

FOSTERING MOTIVATION IN THE PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION SYSTEM IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

Investing in the human factor represents the safest way to ensure the organization's success and bright future. Educational reform, teaching practice, and teachers' psychological accomplishment and well-being are crucial for the success of educational units. Motivated teachers create an engaging and collaborative environment for pupils to learn. However, keeping the teaching staff motivated can be challenging sometimes. The paper analyzes the overall motivation level, focusing on its components, role, and importance in education. At the same time, this study accurately evaluates the motivational methods adopted by pre-university teachers in the Romanian education system and the primary motivational factors expressed by teachers. The research hypotheses are focused on revealing that the intrinsic factors of motivation (work recognition, self-accomplishment, professional development, etc.) are the main determinants of the successful outputs generated by teachers' work; teachers tend to perceive that their outcomes are not fully rewarded according to their efforts and actual work; teachers comprehend work motivation as highly important in relation to professional satisfaction and implicitly, to positive results; weak financial incentives correlated with a large workload have a significant impact on teachers' perspectives regarding professional demotivators. The research methodology comprises the qualitative method by using the research of scientific literature on motivation in the educational system, as well as the quantitative analysis based on a questionnaire applied to teachers in a secondary school. The contribution brought by this research consists in presenting the teachers' perception concerning their motivation for success in their teaching careers.

Keywords

professional competencies; teacher development; teacher motivation; world of education.

Introduction

The investment in the human factor represents the safest way to ensure the success and the bright future of the organization. Human resource management is focused on expanding several fundamental indicators for the organization, such as "the efficiency and effectiveness of employees, their productivity, job satisfaction, the ability to

innovate, solve problems, change the organization depending on the dynamics of internal and external factors” (Săvulescu, 2023).

One of the most common and significant concerns currently occurring in the public sector is the motivation of the employees, as it represents a differentiating factor for the most performing and successful organizations. Public entities have started to carefully invest in their most important human capital resource in response to the ongoing globalization and social changes. The performance and job participation of civil servants within the public sector mainly determine the quality of the outcomes provided by the public organizations. To professionally and efficiently execute their obligations, “there should be implemented methods that contribute to the dedication, involvement, and hard work” (Vance, 2006).

Employee motivation represents a fundamental factor in human resource management, highlighting the support of global management strategies. It involves the correlation between satisfying the individual needs of employees and achieving their assigned responsibilities. The proper motivational factors foster the engagement of public employees in the organization, stimulating active professional participation. Motivation is sometimes difficult to fulfill due to the complexity and versatility of the human factor, “but its presence within public entities leads to providing quality services, and therefore, increasing customer satisfaction” (OECD, 2017). Motivation in the public sector encounters several challenges compared to private entities, especially regarding workers’ payroll, because this factor is generally established following laws, policies, and regulations.

Landscape of motivation in the pre-university education system

The most developed organizations frequently invest large sums of money in their employees’ recruitment, evaluation, motivation, and development. Nowadays, human resources are considered “the main source of ensuring competitiveness, being valuable, rare, and sometimes even irreplaceable” (Manolescu et al., 2007). As the “economic and social environment is defined by features like volatility, spontaneity, dynamism, continuous development, and interdependence, it is essential to conduct the human resources efficiently and to establish the specific techniques of motivation” (Bedrule-Grigoruta, 2007). At the same time, the National Education Law defines the “working conditions for the teaching staff, including the abilities, responsibilities, rights, and obligations.” The training programs represent a legal right stipulated for the pre-university teachers, while their corresponding obligation is to constantly improve the knowledge they acquire.

One of the many objectives of human resource management is to motivate employees. This fundamental mechanism can be accomplished through new policies and processes that value and reward people for their efforts, initiatives, contributions to the organization’s progress, and achieved tasks. The performance of organizations depends directly on the involvement of the employees and, therefore, on their satisfaction level. However, the magnitude of factors that determine the motivational level is complex.

The mechanisms of selection, enrolment, contracting, and employment of teachers in both public and private educational entities are always based on official contests. “For

public pre-university education, these procedures are accomplished through competitive assessment, while the private system involves open recruitment mechanisms” (European Commission, 2022). Pre-university teachers engage in a two-phase professional development process. Each stage is fulfilled by specially developed examinations that generate licenses for higher professional degrees. “Pre-university teachers can acquire two educational degrees: second teaching level and first teaching level” (Law 198/2023 on Pre-University Education). These professional degrees are remunerated with higher income for the same responsibilities and provide the opportunity for leadership, coaching, guidance, and coordination jobs. These management and leadership positions are obtained by passing specific contests and meeting several conditions established by the Ministry of Education (degree, authority, efficiency, results, etc.).

By achieving didactic degrees, it is highlighted the professional development of teachers in relation to The National Qualifications Framework and corresponding standards of the progress of human resources leading to a high-quality level in the education system. The teaching levels represent the recognition of professionalism and expertise gradually acquired by teaching staff. The Romanian educational institutions impose a professional development model combining specific education with qualified training for a teaching career. According to Law 198/2023, “pre-university teachers, including those with management positions, must participate in continuous training programs to acquire the minimum number of professional credits every five years.” Referring to pre-university education, the initial professional training involves a practical internship of one academic year within an educational entity, achieved under the supervision of a mentor teacher. Newcomer teachers are employed within this introductory guidance based on the same contract signed by professors hired for a permanent period that includes identical duties, tasks, rights, and requirements (working hours, remuneration, etc.).

At the same time, the ongoing professional development of pre-university teachers represents a benefit and an important factor of motivation. The educational institutions are responsible for providing the essential conditions and environment dedicated to the continuous professional training of teachers, accomplished through the following specific programs:

- programs developed for pedagogical training;
- scientific sessions based on particular communication topics;
- programs regarding professional guidance and evaluation;
- programs designed to support teachers in passing the mandatory exams for the first and second pedagogic degrees (European Commission, 2022).

