

THE MOTIVATION TO BE A TEACHER. VOCATION AND CHALLENGE

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Abstract: *The extent to which teachers engage in the educational process has multiple determinations, among which motivation is the mobilizing resource in solving the assumed mission. The teacher's motivation defines their strategy of action in order to determine them to act in a certain way of performing a high-quality education. The purpose of the research was to identify the motives that led to choosing the teaching career. Identifying the motivational factors for choosing the teaching career it was also taken into account how they outline their professional image, based on the perception of the other actors of the school environment (pupils, parents, colleagues), as well as the importance assigned by the society to the profession. The correlation analysis highlighted the fact that the psychological, social and cultural-educational dimensions were significantly correlated with each other, offering a new perspective regarding the reasons for choosing the teaching career.*

Keywords: *education; motivation; teacher; behavior;*

1. Introduction

The motivation it is not only a study subject for scholars and academics, but also an introspection theme for each individual: "What makes us work?", "What makes us give the best of us?" The human being, an active being by excellence, acts over the environment in which it lives through the accumulated experience, its ability of foresight and planning (Mihaescu, L., 2018, Steers, R.M., Sánchez-Runde, C., 2017). Thus, any human behavior it is directed from within, whether it is about an action or a thought, at the basis of the personal and social conduct being always a set of motives which help fulfilling some individual and collective action (Dörnyei, Z., Ushioda, E. , 2011). If the vocation is native, the teacher will have a better insight regarding the way how they should adapt to the students' age and personality.

In this context, in choosing the career should be taken into account, primarily, the reasons regarding the skills they have, their aspiration level (goals, desires, professional and life ideals) of social reasons: safety/social and professional security, recognition, appreciation and approval, such as esteem, prestige, consideration, but also psychological and social reasons: the tendency and need of a well-defined social and professional status, and last but not least, the aspiration to achieve a social and individual ideal superior to primary needs or impulses

2. Teachers' motivation - professional performances vector

Any educational activity, regardless of its nature, its complexity and its volume, is carried out having "behind" one or more reasons. All these reasons constitute human motivation, a kind of mechanism that triggers and supports the initiation of an action. (Dörnyei, Z., Ushioda, E., 2011) If the motivation presents itself as a functional structure that ensures the correlation of the reason in the social context, a psychic mechanism that transforms the motivations' general pressure and concrete behaviors directed towards the

purpose, the teachers' motivation defines the action strategy in order to determine them to act in a certain way, namely, to carry out a performing educational process. (Beckers, 2004)

Even though the motivation can often be used as a tool which could predict the behavior, it varies greatly from one individual to another, and therefore it should be taken into consideration the capacity of each individual and the environmental factors which could influence the behavior and performance. (Dörnyei, Z., Ushioda, E., 2011; Jesus, S.N., Lens W., 2005)

Although, motivation brings its contribution to the professional performance, the performance increase is proportional with the motivation increase only to a certain point, after which it could be recorded a stagnation or even a decline. From this point of view, too strong motivation can lead to some emotions' emergence and produce a certain level of disorganization that hinders the progress, leading in this case to regress. (Beckers, 2004; Steers, R.M., Sánchez-Runde, C., 2017)

Work motivation affects the skills that individuals develop, the jobs and careers that individuals are pursuing, and how individuals allocate the resources (attention, effort, time and human and social capital) to affect the direction, the activity's intensity and persistence during work.

In the educational field, professional motivation and, above all, performance, has both subjective and objective determinations, being a balancing and supporting element for the career development (Jesus, SN, Lens W., 2005): didactic vocation (Tran, LT, 2015; Gordon, J: A, 1993; Stevenson, J., 2003; Sheldon, KM, Elliot, AJ, 1999) dedication to the profession and working with children (UNESCO, 2006; Sinclair C., 2006, Bologa, L, 2014); the success obtained in the classroom - the professional rewards received by the teacher observing the students' achievements and results (Gordon, J.A., 1993; UNESCO, 2006); the status obtained in the community by exercising a respected profession (Alderman, 2007; Sinclair C., 2006; Dörnyei, Z., Ushioda, E., 2011); the training acquired through initial and continuous training in the field; working conditions favorable to good performance of the profession (UNESCO, 2006; Jesus, S.N., Lens W., 2005); the possibility of promotion and career advancement; models offered to the society (Sinclair C., 2006; UNESCO, 2006); reward system (Sinclair C., 2006); the security offered by occupying such a position. (Gheorghe, O., 2017)

However, if we would intend to expand the investigation and analyze other education systems (such as the Indian, Australian or Japanese system), this things would be the same? The hypothesis from which we started our research is that there is a common corpus of determinants for the teaching profession. This does not exclude certain specificities, but it can be observed that the profile of the person heading toward this profession has some general lines, which allows us to consider that a new and more refined vision and strategy of how to attract and motivate toward the didactic profession represents an approach that can have a global impact beyond the particularities of an education system or another.

