

The Prestige of the Teaching Profession and Measures for its Improvement

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Abstract

The prestige of the teaching profession in society significantly affects teachers' motivation to teach, their professionalism, student achievement, desirability of the profession among young people, and the overall progress of civilization. Slovenia is currently experiencing a significant shortage of teachers, which may be attributed also to the low prestige of the teaching profession. Accordingly, we were interested in ascertaining teachers' views and identifying opportunities for raising the prestige of the teaching profession in society.

In the empirical part, we present the results of a study conducted with on a random sample of 870 Slovenian primary and secondary school teachers. According to the results, teachers attributed high prestige to teachers at upper and secondary levels, but not to teachers in primary schools. They were most likely to agree with the general public's view that the teaching profession has a higher reputation in other EU countries than in Slovenia and that teaching is publicly regarded as important for society. However, they did not agree that this profession has a high or growing reputation. The highest-rated measures that they believed would improve the reputation of the teaching profession relate to macro-level measures at the national level (support from the government and the relevant ministry, reduction of bureaucratic work, appropriate and comparable financial assessment of work with other professions and maintaining good public education). There were some statistically significant differences between the responses of primary and secondary school teachers.

Key words: education; primary school; Slovenia; teachers; upper secondary school

Introduction

Prestige is defined as a very high opinion of someone held by several people and refers to the respect or honour that individuals gain in society for a variety of reasons (Liga & Priževite, 2019; Hargreaves, 2009).

The teaching profession is one of the cornerstones of the education system, playing a key role in the development of individuals and society (Dolton et al., 2018; Nenty et al., 2015; Stromquist, 2018) and helping to shape all other professions. Despite the importance of the teaching profession in society, in some countries (see OECD, EAG, 2024), the proportion of teachers who believe that the teaching profession is valued in society is declining.

Ongoing monitoring of teachers' self-perceptions of the prestige of their profession in society helps to illuminate the desirability of the profession among young people (Carlo et al., 2013) and to prevent teachers from leaving the profession (Dolton et al., 2018), which is currently particularly important in Slovenia amid a teacher shortage (Bogdan Zupančič & Gavriloski Tretjak, 2023). Teachers' perceptions of their profession also shape their level of motivation to work and their professionalism (Kasapoglu, 2020), which is further linked to learner success (Dolton et al., 2018; Nenty et al., 2015;). More valued teachers are more satisfied and thus contribute to better learning outcomes and the overall progress of society (Baron, 2022; Schleicher, 2018). Raising the profile of the teaching profession is therefore important for raising the quality of education.

Every country has specific social and systemic characteristics that influence the position and prestige of the teaching profession; therefore, our aim was to investigate how Slovenian teachers perceive the prestige of the teaching profession. We were particularly interested in teachers' views on the prestige of the teaching profession in society among other professions; prevailing beliefs about the teaching profession in society; and measures that would help to raise the prestige of the teaching profession. Some previous studies have examined the status of the teaching profession in Slovenia (e. g. Šteh et al., 2019; Žarkovič-Adlešič et al., 2024), focusing on individual aspects, while this study offers a comprehensive examination of the status of profession in society, as it addresses all the above-mentioned aspects. The research aims to contribute to raising awareness of the importance of prestige in society for the teaching profession; to present proposals that teachers believe could contribute to improving prestige and to identify possible differences between the evaluations of primary and lower secondary school teachers in Slovenia. Although the study is based on data collected in Slovenia, its findings go beyond the national context and can make an important contribution to broader professional debates on the social status of the teaching profession.

What determines the prestige of the teaching profession in society?

The prestige of the teaching profession has been analysed in some studies (Kraft & Lyon, 2024; Stromquist, 2018; Šteh et al., 2019; Žarkovič-Adlešič et al., 2024;). These studies have divided and named the factors associated with prestige in the teaching profession in different ways, so the findings cannot be directly compared. They concern the pre-service teacher training, their entry into the profession and career prospects, their teaching practice and autonomy, decision-makers support and concern for a quality and stable education system with the teachers' active role

in co-creating it, and where the teaching profession is appropriately valued, both financially and socially.

Research shows that the level of remuneration for the work done contributes to the prestige of the teaching profession in society and thus to the attractiveness of the profession among young people (Carlo et al., 2013). According to a comparative analysis of 39 education systems in Europe, in public schools at the primary level (grades 1-6), the lower secondary level (grades 7-9); both primary school in Slovenia, and the upper secondary level (secondary school in Slovenia), in the 2021-22 school year, teachers' pay increased on average with the teaching level and was linked to minimum qualification levels required to practise (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2023). In Slovenia, the same level of education is required for teachers in primary and secondary education, but there are various allowances (e.g., for teaching in combined classes, hospitals, bilingual classes, adapted program departments), benefits (e.g., in the form of a reduction in the number of hours of commitment according to age, seniority, class, subject taught) and other payments (e.g., regimes, reimbursement of transport costs, jubilee awards) that teachers can obtain (ibid.)

The OECD EAG (2024) data indicates that growth in teachers' salaries in Slovenia is comparatively slower than that observed in other professions with similar qualifications and responsibilities. Hoyle (2001) posits that the allocation of lower salaries to teachers is influenced by the large number of people employed in the education sector. Additionally, the lower salary may be associated with the feminisation of the teaching profession, which is observed to decline with the level of education in Slovenia (SURs, 2023/24). Consequently, during the 2023/2024 academic year, the percentage of women employed in primary schools was 87.3 %, in secondary schools 67 %, and in tertiary-level institutions 47 %. It is notable that the percentage of women decreases with each higher title.

It is also necessary to look critically at the educational system for future teachers. If it allows candidates who have no other choice to enrol, it is inadequate. Reić Ercegovac and Jukić (2008), in a survey of Croatian students, future kindergarten and schoolteachers, found that students who chose teaching because of the ease of enrolment were less satisfied with their choice than those who were intrinsically motivated or interested in working with children and teaching. However, teacher-training entry requirements are the responsibility of individual EU countries, and only some countries have specific ways of screening candidates for entry into teaching (e.g., through aptitude tests or interviews on motivation to study) (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013). Promoting teaching as a career to young people requires considering not only how teachers are selected to enter a study programme, but also how quality teacher education is provided and how teachers can continue their professional development and career prospects (European Commission..., 2021).

Teacher autonomy is another important area of research for the prestige of the teaching profession. The latter is a complex construct that needs to be studied in

each country (Verger, Fontdevila, & Parcerisa, 2019). It encompasses both the direct work of teachers in the classroom and in the school, as well as opportunities to influence the formulation of school policies (Evers, Verboon, & Klaijnsen, 2017). Teachers are mostly satisfied with the degree of autonomy in their classroom work (e.g., work processes, discipline, and testing), less so with autonomy at the school level (e.g., teacher collaboration, professional development, decision-making power over finances at the school level), and feel that their voice does not matter to decision-makers (Lennert da Silva, 2022). The above-mentioned working conditions and lack of support from decision-makers increase teachers' stress and burnout at work (Žarkovič-Adlešič et al., 2024), potentially leading to attrition from the profession.

According to MacBeath (2012), teachers are overburdened by high societal expectations and low professional prestige. Some authors (Hall & Langton, 2006; Hargreaves et al., 2018) have noted that the public attaches high prestige to professions that have power, money and fame (knowledge, skills and degree of social influence are of secondary importance). Nevertheless, the public often values teachers more than they value themselves. Indeed, teachers often perceive their profession as disreputable, while students' parents perceive it as respectable and important (Hargreaves, 2009; Kralj & Razdevšek-Pučko, 2013; Šteh et al., 2019).

The mass media play an important role in shaping society's perception of teachers, their work and how it is interpreted. Teachers are portrayed in the mass media in a highly polarised and stereotypical way (Stromquist, 2018). On the one hand, the media criticises teachers' work, highlighting their mistakes (Slivar, 2008); on the other hand, it presents the ideal of the teacher. This clear black-and-white image of the teacher, from the purely negative to the ideal, stereotypes the profession (Edling, 2014) and creates myths that can never capture the complexity of real school situations.

Hoyle (2001) points out that raising the prestige of the teaching profession is made more difficult by the relationship-based nature of teaching, which is difficult to measure. Education also involves a wide range of objectives—from the specific, measurable skills to general ones such as social skills. These objectives focus on both the present and the future, making it difficult to specialise knowledge. As a result, it is difficult to clearly define the teaching profession as highly professional. This shifts the focus of reflection to the dilemma of teaching as a (semi-)profession (Ingersoll & Perda, 2008).