Continuous professional training and development generate the ongoing acquisition of abilities and knowledge of teaching staff in correspondence with the educational system’s demands. A critical benefit of this extended professional guidance represents the adaptation of employees’ aptitudes to the existing requirements of the field.

Following the professional training of teaching staff, the evaluation focuses on employees’ acquired competencies and abilities related to the educational demands and their adaptability to change, innovation, and critical situations (OECD, 2016). Professional evaluation is considered the “premise of human resources management as this process emphasizes the abilities of employees to reach the established

standards along with their personal values through their assigned duties” (Manolescu et al., 2007). Civil servants should follow a well-developed evaluation system to reach the highest satisfaction of the public. In the pre-university teaching field, “the evaluation of professional activity is annually accomplished for each teaching entity” (Order No. 6143/2021 on the approval of the *Methodology for annual evaluation of the activity of the teaching and auxiliary teaching staff*). Evaluation should be a transparent, honest, and equitable mechanism based on the regulated methodology that aims to increase professional performance through diverse motivational techniques.

The essential tool necessary for the evaluation of teachers represents the assessment form that establishes the performance standards and the score for each professional activity. Based on this form, the key performance indicators are set for each criterion. The specific evaluation areas for the pre-university teachers are the following:

- Efficient development of teaching curricula by respecting the ongoing legal regulations on the teaching content;
- Achievement of teaching curricula by applying the active methods and resources for teaching activities to accomplish the curricula purposes;
- Continuous evaluation of teaching outputs based on legal regulations and standards;
- Accomplishment of extracurricular activities that contribute to the self-development of scholars;
- Professional development through the imposed training programs and courses (Order No. 6143/2021 on the approval of the *Methodology for annual evaluation of the activity of the teaching and auxiliary teaching staff*).

Factors of motivation in the pre-university education system

By analyzing human behavior, the specialized psycho-organizational theories concluded that there are two typologies of motivational factors: intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic factors refer to the individual reasons for “being engaged in professional activities including personal needs and interests” (Rotaru, Prodan, 2005), such as the desire to find out new concepts, the satisfaction of accomplishing new tasks, developing in a specific field, fulfilling challenging projects, and achieving desired outcomes. On the other hand, the extrinsic factors concern the organizational elements, such as the remuneration system, assigned responsibilities, promotion to a higher position, professional recognition and appreciation, desire to be valuable, positive feedback, and efficient communication with other employees.

Within the educational entities, teachers holding managerial positions are responsible for recognizing the employees presenting intrinsic motivation to support and encourage them, as individual factors generate more efficient results than extrinsic ones in the long term. Motivational feedback is an efficient technique often used in public entities in addition to continuous attention paid to employees’ needs and demands. This generates effective communication between managers and their subordinates and improves the trust between each other.

One of the most relevant elements related to school principals' emotional intelligence and communication competencies is the ability to provide feedback. This response form should be individually transmitted due to an observed action and include strong and weak features. Teachers receiving appreciation and recognition for their efforts

tend to improve their professional activity and invest more time in specific tasks. Positive feedback stimulates teachers to keep up the efficient work. Moreover, teaching staff experiences work recognition through the positive evaluation and responses provided by the most critical stakeholders, such as pupils, parents, superiors, and co-workers, or through various special awards, for example, the "Teacher of the Month."

Moreover, setting "organizational and individual SMART objectives clarifies the demands of the ongoing position so that employees can better understand their function in the entity" (Bjerke, Renger, 2017). The process also involves the overall performance analysis through specific key indicators established for each job. Within this motivational technique, managers play fundamental roles, considering that they explain the organization's mission, values, objectives, and strategy based on which the individual aims are decided. At the same time, the professional goals established for managers should also be correlated to their subordinates' measurable objectives to fulfill them efficiently through commonly available resources.

Employees with managing roles are responsible for evaluating and ranking the tasks included in the employees' job descriptions. To motivate the workforce, great attention is paid to developing employees' professional expertise by allocating new duties in their activity areas. Offering larger complexity to the current position motivates employees to work harder and invest more time and energy in their daily responsibilities. New competencies and abilities are also established, along with improving the list of assignments. For example, extending teachers' professional activity ensures their trust and confidence in their capability and motivates them to invest more resources in their work.

At the same time, employees aim to get engaged in a more detailed manner and, therefore, their outcomes and efficiency also improve. The role development process can be implemented by promoting employees to higher levels or positions in their careers. In the Romanian education system, teachers should demonstrate their experience, authenticate their competencies, and pass several assessments to obtain a position development. These operations influence the ongoing evaluation of teachers' overall performance. Besides teaching activities, the staff of the pre-university education can apply for supplementary responsibilities to increase their motivation level. Some of these extended roles can include mentoring, guidance, or executive and pedagogical positions, depending on the teaching degree and expertise.

Communication is considered essential in the motivation process of civil servants, as "information and communication technology are increasingly becoming an important factor of good governance. The transformations and evolutions of the constitutive processes of good governance inscribe fully in the context of innovative governance" (Săvulescu, Antonovici, 2020). At the same time, ongoing communication increases the overall quality of services provided through positive outcomes by motivated employees. Investing in the most essential resource of organizations, the human factor, through communication strategies represents the fastest way of establishing professional performance and prosperity in the long term. Within schools, communication between teaching staff and the management board is developed through periodical meetings of the teachers' council. It aims to ensure both constructive results based on professional satisfaction and an enjoyable working climate, which is fundamental for efficient activities (OECD, 2020). Regarding

motivation factors, internal communication within teaching entities is focused on intrinsic motivators, such as work recognition, growth, and reputation, being considered stronger than extrinsic ones in the long run.

