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Additional Pedagogical Education as a Prerequisite for Entering the Profession: Prestige of the Teaching Profession and Self-Efficacy

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Annotation. This longitudinal study aims to explore the usefulness of additional pedagogical education (APE) for those interested in the teaching profession in Czechia. The main research question is: What role can APE play in developing teacher self-efficacy and increasing the perceived prestige of the teaching profession? A sequential mixed-methods design with repeated data collection was chosen. The results show that APE, as it was set up, could not be useful for teacher self-efficacy or prestige.

Keywords: *teacher self-efficacy, prestige of teaching profession, pedagogical education, teaching profession.*

Introduction

To obtain qualifications for teaching general education subjects at the lower secondary level of primary schools (grades 6–9 of primary schools) and secondary schools, there are still several pathways available in the Czech Republic. Those aspiring to this profession must complete a Master's degree in the field of educational sciences, focusing on specific subjects they wish to teach. For teaching at the lower secondary level of primary schools, this education is mainly provided by faculties of education. Aspirants who have obtained a Master's degree in non-pedagogical fields must complete pedagogical education through

an accredited course in lifelong learning. In this regard, several changes have been made compared to the original standard of study (compare Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, 2019; Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, 2023). The accredited course must be at least 300 hours long (originally 250 hours) and consists of studies in pedagogy and psychology (70 hours), general and subject didactics (80 hours), and reflective practice in schools (150 hours, originally 100 hours). Through this study, an aspirant can gain the qualification to teach subjects that correspond to the focus of their Master's degree.

The need for qualified and quality teachers has been a topic of discussion in the Czech Republic for years (Spilková & Wildová, 2014). The question of the necessary education and qualifications for teachers is frequently raised, spurred by the shortage of teachers in the education system. Current statistics concerning teachers in the Czech Republic are not flattering and point to many neglected areas. The first alarming figures are shown in the shortage of teachers in regions (Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, 2019), leading to a higher number of unqualified teachers in schools (Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, 2019; Czech School Inspection, 2020). The possibility of employing an unqualified teacher for up to three years is provided by law (Act No. 563/2004 Collection of Law). School headteachers themselves state that employing a qualified teacher is considered a problem (Czech School Inspection, 2020). Meanwhile, data from around the world (Salman & Adeniyi, 2012; Machingambi et al., 2018) and from the domestic environment (Czech School Inspection, 2022) indicate that qualified teachers can achieve better results than teachers without the corresponding qualifications. Differences also appear in what qualifications teachers have or what education they have completed (Wiliam, 2018). Another problem arising from the data is the high departure rate of young teachers from schools (Hanušová et al., 2017) and the low number of applicants for teacher education and the profession (Czech Statistical Office, 2020; Korbel & Prokop, n.d.). All mentioned issues lead to a single outcome: Czech schools lack, or will lack in the foreseeable future, quality teachers who could advance the education of children.

This situation may be related to the prestige of the profession and how it is perceived by teachers themselves. In the Czech Republic, teachers are considered to be of relatively high prestige in society (Tuček, 2019), yet the teachers themselves do not perceive it this way. Similarly to their counterparts in Poland, they reflect that society does not value them, they are not well-paid, and are easily replaceable, because, after all, almost anyone can teach (Smak & Walczak, 2017). However, a higher prestige of the teaching profession could lead to a higher interest in studying to become a teacher (Vilppu et al., 2022), lower dropout rates, and higher job satisfaction (Türkoğlu et al., 2017; Biçer, 2023; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016), and ultimately, a greater number of quality teachers in schools (Fwu & Wang, 2010). Besides feeling undervalued in society, Czech teachers have very low confidence in their professional abilities to manage specific situations in their profession. From the results of TALIS (Czech School Inspection, 2020), it emerges that Czech teachers have one of the lowest self-efficacy scores among all countries studied, meaning

they do not consider themselves sufficient experts, so it is no wonder they perceive their profession as lacking prestige.

The question remains whether making the teaching profession accessible to those without qualifications, or to teachers who have completed a 300-hour educational program, can improve the situation. If they do not feel professionally prepared to face everyday situations in school, it will be difficult for society to value them more, and teachers will continue to perceive their profession as lacking prestige.

