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THE DYNAMICS OF MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS IN THE DIDACTIC CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The findings showed that the interpersonal problem solving skills and social self-efficacy correlate positively. The specialty studies have confirmed that a teacher's professional quality and performance represents a predictor of the academic achievement of the educable individuals. The issue of the teacher's professional development as a constantly topical subject appears conceptualized in the specialty literature under two aspects; on one hand the cognitive aspect- which refers mainly to the acquisition of pedagogical and speciality offering support in the efficient practice of the didactic profession and on the other hand to the emotional aspect which refers to internal impulses that direct behaviour emotionally: commitment, attachment and dedication. The starting point of the research is to examine the internal impulses of the didactic career. Thus, the present study proposes to analyze the dynamics of motivational factors at teachers according to the variables didactic experience and environment as well as the impact these factors have upon the professional development of their didactic career. The practical implications of the present study refer to the evolution of efficient management strategies of professional development programmes adapted to the didactic profession, through developing, training and optimization programmes for personal and social support dimensions which can counterbalance socio-professional pressures and can contribute to obtaining acquisition of high levels of job satisfaction and professional commitment.

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1. Introduction

Admittedly, in an organizational context, motivation represents the process through which human behaviour is mobilized to perform professional objectives. These can be identified as success, desire to win money, social appreciation, teamwork or professional satisfaction. The demands in the didactic

activity have multiplied lately in Romania, chiefly due to multiple curricular changes and to the emphasis laid on the enhancement of quality in the educational system. It is to be expected that the amount of work which has grown substantially whereas salaries remained constant, reflects upon professional motivation of those involved in the didactic career. The main goal of this paper is to identify the existing differences in the structure of professional motivation at teachers from the perspective of self-determination theory.

2. Theoretical Considerations

2.1. Defining Teacher Motivation

The motivation for the didactic career represents a recurrent theme in the specialty literature. Studies about the motivation for the didactic career mainly refer to the consequences of the motivated behaviour and are connected to concepts such as professional satisfaction, professional performance, commitment, constancy, etc. However, when trying to explain what are those stimulating sources which orient teacher's behaviour towards an efficient achievement of his didactic activity, the specialty literature does not offer sufficient material.

In choosing one's career and in professional development, motivational resources are represented by needs, interests, expectations about results, the level of aspiration and the motivation of achievement (Negovan, 2010). Mostly, when professional motivation is analyzed, we refer to the extrinsic aspects of work, respectively working conditions, work results, money, rewards, avoidance of sanctions, labour relations, the type of organizational management, or to intrinsic aspects – the pleasure and the interest to develop a certain activity, autonomy, creativity. From this perspective, the didactic profession is an atypical one. In a study elaborated by Farkas, Johnson & Foleno (2000), when they have been asked what motivates them most in the activity they develop 83% of teachers considered as an essential feature the fact that it is important they like the work they do, and 72% considered that the activity they perform must help others and contribute to the development of society. In character with the previous study, Brookhart & Freeman conclude that what determined teachers to choose the didactic career are primary reasons such as „altruistic, service-oriented goals and other intinsic motivations" (Brookhart & Freeman,). They say that there is a motivational profile of the teacher (Richardson & Watt, 2010) who is inclined to responsibility, commitment and overwork and destined for career burnout.

There is no unity in explaining the motivational behaviour of teachers (Dörnyei & Ushoda, 2011; Han & Yin, 2016). The definitions of teachers' professional motivations are diversified and unclear which determines conceptual ambiguities. The approach of teachers' professional motivation made by Han &Yin appears to be very interesting: „teacher motivation refers to reasons that emanate from individuals' intrinsic values in choosing to teach and sustain teaching, and the intensity of teacher motivation is indicated by the effort expended on teaching as influenced by a number of contextual factors" (Han &Yin, 2016, p. 3).

2.2. Motivational Framework- Self Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 229) postulates that humans have three basic psychological needs, which are inborn and their satisfaction influences the individuals' efficiency, performances and well-being, decisively. These are the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness.

2.2.1. Characteristics of the basic psychological needs

The need for autonomy represents individuals' inherent desire to feel volitional and to experience a sense of choice and psychological freedom when carrying out an activity (De Charms, 1968; Ryan & Deci, 2000). These refers to individual's needs to perceive himself as a source of own decisions, as an initiator of own actions and as an active factor of own life in agreement with personal interest, values and independent from external pressures. These needs are satisfied in contexts where the individual has the opportunity to make choices, to evaluate and to decide the external demands and conditions. (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van den Broeck et al., 2008). The more autonomous they perceive themselves in the activities they develop the more intrinsically motivated they perceive themselves. Researches emphasized the fact that a low level of autonomy is associated with high levels of anxiety and negative coping strategies.

