

THE PROFESSIONAL VALUES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Abstract: *Working conditions make a significant contribution to improving the social climate. The professional satisfaction of teachers is determined by their value system. The present study aims at the analysis of the professional values of the teachers in the primary education, respectively their hierarchy. The theoretical framework is built on three main axes. The first refers to the social status of the teacher, followed by the description of the specific skills needed to practice this profession, and the last axis addresses the functions that the teacher performs. An analysis of teachers' values regarding aesthetic sense, intellectual stimulation, leadership of others, work environment and relationships with colleagues was performed. The preliminary results of the study show that the teacher builds his own professional identity in accordance with the values prescribed by the teaching position. However, this act is influenced by the atmosphere at work.*

Keywords: professional competencies, professional values, teacher, primary school

Introduction

Education can be described as the art of learning, not only from books but from the events of life. Education helps pupils to deal with life holistically, and also helps them to discover values that can last throughout life. Authentic education helps pupils to discover true values which through learning situations that are based on investigation and self-awareness. The quality and relevance of education is given by the quality of teaching personnel. The progress of educational systems and so of the society in general depends on the quality of education, which further depends on the quality of values of teachers and their personal growth.

Recent perspectives

Changes in the knowledge society develop the need for new approaches in the educational process. These requirements refer to the development of teachers by acquiring skills that will help the more efficient training of new generations. Modern education presupposes the existence of well-trained teachers from a professional point of view, both in the specialized discipline and in the psycho-pedagogical and methodical one. The contemporary teacher, from the initial preparation phase, must also be endowed with competencies that will help him during his educational activity. More and more educational systems are now assuming the integration of specialized teacher training based on the argument that a good specialist is also a good teacher. The role of universities in teacher training is in permanent ascent through the offer of the faculties in programs supported by mentoring in the field of teaching. (Chiş, 2002)

In order to stimulate the student's activism and creativity, the teacher himself must be a creative and active person, to show a positive behavior and attitude in this respect. Interactive and creative instruction resizes the roles and hypostases of the teacher. The teaching staff must be:

- the pedagogue who does not impose scientific information but builds learning devices, practicing a differentiated and individualized pedagogy
- designer, tutor, manager, moderator, organizer and manager of training contents, activities and experiences
- mediator of student learning in a heuristic framework
- learning facilitator and self-training
- student counselor in need of learning support
- student partner in an interactive educational relationship
- student work coordinator

- facilitator, activator and catalyst of training, communication of interactions and inter-individual exchanges
- set designer, preparing the setting development of effective learning
- actor of instructive-educational approaches
- strategist-thinker to help the student in building knowledge through continuous restructuring
- reflective in time, before and after the educational action, promoting reflective thinking and reflective teaching
- coevaluator, together with the student of the learning process and product. (Bocoş, 2002)

Theoretical framework:

Teaching, in the 21st century is seen as one of the noblest professions. Teachers are one of the key elements of educational systems, because the future of mankind and communities is built upon it. Teaching profession must be viewed by the community with confidence and responsibility, requiring high standards of professionalism. Therefore, the teacher accepts both public trust and responsibilities to practice the profession according to the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. In this regard, responsibilities include commitment to students, the profession and the community.

The social status of the teacher in contemporary society seems to be in the status of the middle class (Cosmovici, A., Iacob L., 2005). In other words, the teaching profession is not among the most requested, but also among the most avoided. The intellectual profession does not distribute power, influence or higher income to the holder, but gives prestige and satisfaction, the vocation being considered one of the basic reasons in choosing this profession.

In most developed countries, this profession is chosen mainly by women, and Romania is no exception to this rule. The stereotype circulating in the social field is that the profession of teacher is a female profession. In the most common 20 occupations covering 76% of EU employees, the highest representation of women is in occupations related to personal care (89%), cleaners (84%), office workers (80%), technicians in health (78%) and teachers (71%) (Eurostat News, EDN-20180307-1, published on 07-Mar-2018).

The exercise of this profession involves the acquisition of three specific skills:

a. Professional competence: consists of a specific technical culture and interpersonal competence, care allowed the teacher to work with the class of students, and to cooperate with teachers' ceilings. The ability of an organization to work in a team and to compose and make vines in addition to this competence.

Professional competencies take into account the ability to select, combine and use appropriately the integrated, coherently dynamic and open set of knowledge and skills (such as: cognitive, action, relational skills) and other acquisitions (such as: values and skills) specific to the activity of evaluation of public policies and programs, in order to successfully solve problem situations in conditions of effectiveness and efficiency. (Stevahn, L. et al. 2005)

b. Competence to maintain satisfactory relationships with hierarchically superior ranks (directors, inspectors). Teachers regularly bear the pressure of control, they are regularly evaluated by superiors, advancement is not possible without a practical test in front of a committee. Those in charge of the hierarchy note not only the punctuality and activity of the teachers, the quality of the activities and the effectiveness, but also the "stage presence", the authority in front of the students, the quality of the didactic dialogue, etc.

c. The competence to develop good relations with the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the didactic act. The teacher does not work with individual students, but with groups of students. They in turn are assisted and supervised by parents and the community. The quota of teachers is often set according to the ability to manage the class of students, to properly use the autonomy and freedom they enjoy.

