WHY BECOME A PE TEACHER? – MOTIVATION, SELF-CONCEPT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract/Izvleček Career choice can be seen as a complex decision-making process. Individual interests and goals, subjective assessment of abilities, as well as external requirements and circumstances play important roles. The PE teacher profession is often seen as a fun profession, without special requirements or burdens – an opportunity to turn a hobby into a profession. PE teacher candidates are confronted with the question of why they want to become PE teachers. The results of the survey highlight the importance of "biographical competence", which must be seen as an important argument for increased attention to the development of the professional self in the PE teacher training program.

Zakaj postati učitelj športa? - Motivacija, samopodoba in posledice za izobraževanje učiteljev
Na izbiro kariere lahko gledamo kot na zapleten postopek odločanja. Pomembno vlogo imajo posameznikovi interesi in cilji, subjektivna ocena sposobnosti ter zunanje zahteve in okoliščine. Poklic učitelja športa pogosto velja za zabaven poklic, brez posebnih zahtev ali bremen – priložnost, da hobi spremenite v poklic. Kandidati za učitelje športa se soočajo z vprašanjem, zakaj želijo postati učitelji športa. Rezultati raziskave poudarjajo pomen tako imenovane "biografske kompetence", ki jo je treba obravnavati kot pomemben argument za večjo pozornost razvoju študijskih programov za izobraževanje učiteljev športa.

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Introduction

The question whether the job of a physical education teacher is a dream job (Miethling, 2000; Thomann, 2006; Ulich, 2000; Ulbricht, 2013), has been answered by Miethling as being "between dream and nightmare" (2000). Kastrup & Kleindienst-Cachey (2008) came to a similar conclusion. The polarization expressed here is also repeatedly expressed in society's image of the PE teacher profession and in the way PE teachers themselves see their field of activity: a fun job without special demands or burdens, which allows one to turn a hobby into a profession or a job with a high risk of burnout. Low expectations with regard to demands because of one's own experiences as a pupil promise a PE study based on one's own sports activities. Possible challenges of the later profession are rarely seen (Bräutigam, 2003). If, on the one hand, the prevailing image of the PE teacher in society is rather negative and not associated with high esteem in public opinion, and if, on the other hand, PE teachers themselves often describe the demands of sports lessons as much more stressful than those of normal classroom lessons (Frommel, 2006; Gröbe, 2006), then what can motivate young people today to become PE teachers?

This article aims to answer this question and provide subsequent reflections on the significance of career choice motives for (PE) teacher training. The first part of the paper deals with the motivation to choose a profession, followed by a seminar-based study on the career choice of PE teachers. The final part identifies and discusses possible implications of this career choice for the development of the professional self-concept within PE teacher education. This outlines the perspective and purpose of this paper: study and career choice and its importance for (PE) teacher education. The interest is not so much research-based as didactic, in that knowledge about the choice of study and profession is specifically included in teacher training. Individual and autobiographical (explanatory) knowledge is actively used in elaborating and supporting self-reflection for the development of a professional self-concept.

Motive for choice of study and profession

Both nationally and internationally, research on career choice motives is a well and comprehensively investigated field within teacher education research.

The empirical field appears to be well advanced from the perspective of motivation psychology, personality psychology or vocational aptitude theory (Steltmann 1980; Schutz et al., 2001; Kiel et al., 2004; Herzog et al., 2007; Keller-Schneider, 2009; Pohlmann & Möller, 2010).

Different approaches with regard to subject and research perspectives lead to differentiated observations and generalizable findings, especially with regard to different teaching positions or different subjects. In contrast, the significance and possible effectiveness of the choice of study and profession for teacher training is hardly discussed, if at all, and if so, only in passing.

