illustrates both the shared relational nature of emotional agency and the context-specific patterns identified across the three teacher education settings.

Across all three countries, Social Embeddedness emerged as the most prominent manifestation of emotional agency, highlighting the central role of collaboration, communication, and shared professional activity in service-learning settings. At the same time, the relative prominence of Action Regulation and Reflective Processing varied across the national samples. While the German dataset was characterized by strong motivational and collaborative engagement, the Austrian dataset

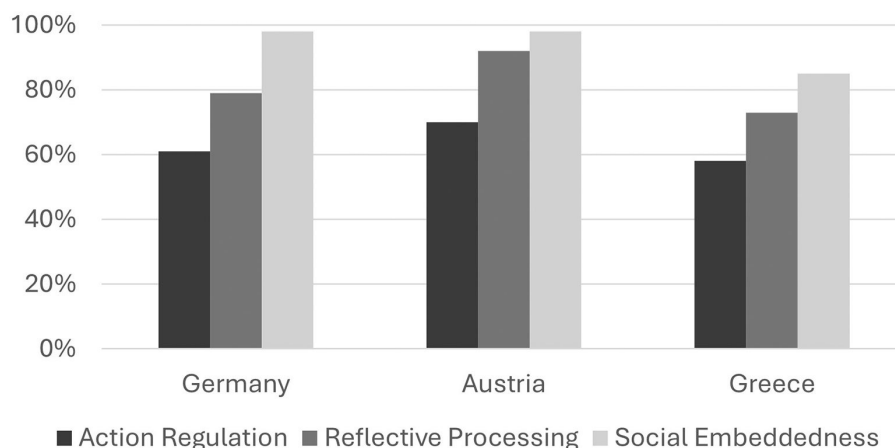


FIGURE 2

Cross-national distribution of emotional agency dimensions. Percentages indicate the proportion of preservice teachers within each national sample who contributed at least one coded segment to the respective dimension of emotional agency. Sample sizes were $N = 94$ (Germany), $N = 60$ (Austria), and $N = 55$ (Greece).

showed a greater emphasis on reflective meaning-making and professional learning. In the Greek dataset, manifestations of emotional agency were particularly associated with collaboration and adaptive responses to challenges.

Taken together, Figure 2 illustrates both the shared and context-specific nature of emotional agency. Although emotional agency was consistently enacted through action regulation, reflective processing, and social embeddedness, the relative importance of these dimensions varied across teacher education contexts in Germany, Austria, and Greece.

Discussion

RQ1: how is emotional agency manifested in preservice teachers' service-learning experiences through action regulation, reflective processing, and social embeddedness?

The findings provide a comprehensive answer to RQ1 by demonstrating how emotional agency is manifested in preservice teachers' service-learning experiences through action regulation, reflective processing, and social embeddedness. Across all three national contexts, emotional agency became visible when preservice teachers mobilized emotional experiences to adapt their behavior, reflect on professional challenges, and engage in collaborative action. These findings support the conceptualization of emotional agency as the enactment of emotional competence in practice and as a dynamic, socially situated process through which emotions shape professional action and decision-making (Benesch, 2018; Hökkä et al., 2019, 2022, 2023).

Among the three dimensions, Social Embeddedness emerged as the most prominent manifestation of emotional agency. Emotional experiences gained meaning primarily through interactions with peers, teachers, and external partners. Emotions supported collaboration, sustained engagement, and contributed to collective problem-solving. This finding is

consistent with research emphasizing the fundamentally relational nature of emotional agency and its emergence through interaction, participation, and collaborative engagement (Hökkä et al., 2017, 2022, 2023; Vanhanen et al., 2026). It also highlights the importance of social support and interpersonal relationships for preservice teachers' professional learning and development (Zhang et al., 2025).