Possible measures to improve the image of the teaching profession

The factors that determine the prestige of the teaching profession in society are related to measures with greater or lesser degrees of complexity that should be taken at the level of the individual teacher (micro level), the school (mezzo level), or the country (macro level) (Marin & Macri, 2018; Van den Borre et al., 2021) and can be immediate, medium-term, or long-term. At the micro level, it is related to teachers' job satisfaction, which can be achieved by meeting their individual needs, having

a robust support (mentoring) network, and a variety of professional development opportunities (Ainley & Carstens, 2018). At the mezzo level, investment is needed in relationships, work organisation and good working conditions (Hargreaves, 2009). At the macro level, perceptions of the teaching profession are closely linked to the economic and social situation in a country and are reflected in different approaches to the design of individual education policies (Hargreaves, 2009; Ingersoll et al., 2018;).

Since there is a perception among teachers that the prestige of the teaching profession in Slovenia is low (Ainley & Carstens, 2018), we decided to investigate the matter.

Methodology

Aims of the empirical research

The objective of the survey was to ascertain the views of teachers in Slovenia on the prestige of the teaching profession and potential strategies for enhancing it in society. In this paper, we present the results of a larger survey on the status of the teaching profession in Slovenia. The survey was designed to address three key research questions: a) What do teachers think is the prestige of the teaching profession in society compared to other professions? B) What do teachers think are the prevailing beliefs about the teaching profession in society? C) What do teachers think are the measures that could contribute to the elevation of the teaching profession in society?

In all the above, we were interested in the differences between primary school teachers (PST) and secondary school teachers (SST).

Research method

Our study is based on the descriptive and causal, non-experimental method of empirical pedagogical research.

Research sample

The survey was based on a random sample of Slovenian PSTs and SSTs. The data were collected using a questionnaire designed for the specific purpose of this study. A link to the questionnaire, which was created using IKA software, was distributed to all publicly accessible email addresses associated with primary (454) and secondary (181) educational institutions in Slovenia (Evidenca..., 2022).

In the sample of 870 teachers who completed the questionnaire, there were more women ($f=695$, 79.9 %) than men ($f=167$, 19.2 %), while 8 (0.9 %) did not want to answer the question. More respondents were employed in primary school ($f=529$, 60.8 %) than in secondary school ($f=341$, 39.2 %). A greater proportion of males were employed in secondary schools ($n=100$, 29.7 %) compared to primary schools ($n=67$, 12.8 %), which is consistent with the structure of most of the teaching staff in primary and secondary schools in Slovenia (SURS, 2023/24). Most respondents (298, 34.3 %) had between 19 and 30 years of work experience, followed by those with 7 to 18 years (219, 25.2 %), 31 years and more (176, 20.1 %), 4 to 6 years (92, 10.6 %), and those with up to 3 years of work experience (85, 9.8 %) were the

fewest- This aligns with the fact that the teaching workforce in Slovenia is ageing, with more than 54 % of teachers having at least 19 years of service.

Data collection procedure and instruments

The first part of the questionnaire was designed to obtain demographic data, followed by questions on the prestige and status of the teaching profession. The relevant question for the present paper is the one in which respondents were asked to rank the professions (from 1 - the highest prestige to 10 - the lowest prestige among the listed professions in the society). In doing so, we referred to the professions mentioned in the survey by Šteh et al. (2019) to be able to compare the results.

This was followed by the question on the teachers' perception of the prevailing societal views of the teaching profession. Participants were presented with eight statements and were invited to indicate their level of agreement on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In conducting this study, we relied on the statements used in the study by Liga and Priževič (2019) and adapted these to align with the objectives of our research. Finally, we sought to identify the measures that teachers perceived as potentially effective in enhancing the prestige of the teaching profession in society. We presented a range of potential measures to the teachers, who were invited to indicate their level of agreement with each measure on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The measures were formulated based on a synthesis of insights drawn from a diverse array of academic literature, which we have previously presented in the theoretical part of the article (e.g., Marin & Macri, 2018, etc.).

The survey was conducted from 10 May to 1 June 2022 by emailing 1KA links to accessible email addresses of all primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Slovenia (Evidenca..., 2022). Principals were asked to provide all school staff with the web address to the survey questionnaire. The respondents participated in the survey on a voluntary basis. The data were processed using the SPSS software package. Basic descriptive and interference statistics were used to analyse the data. To identify differences between primary and secondary school teachers, we used the Mann–Whitney test of differences. The test was applied to examine group differences perceptions of the social status of various professions, beliefs about the public views on the reputation of the teaching profession, and measures that, in their opinion, could contribute to improving the social status of the teaching profession.

Results

The prestige of the teaching profession in society compared to that of other professions

In the survey question, teachers were asked to rank professions on a scale of 1 to 10, according to the level of social prestige. The data are shown in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, teachers attribute the greatest prestige in society to the medical profession, followed by the legal profession and the entrepreneur. The fourth highest

Table 1

Measures of descriptive statistics and results of Mann-Whitney tests of differences in prestige of the professions in society from the perspective of teachers by teaching level

Occupation	N	M (Rank)	SD	School level	N	M	SD	Results M-W test	
								Z	P
Doctor	857	2.19 (1)	2.30	PST	525	2.22	2.30	-1.379	0.168
				SST	332	2.16	2.32		
Lawyer	855	3.01 (2)	2.48	PST	523	2.76	2.34	4.650	<0.001**
				SST	332	3.40	2.66		
Entrepreneur	854	4.04 (3)	2.29	PST	522	3.97	2.20	0.697	0.486
				SST	332	4.15	2.41		
University teacher	855	4.46 (4)	1.67	PST	523	4.44	1.58	-0.051	0.959
				SST	332	4.48	1.82		
(Upper) secondary teacher	856	6.01 (5)	1.58	PST	523	5.94	1.41	1.922	0.055
				SST	333	6.13	1.81		
Journalist	854	4.27 (6)	2.14	PST	523	6.21	2.12	1.101	0,271
				SST	331	6.37	2.17		
Theatre actor	855	6.79 (7)	2.48	PST	524	6.79	2.48	0.043	0.966
				SST	331	6.80	2.49		
Nurse	854	6.97 (8)	2.39	PST	522	7.20	2.28	-3.302	<0.001**
				SST	332	6.61	2.52		
Primary and (lower) secondary teacher	857	7.12 (9)	2.01	PST	526	7.15	1.99	-0.627	0.530
				SST	331	7.06	2.03		
Kindergarten teacher	853	8.12 (10)	2.35	PST	523	8.31	2.24	-2.835	0,005*
				SST	330	7.81	2.50		

Legend: N – number of cases, M(Rank) - mean with rank; place in the hierarchy of professions; the lower the number, the higher the place and the prestige, SD – standard deviation. PST: primary school teachers, SST: secondary school teachers; M-W test = Mann-Whitney U test; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$.

ranked profession was university teacher, followed by (upper) SST. PST ranked second to last in terms of prestige among other occupations, with kindergarten teacher coming in last. In the opinion of teachers, the professions of higher and secondary education have much greater prestige among these professions than the professions of PST and kindergarten teacher.

The Mann Whitney test revealed statistically significant differences between the two groups of teachers for three professions. To two of them SST attributed greater prestige compared to PST (higher position on the occupational scale): nurse, kindergarten teacher, and the reverse was true for the profession of lawyer. It is also worth mentioning the tendency for the SST profession to be more highly regarded by PSTs than by SSTs themselves.

Beliefs about the teaching profession in society, according to teachers

Teachers rated prevailing population beliefs about the teaching profession in Slovenia on a 1–5 scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for these statements.

Table 2

Measures of descriptive statistics and percentage for statements relating to teachers' beliefs about the teaching profession's reputation among the public.

The public in Slovenia believes that:	N	M (Rank)	SD	1(f %)	2(f %)	3(f %)	4(f %)	5(f %)
teachers are experts in education.	870	4.01 (1)	0.91	0.8	7.6	13.4	46.2	32.0
the teaching profession has greater prestige in other EU countries than in Slovenia.	869	3.87 (2)	0.85	1.7	4.8	18.4	54.8	20.3
teachers are experts in upbringing.	866	3.31 (3)	0.96	2.8	17.1	35.9	34.8	9.5
teachers' work is important to society.	869	3.29 (4)	1.15	4.7	23.4	27.4	26.8	17.7
teachers in private schools have greater prestige than their colleagues in public schools.	870	3.27 (5)	0.90	3.2	15.5	37.8	37.8	5.6
the teaching profession would have greater prestige if teachers themselves had a more positive opinion of it.	869	3.05 (6)	1.03	7.1	22.3	35.6	28.3	6.7
the teaching profession has high prestige.	868	2.01 (7)	0.81	27.3	48.3	20.3	3.9	0.2
the teaching profession has greater prestige today than in the past.	867	1.56 (8)	0.76	55.8	36.4	4.8	2.0	0.9

Legend: N – number of cases, M(Rank) - mean with rank; the higher the number, the lower the position and the stronger the agreement, SD – standard deviation; (1) - Strongly disagree, (2) - Disagree, (3) - Neither agree nor disagree, (4) - Agree, (5) - Strongly agree.

