

Teachers' Professional Development : The Components of Achievement Motivation

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the study of teachers' professional motivation. The effectiveness and success of pedagogical tasks are determined by a creative, proactive approach to work and affects both the nature and quality of work performance. In the study, we consider the motivation of teachers and discuss the significance and place of achievement motivation in relation to the effectiveness of performing professional tasks. The teachers' achievement motivation was studied as an internal factor and a predictor of professional achievements. The aim of the research is to identify the main components of achievement motivation and to reveal the nature of correlation of these components with the general level of teachers' professional motivation. As a hypothesis of the study, it was suggested that professional success, productivity and a high quality of life are determined by an individual disposition and teacher needs. The study set out to conduct a comparative analysis of the motivation indicators in two groups of educators who teach humanities and natural science subjects. It was determined that the teachers' achievement motivation is based on the need for success/avoidance of failure, self-respect, recognition, and prestige. The analysis of value, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive components of the teachers' achievement motivation was conducted.

INTRODUCTION

There are a substantial number of studies on achievement motivation. Research on motivation in various areas of activity, i.e. professional, scientific, educational, are of particular importance (Steers, Mowday & Shapiro, 2004). It determines a creative and proactive attitude to a problem and affects both the nature and quality of work (Schunk, 1991). The phenomenon of achievement motivation has been studied by many researchers who described predictors of achievement motivation applying different approaches. A great deal of attention was paid to the issue in cognitive research: B. Weiner's attribution theory (1971), A. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1986), B.F. Skinner's behavioral theory (1953). The authors of a cognitive-affective approach considered the achievement motivation in relation to different socio-psychological phenomena:

expectancy-value theory by J. Atkinson (1957, 1964), J. Eccles (1983, 2002); a social cognitive approach by C. Dweck (1986, 1988); E. Skinner's perceived control theory (1989); motivational and emotional controls of cognition by H.A. Simon (1967); H. Heckhausen's cognitive model (1991, 2008). In the humanistic approach, the ideas of self-actualization and personal fulfillment were of great interest in the psychology of achievement: A. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954, 1971, 1998); D. McClelland's theory of needs (1953, 1961, 1971); an approach of studying the volitional nature of motivation (Güss, Burger & Dörner, 2017). In Russian psychology, the study of achievement motivation is based on the analysis of activities that are characterized by purposefulness (Leontiev, 1978, 2012, 2013). Some works are based on the concept of need (Ilyin, 2011). There are studies examining a personal level of aspiration. Within the framework of a systems approach, system-procedural and dynamic components of achievement motivation were identified. Motivation is based on anticipation mechanisms and an ability to prevent forthcoming events (Akhmetzyanova, 2016; Nichiporenko & Mendelevich, 2006). Being a functional system combining affective and cognitive processes, achievement motivation regulates activities in the achievement of its full implementation.

The purpose of the study is to identify the main components of achievement motivation and to reveal the correlation of these components with the general level of teachers' professional motivation. It was suggested that professional success, productivity and a high quality of life are determined by an individual disposition and teacher needs. The research is aimed at conducting a comparative analysis of the motivation indicators in two groups of teachers who teach humanities and natural science subjects.

Karaseva, Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt and Siibak, (2018) considered the structure of professional motivation and its role with regard to factors influencing effective teaching. One of the research areas focuses on the achievement motivation in relation to various phenomena: affiliation motive and self-acceptance, correlation of which is a factor of teachers' orientation to different models of pedagogical interaction (Han, Yin & Boylan, 2016). Psychological features of teachers' professional motivation with regard to various external factors, namely teaching experience, didactic systems, motivation strategies, were revealed (Hardre & Sullivan, 2008). However, this topic is considered to be insufficiently developed since existing studies examine the notion of achievement motivation as a generalized indicator, not fully revealing its content, characteristics and peculiarities in relation to teachers in general, as well as teachers of different specializations (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Analysing the personality on achievement motivation (method by T. Ehlers), the received answers show a general tendency ($t = 0.72$). However, most humanities teachers opted to choose a maximum score that corresponds to a greater severity of one or another characteristic. Taking into account subjective beliefs about the probability of personal success and the complexity of a task facing an individual, one can say that the humanities teachers tend to be stricter towards themselves than to other people. They experience some dissatisfaction with themselves for refusing difficult assignments. They do not also have the habit of postponing business. Teachers of natural science subjects are quite demanding of themselves and set a high value on the completed work, trying to do it as best as possible.

