PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT AS A KEY ASPECT OF TEACHER LEARNING: A PILOT STUDY OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME EFFECTS WITHIN THE CLIMA CONCEPT

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ABSTRACT

The modern teacher must respond to the needs of society in the context of Education 4.0. It seems suitable to adapt this trend to teaching children at an early age. The paper examines the usefulness of professional education for kindergarten and primary school teachers focused on personality development, emotional intelligence, and other social areas with an emphasis on creating a favourable classroom climate. The pilot study aims to discover which specific areas of this new education approach contributed to the teaching practice. The training effects were evaluated using questionnaires collected from 27 participants before and after the programme in 2018 and 2019. The data obtained from the closed questions were analysed using statistical methods, while open-ended questions were processed by content analysis. An ANOVA test demonstrated the effect in all monitored areas. In verbal answers, the participants appreciated the acquired skills in the field of communication and emotional intelligence. The results suggest that a training programme using elements from management appears to be beneficial to current teaching practice.

KEYWORDS

HOW TO CITE

Highlights

- *The CLIMA concept (including Culture of learning, Leadership, Inclusion, Mentoring, and Activating forms of learning) brings an interdisciplinary approach to teacher training.*
- *The participants in the CLIMA training programme perceived the benefits to be especially in the field of communication and emotional intelligence.*
- *The programme had a greater effect on the classroom climate than on the teaching staff climate.*

INTRODUCTION

The current significant changes in society, the perception of the world and the use of technology are vastly different from a few decades ago and strongly influence how children are educated. Thus, Education 4.0 is a response to new trends in educational needs (Hussin, 2018). In addition to professional skills, teachers need to develop competencies for the educational process. In particular, these are new approaches in the areas of motivation, teamwork, effective communication, inclusion, counselling, coaching and mentoring.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018) states that the present day is characterised by constant changes in the social and cultural spheres. The entire labour market is also changing, mainly because of the need for different skills for existing and new occupations (World Economic Forum, 2018). People must learn and prepare for new roles all their lives (Marr, 2019). In this context, teachers must adapt to the change not only in terms of educational content but its transfer (OECD, 2019). Therefore, in this paper, we asked the question: *How can a training programme focused*

on developing selected aspects of personality contribute to the modern pedagogical process?

To continuously develop high-quality education, the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports in the Czech Republic (MEYS-CZ) established the *Operational Programme: Research, Development and Education* (OP RDE) for 2014–2020, aiming to contribute to education so that the labour force is educated, motivated and creative (MEYS-CZ, 2015c). The view of the MEYS-CZ is that the acquisition of appropriate soft skills should contribute to positive changes in the education of pupils and children and, also, to teachers' private lives because the professional and private lives of each person are inextricably linked.

Education climate

In recent decades, pedagogical research has focused on the educational environment of the school classroom, also known as the 'education climate'. Understanding the educational environment/climate and effectively regulating it consistently with educational objectives is an important factor in facilitating teaching (Özyildirim, 2021). Průcha (2020) defines this concept as a set of psychosocial factors, which can also be described as the relationships between pupils and teachers and between the pupils themselves. These phenomena are examined based on the perception of the educational process, not just on the perception of an independent observer. In this way, the perception of the subjects of the education process is utilised as opposed to typical observation by an independent researcher (observational approach) where these phenomena remain hidden. These findings were also confirmed by the Dutch scholars Creemers and Reezigt (1999) in the elementary school environment and by Vnoučková, Urbancová and Smolová (2017) in university education.

In Czech schools, only some measurements of the classroom climate were taken using the MCI questionnaire (My Class Inventory). For example, Bek (2007), as cited in Průcha (2020), primarily focused his research on how the education climate is evaluated by pupils. A risk of the development of conflicting behaviour can be detected as early as in preschool children. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the classroom climate, even in kindergarten. If not detected in time, it can result in fewer close relationships with the teachers (Buyse et al., 2008). The study by Birbili (2019) focuses on the early stages of children's education as these are critical to their development. A critical approach requires pre-school education, which is also reflected in the perception of teachers of useful knowledge for children (in further education).

The culture and climate in every school and every department is unique. Therefore, loyalty to the organisation is more important than the rivalry of cultures (McGrath and Bates, 2017). In addition to the education of the labour force, Penny (2015) also links the current continuous process of changes to cooperation. Carpenter (2015), like the MEYS-CZ (2015b), claims that a shared positive culture at a school contributes to raising awareness, introducing and maintaining the school curricula, and the effective management of specific cases in education and professional development.

Teachers' personality development

Personality includes a unique combination of psychological and social characteristics that affect the behaviour, thoughts, opinions, attitudes, and feelings of an individual in various situations as well as at different times (e.g., Göncz, 2017; Kim, Jörg, and Klassen, 2019). Psychological theories about personality help to explain the importance of a teacher's personality in the educational process (Göncz, 2017). In addition, personality can change over time (Bleidorn et al., 2021). The development of a teacher's personality affects his/her teaching effectiveness and is beneficial both for the pupils and the whole education system (Kim, Jörg, and Klassen, 2019).