The data in Table 2 show that teachers were most likely to agree with the general public's view that teachers are experts in education, and less likely to agree that teachers are experts in upbringing. Teachers are more likely to say that teaching is important for society, but they expressed rather low agreement with the statement that the teaching profession enjoys high prestige. Among all the statements, they were least likely to agree with the statement that teaching has greater prestige today than in the past. Teachers expressed high agreement with the statement that the teaching profession has greater prestige in other EU countries than in Slovenia, while they tended to respond that teachers in private schools enjoy greater prestige than their colleagues in public schools. Teachers expressed a neutral view of the statement that the teaching profession would have greater prestige if teachers themselves had a more positive opinion of it.

Table 3 shows differences in public beliefs about the teaching profession between PST and SST.

Table 3

Measures of descriptive statistics and results of Mann-Whitney tests of differences in public beliefs about the teaching profession by level of teaching.

The public in Slovenia believes that:	School level	N	M	SD	Results M-W test	
					Z	P
teachers are experts in education.	PST	529	4,05	0,93	-2.068	0.039*
	SST	341	3.95	0.87		
the teaching profession has greater prestige in other EU countries than in Slovenia.	PST	529	3.87	0.86	-0.281	0.779
	SST	340	3.87	0.83		
teachers are experts in upbringing.	PST	592	3.40	0,97	-3.425	<0.001**
	SST	337	3.17	0.92		
teachers' work is important to society.	PST	529	3.28	1,13	0.596	0.551
	SST	340	3.32	1.18		
teachers in private schools have greater prestige than their colleagues in public schools.	PST	529	3.38	0,86	-4.714	<0.001**
	SST	341	3.10	0.94		
the teaching profession would have greater prestige if teachers themselves had a more positive opinion of it.	PST	528	3.0	1.04	1.822	0.068
	SST	341	3.13	1.01		
the teaching profession has high prestige.	PST	527	1.94	0.76	3.235	0.001**
	SST	341	2.13	0.87		
the teaching profession has greater prestige today than in the past.	PST	527	1.49	0.74	4.059	<0.001**
	SST	340	1.67	0.78		

*Legend: PST: primary school teachers, SST: secondary school teachers; N – number of cases; M – mean, SD – standard deviation; M-W test = Mann-Whitney U test; *p<0.05; **p<0.001.*

Table 3 shows that statistically significant differences between PST and SST emerged for five statements. SSTs were more likely than PSTs to agree that the teaching profession is held in high esteem in society. These responses are consistent with our previous results. SSTs were more likely to agree with the statement that the teaching profession has greater prestige today than in the past. PST teachers agreed more than SST teachers with the remaining three statements, where statistically significant differences emerged. PSTs were more likely than SSTs to agree that teachers in private schools have greater prestige than their counterparts in public schools, that teachers are experts in upbringing, and that teachers are experts in education.

Measures that could contribute to raising the profile of the teaching profession in Slovenia

Next, we asked teachers which of these measures they thought could contribute to raising the prestige of the teaching profession. Teachers could choose a response from 1 to 5, where 1 meant that they did not agree at all and 5 meant that they strongly agreed. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Measures of descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney test results on the importance of measures to improve the status of the teaching profession in society by level of education.

What would help to raise the status of the teaching profession in society?	N	M (Rank)	SD	School level	N	M	SD	Results M-W test	
								Z	P
Support for teachers from the government and the responsible ministry.	867	4.52 (1)	0.67	PST SST	528 339	4.56 4.45	0.63 0.73	-2.384	0.017*
Reducing the amount of bureaucratic work for teachers.	686	4.50 (2)	0.72	PST SST	527 341	4.58 4.39	0.67 0.79	-3.646	<0.001**
Providing incentives for teachers to reward them for a job well done.	866	4.48 (3)	0.695	PST SST	527 339	4.46 4.50	0.71 0.68	0.694	0.488
Equalising teachers' salaries with those in professions requiring the same level of education.	865	4.46 (4)	0.698	PST SST	527 338	4.49 4.42	0.69 0.70	-1.661	0.097
Maintaining a good public education network.	869	4.46 (5)	0.65	PST SST	528 341	4.48 4.42	0.63 0.69	-1.043	0.297
More positive media coverage of the teaching profession.	866	4.45 (6)	0.72	PST SST	527 339	4.49 4.39	0.68 0.77	-1,547	0.122
Ensuring a stable education system, that is not subject to political influence.	865	4.40 (7)	0.72	PST SST	525 340	4.48 4.40	0.68 0.80	-0.890	0.373
Increasing the autonomy of teachers in their teaching practice.	866	4.43 (8)	0.71	PST SST	525 341	4.52 4.29	0.64 0.78	-4.491	<0.001**
A more active role for teachers in shaping educational policy.	867	4.43 (9)	0.67	PST SST	527 340	4.47 4.36	0.65 0.70	-2.547	0.011*
The dedicated and consistent work of all teachers.	867	4.35 (10)	0.73	PST SST	528 339	4.34 4.36	0.74 0.73	0.468	0.640
A positive view of the teaching profession among all teachers.	866	4.27 (11)	0.78	PST SST	527 339	4.29 4.24	0.76 0.82	-0.711	0.477
More active participation of teachers in the design of programmes for pre-service teacher training. .	868	4.24 (12)	0.75	PST SST	528 340	4.28 4.16	0.74 0.76	-2.564	0.010*
A more active role in curriculum updating.	866	4.21 (13)	0.79	PST SST	525 341	4.24 4.15	0.77 0.81	-1.642	0.101
Ensuring quality mentoring for beginning teachers when they enter the teaching profession.	869	4.20 (14)	0.83	PST SST	528 341	4.20 4.20	0.85 0.79	-0.535	0.593

Improving opportunities for teachers to participate in quality training.	866	4.16 (15)	0.82	PST SST	526 340	4.17 4.13	0.80 0.84	-0.569	0.570
More open opportunities for teachers to be employed in different areas, not only in schools.	867	4.05 (16)	0.86	PST SST	526 341	4.06 4.03	0.86 0.87	-0.561	0.575
Better working conditions (space, computer equipment, etc.).	868	4.01 (17)	0.89	PST SST	528 340	4.02 4.0	0.91 0.87	-0.534	0.593
Removing the possibility of anonymous applications from teachers.	868	3.98 (18)	1.09	PST SST	528 340	4.13 3.74	1.02 1.152	-5.040	<0.001**
Better quality training for future teachers.	867	3.96 (19)	0.92	PST SST	526 341	3.98 3.93	0.93 0.91	-1.253	0.210
Entrance exams for teacher training programmes.	867	3.62 (20)	1.08	PST SST	528 339	3.63 3.61	1.07 1.09	-0.106	0.916
More demanding entry requirements for teacher training programmes (more points, higher matriculation results...	868	3.35 (21)	1.08	PST SST	528 340	3.34 3.36	1.08 1.108	0.160	0.873

Legend: N – number of cases; M(Rank) – mean with rank; the higher the number, the higher the position and the greater agreement that a particular measure could contribute to improving the reputation of the teaching profession; SD – standard deviation; PST: primary school teachers, SST: secondary school teachers; M-W test = Mann-Whitney U test; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$.

Table 4 shows that the highest/-rated actions by teachers relate to the macro level of actions at the national level (support from the government and the relevant ministry, reduction of bureaucratic work, adequate and comparable financial evaluation of work with other professions, maintenance of good public education, etc.). In addition to the responsibility of each policy, they are also aware of the importance of their own dedicated work and of the positive evaluation of the teaching profession. They consider future teacher enrolment organisation and concrete working conditions to be the least problematic issues.

Statistically significant differences in PST and SST ratings of actions that could contribute to raising the prestige of the teaching profession were found for six statements. In all of these, PSTs were more likely to agree with them than SSTs. Here again, the statements were mainly related to the macro level of support for teachers from the government and the Ministry of Education, reducing the amount of bureaucratic work, increasing autonomy in teaching work, increasing the autonomy of teachers, more active role in education policymaking, more active participation in the design of programmes for pre-service teachers, and the elimination of the possibility of anonymous allegations of teachers by parents.

