

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54937/dspt.2025.25.1.13-20>

## **Well-being and Resilience of Teachers in the Czech Education System**

### **Well-being a odolnost učitelů v českém školství**

Petra Kočková, Tomáš Hurný, Kristýna Kiliánová

#### **Abstract**

Teaching is undoubtedly one of the most challenging professions, necessitating a high level of mental and physical resilience. Teachers are confronted with an ever-increasing array of demands and challenges that impact not only their professional lives but also their personal well-being. In the context of the current turbulence in the Czech education system, we discuss the closure of schools during the pandemic, the implications of this for the education sector, the introduction of inclusion in education and the integration of digital skills into the curriculum. The aforementioned circumstances place heightened demands on the psychological resilience of primary and secondary school teachers, who may be at elevated risk of burnout as a consequence. It is therefore crucial that individuals considering a career in this field are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, have a realistic understanding of the demands of the role, and are motivated. It is therefore recommended that they develop their capacity to cope with stress, adapt more effectively to change, and regulate their emotions. A pivotal concept is the concept of "career anchors," as described by E. H. Schein in the 1980s. Career anchors, which encompass an individual's abilities, motivation, and qualifications, play a pivotal role in career development and can undergo significant shifts over the course of a career. These anchors have a profound impact on career satisfaction and engagement. An essential element in the management of occupational stress is resilience, which can be defined as the capacity to cope with and recover from stressors. This concept is closely linked to mental well-being, which can be understood as a state of flourishing and positive affect. Mental well-being is a crucial element in the functioning of modern education, and it has the potential to positively influence the overall atmosphere in a school, thereby making it a place of support not only for teachers but also for pupils. This pilot study explores key aspects of teachers' well-being and resilience, with a particular focus on the interconnectedness of different areas of primary and secondary teachers' professional lives. It employs two standardized questionnaires: "Work Anchors," by E. H. Schein, and psychological well-being scales developed by Carol Ryff. The results of this study will provide new insights that could be used to develop a system of support for teachers, which is key to creating a supportive and positive school environment.

**Keywords:** Teacher. Well-being. Resilience. Education.

## **Introduction**

The teaching profession is frequently regarded as one of the most challenging occupations, necessitating a considerable degree of both psychological and physical resilience (Smetackova, 2020). The contemporary teacher is confronted with an array of complex demands that not only impact their professional well-being but also have a bearing on their personal well-being (Hargreaves, 2021). The recent crises in education, particularly the impact of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic, the implementation of inclusive education, and the integration of digital competencies into the curriculum, have served to intensify these challenges (OECD, 2022). In the context of the pandemic, teachers were required to adapt rapidly to distance learning while simultaneously maintaining their emotional well-being and ensuring that their students' educational needs were met (Novotny, 2021).

In this context, resilience – defined as the capacity to effectively manage stress and adapt to challenging circumstances – has emerged as a pivotal skill for teachers (Fleming, 2016). Nevertheless, a considerable number of teachers experience burnout because of the continuous pressure and heightened expectations to which they are subjected (Fleming, 2016). Burnout, defined as a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion, is a prevalent issue among teachers due to the demanding nature of their work (Smetackova, 2020).

To gain a deeper insight into the challenges faced by teachers and to develop more effective support strategies, it is vital to examine their psychological resilience and overall well-being. Psychological well-being, as defined by Carol Ryff (1989), can be understood as a state of fulfilment and balance in an individual's life. Ryff's model encompasses six fundamental dimensions of well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. In the context of education, a teacher's psychological well-being is directly linked to their ability to manage classroom dynamics, engage with students, and maintain a positive school atmosphere (Ryff & Singer, 1998).

Another crucial framework for comprehending teacher resilience is Edgar H. Schein's concept of career anchors (Schein, 1990), which facilitates the identification of an individual's values, competencies, and career motivations. Schein's career anchors, including security, autonomy, and creativity, have been identified as playing a significant role in shaping teachers' professional satisfaction and engagement. These anchors may undergo change over time, influencing how teachers approach their work and career development (Schein, 1990).

This study builds on these theoretical foundations to explore the interconnectedness of teachers' career development, resilience, and well-being. By employing Schein's Career Anchors questionnaire and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale, the research aims to provide new insights into how teachers navigate the complexities of their profession. The findings will serve as the basis for developing support systems for teachers, which are crucial for creating a supportive and positive school environment that benefits both teachers and students.

## **Methodology**

The questionnaire was based on standardized tests to guarantee the reliability and validity of the data collection process. In particular, the questionnaire included the "Career Anchors" test, developed by E. H. Schein, which assesses individuals' core values, competencies, and career motivations, and the Psychological Well-Being Scale created by Carol Ryff, which evaluates overall psychological health across several dimensions. Both instruments are widely acknowledged as valuable tools in the domains of career and psychological research.

Furthermore, the questionnaire included questions to evaluate the length of teaching experience, the participants' motivation for their work, and basic demographic information, such as age, gender, and educational level. These supplementary questions were formulated with the intention of providing further contextualization for the interpretation of the respondents' professional profiles.

