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TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY AND ITS ROLE IN INCREASING MOTIVATION

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Abstract

In psychology, motivation is seen as a process by which an individual selects the most relevant to their needs from a number of incoming messages and carries out behavior based on it. While discussing the grounds for teachers' motivation, it is important to consider the significance of teachers' self-efficacy. Teachers with high self-efficacy typically incorporate didactic and innovative methods into the learning environment as they are more confident in their own abilities and those methods give students more independence and autonomy.

Within the framework of the research, 405 teachers of private and public schools from five different cities of Georgia, participated in the survey. The convenient sampling method was used throughout the survey.

The results of the study showed that among the surveyed teachers, instruction giving and disciplinary self-efficacy were highest. Teachers also showed high level of external motivation type - identified regulation, which implies that teachers perceive their work as highly important. The results also show that high level of teacher self-efficacy is associated with their high motivation, while low self-efficacy is associated with low level of motivation. Regression analysis furthermore confirms that teachers' level of self-efficacy is one of the main predictors of their motivation.

Keywords: *teacher, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, self-efficacy*

INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies in the field of education in Georgia confirm that one of the main problems of teachers in general education institutions is the lack of motivation both during choosing the profession, as well as during the teaching process. According to the results of the 2018 International Teaching and Learning Survey, the average age of teachers in Georgia is 50 years, which is quite high and is 7 years higher than the data of the other 48 countries participating in the study. It is also noteworthy that the share of teachers under 30 is only 3.9%, which is 3 times lower than the data of other countries. These data is a clear example of low motivation to become a teacher in Georgia. The situation is particularly problematic in the specific directions, for example the share of young teachers is the lowest among math and Georgian language and literature teachers (TALIS, 2018). According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia (2022), the number of teachers in general education institutions has decreased by 16,000 over the last fifteen years and according to the data of the 2021-2022 academic year, there are only 62,981 teachers in Georgia. While the number of students has increased by 100,000 and is currently 624,500. The lack of motivation to become a teacher is also indicated by the results of a 2012 study by the Institute for Social Research and Analysis, according to which only half of the students and graduates of the pedagogical profile want to work as teachers in the school and among students of the natural sciences profile this figure does not exceed 4% (ISSA, 2012).

MOTIVATION AND SELF-EFFICACY

There have been number of definitions of motivation in psychology that have changed and evolved over the years. According to Sully's (1884) one of the first definitions, "desire that precedes and determines behavior is the driving force, stimulus, or motive." According to Maslow (1955), the main criterion of motivation is subjective, a person is motivated when he or she wants something, tries to achieve something or lacks something. While according to Vroom (1964), motivation is a process that guides the choice between alternatives. Through the functional definitions motivation is seen as a process by which the body selects the most relevant to its needs from thousands of incoming messages and implements behavior based on it (Stein & Rosen, 1974). Modern psychologists state, that in the work or everyday environment motivation is a special desire to accomplish a goal, which, together with skills and environmental factors helps a person to achieve the desired outcome and success (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2007).

Motivation helps us to engage in a behavior, however what gives people motivation? Why is it that in the same situation the motivation of some individuals is quite high, while in others it is almost non-existent, and causes of the same motivation level can be completely different? Psychological theories have been trying to research and explain these issues for years. Deci and Ryan's theory of self-determination (1985) distinguishes between two main types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is defined by them as performing any activity for the purpose of gaining pleasure or self-interest. An internally motivated person does not engage in behavior for external rewards or incentives, but for fun, to satisfy curiosity, to take pleasure, or to test his or her own abilities. Despite the great importance of intrinsic motivation, most people's activities are motivated by extrinsic motivation. With age, an individual's responsibilities and role in society increases, so it becomes difficult for him / her to focus on his / her own interests and pleasures in majority of the activities. And unlike intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation involves performing an activity to get a certain result or to avoid an undesirable consequence.

Teacher motivation research has been particularly active since the 1990s throughout the world. An apparent decline in the number of teachers in European countries, the US and Australia led to the need to study their motivation. Sinclair (2008) in his paper divides the determinants of teacher motivation into ten main categories: calling to become a teacher, students, altruism, intellectual stimulation, influencing others, perceived financial and other benefits, teaching process, desire to change profession (or lack thereof), ease of obtaining the education required for a teacher, and status in the community. In parallel with the motivating factors of teachers, some of the researchers identified the reasons for their demotivation. Among them is one of the most recent and widespread classifications of Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013), which offer five demotivators: stress, impaired autonomy, lack of self-efficacy, inadequate career structure, routine work and lack of opportunity for intellectual development. As we can see a large proportion of motivators and demotivators are factors standing on the opposite ends of the continuum.

While discussing the causes for teacher motivation, it is important to consider the teacher self-efficacy factor. With the theory of self-efficacy, Albert Bandura tried to explain the defining reasons for an individual's behavior. He defines self-efficacy as "an individual's belief that he or she can successfully perform a particular behavior or be successful in a particular situation." (Bandura, 1989). A sense of self-efficacy determines a person's thoughts, feelings, motivations, and behaviors. According to the theory of self-efficacy, a person will perform only those behaviors that in his or her mind will be completed successfully. According to Bandura, high self-efficacy helps an individual to set highly ambitious goals, in which case a person perceives difficult tasks as challenges that can be accomplished and not dangers that should be avoided.