Although service-learning is inherently collaborative and socially oriented, the prominence of Social Embeddedness should not be interpreted solely as a characteristic of emotional agency itself. The pedagogical structure of service-learning, which emphasizes authentic collaboration, shared responsibility, and interaction with peers, teachers, and community partners, likely contributed to the salience of this dimension by creating numerous opportunities for emotions to be expressed, negotiated, and enacted within social relationships. At the same time, the findings suggest that emotional agency is fundamentally enacted through social interaction. Emotional experiences became professionally meaningful when they were shared, negotiated, and reflected upon with others. Rather than creating emotional agency, the service-learning context appears to make its relational character particularly visible. The findings therefore support relational perspectives on emotional agency by demonstrating that emotions are not only individually experienced but also socially mediated resources for professional action.

Action Regulation and Reflective Processing represented additional manifestations of emotional agency. Through Action Regulation, emotional experiences informed behavioral adaptation, persistence, and responses to challenges. Through Reflective Processing, emotions contributed to interpretation, meaning-making, and professional decision-making. Together, these findings suggest that emotional experiences function not merely as reactions to events but as resources that support learning, adaptation, and professional action in service-learning contexts (Chaseley and Abercrombie, 2025).

The findings further clarify the relationship between emotional competence and emotional agency. While emotional competence was evident in participants' awareness,

understanding, expression, and regulation of emotions, emotional agency became visible only when these emotional resources informed professional action. Emotional competence therefore represents an important foundation for professional learning, whereas emotional agency captures how emotional experiences become professionally consequential through action regulation, reflective processing, and social embeddedness. In this way, the study extends competence-oriented approaches by demonstrating that emotional resources acquire professional relevance through their enactment in socially embedded contexts.

RQ2: how do manifestations of emotional agency vary across teacher education contexts in Germany, Austria, and Greece?

The findings provide a nuanced answer to RQ2 by revealing both shared and context-specific manifestations of emotional agency across the three teacher education contexts. Across all countries, Social Embeddedness emerged as the dominant manifestation of emotional agency, indicating that emotional experiences primarily manifested in professional action through collaboration, communication, and interaction with others. Although service-learning is inherently collaborative, this finding suggests that emotional agency is fundamentally relational in nature. Emotional experiences became professionally meaningful when they were shared, negotiated, and acted upon within social interactions, supporting relational perspectives on emotional agency (Benesch, 2018; Hökkä et al., 2022, 2023).

At the same time, the findings reveal distinct national profiles. In Germany, manifestations of emotional agency were particularly associated with motivational engagement and collaborative participation. Emotional experiences frequently functioned as resources that sustained involvement and supported collective action. In Austria, emotional agency was more strongly characterized by Reflective Processing. Participants frequently engaged with emotional complexity, uncertainty, and ambivalence, using these experiences as a basis for professional reflection, meaning-making, and future-oriented decision-making. In Greece, manifestations of emotional agency were most evident in collaboration and adaptive responses to challenges. Emotional experiences supported engagement, behavioral adjustment, and participation in collective learning processes.

These differences suggest that emotional agency is shaped not only by individual emotional resources but also by the educational contexts in which professional learning occurs. The findings support research emphasizing that emotions and agency are embedded within institutional, cultural, and pedagogical environments rather than solely within individual psychological processes (Kamali and Nazari, 2025; Kyriazopoulou et al., 2025). However, given the qualitative and exploratory nature of this study, these differences should be interpreted with caution. While the observed patterns are consistent with contextual influences within teacher education, the present design does not allow conclusions regarding the specific sources of these differences. They may also reflect cohort characteristics, institutional variations within countries, or differences.

Importantly, the differences identified across the three countries should not be interpreted as different levels of

emotional agency. Rather, they point to different pathways through which emotional experiences manifest in professional action. While the enactment of emotional agency varied across contexts, its relational and action-oriented character remained evident in all three teacher education settings.

Taken together, the findings suggest that emotional agency represents a context-sensitive process through which emotions become professionally consequential. Rather than attributing the observed national profiles exclusively to country-level differences, the findings point to the interplay of contextual, institutional, and participant-related factors that may shape how emotional agency is expressed in service-learning-based teacher education. The comparison across Germany, Austria, and Greece therefore highlights both the shared foundations and the contextual variability of emotional agency in service-learning-based teacher education.