In the Education field, effective management refers to correctly applying administrative procedures designed for the teaching process. Education entities can be perceived as organizational units conducted by managers with various authorities, while management can be practiced at several levels. The macro approach covers the European and national management of teaching processes, the middle level refers to coordinating the education units, and the micro-level involves classroom management supported by teachers. Teachers with managerial functions should hold a series of relevant competencies for the proper functioning of the organizational activities, such as communication skills, interpersonal abilities, technical expertise, evaluation proficiency, and organizing know-how. These lead to the accomplishment of quality educational activities.

The Secondary School is formed of the teacher's council and the board of directors managed by the school principal. The board of directors concentrates on efficiently distributing the human resources to meet the educational goals established by the entity. It aims to entirely and harmoniously develop individuality and create the innovative personality of young people preparing to participate in the world. The public entity focuses on three main aspects: school, community, and family, while supporting children to become complete and fulfilled adults who follow their purpose. Regarding the main organizational priorities, it focuses on improving teachers' performance while continuously enhancing the quality of the educational process. The entity pays great attention to the perpetual professional training of teachers as it highly contributes to the outcomes and performance of provided services. It has developed a series of strategic targets within the operational plan, including improving human resource management regarding teachers' selection and training processes.

Analysis of motivation in the pre-university education system in Romania

Our research aims to identify the degree of professional motivation and satisfaction of teachers regarding their daily responsibilities assigned within the educational unit. Moreover, the primary purpose of this survey is to determine the ranking of motivational factors and methods that inspire teachers to engage in their work and accomplish both individual and professional goals.

The present study aims to identify the following issues:

- Teachers' overall motivation level regarding the methods applied in the Secondary School;
- The main factors of motivation asserted by respondents;
- The most effective techniques of motivation practiced in the school;
- The extent to which certain factors of demotivation impact the teachers;
- The perception of teachers regarding work satisfaction concerning the assigned responsibilities.

Research hypotheses

The intrinsic motivation factors (work recognition, self-accomplishment, professional development, etc.) are the main determinants of the successful outputs generated by teachers' work.

Teachers tend to perceive that their outcomes are not fully rewarded according to their efforts and actual work.

Teachers comprehend work motivation as highly important in relation to professional satisfaction and, implicitly, to positive results.

Weak financial incentives correlated with a large workload significantly impact teachers' perspectives regarding professional demotivators.

Research methodology

We have applied an electronic questionnaire as a research method, developed for the motivation framework and dedicated to the teachers working in a Secondary School. We have chosen to use the questionnaire due to its practicality and scalability, being a cost-efficient tool that generates accurate results. The questionnaire includes both open and closed questions to collect relevant information about the teachers' perspectives and attitudes regarding motivation, and afterward, analyze and interpret the questionnaire's results to determine how public employees in the chosen entity perceive motivation. Due to its quantitative characteristics, the questionnaire uses systematic procedures for measurements and evaluations being applied to representative samples.

The survey is developed in Google Forms and comprises 15 questions, including half-open, closed, and dichotomous questions, thus offering respondents the possibility of quickly filling it out. It also provides single-choice questions with pre-prepared text answers that involve clear replies and questions with hierarchical answers that identify the preferences regarding factors and techniques of motivation. The questionnaire is based on closed questions due to their feasibility as they minimize the reply time by being statistically analyzed easily. Generally, the respondents consider these types of questions more helpful and acceptable, providing answer options that would not have been considered otherwise. At the same time, the efficiency of this survey is highlighted by the use of multi-choice grid questions that cover various elements within a specific topic. We have grouped the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation factors and the applicable techniques into this typology of query to analyze the results efficiently and comparatively.

The questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 50 pre-university teachers working in a Secondary School, aiming to identify significant results for the entire teachers' council. Regarding the identification aspects, as shown in Figure 1, 86% of the respondents are women, and 14% are men.

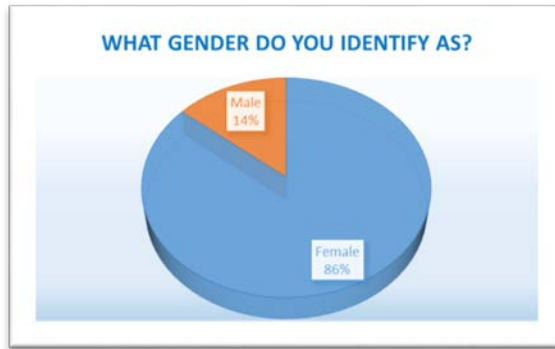


Figure 1. Distribution of teachers by gender
(Source: Authors' own research results)

Moreover, as Figure 2 highlights, the minimum age of the respondents is 25 years, while the average predominant age group of the teachers within the Secondary School is between 41 and 50 years. 30% of teachers are over 50, while only 10% are between 31 and 35. It highlights that even if the role of teachers becomes increasingly important, this profession becomes less engaging as a career choice.

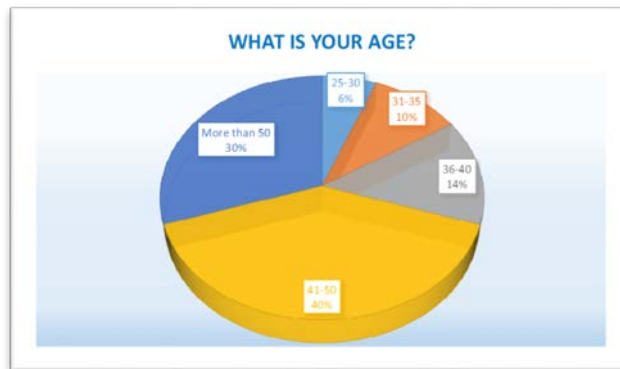


Figure 2. Distribution of teachers by age
(Source: Authors' own research results)

According to Figure 3, the work experience in the teaching field recorded a majority of 42%, equivalent to 21 responses expressing a job history of more than 15 years. 36% of the respondents have 11-15 years of teaching experience, 10% accomplished 5-10 years in this field, while the rest of 12% worked as teachers for less than five years.

