

Before Decision: Career Motivation of Teacher Candidates

Authors : Pál Iván Szontagh

Abstract : We suppose that today, the motivation for the career of a pedagogue (including its existential, organizational and infrastructural conditions) is different from the level of commitment to the profession of an educator (which can be experienced informally, or outside of the public education system). In our research, we made efforts to address the widest possible range of student elementary teachers, and to interpret their responses using different filters. In the first phase of our study, we analyzed first-year kindergarten teacher students' career motivation and commitment to the profession, and in the second phase, that of final-year kindergarten teacher candidates. In the third phase, we conducted surveys to explore students' motivation for the profession and the career path of a pedagogue in four countries of the Carpathian Basin (Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Serbia). The surveys were conducted in 17 campuses of 11 Hungarian teacher's training colleges and universities. Finally, we extended the survey to practicing graduates preparing for their on-the-job rating examination. Based on our results, in all breakdowns, regardless of age group, training institute or - in part - geographical location and nationality, it is proven that lack of social- and financial esteem of the profession poses serious risks for recruitment and retention of teachers. As a summary, we searched for significant differences between the professional- and career motivations of the three respondent groups (kindergarten teacher students, elementary teacher students and practicing teachers), i.e. the motivation factors that change the most with education and/or with the time spent on the job. Based on our results, in all breakdowns, regardless of age group, training institute or - in part - geographical location and nationality, it is proven that lack of social- and financial esteem of the profession poses serious risks for recruitment and retention of teachers.

Keywords : career motivation, career socialization, professional motivation, teacher training

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