Prestige of the Teaching Profession

The prestige of a profession and our understanding of it have significantly changed over the decades since this construct was first introduced. The pioneer in this concept was Veblen, who in his work "Theory of the Leisure Class" from 1899 (Veblen & Orgocka, 1999) defined prestigious professions and the factors that make them prestigious. Veblen and Orgocka (1999) argued that the sources of a profession's prestige include leisure, conspicuous consumption, labour distribution, time for self-development and education, or an interest in arts and culture. According to Veblen and Orgocka (1999), examples of prestigious professions included university professors. However, since that period, the prestige of a profession and its understanding have significantly changed, and today, the sources that constitute it differ. One change was the impact of higher education attainment on the prestige of professions. Based on his research, Klein (2015) indicates that times have changed since the past, with a larger number of people achieving university education than before. This fact itself suggests that having a higher education degree is no longer a privilege of a small number of people working in various professions. Professional closure does not typically occur based on a university diploma, but on the specialisation needed for a specific profession. Veblen and Orgocka (1999) mentioned that what not everyone can have become prestigious in its own way. The concept of closure also appears in more modern sociological works, discussing social closure as the exclusion of a group (in our case, a profession), which then becomes harder to access and thereby more prestigious (Wegener, 1992; Weber et al., 1948). In the context of professions, this means that not everyone can practise a profession, but only those who meet the qualification and specialisation requirements (Keturakyte, 2021). This is likely one of the reasons why doctors (Tuček, 2019), who require specialised education, are often considered to belong to a prestigious profession. In the territory of what is now the Czech Republic, the teaching profession was the second most prestigious before World War II, but it started to decline after 1970 (Penn, 1975). Penn (1975) mainly attributes this to the fact that the prestige of a profession is linked to its usefulness to society, which can vary according to the composition of society. This is confirmed by data from the same period in Czechoslovakia and Poland, which ranked farmers highly but placed university professors lower (Penn,

1975). After 1989, the prestige of teachers in the Czech Republic fell even further, as a result of low salaries and social image in society (Palouček & Zounek, 2021). A similar situation – with the declining prestige of the teaching profession – is encountered in some other countries outside the Czech Republic (Berzin et al., 2022), or its perception by teachers themselves is declining (Smak & Walczak, 2017).

However, from what sources does the prestige of the teaching profession derive? In OECD countries, teachers enjoy the highest prestige in Finland (OECD, 2020). One of the sources is the aforementioned closure, the exclusivity associated with the profession. In Finland, only 10% of applicants are admitted to teacher training programmes, representing a low acceptance rate, which according to Keturakytė (2021), proportionally increases the profession's prestige. Other sources contributing to its high prestige in Finland include significant autonomy at work, quality education, social image, motivating salaries and benefits, and importance in society (Keturakytė, 2021; Prucha & Kansanen, 2016). Conversely, countries where the prestige of the teaching profession is low perceive as sources of low prestige, low salaries (Tastanbekova, 2020) and no benefits (Orlov, 2000), low qualification and poor-quality education (Bilbokaitė-Skianterienė & Bilbokaitė, 2018; Orlov, 2000; Zigatchinova, 2010), low respect in society (Husnutdinova, 2017; Tomšíková et al., 2021), or bad social image (Koller et al., 2018).

The sources from which the prestige of the teaching profession is derived today are mainly considered to be salary conditions (and associated benefits), social image, and education (Hoyle, 2001). Several authors point out salary conditions as a crucial component of a profession's prestige (Orlov, 2000; Husnutdinova, 2017) and consider a raise in salaries a necessary step for the prestige to increase (Bilbokaitė-Skiauterienė & Bilbokaitė, 2018; Tastanbekova, 2020). Education represents a source of expertise and specialisation, i.e., profound knowledge linked to the profession (Hoyle, 2001). The last-mentioned source of a profession's prestige is social image. This can be built by the media (Koller et al., 2018), respect in society (Husnutdinova, 2017; Majchrowska, 2021), or parents' trust in the teacher's expertise (Prucha & Kansanen, 2016). However, it is important to note at the end of this chapter that prestige and its components are challenging to study objectively (Ingersoll & Perda, 2008) and it is important to examine it from both the perspective of society and the actors. Different perspectives can thus reveal potential discrepancies between the prestige of the profession in society and its perception by the actors, i.e., the teachers (Smak & Walczak, 2017).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy stems from Bandura's (1986) concept of self-efficacy, which describes it as the belief in one's capabilities to manage specific tasks (Bandura, 1997). Bong and Skaalvik (2003) emphasize that self-efficacy is not a belief in one's skills or abilities,

but rather a belief in how one can solve a particular task using any skills and abilities available. Based on how confident we are in achieving a goal in a specific situation, we also choose the difficulty of the situation and approach (Bandura, 1997). Thus, it can be said that the higher our self-efficacy in a specific area, the greater challenges we aim for, and thereby, we can achieve higher performance (Gavora et al., 2020). However, Bandura (1997) cautions against confusing self-efficacy with general self-confidence. High self-confidence in oneself does not necessarily mean that one will also have a strong belief in their capabilities in a specific, particular situation. Self-efficacy is formed over a long period, based on repeated experience with specific situations and whether the individual consistently manages them successfully or not (Bandura, 1997). Lippke (2020) lists four main sources from which individuals form their self-efficacy: own experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (Lippke, 2020). Based on how these sources shape our self-efficacy, they manifest in our actions in reality, such as in choice (approach, avoid), effort and persistence, thinking and decision-making, and emotional reactions (stress, depression, etc.) (Lippke, 2020).