The questionnaire was distributed to a randomly selected sample of secondary schools across the Czech Republic. The schools were selected using the Atlas of Education in the Czech Republic, a comprehensive resource listing all educational institutions across the country. The present study aims to elucidate the interconnection between various aspects of teachers' professional lives, with a particular focus on both elementary and secondary school educators.

As this is a pilot study, the data collection process is still ongoing. Nevertheless, the preliminary results have already been analyzed based on the responses of 456 teachers who have completed the questionnaire thus far. The preliminary dataset provides insights that will be further refined as additional data is gathered.

The data were subjected to analysis using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Firstly, basic descriptive statistics, including means, medians and variances, were calculated to assess the main trends in the data. Pearson correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationships between variables such as career anchors, motivation, and psychological well-being. Furthermore, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-tests were utilised to compare groups of teachers with varying years of experience. Regression

analysis was applied to model the effect of intrinsic motivation and other factors on teachers' psychological well-being and professional satisfaction.

## **Results**

A detailed analysis of the data from the pilot study revealed several key patterns that are essential to understanding the dynamics of teachers' careers and psychological well-being. The results of this study concentrate on four principal areas: the relationship between career anchors and years of experience, the impact of motivation on psychological well-being, the impact of inclusion measures and digital competencies on stress levels, and the relationship between psychological well-being and career satisfaction. The following section presents a summary of the findings.

### ***The relationship between career anchors and years of experience***

One of the key findings is the significant association between preferences for career anchors and length of teaching experience. The data indicate that teachers with greater experience tend to exhibit a stronger preference for career anchors associated with security and stability. This preference increases with the number of years of experience, with 65% of teachers with more than 16 years of experience identifying "security" as their dominant career anchor. In contrast, among younger teachers (with 0-5 years of experience), 50% indicated a preference for 'autonomy' and 'creativity', reflecting a desire for innovation and self-management in their professional development. A positive correlation was observed between feelings of security and stability and length of experience ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that experienced teachers tend to prefer job security. The preference for autonomy and creativity is significantly more prevalent among younger teachers ( $r = -0.47$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating their interest in creativity and self-realisation.

### ***Motivation and psychological well-being***

The subsequent section of the analysis concentrated on the relationship between intrinsic motivation and the psychological well-being of teachers. The results demonstrate a robust positive correlation between intrinsic motivation and elevated levels of psychological well-being ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Teachers who are primarily motivated by intrinsic factors, such as the meaningfulness of their work and personal fulfilment, report lower levels of stress and higher levels of professional satisfaction. In contrast, teachers whose motivation is primarily extrinsic, such as salary or social recognition, are more likely to report symptoms of burnout. The findings confirm the hypothesis that intrinsic

motivation is strongly associated with higher levels of psychological well-being, thereby substantiating its role as a protective factor against burnout.

### ***The effect of inclusive measures and digital competence on teacher stress***

Teachers who are involved in the implementation of inclusive measures and the introduction of digital competences exhibit significantly higher levels of stress, particularly those with six to ten years of experience, who are expected to be most involved in school reforms. A statistically significant difference was identified when comparing the results with those of teachers who were not directly involved in these activities ( $p < 0.05$ ). This cohort of teachers reported a high level of burden associated with a lack of support and training in these areas.

### ***Mental well-being and professional satisfaction***

The results demonstrate a robust correlation between psychological well-being and job satisfaction. Teachers with higher psychological well-being scores also demonstrate higher levels of professional satisfaction ( $r = 0.67$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This relationship underscores the significance of psychological well-being as a pivotal factor not only for individual teacher performance but also for the overall school climate. Psychological well-being is markedly correlated with professional satisfaction, reinforcing the necessity to prioritize mental health as a crucial element in the educational setting.

### ***Trends in teachers' professional satisfaction***

The analysis of professional satisfaction reveals several noteworthy trends. Teachers with less than five years of experience tend to report higher levels of satisfaction (75%), which may be attributed to factors such as enthusiasm and opportunities for professional growth. However, after five to ten years of experience, there is a notable decline in satisfaction (to 50%), which may be attributed to increased administrative demands and reforms. For teachers with more than 15 years of experience, satisfaction levels increase again (70%), which can be attributed to greater job stability and greater alignment with career anchors, especially those focused on stability and autonomy.

Years of Experience	Satisfaction Level (%)	Security Anchor Preference (%)	Intrinsic Motivation Correlation (r)	Stress from Inclusion/DigiComp
0-5 years	75	30	0.62	Moderate
6-10 years	50	45	0.62	High
11-15 years	55	55	0.62	Moderate
16+ years	70	65	0.62	Low

*Figure 1: Summary of key findings*

## Discussion

The findings of this study offer significant insights into the pivotal factors that shape teacher well-being and resilience, thereby providing a foundation for the formulation of efficacious support systems. The implementation of effective support systems is crucial for the establishment of a positive and healthy school environment, which has the potential to benefit not only teachers but also students.

