Andragogical and Psychological Sensitivity for Adult Learning, Teacher Well-being and Relational Trust in Czech and Polish Education

Václav Šimek
Foreign Branch Prague, University of Social Sciences and Security
Hovorčovická 1281/11, 182 00 Praha, Czech Republic
E-mail address: simek@wsnsb.cz
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0158-6432

Jakub Šimek
Doctoral student
Faculty of Psychology, Pan-European University
Tomášikova 20, 821 02 Bratislava, Slovakia
E-mail address: jakvb.simek@icloud.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-4245-1692

Abstract

Thesis. Adult learning and teacher well-being depend on the relationship between individual agency, professional experience and institutional conditions. The article develops a conceptual framework linking andragogy and psychology through relational trust in Czech and Polish education.

Concept. A conceptual review brings together adult learning theory, psychological accounts of motivation and self-efficacy, research on teacher well-being and school relationships, and institutional evidence from OECD, Eurydice and the European Commission. Olga Czerniawska's work provides a regional perspective on biography and the changing scope of andragogy.

Results and conclusion. The framework comprises five interrelated dimensions: biographical grounding, self-efficacy, psychological safety, relational trust and institutional responsibility. Meaningfulness is treated as a cross-cutting interpretive criterion. Czech and Polish evidence contextualises the framework through reported teacher stress, professional development arrangements and educational reform. The synthesis identifies conditions to consider when designing professional learning, mentoring and leadership support. It presents neither primary empirical findings nor a systematic review; the relationships proposed within the framework require empirical testing.

Originality. The contribution lies in connecting individual, relational and institutional dimensions within an analytical framework for teachers as adult learners. A comparative table links the dimensions to institutional contexts and possible research indicators, providing a basis for qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods studies.

Keywords: andragogy, adult learning, teacher well-being, relational trust, psychological safety, professional development, Czechia, Poland

Introduction

Adult education has expanded beyond narrow institutional responses to qualification gaps, retraining and continuing professional development, and now includes broader questions of identity, participation, social change, professional agency and lifelong learning (Jarvis, 2004; Merriam, 2001). Andragogy has therefore repeatedly returned to the question of what adulthood means and how adults can be educated, supported and accompanied through life stages that are neither linear nor predictable. Adult education becomes a space in which adults encounter change, uncertainty, professional identity, institutional pressure, relational demands and the need to preserve personal continuity in rapidly changing societies.

The connection between andragogy and psychology is therefore not accidental. Adult learning cannot be understood only as a transfer of knowledge or the accumulation of competences. Motivation, biography, agency, self-efficacy, work strain, relational trust and the search for meaning all shape how adults enter, resist, accept or transform learning situations. Knowles's andragogical model placed adult experience, readiness to learn, self-direction and problem orientation at the centre of adult education (Knowles, 1980). Mezirow's theory of transformative learning further emphasised changes in meaning perspectives, while Illeris located learning in the dynamic interaction between cognitive, emotional and social dimensions (Illeris, 2003; Mezirow, 1997). Psychology deepens these insights by explaining why adults feel capable or incapable of learning, why institutional demands may become threatening, and why trust can determine whether professional development becomes growth or compliance.

Olga Czerniawska's article *Dylematy andragogiki* [*Dilemmas of andragogy*] provides an important regional starting point for this discussion. Czerniawska belongs to the Polish andragogical tradition that has treated adult education not only as institutional provision, but also as a field concerned with biography, ageing, social change and the boundaries between educational and social support. Her article provides a Central European conceptual perspective that connects Polish andragogical debates with broader adult learning theory. Czerniawska argued that andragogy must continually ask what content it should include, what research areas it should address and how it should respond to social change (Czerniawska, 2011). Her contribution to biographical didactics and its use in adult and later-life education is also documented by Woźnicka (2021).

The Czech–Polish framing also requires attention to disciplinary traditions and institutional settings. Czech scholarship addresses andragogy as a scientific discipline with established university centres and an expanding institutional base (Beneš, 2014, p. 9). Polish scholarship discusses the boundaries of andragogy, its relations with gerontology and social

work, and the shift from teaching to learning (Czerniawska, 2011; Malewski, 2016). These sources provide national disciplinary perspectives rather than a direct comparison of disciplinary autonomy. The article therefore does not assume that andragogy functions identically in both national contexts. It treats andragogy as a conceptual bridge whose institutional status must itself be part of the analysis.

Czerniawska opened several areas that can be developed in a psychological direction. Biographical didactics treats the life story, memory and personal experience as legitimate sources of learning, which corresponds to the broader European tradition of biographical learning (Alheit & Dausien, 2006; Dominicé, 2006). The boundary between andragogy and gerontology shows that adulthood, ageing and learning cannot be explained solely by chronological age (Czerniawska, 2011). The relation between andragogy and social work shows that adult education enters situations of marginalisation, disadvantage, unemployment and institutional vulnerability (Czerniawska, 2011). All three areas involve psychological questions concerning identity, agency, resilience, autonomy and the capacity to find one's place in changing social worlds.