In line with Bandura's concept of self-efficacy, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) define teacher self-efficacy as individual beliefs of teachers in their own abilities to plan, organize, and carry out activities necessary to achieve set educational goals. Teachers form their self-efficacy from the beginning of their studies and continue throughout their practice (Gavora et al., 2020). Therefore, it is not surprising that more experienced teachers have higher self-efficacy than their younger colleagues (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). However, experience is not the only factor that impacts teachers' beliefs in their capabilities. As it turns out, the professionalisation and education of teachers can also play a crucial role in increasing their belief that they are prepared to handle situations they face in schools (Ross & Bruce, 2010). Higher self-efficacy can then manifest in many areas of the teaching profession and have multiple impacts. Teachers with higher self-efficacy experience lower stress at work (Klassen & Chiu, 2010), lower levels of burn-out (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007), higher job satisfaction (Biçer, 2023; Türkoğlu et al., 2017), and are less likely to leave the teaching profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). They also achieve better educational outcomes with their students, as seen in student engagement and academic results (Sarfraz et al., 2022). Developing teacher self-efficacy can thus have effects not only on an individual level but can also contribute to solving societal issues, such as teacher attrition (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016).

Summary of the Theoretical Part

Enhancing teacher self-efficacy among teachers can represent an important factor for the prestige of the teaching profession. Teachers with higher self-efficacy are more motivated and effective in teaching, experience higher job satisfaction, and have lower levels of stress and burnout. Such teachers act professionally and competently, which can influence the social image and opinions about their knowledge and education in society.

These are sources that contribute to the prestige of a profession in society, which in turn translates into the perceived prestige by the teachers themselves.

Methods

Research Aims and Design

This research aims to contribute to the professional discussion with data that shows to what extent the current supplementary education in pedagogical sciences (APE) is useful for its graduates and their self-efficacy, as well as for the state of the teaching profession and its perceived prestige. The main research question is: What role can additional education play in the development of teacher self-efficacy and in increasing the perceived prestige of the teaching profession among teachers themselves? The specific research questions are:

- What is the relationship between the prestige of the teaching profession and entering the APE?
- How do self-efficacy and perceived prestige change between entering and completing the APE?
- How are self-efficacy and perceived prestige related among APE participants?
- How do the participants themselves perceive the usefulness of the APE?

To achieve the goal of this research, I chose a quantitative-qualitative mixed design (Vlčková & Lojdová, 2016), which Creswell (2014) refers to as an explanatory sequential design. Based on the results of the quantitative part of the research, I explored some phenomena in the qualitative part, using in-depth semi-structured interviews.

The research tool for quantitative data collection consisted of two research scales. The adapted and piloted Czech version of the NTSES (Fico, 2023) and the created and piloted scale for measuring the perceived prestige of the teaching profession (Fico, 2022). The outline of the semi-structured interview was created based on the results of the quantitative data and deepens the findings on possible relationships between APE, self-efficacy, and perceived prestige of the teaching profession. The interviews were recorded on a dictaphone and then transcribed. The results of both the quantitative and qualitative analysis were combined and linked to improve understanding of the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

Research Sample and Data Collection

The research sample consists of participants in continuing education programs in the field of pedagogical sciences. The quantitative data collection was conducted in two waves, as a pre-test and post-test. The first measurement involved participants who had entered the program and were in their first semester. The second measurement involved participants who met the conditions for admission to the final program exam. In this

quantitative part, all institutions offering APE were contacted (10 institutions). One institution refused to participate in the research. One did not open the educational program due to a lack of interest. The remaining eight institutions agreed to participate and expressed support for sending out research questionnaires to their participants. The first measurement was thus attended by 152 respondents from 8 different institutions. The response rate ranged from 5–50% (rounded to whole numbers). The second measurement was again attended by all 8 institutions, however the response rate ranged from 0–20% (rounded to whole numbers) and reached 47 respondents. In total, N = 199.

For the purpose of the interview, all participants in the quantitative survey who provided me with an email with the aim of being contacted regarding participation in the research interviews were contacted by email. They were offered a non-financial reward for participating in the interview. Two out of 32 participants responded to the email request. Subsequently, the program guarantors at three institutions were asked to present the request for participation in person. These three institutions were selected based on availability, due to the need to conduct in-depth interviews. Four more participants responded. In total, N=6 in the qualitative part. A description of the participants is attached below.

Janette – Graduated from the Faculty of Science, specializing in environmental protection. She has worked in the non-profit and leisure education sectors in the past.

Giuseppe – Graduated in forest engineering with a focus on forestry. He has worked as a gamekeeper and forest technician in the past.

Jennifer – Graduated from the Faculty of Arts in the field of librarianship and archiving. She worked in a managerial position in a fast-food chain.

Beatrice –Graduated from the Faculty of Arts in the field of Czech studies and linguistics. She has worked as a teacher in the past, even during her studies.

Eleonora – Graduated from the Technical University with a focus on chemical process management and management of the chemical and food industry. She has worked as an administrative worker in a large company in the past.

