



MOTIVATION FOR TEACHING CAREER OF STUDENTS FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND PRIMARY SCHOOL PEDAGOGY

Gianina-Ana Massari

Abstract: This paper examines why teaching is chosen as a career, and considers the extent to which a range of factors identified within a sample of 173 students from kindergarten and primary school pedagogy, early childhood education and applied didactics in primary school. The study is based on the responses to a questionnaire applied to students involved in initial teacher training (bachelor and master program). The findings showed that those in the process of training to teach were attracted to the profession largely for intrinsic reasons, although, to a lesser extent, there was extrinsic motivation too. The implications of these findings show that more research is needed to understand how reforms in curriculum and professional development affect teacher motivation.

Key words: motivation, teaching career, students, early childhood education, primary school

1. Introduction

Following the highest possible quality standards for the development of vocational education, one of the main conditions emerges to teacher training programs focused on the understanding of their important role as teachers. These teachers should understand that they have not only the responsibility of sharing knowledge and practical skills to their students, moreover their responsibility is on training able people to successfully integrate on an increasingly labor market that is directed by competitiveness and efficiency.

The basic question for this study is regarding the motivation for teaching career of students from Romanian early childhood education and primary school pedagogy programs.

General trends in the literature are noted, including the importance of professional attributes, like relationships with children, the need of communication and collaboration, personal development, teacher self-efficacy, teacher autonomy, intrinsic rewards, administrative support, education policy; or professional knowledge and understanding such as teaching, learning, achievement, assessment, monitoring, well-being; or professional skills, like planning process, monitoring and giving feedback, reviewing teaching and learning, learning environment, team working and collaboration, mentoring or coaching. Many factors have been examined in an attempt to find which ones promote teacher motivation. There are various studies focused on students' decision to become teachers, on the appeal of teaching to undergraduates or regarding the motivation of being trainee teachers [Lortie, 1975; Yong, 1995; Baumfield & Taverner, 1997; Heafford and Jennison, 1998; Kyriacou & Koberi, 1998; Spear, Gould, & Lee, 2000, Hammond, 2002]. Some studies show that improvement in teacher motivation has benefits for students as well as teachers; however, there is no consensus about the precise benefits. D.C. Lortie [1975] found out that the appeal of teaching has its interpersonal nature that it allowed teachers to continue their involvement with a subject they themselves studied and enjoyed. B. Young [1975] found that pre-service teachers from California had chosen to teach for altruistic reasons and they planned to remain in teaching profession only with the guaranty if the expected satisfaction of working with children emerged. As key factors for choosing teaching as a career, M. Heafford and B. Jennison [1998] studied a cohort of teachers who revealed a job satisfaction associated with forming positive relationships with young people together with a continued involvement with their subject. M. Spear et al [2000] found out that relatively low salary is the greatest drawback to attraction of being teacher, but in the same time the main reasons

are correlated to high job satisfaction, working with young people, desire to guide and shape school students' learning, improving children's life opportunities, having a sense of providing a service to society, viewing an application of their degree subject, or sharing knowledge of their subject. Baumfield & Taverner [1997] has identified that teaching practice is very significant during training and it is at this point where some people realise that they are unsuited to teaching, but also if there are some opportunities to provide to young people the possibility to visit or work in schools it could have a positive impact on recruitment. M. Hammond [2002] placed a significant emphasis on previous teaching experiences as factors in the motivation decision to teach. By experiencing 'teaching-like' activities the future teacher may 'rehearse and enjoy the role of the teacher' in a safe setting" [Hammond, 2002, p. 145], and this provides confidence to embark on training, and a strong interest on their suitability for teaching.

Synthesizing, these studies have shown that we can take into consideration three main reasons category: intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic reasons. Intrinsic reasons cover aspects of the teaching profession itself, such as teaching or scientific interest in using their professional knowledge for students training, but also personal development and work in schools. Extrinsic reasons cover aspects of the teaching profession which are not directly related to it, such as teachers schedule, or wages, but also the benefits and security offered by this profession. Altruistic reasons cover aspects of pleasure to work with students, teacher's desire to contribute to the students' development, or helping the society to progress [Moran, A., 2001]. Under the effect of globalization and computerization, traditional education no longer represents the preferred system of education on global and national level. Actually, it has been doubled (at least for a hundred years) by various types of education: correspondence, radio, television, and recently by Internet. All these alternatives have gradually proven their advantages and disadvantages, actually representing stages of the development / modernization of a system of education which is more and more complex, oriented towards the fulfillment of necessities of informing and educating a gradually larger public, more varied regarding age and learning experience, and more exigent.

2. Goal and objectives of the study

The goal of this study is to investigate what is the motivation for choosing a teaching career by students from Applied Didactics in Primary School and Early Childhood Education master programs and kindergarten and primary school pedagogy.