The competencies necessary for the teaching profession are structured on several levels. The basic competencies that must not be lacking in any teacher because they make them skillful in the profession they have. This category includes communicativeness, empathy, managerial ability, desire to train continuously, educational research, creativity and openness to the use of all new technologies. Following the presence of these basic competencies, it is required to supplement them with specialized competencies. These presuppose the ability to assimilate and perform scientific content related to the taught subject, to achieve trans-disciplinary correlations, to adapt the contents to each individual, to stimulate the development of the maximum potential of each student and to promote active participation in the learning situations created. These sets of competencies are not sufficient if methodological ones are not taken into account. Understanding and applying the content of education sciences, but also psychology is more than necessary in the

modern educational process. This set of competencies refers to the most appropriate way to apply the other two sets of competencies presented above. (Cosmovici, 1996)

The connection between the skills stated above is the set of psycho-relational skills without which the instructive-educational process would belong to traditional pedagogy. Communication has become the most important delegating bridge between the agents of the educational act. The development of positive relationships within groups with students, parents and teachers has become more than a necessity if we want to have an authentic education. Activating the group of students in achieving common goals and motivating them can only be achieved by mastering the set of psycho-relational skills by teachers. (Mitrofan, 1988)

The specificity of teachers' working conditions has been analyzed in a few specialized studies. One observation that can be made about this refers to the low intensity of the interaction of teachers from the same educational institution on professional topics. Rarely do teachers call on colleagues for advice and support. The request for support can be interpreted by others as a confession of helplessness and incompetence (Dornbush, et al., 1996). Noting that the opportunities for evaluation by inspectors, principals or other teachers are few and often provide inconclusive assessments, A. Neculau (1978) proposed evaluation by beneficiaries: but from qualities in action, capitalized in school work. These qualities and attitudes are best noticed by their beneficiaries, by the students”.

In school, the teacher fulfills the following functions: organizer of the educational process, educator, education partner and member of the teaching staff (Cosmovici, A., Iacob L., 2005).

The organization of learning must be oriented according to the own criteria of the discipline, aiming at the application of the most suitable problem-solving strategies, the development of students' thinking and the skills of independent information gathering, critical processing and application in different situations. From the teacher's perspective, organizing learning means finding the most appropriate methods, building instructional sequences based on the objective logic of the discipline, awakening students' interests and stimulating performance, creating an atmosphere conducive to study, dosing difficulties in order to develop strategies. problem solving (Geissler, 1981).

As a member of the teaching staff, the teacher finds himself in close interdependence with the other colleagues in the educational unit in which he works. Thus, a consensus of pedagogical attitudes and actions is needed.

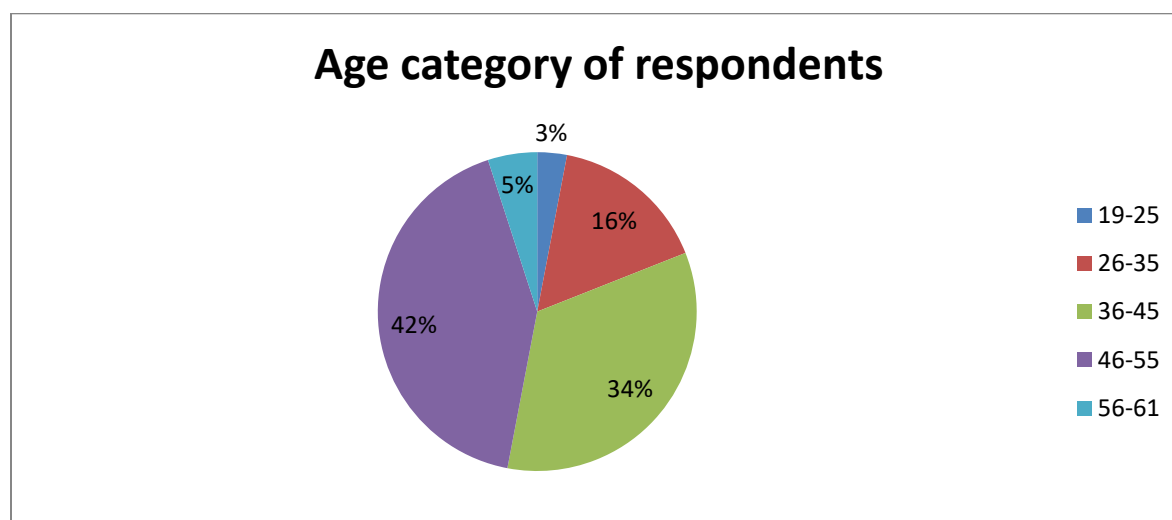
Methodology

Through the survey method it exists according to the questionnaire, studies the centrality and analyzes the professional value of 52 teachers reported on the activities carried out in the field of pre-university education.