Czech and Polish education provides a context for examining how these theoretical perspectives relate to institutional conditions. Shared historical experiences and geographical proximity support a regional comparison, while national reports identify differences in teacher stress, professional development arrangements and reform priorities. OECD TALIS 2024 country notes describe teachers' reported working conditions, and the European Commission's Education and Training Monitor 2025 documents challenges concerning inequality, governance, curriculum reform and staffing (European Commission, 2025a, 2025b; OECD, 2025a, 2025b). These sources provide context for the framework without establishing the relationships among its dimensions.

The Czech–Polish framework provides a regional analytical setting in which adult learning, teacher well-being and relational trust can be examined through both shared and contrasting institutional conditions. The central thesis of the article is that andragogy needs psychology not as a supplementary vocabulary, but as a conceptual partner capable of explaining why adult educational actors learn, resist, adapt, burn out, trust, distrust and search for meaning in institutional contexts.

Conceptual Approach and Sources

The article is a conceptual review based on purposive selection and integration of relevant literature. Its purpose is to connect established theories with research on teachers'

professional learning and institutional conditions. The distinction among review types discussed by Grant and Booth (2009), together with Snyder's (2019) account of literature reviews as a research methodology, informs this approach. The article does not claim an exhaustive search, a systematic review or statistical aggregation of findings.

The review process followed a transparent and purposive selection logic. Sources were selected from four strands. The first strand consisted of canonical andragogical and adult learning theory, including Knowles, Mezirow, Illeris, Jarvis, Czerniawska, Alheit and Dominicé. The second strand consisted of psychological theories relevant to adult learning and professional development, particularly self-determination theory, self-efficacy theory, salutogenesis and psychological safety (Antonovsky, 1996; Bandura, 1977, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Edmondson & Lei, 2014). The third strand consisted of research on teacher well-being, burnout, professional development, reflective practice, communities of practice, school climate and relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Desimone, 2009; Goddard et al., 2000; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013; Hascher & Waber, 2021; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Madigan et al., 2023; Mijakoski et al., 2022; Schön, 1983; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Wang & Degol, 2016). The fourth strand consisted of current international and institutional evidence concerning Czech and Polish education, mainly OECD TALIS, Eurydice and the European Commission's Education and Training Monitor.

The selection logic centres on the relevance of each source to adult learning, teacher well-being, relational trust or the institutional context of Czech and Polish education. Foundational works provide definitions and theoretical arguments; empirical studies and research reviews inform the discussion of psychological and organisational conditions; official reports provide national context. Sources are considered in relation to the five proposed dimensions, with attention to their conceptual contribution, the type of evidence they offer and the limits of their application to teachers as adult learners.

The synthesis distinguishes theoretical arguments, empirical findings and contextual information. Established constructs are used to organise the framework, while associations reported in empirical studies are distinguished from the relationships proposed in the article. The national reports contextualise the framework but do not validate it. This distinction is maintained in Table 1, where institutional descriptions inform analytical interpretations and possible indicators for future research.

Three research-oriented questions guide the review. First, how can the link between andragogy and psychology be theoretically justified in contemporary adult education? Second, which psychological dimensions of adult learning are most relevant for teacher well-being and

professional development? Third, how can Czech and Polish institutional evidence refine a conceptual framework that would otherwise remain too general? These questions structure the following sections and are explicitly addressed in the discussion and conclusion.

Adult Learning and the Psychological Conditions of Agency

Knowles's andragogical model proposes that adult learning is shaped by accumulated experience, a need for autonomy, readiness shaped by social roles and a problem-centred orientation to learning (Knowles, 1980). Although Knowles's model remains influential, its assumptions about self-direction and adult autonomy have been criticised for insufficient attention to social context, power, dependency and differences among adult learners (Merriam, 2001; Pratt, 1993). Its value for the present article is therefore not treated as universal explanatory theory, but as a historically important andragogical point of departure because it places adult agency, experience and problem orientation at the centre of learning. Adult education becomes meaningful when learners understand why they are expected to learn and when they can connect educational demands with their own experience, responsibilities and future action.

Jarvis's understanding of adult learning as embedded in social life is important here because it prevents adult education from being reduced to individual information processing (Jarvis, 2004). Adults learn within institutions, workplaces, families and communities, and these social contexts shape whether learning is experienced as participation, obligation, resistance or transformation. This social understanding of adult learning makes the later discussion of relational trust and institutional responsibility necessary rather than merely supplementary.