Hargreaves and Preece (2014) state that the development of a teacher's personality can be considered crucial given the fact that teaching reflects his/her personality traits, which can be substantially corrected in the teacher training programme. An administrative environment should be set up to create a teacher's personal development programme, and this ultimately takes an ambivalent attitude to personal growth in professional development (Luckcock, 2007). However, there are not many opportunities for the professional education of teachers with such a focus (Pennington, 1994). Similarly, Hockicková and Žilová (2015) state that to date, the lack of professional education specifically persists in teacher training, where the combination of theoretical and practical knowledge and experience is important.

In particular, "teachers' pedagogical optimism" plays a key role in the conceptual approach of the MEYS-CZ (2015a). Pedagogical optimism means that pupils' success is influenced by the fact that teachers consider school results to be important, that they can positively influence teaching and the lives of all pupils, and that they trust pupils and parents because they have a common goal (Hoy, Tarter and Hoy, 2006).

CLIMA concept

Livingston and Flores (2017) call for new skills, new ways of thinking and innovative approaches to view the interaction of teaching and learning. It is advisable that the evolving form of education absorbs new scientific knowledge that present-day teachers were not acquainted with during their studies, e.g., about effective trends in education that are consistent with how the human brain reacts to different stimuli (MEYS-CZ, 2020). In the OP RDE (MEYS-CZ, 2015c), the newly promoted approach, the so-called CLIMA concept, focuses on the development of five areas: Culture of learning, Leadership, Inclusion, Mentoring and Activating forms of learning, which stands for the acronym in the concept title. Attention should be focused in further teacher education on the individual sections that comprise the acronym CLIMA (MEYS-CZ, 2015b). These are presented in more detail below in separate paragraphs and focus on how they relate to the development of personality and climate in the classroom. Education according to the CLIMA acronym represents the teaching of interconnected soft skills.

The *culture of learning* has been discussed globally since the 1980s. Damen (1987) refers to it as a separate dimension to teaching. The role of the culture of learning also lies in its ability to promote and increase the quality of teaching (Shepard,

2000). Therefore, it is an important aspect in the application of teaching methods (Janík, 2013; van Breda-Verduijn and Heijboer, 2016). The culture of learning influences the psychological aspects of employees and their involvement in their company's intentions and, therefore, its effectiveness (Islam, Khan and Bukhari, 2016). Ball and Ladson-Billings (2020) provide concrete examples of how understanding cultural practices can contribute to better training programmes. School culture significantly affects the relationship between teaching leadership and teachers' job engagement (Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019).

Leadership also increases the efficiency of communication in teaching because it achieves more open and honest communication (Graham, 2018; Shields, 2017; Stejskalová et al., 2021). Teaching leadership also eliminates gender disparities and balances gender roles in the competitive and turbulent environment of this world (Kairys, 2018). Leadership also supports interpersonal relationships and interdisciplinary (e.g., Margolis et al., 2017; Miles and Scott, 2019). With education development in the 21st century, leadership is being incorporated into teachers' professional qualifications (Santi, 2020). Cooper (2020) explains the complexities of connecting the role of the teacher and the role of the leader in teaching and views this problem as the dual identity of the teacher.

The aim of *inclusion* is undoubtedly to establish a fairer approach to education for all groups of children, pupils, and students. A prerequisite for inclusion as open education for all is the willingness to cooperate (Florian and Beaton, 2018). The issue of inclusion is one of the biggest challenges in contemporary education. Students with specific needs must be understood and the appropriate conditions for their education must be set (Tharp et al., 2018). The inclusion success depends on the teaching approach and teaching skills, as well as the school climate and school culture (Woodcock and Woolfson, 2019).

Mentoring is a process of life guidance, leading and support and takes place in schools, communities, and religious environments. Mentoring is one of the most effective approaches to achieving workplace optimisation (MacLennan, 2017) that requires an approach different from previous generations and should include various forms of communication (Waljee, Chopra and Saint, 2020). Spooner-Lane (2017) shows, that like inclusion, mentoring is still not a precisely defined term, especially in primary education (although as highlighted, it is a key element and is not only for novice teachers). Orland-Barak and Wang (2021) analyse four basic approaches to mentoring kindergarten teachers from the perspective of expecting new directions in education.

There are many *activating forms of learning,* e.g., the core elements: active, collaborative, cooperative and problem-based learning (Prince, 2004). However, the basic pillar can be the involvement of a pupil or student in the process of problem-solving using an appropriate communication method (Sivan et al., 1991) to awaken their critical thinking. Teamwork competencies can be considered as activating methods based on cooperation (Nančovska Šerbec, Strnad and Rugelj, 2009) or an activating method of learning (Hošková-Mayerová and Rosická, 2015). Fischer and Hänze (2019) indicate that activating forms of teaching and acceptance by pupils may also be associated with sympathy for the teacher. Fidan and Tuncel (2019) found that the integration of the activating form using augmented reality into the teaching of physics improved the students' learning outcomes together with a positive attitude towards the subject being taught.