The need for competence refers to a need to feel confident and effective in one's activities (Ryan & Deci, 2002). This expresses the individual's need to feel a complete control within the interactions with the environment, to be efficient in relation to the environment, to feel competent to solve tasks and to believe that he can influence the results of the actions he involves in significantly (Stone et al. 2009). Competence satisfaction allows individuals to adapt to complex and changing environments, whereas competence frustration is likely to result in helplessness and a lack of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Competence satisfaction refers to a more general, affective experience of effectiveness which results from mastering a task. Satisfying individuals' need for competence is also important because if they do not feel competent to perform well on the target behavior, individuals are less likely to internalize regulation of such behavior (Vallerand et al., 1997).

The need for relatedness refers to the individual's need to feel attached to those around him, to be respected by them. The need for relatedness is the need for a „psychological sense of being with others in secure communion or unity" (Ryan & Deci, 2002, p. 7). This conceptualization includes connection feelings and a sense of belongingness with other individuals as well as with one's community.

Self- Determination Theory conceives motivation as a multidimensional concept based on three distinct qualitative types: „in a continuum ranging from the least to the most self-determined forms there is amotivation, controlled motivation, and autonomous motivation. Autonomous and controlled motivation refer to an individual's intention to act (though leading to different outcomes), conversely amotivation refers to the lack of it." (Orsini, Binnie & Wilson, 2016, p. 2).

Amotivation appears when there is no connection between results and actions and the persons have neither intrinsic nor extrinsic motivation. Amotivated persons do not have precise goals and objectives and do not seem to reach the finality of an activity systematically, avoid effort and experience feelings of control loss and incompetence. The specialty literature distinguishes four types of amotivated

behaviour (Vallerand et al., 1992), which consist in the conviction that a. even with a considerable effort in developing an activity, performance cannot be attained; b. the activity implies a considerable effort; c. the individual does not possess the necessary capacities to attain this; d. the adopted strategies do not lead to accomplishing the objectives.

Extrinsic motivation even if it presumes an intentional behavior, this is interpreted by the individual as not being the effect of his desires and appears as a multidimensional concept associated with the following processes: a. *extrinsic motivation- external regulation* (it appears with the aim of obtaining rewards and avoiding punishments), b. *extrinsic motivation-introjected* describes a type of internal regulation that is still quite controlling because people perform such actions with the feeling of pressure in order to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego-enhancements or pride, but the individual can internalize the reasons of his actions, but his behavior is not self-determined yet.; c. *extrinsic motivation- identified* the person has identified with the personal importance of a behavior and has thus accepted its regulation as his or her own, and d. *extrinsic motivation- integration* appears when regulation identified is assimilated to the ego completely, the behavior is encompassed for external reasons but is congruent with personal needs and values. (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Intrinsic motivation is self-determined. We can identify at this level a. *intrinsic motivation for knowledge* which presumes the engagement in an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction to accomplish it and is associated with behaviours such as success, curiosity, exploration, the need to know and to understand; b. intrinsic motivation for success implies the individual engagement in an activity for the pleasure to excel and is associated with the search for efficiency, creativity and competence; c. extrinsic motivation for stimulation presupposes the person's implication in the activity for the emotions and sensations lived in its development (Negovan, 2010).

The individual behavior associated to these motivational types oscillates from not self- determined to most self-determined. (Tabel. 1)

Tabel. 1. A taxonomy of human motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61)

Regulatory styles	Amotivation	Extrinsic motivation				Intrinsic motivation
		External regulation	Introjection	Identification	Integration	
Associated processes	Perceived non contingency Low perceived competence	Salience of extrinsic rewards or punishments	Ego involvement	Conscious valuing of activity	Hierarchical synthesis of goals	Interest / Enjoyment
	Nonrelevance Nonintentionality	Compliance/ Reactance	Focus on approval from self or others	Self endorsement of goals	Congruence	Inherent satisfaction
Perceived locus of causality	Impersonal	External	Somewhat external	Somewhat internal	Internal	Internal

2.3. Determinants Of Self –Determined Motivation

Latest research examines the variables which determine the self-determined motivation (Orsini, Binnie & Wilson, 2016). Significant positive relations are registered for intrapersonal factors such as age

(persons with experience tend to include autonomous behaviours in their motivational profile), gender (women have a higher autonomous motivation as compared to men but also a higher motivational control), and certain personality traits such as constancy, self-directedness, cooperativeness, self-transcendence, readiness to start and willigness to sacrifice. Professional factors such as professional input, professional development, professional relations and ties etc. are among the interpersonal factors, which have significant relations in activating self-determined motivation.