Psychology deepens the andragogical concept of agency. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy explains how people judge their capability to organise and execute actions required to achieve particular goals (Bandura, 1977). In teacher professional development, self-efficacy is particularly important because teachers do not only acquire new knowledge. They must also believe that they can implement it in real classrooms, institutional cultures and relationally demanding situations. Applied to teacher professional development, this theory suggests that lower self-efficacy may contribute to avoidance, whereas stronger self-efficacy can support effort and persistence in implementing new practices.

Agency is used in this article as the broader capacity of adults to act purposefully within social and institutional constraints, while self-efficacy denotes the more specific judgement of capability that supports such action. The two concepts are therefore not treated as synonyms.

Self-efficacy is one psychological condition of agency, but agency also depends on institutional opportunities, relational trust and perceived legitimacy of action.

Collective efficacy extends the argument beyond the individual level. Bandura examined shared beliefs about a group's capacity to organise and execute courses of action, and Goddard et al. developed and investigated collective teacher efficacy in schools (Bandura, 2000; Goddard et al., 2000). Teacher development therefore depends both on individual judgements of capability and on whether staff believe that they can act effectively as a professional community.

Self-determination theory complements this argument by showing that autonomy, competence and relatedness are basic psychological needs that support motivation and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Adult education that ignores autonomy may be experienced as pressure. Professional development that ignores competence may intensify feelings of inadequacy. Training that ignores relatedness may fail because the adult learner feels isolated or judged. A psychologically informed andragogy must therefore ask not only what adults should learn, but also under what motivational and relational conditions learning becomes possible.

Biographical learning adds a further dimension. Dominicé examined how educational biographies reveal the meaning adults give to their learning and development, while Alheit and Dausien showed that biographical learning connects individual learning across the life span with its social framework (Alheit & Dausien, 2006; Dominicé, 2006). Czerniawska's biographical didactics belongs to this tradition because it treats the adult life story as an educational source rather than as an irrelevant background (Czerniawska, 2011; Woźnicka, 2021). Biography is not a decorative narrative layer. It is the structure through which adults make sense of change, loss, achievement, institutional demands and professional identity.

The psychological grounding of andragogy can therefore be stated more precisely. Adult learning involves biographical continuity, self-efficacy, motivation, relational conditions, individual agency and collective agency. These elements can shape whether learning is experienced as development, threat, obligation or meaningful transformation. In the context of teacher well-being, the issue is especially important because teachers are expected to learn continuously while simultaneously managing emotional labour, accountability demands, administrative pressure and relationships with pupils, parents, colleagues and leaders.

Teacher Well-being, Professional Development and Psychosocial Strain

Teacher well-being has become a central issue in contemporary educational research because teaching is emotionally demanding, relationally dense and institutionally exposed. Hascher and Waber's systematic review shows that teacher well-being is a multidimensional construct that cannot be reduced to the mere absence of stress (Hascher & Waber, 2021). The reviewed studies use varying combinations of emotional, cognitive, social and work-related dimensions. A teacher may remain formally functional while being internally exhausted or may feel committed to pupils while losing trust in the institution.

Research on burnout confirms the seriousness of this issue. Madigan et al. found that teacher burnout is associated with a range of physical health problems, including somatic complaints, illnesses, voice disorders and biological stress markers (Madigan et al., 2023). A systematic review by Mijakoski and colleagues identified determinants of teacher exhaustion such as job satisfaction, work climate, pressure, self-efficacy and classroom disruption (Mijakoski et al., 2022). The teacher well-being literature therefore supports a key premise of this article, namely that professional development cannot be separated from psychosocial conditions of work.

The job demands-resources model is useful for understanding this relationship. High job demands can contribute to exhaustion, while resources such as autonomy, social support and performance feedback can buffer their impact and support work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker et al., 2023). The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire provides a methodological tool for monitoring psychosocial work environments, including demands, influence, social relations, leadership and health-related outcomes (Burr et al., 2019; Kristensen et al., 2005). These frameworks matter for andragogy because adult education aimed at teachers may be insufficient when it focuses only on course content and neglects the work environment into which the learning must be transferred.

Gajdošova and Svence (2023) provide a regional empirical perspective through a study of 800 teachers in Slovakia and Latvia during distance teaching. They report strong positive associations between resilience and social-emotional health. Newman's (2023) review of teacher job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic highlights institutional support, communication, training and access to resources under changing work demands. Both contributions are relevant to the framework's consideration of psychological resources alongside organisational conditions, although their pandemic context limits direct generalisation to routine professional learning.

Effective teacher professional development also depends on design quality. Desimone argues that professional development research needs a common conceptual framework and identifies core features such as content focus, active learning, coherence, duration and collective participation (Desimone, 2009). These features align closely with andragogical principles and psychological needs. Professional development becomes more credible when it respects adult experience, supports self-efficacy, allows practice and feedback, and is embedded in collegial contexts rather than delivered as isolated formal training.