Pilot study based on new training programme and research questions

Tatto (2021) states that training programmes must seek ways to consistently provide teachers with the opportunities to learn the professional knowledge and skills that will allow them to be effective. Liu (2020) shows that turnaround school improvement requires more various comprehensive approaches, focusing on the interpersonal dimensions of leadership.

This pilot study presents the results of a nine-week training programme (26 teaching hours) reflecting the CLIMA concept. This training programme for primary school and kindergarten teachers was first implemented in the Czech Republic in 2018. Through the acronym CLIMA, it aimed to select useful skills from the broadly focused goal of the Czech National Development Programme and thus contribute to the development of the teacher's personality and, at the same time, to improving the classroom climate.

The programme paid increased attention to the learning culture, leadership, mentoring and active/activating forms of learning related to the classroom climate. The main goal of the programme lecturers at the Faculty of Management of the Prague University of Economics and Business was to use an interdisciplinary approach to familiarise the participants with new knowledge in habit formation, the reaction of the brain to selected stimuli, emotion management, communication, teamwork, leadership, procrastination, etc., i.e., to develop personality, emotional intelligence and a positive classroom climate.

The combination of CLIMA content, classroom climate and the level of the pedagogical process is a new and yet unpublished view of education. The paper intends to follow up the ideas of Darling-Hammond (2017), who states that teaching concepts that present greater challenges will probably be accomplished better if we can teach each other what matters and what works in different contexts. Therefore, the objective of this pilot study is to present and discuss the results from the new training programme reflecting the CLIMA concept and in line with the introductory question focusing on the topics that appeared useful to the teachers and contributed to improving their teaching methods.

In particular, the pilot study aims to answer the following research questions (RQ):
- RQ1: How do the programme participants perceive the change in their teaching methods and the classroom or teamwork climate after completing the educational programme?
- RQ2: How did the training programme affect the teachers' skills from the programme participants' point of view?
- RQ3: In which educational areas did the influence of the training programme differ between kindergarten and primary school teachers?
- RQ4: What new skills do the participants in the training programme consider to be the most beneficial?

The Materials and Methods section describes how the data were obtained and evaluated to answer the research questions asked. It also briefly introduces a sample of respondents – participants in the training programme, who were kindergarten and primary school teachers. The Results section offers comparative analyses of respondents' answers before and after completing the programme. It also presents the programme benefits perceived by their participants. In the next section, the results are discussed and compared with the results of other studies. The main findings are summarised in the Conclusions section, including the limitations of the study and the direction of possible further research.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The pilot study is based on a two-round questionnaire survey, which was part of the nine-week training programme for teachers at primary schools and kindergartens in 2018 and 2019. The participants evaluated the effects of education from the period preceding the CLIMA training programme and subsequently after completing the training programme. To maintain the anonymity of respondents, but to link the responses from both questionnaires, each respondent used their own easy-to-remember identification symbol.

Sample

Both questionnaires were completed by 27 (11 kindergarten teachers and 16 primary school teachers) out of 31 participants (13 kindergarten teachers and 18 primary school teachers) on the training programme. The programme participants were all women, and their breakdown by the length of practice in years (four categories) is shown in Table 1.

Participants	Type of School	Practice Length [Years]				Total
		[0, 3)	[3, 10)	[10, 20)	[20, ∞)	
Sample	Kindergarten	0	3	2	6	11
	Primary School	4	4	4	4	16
	Total	4	7	6	10	27
All	Kindergarten	0	3	3	7	13
	Primary School	4	4	5	5	18
	Total	4	7	8	12	31

Table 1: The distribution of the training programme participants (kindergarten and primary school teachers) by practice length, 2019, (source: own research)

The small number of respondents is because the training programme is designed for a maximum of sixteen participants due to the individual approach. Therefore, the programme is not intended for frontal teaching, and it is also quite extensive. To date, it has only been implemented twice. Nevertheless, the return rate of both questionnaires was 87.1%.

Questionnaire design

Both the questionnaires completed before and at the end of the training programme had a common part focused on six specific educational areas:

(1) *Behaviour* – Pupil behaviour and classroom management;
(2) *Teamwork* – Teamwork support;
(3) *Communication* – Communication skills development;
(4) *Emotion* – Development of emotional intelligence;
(5) *Atmosphere* – Creating a pleasant atmosphere in the workplace;
(6) *Personality* – Development of their own personalities and the personalities of the pupils.