Discussion

The survey results show that teachers in Slovenia assign the highest societal prestige to the medical profession, followed by the legal profession and the profession of entrepreneur. Teaching is held in varying prestige depending on the level of teaching. Among other professions, PSTs have a rather low ranking, while SSTs are rated higher, and higher education teachers the highest. This is consistent with findings from other research on teachers and education systems (Dolton et al., 2018; Stromquist, 2018; Šteh et al., 2019). The prestige of the teaching profession in Slovenia is low according to the TALIS survey (Ainley & Carstens, 2018). In 2017, Slovenian and Croatian researchers (Šteh et al., 2019) conducted a comparative study on the prestige of the teaching profession in both countries among PSTs. It showed that Slovenian teachers have a poor perception of the prestige of their profession, and Croatian teachers an even lower perception. According to Hoyle (2001), the prestige of teachers is consistent and relatively high compared to other service professions in the public service (e.g., nurses, social workers, or police officers), but lower than the “core professions” (e.g., medicine, law, or architecture). It should be added that teachers tend to rate their profession (regardless of their level of teaching) lower than the public, as has been noted by other authors (Hargreaves, 2009; Kralj & Razdevšek-Pučko, 2013), since parents often attribute a higher esteem to teachers than do the teachers themselves.

The results of the survey show that teachers feel they are more expert in education and less so in upbringing. In fact, it is difficult to separate education and training in practice, as they are closely linked in school, because teachers are already educating at the same time as they are training (Peček & Lesar, 2020). The lower SST score for teachers being experts in upbringing can be linked to the fact that, developmentally speaking, the process of education has a more important place in the lives of primary school students, comparing to students in upper secondary school that reach the age of majority. Teachers’ assessments in our research that teachers were more highly regarded in the past and that teachers abroad and in the private sector are more highly regarded suggest an idyllic view of the way it used to be and how it is elsewhere (Fuller et al., 2013).

We also have identified several areas of action where measures to improve the prestige of the teaching profession could be implemented at different levels (Bogdan Zupančič & Gavriloski Tretjak, 2023). Based on the teachers’ responses, we can see that research on the prestige of the teaching profession is complex, as a wide range of factors contribute to prestige. Among the measures listed, teachers rated those that fall under the auspices of the government or the relevant ministry as the most important for improving the prestige of the teaching profession. Teachers are most keen to have support from the government, more so PST than SST. They simply want to feel that the government values their work and is aware of the importance

of the teaching profession, which could significantly contribute to the prestige of the teaching profession in society (MacBeath, 2012). Prestige is certainly also linked to the financial valuation of teaching work. Teachers also feel that it would help to improve the prestige of the teaching profession if they had more autonomy in their teaching work. This is in line with the results of other research (e. g. Lennert da Silva, 2022) showing that teachers want more autonomy, which is limited by many regulations. The increasing focus on knowledge standards and external assessment undermines autonomy and the opportunities for professional growth needed for the professionalism of the profession (Marentič-Požarnik, 2019). This is important, since greater teacher autonomy has a positive effect on their retention in the profession (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020). Along with pedagogical autonomy, teachers also want a more active role in the formation of educational policy. Based on the findings, we conclude that teachers feel insufficiently heard. Professional changes in education are often introduced without their wider involvement and consideration, at the level of political decisions. PSTs have lower prestige, which is why they express an even stronger desire for autonomy in making decisions about their work.

In recent years, the scope of bureaucratic work of teachers has expanded considerably; despite digitization, teachers often require even more time to manage various data. This was pointed out by the teachers in our study, who believed that the reduction of bureaucratic work could help by raising the quality of the teaching profession. Bureaucratic work undermines the fundamental role and mission of teachers: upbringing and education. Despite the economic, technological and media foundations for digital transformation (Vendramin, 2021), its pedagogical aspects are insufficiently discussed, which is especially highlighted by PST. Comparatively speaking, PST also rate measures for increasing the autonomy of teachers in direct pedagogical work and a more active role in shaping the education system. Differences in the understanding of the concept of autonomy and the operation of the school system may contribute to the divergent view of autonomy between PST and SST (Strong & Yoshida, 2014). It is interesting, however, that teachers are somewhat less willing to participate in the design of programs that educate future teachers and to be involved in updating curricula. Trust in the work of teachers and the autonomy of teachers in their work are also related to the statement concerning the elimination of the possibility of anonymous allegations. In Slovenia, anyone can submit an anonymous report to the Inspectorate of Education of the Republic of Slovenia, which (in their opinion) relates to irregularities and violations in the work of a teacher or school regarding legal compliance. According to the Slovenian Inspection Control Act (UL RS, 40/14), the competent inspectorate must consider all anonymous reports and verify their validity. The number of extraordinary inspections has been increasing since 2004 (Inspectorate..., 2018). If irregularities are not detected, the procedure is stopped, and the applicant does not suffer any consequences. Among all the measures to increase the prestige of the teaching profession, the teachers

rated those related to the entry and education of future teachers the lowest: more demanding prerequisites for enrolment in programs that educate future teachers, the introduction of entrance exams and the improvement in the quality of education of future teachers. Although research shows that most teachers leave the teaching profession within the first five years of their employment (Ingersoll et al., 2018) and that studying, entry into employment and the development of a teacher's career have a major impact on leaving the profession, from the perspective of the teacher, the school and the country (Van den Borre et al., 2021), respondents in the present research did not find this particularly important.

In the end, some limitations of our research need to be mentioned. Firstly, restrictions are attributed to the sample namely. Although the survey questionnaire was sent by e-mail to all primary and secondary schools in Slovenia, on average only 1.3 teachers per school responded, those who were willing to participate in the survey. The representative sample is applicable only to Slovenian schools, and care should be taken when and if applying it to any other country. Moreover, the research was carried out in Slovenia immediately after distance learning during the pandemic ended and schools reopened, which could have influenced some teachers' opinions. For this reason, it would make sense to repeat the research at some point in the future, while encouraging teachers to be more responsive in the survey. Nevertheless, the research provides important insights into the prestige of the teaching profession in Slovenia and possible measures to improve it. The results are useful both at the level of educational policymaking and at the level of its practical implementation. It also represents an important starting point for further research.

Conclusion

The teaching profession in Slovenia does not enjoy high prestige; despite this, expectations for teachers are rising and the scope of their tasks is expanding (Kralj & Razdevšek-Pučko, 2013). Globalization, digitization, changes in the working environment, international knowledge tests, changed attitudes towards knowledge and authority in society, and the unpredictability of the future needs of young people—all of these introduce new challenges into teaching and require teachers to constantly adapt and upgrade their competences (Sahlberg, 2021). But with the international focus on student success measurements, which represent a tool for comparing individual school systems and a starting point for decision-makers for the formulation of educational policy, it is also necessary to consider research on the prestige of the teaching profession in society. This follows because the prestige of a certain profession affects the (un)attractiveness of the profession when deciding to study, the level of satisfaction with the profession, and leaving the profession to seek professional opportunities in other workplaces. As a result of the lack of teachers, there may be a lowering of the conditions for obtaining a professional qualification and thus a decrease in quality; in the long term, this could mean an additional decrease

in the prestige of the profession. Among the above issues, the teachers listed as the most important measures that, in their opinion, would improve the prestige of the teaching profession: appropriate “decision-making”, social and financial evaluation of the teaching profession, care for a high-quality and stable (public) education system, and greater autonomy in pedagogical work and in the design of educational policy. Considering the serious shortage of teachers, it becomes even more vital to hear teachers’ proposals for solutions to improve the prestige of the teaching profession.

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Ugled učiteljske profesije i mjere za njezino poboljšanje

Sažetak

Ugled učiteljske profesije u društvu značajno utječe na motivaciju učitelja za poučavanje, njihovu profesionalnost, uspjeh učenika i ukupni napredak društva. Slovenija se trenutačno suočava s ozbiljnim nedostatkom učitelja, što se može pripisati niskom ugledu učiteljske profesije. Sukladno tome, željeli smo saznati stavove učitelja i identificirati potencijalne mogućnosti za podizanje ugleda učiteljske profesije u društvu. U empirijskom dijelu prikazujemo rezultate istraživanja provedenoga na slučajnom uzorku od 870 slovenskih učitelja osnovnih i srednjih škola.

Prema rezultatima, učitelji su pripisali visok prestiž nastavnicima na višim i srednjim razinama, ali ne i nastavnicima u osnovnim školama. Uglavnom su se složili s općom javnošću da je nastavnički posao više cijenjen u drugim zemljama EU-a nego u Sloveniji i da je važan za društvo, ali nisu bili suglasni da je to visoko cijenjena ili rastuća profesija. Najviše ocijenjene mjere za koje su vjerovali da bi poboljšale ugled nastavničke profesije odnose se na mjere na makrorazini, na nacionalnoj razini (podrška vlade i nadležnoga ministarstva, smanjenje birokratskoga opterećenja, primjereno i usporedivo financijsko vrednovanje rada u odnosu na druge profesije te održavanje dobrog javnog obrazovanja). Postojale su neke statistički značajne razlike između odgovora učitelja i nastavnika.