The choice of study and profession is a complex decision-making process, the reasons for which are based on experience and on often long-term goals, which include expectations, desires and short-term objectives. This includes job-relevant and experience-oriented previous experience, the subjective assessment of one's own abilities, and individual interests or even goals that are not related to one's job or study. Kuhl (2001) distinguishes between causal and final aspects in this context. Theories on career choice behaviour (Holland, 1985; Schutz, Crowder & White, 2001; Watt & Richardson, 2007, 2008; Retelsdorf & Möller, 2012) describe the career decision as the result of an evaluation process based on the greatest possible agreement between personal characteristics and the expected requirements of a future profession. To a greater or lesser extent, motives for choice of profession depend on individual resources: i.e., biographical and socialization aspects have a greater impact than is often consciously assumed (Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995; Herzog, et al., 2007; Terhart, 1994).

Motive dimensions

In relevant research, the motivation for studying and choosing a profession is usually mentioned without defining and differentiating it in a more precise manner. However, the choice of a study does not necessarily have to include a profession as its objective. The two perspectives - study and profession - can correspond, but do not have to. The choice of a particular study can initially stem from quite different reasons, and it is only during the course of study that its choice becomes a career perspective, or another career perspective can replace the desired career in the course of the studies. However, a closer look at the items presented in the surveys shows that the career perspective is always implicit, even when respondents are asked about the choice of study.

This is particularly true for teacher training, even though the 'classic' teacher training program has now been replaced by a bachelor's program, which theoretically opens up other career paths (Besa, 2018; Rothland, 2014).

These developmental perspectives, combined with the usual motivational categories of 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic', lead to a four dimensional model shown in Figure 1, which, though often conceptually blurred, can be found in most publications on the choice of study and profession (Hanfstigl & Mayr, 2007; Mayr, 2009; Kiel et al., 2015; Keller-Schneider, Weiss & Kiel, 2018).
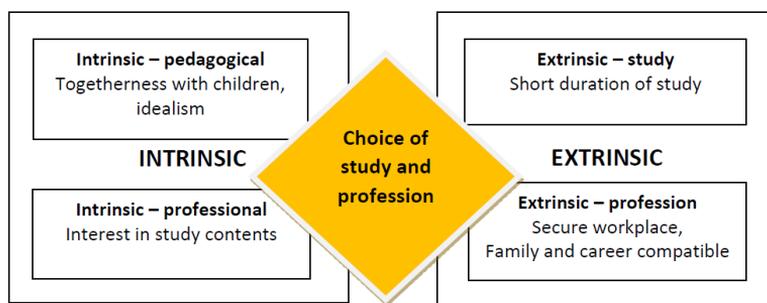

Figure 1: Systematics of study and profession choice motives (see also Kiel et al., 2015, 302)

An intrinsic motive for studying to become a teacher is, for example, interest in the content of the study, while an extrinsic one can be the relatively short duration of the study. An intrinsic motive for choosing a profession is often the joy of being with children and young people, while an extrinsic motive is, for example, job security.

The ultimate motive structure is a matter of individual choice. However, all studies indicate that intrinsic motives, especially educational ones, dominate over extrinsic ones (e.g. Mayr, 2009; Pohlmann & Möller, 2010; Keller-Schneider, Weiss & Kiel, 2018). The motive 'joy of working with children' always played a prominent role in earlier studies (Baur, 1981; Hirsch, 1990; Ulich, 2004; Herzog et al., 2007). For prospective students of physical education, subjectively perceived existing competence seems to be an important decision-making factor: i.e., it is expected that sports studies will enrich or supplement an already acquired professional competence with (subject) didactic competence.