When determining the benefits and usefulness of the training programme, we were inspired by the form of a selected part of the design of the questions from the Teaching and Learning International Survey – TALIS (Czech School Inspectorate, 2014, 2019). The TALIS was conducted in more than 40 OECD countries and focused on lower secondary schools and the corresponding sixth and eighth grades at grammar schools. This concerned the part focusing on professional education, where the first area *Pupil behaviour ('student behaviour' in TALIS) and classroom management* is directly monitored. The other five areas were selected in accordance with the contents of the training programme and the research objective. The respondents evaluated the positive effect of each area on their teaching using one item with a four-point ordinal scale (0 – none, 1 – little, 2 – medium, 3 – large effect). This scale was chosen the same as in the TALIS 2013 (Czech School Inspectorate, 2014).

The second questionnaire was more extensive than the first. In addition, it contained questions focused on a perceived change in the classroom climate and the teaching staff after completing the training programme. The respondents again rated these two questions (items) on the four-point ordinal scale (0 – none, 1 – little, 2 – medium, 3 – large effect). Further, it included open-ended questions, where for each of the six educational areas, the respondents wrote what they had already used in their practice, what they found interesting and, where applicable, what they would use in the near future. In addition, the respondents had the opportunity to enter their own evaluation commentary on the training.

Data analysis

The data from the scaled items in both questionnaires were first processed using descriptive statistics. Subsequently, the ANOVA model with blocks, which considered the interconnection of the questionnaires from the same respondents, and a two-sample *t*-test were used to evaluate the first three research questions RQ1–RQ3. The chosen statistical

parametric methods are robust to the violated normality assumption and are also applicable to ordinal data, even in the case of lower sample sizes (Heeren and d'Agostino, 1987; Stiger et al., 1998; Zimmerman and Zumbo, 1993; Norman, 2010). The statistical tests are supplemented by the related effect size characteristics (Lakens, 2013).

Free answers from the open-ended questions of the second questionnaire distributed at the end of the training programme were used to evaluate the last research question RQ4. The participants' responses were processed using content analysis (White and Marsh, 2006). This approach made it possible to evaluate the transfer of acquired skills into teaching practice. To increase the validity of the results in terms of triangulation, all the statements were classified independently by two experts into thematic units. Slight differences in classification were subsequently made up together. Finally, a frequency analysis of the topics was performed. In addition, selected full-text responses were used to supplement the results obtained from the statistical analysis.

RESULTS

This section is divided into three parts. The first part addresses RQ1, the second addresses RQ2 and RQ3 and the third gives the basis for the response to RQ4. One-word names of the monitored educational areas are used in this section.

Perceived effects of the training programme on the classroom or work team climate

Table 2 shows the relative frequencies and average values of the respondents' answers to the perceived change in the climate in their working environment. A positive effect was perceived in the classroom by 88.5% of respondents. However, the average effect is rated between low and medium levels. Distinguishing the type of school where the respondent teaches, we arrived at the following frequencies of the perceived positive effect: 80% of respondents teaching in kindergartens and 93.8% of respondents teaching in primary schools. Thus, the average effect was perceived as higher among primary school participants and reached the level of 1.69.

Environment	Type of School	Positive Effect [%]				Average Effect
		0 – none	1– little	2 – medium	3 – large	
Classroom	Kindergarten	20.0	40.0	40.0	0.0	1.20
	Primary School	6.2	25.0	62.5	6.3	1.69
	Total	11.5	30.8	53.9	3.8	1.50
Work team	Kindergarten	60.0	30.0	10.0	0.0	0.50
	Primary School	56.3	12.5	31.2	0.0	0.75
	Total	57.7	19.2	23.1	0.0	0.65

Table 2: The perceived positive effect of the training programme on the climate in the classroom and the work team, 2019, (source: own research)

The effect of the training programme on the climate in the work team was less pronounced. On average, it was 0.85 points lower than in the class (0.65 vs 1.50). A positive effect was perceived in the work team by a minority (42.3%) of respondents, more specifically by 40% of respondents teaching in kindergartens and by 43.7% of respondents teaching in primary schools. The average effect ranges from 0.50 to 0.75, i.e., below the level with little positive effect.

Perceived effects of the training programme on areas of teachers' skills

Based on the responses from the programme participants in both questionnaires, Table 3 shows the average values of the perceived effects for each area in the respondents' own teaching, including the differentiation of the type of school where the respondent teaches. It also shows a change in the evaluation of the areas before and after completing the programme. This change can be considered as a benefit of the training programme. The data suggests that the programme has helped most of the participants in the use of emotional intelligence (*Emotion*). Specifically, at the beginning of the training programme, the respondents assessed the effect of emotions in teaching at an average of 0.48 points (i.e., between none and little effect) while after the programme, at an average of 1.78 points (i.e., closer to the middle effect). The overall average change based on the respondents' answers thus reached the level of 1.30 points.