Schön's theory of the reflective practitioner strengthens this argument because professional learning is not only the reception of external knowledge, but also reflection in and on practice (Schön, 1983). Lave and Wenger's theory of situated learning and communities of practice further shows that learning is embedded in participation, identity formation and membership in professional communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Teacher professional development therefore requires more than courses. It requires reflective spaces, participation in professional communities, shared problem solving and institutional recognition of teacher judgement.

The TALIS 2024 country notes provide a national context for these relationships by describing reported stressors and working conditions among lower secondary teachers in Czechia and Poland (OECD, 2025a, 2025b). The section on institutional evidence examines how these descriptions can inform the proposed framework while remaining distinct from evidence about its explanatory value.

Relational Trust as an Institutional Condition of Adult Learning

Relational trust connects adult learning with the institutional relationships through which teachers cooperate, seek support and engage in change. Bryk and Schneider identified trust among teachers, principals, pupils and parents as a core resource for school improvement (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Their account emphasises respect, personal regard, competence in role responsibilities and integrity. These dimensions are relevant to adult education because professional development, family–school cooperation and reform require participants to accept vulnerability in their dealings with others.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy similarly argue that trust matters for successful school leadership because trust shapes how stakeholders interpret one another's intentions, competence and reliability (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). A teacher who distrusts leadership may experience professional development as surveillance. A parent who distrusts school may interpret communication as judgement. A school leader who distrusts teachers may

design accountability mechanisms that weaken professional agency. Relational trust therefore connects psychological safety with institutional culture.

Hargreaves and Fullan's concept of professional capital offers a complementary perspective. Teaching quality depends not only on individual human capital but also on social capital and decisional capital, that is, the professional networks and judgement through which teachers improve their practice collectively (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013). The argument is crucial for adult education because teachers are not isolated learners. Their learning is shaped by professional cultures, leadership, collective efficacy, collegial trust and the institutional value placed on professional judgement.

Relational trust also links schools with families. Family–school cooperation is not merely an organisational arrangement. It involves adult learning on both sides. Teachers learn to communicate across social differences, parents learn to interpret institutional expectations, and school leaders learn to create conditions for partnership. Kraft and Rogers showed the underused potential of teacher-to-parent communication, while Smith et al. demonstrated that family–school partnership interventions can support academic and social-emotional outcomes (Kraft & Rogers, 2015; Smith et al., 2020). In the Czech and Polish context, this theme is especially relevant because TALIS 2024 identifies parent or guardian concerns as one of the leading reported stressors among Polish teachers (OECD, 2025b).

Relational trust provides a way to examine why teachers may respond differently to similar professional development programmes. Repeated interactions, leadership practices, communication norms and perceived fairness shape whether institutional expectations are credible. This perspective places individual coping within a relational context and is consistent with school climate research, which links relationships, safety and the institutional environment with student outcomes (Wang & Degol, 2016).

Czech and Polish Institutional Evidence

The Czech–Polish comparison focuses on reported teacher stress, professional development structures and educational reform. The TALIS country notes concern lower secondary teachers, whereas the Eurydice accounts describe continuing professional development across early childhood and school education. These differences in coverage need to be retained when interpreting the institutional evidence.

TALIS 2024 reports that 11% of Czech lower secondary teachers experience a lot of stress at work, below the OECD average. The most commonly reported stressors are excessive administrative work, responsibility for student achievement and maintaining classroom

discipline (OECD, 2025a). In Poland, responsibility for student achievement is the most frequently reported stressor, followed by parent or guardian concerns and excessive administrative work at the same percentage. Salary satisfaction is below the OECD average, while overall job satisfaction is close to it (OECD, 2025b). These descriptive profiles identify overlapping pressures and different areas of emphasis; they do not establish causal explanations for national differences in well-being or trust.

The second area concerns professional development. Eurydice reports that continuing professional development for Czech school teachers is strongly linked to the National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic, which has regional workplaces and offers educational programmes across regions (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2026a). Polish continuing professional development includes self-study, internal school-based activities and external activities such as qualification courses, postgraduate programmes, placements, conferences, seminars and workshops (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2026b). These accounts illustrate institutional arrangements through which adult learning of teachers is organised; both systems include multiple providers and forms of learning. A framework of andragogical and psychological sensitivity must therefore address not only the content of learning but also the institutional form through which professional development becomes accessible and meaningful.

The Education and Training Monitor 2025 describes Czech education as performing above the EU average in several areas while also showing large inequalities, unequal access to resources and regional fragmentation affecting school management capacities (European Commission, 2025a). The Polish report describes preparations for curriculum reform focused more strongly on key competences, measures to improve teachers' working conditions and persistent shortages affecting schools and kindergartens (European Commission, 2025b). These contexts are relevant to adult learning because teachers interpret and implement reform while continuing to develop their own practice.

