

MOTIVATION TO PRACTICE A TEACHING PROFESSION DURING THE STUDIES AT THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

The paper describes partial results of the research implemented with the support of the project SGS-2016-063 – Studying at the Faculty of Education as a place for forming future teacher's professional identity. It is focused on motivation of students of the Faculty of Education to practice the teaching profession. Motivational elements are monitored in terms of their intensity and interaction. From a methodological point of view, this is a questionnaire survey. The result is the identification of key adaptive motives and the design of adaptive motives model for the practice of the teaching profession. Study at the Faculty of Education and its influence is also specified.

Keywords: Teacher's professional identity, Study of teaching, Motivation to study, Motivation to practice the profession.

1 INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of the role of a teacher has been undertaking constant and dramatical change. It seems teaching is going through a crisis and it is necessary to be professionalised. The process of professionalization implies progressive acquisition of competences and increasing its professional position within a structure of professions and social assignments (Kožešník, 1982). However, the ineptitude of teachers to adapt to this new concept is criticised by many experts. Helus (2007) considers the inability to cope with new demands as one of the weakest points in embracing and asserting transformation. A prerequisite would be a noticeable modification of professional identity of current teachers.

The concept of a teacher's professional identity is based on the onion model. The onion model is divided into six layers: environment, behaviour, competences, beliefs, identity, and mission (Korthagen – Vasalos, 2005). According to Spilková, professional identity includes personal "pedagogical philosophy", self-image, self-respect, "self-efficacy", professional motivation, perception of professional requirements of teachers, future prospects and personal approach to teaching (Spilková and Vašutová, 2003).

Professional identity develops during the process of gaining new experiences. Průcha (2002) defines four developmental stages of teachers: choice to become a teacher, student of education, beginning teacher and experienced teacher. This survey connects first two stages and foci on the motivation of becoming a teacher during the studies at the faculty of education. A crucial prerequisite of professionalism, to name one, is strong motivation, awareness of the mission as a basis for choosing a professional career and a permanent, lifelong commitment to the chosen career (Havlík, 1998).

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The choice of becoming a student of pedagogy is conditioned by many factors which are more or less involved in the decision-making process to apply to a faculty of education. Among most frequent motives are: interest in working with children; interesting, meaningful and creative job; holidays; but also, the belief that it is not that difficult to apply and be accepted at this faculty as well as ease of graduation (Bajtoš and Honzíková, 2007). This idea is proved by Havlík's experiment conducted in 1995. His research showed that the significant number of students attending entrance examinations may be misleading and it does not have to convey they are in fact interested in becoming teachers (Havlík in Průcha, 2002). Many graduates decide not to practice the teaching profession, or they leave this profession during their career (Walterová, 2002).

According to Bajtoš and Honzíková (2007) students are dissuaded from the teaching profession by low income and inadequate social appreciation of teachers, also by excessive psychological burden and unsatisfactory conditions for further education.

Havlík (1998) deduces from these factors lower professional self-image of teachers in comparison to other graduate professions. According to Havlík (1998) other factors may include negative public opinion concerning the quality of faculties of education, high degree of feminization in education, unclear criteria of evaluating the effects of this job and furthermore unqualified evaluation by media, government officials and parents.

The source of motivation to become a teacher is primarily the desire to be a teacher, a positive attitude towards children, the possibility to participate in raising and educating individuals (Esquieu, Périer, 2001). Students of pedagogical institutes emphasize that teacher's profession is highly variable because a good teacher is constantly transforming during the teaching process, into a historian, a scientist, a mother-tongue teacher, an artist, a doctor as well as a psychologist (Skaalvik et al., 2006).

According to Lahire (2003) a relatively high number of students come from teachers' families, where in most cases the mother is a teacher. Another impulse may be an encounter with an inspirational teacher and the student's aspiration to become one as well.

Potential contradiction between motivation to study at the faculty of education and motivation to become a teacher is complicated even more so due to the present situation of structure of education in tertiary institutions. Most applicants commence their studies at pedagogical faculties in Bachelor programs, i.e. not necessarily teaching programs. This is one of the issues the presented study focuses on.