Lucilla – Graduated from the Faculty of Science in the field of geology. Apart from part-time jobs during her studies, she had no work experience, she joined the program right after graduation.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis was performed in SPSS and JASP using descriptive statistics, correlation statistics, and u-tests. I analysed the data at the factor level, not at the level of individual items. This type of data work was made possible by the results of pilot studies of both scales, which showed a factor structure using CFA (Fico, 2022; 2023). Using descriptive statistics, I explored the distribution of data, mean values, frequencies of occurrence, and standard deviation. I calculated correlations using Spearman's correlation coefficient, which I chose as more appropriate due to the non-normality of the

data distribution and ordinal scale (Bishara & Hittner, 2012; Schober et al., 2018). A weak correlation between variables is considered to be above -0.1/0.1, a medium-strong correlation 0.3/ -0.3, and a strong correlation at a coefficient of at least 0.4/ -0.4 in Spearman's correlation coefficient. These values represent recommended cut-off points in the social sciences (Akoglu, 2018). I chose the Mann-Whitney U test because it is more suitable due to the data distribution, small sample size, and difference in sample sizes (Nachar, 2008; Sawilowski, 2005). I calculated at a significance level of p=0.05.

Qualitative data analysis was performed in Atlas.ti and in accordance with the principles of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). The interview transcripts were coded using Open coding. I then discussed the codes with a colleague, the guarantor of the APE. This was followed by the axial coding phase when I grouped and categorized the codes according to their meaning. In the selective coding phase, I defined categories based on the saturation of categories, among which I searched for relationships and links. In this phase, I created an analytical scheme that helped me with the actual analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Ethical Aspects of the Research

All research participants were familiarised with the research background and participated voluntarily. All participants in the research are adults and do not fall into a vulnerable group of the population. The research questionnaire did not collect any sensitive or personal information, and answering the questions was completely voluntary. Participants agreed to participate in the research and were informed about the processing, storage and publication of data. Without the explicit consent of individual participants, I did not and do not have any contact information for them. Participation in the research was completely anonymous and it is not possible to identify who filled out the questionnaires even retrospectively. Participants in the research interviews signed a consent form to participate in the research and to the processing of all data. The procedure was consulted with the ethics committee of my home university.

Results

The results are presented in a structured manner according to specific research questions. In the text, I link quantitative data with qualitative data, in accordance with the recommendations of Vlčková and Lojdová (2016).

SVO1: What is the relationship between the prestige of the teaching profession and entry into APE?

80.3% of attendees declare that they chose the teaching profession based on their internal motivation, the desire to practice it. Nearly every sixth attendee (15.8%) originally

did not want to teach, and the choice of profession represents a backup plan for them. The most common reason for entering APE, as stated by attendees (79.6%), is their desire to become better teachers relating to their profession choice. Conversely, nearly every fifth attendee (18.4%) entered APE because they were pressured by their employer or by law.

Table 1
Prestige – Plan A / Plan B to Become a Teacher

	N	Mean
1st Factor - plan A	122	2,8230
1st Factor - plan B	30	2,6800
2nd Factor - plan A	122	2,5148
2nd Factor - plan B	30	2,3733
3rd Factor - plan A	122	2,2514
3rd Factor - plan B	30	2,4556
Prestige - plan A	122	2,5297
Prestige - plan B	30	2,5030

In Table 1, you can see that attendees choosing the teaching profession due to a strong desire to become teachers (plan A) perceive the prestige of the teaching profession slightly higher than those who chose it as a plan B. They also scored higher in two factors (education and social image). In terms of salary, those with teaching as a plan B perceive the prestige higher – that is related to their extrinsic motivation to teach. However, a significant difference at the significance level of 0.05 is only in factor no. 1 (education).

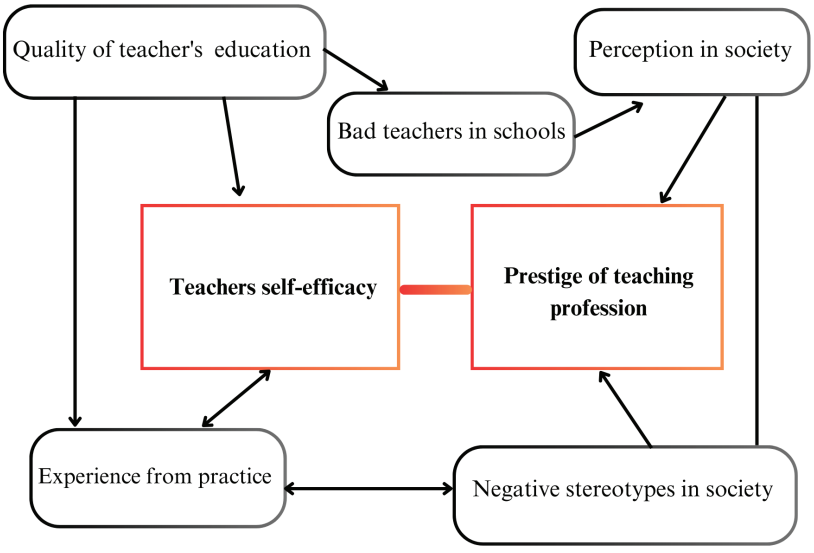
APE attendees represent a heterogeneous group with different work experiences, educational backgrounds, and paths that led them to the teaching profession. According to the data, APE attendees can be divided into three groups. These include those who were interested in teaching during their university studies and smoothly began APE after obtaining their degree. *"I studied Bohemistics and Linguistics at the Faculty of Arts, and I already knew then that I wanted to teach. I even taught a bit during school."* (Beatrice). The second group is represented by people who had worked in other sectors and professions after university but were led to teaching by internal motivation. *"Even though I was a forester, I worked with children. Experiential education and coaching... I was always somewhat drawn to teaching, even though I had a better salary before (laughter)."* (Giuseppe). The last group consists of those whose previous career did not work out, and they considered teaching as an easy alternative with many benefits (more extrinsic motivation). *"I worked in the social sector where the new management needed someone*