Limitations and implications

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings related to RQ1 and RQ2. First, the study relies on reflective diaries, which provide valuable insights into participants' interpretations of emotional experiences but cannot fully capture emotional agency as it unfolds in real-time professional interactions. Consequently, some manifestations of emotional agency—particularly those related to Action Regulation, Reflective Processing, and Social Embeddedness—may have remained implicit or unarticulated. While the findings provide evidence for the proposed operationalization of emotional agency (RQ1), additional data sources such as observations or interviews could further strengthen the validity of these dimensions.

Second, the study was conducted within service-learning contexts associated with the Erasmus+ International Teaching Clinic Network project in Germany, Austria, and Greece. Although the shared project framework enhanced comparability across contexts, the findings cannot be generalized to all teacher education programs or national settings. Furthermore, differences in language, reflective writing practices, and institutional traditions may have influenced how participants articulated emotional experiences and professional actions. These factors should be considered when interpreting the cross-national differences identified in RQ2.

Future research could strengthen and further validate the proposed operationalization of emotional agency by combining reflective diaries with interviews, observations, and longitudinal approaches. Such designs would provide deeper insights into how manifestations of emotional agency develop over time and whether the dimensions of Action Regulation, Reflective Processing, and Social Embeddedness are transferable across different educational contexts and teacher education systems.

The findings also have important implications for teacher education. In response to RQ1, the study demonstrates that emotional agency becomes visible when emotional experiences manifest in professional action through behavioral adaptation, reflection, and social interaction. Teacher education should therefore focus not only on developing emotional competence but also on creating opportunities for its enactment in authentic professional contexts. This may be achieved through pedagogical

approaches that combine authentic practice experiences with structured reflection, collaborative problem-solving, and guided mentoring. For example, reflective diaries, peer discussion groups, feedback sessions with mentors, and collaborative service-learning projects can provide opportunities for preservice teachers to examine emotional experiences, negotiate meaning with others, and translate emotional insights into professional action. Such learning environments may foster all three dimensions of emotional agency by supporting behavioral adaption, reflective meaning-making, and socially embedded learning.

In response to RQ2, the study highlights both shared and context-specific manifestations of emotional agency across Germany, Austria, and Greece. While Social Embeddedness emerged as a common foundation across all three contexts, the relative prominence of Reflective Processing and Action Regulation varied. These findings suggest that emotional agency is simultaneously relational and context-sensitive, emphasizing the importance of considering institutional and educational conditions when designing teacher education programs and when investigating emotional processes across national settings. Teacher educators and program designers should therefore provide diverse learning opportunities that encourage collaboration, structured reflection, and adaptive responses to authentic professional challenges while remaining responsive to the specific institutional and cultural contexts in which teacher education is embedded.

More broadly, the proposed framework offers a transferable approach for examining how emotional experiences become professionally meaningful. Future research should further investigate the applicability of this framework across different educational contexts and explore how emotional agency relates to professional identity development, resilience, and long-term professional learning.

Conclusion

This study examined how emotional agency is manifested in preservice teachers' service-learning experiences and how these manifestations vary across teacher education contexts in Germany, Austria, and Greece. The findings demonstrate that emotional agency becomes visible when emotional experiences manifest in professional action through Action Regulation, Reflective Processing, and Social Embeddedness. Across all three educational contexts, emotions informed behavioral adaptation, professional reflection, and collaborative engagement, highlighting the relational and action-oriented nature of emotional agency.

The cross-national analysis identified both shared patterns and context-dependent manifestations of emotional agency. While Social Embeddedness emerged as the dominant dimension across all countries, distinct patterns were evident in the relative prominence of the three dimensions. In Germany, manifestations of emotional agency were particularly associated with motivational engagement and collaborative participation. In Austria, emotional agency was more strongly characterized by Reflective Processing and engagement with emotional complexity. In Greece, emotional agency was most evident in collaboration and adaptive responses to professional challenges. These findings suggest that emotional agency is shaped by educational and institutional contexts while maintaining a shared relational foundation.