Cultural habitus and professional self-concept

The motives for choosing study and profession are not only based on current or situational moments but are often based on one's own socialization. Several studies (e.g. Terhart et al., 1994; Zoglowek, 1996a; Scherler, 1996; Blotzheim, 2005; Reinartz & Schierz, 2007) have shown that teachers hardly ever orient themselves in reflected pedagogical decisions towards knowledge acquired during their studies, whereas biographical aspects and their own experiences are more often used as a context of justification. From a prospective perspective, Mayr (2009) found in extensive longitudinal studies at all pedagogical universities in Austria, that career choice motives are also important factors for teachers' professional probation. In this context, it seems appropriate to take a closer look at biographical self-reflection when deciding on study and career choice and to take this into account in the professionalization concept. In a study on the connection between culture of origin and choice of study subject, Schölling (2005) concluded that the compatibility of personal culture (habitus) and subject culture is of enormous importance for the choice of study. He explains the term, borrowed from Bourdieu (1979), as "a system of dispositions shaped by socialization, which influences the thinking, acting and perception of actors in the social field" (Schölling 2005, p. 16; own translation); he therefore concludes that a person chooses the study that best corresponds to his or her habitus. At the same time, the study socialization that results from the choice of study has a feedback effect on the habitus (Figure 2).
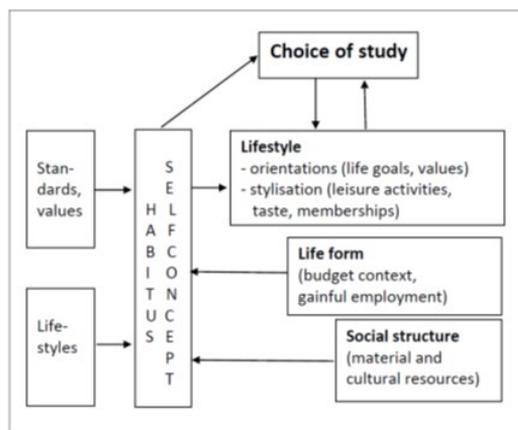

Figure 2: Correlation between personal culture and choice of study subject (based on Schölling, 2005; see also Pemmer, 2009)

In the discussion on pedagogical professionalism and the skills required for the teaching profession, the need to include the importance of one's biography is pointed out (Combe & Kolbe, 2004; Blotzheim, 2005; Reinartz & Schierz, 2007). This is particularly important in the case of self-competence, which has gained significance in recent competency models (Bräutigam, 2003; Blotzheim, 2005; Zoglowek, 2008; Unterweger, 2008, 2014; Pemmer, 2009). Self-competence is understood to be the ability to use proven knowledge to make one's own reality the subject of cognitive activities. If biographical competence is an important motive for the choice of study and profession, the next step should be to consider how these aspects of self-competence can be both used and developed in teacher training. If prospective teachers understand their biography as an important resource, this opens up considerable opportunities for them to cope with their later professional tasks. This can be achieved if teachers are able to further develop and modify this resource and design it to meet professional requirements. This task can be fulfilled by focusing on the 'professional self' in education.

Career aspiration: Physical Education teacher

At present, studies are often school-specific or teaching position-oriented differentiations, but almost no research has been done regarding the motivational structure of certain subjects or subject combinations. It can be assumed, however, that individual interests and requirements are also associated with the selected subjects. There are few recent studies on the career choice of PE teachers (Pemmer, 2009; Weiss & Kiel, 2010). Weiss & Kiel confirm in a certain way the term 'habitus', which was discussed in the previous section, when they state that, "Lifestyle and main interest become the profession" (2010, p. 311; own translation). Another way to undertand this, as Baillod & Moor (1997) have critically noted, is that a significant number of the students have a relatively naive attitude towards their future profession: they expect to continue their own sports activities; that means a relatively simple, practical and rather theory-free study. The students' own enjoyment of sport activities is the central motive with which they approach their study (Baillod & Moor, 1997; Pemmer 2009).