Ključne riječi: odgoj i obrazovanje; osnovna škola; Slovenija; srednja škola; učitelji

Uvod

Ugled se definira kao vrlo visoko mišljenje o nekome koje dijeli više ljudi i odnosi se na poštovanje ili čast koje pojedinci stječu u društvu iz različitih razloga (Liga i Priževite, 2019; Hargreaves, 2009).

Učiteljska profesija jedan je od temelja obrazovnog sustava, igra ključnu ulogu u razvoju pojedinaca i društva (Nenty i sur., 2015; Dolton i sur., 2018; Stromquist, 2018) te pomaže oblikovanju svih drugih profesija. Unatoč važnosti nastavničke profesije u društvu, u nekim zemljama (vidi OECD, EAG, 2024.) opada udio nastavnika koji smatraju da je nastavnička profesija cijenjena u društvu.

Praćenje samo percepcije učitelja o ugledu njihove profesije u društvu pomaže razumjeti privlačnost profesije među mladima (Carlo i sur., 2013) i spriječiti odlazak učitelja iz profesije (Dolton i sur., 2018), što je posebno važno u Sloveniji gdje postoji

ozbiljan nedostatak učitelja (Bogdan Zupančič i Gavriloski Tretjak, 2023). Percepcija učitelja oblikuje i njihovu motivaciju za rad te profesionalnost (Kasapoglu, 2020), što je povezano s uspjehom učenika (Nenty i sur., 2015; Dolton i sur., 2018). Učitelji koji su cjenjeniji, zadovoljniji su te doprinose boljim obrazovnim ishodima i napretku društva (Schleicher, 2018; Baron, 2022). Podizanje ugleda učiteljske profesije stoga je ključno za povećanje kvalitete obrazovanja.

Svaka zemlja ima specifične društvene i sustavne značajke koje utječu na status i prestiž nastavničke profesije, stoga je naš cilj bio istražiti kako slovenski nastavnici percipiraju status nastavničke profesije. Posebno su nas zanimala mišljenja učitelja o statusu nastavničke profesije u društvu u usporedbi s drugim profesijama, prevladavajuća uvjerenja o nastavničkoj profesiji u društvu te mjere koje bi pomogle u podizanju statusa nastavničke profesije. Neke su prethodne studije ispitivale status nastavničke profesije u Sloveniji, usredotočujući se na pojedinačne aspekte, dok ova studija nudi sveobuhvatno ispitivanje statusa profesije u društvu jer obuhvaća sve gore navedene aspekte. Cilj je studije podići svijest o važnosti statusa nastavničke profesije u društvu, predstaviti prijedloge za koje nastavnici smatraju da bi mogli doprinijeti poboljšanju njezinoga statusa te utvrditi razlike u procjenama učitelja i nastavnika osnovnih i srednjih škola u Sloveniji. Iako se studija temelji na podatcima prikupljenima u Sloveniji, njezini nalazi nadilaze nacionalni kontekst i mogu dati važan doprinos široj stručnoj raspravi o društvenom statusu nastavničke profesije.

Što određuje ugled učiteljske profesije u društvu?

Ugled učiteljske profesije analiziran je u nekim studijama (Stromquist, 2018; Šteh i sur., 2019; Žarkovič-Adlešič i sur., 2024; Kraft i Lyon, 2024). Ove studije na različite su načine razdvojile i imenovala čimbenike povezane s ugledom učiteljske profesije, zbog čega se njihovi nalazi ne mogu izravno uspoređivati. Oni se odnose na izravno obrazovanje budućih učitelja, njihov ulazak u profesiju i perspektive karijere, izravni pedagoški rad učitelja i njihovu autonomiju u tom radu, podršku i brigu donositelja odluka za kvalitetan i stabilan obrazovni sustav te aktivnu ulogu učitelja u njegovom suoblikovanju, pri čemu se učiteljska profesija odgovarajuće vrednuje, kako financijski, tako i društveno.

Istraživanja pokazuju da razina plaće za obavljani rad doprinosi ugledu učiteljske profesije u društvu, a time i atraktivnosti profesije među mladima (Carlo i sur., 2013). Prema komparativnoj analizi 39 obrazovnih sustava u Europi, u javnim školama na razini osnovnoga i srednjoškolskoga obrazovanja, u školskoj godini 2021./2022., plaće učitelja u prosjeku su rasle s razinom na kojoj su poučavali i bile su povezane s razinom minimalnih kvalifikacija potrebnih za obavljanje profesije (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2023). U Sloveniji je za učitelje u osnovnim i srednjim školama potreban isti stupanj obrazovanja, no postoje različiti dodatci (npr. za rad u kombiniranim, bolničkim, dvojezičnim, prilagođenim odjelima), pogodnosti (npr. u obliku smanjenja broja sati obveza prema dobi, stažu, razredu, predmetu koji se

predaje) i druga primanja (npr. režijski troškovi, naknade za prijevoz, jubilarne nagrade) koje učitelji mogu ostvariti (ibid.).

Podatci OECD EAG (2024) upućuju na to da rast plaća učitelja u Sloveniji usporedivo zaostaje za rastom plaća u drugim profesijama sa sličnim kvalifikacijama i odgovornostima. Hoyle (2001) navodi da raspodjela nižih plaća učiteljima ovisi o velikom broju zaposlenih u sektoru obrazovanja. Nadalje, niža plaća može biti povezana s feminizacijom učiteljske profesije koja opada s razinom obrazovanja u Sloveniji (SURs, 2023./24.). Posljedično, tijekom školske godine 2023./2024., postotak žena zaposlenih u osnovnim školama iznosio je 87,3 %, u srednjim školama 67 %, a u ustanovama visokoga obrazovanja 47 %. Zanimljivo je da postotak žena opada sa svakom višom titulom.

Također je potrebno kritički promatrati sustav obrazovanja budućih učitelja. Ako omogućuje kandidatima koji nemaju drugu opciju upisa, sustav je neadekvatan. Reić Ercegovac i Jukić (2008), u anketi među hrvatskim studentima, budućim odgajateljima i učiteljima, utvrdili su da su studenti koji su izabrali učiteljstvo zbog lakog upisa manje zadovoljni svojim izborom od onih koji su bili intrinzično motivirani ili zainteresirani za rad s djecom i poučavanje. Međutim, uvjeti za upis u programe obrazovanja učitelja odgovornost su pojedinih zemalja EU-a, a samo neke zemlje imaju specifične načine provjere kandidata za upis učiteljskoga studija (npr. testovima sposobnosti ili intervjuima o motivaciji za studij) (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013). Za promociju učiteljstva kao karijere među mladima potrebno je razmotriti ne samo način odabira učitelja za upis u studijski program, već i način pružanja kvalitetnoga obrazovanja učiteljima te mogućnosti daljnje profesionalnog razvoja i karijernih perspektiva učitelja (European Commission..., 2021).

Autonomija učitelja još je jedno važno područje istraživanja u kontekstu ugleda učiteljske profesije. Radi se o složenoj konstrukciji koju treba proučavati u svakoj zemlji (Verger i sur., 2019). Obuhvaća kako izravni rad učitelja u učionici i školi, tako i mogućnosti utjecaja na oblikovanje školske politike (Evers i sur., 2017). Učitelji su uglavnom zadovoljni stupnjem autonomije u svojem radu u učionici (npr. radni procesi, disciplina i testiranje), manje s autonomijom na razini škole (npr. suradnja učitelja, profesionalni razvoj, ovlasti u odlučivanju o financijama na razini škole) te smatraju da njihovo mišljenje nema utjecaja na donositelje odluka (Lennert da Silva, 2022). Navedeni radni uvjeti i nedostatak podrške donositelja odluka povećavaju stres i profesionalnu iscrpljenost učitelja na poslu (Žarković-Adlešić i sur., 2024), što posljedično može dovesti do napuštanja profesije.