The study further contributes to theory development by clarifying the relationship between emotional competence and emotional agency. While emotional competence provides the emotional resources needed to perceive, understand, express, and regulate emotions, emotional agency captures how these resources are mobilized in professional practice. The findings therefore support the view that emotional competence constitutes an important foundation for professional learning, whereas emotional agency explains how emotional experiences become professionally consequential through action.

By operationalizing emotional agency through Action Regulation, Reflective Processing, and Social Embeddedness, the study provides a theoretically grounded and empirically applicable framework for examining how emotions manifest in professional action in teacher education. The framework offers a basis for future research on emotions, professional learning, and teacher development across diverse educational contexts.

Data availability statement

The datasets presented in this article are not readily available due to privacy or ethics restrictions. Requests to access the datasets should be directed to Elena Stamouli, eleni.stamouli@ur.de.

Ethics statement

The studies involving humans were approved by Ethics Committee of the University of Regensburg, Germany (Approval Number: 24-3715-101). The studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

ES: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. AB: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. PE: Writing – review & editing. DF: Writing – review & editing. JR: Writing – review & editing. KG: Writing – review & editing.

Funding

The author(s) declared that financial support was received for this work and/or its publication. This research was funded by the Erasmus+Programme under Grant Agreement No. 2023-1-AT01-KA220-HED-000159316.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the preservice teachers who participated in this study.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared that this work was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Generative AI statement

The author(s) declared that generative AI was not used in the creation of this manuscript.

Any alternative text (alt text) provided alongside figures in this article has been generated by Frontiers with the support of artificial intelligence and reasonable efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, including review by the authors wherever possible. If you identify any issues, please contact us.