A change (1.22) almost as big as in emotional intelligence was also reported by the training programme participants in the area of *Personality* (development of their personalities and those of the pupils). Note that at the end of the course, the positive effect of this area in the respondents' teaching was perceived on average as the highest with 2.15 points among the examined areas. This was the main reason that the concept of the programme was created. The training programme lecturers had studied a large amount of new scientific knowledge, which claims that changing one's personality will cause a change in the behaviour of the other members of the team, especially when the team leader, i.e., the teacher, changes their personality. The following was stated by one of the primary school teachers (with 3 to 9 years of experience) in the questionnaire: *"Each session had something that influenced my actions, thinking and view of the pupils. I passed this on, and the relationships are improving. The training has improved and facilitated my life and work, I can cope with procrastination, relationships, ask the right questions, turn a problem into a no problem, etc."*

On the contrary, the smallest average increase in effect (0.81) was in *Teamwork*. This was caused, inter alia, because the programme only introduced the topic in the last session, so the participants did not have the opportunity to acquire practical skills by practising the recommended techniques. However, one of the participants teaching at primary school (experience length 3 to 9 years) wrote: *"What I found most interesting was how a team works, how to change it, establish a sense of*

security, get the right people on your side, listen also to the angry ones, and discuss a difficult and rejected topic before meeting with those who would most likely oppose a solution."

Moreover, the spider graphs in Figure 1 show the differences in the utilisation of each area of teaching in kindergarten and primary schools.

Type of School	Kindergarten			Primary School			Total		
Evaluation Area	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change
Behaviour	0.64	1.55	0.91	0.94	1.75	0.81	0.81	1.67	0.85
Teamwork	1.09	1.55	0.45	0.56	1.62	1.06	0.78	1.59	0.81
Communication	1.82	2.09	0.27	0.62	2.00	1.38	1.11	2.04	0.93
Emotion	0.82	1.82	1.00	0.25	1.75	1.50	0.48	1.78	1.30
Atmosphere	0.91	1.64	0.73	0.31	1.44	1.12	0.56	1.52	0.96
Personality	1.09	2.18	1.09	0.81	2.12	1.31	0.93	2.15	1.22

Table 3: Average evaluation of the effects of the areas before and after the training programme and the changes (after - before), 2019, (source: own research)
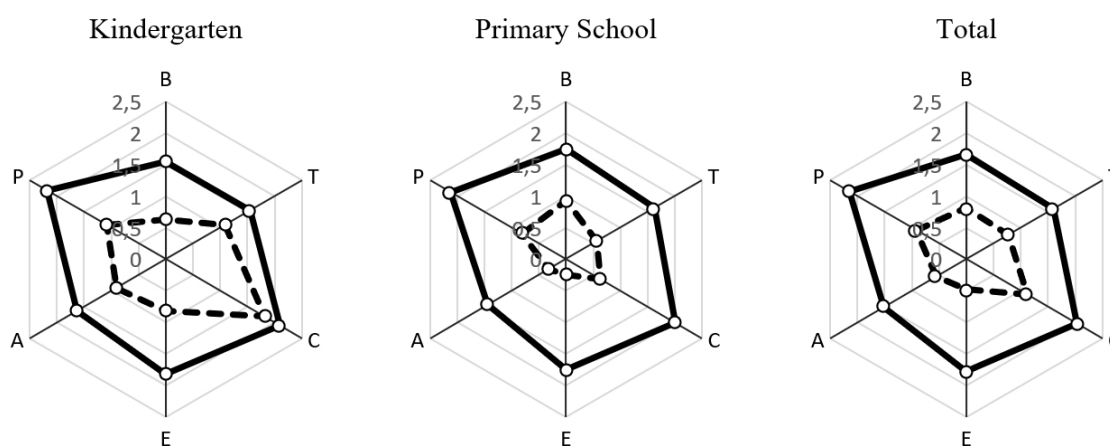

Figure 1: Average ranking of the evaluation areas (B – Behaviour, T – Teamwork, C – Communication, E – Emotion, A – Atmosphere, P – Personality), 2019, (source: own research)

A linear model with ANOVA parameterisation and blocks was used to estimate and test the significance of the change in the mean effect. Specifically, two dichotomous variables identifying the state concerning the training programme (before, after) and the respondent's workplace (kindergarten, primary school) entered the model, while the blocks characterised the same respondent. The mean effect, in this case, was the mean of the mean effects in the kindergarten and primary school teaching.

Table 4 presents the basic results for answering RQ2. Based on the model used, the increase in the mean effect of *Emotion* in teaching was estimated as the highest at 1.25 points with *Teamwork* as the lowest at 0.76 points. The second-highest programme benefit is for the area of personality development (the estimated increase is 1.20 points). The changes in the mean effect are statistically significant for all the six educational areas (see low *p*-values in Table 4). Fisher's η^2 ranges from 0.16 to 0.34.