Prema MacBeathu (2012), učitelji su preopterećeni visokim očekivanjima društva i niskim profesionalnim ugledom. Neki autori (Hall i Langton 2006; Hargreaves i sur., 2018) primijetili su da javnost pripisuje visoki ugled profesijama koje imaju moć, novac i slavu (znanje, vještine i stupanj društvenoga utjecaja imaju sekundarnu važnost). Ipak, javnost često više cijeni učitelje nego što oni sami vrednuju svoju profesiju. Učitelji često doživljavaju svoju profesiju kao nedostojnu, dok je roditelji

učenika smatraju uglednom i važnom (Hargreaves, 2009; Kralj i Razdevšek-Pučko, 2013; Šteh i sur., 2019). Masovni mediji igraju važnu ulogu u oblikovanju percepcije društva o učiteljima, njihovom radu i načinu na koji se on interpretira. Učitelji su u masovnim medijima prikazani na snažno polariziran i stereotipan način (Stromquist, 2018). S jedne strane, mediji kritiziraju rad učitelja, ističući njihove pogreške (Slivar, 2008), dok s druge strane predstavljaju ideal učitelja. Ova jasna crno-bijela slika učitelja, od potpuno negativnoga do idealnoga, stereotipizira profesiju (Edling, 2014) i stvara mitove koji nikada ne mogu obuhvatiti složenost stvarnih školskih situacija.

Hoyle (2001) ističe da je podizanje ugleda učiteljske profesije otežano zbog prirode učiteljstva temeljenoga na odnosima, koju je teško mjeriti. Obrazovanje također obuhvaća širok spektar ciljeva – od specifičnih (npr. mjerljive vještine) do općih (npr. socijalne vještine). Ti se ciljevi usmjeravaju i na sadašnjost i na budućnost, što otežava specijalizaciju znanja. Posljedično, teško je jasno definirati učiteljsku profesiju kao visoko profesionalnu. To pomiče fokus refleksije na dilemu učiteljstva kao (polu-)profesije (Ingersoll i Perda, 2008).

Moguće mjere za unaprjeđenje ugleda učiteljske profesije

Čimbenici koji određuju ugled učiteljske profesije u društvu povezani su s mjerama koje se trebaju poduzeti s različitim stupnjem složenosti na razini pojedinoga učitelja (mikrorazina), škole (mezorazina) ili države (makrorazina) (Marin i Macri, 2018; Van den Borre i sur., 2021) te mogu biti neposredne, srednjoročne ili dugoročne. Na mikrorazini to je povezano sa zadovoljstvom učitelja poslom, koje se može postići zadovoljenjem njihovih individualnih potreba, postojanjem čvrste mreže podrške (mentoring) i različitim mogućnostima za profesionalni razvoj (Ainley i Carstens, 2018). Na mezorazini potrebna su ulaganja u odnose, organizaciju rada i dobre radne uvjete (Hargreaves, 2009). Na makrorazini percepcija učiteljske profesije usko je povezana s ekonomskom i društvenom situacijom u zemlji te se odražava u različitim pristupima oblikovanju pojedinih obrazovnih politika (Ingersoll i sur., 2018; Hargreaves, 2009).

Budući da među učiteljima postoji percepcija da je ugled učiteljske profesije u Sloveniji nizak (Ainley i Carstens, 2018), odlučili smo istražiti ovo pitanje.

Metodologija

Ciljevi empirijskoga istraživanja

Cilj istraživanja bio je ispitati stavove učitelja u Sloveniji o ugledu učiteljske profesije i mogućim strategijama za njegovo poboljšanje u društvu. U ovome radu predstavljamo rezultate većega istraživanja o statusu učiteljske profesije u Sloveniji. Istraživanje je obuhvatilo tri ključna pitanja: a) Kako učitelji procjenjuju ugled učiteljske profesije u usporedbi s drugim profesijama? B) Što učitelji misle o prevladavajućim uvjerenjima o učiteljskoj profesiji u društvu? C) Koje mjere učitelji smatraju mjerama koje bi mogle doprinijeti uzdizanju učiteljske profesije u društvu?

U svemu navedenomu zanimalo nas je postoje li razlike između učitelja osnovnih (PST-*primary school teachers*) i srednjih škola (SST-*secondary school teachers*).

Istraživačka metoda

Naše istraživanje temelji se na deskriptivnoj i kauzalnoj, neeksperimentalnoj metodi empirijskoga pedagoškog istraživanja.

Istraživački uzorak

Istraživanje je temeljeno na slučajnom uzorku slovenskih PST i SST. Podatci su prikupljeni korištenjem upitnika osmišljenoga posebno za potrebe ovoga istraživanja. Poveznica na upitnik, koji je izrađen pomoću softvera 1KA, distribuirana je na sve javno dostupne e-adrese povezanih s osnovnim (454) i srednjim (181) obrazovnim institucijama u Sloveniji (Evidenca..., 2022).

U uzorku od 870 učitelja koji su pravilno ispunili upitnik bilo je više žena ($f = 695$, 79,9 %) nego muškaraca ($f = 167$, 19,2 %), dok 8 ispitanika (0,9 %) nije željelo odgovoriti na to pitanje. Više ispitanika bilo je zaposleno u osnovnoj školi ($f = 529$, 60,8 %) nego u srednjoj školi ($f = 341$, 39,2 %). Veći udio muškaraca bio je zaposlen u srednjim školama ($n = 100$, 29,7 %) u usporedbi s osnovnim školama ($n = 67$, 12,8 %), što je u skladu sa strukturom većine nastavničkoga kadra u osnovnim i srednjim školama u Sloveniji (SiStat 2023). Većina ispitanika (298, 34,3 %) imala je između 19 i 30 godina radnoga staža, slijedili su oni sa 7 do 18 godina (219, 25,2 %), 31 godina i više (176, 20,1 %), 4 do 6 godina (92, 10,6 %), dok je najmanji broj ispitanika imao do 3 godine radnoga iskustva (85, 9,8 %). Ovaj nalaz je u skladu s činjenicom da učiteljska radna snaga u Sloveniji stari, pri čemu više od 54 % učitelja ima najmanje 19 godina staža.

Postupak prikupljanja podataka i instrumenti

Prvi dio upitnika bio je osmišljen za prikupljanje demografskih podataka, nakon čega su slijedila pitanja o ugledu i statusu učiteljske profesije. Relevantno pitanje za ovaj rad bilo je ono u kojem su ispitanici zamoljeni da rangiraju profesije (od 1 – najviši ugled do 10 – najniži ugled među navedenim profesijama u društvu). Pri tome smo se referirali na profesije navedene u istraživanju Šteh i sur. (2019) kako bismo mogli usporediti rezultate.

Slijedilo je pitanje o tome koja mišljenja o učiteljskoj profesiji u društvu učitelji percipiraju kao prevladavajuća. Sudionicima je predstavljeno osam izjava, a zamoljeni su da navedu stupanj slaganja na petostupanjskoj skali, od 1 (uopće se ne slažem) do 5 (u potpunosti se slažem). U provođenju ovoga istraživanja oslonili smo se na izjave korištene u studiji Liga i Priževite (2019) i prilagodili ih ciljevima našega istraživanja. Na kraju, željeli smo identificirati mjere koje učitelji smatraju potencijalno učinkovitima za povećanje ugleda učiteljske profesije u društvu. Učiteljima smo predstavili niz potencijalnih mjera, pri čemu su bili pozvani da navedu stupanj

slaganja s pojedinom mjerom na skali od 1 (uopće se ne slažem) do 5 (u potpunosti se slažem). Mjere su formulirane na temelju sinteze uvida u raznovrsnu akademsku literaturu, koju smo prethodno predstavili u teorijskom dijelu članka (npr. Marin i Macri, 2018).

Istraživanje je provedeno od 10. svibnja 2022. do 1. lipnja 2022. slanjem poveznice na upitnik pripremljen u IKA na dostupne adrese svih osnovnih i srednjih škola u Republici Sloveniji (Evidenca... 2022). Ravnatelji su zamoljeni da svim zaposlenicima škole dostave mrežnu adresu upitnika. Sudjelovanje ispitanika u istraživanju bilo je dobrovoljno. Podatci su obrađeni pomoću softverskoga paketa SPSS. Za analizu podataka korištena je osnovna deskriptivna i inferencijska statistika. Kako bismo utvrdili razlike između učitelja i nastavnika, koristili smo Mann-Whitneyjev test razlika. Test smo koristili za ispitivanje razlika između dviju skupina u njihovoj percepciji društvenoga statusa različitih profesija, njihovih uvjerenja o javnoj slici nastavničke profesije i mjera koje bi, prema njihovom mišljenju, mogle doprinijeti poboljšanju društvenoga statusa nastavničke profesije.

Rezultati

Ugled učiteljske profesije u društvu u usporedbi s drugim profesijama

U anketnom pitanju učitelji su zamoljeni da rangiraju profesije na skali od 1 do 10, pri čemu 1 označava najmanje, a 10 najviše cijenjenu profesiju u društvu, prema razini društvenoga ugleda. Podatci su prikazani u Tablici 1.