For the proposed framework, the Czech evidence directs attention to local support capacity and administrative demands, while the Polish evidence highlights the relational demands of parent communication and the professional learning associated with curriculum reform. These are possible emphases for comparative research. They are not exclusive national characteristics, and differences among schools, regions and career stages may be equally consequential.

Andragogical and Psychological Sensitivity as an Analytical Framework

The framework integrates established perspectives on adult learning, psychological resources, school relationships and working conditions. Its contribution lies in connecting the adult learner's biography and perceived capability with relational conditions and institutional responsibility. The contributing theories emphasise different aspects of this relationship: the job demands–resources model addresses working conditions, self-determination theory explains motivational needs, biographical learning examines professional continuity and meaning, and relational trust research addresses the credibility of school relationships. Using these perspectives together makes their connections explicit when examining teachers as adult learners. The framework remains a heuristic for research and practice rather than a validated explanatory theory.

Andragogical and psychological sensitivity is defined here as an analytical framework for examining whether adult education, teacher professional development and institutional reform adequately connect adult biography, self-efficacy, psychological safety, relational trust and institutional responsibility. It is intended to support the analysis, design and evaluation of learning environments rather than to describe a personal trait or a single professional skill. Meaningfulness functions as a cross-cutting interpretive criterion: it concerns how adults understand the relationship between their professional experience, perceived capability, relationships and institutional expectations.

The dimensions operate at connected levels. Biographical grounding and self-efficacy concern the adult learner and professional identity. Psychological safety and relational trust concern the interpersonal and organisational conditions for speaking openly, learning from difficulty and acting collectively. Institutional responsibility concerns workload, leadership, resources and policy implementation. Three related assumptions guide the framework: professional learning is expected to be supported by alignment across these levels; weakness in one dimension may limit the contribution of others; and resources in one dimension may partly compensate for difficulties elsewhere without fully replacing the support that is missing. These assumptions make the proposed relationships explicit, but their direction, strength and limits require empirical investigation.

Five dimensions structure the framework. Biographical grounding recognises the adult's life and professional history as a source of meaning. Self-efficacy explains whether the adult feels capable of acting on new learning and becomes one psychological basis of broader agency. Psychological safety concerns perceived interpersonal risk when speaking up, asking questions or acknowledging mistakes (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Relational trust captures the

institutional relationships that make cooperation and reform credible. Institutional responsibility shifts attention from individual adaptation to organisational conditions that support or undermine adult learning.

Table 1

Dimensions of Andragogical and Psychological Sensitivity in Czech and Polish Education

Dimension	Theoretical grounding	Relevance in Czechia	Relevance in Poland	Possible research indicators
Biographical grounding	Adult experience and biographical learning (Alheit & Dausien, 2006; Dominicé, 2006; Knowles, 1980)	Regional fragmentation and uneven support capacity draw attention to local professional histories.	Curriculum reform draws attention to professional identity and established routines.	Career-stage interviews; accounts of reform fatigue; perceived professional continuity.
Self-efficacy	Individual and collective efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 2000; Goddard et al., 2000)	Administrative and classroom management demands provide contexts for examining perceived capability.	Achievement pressures and parent concerns provide contexts for examining instructional and relational efficacy.	Teacher self-efficacy and collective efficacy measures; perceived professional control.
Psychological safety	Interpersonal risk and reflective practice (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Schön, 1983)	CPD and mentoring provide settings for examining openness about uncertainty and mistakes.	Professional learning during curriculum reform provides settings for examining openness about difficulties.	Staff climate surveys; openness in CPD; discussion of mistakes; mentoring experiences.
Relational trust	Trust in school relationships and family–school cooperation (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Smith et al., 2020; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000)	Uneven management capacity directs attention to trust in leadership and support structures.	Reported parent concerns direct attention to teacher–parent relationships alongside leadership trust.	Trust in leadership; communication with parents; perceived fairness; conflict resolution.
Institutional responsibility	Job demands and resources, professional capital and participation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Burr et al., 2019; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013; Lave & Wenger, 1991)	Administrative demands and unequal support capacity draw attention to workload and access to CPD.	Staff shortages and working condition reforms draw attention to resources and sustainable workloads.	Workload; CPD access; staffing; leadership support; job resources; retention intentions.

Note. CPD = continuing professional development. Institutional contexts are drawn from the TALIS 2024 country notes (OECD, 2025a, 2025b), Eurydice (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2026a, 2026b) and the Education and Training Monitor 2025 (European Commission, 2025a, 2025b). Their relevance to each dimension is an analytical interpretation. The indicators are proposals for future research, not findings from a new study or a validated measurement instrument.

Table 1 connects the dimensions with possible research indicators. Biographical interviews can examine professional continuity and experiences of reform, while measures of individual and collective efficacy can address perceived capability. Psychological safety and relational trust require attention to staff relationships, leadership and communication with families. Workload, access to professional development and available job resources provide indicators of institutional conditions. Selecting measures for a future study will require attention to construct overlap, level of analysis and comparability across national settings.