3. Teaching profession - Statuses and roles

Changes in the educational system (school curriculum, teacher training, education policy etc.) and at the social and economic level have led to the transformation, adaptation and change of roles of the teaching profession. Given that the status reveals the individual's expectations toward the others, and therefore their rights, and the role reveals the expectations of the others towards the individual, and thus its obligations. The result is that in any complementarity relationship the partner' status specific rights imply in the same time the specific obligations of the other partner's role. (Gheorghe, O., 2017; Dörnyei, Z., Ushioda, E., 2011; Alderman, 2007; Hargreaves, L., 2009)

The changes that took place in schools have also changed the teachers' roles. The status of the teaching profession as a whole is considered to have undergone little change in the past five years.

In this context, the didactic profession is associated with some fundamental categories of roles, accepted by most of the teacher training systems: the design, the management and learning activities planning, psycho-educational counseling, classroom management, communication with the students, parents and colleagues, lifelong professional development, contributions to the educational process improvement and school innovations, providing educational services for the community etc. (Mihaescu, L., 2018, UNESCO, 2006)

The teacher's main quality is the pedagogical vocation, expressed by finding the true calling, by feeling that you are chosen for this task and able to fulfill it. Three roles are attached to the pedagogical vocation: pedagogical love, the belief in the social and cultural values, awareness of the responsibility towards the student. Assuming multiple roles, the teacher must realize that manifesting them depend on their own personality which they are shaping. (Gheorghe, O., 2017; Hargreaves, L., 2009) Pedagogical vocation involves the coherent synthesis of instrumental forces and moral-social values, an optimum interaction between the abilities and attitudes in a highly axiological consciousness and based on a strong tendency of enhancement. (Stevenson, J., 2003; Sheldon, K.M., Elliot, A.J., 1999)

4 Methodology

The purpose of the research was to identify the main reasons that led to choosing the teaching profession by the investigated subjects. Identifying the motivational factors for choosing the teaching profession also took into account the way teachers shape their professional image, both based on the other actors of the school environment's perception (pupils, parents, colleagues), as well as the importance given by the society to the practiced profession. The stated hypotheses were: H1 The psychological dimension is positively correlated with the social dimension of motivation for the teaching profession; H2: The psychological dimension is positively correlated with the cultural-educational dimension of motivation for the teaching profession; H3: The social dimension of motivation for the teaching profession is positively correlated with the cultural - educational dimension. From this perspective, we tried to capture the perceptions of the teaching staff from the pre-university system, and of the students - the future teaching staff, thus trying to outline an overview of the investigated issues.

Data was collected between October 1 and November 1, 2018 and February 28, 2019.

At the research participated 217 subjects, 32.71% teachers and 67.29% students - future teaching staff (pre-service teacher). Regarding the teaching staff's characteristics, 78.88% were females and 21.12% males, 25.35% develop their activity in the preschool system, 22.53% primary system, 35.21% gymnasium and 16.9% high-school, covering the diversity of situations from the system regarding these attributes.

The questionnaire used exploratory factor analysis. We used the Varimax rotation method and suggested 3 dimensions of the motivation to become a teacher through the main analysis of the psychic impulse that initiates and directs the teacher's behavior: the psychological dimension, the social dimension and the cultural - educational dimension.

The psychological dimension took into consideration the following indicators: attitudinal factors (At), aptitude factors (Ap) and personal development factors (DP). The reliability of the Cronbach's α scale in the present study was 0.86. The social dimension took into account the following factors: the status attained inside the community, the accomplished success, the promotion prospects and the reward system. The reliability of the Cronbach's α scale in the present study was 0.84. The cultural-educational dimension took into account the following factors: the training attained through the initial and continuous training in the field,

the possibility of promotion and career advancement, the models offered by the family. The reliability of the Cronbach's α scale in the present study was 0.82.

5. Results

Given the latent nature of the variables took into consideration in this study, we used multi-item, 5-point Likert-type scales (1 = 'strongly disagree' and 5 = 'strongly agree'). After reliability analysis, Cronbach's α in the present study was 0.84 (24 items). Analyzing the profile studies (Kline, R.B., 2011), several indicators of this research have been calculated to evaluate the overall fit of the model to the data used that acknowledged the potential for acceptable (χ^2 / df ratio < 3, CFI and TLI > 0.90, RMSEA < 0.08, SRMR < 0.10). The results of the confirmation factor analysis (CFA) showed an acceptable level of validity of the construct with the following welfare indicators: $\chi^2 = 223.51$, $\chi^2 / df = 2.34$, CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.060, SRMR = 0.036.