Tablica 1

Kao što je prikazano u Tablici 1, učitelji najveći ugled u društvu pripisuju medicinskoj profesiji, zatim pravnoj profesiji i profesiji poduzetnika. Četvrta najbolje rangirana profesija bio je sveučilišni nastavnik, a zatim učitelj srednje škole. Učitelj osnovne škole zauzeo je pretposljednje mjesto po ugledu među ostalim profesijama, dok je učitelj predškolske djece bio na posljednjem mjestu. Prema mišljenju učitelja, profesije visokoga i srednjega obrazovanja imaju znatno veći ugled među navedenim zanimanjima nego profesije učitelja osnovne škole i odgojitelja u vrtiću.

Mann-Whitneyjev test pokazao je statistički značajne razlike u ocjenama triju profesija. Dva od njih pripisala su veći ugled (višu poziciju na skali zanimanja) SST u usporedbi s PST: medicinska sestra i učitelj predškolske djece, dok je obrnuto za profesiju pravnika. Također je vrijedno spomenuti tendenciju da profesiju učitelja srednje škole više cijenjena PST nego sami SST-a.

Percepcija učiteljske profesije u društvu prema mišljenju učitelja

Pitali smo učitelje koja mišljenja o učiteljskoj profesiji prevladavaju među stanovništvom u Sloveniji. Nastavnici su mogli odabrati odgovor od 1 do 5, pri čemu je 1 značilo da se u potpunosti ne slažu, a 5 da se u potpunosti slažu. Tablica 2 prikazuje pokazatelje deskriptivne statistike za te izjave.

Tablica 2

Podatci iz Tablice 2 pokazuju da su se učitelji najčešće slagali s mišljenjem opće javnosti da su učitelji stručnjaci za obrazovanje, dok su se rjeđe slagali da su učitelji stručnjaci za odgoj. Učitelji su češće isticali da je poučavanje važno za društvo, ali su izražavali relativno nisku suglasnost s izjavom da učiteljska profesija uživa visok ugled. Među svim izjavama, najmanje su se slagali s tvrdnjom da učiteljstvo danas ima veći ugled nego u prošlosti. Učitelji su izrazili visoku suglasnost s izjavom da učiteljska profesija ima veći ugled u drugim zemljama EU-a nego u Sloveniji, dok su skloni odgovoriti da učitelji u privatnim školama uživaju veći ugled od svojih kolega u javnim školama. Učitelji su zauzeli neutralan stav prema izjavi da bi učiteljska profesija imala veći ugled kada bi sami učitelji imali pozitivnije mišljenje o njoj.

Tablica 3 prikazuje razlike u javnim uvjerenjima o učiteljskoj profesiji između PST-a i SST-a.

Tablica 3

Tablica 3 pokazuje da su se statistički značajne razlike između učitelja osnovnih i srednjih škola pojavile u pet izjava. SST su češće od PST-a bili skloni složiti se da učiteljska profesija uživa visok ugled u društvu. Ovi su odgovori u skladu s prethodnim pitanjem pri čemu su učitelji rangirali profesije te su SST rangirani više od PST-a u pogledu ugleda. SST također su se češće od PST-a složili s izjavom da učiteljska profesija danas ima veći ugled nego u prošlosti. PST slažu se više od SST-a s preostale tri izjave kod kojih su uočene statistički značajne razlike. PST su češće od SST-a bili skloni složiti se da učitelji u privatnim školama imaju veći prestiž od svojih kolega u javnim školama, da su učitelji stručnjaci za odgoj te da su učitelji stručnjaci za obrazovanje.

Mjere koje bi mogle pridonijeti povećanju ugleda učiteljske profesije u Sloveniji

Zatim smo učitelje upitali koje od navedenih mjera smatraju da bi mogle pridonijeti povećanju ugleda učiteljske profesije u Sloveniji. Nastavnici su mogli odabrati odgovor od 1 do 5, pri čemu je 1 značilo da se u potpunosti ne slažu, a 5 da se u potpunosti slažu. Rezultati su prikazani u Tablici 4.

Tablica 4

Tablica 4 pokazuje da su najviše ocijenjene mjere učitelja odnose na makrorazinu djelovanja na nacionalnoj razini (podrška vlade i resornoga ministarstva, smanjenje birokratskoga rada, odgovarajuća i usporediva financijska valorizacija rada u odnosu na druge profesije, održavanje kvalitetnoga javnog obrazovanja itd.). Osim odgovornosti svakoga donositelja politike, učitelji su također svjesni važnosti vlastitoga predanog rada i pozitivne valorizacije učiteljske profesije. Organizaciju upisa budućih učitelja i konkretne radne uvjete smatraju najmanje problematičnim

pitanjima. Statistički značajne razlike u ocjenama PST i SST učitelja o mjerama koje bi mogle pridonijeti povećanju ugleda učiteljske profesije utvrđene su za 6 izjava. U svim tim slučajevima PST su češće bile sklone složiti se s njima nego SST. Izjave su se ponovno ponajprije odnosile na makrorazinu institucionalne podrške učiteljima osobito u kontekstu djelovanja vlade i Ministarstva obrazovanja ($U = 82080,5$, $p = 0,017$), smanjenje opsega birokratskoga rada ($U = 78545,5$, $p < 0,001$), povećanje autonomije u pedagoškom radu ($U = 75119,5$, $p < 0,001$), povećanje autonomije učitelja ($U = 75119,5$, $p < 0,001$), aktivniju ulogu u oblikovanju obrazovne politike ($U = 81413,0$, $p = 0,001$), aktivnije sudjelovanje u oblikovanju programa obrazovanja budućih učitelja ($U = 81378,5$, $p = 0,010$) te uklanjanje mogućnosti da roditelji anonimno prijavljuju učitelje ($U = 72563,5$, $p < 0,001$).

Diskusija

Rezultati ankete pokazuju da učitelji u Sloveniji najveći društveni ugled pripisuju medicinskoj profesiji, zatim pravnoj profesiji i profesiji poduzetnika. Ugled učiteljskoga zanimanja varira ovisno o razini poučavanja. Među ostalim profesijama, PST zauzimaju prilično nisku poziciju, dok su SST rangirani više, a nastavnici visokoga obrazovanja najviše. To je u skladu s rezultatima drugih istraživanja o učiteljima i obrazovnim sustavima (Dolton i sur., 2018; Stromquist, 2018; Šteh i sur., 2019). Ugled učiteljske profesije u Sloveniji prema TALIS istraživanju je nizak (Ainley i Carstens 2018). Godine 2017. slovenski i hrvatski istraživači (Šteh i sur., 2019) proveli su komparativnu studiju o ugledu učiteljske profesije u obje zemlje među PST. Rezultati su pokazali da slovenski učitelji slabo percipiraju ugled svoje profesije, dok hrvatski učitelji imaju još lošiju percepciju. Prema Hoyleu (2001), ugled učitelja je konzistentan i relativno visok u usporedbi s drugim službeničkim zanimanjima u javnoj službi (npr. medicinske sestre, socijalni radnici ili policajci), ali niži nego kod „ključnih profesija” (npr. medicina, pravo ili arhitektura). To nije u skladu s našim nalazima, pri čemu su medicinske sestre rangirane više od PST-a. Učiteljska profesija općenito se svrstava u kategoriju „poluprofesionalnih” profesija (Ingersoll i Perda, 2008); međutim, pojam profesije koristi se za zanimanja za koja su propisani određeno obrazovanje, osposobljavanje, kompetencijski profil, identitet i proces profesionalne socijalizacije itd. (Monteiro, 2015). U usporedbi s drugim zanimanjima, profesije imaju tendenciju zauzimati viši društveni status (Hoyle, 2001), što utječe na ugled povezan s hijerarhijom profesija. Dodatnu složenost problematike predstavlja činjenica da u Sloveniji ne postoji jasna razgraničenost između pojmova profesija i poziv, a riječ profesija često je povezana s pozivom ili misijom poučavanja (Javrh, 2011). Treba dodati da učitelji obično procjenjuju svoju profesiju (bez obzira na razinu poučavanja) niže nego javnost, što su primijetili i drugi autori (Kralj i Razdevšek-Pučko, 2013; Hargreaves, 2009), budući da roditelji često pripisuju učiteljima viši ugled nego sami učitelji.