Method: Survey as introduction to teacher training

"Why do you want to become a PE teacher?" This question is asked of students who attend a seminar on the professional self-concept of the PE teacher. For several years now, a seminar has been offered in which the main focus is on pedagogical professionalism and the development of the professional self. The importance of one's own biography for the assessment and choice of future profession plays an important role and is reflected and discussed accordingly. As a reflection-stimulating initial question, students are asked to write down why they want to become a PE teacher. Over a period of nine years (2011-2019), 172 students (62 male and 110 female; aged between 20 and 34) have expressed their views on this question. It is a very short, quick survey. The main intention is not primarily to produce empirical data but to initiate a process of thinking and reflection. The open question should be answered relatively spontaneously, with up to five keywords or short sentences. The question of study and career motivation serves the seminar participants as a starting point for reflection on their existing professional self-image. The seminar is largely based on the answers given, and certain aspects and dimensions will be returned to again and again during the course of the seminar.

Survey and communicative validation
By using the concept of communicative validation to check the validity of the collected data, this procedure serves not only this validity check but also the main intention, namely the initiation of deeper reflection. The concept of communicative validation is applied in the paradigm of qualitative research to verify the validity of an understanding or interpretation by establishing consent, agreement or comprehensibility through feedback of the result to the respondent (cf. Flick, 1987, 2017; Zoglowek, 1996b; Meyer, 2018). This validation form can refer to the survey phase, the evaluation phase or both phases. Communicative validation for the evaluation of interpretations is primarily regarded as critical when the primary goal is to gain knowledge - in this case communicative validation should triangulatively be regarded merely as one of several test steps. In the case, however, when acquired knowledge is seen from the outset as a step towards shaping and changing practice, it can be stated after Klüver that, "Communicative validation procedures have their meaning and irrevocable necessity precisely where the theoretical interpretations of statements, especially self-portrayals, have the function of preparing and structuring a practice shared with the respondents" (1979, p. 82).

Table 1: Why do I want to become a PE teacher? (own research; seminar survey; N = 172)

Year	All	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2012	2011
N =	172	25	20	17	28	18	14	21	29
Educational work with children	**241**	**29**	**28**	**24**	**33**	**24**	**24**	**36**	**43**
enjoy working with children	59	10	4	-	5	1	3	15	21
getting children excited about physical activities	112	13	14	13	14	14	16	14	14
to find better contact to children via movement	40	1	3	8	6	9	3	4	6
compensation for other everyday school life	28	4	7	2	8	-	2	3	2
improvement of the classroom climate	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Subject-specific interest	**102**	**12**	**9**	**14**	**21**	**12**	**-**	**13**	**21**
movement is important for children	49	3	5	6	13	12	-	3	7
physical and social learning	28	4	-	4	4	-	-	6	10
health Learning	21	4	4	2	3	-	-	4	4
the most popular subject for children	4	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	-
Own sports biography and socialization	**138**	**30**	**12**	**11**	**24**	**18**	**17**	**32**	**39**
turning hobby into a profession	12	4	-	1	1	2	2	2	-
enjoy sports oneself	121	15	11	7	17	14	13	23	21
can be active oneslef	10	3	-	2	2	-	-	3	-
already trainer	15	7	-	-	3	-	2	-	3
Other	**19**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**8**	**-**	**4**	**2**	**-**
good sports teacher as a role model	6	-	1	-	3	-	2	-	-
be a better PE teacher	4	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	-
no class tests	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
little preparation	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
contribution to better society	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
dream job	4	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-

It is precisely in this sense that the answers concerning the choice of study and career are treated. The motives written down by the students were first listed and linguistically standardized, i.e., differently formulated justifications of equal importance were combined and quantitatively recorded. This merging of opinions was then presented to the students and questioned as to its correctness or consistency; in other words, it was validated communicatively (Meyer, 2018). In view of other, similar studies (Weiss & Kiel, 2010; Keller-Schneider, 2009; Keller-Schneider et al., 2018), the statements were assigned to the categories shown in Table1.

Discussion

The first thing to note is that only a very few extrinsic motives are mentioned. The intrinsic motives are divided into three categories (see Table 1). The answers under the fourth heading (other) are considered to be of little relevance to the question and are only mentioned here to satisfy the complete reproduction of the answers.