There were followed three main objectives:

- to find out which are the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of students for choosing a teaching career in kindergarten and primary school;
- to make a comparison between motivation of students from bachelor and professional master programs for choosing a teaching career;
- to investigate if those who are already in the process of teaching were attracted to the profession largely for intrinsic reasons.

3. Research methodology

It should be noticed that this study took place during the academic year 2012-2013, and it was supported by the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development, financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number POSDRU/89/1.5/S/ ID 56815/E/1859.

Of the roughly 190 students from Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi – kindergarten and primary school pedagogy program and two master programs for kindergarten (Early Childhood Education) and primary school (Applied Didactics in Primary School), there were 170 female students and 4 male students who agreed to participate in the reported study, and completed the survey. Our subjects represents a range of backgrounds and age of teaching experience. The participating students in this study included:

- from Early Childhood Education master program, 2nd level, from 31 students there were all female students; 11 who teach in rural area; and 5 newly qualified teachers, 13 beginners teachers, 9 teachers with more than 10 years experience, and 4 teachers with more than 20 years experience;
- from Early Childhood Education master program, 1st level, from 29 students there was only one male student; 15 respondents who teach in rural area, 12 students with no teaching experience; 7 newly qualified teachers, 5 beginners teachers, 5 teachers with more than 10 years experience, and none with more than 20 years experience;
- from Applied Didactics in Primary School master program, 2nd level, from 23 students there were all female students; 7 who teach in rural area; and 1 with no teaching experience, 7 newly qualified teachers, 3 beginners teachers, 6 teachers with more than 10 years experience, and 5 teachers with more than 20 years experience;
- from Applied Didactics in Primary School master program, 1st level, from 36 students there were only two male students; and 7 students with no teaching experience, 5 who teach in rural area; 12 newly qualified teachers, 7 beginners teachers, 5 teachers with more than 10 years experience, and 5 teachers with more than 20 years experience;
- from Kindergarten and Primary School Pedagogy – bachelor program, 3rd level, from 54 respondents students there was only one male student; 37 students with no teaching experience, 5 who teach in rural area; 4 newly qualified teachers, 3 beginners teachers, 2 teachers with more than 10 years experience, and 3 teachers with more than 20 years experience.

Regarding the instrument used, it was conceived a survey based on eight questions designed to determine such things as: the reasons that influenced their choice for teaching career, what means for them professional development, which are their main objectives regarding development of their teaching career, related to their teaching beginnings how these objectives have been changed, what are their expectations regarding personal and professional development, and which are the strongest intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for choosing a teaching career.

All responses for the first item were one-to-four Likert scale, where "1" represents "strongly agree/highly measure" and "4" "strongly disagree/not at all" on the list of proposed reasons. For the next 7 items there were expected open answers, because some reasons could be omitted as much as in building investigative tools there is often a cultural footprint.

To achieve followed objectives, there were used statistical processing methods by creating a database which was analyzed through SPSS for: frequencies, t-tests, and rang. The independent variables were represented by kindergarten and primary school pedagogy program, Early Childhood Education master programs, and Applied Didactics in Primary School master program. And the dependent variable was motivation for a teaching career.

4. Results and findings

Factorial analysis shown a score of .86 for alfa cronbach of our instrument, and for those 9 aspects it was between .63 și .82, as follows:

1. teaching vocation: .82
2. passion and love for children: .80
3. desire to serve the society: .78
4. training programs for this profession: .76
5. status and desire to be an authority: .74
6. working conditions: .70
7. influence of others (family, friends): .67

8. autonomy and flexibility of the program: .65
9. intellectual challenge: .63

Below, we will present the obtained results for each followed objective.

Therefore, to achieve the first objective regarding which are the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of students for choosing a teaching career in kindergarten and primary school, we consider that it could be interesting to make an hierarchy of the reasons with the highest and lowest score of intensity for intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and also to do some statistical analysis on those 9 followed dimensions (teaching vocation, passion and love for children, desire to serve the society, training programs for this profession, status and desire to be an authority, working conditions, influence of others like family or friends) autonomy and flexibility of the program, and intellectual challenge). The three first top reasons chosen were: "teaching vocation", "I love and I am loved by the children", and "social responsibility for nurturing the young". The lowest top reasons chosen were: "family tradition", and "advise/desire of friends/family". Regarding those three dimensions of motivation for choosing a teaching career in kindergarten or primary school, the obtained results are different then other research, there wasn't kept the same order like we found it in the literature, as follows: intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic reasons. From our results emerged that altruistic reasons are on the first place, then there are intrinsic motivation, and the last are extrinsic motivation. Beyond this, the analysis of open answers revealed that the students' motivation for a teaching career in kindergarten or primary school has mostly an intrinsic nature. It is emphasized the choice of teaching over other professions, despite the fact that students realise that they may choose to have another kind of profession/career and to have more opportunities to get employed. They believe that getting teaching satisfaction can not make other benefits from another profession. For most of them, even the fact that having a career in education does not amount to a high salary does not prevent them to choose this vocational route.