The answers to the questionnaire are teachers for primary education in urban areas. Questions was adapt after the Professional Values Questionnaire to D. Super, and with information about information about professional values such as: creativity, aesthetic sense, intellectual stimulation, senior management, work environment and relationships with colleagues.

The answers offered the famous field of interest for an importance in 5 steps, or variants of answer, about care 1 answer very important, 2 important, 3 medium importance, 4 unimportant, 5 important.

Other 3 items of the questionnaire represent identification variables that refer to the age category of the respondents, the form of employment in the education system and their seniority. Compared to the age category of the teachers who completed the questionnaire, there was a significant variation, so 3% of teachers are between 19-25 years old, 16% are between 26-35 years old, 34% are ages between 36-45 years, 42% between 46-55 years, and 5% between 56-61 years.



Graphic no. 1. Age category of respondents

Identifying the form of employment in the Romanian education system of the surveyed teachers, we found that 89.9% have concluded employment contracts with the educational units in which they work indefinitely, and 10.1% have as a form of employment for a certain period. None of the respondents to the questionnaire is employed by the hourly pay scheme.

Regarding the item that refers to the seniority in education, we can conclude that 3.6% of the teachers who completed the questionnaire are less than 5 years old, 30.3% carry out their teaching activity in education of 6 to 10 years , 37.4% have a seniority in education between 11-20 years, and 28.7% have a seniority of over 20 years in education.

As expected, given that teachers who are the subject of this study work in primary education, there is an increased frequency of professional value expressed in their creativity.

Creativity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Vimportant	14	26.9	26.9	26.9
	Important	21	40.4	40.4	67.3
	Medium	15	28.8	28.8	96.2
	Little	2	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table no. 1. Frequencies of primary teachers answers about creativity as a professional value

Correlating the answers given regarding creativity and aesthetic sense, we can conclude that teachers appreciate more as a professional value the skills that allow the creation of new products, the application of new ideas, the invention of innovative activities.

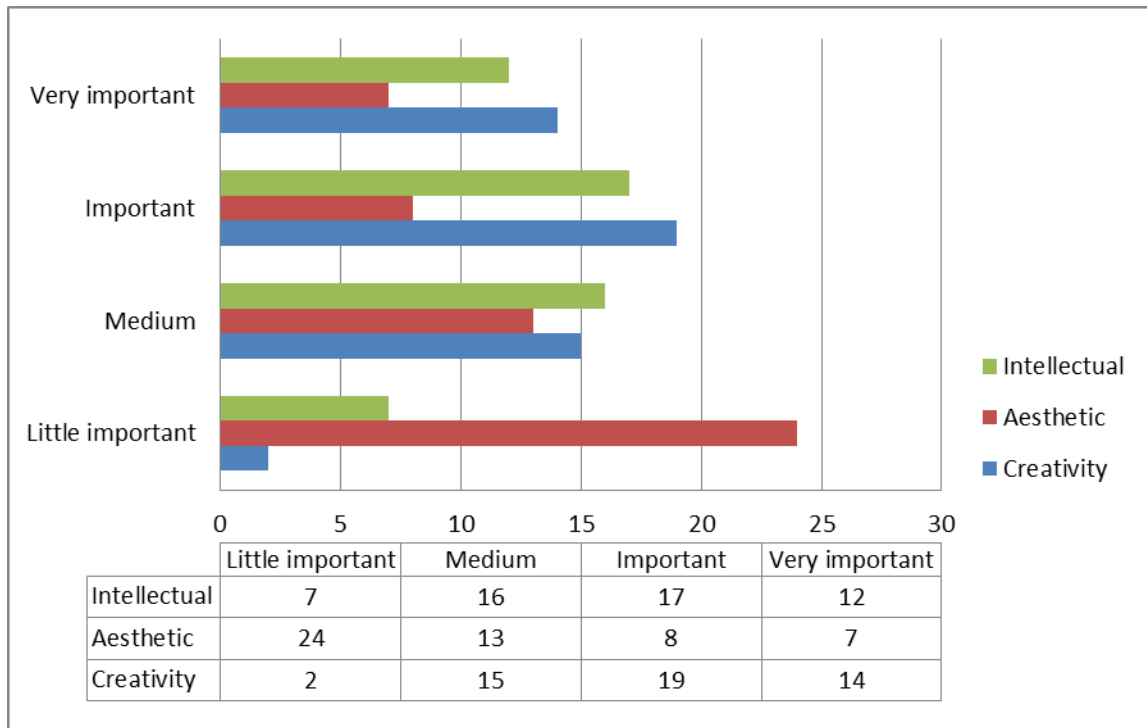
Group Statistics

	Atitude	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Creativ	1.00	4	22.5750	16.99752	8.49876
	2.00	1	9.5000	.	.
Aesthetic	1.00	4	21.1500	8.48312	4.24156
	2.00	1	13.5000	.	.