3 PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The subject matter is to analyse motives of students at the faculty of education to become professional teachers, from an intensity and mutual interaction point of view. Therefore, four research questions were specified:

- What is the motivation to attend a faculty of education?
- What determines individual decisions of becoming a professional teacher during the stage of professional orientation?
- Which motivation factors are most crucial and in which way do they interfere the decision-making process?
- What is the role of studying at faculty of education in the decision-making process to become a professional teacher?

From a methodological point of view, this is a questionnaire survey submitted to students of the faculty of education. The questionnaire was constructed around a narrative question: "What influenced you to attend the faculty of education?" Every item was formulated and based on the research's qualitative statements of students, therefore, the original stylistic, including ich-form, was respected during its construction. At the end, 25 questionnaire items were generated, each of them provided by a five-level item scale, on which students introduced their degree of motivation. Their focus is presented in table 1.

The target group was represented by 284 students from 1st to 3rd year of bachelor programs and from 1st to 2nd year of master programs. Undergraduate programs do not lead to a qualification of professional teacher, whereas graduate programs are considered teaching programs. Students of 7 different specializations for primary and secondary education were included. All these students attended the university in full-time programs. Students of distance programs have already been teaching and they are studying to gain a

supplemental qualification. They have already made the decision of becoming teachers. The gender ratio of participants was 39% male students and 61% female students.

4 RESULTS

Table 1. Motivation to attend a faculty of education – descriptive statistics

<i>Motives</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Motives</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Failure to pass exams to another university</i>	1,69	1,19	<i>Social status</i>	1,97	1,06
<i>Good starting salary</i>	1,34	0,65	<i>The actual decision to teach</i>	3,31	1,48
<i>Love for children</i>	3,33	1,35	<i>Pro-social value orientation</i>	3,54	1,24
<i>Gaining master's degree</i>	3,92	1,08	<i>Easier admission to university</i>	1,7	0,99
<i>Positive reflection of dispositions</i>	3,16	1,17	<i>Parents' stimuli</i>	1,21	0,64
<i>Perspective of teaching profession</i>	2,60	1,12	<i>Prerequisites for qualitative outputs</i>	2,96	1,12
<i>Holiday scope</i>	2,97	1,34	<i>Job stability</i>	2,51	12
<i>Friends' recommendation</i>	1,40	0,82	<i>Proximity of the faculty</i>	1,64	1,18
<i>Interests in field</i>	4,11	1,03	<i>Social respect</i>	1,8	0,93
<i>Less demanding studying</i>	1,63	0,95	<i>Interest in job content</i>	3,53	1,19
<i>Possibility to influence others</i>	2,59	1,36	<i>Job openings</i>	2,54	1,28
<i>Student's status</i>	2,41	1,35	<i>Set of working hours</i>	2,77	1,24
<i>Positive social image</i>	2,14	1,06			

The strongest motives stated by responded students are: interest in field, gaining master's degree, pro-social value orientation, interest in job content and love for children. Majority of respondents nearly concurred with being interested in the field and with importance of acquiring a master's degree. Two statements that showed higher number of standard deviation were: interest in job content and love for children. As the least important criteria for choosing to study at the faculty of education that were evaluated were: parents' stimuli, good starting level salary, friends' recommendation, less demanding study, proximity of the faculty. Lower fluctuation of weighted score can be found within these options. Concerning the statement of making the actual decision to teach, this is an item with the highest standard deviation.

This graph (Fig. 1) is a percentage representation of students that are considering becoming teachers and those who are not.

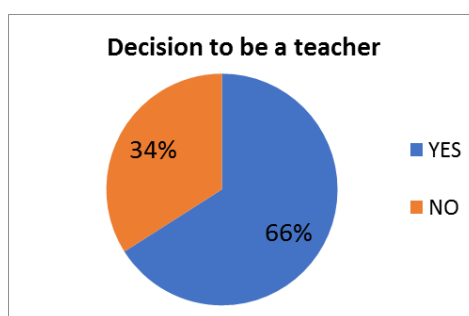


Fig. 1. Percentage representation of students that are considering becoming teachers.

