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The relationship between the motivation to attend the teacher education programme and the acquisition of professional competences. The case of Romanian teachers

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to present the results pertaining to a section of a much wider research, having as main objective the process of pre-service teacher training in Romania by means of academic programs organized within universities. The research has an ascertainment-improvement character. We performed this research along the following main directions: investigating the opinions of inspectors responsible for lifelong training and those of the training programs’ beneficiaries. From a methodological perspective, as research method, we used the questionnaire-based survey of the subjects in the target groups. Through the questionnaire-based assessment we aimed at investigating the opinions of some factors involved in the initial training system. Starting from the hypotheses referring to the condition of the training system, we designed the research instruments, based on the identification of problems and solution pertaining to the role of motivation for graduating from the teaching training program in the acquisition of professional competences provided for by the teaching profession standards. We elaborated tools for each of the two categories of factors involved. From a methodological point of view, in designing the questionnaire we tried, as much as possible, in the case of common objectives, to formulate common means of surveying (common questions) the categories of subjects they address. The samples are representative of the target population. The diversity of structures resulting from the analysis of the target population features allows us to state that the results (information/opinions) obtained on the basis of the questionnaire reflects the opinions on the diversity of situations/conditions/socio-educational environments/training levels etc., which characterize our educational system. It may be stated that the research hypotheses were confirmed, as follows: the students’ level of involvement in their training for the teaching career is in an interdependence relationship with their motivation for completing the teacher education module.

Keywords: motivation; teacher training; teaching career;

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1. Introduction

The research, performed in the 2011 by Şerbănescu, L.: Initial training diagnosis and perspectives for teaching career system, has an ascertainment-improvement character. We carried out this research along the following main lines: investigating the opinions of inspectors responsible for lifelong training and those of these training programs’ beneficiaries. The research purpose is to identify the extent to which the motivation for completing the teaching profession training program contributes to creating the set of professional competences.

Research hypothesis: The extent of involving students in their training for the teaching career is in an interdependence relationship with their motivation in completing the teaching education module.


2. Research Methodology

As part of the research we investigated both the students – as future beneficiaries of psycho-pedagogical training and inspectors responsible for lifelong training.

From a methodological perspective, as survey technique, we used the questionnaire-based survey of the subjects in the target groups. Through the questionnaire-based assessment we aimed at investigating the opinions of all the factors involved in the initial training system: the role of motivation in completing the teaching profession training programme provided by the teaching profession standards.

We elaborated instruments for each of the two categories of factors involved. From a methodological point of view, in designing the questionnaire we tried, as much as possible, in the case of common objectives, to formulate common means of surveying the categories of subjects they address (common questions). A first advantage of this endeavor is the possibility to compare the opinions of the categories of subjects involved.

Using the two instruments, we aimed at retrieving information specific to the represented target group, as follows: through the questionnaire administered to students we asked for opinions on: the attitude and motivation in choosing the teaching profession; through the questionnaire administered to the school inspectors responsible for lifelong training we asked for opinions on: the motivations for choosing the teaching profession and in remaining in the educational system. [Şerbănescu, L. (2011). Initial training diagnosis and perspectives for teaching career system]

2.1. Surveyed population

We administered the survey instruments to representative samples of the two target populations, specifying that the sample of school inspectors covers the entire target population that is represented, the questionnaires being administered to the school inspectors responsible for lifelong training in all the 42 counties. Thus, the research was performed along the following two samples: the sample of students, comprising 569 subjects; the sample of school inspectors responsible for lifelong training, comprising 40 subjects.

2.2. Sample validation

As for the subjects included in the academic curriculum, the research included subjects from 23 sample units. The student sample distribution by domains of study is represented in Table 1.
Table 1. Distribution according to domains of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Location size</th>
<th>Projected sample</th>
<th>Achieved sample</th>
<th>Square-Chi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D01</td>
<td>Mathematics-computer science studies</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D02</td>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D03</td>
<td>Romanian language-modern languages</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>150%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D04</td>
<td>Social studies and humanities</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>154%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D05</td>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D06</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D07</td>
<td>Technical/Economics</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>9.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>569</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to expectations, the ratio of 95.2% responses from the inspectors confirms this sample’s representativeness. Consequently, all the two samples are representative of the target population: TTD students, and inspectors responsible for lifelong training. [Şerbănescu, L. (2011). Initial training diagnosis and perspectives for teaching career system]

3. Research Methodology

Among the reasons that were given, only slightly more than half of the subjects mention a clear option for the teaching career, to whom we can add those who consider it a fall-back career. Most of the subjects (more than three quarters of the sample) consider the courses easy to complete. It is interesting that the answers are focused on the third choice, almost two thirds of the subjects (61.5%) considering the competences provided by the psycho-pedagogical module as a contribution to their personal development.

Motivation for completing the psycho-pedagogical module is represented in Figure 1.
The strongest motivation is that of the satisfaction resulting from the activity with pupils. The next motivations, with close scores, are the ones for a positive self-assessment regarding the qualities required for the teacher position and the social importance of this profession.

Motivations for choosing the teaching career are represented in Figure 2.

Simultaneously with the assessment of the motivations for choosing the teaching career, we also surveyed the causes that limit this option. This aspect was included both in assessing the students’ motivation for pursuing a teaching career, and in assessing the situation of continuing one’s career, respectively remaining in the system, in the school inspectors’ opinion.

The most important risk factor in the teaching staff’s remaining in the system is represented by the inappropriate salary, which was considered to rank first among the risk factors for most subjects. [Şerbănescu, L. (2011). Initial training diagnosis and perspectives for teaching career system]

Risk factors in the options of choosing and performing the teaching career is represented in Figure 3.
4. Discussion

The results emphasize both the opinions of inspectors responsible for lifelong training and those of the training system’s beneficiaries:

Starting from the current experience, the motivations were approached both from the student’s perspective, who is training for this profession and who expresses opinions shaped as a result of the information and communication sources, and from the perspective of practitioners in education, in whose case we selected the inspectors responsible for continuous teacher training, who have gained experience as a result of the multiple situational assessments in which they participated.

We aimed at expanding the investigation area to the entire segment of the students who opted for including the psycho-pedagogical module in their educational portfolio, as it is known that only a part of them will embrace the teaching career. Thus, before identifying the reasons for choosing the teaching career, the questionnaire asked them to motivate their option for completing the psycho-pedagogical module, the teaching career being only one of the possible answers. This question may be appreciated as a filter question, based on which the subjects were grouped according to the option of choosing or not choosing the teaching career.

Conclusions

It may be stated that the research hypothesis was confirmed, as follows: the students’ level of involvement in the teacher training programme is in an interdependence relationship with the motivation for completing the teacher training module.

Among the reasons that were given, only slightly more than half of the subjects mention a clear option for the teaching career, together with those who consider it a fall-back career.

The most important risk factor in the teaching staff’s remaining in the system is represented by the inappropriate salary, which ranked first among the risk factors invoked by the majority of subjects. The strongest motivation is that of the satisfaction resulting from the activity with pupils.

References