Table no. 2 Analysis of professional values of creativity and aesthetic sense

Regarding the intellectual stimulation, perceived as a value that offers the possibility to

learn something new, requires independent thinking, reflections on abstract actions / notions, there is a slight symmetry of the answers offered by teachers. Most of the respondents consider that intellectual stimulation as a professional value is of medium importance in the educational activities undertaken.



Graphic no. 2. Primary school teacher's perception of the importance of creativity, aesthetic sense and intellectual stimulation as professional values

It is well known that peer relationships can influence the quality and level of employee involvement. These relationships positively or negatively influence the entire reporting of the individual on the act of work. We spend much of the week at work, where sometimes the environment can be very stressful, but positive relationships with others can help transform the workplace into a more pleasant place.

The work environment can greatly influence the productivity, well-being of employees and their motivation. Creating a pleasant atmosphere is important.

In education, in primary school teachers, it seems that things work on the principle mentioned above. Thus, the good relations in the work team of the respondents, represent a

significant professional value, which in turn can determine the work environment characterized by the optimal conditions offered by the employer.

Paired Samples Statistics

			Statistic	Bootstrap ^a			
				Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Pair 1	Collegial relations	Mean	1.98	.00	.00	1.98	1.98
		N	52				
		Std. Deviation	.896	.000	.000	.896	.896
		Std. Error Mean	.124				
	Environment	Mean	2.19	.00	.00	2.19	2.19
		N	52				
		Std. Deviation	1.011	.000	.000	1.011	1.011
		Std. Error Mean	.140				

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 100 stratified bootstrap samples

Table no.3. Analysis of professional values of collegial relations and work environment

Correlating the answers of the respondents regarding the professional values, we can conclude that all the six values included in the questions of the questionnaire have some influence in their personal and professional development.

It is acknowledged that creativity, peer relationships, and workplace ambience are professional values that are valued as values that in turn determine and influence other professional values. On the other hand, leadership and aesthetic sense are less valued professional values among respondents.

One-Sample Statistics

		Statistic	Bootstrap ^a			
			Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Intellectual stimulation	N	52				
	Mean	2.31	.00	.00	2.31	2.31
	Std. Deviation	.981	.000	.000	.981	.981
	Std. Error Mean	.136				
Creativity	N	52				
	Mean	2.10	.00	.00	2.10	2.10
	Std. Deviation	.846	.000	.000	.846	.846
	Std. Error Mean	.117				
Aesthetic feels	N	52				
	Mean	2.96	.00	.00	2.96	2.96
	Std. Deviation	1.066	.000	.000	1.066	1.066
	Std. Error Mean	.148				
Collegial relations	N	52				
	Mean	1.98	.00	.00	1.98	1.98
	Std. Deviation	.896	.000	.000	.896	.896
	Std. Error Mean	.124				
Leadreship	N	52				
	Mean	2.88	.00	.00	2.88	2.88
	Std. Deviation	.943	.000	.000	.943	.943
	Std. Error Mean	.131				
Environment	N	52				
	Mean	2.19	.00	.00	2.19	2.19
	Std. Deviation	1.011	.000	.000	1.011	1.011
	Std. Error Mean	.140				

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 stratified bootstrap samples

Table no.4. General perspective on the professional values of primary teachers

Conclusions

The didactic function of the teacher is expressed by fulfilling the status of model, partner, advisor of students. For a teacher, to train themselves, means to use methods that help students to pay attention to self-employment, to develop social virtues, to strengthen the inclusion of students in their own worth, helping them to find their identity.

The role of the teacher as a partner of education refers to his relationships with other educational factors. The school is the second instance of socialization of students, after the family, and the teacher must collaborate with all educational factors, to harmonize formal education with

non-formal and informal.

Professional values, knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers are of vital importance. The quality and professionalism of their work directly influences the school performance of students. Teachers must meet very high requirements. They are the promoters of a high quality education system for all students and therefore need to continuously develop their values and skills.

The six professional values are not necessarily constant throughout the teachers' teaching careers, but they can fluctuate depending on their age category, the level of interest in their own training and personal and professional development.

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