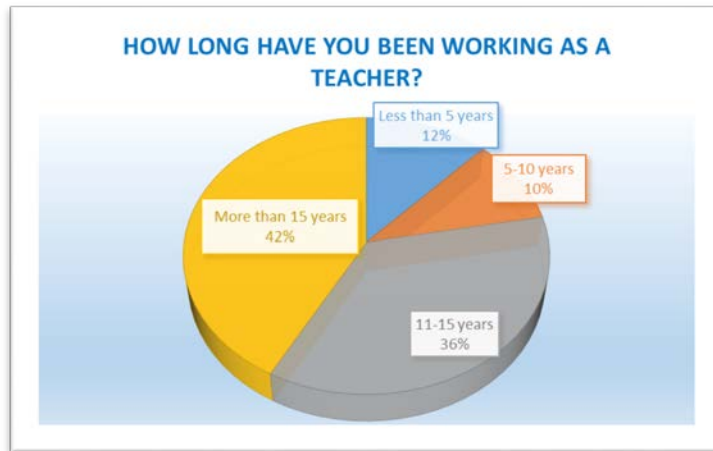


Figure 3. Distribution of teachers by work experience
(Source: Authors' own research results)

Figure 4 shows that the preponderance of 96% of the surveyed sample holds a teaching position in the pre-university area, while a small percentage of 4% of teachers hold a pedagogical position for the primary schools.

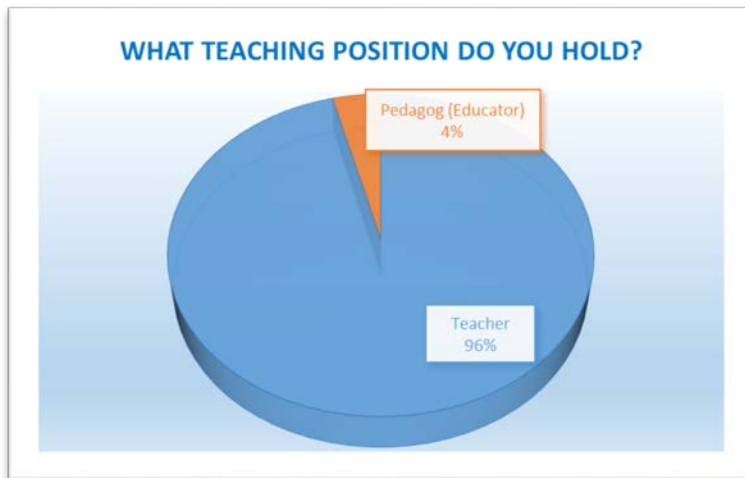


Figure 4. Distribution of teachers by position
(Source: Authors' own research results)

Concerning the teaching degree held by teachers, Figure 5 shows that 62% of them have reached the 1st teaching degree, 22% of the respondents have a completed teaching level, while the rest 16% are specialized with the 2nd teaching degree. Therefore, most teachers have the highest teaching qualification that highlights a well-defined experience in education.

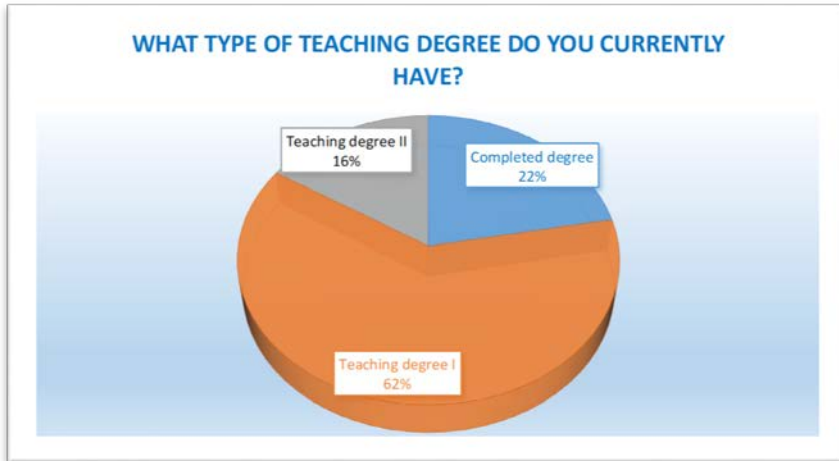


Figure 5. Distribution of teachers by their teaching degree
(Source: Authors' own research results)

Moreover, the diversity of the surveyed population is defined by the variety of teaching subjects reported by the respondents. Figure 6 shows that 25% of teachers specialize in communication, including subjects such as Romanian language, literature, and foreign languages. A percentage of 20% of the respondents teach digital sciences, while 17% of them teach Math. 9% of people teach Socio-Human Sciences such as History and Geography, while the same percentage teach in primary education. Only 8% of the respondents teach social and cultural competencies, while the same percentage of teachers specialize in the Natural sciences. Sports instructors represent the minimum rate of 4%.