else... I wanted to go into free-time pedagogy, but I disagreed with the management, and so I ended up at a school where I still am today." (Janette). The reasons why APE attendees entered the study are also related to their view of the teaching profession. Those who chose teaching as their first career option, or based on internal motivation, perceive teaching as a financially undervalued profession with a huge amount of responsibility and difficulty. *"Financially, I'm worse off, it's really not about the money. To be a teacher. The money really doesn't match the difficulty involved."* (Giuseppe). On the other hand, those who chose teaching as a plan B view the profession itself more negatively and, conversely, see the financial and non-financial rewards as stable and without the risk of dismissal. *"You see, even if you do it automatically and don't know how, you get the same salary. They won't fire you because there's no one else to teach. And it's sad that pedagogy has the status it does."* (Janette).

SVO2: How does SE and perceived prestige relate among APE attendees?

A moderately strong correlation was shown between the 1st (0.185) and 2nd (0.121) factors of perceived prestige in relation to overall self-efficacy. The higher the self-efficacy respondents achieve, the higher they perceive the prestige of the teaching profession, especially in two factors: education and social image. This correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Figure 1
Relations Between Teachers Self-efficacy and Prestige of Teaching Profession



Teachers' self-efficacy is formed based on how prepared teachers feel to tackle certain situations, i.e., the quality of their preparatory education. The quality of education and

preparedness are also related to another source of self-efficacy – experiences gained in practice. Successfully handled situations increase teachers' self-efficacy, and they feel confident taking on new challenges. These are then converted into further experiences. Due to insufficient or poor-quality teacher education, unprepared and low-quality teachers come to schools. Parents of students have experiences with these teachers, and based on these, society forms the impression that teachers are uneducated, idle, and merely watch children while their parents are at work. Based on how teachers are perceived by society, negative stereotypes are also formed within it, which can subsequently be transferred to daily practice and the undervaluing of their qualities by teachers. At the same time, these experiences can stimulate the emergence or strengthening of stereotypes in society. The relationship between prestige and self-efficacy can be seen in teacher education. While self-efficacy is formed directly based on it, the prestige of the teaching profession is formed indirectly, based on societal perception and associated stereotypes (see in Figure 1).

In the quantitative part of the research, it emerged that respondents have the least confidence in maintaining discipline. This fact also resonated in the interviews. *"I always struggle the most with authority among students. To get them to listen, set some boundaries, so they simply respect me."* (Eleonora). Sometimes problems with maintaining discipline are related to another area – motivating students. *"It's probably also about engaging them. If I engage them and they're interested, then they don't disrupt and I have a natural authority. I don't know."* (Eleonora). What the respondents have the most confidence in, however, is instructions. Informants also perceive giving instructions as their strength, even trying to use when coping with what they are less confident in – motivating students or maintaining discipline. When in doubt, they switch to lecturing and explaining without using other methods. *"For me, frontal teaching is always easier. That way I can keep their attention and they don't disrupt as much."* (Beatrice).

SVO3: How do SE and perceived prestige change before and after completing APE?

Table 2
Self-Efficacy Measure 1

	N	**Mean**
1st Factor	152	3,86
2nd Factor	152	3,467
3rd Factor	152	3,57
4th Factor	152	3,17
5th Factor	152	3,82
6th Factor	152	3,6986
Self-efficacy	152	3,5964

Table 3
Self-ffficacy Measure 2

.	*N*	Mean
1st Factor	47	3,9628
2nd Factor	47	3,3404
3rd Factor	47	3,3564
4th Factor	47	3,1596
5th Factor	47	3,8085
6th Factor	47	3,7063
Self-efficacy	47	3,5556

The tables (Table 2 and Table 3) show that the overall self-efficacy of attendees did not increase after completing APE. In factors 2, 3, 4, and 5, even a slight decrease may be observed. In factors 1 and 6, there is a slight increase. However, the differences between the first and second measures in individual factors, as well as in overall self-efficacy, are not significant (significance level 0.05), thus the null hypothesis must be supported. Self-efficacy among respondents only increased at one workplace, from 3.49 to 3.56. However, this difference is not significant (significance level 0.05), thus the null hypothesis must be supported too.