Despite the fact, that all respondents are attending a faculty of education, more than a third is not

considering becoming a teacher upon finishing their studies. One may find a relation to the previous discovery that the strongest motive to enter a faculty of education is the interest for the study field/specialization. The reached result is facilitated by a size of a standard deviation of weighted score. Havlík's research has concluded to similar findings where 67% respondents from faculty of education stated their interest of truly becoming teachers (Havlík in Průcha, 2002).

Following graph (Fig. 2) represents a percentage of bachelor (not teaching) programs and master (teaching) programs.

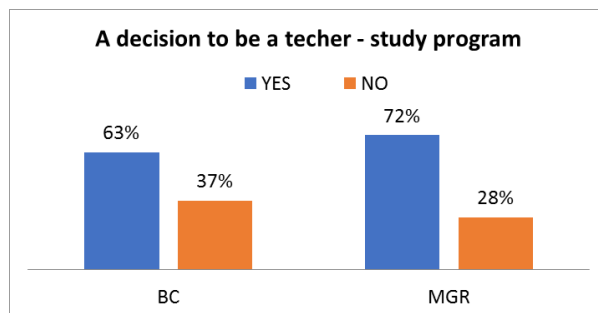


Fig. 2. A percentage representation of students that are considering becoming teachers and their study programs.

For both types of measure programs, the following is true: the majority of students have decided to pursue a teaching job. A non-negligible percentage of respondents have not decided yet or are still planning a different professional career. In the case of bachelor program students this result has been anticipated. Follow-up master programs are aimed to produce qualified teachers and 28% of students have not decided whether to teach, whereas with bachelor program students it is a mere 9%. It is quite possible that some of these students will remain to be educators although it not being their first choice. This circumstance will complicate the process of creating and accepting a professional identity and may have consequences even on their performance as a teacher.

What then plays a part in an individual's phase of professional orientation when concluding whether to work as a teacher? Which motivational elements are key and how are they involved in the decision-making process? With regards to this Bruinsma and Jansen (2010) mention "adaptive and maladaptive motives", where only adaptive motives support sustainability of a relationship and engagement in teaching. The following table () describes investigated correlations with decisions of performing a teaching practice.

Table 2. Values of Pearson correlation coefficient of motives

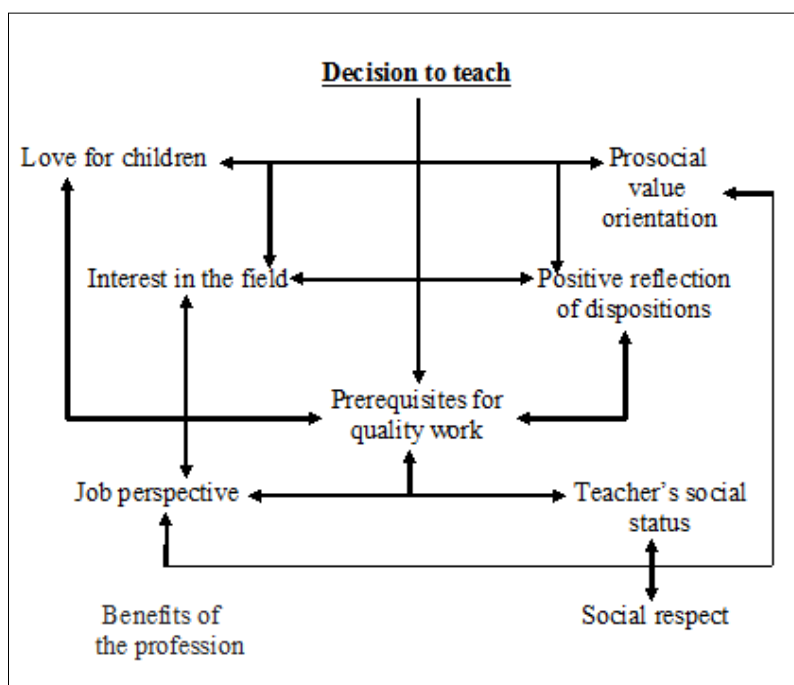
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	1								
2	0,44	1							
3	0,40	0,36	1						
4	0,36	0,27	0,53	1					
5	0,69	0,64	0,56	0,41	1				
6	0,56	0,46	0,43	0,38	0,61	1			
7	0,53	0,60	0,47	0,34	0,66	0,55	1		
8	0,35	0,33	0,38	0,58	0,35	0,32	0,50	1	