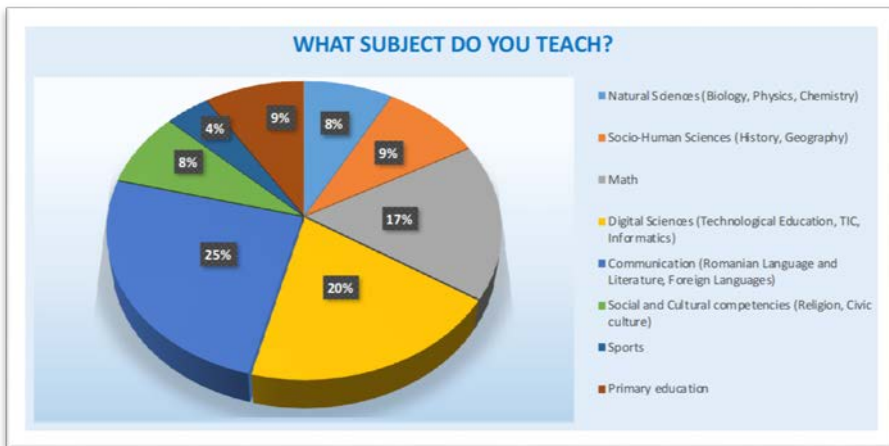


Figure 6. Distribution of teachers by teaching subject
(Source: Authors' own research results)

According to Figure 7, the question that acknowledges the current level of professional motivation expressed by the respondents regarding their current jobs highlights that 42%, representing the majority of teachers, feel more than motivated. A lower

percentage of 26% perceive their profession as motivating, while 24% of the respondents believe that they are extremely motivated from a professional perspective. A small proportion of teachers, 6%, also evaluated their work motivation level as partially motivated. Only 2% of teachers who participated in this survey are not motivated at all by their current jobs. Therefore, it can be noticed that teachers of the Secondary School feel more than motivated with their work.

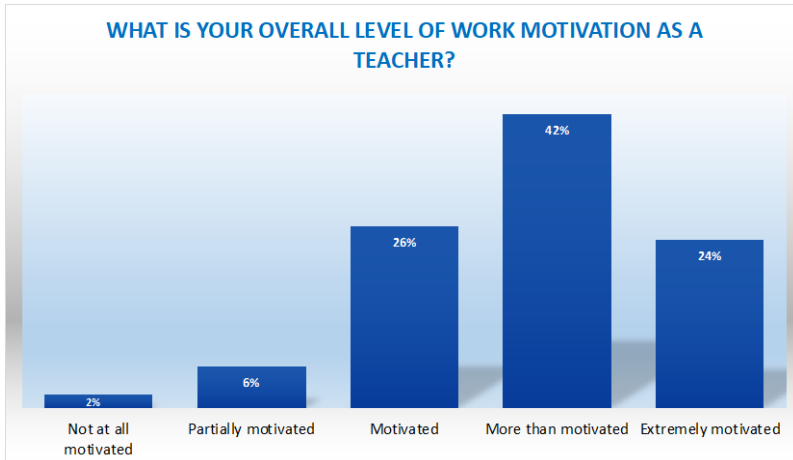


Figure 7. Professional motivation level of teachers
(Source: Authors' own research results)

Related to the question "How many colleagues of yours would you consider being professionally unmotivated?" a majority of 36% of the surveyed population specified that 1-5 colleagues are considered unmotivated with their job. A percentage of 22% of teachers consider that more than 20 of their colleagues are not professionally motivated, while the same percentage of respondents presume that among 6-10 other teachers don't express motivation at work. Only 10% of the surveyed teachers stated that none of their colleagues are professionally unmotivated. A further 8% of the sample consider that around 16-20 co-workers are not motivated, while another 2% believe that between 16-20 of their colleagues cannot perceive office motivation.

Therefore, the overall motivation level perceived in the workspace is average, considering that Figure 8 shows a significant proportion of teachers expressing a lack of professional motivation. It can be highlighted that a weak motivation level, perceived from a general perspective, might negatively influence the working environment, generating professional dissatisfaction in the long run.

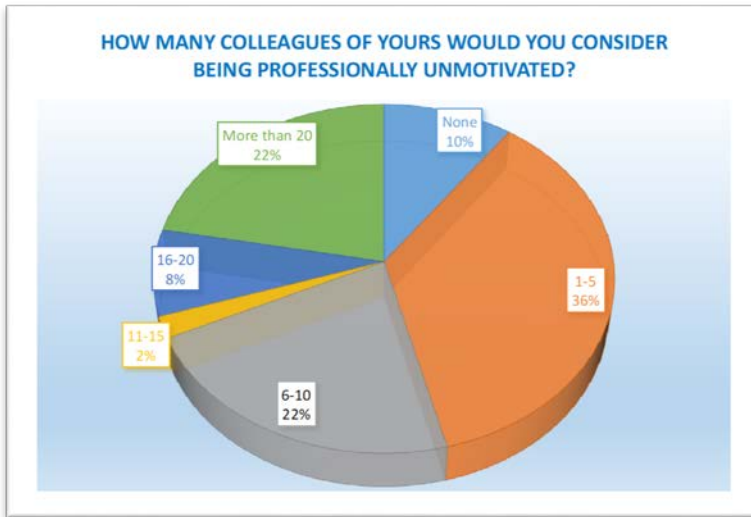


Figure 8 . Teachers' opinion regarding their co-workers' motivation level (Source: Authors' own research results)

As regards the satisfaction level of teachers in relation to their current responsibilities, Figure 9 shows that 46% of the surveyed population feel more than satisfied with the designated tasks, while 38% of them only feel professionally satisfied with their work. There is an equal percentage of 4% between the teachers who feel extremely satisfied with their responsibilities and those who cannot find their job satisfying at all. At the same time, a small proportion of 8% of respondents consider themselves partially satisfied with the actual assignments. Therefore, the overall satisfaction level of teachers regarding their responsibilities is positive and highlights a well-developed task allocation system that might require further improvements.