Table 4
Prestige Measure 1

	N	Mean
1st Factor	152	2,7947
2nd Factor	152	2,4868
3rd Factor	152	2,2916
Prestige	152	2,52441

Table 5
Prestige Measure 2

	N	Mean
1st Factor	47	2,8127
2nd Factor	47	2,45531
3rd Factor	47	2,38297
Prestige	47	2,55035

Perceived prestige changed slightly after completing APE (compare Table 4 with Table 5), with respondents experiencing an increase. An increase is also seen in factors 1 and 3, but a slight decrease appears in factor 2. The differences between the first and second measures in individual factors, as well as in overall perceived prestige, are not significant (significance level 0.05), thus the null hypothesis must be supported.

After completing APE, the informants reflected on changes in their perception of the teaching profession; they suddenly perceived it as more demanding than they had expected. After completing their studies including mandatory practice, they were able to name specific activities they consider extremely challenging. *"Just perceiving the diversity in the classroom and always thinking about how to work with a specific child. Just that completely surprised me, how challenging it is."* (Lucilla). According to them, the profession is undervalued by society given its challenges and level of responsibility. *"I think people think that teachers are slackers, lazy, and that they do nothing there. Just watch the kids. But it's not like that. I spend a lot of time researching, reading, and preparing. A lot of time I spend educating myself."* (Giuseppe). However, Janette, who after completing APE came to the opinion that pedagogy, as taught within the study, is unnecessary and discredits the entire work of a teacher, perceived it differently. She believes a teacher should have a talent and know their subject, but since a diploma is required as opposed to skills, unqualified teachers enter the system and then "*...we shouldn't be surprised that teachers are considered stupid*." (Janette).

SVO4: How do attendees perceive the usefulness of APE?

Table 6
Additional Education in Educational Sciences is Considered to Be

	Percent
Useless and rather useless	21.2%
Useful and rather useful	78.8%

78.8% of respondents consider APE to be useful or rather useful. Conversely, 21.2% consider APE to be not useful or rather not useful (see in Table 6). 75.8% of attendees who consider APE useful believe that they are better teachers after completing it than before. On the other hand, 50% of attendees who consider APE not useful or rather not useful believe that they are not better teachers after completing it.

Table 7
Correlation – Usefulness Versus Prestige

Additional education in educational sciences is considered to be:	*N*	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)
Prestige	47	.558**	.000
Factor 1	47	.394**	.006
Factor 2	47	.394**	.006
Factor 3	47	.436**	.002

As seen in Table 7, the higher APE attendees perceive the prestige of the teaching profession (including in individual factors), the more useful APE seems to them. In other words, those who perceive the prestige of the teaching profession as higher also perceive APE more positively. This difference is significant at the 0.01 level.

Qualitative data expand on the quantitative finding that those who consider APE useful perceive an improvement in their role as teachers. This is manifested in not solving situations at school intuitively but knowing some methods and procedures they can adhere to if needed. *"There I said to myself, aha, this is a good method, I could use it."* (Beatrice). *"We learned a lot of interesting things there that were beneficial."* (Giuseppe). On the other hand, the opposite was also shown, i.e., when someone perceives APE as unnecessary and not useful, they do not take anything from it and consider it *"pure horror"* (Janette). Despite laudatory words towards APE, there are opinions that it is insufficient the way it is currently set up: the small time allocation for pedagogical and psychological subjects, lack of time for reflecting on practice, and the relatively lax approach of teachers who were not willing to discuss matters as Janette noted, *"And when I actually talked about what kind of educational type I am, what I would need, I just got an ironic remark from an unnamed teacher, telling me not to bother anymore."* (Janette).

Discussion

In the Czech Republic, the shortage of teachers at primary schools remains an issue (Czech School Inspection, 2020). Besides the under dimensioning of human resources, the quality of teachers and their qualifications continue to be a topic of discussion in professional and political circles. One possible way to attract more applicants to the teaching profession is to make it accessible to those who did not study a teaching programme at university and yet are interested in working at schools. This alternative access to a profession involves graduates obtaining additional education in pedagogical sciences. However, there has still been an ongoing debate in the professional community about

whether additional pedagogical education is sufficient and whether it produces truly quality teachers. This topic has also been a subject of research in other countries (Jackson & Miller, 2019) and is still without a clear answer. One indicator could be teachers' self-efficacy, i.e., how teachers believe they can handle the challenges that await them in the profession after completing APE. It is also a question of whether making the profession accessible to a wider group of people, i.e., those who are supplementing their pedagogical education, will increase the prestige of the profession and thus interest in it among future generations.