Rezultati ankete pokazuju da učitelji smatraju da su stručniji u obrazovanju, a manje u odgoju. U praksi je, zapravo, teško odvojiti obrazovanje i odgoj jer su oni

u školi usko povezani jer učitelji istovremeno odgajaju i obrazuju (Peček i Lesar, 2020). Niža ocjena SST učitelja kao stručnjaka za obrazovanje može se povezati s činjenicom da obrazovni proces, razvojno gledano, ima važnije mjesto u životima učenika osnovne škole. Učenici srednjih škola dosežu punoljetnost i pretpostavlja se da imaju razvijenu osobnost, što nije slučaj kod učenika osnovne škole. Procjene učitelja u našem istraživanju da su učitelji u prošlosti bili cijenjeniji te da su učitelji u inozemstvu i privatnom sektoru danas više cijenjeni sugeriraju idiličan pogled na to kako je bilo i kako je drugdje (Fuller i sur., 2013).

Identificirali smo nekoliko područja djelovanja u kojima bi se mjere za poboljšanje ugleda učiteljske profesije mogle provoditi na različitim razinama (Bogdan Zupančić i Gavriloski Tretjak, 2023). Na temelju odgovora učitelja jasno je da je istraživanje o ugledu učiteljske profesije složeno jer na njega utječe širok raspon čimbenika. Među predloženim mjerama, učitelji su kao najvažnije ocijenili one koje spadaju u nadležnost vlade ili resornoga ministarstva. Posebno su istaknuli potrebu za podrškom države – osobito PST, koji naglašavaju da žele osjetiti da se njihov rad cijeni i da se važnost učiteljske profesije prepoznaje na nacionalnoj razini (MacBeath, 2012). Ugled je također usko povezan s financijskim vrednovanjem učiteljskoga rada. Učitelji također smatraju da bi im veća autonomija u nastavnom radu pomogla poboljšati ugled učiteljske profesije. To se podudara s nalazima Lennerta da Silve (2022), koji navodi da mnogi učitelji svoju autonomiju doživljavaju ograničenom zbog pretjerane regulacije. Osim toga, sve veći naglasak na standardima znanja i vanjskim vrednovanjima smanjuje mogućnosti za profesionalni razvoj i potkopava profesionalnu autonomiju (Marentič-Požarnik, 2019). Budući da je dokazano da veća autonomija pozitivno utječe na zadržavanje učitelja u profesiji (Worth i Van den Brande, 2020), ovo pitanje je posebno važno. Konačno, učitelji su izrazili želju za aktivnijom ulogom u oblikovanju obrazovne politike. Na temelju nalaza zaključujemo da se učitelji osjećaju nedovoljno saslušani te da se promjene često uvode bez njihove šire uključenosti i razmatranja, na razini političkih odluka. PST imaju niži ugled zbog čega izražavaju još snažniju želju za autonomijom u donošenju odluka o svojem radu.

U posljednjim godinama opseg birokratskoga rada učitelja znatno se povećao, unatoč digitalizaciji učitelji često trebaju još više vremena za upravljanje različitim podacima. To su istaknuli učitelji u našoj studiji koji su smatrali da bi smanjenje birokratskoga rada moglo pridonijeti povećanju kvalitete učiteljske profesije. Birokratski rad narušava temeljnu ulogu i misiju učitelja: odgoj i obrazovanje. Unatoč ekonomskim, tehnološkim i medijskim osnovama za digitalnu transformaciju (Vendramin, 2021), njezini pedagoški aspekti nedovoljno su raspravljani, što posebno ističe PST. U usporedbi, PST također vrednuju mjere za povećanje autonomije učitelja u izravnom pedagoškom radu te aktivniju ulogu u oblikovanju obrazovnoga sustava. Razlike u razumijevanju pojma autonomije i načina rada školskoga sustava mogu pridonijeti različitim pogledima na autonomiju između PST-a i SST-a (Strong i Yoshida,

2014). Zanimljivo je, međutim, da su učitelji donekle manje skloni sudjelovanju u oblikovanju programa koji obrazuju buduće učitelje te u uključivanju u ažuriranje kurikula. Povjerenje u rad učitelja i autonomija učitelja u njihovom radu također su povezani s izjavom o uklanjanju mogućnosti anonimnih prijava. U Sloveniji svatko može podnijeti anonimnu prijavu na Zavod za inspekcijski nadzor Republike Slovenije, koja se (prema njegovu mišljenju) odnosi na nepravilnosti i povrede u radu učitelja ili škole u vezi s poštivanjem zakonskih propisa. Prema [Zakonu o inspekcijskom nadzoru] (UL RS, 40/14), nadležna inspekcija mora razmotriti sve anonimne prijave i provjeriti njihovu istinitost. Broj izvanrednih inspekcija raste od 2004. godine (Inspekcija..., 2018). Ako se nepravilnosti ne otkriju, postupak se zaustavlja, a podnositelj prijave ne snosi nikakve posljedice.

Među svim mjerama za povećanje ugleda učiteljske profesije, učitelji su najniže ocijenili one koje se odnose na upis i obrazovanje budućih učitelja: zahtjevniji preduvjeti za upis u programe obrazovanja budućih učitelja, uvođenje prijavnih ispita i poboljšanje kvalitete obrazovanja budućih učitelja. Iako istraživanja pokazuju da većina učitelja napušta učiteljsku profesiju unutar prvih pet godina zaposlenja (Ingersoll i sur., 2018) te da studiji, ulazak u zaposlenje i razvoj učiteljske karijere imaju velik utjecaj na napuštanje profesije iz perspektive učitelja, škole i države (Van den Borre i sur., 2021), ispitanici u ovome istraživanju to nisu smatrali osobito važnim.

Na kraju treba spomenuti neka ograničenja našega istraživanja. Prvo, ograničenja se odnose na uzorak. Iako je istraživački upitnik poslan e-poštom svim osnovnim i srednjim školama u Sloveniji, u prosjeku je samo 1,3 nastavnika po školi bilo spremno sudjelovati u istraživanju. Reprezentativni uzorak vrijedi samo za slovenske škole, stoga je pri njegovoj primjeni na bilo koju drugu zemlju potrebno postupati s oprezom. Osim toga, anketa je provedena nakon što su se škole ponovno otvorile nakon zatvaranja i uvođenja nastave na daljinu u Sloveniji tijekom pandemije, što je moglo utjecati na mišljenja nekih nastavnika. Stoga bi bilo korisno ponoviti anketu u budućnosti i dodatno potaknuti nastavnike na aktivnije sudjelovanje u ispunjavanju upitnika. Unatoč tome, anketa nudi važne uvide u prestiž nastavničke profesije u Sloveniji i moguće mjere za njegovo poboljšanje. Rezultati su korisni i na razini kreiranja obrazovne politike i na razini njezine praktične provedbe. Također predstavljaju važnu polaznu točku za daljnja istraživanja.

Zaključak

Učiteljska profesija u Sloveniji ne uživa visok ugled; unatoč tome, očekivanja od učitelja rastu, a opseg njihovih zadataka se širi (Kralj i Razdevšek-Pučko, 2013). Globalizacija, digitalizacija, promjene u radnom okružju, međunarodna testiranja znanja, promijenjeni stavovi prema znanju i autoritetu u društvu te nepredvidljivost budućih potreba mladih – svi ovi čimbenici unose nove izazove u poučavanje i zahtijevaju od učitelja stalnu prilagodbu i nadogradnju kompetencija (Sahlberg, 2021). Međutim, uz međunarodnu usmjerenost na mjerenje uspješnosti učenika,

koje predstavlja instrument za usporedbu pojedinih školskih sustava i polazište za donositelje odluka pri oblikovanju obrazovne politike, potrebno je razmatrati i istraživanja o ugledu učiteljske profesije u društvu. To je važno jer ugled određene profesije utječe na (ne)privlačnost zanimanja pri odluci o studiju, razinu zadovoljstva profesijom te napuštanje profesije radi traženja profesionalnih prilika u drugim zanimanjima. Kao posljedica nedostatka učitelja može doći do snižavanja kriterija za stjecanje stručne kvalifikacije, a time i do pada kvalitete odgojno-obrazovnoga procesa. Dugoročno, to bi moglo dodatno narušiti ugled profesije. Među navedenim pitanjima, učitelji su kao najvažnije mjere koje bi, prema njihovu mišljenju, poboljšale ugled učiteljske profesije, istaknuli: odgovarajuće „sudjelovanje u odlučivanju“, društvenu i finansijsku valorizaciju učiteljske profesije, skrb za kvalitetan i stabilan (javni) obrazovni sustav te veću autonomiju u pedagoškom radu i u oblikovanju obrazovne politike. S obzirom na ozbiljan manjak učitelja, postaje još važnije čuti prijedloge učitelja o rješenjima za unaprjeđenje ugleda učiteljske profesije.