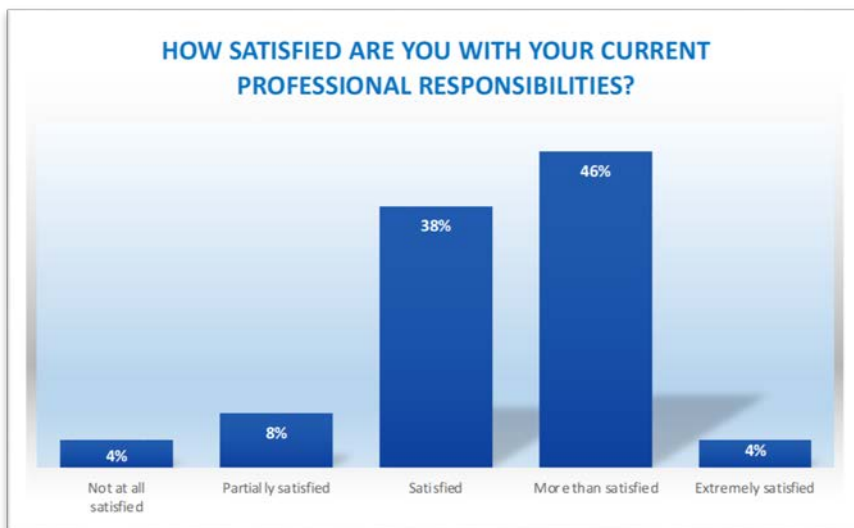


Figure 9. Satisfaction level of teachers regarding their responsibilities (Source: Authors' own research results)

When referring to the most relevant motivation factors, most respondents evaluated as their top choices the investment in the new generation with 31 responses and work recognition with 30 responses.

Besides these, Figure 10 presents that professional development opportunities and prestige are considered very important factors of motivation, accumulating 29, respectively 26 responses. Equally, 26 respondents consider involvement in an honorable profession to be a very important motivation factor, followed by the high importance of self-achievement chosen by 25 respondents. Positive feedback and work security are equally considered very important in the motivation process by 23 of the surveyed teachers, while communication is evaluated as a prior factor by 22 respondents. At the same time, 21 teachers perceive the sense of responsibility and days off as very important in relation to professional motivation. The respondents differently appreciate financial incentives. This extrinsic motivation factor gathered various opinions, as 21 teachers consider it very important, 14 believe it is important, and 12 of the respondents evaluate financial motivators as partially important. Growth opportunities are ranked last in relation to their importance. Only 16 teachers considered them very important, while 17 respondents considered them important, and 9 believed that growth opportunities are partially important in this field.

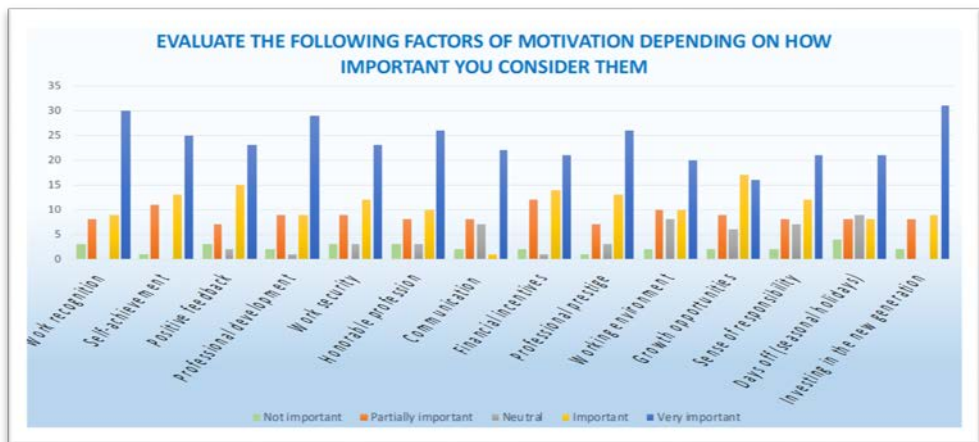


Figure 10. The factors of motivation evaluated by teachers
(Source: Authors' own research results)

Concerning the most effective methods of stimulating employees, 28 surveyed teachers evaluated efficient management as highly motivating, while 14 considered it moderately motivated. An equal number of 3 teachers feel neutral and partially motivated by effective management within their school.

According to Figure 11, financial incentives are perceived as a highly important motivation technique by 25 respondents, while 12 feel moderately motivated by this method. 7 teachers consider financial awards partially motivating, and 4 believe this technique is not motivating.

17 teachers evaluated the involvement in the council meetings as a moderately motivating method, while 13 expressed that it is a partially motivating technique, and

5 respondents felt unmotivated by it. On the other hand, 9 respondents are highly motivated by their involvement in the board meetings.

Teachers perceive the methods that contribute to their professional development as motivating. 21 of the surveyed population feel moderately motivated by free training courses, 15 teachers consider it a highly motivating practice, and 10 believe it is only partially motivating. At the same time, the provided conferences and workshops are perceived by 24 teachers as moderately motivating, while 13 respondents feel highly motivated by this incentive.

Early retirement is an impartial motivation technique for most respondents, as 13 teachers evaluated it as neutral. On the other hand, 14 respondents feel moderately motivated by this determinant. An amount of 7 teachers expressed a lack of motivation regarding early retirement, showing that the teaching staff is not guided by this specific method.

Relevant insights are highlighted by the research and cultural projects offered to efficient teachers by the Ministry or other education entities. 25 surveyed teachers evaluated this technique as moderately motivating, while 11 other teachers felt highly motivated by these projects. There is also a small extent of 7 respondents who feel partially motivated by research and cultural activities, while the other 4 are not motivated at all by this incentive.