The results confirm that the decision to enter the teaching profession among people who need to complete APE is related to their perceived prestige of the profession. In my sample, nearly every sixth attendee enters the teaching profession as their plan B after another career path did not work out, while in other countries where the teaching profession is considered more prestigious, there are much fewer of those (Nesje et al., 2017). These attendees in this sample are supplementing their pedagogical education due to an obligation, not because they consider it important for their future profession. However, those who decided to enter the profession through APE out of genuine interest perceive the prestige of teaching higher. The prestige of the profession plays one of the important roles in the choice of the teaching profession abroad as well. This finding is consistent with the experiences of foreign authors (Kasapoglu 2020; Tastanbekova, 2020; Vilppu et al., 2022; Zhan, 2015). Hoyle (2001) claims there are three sources of prestige in the teaching profession: salary, social image, knowledge. Currently set salaries motivate more those for whom teaching is a plan B, i.e., those for whom another preferred career did not work out for various reasons. Yet, an increase in salary is considered a key factor if we want to increase the prestige and motivate more quality applicants to enter the profession (Tastanbekova, 2020). What salary is motivational enough though? Dolton and Marcenaro-Gutierrez (2011) state the salary ought to be in the top 20% pay grade. They also mention the option to set salaries with regard to motivation; in other words, related to a teacher's performance, or pupils' performance. As shown in the past, this may not bring desirable effects; instead of motivating teachers, differences among schools might be deepened (Muller, 2018). Conversely, those who declared a strong desire to teach do not perceive currently set salaries as motivating or prestige-enhancing, and they enter their occupation with stronger intrinsic motivation. In this research sample, however, there are fewer of those compared to countries in which teaching is considered rather prestigious (exam. Smith, 2021). Another important source of prestige is the social image, i.e., the image of the profession that is presented and entrenched in society. From the quantitative part of the study, it emerges that informants consider this area the weakest. They perceive disrespect from parents and an unflattering media presentation. Identical problems also appear abroad, where authors associate them with the low or declining prestige of the teaching profession (Berzin et al., 2022; Koller et al., 2018). Even in Finland, known for the high prestige of teachers, it is reflected that a possible decline in interest in

the profession of primary school teacher may be related to a worse media presentation of the profession and a call for a change (Vilppu et al., 2022). A recommendation to work on improving social image may be found abroad. The first steps could be presenting the teaching profession in media together with its usefulness for society (Klassen et al., 2021). The last source of prestige is the area of education and knowledge that the profession's representatives possess. APE attendees reflect that APE does not represent challenging study and that they do not feel well-prepared to perform the profession. Yet, quality education and solid knowledge can result in professionalism of teachers (Ingersol & Perda, 2008) and subsequent improved social image (Hoyle, 2001). The low perceived prestige of Czech teachers was not only captured by this research but has been visible for years. Already in 1989, teachers were presented as unstable, ineffective, and even physically punishing children (Palouček & Zounek, 2021), which definitely did not strengthen the social image in society and manifested in low esteem among children and parents (Tomsikova et al., 2020).

Another important finding is that teachers' self-efficacy correlates with the prestige of the teaching profession. Teachers' self-efficacy and its increase among teachers can indeed represent an important factor for the prestige of the teaching profession. Teachers with higher self-efficacy are more motivated and effective in teaching (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998), are more satisfied at work (Türkoğlu et al., 2017; Biçer, 2023), and have a lower rate of stress and burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Such teachers act professionally and competently, which can influence the social image in society, or opinion on their knowledge and education. If teachers are respected in society, there will be a greater will to increase their salaries, which appears as a necessary step to increasing the prestige of the teaching profession (Tastanbekova, 2020).

The additional pedagogical education, as it was set before the reform (Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, 2019), does not appear to be too effective on this research sample, at least in terms of potentially increasing teacher self-efficacy. Unlike the results from other studies where an increase in self-efficacy after completing educational programs was demonstrated (Altarawneh et al., 2023; Hoy & Spero, 2005; Ross & Bruce, 2010; Thorsnes et al., 2020), self-efficacy did not increase among APE attendees after completion. This result indicates that completing APE did not give them confidence that they could successfully meet the challenges awaiting them in the profession. This could be caused by APE attendees being confronted with real school experience for the first time (Pendergast et al., 2011) and taking responsibility for a class full of students (Hoy & Spero, 2005). This might reveal the real difficulty of individual activities to them, realizing that they do not know how to tackle them. Another possible explanation is that they overestimate themselves without real experience, as was also shown in other studies (Cabanová & Lynch, 2023). This sample's findings, however, are in contradiction with findings in similar studies abroad; the difference in self-efficacy in favour of the post-test was confirmed there and it suggests that educational teaching programs may