References

- Aramburo, C., and Zhang, Y. (2026). Editorial: the role of teacher emotion in education. *Front. Educ.* 11, 1822568. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2026.1822568
- Barboza-Wilkes, C. J., and Le, T. V. (2024). Diary designs as a compassionate research design. *Public Integrity* 26 (6), 716–730. doi: 10.1080/10999922.2023.2236413
- Benesch, S. (2018). Emotions as agency: feeling rules, emotion labor, and english language teachers' decision-making. *System* 79, 60–69. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2018.03.015
- Boemo, T., Nieto, I., Vazquez, C., and Sanchez-Lopez, A. (2022). Relations between emotion regulation strategies and affect in daily life: a systematic review and meta-analysis of studies using ecological momentary assessments. *Neurosci. Biobehav. Rev.* 139, 104747. doi: 10.1016/j.neubiorev.2022.104747
- Brosch, T., and Steg, L. (2021). Leveraging emotion for sustainable action. *One Earth* 4 (12), 1693–1703. doi: 10.1016/j.oneear.2021.11.006
- Calandri, E., Mastrokoukou, S., Marchisio, C., Monchietto, A., and Graziano, F. (2025). Teacher emotional competence for inclusive education: a systematic review. *Behav. Sci.* 15 (3), 359. doi: 10.3390/bs15030359
- Carson, R. L., and Domangue, E. A. (2013). The emotional component of service-learning. *J. Exp. Educ.* 36 (2), 139–154. doi: 10.1177/1053825913487885
- Castro Mosqueda, H. (2025). The role of emotions in teacher agency: a study of Mexican English language educators. *Profile Issues Teach. Prof. Dev.* 27 (1), 67–82. doi: 10.15446/profile.v27n1.114867
- Chaseley, T. L., and Abercrombie, S. (2025). Using scaffolds to support preservice teachers' reflective practice. *Front. Educ.* 10, 1621269. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2025.1621269
- Colombo, D., Diaz-García, A., Fernandez-Álvarez, J., and Botella, C. (2021). Virtual reality for the enhancement of emotion regulation. *Clin. Psychol. Psychother.* 28 (3), 519–537. doi: 10.1002/cpp.2618
- Cramer, C., Brown, C., and Aldridge, D. (2023). Meta-Reflexivity and teacher professionalism: facilitating multiparadigmatic teacher education to achieve a future-proof profession. *J. Teach. Educ.* 74 (5), 467–480. doi: 10.1177/00224871231162295
- Eder, A. B. (2023). A perceptual control theory of emotional action. *Cogn. Emot.* 37 (7), 1167–1184. doi: 10.1080/02699931.2023.2265234
- Frenzel, A. C., Daniels, L., and Burić, I. (2021). Teacher emotions in the classroom and their implications for students. *Educ. Psychol.* 56 (4), 250–264. doi: 10.1080/00461520.2021.1985501
- Froehlich, D. E., Hobusch, U., and Moeslinger, K. (2021). Research methods in teacher education: meaningful engagement through service-learning. *Front. Educ.* 6, 680404. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2021.680404
- Gentsch, A., and Synofzik, M. (2014). Affective coding: the emotional dimension of agency. *Front. Hum. Neurosci.* 8, 608. doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2014.00608
- Gerbeth, S., and Stamouli, E. (2023). Validating the short version of the multidimensional emotional competence questionnaire. *Psychol. Test Adapt. Dev.* 4 (1), 128–140. doi: 10.1027/2698-1866/a000041
- Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M., and De Lacey, S. (2016). Qualitative research methods: when to use them and how to judge them. *Hum. Reprod.* 31 (3), 498–501. doi: 10.1093/humrep/dev334
- Harris, V. W., Anderson, J., and Visconti, B. (2022). Social emotional ability development (SEAD): an integrated model of practical emotion-based competencies. *Motiv. Emot.* 46 (2), 226–253. doi: 10.1007/s11031-021-09922-1