Area	Mean Change	95% Conf. Int.	*p*-value	Fisher's η^2
Behaviour	0.86	(0.28, 1.44)	0.005	0.16
Teamwork	0.76	(0.26, 1.25)	0.004	0.17
Communication	0.82	(0.41, 1.23)	< 0.001	0.25
Emotion	1.25	(0.78, 1.72)	< 0.001	0.34
Atmosphere	0.93	(0.46, 1.40)	< 0.001	0.19
Personality	1.20	(0.70, 1.70)	< 0.001	0.24

Table 4: Estimates of the mean changes in the effects of the areas on teaching based on a linear model with the related *t*-tests and Fisher's η^2, 2019, (source: own research)

Table 5 presents the results of a comparison of the differences in the change in the effect of each area between kindergarten and primary school teachers (RQ3) using a two-sample *t*-test applied to the "change data" (i.e., 27 "after – before" values). A statistically significant difference in a change in effect was

found in only one case, *Communication* (*p* = 0.011). The difference in a change in effect was 1.10 higher for primary schools than for the kindergartens, which is due to the "better starting position" of the participants from the kindergartens before the programme (see Table 3, Figure 1). Note that

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Cohen's *d* of 1.08 also demonstrates a large change difference in this case. In the remaining five areas, the data did not show a statistically significant difference concerning the type of school.

Area	Change Diff.	95% Conf. Int.	*p*-value	Cohen's *d*
Behaviour	-0.10	(-1.25, 1.06)	0.865	-0.07
Teamwork	0.61	(-0.38, 1.60)	0.218	0.50
Communication	1.10	(0.28, 1.92)	0.011	1.08
Emotion	0.50	(-0.44, 1.44)	0.284	0.43
Atmosphere	0.40	(-0.54, 1.34)	0.392	0.34
Personality	0.22	(-0.78, 1.22)	0.652	0.18

Table 5: Comparison of the change difference in the effects of the areas on teaching between kindergarten and primary school based on a two-sample *t*-test and Cohen's *d* applied to "change data", 2019, (source: own research)

Perceived acquired skills based on the training programme

As part of the open-ended questions in the questionnaire, we addressed the fact that in different social education areas, the course participants mentioned the same skills that they were interested in and that they used. For example, "New Communication Skills" appeared in both "Communication" and "Personality". For this reason, we grouped individual skills into the frequency table, regardless of the social area in which they were mentioned. Then, based on an expert approach, we grouped them into educational and social areas. This procedure aimed to discover which topics (skills) interested the participants most often, regardless of the other contexts in which they were mentioned. The results are shown in Table 6.

Based on the number of responses, the participants were most interested in *Communication* (almost 38%). Of the specific skills, then these were "new communication skills" (59% within the area) and story communication (20% within the area). As part of their new communication skills, they mentioned, for example, conducting an interview using open-ended questions. As part of communicating through the story, a new and useful approach for the participants was how to manage the story in their minds, i.e., how to be able to realistically display the experienced reality and reduce the distortion of the perception caused by past experiences. The second most important area was *Emotional Intelligence* (25%). In this area, the participants most often mentioned *Positive Thinking* as a new skill, including recording positive experiences in the flow diary (39% within the area). They also reported the use of *Mirroring of Positive Emotions* (29% within the area) very often. The reflection of emotions in the discussion and the questionnaire survey also appeared to be a useful tool used in new communication skills and this skill was frequently mentioned by the course participants at the same time. They found it useful that when approached by an angry parent or an unhappy child, their emotions were so strong that it was often very difficult to negotiate. One possible way is to manage the reflection of positive emotions more strongly than the negative ones that are transmitted. One of the assumptions that this can be done is also positive thinking.

The area of *Personality Development* was mentioned by almost 20% of the participants. The most frequently mentioned new skills were *Support for a change in one's behaviour* (39% within the area) and *Focus only on what I can influence* (35% within the area). The two skills are closely linked and the participants in the discussion said that it was easier and more pleasant for them to deal with what they could influence. Focusing frequently on this will improve the atmosphere in the classroom.

The area of *Teamwork (leadership)* also appears to be important, showing 17% of responses. The participants considered the search for suitable common solutions and common intention to be the most important skill (68% within the area). They were also interested in finding new solutions to the situation instead of looking for the cause (30% within the area). Finally, the area of *Activation methods of teaching* did not interest the participants very much and was mentioned in less than one per cent of the answers.

The innovative training programme was relatively well evaluated by the participants. In the overall summary of the programme, one of the participants teaching in kindergartens (experience length 10 to 19 years) wrote: "*As far as I am concerned, I can write that the title of the training programme using the CLIMA approach is very apt and my participation in it exceeded my expectations. My life is really comfortable, and I feel better and more confident. Thank you.*" Another participant teaching at primary school (experience length 3 to 9 years) stated the following: "*Thanks to the programme, I don't take over the duties of others – I only do what I am really supposed to do (and what I can change). Not putting things off for later (dealing with them as soon as possible but not in emotions). Not forgetting about myself and thinking about myself – what I want, and I look for a solution. Realising how nice something will be "after" if I attempt to change it. I look for a NO-problem and with it a motivation to change. So far, I am unable to "anchor" myself, i.e., to calm down quickly when strong emotions occur*".