Discussion

The first research question asked how the link between andragogy and psychology can be theoretically justified in contemporary adult education. The answer is that adult learning involves agency, biography, motivation, self-efficacy, relational safety and meaning. Knowles provides the andragogical foundation through adult experience and self-direction, while his critics remind us that adult autonomy cannot be universalised without attention to social context and power (Knowles, 1980; Merriam, 2001; Pratt, 1993). Jarvis, Mezirow, Illeris and biographical learning theory explain how adult learning involves meaning and identity while remaining embedded in social life (Alheit & Dausien, 2006; Dominicé, 2006; Illeris, 2003; Jarvis, 2004; Mezirow, 1997). Psychology contributes accounts of self-efficacy, self-determination and psychological safety that inform the analysis of adult learning conditions (Bandura, 1977, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Salutogenesis adds a health-oriented perspective on resources and the sense of coherence, including meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1996).

The second research question asked which psychological dimensions of adult learning are most relevant for teacher well-being and professional development. The review identifies self-efficacy, psychological safety and relational trust as particularly important, while meaningfulness is treated as a cross-cutting criterion through which the alignment between adult biography, professional capability and institutional conditions can be assessed. Teacher well-being research and burnout reviews support the article's premise that professional learning should be considered alongside workload, support, health and emotional exhaustion (Hascher & Waber, 2021; Madigan et al., 2023; Mijakoski et al., 2022). The job demands-resources model and COPSOQ literature further show that job demands must be analysed together with resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Burr et al., 2019). Teacher professional development is therefore most defensible when it supports content focus, active learning, coherence, sustained

learning, collective participation, reflective practice and communities of practice rather than isolated compliance (Desimone, 2009; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Schön, 1983).

The third question concerns the role of Czech and Polish institutional evidence. The national reports identify settings in which the framework could be investigated, including administrative demands, communication with parents, unequal support capacity and curriculum reform (European Commission, 2025a, 2025b; OECD, 2025a, 2025b). Eurydice adds information about the organisation of professional development (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2026a, 2026b). Their contribution is contextual: they help specify relevant demands and resources, while leaving open whether the proposed dimensions explain differences in learning, well-being and trust.

A critical discussion must also ask how the framework could fail. The first risk is conceptual overlap. Biographical grounding, self-efficacy, psychological safety, relational trust and institutional responsibility may not be empirically separable in all settings. Future studies should therefore test whether these dimensions produce distinct analytical value or merely describe one broad climate of support. The second risk is normative idealisation. A framework focused on sensitivity may appear to soften professional demands. The opposite is intended. Sensitivity should mean better alignment between demands, resources and adult agency, not the removal of standards.

The third risk is individualisation of systemic problems. Psychological vocabulary can be misused when institutions tell teachers to become more resilient while leaving excessive workload, unclear reforms or weak leadership untouched. Critical pedagogy has long warned against educational arrangements that adapt learners to oppressive or unequal conditions rather than enabling them to understand and transform those conditions (Freire, 1970). Freire's critique of banking education is relevant here because it rejects models in which learners are positioned as passive recipients of externally defined content, and it therefore reinforces the need to distinguish adult learning as participation and critical agency from adult learning as adaptation to institutional pressure. The debate on lifelong learning has also highlighted tensions between its social framework and biographical learning (Alheit & Dausien, 2006). For this reason, institutional responsibility is not an optional dimension but a protective element of the framework.

The fourth risk concerns national comparison. Czech and Polish education are close enough to be compared, but not so similar that one framework can automatically explain both contexts. Potential differences in disciplinary traditions and institutional settings further require

caution. Empirical work should therefore examine whether the framework functions similarly across schools, regions, career stages and levels of education.

The framework organises questions for further research. Its contribution will depend on whether the dimensions provide distinct and useful explanations of professional learning, teacher well-being, trust in leadership and cooperation with families. Empirical studies will also need to establish whether their integration offers explanatory value beyond the contributing theories and measures.

Limitations and Future Research

The article has several limitations. Conceptual design limits the strength of the conclusions because no primary data are presented. The Czech and Polish comparison is grounded in official international sources and institutional evidence, but it does not include interviews, survey data or document analysis conducted specifically for this article. The proposed framework should therefore be treated as a theoretically grounded research model rather than as a validated explanatory theory.

Further research could examine the framework through complementary qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods designs. Interviews could explore how Czech and Polish teachers describe professional biography, reform fatigue, trust and meaningfulness. Quantitative studies could assess the distinctiveness of the dimensions and investigate their relationships with professional learning and well-being. Longitudinal or mixed methods designs could examine the proposed connections among institutional conditions, relational trust and professional development, with attention to temporal order and alternative explanations.