- Hökkä, P. K., Räikkönen, E., Ikävalko, H., Paloniemi, S., and Vähäsantanen, K. (2022). Emotional agency at work: the development and validation of a measure. *Front. Educ.* 7, 852598. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2022.852598
- Hökkä, P. K., Vähäsantanen, K., and Ikävalko, H. (2023). An integrative approach to emotional agency at work. *Vocat. Learn.* 16 (1), 23–46. doi: 10.1007/s12186-022-09299-3
- Hökkä, P. K., Vähäsantanen, K., Paloniemi, S., and Eteläpelto, A. (2017). "The reciprocal relationship between emotions and agency in the workplace," in *Agency at Work (Vol. 20)*, eds. M. Goller, and S. Paloniemi (Cham: Springer International Publishing), 161–181. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-60943-0_9
- Hökkä, P. K., Vähäsantanen, K., Paloniemi, S., Herranen, S., and Eteläpelto, A. (2019). Emotions in leaders' enactment of professional agency. *J. Workpl. Learn.* 31 (2), 143–165. doi: 10.1108/JWL-07-2018-0086
- Ji, Y., Oubibi, M., Chen, S., Yin, Y., and Zhou, Y. (2022). Pre-service teachers' emotional experience: characteristics, dynamics and sources amid the teaching practicum. *Front. Psychol.* 13, 968513. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.968513
- Kamali, J., and Nazari, M. (2025). Transnational language teachers' emotional vulnerability and professional identity construction: an ecological perspective. *J. Multiling. Multicult. Dev.* 46 (7), 1857–1871. doi: 10.1080/01434632.2023.2257659
- Kim, H., Sefcik, J. S., and Bradway, C. (2017). Characteristics of qualitative descriptive studies: a systematic review. *Res. Nurs. Health.* 40 (1), 23–42. doi: 10.1002/nur.21768
- Körkkö, M., Lutovac, S., and Korte, S.-M. (2024). The sense of inadequacy and uncertainty arising from teacher work: perspectives of pre- and in-service teachers. *Int. J. Educ. Res.* 127, 102410. doi: 10.1016/j.ijer.2024.102410
- Kuckartz, U., and Rädiker, S. (2022). "Datenaufbereitung und datenbereinigung in der qualitativen sozialforschung," in *Handbuch Methoden der Empirischen Sozialforschung*, eds. N. Baur, and J. Blasius (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden), 501–516. doi: 10.1007/978-3-658-37985-8_32
- Kyriazopoulou, M., Metsäpelto, R.-L., Varis, S., Poikkeus, A.-M., Tolvanen, A., Galanaki, E. P., et al. (2025). Teacher education students' emotional intelligence and teacher self-efficacy: a cross-cultural comparison. *Curr. Psychol.* 44 (2), 1206–1218. doi: 10.1007/s12144-024-06999-y
- Lin, T.-H. (2021). Revelations of service-learning project: multiple perspectives of college students' reflection. *PLoS One* 16 (9), e0257754. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0257754
- Lozano-Peña, G., Sáez-Delgado, F., López-Angulo, Y., and Mella-Norambuena, J. (2021). Teachers' social-emotional competence: history, concept, models, instruments, and recommendations for educational quality. *Sustainability* 13 (21), 12142. doi: 10.3390/su132112142
- Mänty, K., Järvenoja, H., and Törmänen, T. (2023). The sequential composition of collaborative Groups' emotion regulation in negative socio-emotional interactions. *Eur. J. Psychol. Educ.* 38 (1), 203–224. doi: 10.1007/s10212-021-00589-3
- Matsumoto-Royo, K., Ramírez-Montoya, M. S., and Conget, P. (2021). Opportunities to develop lifelong learning tendencies in practice-based teacher education: getting ready for education 4.0. *Fut. Inte.* 13 (11), 292. doi: 10.3390/fi13110292
- Mayring, P. (2015). "Qualitative content analysis: theoretical background and procedures," in *Approaches to Qualitative Research in Mathematics Education*, eds. A. Bikner-Ahsbals, C. Knipping, and N. Presmeg (Netherlands: Springer), 365–380. doi: 10.1007/978-94-017-9181-6_13

Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

Supplementary material

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2026.1911936/full#supplementary-material>

- McLay, K. F., Thomasse, L., and Reyes, V. C. (2023). Embracing discomfort in active learning and technology-rich higher education settings: sensemaking through reflexive inquiry. *Educ. Technol. Res. Dev.* 71 (3), 1161–1177. doi: 10.1007/s11423-023-10192-6
- Mehler, M., Balint, E., Gralla, M., Pölsnecker, T., Gast, M., Hölzer, M., et al. (2024). Training emotional competencies at the workplace: a systematic review and metaanalysis. *BMC. Psychol.* 12 (1), 718. doi: 10.1186/s40359-024-02198-3
- Naraan, S. (2015). Love's labor lost: emotional agency in a school worker's story of family advocacy. *Int. J. Qual. Stud. Educ.* 28 (1), 92–111. doi: 10.1080/09518398.2013.857060
- Nazari, M., Karimpour, S., and Ranjbar, M. (2024). Emotion labor as professional development work: insights from teachers doing action research. *TESOL Q.* 58 (1), 222–250. doi: 10.1002/tesq.3226
- Nguyen, M. H., and Ngo, X. M. (2025). An activity theory perspective on Vietnamese preservice English teachers' identity construction in relation to tensions, emotion and agency. *Lang. Teach. Res.* 29 (8), 3486–3506. doi: 10.1177/13621688221151046
- Núñez-Regueiro, F., Escrivá-Boulley, G., Azouaghe, S., Leroy, N., and Núñez-Regueiro, S. (2024). "Motivated to teach, but stressed out by teacher education": a content analysis of self-reported sources of stress and motivation among preservice teachers. *J. Teach. Educ.* 75 (1), 76–91. doi: 10.1177/00224871231181374
- OECD (2025). *Education at a Glance 2025: OECD Indicators*. OECD Publishing, 484–507. doi: 10.1787/1c0d9c79-en
- OECD (2026). *Empowering Schools' improvement: Insights from PISA for Schools Case Studies [PISA in Focus]*. Paris: OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). Available online at: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/empowering-schools-improvement_50f6b0e5-en.html (Accessed May 11, 2026).
- Pekrun, R. (2024). Control-Value theory: from achievement emotion to a general theory of human emotions. *Educ. Psychol. Rev.* 36 (3), 83. doi: 10.1007/s10648-024-09909-7
- Rauterkus, H., Hennemann, T., Hagen, T., Krull, J., Nitz, J., Eiben, K., et al. (2025). Teachers' emotional competence and students' social integration: exploring mediation pathways through teacher-student relationships in elementary classrooms. *Front. Educ.* 10, 1713822. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2025.1713822
- Resch, K., and Schritteser, I. (2023). Using the service-learning approach to bridge the gap between theory and practice in teacher education. *Int. J. Inklus. Educ.* 27 (10), 1118–1132. doi: 10.1080/13603116.2021.1882053
- Resch, K., Schritteser, I., and Knapp, M. (2024). Overcoming the theory-practice divide in teacher education with the 'partner school programme'. A conceptual mapping. *Eur. J. Teach. Educ.* 47 (3), 564–580. doi: 10.1080/02619768.2022.2058928
- Savina, E., Fulton, C., and Beaton, C. (2025). Teacher emotional competence: a conceptual model. *Educ. Psychol. Rev.* 37 (2), 40. doi: 10.1007/s10648-025-10018-2
- Schoon, I. (2021). Towards an integrative taxonomy of social-emotional competences. *Front. Psychol.* 12, 515313. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.515313
- Seyri, H., and Ghiasvand, F. (2025). Emotions at the heart of tensions: a transcendental phenomenology of Iranian EFL Teachers' intra- and interpersonal emotional tensions and regulation strategies. *Int. J. Appl. Linguist.* 35 (2), 768–781. doi: 10.1111/ijal.12655
- Stamouli, E., and Gerbeth, S. (2021). The moderating effect of emotional competence on job satisfaction and organisational commitment of healthcare professionals. *BMC. Health. Serv. Res.* 21 (1), 1257. doi: 10.1186/s12913-021-07234-1
- Tao, J., Xu, Y., and Gao, X. A. (2024). Teacher emotions and agency enactment in online teaching. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* 137, 104389. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2023.104389
- Toker-Bradshaw, Ş., and Tezgiden-Cakcak, Y. (2025). Emotion-identity-agency triangle in practicum experience: a pre-service second language teacher's development of critical emotional reflexivity. *RELC J.* 56 (1), 50–65. doi: 10.1177/00336882241279463
- Van Kessel, C., Jacobs, N., Catena, F., and Edmondson, K. (2022). Responding to worldview threats in the classroom: an exploratory study of preservice teachers. *J. Teach. Educ.* 73 (1), 97–109. doi: 10.1177/00224871211051991
- Vanhanen, S., Turjanmaa, E., and Kähäri, O. (2026). Emotions and emotional agency at work: the perspective of trust. *Vocat. Learn.* 19 (1), 1. doi: 10.1007/s12186-025-09380-7
- Yang, S., Shu, D., and Yin, H. (2022). "Teaching, my passion; publishing, my pain": unpacking academics' professional identity tensions through the lens of emotional resilience. *High. Educ.* 84 (2), 235–254. doi: 10.1007/s10734-021-00765-w
- Yazan, B. (2025). Emotional entanglements and intersectional language teacher identities in critical autoethnographic narratives. *Int. J. Appl. Linguist.* 35 (3), 1007–1018. doi: 10.1111/ijal.12697
- Zhang, X., Abdul Rahman, M. N. B., Abd Wahab, H. B., and Qiu, L. (2025). How mentor teachers and emotions influence professional identity and career decisions of preservice preschool teachers. *Front. Educ.* 10, 1569062. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2025.1569062