	0,5								
9	1	0,5	0,5	0,47	0,69	0,6	0,52	0,38	1

Legend of table (Table 2): 1 – Love for children; 2 – Positive reflection of dispositions; 3 – Job perspective; 4 – Teacher’s social status; 5 – Decision to teach; 6 – Prosocial value orientation; 7 – Prerequisites for quality work; 8 – Social respect; 9 – Interest in the field.

A model, based on previous data, of crucial elements, which play a role in the intensity of motivation to work as a teacher, was compiled.

The magnitude of a decision to pursue a teaching practice is determined primarily by love for children, personal interest in a teaching practice, wider requisites for quality work, positive reflection of personal dispositions and prosocial value orientation of a student. The afore mentioned components are interconnected and positively correlate together in differing degrees. Prosocial value orientation is closely linked to love for children, interest in the field, and positive reflection of personal dispositions. Likewise, wider requisites for quality work is derived from positive reflection of personal dispositions, love for children, prosocial value orientation, and interest in the field. Love for children is a prerequisite as well as goal of the interest in field which is determined from positive reflection of personal dispositions.



Pic. 1. A model of motives to become a teacher from intensity point of view

Perceived perspective of job as well as social status of a teacher plays a role in deciding whether to pursue a teaching career. Perspective of a teaching job is connected with prosocial value orientation, prerequisites for quality work, and interest in the field; the social status of teacher also plays an important role. Teacher's respect positively correlates primarily with teacher's social status and personal requisites of quality work.

Generally recognized benefits of teaching are social assurances, fixed work hours, job openings, days of holiday and generally perceived ease of gaining a university degree at a faculty of education. All these attributes are involved in the monitored decision-making process but a clear correlation between magnitude of decision of pursuing a teaching career and benefits of this particular job has been found to be quite low.

5 CONCLUSION

The desire to become a teacher is not the single and vital input motivation to study at the faculty of education. Some students are motivated more by the study field/specialisation or by the opportunity to gain a master's degree. More than a third of students does not consider practising a teacher's profession upon graduation. A relatively significant percentage includes students of specific teaching programs.

In the decision-making process of becoming a professional teacher especially love for children, interests in

content of the job, prerequisites for qualitative outputs, positive reflection of dispositions and pro-social value's orientation are included. These elements are interconnected and are supported by other motivation elements.

Concerning love for children, relationships are generally formed based on experiences obtained during mutual interactions. The question remains, whether it is possible to develop this affective relation at a faculty of education, given such a relational foundation would not have been based before. The quota of practice-based subjects in undergraduate teaching programs is still very limited.

Studying at a faculty of education cannot aim to support significantly a student's pro-social value orientation. All fundamental personal characteristics have already been developed when students start to attend a university. Focus of value orientation is primarily based on the socialisation in ones family. Teachers should therefore influence their students as behaviour-models.

The interest of a teacher's profession can be supported by the faculty of education through development of professional competencies which surpass students' present ideas about the teaching profession, hitherto gained from a pupil's and student's position.

For a students' positive reflection of their own dispositions the manner of interactions with university professors seems to be key. Students at a faculty of education are only starting their teacher profession training and a personal professional self-reflexion is difficult for them. The level of students' dispositions is therefore estimated by the reactions of teachers. Those university professors who communicate with their students in a spirit of pedagogical optimism support their professional self-esteem thus make a significant contribution to students' decision of becoming teachers.

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