In the category 'educational work with children', the developing human being is in the foreground. One is interested in the individual and social development of the children, wants to support them in their development and establish a relationship with them. In other studies, altruistic or idealistic motives are also mentioned in this section (cf. Rinke, 2008; Kiel et al., 2015).

The sub-category 'Getting children excited about physical activities' can be described as lying in a grey area or as an overlapping zone between the educational motives and the subject-specific motives. In line with other studies, this sub-category is assigned to educational motives, since the main tenor is based more on enthusiasm for learning and less on specific physical activities. The category 'subject-specific interest' deals with the subject of 'sport' itself. The values ascribed to sport are at the forefront of the motive justification. The third category 'own sports biography and socialization' is relatively rarely found in similar studies. This may be because one's biography has only in recent years become more important in the choice of studies and profession, and it also seems to have a special significance for the profession of PE teacher. The above-average interest in the study content seems to be primarily due to the fact that there is a longstanding biography of sports activities, and one would like to maintain and continue this 'purpose in life' in many ways. This aspect is of the utmost importance for the actual purpose of this survey, as it is about making students aware of their own biography and sporting socialization for and during their study, and to address this issue in PE teacher training.

The sub-categories related to 'enthusiasm' received by far the most mentions. 70% of the surveyed students state that they themselves enjoy sports as an important motive for their choice of study and profession, and for 65%, 'getting children excited about physical activities' is the primary motive for their choice. These motives can be regarded as the most important prerequisites for PE teachers. "Enjoyment of working with children is an indispensable, but not sufficient prerequisite for coping with the professional demands" (Keller-Schneider, 2009, p. 19; own translation).

Implications for (PE) teacher training: To professionalize oneself

In addition to the training of professional and didactic skills, PE teacher training is concerned with the training and (further) development of self-competence in relation to the profession of PE teacher.

For the development of professionalism, self-reflection is indispensable. Self-reflection, the acting self as well as the aspect of the self in relation to and dependence on the socio-cultural environment and to other persons become important aspects in the process of teacher professionalization. For teachers, it is of great importance to become aware of the formative aspects of their own socialization and school experiences. Their values and evaluations, the acquired concepts and subjective theories must be questioned in order to become aware of one's own guidelines for action but also to be open to new steps in development.

These reflective impulses can begin specifically with consideration and discussion of one's choice of study and career. *Why am I actually here? What expectations do I have of my study and my career?*

Especially at the beginning of the study, the focus of education should be on self-awareness and self-reflection, on becoming aware of what is already there (see also Unterweger, 2014). The intensive examination of one's own potential, expectations, strengths and resources forms an essential basis for self-competence. Prospective PE teachers should learn to understand their biography as a resource, since it yields significant potential for coping with their future professional tasks. Professionally, i.e. as part of their professional self, they will succeed if they are able to use this resource, not uncritically, but in a reflective manner in their professional training and in their later professional activities. This also includes the insight that this resource can be developed and modified.

Figure 3 shows a model of this development process. The model is a combination and further development of the concepts of Bauer (2005) and Schölling (2005). In this understanding, the importance of the choice of study for the development of the professional self is emphasized. This applies both to the interdependent relationship between current self-image and choice of study and to the influence of choice of study on the (further) development of the professional self.
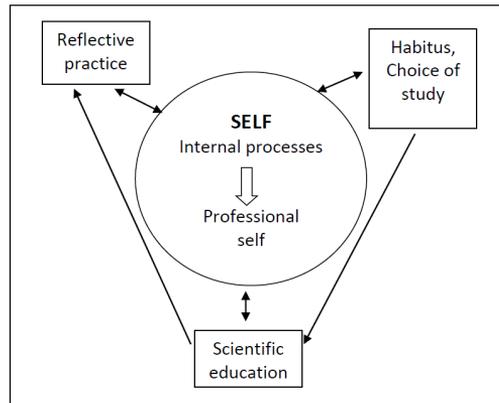
Reflective practice