Considering such a criterion as level of significance and a desire to support and raise self-esteem, it should be mentioned that teachers of both specializations are inclined to show zeal. Praise to a greater extent contributes to the success than blame. Teachers of both specializations are prone to rely on themselves, and professional success is attributed to them. However, it should be noted that in a team with hardworking members they feel that they are capable of their own achievements and it is easier for them to build relationships with such people. The humanities teachers have a moderately high level of achievement motivation (43.3%), which indicates adequate beliefs about their self-esteem. They are oriented towards success and set themselves achievable tasks gradually increasing the degree of complexity. Teachers of natural science subjects have an average level of motivation for success (36.7%). Some educators have a moderately high level (30%). A very high level of motivation for success is observed by 16.7% and 13.3% of teachers. They can brace themselves and focus on the realization of goals. They tend to plan their future. However, they are also inclined to choose tasks with a really high degree of complexity that may not be fulfilled. The low level of motivation allows describing teachers who are not inclined to undertake challenging tasks. Such people rely on external help and they are disposed to ascribe more success to their colleagues and external factors (20% of respondents in each group).

2. The analysis of data on internal motivation, external positive motivation, and external negative motivation (Zamfir's motivation of professional activity amended by Rean) demonstrated that there were significant differences between internal motivation and external positive motivation ($t = 1.9$; $t = 2.4$). The external positive motivation in educators running natural science courses is higher than in the humanities teachers. It is conditioned by external circumstances based on positive incentives, such as a need for social prestige and respect from others. Internal motivation

is mostly inherent in the humanities teachers than in colleagues teaching natural science subjects. For the humanities specialists, their activity including a desire for promotion, satisfaction with the process itself and the result, an opportunity of complete self-fulfillment in the profession is more important. There were no differences in relation to internal negative motivation ($t = 1.1$). This fact suggests that the internal negative motivation, which includes the conditionality of external negative circumstances, a desire to avoid criticism from senior managers or colleagues, a desire to avoid possible punishments or troubles, is expressed to the same extent. In addition, external positive motives, which are manifested to a greater extent as compared to external negative ones, are more effective and desirable for teachers of both specializations.

CONCLUSION

1. The achievement motivation of teachers corresponds to a moderately high level. Teachers cope with complex tasks and focus on the implementation of their goals. Achievement motivation is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of innovative teaching. It is a predictor of the ability to make prompt decisions, take certain risks, successfully resolve conflicts arising from the introduction of innovations, and remove innovative barriers 2. It is revealed that the professional motivation of natural science teachers is mainly conditioned by external positive circumstances: earnings, the desire for career growth and the need for social prestige and respect from others. The humanities teachers are characterized by internal motivation: a great importance of pedagogical activity, satisfaction with the process itself and the work outcomes, and an opportunity of self-realization in the activity. 3. When studying the emotional component of achievement motivation, it is revealed that teachers have a developed sense of positive self-attitude. The study on the value component of achievement motivation has shown sufficient meaningfulness of teachers' life and satisfaction with life processes, effective goal-setting in the immediate and long-term perspective. Specific features of persistence and self-control indicators within the behavioral component were revealed. Natural science teachers show a high level of emotional stability. The humanities educators are characterized by an average level of self-control; strict time limits may reduce their self-regulation. The study on the cognitive component of achievement motivation made it possible to establish that the teachers tend to have the internal locus of control. 4. A semantic differential was developed to identify the needs of teachers. The findings demonstrate that the needs for success/avoidance of failures, self-respect, recognition, and prestige determine the achievement motivation of teachers. Teachers are more success-oriented. It is not typical for them to avoid failures. However, among the factors affecting professional reputation they highlight not only the nature of activity and productivity, but also interpersonal relations.

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