The level of self-efficacy combined with favorable or unfavorable environmental conditions can lead to four potential outcomes. 1. Desirable environmental conditions and high self-efficacy give the most optimal results and the individual can successfully perform a variety of

behaviors. 2. Individuals with high self-efficacy in unfavorable environmental conditions usually try to change the environment in different ways and achieve the set goal. However, in case of failure, they may abandon their own efforts or find a more favorable environment. 3. A favorable environment for individuals with low self-efficacy, where other, like-minded people successfully cope with tasks, may become a source of additional stress and frustration. 4. Individuals with low self-efficacy in unfavorable environmental conditions usually become depressed and apathetic. For them, setting goals and achieving success is not interesting and they feel helpless (Bandura, 1982).

Like teachers' motivation, research into their self-efficacy has intensified in the 1990s. Since Bandura, a number of scholars and researchers have focused on the role of teachers' self-efficacy in creating an interesting and effective learning environment. Teachers with high self-efficacy introduced didactic and innovative methods into the learning environment, giving students more independence and autonomy as such teachers became more confident in their own abilities (Cousins & Walker, 1995). Meanwhile, 30% of US teachers who quit their jobs at various stages cited the problem of classroom discipline as directly related to their level of self-efficacy (Ingersoll, 2001).

METHODOLOGY

The Bandura (1997) Teacher Self-efficacy Scale was used to measure self-efficacy levels, while teacher motivation was measured using the Fernet and colleagues (Fernet, Sene'cal, Guay, Marsh, & Dowson, 2008) Teacher Work Motivation Scale. It measures teacher motivation based on 5 areas, although only 4 areas were measured for our study, namely: preparation for the lesson process, teaching, student assessment, and completing administrative assignments. The questionnaire also included demographic variables such as teacher gender, age, place of residence, level of education, school work experience, income, professional status of the teacher, experience of working as a tutor and more. The survey was conducted in 30 schools of 5 Georgian cities using the convenience sampling method with the participation of 405 teachers.

The majority of survey participants (93%) are women, ranging in age from 21 to 68 years ($M=43.75$, $SD=11.5$). Most of the survey participants have a master's degree or an equivalent and have quite a varied rate of duration of working as a teacher (from 1 to 47 years).

RESULTS

The results of the study show a clear difference by age groups. In certain subjects, such as arts, civic education, chemistry, teachers under the age of 40 make up half of the group, while in the case of special education teachers, the vast majority (83%). However foreign languages such as German, French or Russian are not taught by the young teachers participating in the study. As for the different instruments used in the study, the results of the self-efficacy scale show that the surveyed teachers have the highest self-efficacy on the scales of issuing instructions ($M=7.89$, $SD=1.03$), establishing discipline ($M=7.7$, $SD=1.05$) and creating a positive school climate ($M=7.42$, $SD=1.36$); While the lowest self-efficacy on the scale of enlisting community involvement ($M=4.57$, $SD=1.94$).

The main variable of research, teacher motivation scale is divided into five sub-scales, which show what type of motivation is dominant for teachers. The results of the research show that identified motivation is dominant among the surveyed teachers ($M=71.26$, $SD=13.14$), which implies external motivation, given the importance of one's own profession and work. Intrinsic motivation is also high among the surveyed teachers ($M=68.82$, $SD=12.14$), while the lowest levels were shown on the amotivation scale ($M=36.73$, $SD=18.64$).

It is important to note that a positive correlation was observed between the main study variables and their internal scales. The level of teacher motivation increases with the increase of their self-efficacy level ($r = .436^{**}$, $n=402$, $p < .01$). Also, a positive correlation was observed

between self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation ($r = .504^{**}$, $n=402$, $p < .01$) and self-efficacy and identified regulation ($r = .487^{**}$, $n=402$, $p < .01$). The results show that there is a medium positive correlation between self-efficacy and motivation. Teachers who are characterized by high levels of self-efficacy also have high motivation. Even higher positive correlations were found between intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy, teachers with high self-efficacy are also characterized by high levels of intrinsic motivation. As for amotivation, no correlation was found between self-efficacy and amotivation. Also, positive, though low correlations were found between years of teaching experience and motivation variables. It is noteworthy that a positive correlation was observed between both years of experience and intrinsic motivation as well as years of experience and amotivation.

After establishing the correlations, a simple linear regression analysis of the data was performed, which showed that the highest predictor of teachers' motivation from the research variables is their level of self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy rates account for 19% of variability ($R^2_{ADJ}=.205$, $F(1,392) = 91.90$, $p < .01$) and is a reliable predictor of teacher motivation ($\beta = .67$, $p < .01$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of the research showed that among the surveyed teachers, according to their self-assessment, the highest is the instructional and disciplinary self-efficacies, and the lowest is the self-efficacy of involving community members in school activities. As for the level of teacher motivation and the differences between the scales of motivation, the identified regulation type of motivation is the highest among the surveyed teachers. On the basis of which we can conclude that the teachers perceive their work as important and this is one of the main sources of their motivation. However, the main finding of the research is that one of the main predictors of teachers' motivation is the level of their self-efficacy.

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