2.4. The Effects Of Teacher's Self –Determined Motivation Upon Pupils

Recent research emphasized the necessity to establish the connections between the teacher's type of motivation and pupils' motivation (Han & Yin, 2016) since studies which approach the connection between teacher's motivational style and pupils' motivation are sparse (Taylor & al., 2009).

Another aspect of the effects of teacher's motivational style can be retrieved in students' implications (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Marks (2000) conceptualized engagement as "a psychological process, specifically, the attention, interest, investment, and effort students expend in the work of learning".

3. Objectives and Hypothesis of the Study

The present study proposes to determine if there are significant differences between the types of motivations at different levels of professional experience in the context of self-determination theory.

4. Method

4.1. Participants

The group of subjects is made up of 80 teachers having a didactic experience between 3-35 years, 20 males and 60 females who come from the rural -32 urban environment – 48.

4.2. Instruments

In order to identify the type of motivation, we built a questionnaire starting from extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors, thus the subscale of extrinsic motivation contains 12 measured items and the scale of intrinsic motivation contains 15 items. The scoring is achieved by using a four point Likert scale, 1-strong disagreement, 4- strong agreement. Each of the built scales has internal consistency, thus extrinsic motivation scale $\alpha=0,78$ and intrinsic motivation scale $\alpha=0,65$.

As concerns the identification of the basic psychological needs, we built a 3-scale questionnaire – competence (7 items), autonomy (8 items) and relatedness (8 items), which contains a number of 23 items. The questionnaire had been validated by using Basic Psychological Needs Questionnaire (Shedlon, Elliot, Kim & Kasser, 2001). The scoring is achieved through a four point Likert scale, 1- strong disagreement, 4- strong agreement. Each of the built scales has internal consistency, thus Competence $\alpha=0,82$, Autonomy $\alpha=0,85$ and Relatedness.

5. Results and Discussions

The analysis of the data obtained showed the following: the subjects of the sample present scores over average at the intrinsic motivation scale (m= 34.85, sd= 3.22) , and also at the extrinsic one (m= 36.40, sd=2.21). We can observe that there are significant differences as regards the intrinsic motivation between males and females, (t= -.823, sig= 0.23, df= 79), but there are no significant differences between males and females as regards extrinsic motivation. External factors, such as the job,security, the salary, the organizational climate, rewards and benefits are determinant both for females as for males. As concerns intrinsic motivation it appears that females are more focused on the activity with children, are more empathic and find pleasure in working with children more easily. There are no significant differences as regards the teachers' types of motivation and working environment (urban-rural)..

We have registered significant differences in the matter of didactic experience at the level of extrinsic motivation (t= 4.105, df=79, sig=0.001), and also for intrinsic motivation (t=-3.638, dr=79, sig=0.002). The analysis of the questionnaire which identifies the psychological needs shows that there are significant differences in the matter of professional experience. Teachers with experience tend to obtain bigger scores at the need for relatedness whereas those with a relatively little experience tend to obtain high scores at the need for competence and the need for relatedness.

There are no registered differences in the investigated group either in point of gender or in point of environment (rural-urban) at any scale of psychological needs of motivation.

6. Conclusions

The approach of teachers' professional motivation from the perspective of self-determination theory seemed interesting to us as it explains the motivation of an individual's professional behavior as a continuum, according to the social context in which he functions. The individual can change his motivational orientation naturally, through internalization- the persons' natural tendency to interiorize the regulation of the behaviours that are socially valorized and which initially depended on external rewards. The theory adverts to the fact that social environment can disrupt self-determined motivation when it does not support the fundamental needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness.

Our study is a preliminary one and has as main objective the identification of teachers' motivational profiles according to the criterion didactic experience. The data of the study offer a direction in approaching teachers' professional motivation in keeping with the new research directions.

The limits of the research are due mainly to the small number of subjects, which implies the impossibility of results generalization. Further studies should diversify the also broaden the sample.

The practical relevance of the study targets on one hand aspects which belong to the effects of teacher's professional motivation upon the pupils' learning behavior, commitment and academic performances but also to the organization of the social environment in which teachers develop their activity so that it would stimulate them to manifest self-determined behaviours.

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