Acquired Skills	N	PT [%]	PA [%]
Communication	**104**	**37.6**	**100.0**
New communication skills (such as listening and using open-ended questions)	61	22.1	58.6
Communication through a story	21	7.6	20.2
Successful key interview techniques	8	2.9	7.7
Finding and communicating with collaborating solvers	7	2.5	6.7
Identifying and communicating with opponents (doubters, weak links)	6	2.2	5.8
Perception of body language in communication	1	0.3	1.0
Emotional Intelligence	**69**	**24.9**	**100.0**
Positive thinking (including recording positive experiences in the flow diary)	27	9.8	39.1
Using the mirroring of positive emotions	20	7.2	29.0
Development of emotional intelligence	13	4.7	18.9
Creating security	9	3.2	13.0
Personality Development	**54**	**19.6**	**100.0**
Support for change in one's behaviour	21	7.6	38.9
Focus only on what I can influence	19	6.9	35.2
Creating a new habit	6	2.2	11.1
Self-confidence	5	1.8	9.2
Setting and following rules, such as a new habit	3	1.1	5.6
Teamwork and Leadership	**47**	**17.1**	**100.0**
Finding suitable common solutions, common intentions	32	11.6	68.1
Finding new solutions to the situation instead of finding the causes	14	5.1	29.8
Using the principles of leadership	1	0.4	2.1
Activation Methods of Teaching	**2**	**0.8**	**100.0**
Situation simulation	1	0.4	50.0
Activation methods of learning	1	0.4	50.0
Total	**276**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Table 6: A detailed look at the individual skills acquired with a different arrangement of educational social areas (*N* – number of answers, PT – proportion of total answers, PA – proportion of answers within the area), 2019, (source: own research)

DISCUSSION

The main aim of this paper was to evaluate the effect of the new educational approach based on areas (subjects) of the CLIMA acronym and to find how specific areas of this new form of education contributed to the participants' teaching practice. The results from the questionnaires collected from 27 participants confirmed that the positive effect of all the areas supported by the training programme under examination has significantly increased. The educational approach based on areas (subjects) of the CLIMA acronym can be considered useful and successful. Moreover, the results confirm that not only faculties of education can offer interesting and effective training programmes for teachers and thus suitably supplement the portfolio of their training programmes. In the Czech Republic, there is no educational entity that would train teachers in the field of national policy. Insulander, Brehmer and Ryve (2019) presented the teachers' agency in professional development programmes focusing on the national policy initiative in Sweden. However, this initiative was limited to the professional development of mathematics teachers, so it was not a holistic (comprehensive) development as in the case of this study of CLIMA.

By comparing some selected results of TALIS 2018 (Czech School Inspectorate, 2019), the training programme can help the Czech Republic move closer to the European average in the area of active learning, such as the possibility to practice the application of new procedures and knowledge in the classroom

(the Czech Republic: 73%, the EU average: 84%) and the possibility of collaborative learning (the Czech Republic: 30%, the EU average: 72%). It has also contributed to sharing experience and development of mentoring. It has also contributed to sharing experience, improving knowledge and the development of mentoring (Suchánková and Hrbáčková, 2017). In the Czech Republic, 59% of school principals do not have access to a mentoring programme (Czech School Inspectorate, 2019). This is significantly more than the average figure for EU countries (35%).

The second important finding is that the greatest benefit of improvement in the further professional and personal life of teachers was in *Personality* (i.e., the development of their personalities and those of their pupils). In particular, the participants appreciated techniques to encourage a change in their behaviour and the realisation that they should focus only on what they can influence themselves. This confirmed the main idea and objective of the training programme, which was based on the following new knowledge: a change in the behaviour of the leader (in this case, the teacher) will also trigger a change in the behaviour of the team members (in this case, the pupils). According to Hargreaves and Preece (2014), personality development can be significantly corrected in a teacher training programme. A study by Ghaith (2003) proves that establishing cooperation helps with a better perception of the classroom climate and, at the same time, a better performance (success). From an individual point of view, this can lead to a feeling of "happiness".

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Further, based on the responses of the programme participants, a significant positive change in terms of the effect of that area in teaching has been identified in emotional intelligence. Specifically, at the beginning of the training programme, the respondents assessed the effect of emotions in teaching at an average of 0.48 points while after the programme, at an average of 1.78 points. This may be because emotional intelligence had not been supported much in previous education and that there has recently been a lot of new scientific knowledge focused on how to develop this area. Emotional intelligence is a key element to managing the "emotions" of other (groups) through self-understanding (Serrat, 2017). The programme participants reported that what helped them most in this area was newly acquired communication skills in terms of how to communicate with themselves: not to deal with or think about things and situations they cannot influence but rather channel energy into what they can influence. They were also extremely interested in the issue of mirroring positive emotions and positive thinking. In the respondents' view, good workplace relationships and the art of listening are also important.