have an impact on teacher self-efficacy (exam. Jackson & Miller, 2019). The quality of the education, especially the teaching practice, is nonetheless questionable. It is application of knowledge in practice which proves to be an effective means for growth of teacher self-efficacy (Rupp & Becker, 2021; Vignoli et al., 2018). In spite of the APE participants' obligation to undertake teaching practice, their self-efficacy did not rise, which could be caused by quality of their teaching practice (Savasci & Tuna, 2018). Alternatively, albeit somewhat simplistically, APE according to the original accreditation was insufficient, and an increase in real abilities or self-efficacy is not possible. However, support for this interpretation could also be the fact that only three-quarters of respondents consider APE useful. Of them, three-quarters believe that its completion will help them become better teachers. Other research indeed confirms that pedagogical education has effects on the quality of teachers and their effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 1999). The question is whether education is set up this way. In fact, informants in interviews name clear deficiencies of APE such as insufficient time allocation, lack of space for reflection or discussion of experiences, or poor and outdated lectures. Interestingly, an increase in self-efficacy was recorded among attendees at one workplace, even if statistically insignificant. Is it possible that it is indeed an APE that is of higher quality than others? Or is it caused by chance or the law of small numbers (Tversky & Kahneman, 1971).

The major limitation of these findings is the research sample. Despite efforts to assemble the best possible research sample, I faced very low response rates; thus, the conclusions from this study must be taken with some caution and accepted that they may be subject to certain biases. Possible biases in measuring self-efficacy among teachers in smaller samples have also been noted by authors before me (Vignoli et al., 2018). Additionally, the results obtained from this sample may be subject to the previously mentioned bias according to the law of small numbers (Tversky & Kahneman, 1971), which means extreme cases concentrated in a small sample. Besides the impact of the research sample, there may also be biases caused by the quality of practices (Savasci & Tuna, 2018), which can vary across different schools, the environment and culture in which the practices are conducted (Savasci & Tuna, 2018), or by individual teachers who supervise the students' practicum (Rupp & Becker, 2021). It would certainly be advisable to repeat the research in the future, as the accreditation of APE has changed (Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport, 2023). It would be necessary to expand the research sample, systematically collect data throughout the study, and capture any changes over time, which can help uncover further factors influencing changes in the development of self-efficacy, as was the case in the research (Rupp & Becker, 2021).

Conclusion

The results of this study highlight important findings in the field of alternative entry into the teaching profession and associated additional pedagogical education in the Czech Republic. Many candidates enter the profession through APE based on stronger external motivation. This group of candidates does not perceive teaching as prestigious, views additional pedagogical education as necessary, and considers a teaching career merely as a backup plan following an unsuccessful previous career. Conversely, the group of candidates who wish to teach based on stronger internal motivation regards teaching as a more prestigious profession and APE as necessary for good performance in the role. This underscores the importance of attracting more motivated candidates who want to be teachers not just based on external motives, but also internal ones. Additional pedagogical education, which represents an alternative way to enter the profession, however, does not offer sufficiently high-quality education for this research sample that would help them feel more certain that they will be able to manage their profession adequately. Even after completing it, respondents do not believe that they will be able to handle the challenges that await them in the profession. Low confidence in their ability to manage workplace challenges also correlates with a lower perceived prestige of the profession. Consequently, more motivated, quality candidates may not enter the profession. These findings indicate that systemic steps such as increasing salaries, improving preparatory education, and enhancing the social image through communication with the public or media should be initiated. These measures could result in increased perceived prestige, more motivated and quality candidates for the profession, and better teachers in practice.

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Papildomas pedagoginis išsilavinimas kaip būtina sąlyga profesinei veiklai pradėti: mokytojo profesijos prestižas ir saviveiksmingumas

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Santrauka

Šiame tyrime nagrinėjamas papildomo pedagoginio išsilavinimo (angl. *APE*) poveikis mokytojo profesijos saviveiksmingumui ir suvokiamam prestižui. Pagrindinis tyrimo klausimas: koks papildomo pedagoginio išsilavinimo (angl. *APE*) vaidmuo ugdant mokytojo saviveiksmingumą ir didinant suvokiamą mokytojo profesijos prestižą. Taikytas mišraus tyrimo metodas. Tyrime dalyvavo 199 papildomo pedagoginio švietimo programų dalyviai. Kiekybiniai duomenys neparodė reikšmingų saviveiksmingumo ar suvokiamo prestižo pokyčių baigus APE. 6 dalyvių interviu atskleidė, kad kai kurie iš jų mokytojo profesiją ir papildomą pedagoginį išsilavinimą vertina kaip atsarginį planą, o ne kaip kelią į prestižinę karjerą. Žemas saviveiksmingumas buvo susijęs su mažesniu suvokiamu prestižu. Tyrimas rodo, kad mokytojų atlyginimų ir būsimų mokytojų rengimo gerinimas galėtų pritraukti daugiau motyvuotų kandidatų, padidinti saviveiksmingumą, rezultatus ir galiausiai visuomenės požiūrį į profesiją.

Esminiai žodžiai: *mokytojo saviveiksmingumas, mokytojo profesijos prestižas, pedagoginis išsilavinimas, mokytojo profesija.*

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