Significant attention is also shown to special awards such as the "Teacher of the Month," which 22 of the surveyed teachers evaluated as a moderately motivating method, and 10 respondents feel highly motivated by it. At the same time, 8 teachers are neutral regarding this technique, 6 feel partially motivated by the special awards, and 4 respondents define a lack of motivation in relation to them.

The camps and excursions with pupils are perceived from various perspectives as 13 respondents feel highly motivated by this interaction, 12 teachers consider it moderately motivating and 11 teachers feel neutral. Therefore, this method cannot be classified as a top priority for motivating teachers.

Another relevant motivation method applied to the teaching staff is the possibility of organizing their schedule by allocating courses. An amount of 18 teachers consider the flexible schedule a highly motivating method, while 19 believe it is moderately motivating. Only a small number of 5 respondents stated that they feel partially motivated by this technique, and the other 5 evaluated it as partially motivating. Consequently, it can be observed that teachers appreciate the benefit of a flexible schedule.

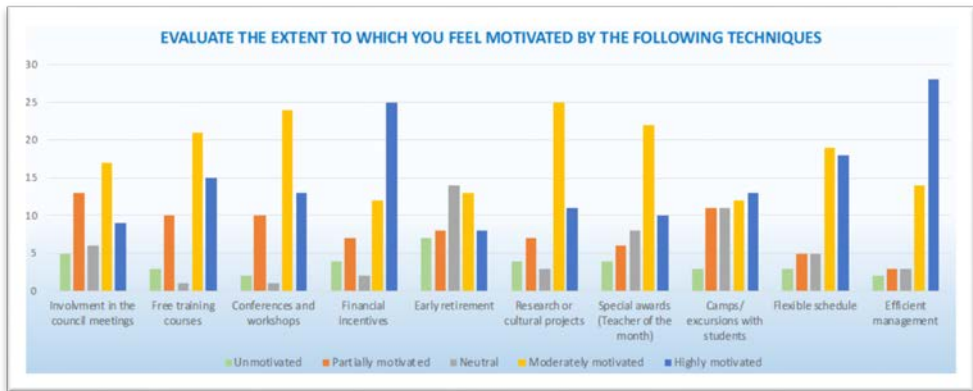


Figure 11. The methods of motivation evaluated by teachers
(Source: Authors' own research results)

Referring to the reasonable allocation of the rewards, Figure 12 highlights that more than half of the surveyed teachers, more precisely 60%, consider that they are not awarded according to the actual work. 22% of respondents believe that they are correctly remunerated in relation to their professional activity, while 18% of them preferred not to answer. Therefore, it can be noted that, for most teachers working in secondary school, the theory of equity is not applied regarding professional compensation. This element is strongly related to professional motivation, as people associate their primary needs with the concept of receiving honourable remuneration according to their work.



Figure 12. Teachers' opinions regarding their awards
(Source: Authors' own research results)

One relevant factor of motivation is represented by employees' ability to accomplish their personal and professional purposes through their work. According to Figure 13, the question that aims to identify the extent to which teachers accomplish their goals shows that 76% of respondents believe their professional principles are attained. 8% of teachers consider that they cannot achieve their professional purposes through their work, and 6% of respondents preferred not to answer. Therefore, a substantial proportion of the surveyed sample tends to carry out the established professional goals as a result of their jobs.



Figure 13. Teachers' opinions regarding their professional purposes
(Source: Authors' own research results)

As the previously presented factors of motivation represent a relevant indicator for the engagement of employees, the components of demotivation are also important for this process. As shown in Figure 14 of the surveyed population, 27 teachers consider that the lack of work recognition has the greatest impact on professional demotivation. At the same time, 12 of them think it is moderately demotivating. An amount of 6 people stated that the absence of work appreciation affects them to a lower extent, while 4 respondents are very little influenced by it. A considerable number of respondents, 23, believe that the lack of development opportunities moderately affects them, while this demotivation factor very highly influences 13 teachers.

The absence of professional development affects 7 teachers to a minimal degree while the other 3 people don't feel disturbed. The deficit of pupils' interest in the curricula affects 17 teachers at a very high level, while the other 15 respondents consider that this factor moderately influences them. At the same time, 14 teachers evaluated the lack of pupils' interest as a low demotivation factor, while 3 were affected in a very low proportion. Only one respondent is not affected at all by this element. Another relevant factor contributing to teachers' demotivation is the lack of other colleagues' involvement in their work. This element affects a small number of 12 respondents in a low proportion, while 9 feel very affected. On the other hand, 12 teachers are moderately affected by this factor, and 10 respondents perceive its consequence as slightly significant. Only 4 people are not influenced by the lack of their colleagues' involvement.

The association between a high workload and the weak financial incentives offered to teachers is highly connected. It can be noticed that both factors of demotivation have reached similar responses, as 20 people consider them moderately affecting while 18 people, respectively 16, are very influenced by these elements. A small number of 2 teachers are unaffected by a high workload, and 4 are not influenced by weak remuneration. Therefore, both factors have a great impact on the professional demotivation of teachers.