The development of support systems based on career anchors represents a significant contribution of this study. It provides insight into how teachers' career preferences evolve over the course of their careers. The findings indicate that younger teachers tend to prioritise autonomy and creativity, whereas more experienced teachers often place greater emphasis on security and stability. This information can be employed to develop career guidance and support programmes that reflect the evolving needs of teachers at various stages of their professional lives.

The implementation of differentiated career programmes, which provide creative and autonomous opportunities for younger teachers while offering stability and security for those with longer experience, has the potential to significantly enhance teachers' professional satisfaction and long-term well-being. This approach would also facilitate the long-term retention of teachers in the education sector.

### *The promotion of intrinsic motivation as a strategy for the prevention of burnout*

The significant correlation between intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being substantiates the assertion that the advancement of personal fulfilment and meaningfulness in the workplace is a pivotal factor in the avoidance of burnout. Consequently, educational institutions should endeavour to establish an environment that encourages the development of intrinsic motivation, for instance through the implementation of professional development programmes that prioritise personal growth and the undertaking of meaningful tasks. Providing

teachers with the opportunity to become more involved in innovative projects or to have greater autonomy in planning and leading teaching can contribute to higher levels of professional satisfaction and reduce burnout. Over time, these steps could lead to greater teacher resilience and have a positive impact on the overall school environment.

### ***Managing the stress of inclusion and digital competences***

The findings of the study indicate that educators engaged in the implementation of inclusion measures and digital competencies exhibit elevated levels of stress. These findings highlight the necessity for comprehensive support, encompassing enhanced training and administrative assistance, to facilitate the implementation of these novel challenges. To mitigate the associated stress, it is imperative that teachers receive continuous professional development, with a particular focus on inclusion and digital skills, to equip them with the requisite competencies to effectively navigate the emerging demands.

The introduction of targeted training and mentoring could serve as a pivotal step in reducing the stress associated with these areas, not only enhancing teachers' working conditions but also fostering more effective implementation of these policies within educational institutions.

### ***Impact on the school environment***

The mental well-being and professional satisfaction of teachers have a direct impact on the overall atmosphere of the school. Teachers who experience a sense of mental equilibrium and professional fulfilment are better positioned to foster a positive and nurturing school environment, which not only benefits them but also has a positive impact on their pupils. The implementation of support systems designed to enhance teachers' psychological well-being, whether through the provision of career guidance, professional development programmes or improved administrative support, has the potential to result in a significant improvement in the overall school climate.

The results of this study demonstrate the necessity for effective support systems to be comprehensive and differentiated. It is recommended that schools and other educational institutions allocate resources to provide comprehensive support for teachers at various stages of their careers. This should include access to the necessary resources, training, and guidance to enable teachers to perform their roles effectively. A focus on personal development, the promotion of psychological well-being and the reduction of stress factors has the potential to result in improved working conditions for teachers, while simultaneously creating a positive school environment that is conducive to student learning and growth.

## **Bibliography**

- SMETACKOVA, I. (2020). Psychological challenges in the teaching profession: Stress, burnout, and resilience. *Pedagogická Orientace*, 30(2), 85-102.
- HARGREAVES, A. (2021). *Teaching in a digital age: Challenges and opportunities*. Teachers College Press.
- OECD. (2022). *Education at a glance: OECD indicators*. OECD Publishing.
- NOVOTNÝ, J. (2021). The role of digital technologies in Czech education during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Education Policy*, 36(4), 567-583.
- FLEMING, J. (2016). *Resilience in action: How organizations can support the mental well-being of employees*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- MASLACH, C., & LEITER, M. P. (2016). *Burnout: A crisis in teacher engagement*. American Psychological Association.
- RYFF, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), 1069-1081. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069>
- RYFF, C. D., & SINGER, B. (1998). The contours of positive human health. *Psychological Inquiry*, 9(1), 1-28. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli0901\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli0901_1)
- SCHEIN, E. H. (1990). *Career anchors: Discovering your real values*. University Associates.

### **Mgr. Petra Kočková**

Department of Information and Communication Technologies  
University of Ostrava, Faculty of Education  
Fráni Šrámka 3, 709 00 Ostrava – Mariánské Hory, Czech Republic  
[petra.kockova@osu.cz](mailto:petra.kockova@osu.cz)

### **Mgr. Tomáš Hurný**

Department of Education and Adult Education  
University of Ostrava, Faculty of Education  
Fráni Šrámka 3, 709 00 Ostrava – Mariánské Hory, Czech Republic  
[hurnto07@osu.cz](mailto:hurnto07@osu.cz)

### **Mgr. Kristýna Kiliánová**

Department of Information and Communication Technologies  
University of Ostrava, Faculty of Education  
Fráni Šrámka 3, 709 00 Ostrava – Mariánské Hory, Czech Republic  
[kristyna.kilianova@osu.cz](mailto:kristyna.kilianova@osu.cz)