Comparative research should also avoid treating Czechia and Poland as homogeneous national units. Regional differences, school type, leadership quality, teacher career stage and local community conditions may matter more than national labels alone. The Education and Training Monitor's emphasis on regional fragmentation in Czechia and ongoing curriculum reform in Poland suggests that comparative analysis must connect national policy with local institutional experience (European Commission, 2025a, 2025b).

Conclusion

The review connects andragogical accounts of experience, biography and agency with psychological and organisational perspectives on teachers' professional learning. Czerniawska's discussion of the changing boundaries of andragogy provides a regional starting point for examining how adults understand change and maintain professional continuity

(Czerniawska, 2011). The proposed framework develops this discussion through five connected dimensions: biographical grounding, self-efficacy, psychological safety, relational trust and institutional responsibility.

The synthesis gives individual capability, relationships and working conditions a shared place in the analysis of adult learning. Biographical grounding addresses the meaning of professional experience; self-efficacy concerns perceived capability; psychological safety and relational trust address openness and cooperation; and institutional responsibility directs attention to the conditions under which learning is expected to occur. Their integration is a conceptual contribution whose explanatory value remains to be tested.

Czech and Polish institutional evidence identifies relevant contexts for that work, including administrative demands, communication with parents, regional inequalities and curriculum reform. The framework can guide questions about professional development, mentoring and leadership support, while comparative research must account for variation among schools, regions and career stages. Its practical and theoretical value will depend on whether these connections help explain how teachers learn and sustain well-being within their institutions.

Declaration of AI usage

The authors state that generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used exclusively for language editing and to ensure the technical consistency of the manuscript. The conceptual framework, selection and verification of sources, analysis, interpretation, critical evaluation, and all substantive conclusions were developed and verified by the authors. The authors bear full responsibility for the content and the final version of the manuscript.

Credit author contribution statement

Václav Šimek: Conceptualization, Methodology, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Jakub Šimek: Conceptualization, Methodology, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Both authors contributed equally to the conceptualization of the study, the selection and synthesis of the literature, the development of the analytical framework, and the preparation and revision of the manuscript. Both authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

References

Alheit, P., & Dausien, B. (2006). Processo de formação e aprendizagens ao longo da vida [Formation processes and learning throughout life]. *Educação e Pesquisa, 32*(1), 177–197. https://doi.org/10.1590/S1517-97022006000100011

Antonovsky, A. (1996). The salutogenic model as a theory to guide health promotion. *Health Promotion International, 11*(1), 11–18. https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/11.1.11

Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands–resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 22*(3), 273–285. https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000056

Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Sanz-Vergel, A. (2023). Job demands–resources theory: Ten years later. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 10*(1), 25–53. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-120920-053933

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84*(2), 191–215. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191

Bandura, A. (2000). Exercise of human agency through collective efficacy. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 9*(3), 75–78. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.00064

Beneš, M. (2014). *Andragogika* [Andragogy] (2nd rev. and expanded ed.). Grada.

Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2003). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership, 60*(6), 40–45.

Burr, H., Berthelsen, H., Moncada, S., Nübling, M., Dupret, E., Demiral, Y., Oudyk, J., Kristensen, T. S., Llorens, C., Navarro, A., Lincke, H.-J., Bocéréan, C., Sahan, C., Smith, P., & Pohrt, A. (2019). The third version of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire. *Safety and Health at Work, 10*(4), 482–503. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shaw.2019.10.002

Czerniawska, O. (2011). Dylematy andragogiki [Dilemmas of andragogy]. *Rocznik Andragogiczny*, *18*, 47–52. https://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.cejsh-6ce6a8f0-e547-4be9-90c5-95e3a7bb7b78/c/O._Czerniawska_RA_2011.pdf

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry, 11*(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01

Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher, 38*(3), 181–199. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08331140

Dominicé, P. (2006). A formação de adultos confrontada pelo imperativo biográfico [Adult education confronted by the biographical imperative]. *Educação e Pesquisa, 32*(2), 345–357. https://doi.org/10.1590/S1517-97022006000200010

Edmondson, A. C., & Lei, Z. (2014). Psychological safety: The history, renaissance, and future of an interpersonal construct. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 1*(1), 23–43. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091305

European Commission. (2025a). *Education and Training Monitor 2025: Czechia*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor/en/country-reports/czechia.html

European Commission. (2025b). *Education and Training Monitor 2025: Poland*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor/en/country-reports/poland.html

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice. (2026a, September 16). *Czechia. Continuing professional development for teachers working in early childhood and school education*. Eurydice National Education Systems. Retrieved September 29, 2026, from https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/czechia/continuing-professional-development-teachers-working-early-childhood-and-school

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice. (2026b, May 18). *Poland. Continuing professional development for teachers working in early childhood and school education*. Eurydice National Education Systems. Retrieved September 29, 2026, from https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/poland/continuing-professional-development-teachers-working-early-childhood-and-school

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). Herder and Herder.