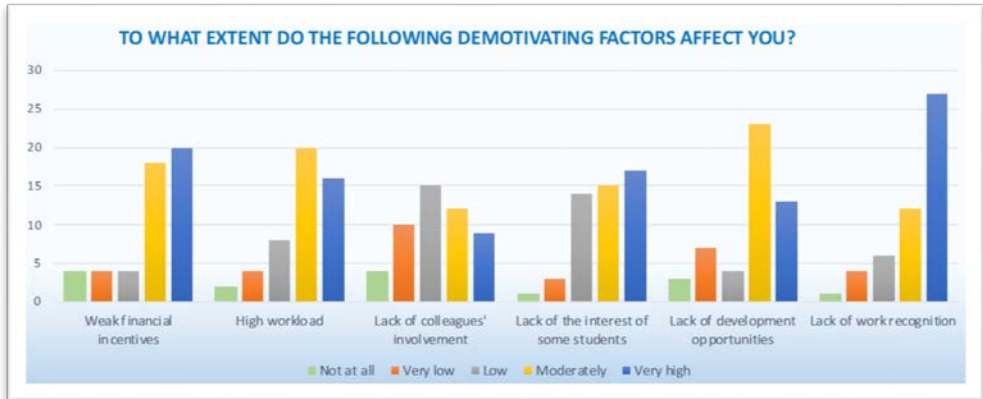


Figure 14. The factors of demotivation evaluated by teachers
(Source: Authors' own research results)

As presented in Figure 15, the perception of employees regarding the quality of the methods applied by the school in the motivation process varies on the evaluation scale. A percentage of 34% of the surveyed teachers assess the overall quality of applied techniques as acceptable, while 32% of the respondents consider it good. 18% believe that the Secondary School implements very good methods of motivation, while on the contrary, 12% of teachers evaluated this approach as very poor. A proportion of 4% of respondents classified the motivation techniques as poor.

It can be concluded that the administrative board of this teaching entity has implemented several successful methods that contribute to the motivation level of teachers. However, at the same time, improvements and new elements can be included in the coming plans.

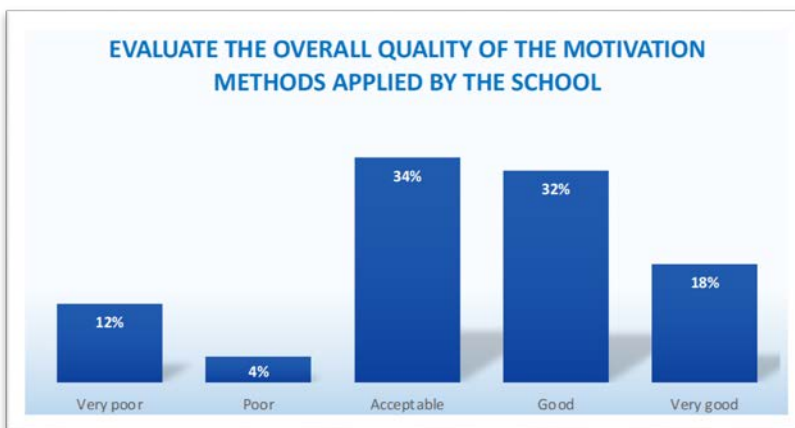


Figure 15. The overall quality of motivation evaluated by teachers
(Source: Authors' own research results)

By analyzing the respondents' opinions and evaluations, it can be concluded that the four hypotheses are confirmed. Our analysis highlights that most surveyed teachers are motivated by intrinsic factors such as work recognition, professional development and prestige, interest in an honorable profession, and self-achievement. At the same time, the extrinsic factors are also relevant but not fundamental. Most teachers perceive a lack of equity between their work and received incentives and awards, considering their efforts are not appropriately compensated. This leads to the absence of several intrinsic factors of motivation that are essential in engaging teachers in professional activity. At the same time, teachers expressed their opinions regarding the importance of work motivation and professional satisfaction, which also leads to positive outcomes.

Moreover, the survey shows that respondents appreciate more the methods of professional persuasion which are interconnected with the internal factors of motivation. For example, the provided training, courses, and conferences determine their professional development, while research projects define a certain prestige. Nevertheless, financial incentives are also important in the motivation process of teachers, but it doesn't represent a prior technique in this specific case. As teachers engage in their work and try to support professional purposes, they are guided more by moral and principled presumptions than financial reasons. Therefore, teachers tend to disclose expectations regarding efficient management that aim to identify the appropriate remuneration and compensation for this ethical profession. Furthermore, most teachers consider that there should be a balance between the number of their assignments and the economic incentives. Otherwise, the teaching staff perceives the feeling of professional demotivation that results in weak results and poor quality of work in the long term.

We believe that the secondary school's administrative council and management team should focus more on the intrinsic motivational factors expressed by teachers and apply corresponding incentives. As most teachers believe their work is not properly rewarded, an internal communication campaign represents one measure that would improve this belief. The aim should focus on increasing the benefits offered to the teaching staff through local events and activities that promote professional recognition and appreciation. The internal communication could be conducted through a yearly newsletter, displayed for the school members, that includes the best results obtained by teachers in every academic year, valuable insights about the teaching staff, and important information regarding the ongoing curricula. Moreover, the management board of the surveyed entity should consider the implementation of various workshops with teachers and pupils and monthly free courses on subjects of interest, such as personal and professional development in the teaching field. These methods of motivation would boost the satisfaction level of employees and would improve engagement in the teaching projects.

Conclusions

As the research developed in the Secondary School shows, pre-university teachers tend to count more on non-financial incentives such as appreciation, recognition of work, individual merits, promotion opportunities, positive relationships with

colleagues, and efficient management, which are connected with the intrinsic factors of motivation and determine the professional performance of employees.

Regarding the remuneration of teachers as a motivational method, we consider that a fair income maintains their effort and interest. However, it should also highlight their professional skills, current responsibilities, and performance indicators. By evaluating the motivation level of teachers and the corresponding factors that stimulate them, the research confirms the hypotheses regarding the main determinants in this specific entity.

Taking into consideration the results of the research, we propose the development of an internal communication campaign to ensure a high motivation level for teachers. Moreover, we believe that it is essential that the management team of this entity should focus on expanding the non-financial incentives to stimulate the intrinsic motivation factors for the teachers. The board of teachers should benefit more from cognitive and non-financial elements such as efficient management, honorary awards, involvement in the decision-making process, free training programs, and workshops. Thus, pre-university teachers' overall satisfaction and motivation level within the Secondary School would increase.

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