Habitus, Choice of study

SELF
Internal processes

Professional self

Scientific education

Figure 3: The professional self (Edited according to Bauer, 2005 and Schölling, 2005)

A further point can be discussed by focusing on the category 'own sports biography and socialization'. It is particularly interesting that the motive "enjoy sports myself" is the one most frequently mentioned as a study and professional motive (121 times). These – and one could add the statement "can be active oneself" – clearly underline how strongly previous sporting socialization has influenced the desire to pursue this study. Some also explicitly express this perspective: "turning a hobby into a profession". Sports activities as the core of family socialization and as a formative lifestyle should, ideally, be continued in the future profession. This 'habitus' seems so strongly developed that it is no longer questioned. Other professional or scientific motives are not recognised or at least, not considered particularly relevant. On the one hand, this choice against the background of the previous sporting life biography must be seen as positive, because it seems to be supported by high levels of intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, a negative aspect can also be identified in it, a certain danger, since the previous positive experience with sports mean that the study of sports and the later professional field are seen from a one-sided perspective and as relatively easy. Possibly unrealistic expectations of the study program – ability to continue one's own sports activities and to enhance one's practical skills – as well as of the future profession – passing on one's own positive experiences in sports and conveying the fun of exercise – can quickly lead to disillusionment and to demotivating experiences during the course of study, if the self-biographically based optimistic expectations are not critically questioned and opposed to a potentially different reality (see also Baur, 1981; Bräutigam, 2003; Blotzheim, 2005; Pemmer, 2009).

To teach PE is not the same as to engage in sports activities oneself. Because not all children come to school and physical education with a positive experience of early childhood sports socialization, not all children have positive experiences of body and movement and not all sports activities are shared, joyful activities. Sports activities can entail conflict management and also be conflictual. This is not to mention general problems in dealing with pupils and the social environment at school. A reflective approach to one's own self-image and a possible reality-related modification must therefore be an indispensable and important part of self-professionalization. The approach presented here therefore attempts to actively use the possibilities and opportunities that lie in every new beginning. In concrete terms, this means uncovering, questioning and positively transforming the self-images, control convictions and unrealistic expectations that may have existed at the beginning of the sports teacher's studies, some of which were not well reflected. These and similar aspects are taken up in a lesson designed in this way. By placing the relatively spontaneous expressions of study and career aspirations on a higher level of reflection, the fundamentally positive motives for choice can be critically examined, and positive study and professional experiences can be prepared, thus enabling students to develop a realistic professional self.

"It concerns thereby biographic self reflection of the choice of study decision and a professionalisation concept, with which educational professionalism is seen as an individual development task. [...] Behind this is the idea of using the inevitable disappointments in studies, which can influence self-image and locus of control, as a productive element in the forming and developing of the professional self" (Kiel et al., 2004, p. 230; own translation).

Outlook

According to Messner (2001), teacher training is a self-learning process, a biographical process and a (professionally) lifelong process. The self is regarded as the central integrating instance, and the choice of study ultimately initiates the consciously reflected forming of the professional self. Teacher training must take this into account by considering the choice of study, with all its associated prerequisites and implications, as an important entry point and starting point for the individual training of the future teacher.

"Teachers work with their whole personality. In this respect, forms of work and staging are needed which allow the person who is so important for the teaching profession to be presented and present already during the study. As important as cognitively sound methodological formation is for teacher education, the institutional habitus of the university tends towards intellectualism and taught self-expression. For the development of the competence of future teachers, however, it is essential to expand this traditional setting to meet the challenges of the entire student person..." (Messner 2001, p. 12; own translation). How such an understanding of the profession can be justified and how the related professional self can be addressed in (PE) teacher training is demonstrated in this article.

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