The average score for the psychological dimension is between 3.83 and 3.08, but the highest score was obtained by the attitudinal factors of 3.83, the indicator "autonomy". The second highest score was identified at the skills level of 3.80, the "didactic vocation" indicator. The lowest score was obtained at attitudinal factors 3.12, the indicator: "adapting to legislative changes in education". For the personal development factors, the scores obtained were averages.

The average score for the social dimension ranges between 3.76 and 2.83, but the highest score was obtained for the community status factor of 3.76, the indicator: "the respect attained by the profession". The second highest score was the success factor of 3.68, the indicator: "awards received by students". The lowest score was obtained by the reward system factor 2.83: "Received salary".

The average score for the cultural - educational dimension ranges between 3.45 and 3.12, but the highest score was obtained by the factor models provided by the society of 3.45, the indicator: "profession choice directed by the parents". The second highest score was the training factor obtained by initial and continuous training in the field of 3.42, the indicator: "completed studies". The lowest score was the possibility of career advancement 3.12, the indicator: "care for employee's personal development".

Regarding the 3 factors of the psychological dimension: (attitudinal factors, ability factors and personal development factors), the 4 factors of the social dimension (the obtained status in the community, success, promotion, reward system) and those 3 factors of the cultural-educational dimension (the training attained by initial and continuous training in the field, the possibility of career advancement, models provided by the society) were carried out a variable analysis.

The results of the analysis showed that only 3 indicators "need to have a job", "the job's stability" and "the reward and well-being" according to their potential for research activity it were not significantly correlated, while the other dimensions emphasized a significant correlation.

The results also emphasized that the motives from the psychological dimension, the one from the social dimension and cultural - educational dimension were positively associated with the stated hypotheses 1-3.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) was confirmed because the psychological dimension *is positively correlated with the social dimension of motivation for the teaching profession* ($\beta = .68$, $p < .001$).

The hypothesis 2 (H2) was confirmed because the psychological dimension *is positively correlated with the cultural-educational dimension of the motivation for the teaching profession* ($\beta = .43$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis 3 (H3) was validated because the partial regression coefficient of the social dimension reached a statistically significant level ($\beta = .51$, $p < .001$) after controlling the effect of the educational cultural dimension.

6. Discussions

In this study, we examined the reasons behind the choice of the teaching profession using a mediatory approach where were analyzed the factors of psychological, ability and cultural-educational dimension as factors which determine this choice. As it was to be expected, the results of this study showed that the psychological dimension is positively associated with the social dimension, the psychological dimension is positively correlated with the cultural-educational dimension, and the social dimension is positively correlated with the educational cultural dimension of motivation for the teaching profession. This result it is in aligned with the previous studies (Steers, 2004).

The options selected by teachers with a longer seniority in the educational system and who can be considered to have a career in this field were mainly based, on intrinsic grounds, animated by the desire of working with the children, to contribute to the development of society and to practice a profession they can be proud of. Most of them claimed that they were encouraged to pursue this career by other teachers (family members or from schools where they learned) who, in their turn, practiced this job with dedication and pleasure, the social model and the autonomy becoming in this case possible predictors of teachers' professional motivation. Despite the complaints and difficulties faced by the teachers and the feeling that the profession they practice it is not valorized by the society, if they were given the chance to take it from the start at the professional level, 86.31% of the teachers would choose certainly this profession, while only 5.1% would definitely turn to another profession.

The majority of pre-service teacher, participants in this research, said that they can not be successful in this job without passion, without loving it and without loving the children, and the greatest responsibility is informing and training the pupils, the future adults. According to the previous researches, the present study identified teaching as a possible predictor for the teachers' professional motivation (Sheldon, K.M., Elliot, A.J., 1999; Stevenson, J., 2003). This result suggests that the future teachers who feel that their values are congruent with the values of their organization show higher levels of involvement in work, and the skills factors can predict the efficiency of the didactic activity. A less important role is getting material rewards and job security.

Although, I believe that these results bring their contribution to a better understanding of the mechanism of the motives behind electing the teaching profession, a number of limitations should be taken into consideration. First of all, this study sample was composed of a group representing a single region which limits the generalization of the research's results and conclusions. Therefore, in the future research, we could consider extending the sample to other regions as well. Another limitation is due to the transverse design of the study, making it difficult to deduce the motives and also their effects, in the same time. Future longitudinal or experimental studies could facilitate more causal assessments.

7. Conclusions

As it is well known, the professional motivation does not have unidimensional grounds and determinations in temporary and socializing terms. It also aims at a more remote perspective - the future individual, fulfilling from this point of view a dual functionality: trigger-energizing factor, and orientation and directing towards the future profession- the professional option. These higher reasons reflect the maturity and objectivity in choosing the profession, knowing the skills and the psycho-intellectual possibilities of each individual.

In conclusion, the present study is an empirical framework for the researchers, examining the motivation to become a teacher in terms of psychological, social and cultural-educational dimensions by relating to the individual's system of needs.

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