Specifically, the participants reported that they had begun to use the technique of mirroring positive emotions and positive thinking in practice. They also stressed in their evaluations that they had realised the importance of good relationships in the workplace and the art of listening. Self-efficacy in classroom management can be increased through self-understanding (Weber, Prilop and Kleinknecht, 2019). Emotional experience affects the effectiveness of teaching (the ability to achieve the desired results), which can be further improved in practice based on the acquired knowledge and training (Williams, 2009).

A positive setting of the climate in the classroom should be the basis. In addition, it can resolve or even prevent any conflict from occurring (Elliott and Morris, 1991). Therefore, a positive climate in the classroom acts as prevention. The results of the pilot study indicated a positive effect of the training programme on the classroom climate. We are aware that classroom climate should be verified by observing non-participants; however, the view of teachers as observers on how the climate among pupils has changed is interesting.

In contrast, the effect of the training programme on the climate in the work team was quite low. On average, it was 0.85 points lower than in the class. This result could be expected for two reasons. The first is that a maximum of two teachers from each school took part, who then had to transfer limited knowledge to their colleagues who did not attend the training. The second reason is that the content of the training programme was only to a small extent focused on building the climate in the team of teachers and was more focused on building the climate in the classroom.

An important point is *Teamwork* (support of teamwork), which can be described as Leadership based on how it is taught at the faculty of management, where the training programme was implemented. In this area, we recorded the smallest average increase in the effect of education in the teaching practice of the participants. Based on this pilot study, the training programme lecturers realised that this is a difficult and complicated area for teachers. This part would deserve at least one more session with

the participants and ideally, a follow-up training programme focused solely on this issue (with a duration of approximately three weeks with two lessons each). In this area, we identify with Fairman and Mackenzie (2012), who state that the role of leadership is crucial in the professional (further) education of teachers. When teachers encountered conflict, they found that they needed to build interpersonal relationships, and they lacked the proper skills to do so.

On the contrary, what is completely different is the promotion of leadership among school principals, who are largely influenced by the school's culture established in the past and their predecessors (they transfer their knowledge to the new leadership of the school – distributed leadership) (Torrance, 2015). The introduction of leadership in education is seen as reform (Earley and Greany, 2017), as it is a change in the whole school policy and an increase in teaching standards (entitlement to it). However, an additional outcome is a higher standard of a pupil's or student's curriculum vitae. Higher quality student outcomes are recorded in all stages of study, including doctoral (Tolstikov-Mast et al., 2018).

Of equal importance is the knowledge that joint education for kindergarten and primary school teachers has proven to be successful. It is useful to see the developmental process of a child in a wider age context. The development of the teacher community was also addressed by Alles, Seidel and Gröschner (2019), who emphasise the need for further education of teachers in their practice. In seminars with a facilitator, they can develop discussions about their individual teaching styles and different alternative scenarios. This leads to the professional development of teachers. The exchange of the experience of teachers from kindergartens and primary schools who participate in the elementary phase of the institutional educational process of individuals in contemporary society can help increase efficiency.

CONCLUSIONS

The development of the climate in the classroom and the team of teachers using the CLIMA concept can be described as a new pedagogical approach. The CLIMA training programme brings the interdisciplinary approach, for example, among psychology, management and pedagogy and other disciplines. It is based on new scientific knowledge about how the human brain works so increases education with greater spontaneity, perception, listening and a sense of happiness – both for educators and children.

The pilot study shows that the direct effect of all the supported social areas (*Behaviour, Teamwork, Communication, Emotion, Atmosphere, Personality*) has increased significantly. Based on the responses of the programme participants, a significant positive change in emotional intelligence was identified in terms of the effect of this area in teaching. Another important finding is that after the training programme, the greatest perceived benefit in further professional and personal life was measured in *Personality*.

Another relevant point is teamwork (teamwork support), which can be described as leadership based on how it is taught at the faculty of management. From this point of view, other faculties than those of education can offer interesting and

effective training programmes for teachers. Thus, they suitably supplement the portfolio of their training programme while contributing to expanding the portfolio of modern teachers. In summary, the training programme using the CLIMA approach can help the Czech Republic move closer to the European average in the field of active learning, such as the opportunity to practice the application of new procedures and knowledge in the classroom.

Our pilot study has several limitations. It focuses on one specific training programme conducted by the managerial faculty. As this is a new training programme, the results are based on only two implementations of the entire training programme in one school year. Therefore, the number of respondents is relatively low although we still arrived at statistically significant and particularly stimulating results. Further, our study was based on a questionnaire survey using a rough four-point scale, where each variable was represented by only one item. Although no qualitative research was conducted, for example, through in-depth interviews, the open-ended questions in the questionnaire provided more detailed results than those offered by the scale used.

It should also be noted that the feedback on the training programme was provided immediately after completion. Therefore, in further research, it is appropriate to focus on long-term monitoring of the training programme impact to identify which skills acquired in the training programme the participants still use in their pedagogical practice or life, for example, one year apart. Based on the pilot study results, the programme content needs to be extended primarily to activating methods in the classroom and teamwork. This is a challenge for the further development of the innovative CLIMA training programme, which is still of interest.

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