Gajdošova, E., & Svence, G. (2023). Teacher's social emotional health and resilience in Slovakia and Latvia during distance learning situation. *Society. Integration. Education. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference, 2*, 403–418. https://doi.org/10.17770/sie2023vol2.7061

Goddard, R. D., Hoy, W. K., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2000). Collective teacher efficacy: Its meaning, measure, and impact on student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 37*(2), 479–507. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312037002479

Grant, M. J., & Booth, A. (2009). A typology of reviews: An analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. *Health Information & Libraries Journal, 26*(2), 91–108. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-1842.2009.00848.x

Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2013). The power of professional capital. *JSD, 34*(3), 36–39. https://www.michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/JSD-Power-of-Professional-Capital.pdf

Hascher, T., & Waber, J. (2021). Teacher well-being: A systematic review of the research literature from the year 2000–2019. *Educational Research Review, 34*, Article 100411. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100411

Illeris, K. (2003). Towards a contemporary and comprehensive theory of learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 22*(4), 396–406. https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370304837

Jarvis, P. (2004). *Adult education and lifelong learning: Theory and practice* (3rd ed.). RoutledgeFalmer. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203561560

Knowles, M. S. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy* (Rev. ed.). Cambridge Adult Education.

Kraft, M. A., & Rogers, T. (2015). The underutilized potential of teacher-to-parent communication: Evidence from a field experiment. *Economics of Education Review, 47*, 49–63. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2015.04.001

Kristensen, T. S., Hannerz, H., Høgh, A., & Borg, V. (2005). The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire: A tool for the assessment and improvement of the psychosocial work environment. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health, 31*(6), 438–449. https://doi.org/10.5271/sjweh.948

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355

Madigan, D. J., Kim, L. E., Glandorf, H. L., & Kavanagh, O. (2023). Teacher burnout and physical health: A systematic review. *International Journal of Educational Research, 119*, Article 102173. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2023.102173

Malewski, M. (2016). O granicach andragogiki i granicach w andragogice [On the boundaries of andragogy and boundaries within andragogy]. *Teraźniejszość – Człowiek – Edukacja, 19*(3), 9–39. https://insted-tce.pl/ojs/index.php/tce/article/view/272

Merriam, S. B. (2001). Andragogy and self-directed learning: Pillars of adult learning theory. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 2001*(89), 3–14. https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.3

Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative learning: Theory to practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 1997*(74), 5–12. https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.7401

Mijakoski, D., Cheptea, D., Marca, S. C., Shoman, Y., Caglayan, C., Bugge, M. D., Gnesi, M., Godderis, L., Kiran, S., McElvenny, D. M., Mediouni, Z., Mesot, O., Minov, J., Nena, E., Otelea, M., Pranjic, N., Mehlum, I. S., van der Molen, H. F., & Guseva Canu, I. (2022). Determinants of burnout among teachers: A systematic review of longitudinal studies. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(9), Article 5776. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19095776

Newman, D. (2023). Pracovná spokojnosť učiteľov počas pandémie COVID 19 [Teacher job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic]. In E. Gajdošová (Ed.), *Podpora a rozvoj duševného zdravia v školách: Zborník príspevkov z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie* [Supporting and developing mental health in schools: Proceedings of an international scientific conference] (pp. 216–219). IPV Inštitút priemyselnej výchovy. https://www.paneurouni.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/e_zbornik_na_web.pdf

OECD. (2025a). *Results from TALIS 2024: Czechia*. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/results-from-talis-2024-country-notes_e127f9e2-en/czechia_5d89926e-en.html

OECD. (2025b). *Results from TALIS 2024: Poland*. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/results-from-talis-2024-country-notes_e127f9e2-en/poland_eb08362c-en.html

Pratt, D. D. (1993). Andragogy after twenty-five years. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 1993*(57), 15–23. https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.36719935704

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 68–78. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Basic Books.

Smith, T. E., Sheridan, S. M., Kim, E. M., Park, S., & Beretvas, S. N. (2020). The effects of family-school partnership interventions on academic and social-emotional functioning: A meta-analysis exploring what works for whom. *Educational Psychology Review, 32*(2), 511–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-019-09509-w

Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research, 104*, 333–339. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, W. K. (2000). A multidisciplinary analysis of the nature, meaning, and measurement of trust. *Review of Educational Research, 70*(4), 547–593. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543070004547

Wang, M.-T., & Degol, J. L. (2016). School climate: A review of the construct, measurement, and impact on student outcomes. *Educational Psychology Review, 28(2), 315–352.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9319-1

Woźnicka, E. (2021). Dydaktyka biograficzna w ujęciu Profesor Olgi Czerniawskiej [Biographical didactics in Professor Olga Czerniawska's approach]. *Edukacja Dorosłych, 84*(1), 41–52. https://doi.org/10.12775/ED.2021.004