For the second objective of this study, to make a comparison between motivation of students from bachelor and professional master programs for choosing a teaching career, there were significant differences between groups, regarding the level of motivation for "loving the children" ($p=.12$) and "teaching vocation" ($p=.16$). The motivation level of students from bachelor is lowest than master students.

The third objective was to investigate if those who are already in the process of teaching were attracted to the profession largely for intrinsic reasons. By processing and interpreting the data, we could find out that there are significant differences between teachers as students and students who are not involved yet in teaching process. Thus, there are significant differences on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Those students who are already employed in the educational system are extrinsic motivated to choose a teaching career ($p=.01$, $m=2,3967$), and the youngest, those students who are still involved in pre-service teacher training are more extrinsic motivated to choose a teaching career ($p=.03$, $m=3,1144$).

5. Conclusions

The results of this study aimed to investigate what is the motivation for choosing a teaching career by students from Applied Didactics in Primary School and Early Childhood Education master programs and kindergarten and primary school pedagogy.

Making a radiography of the results of this research concerning reasons why students choose to have a teaching career, there it could be an indicator that we are at a crossroads considerations regarding intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for having a teaching career.

Our data revealed that an important role in choosing a teaching career play individual interests, such as self-development or intellectual challenge, and professional skills. Also, the job attractiveness, safety and professional opportunities with no extra cost are aspects that are not neglected by students. Teaching vocation and love for children are strong motivational indicators that lead us to say that students from master programs are more oriented and motivated on their teaching profession. The promotion of the respect for knowledge, learning and opportunities for self-development are among

the top reasons of intrinsic nature. Also, the results revealed that the opportunity to have a positive role model for students or a desire to give students self-confidence are reasons with a highest level of intensity.

This study brings into focus again the complexity of career guidance, and especially the complexity of choosing a teaching profession. Regarding this complexity, we do not neglect the role and importance of the professional knowledge and understanding such as teaching, learning, achievement, assessment, monitoring, well-being; but we consider that teacher training programs should be focused also on the professional attributes, like relationships with children, the need of communication and collaboration, personal development, teacher self-efficacy, teacher autonomy, intrinsic rewards, administrative support, education policy; and on developing the professional skills, like planning process,

References

- [1] Baumfield, V. & Taverner, S. (1997), Why Students Withdraw from Initial Teacher Training, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, vol. 26 (1), pp. 25 – 43.
- [2] Hammond, M. (2002), Why teach? A case study investigating the decision to train to teach ICT, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, vol. 28 (2), pp. 135 – 148.
- [3] Heafford, M. & Jennison, B. (1998), Destined to Teach: a case study of a Post Graduate Certificate of Education cohort over 16 years, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, vol. 24 (2), pp. 147– 164.
- [4] Kyriacou, C., & Kobori, M. (1998). Motivation to learn and teach English in Slovenia. *Educational Studies*, vol. 24 (3), pp. 345-351.
- [5] Moran, A., Kilpatrick, R., Abbott, L, Dallat, J., McClune, B., 2001, Training to Teach: Motivating Factors and Implications for Recruitment, Evaluation and Research in Education, vol. 15 (1), pp. 17-32.
- [6] Lortie, D. C. (1975), *School Teacher. A Sociological Study*, The University of Chicago Press.
- [7] Spear, M., Gould, K. & Lee, B. (2000), Who would be a teacher? A Review of factors Motivating and Demotivating Prospective and Practising Teachers, Slough: NFER
- [8] Seghedin, Elena, 2010, „Componenta moral-deontică a profesionalismului educatorilor. Repere teoretice si deschideri aplicative” in vol Conferintei internationale de Educatie a Adultilor, 10 ani de dezvoltare europeana in educatia adultilor. Realizari si provocari in atingerea obiectivelor Lisabona, ISSN 2069-0541, Ed.Eurostampa, acreditata CNCISIS, Timisoara, pp. 130-138
- [9] Seghedin, Elena, 2011, “Reflective capability – a specific goal of a Teachers Professional Ethics Course”, in vol. Teachers for the knowledge society, *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Elsevier Publishing House, vol.11, march 2011
- [10] Yong, B. C. S. (1995) Teacher Trainees' Motives for Entering into a Teaching Career in Brunei Darussalam, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, vol. 11 (3), pp. 275-280.
- [11] Young, B. (1995) Career plans and work perceptions of pre-service teachers, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, vol. 11 (3), pp. 281-292.

Authors

Massari Gianina-Ana, postdoctoral researcher, Romanian Academy - Iasi Branch, gianina.massari@gmail.com

Acknowledgements

This paper is supported by the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development, financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number POSDRU/89/1.5/S/ ID 56815/E/1859.