

MEASURES MOTIVATING TEACHERS: A STUDY IN VILNIUS CITY MUNICIPALITY

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Abstract. *Recently, there has been significant conversation surrounding the issue of a lack of teachers and the difficulties in retaining them. One question being asked is how to make teaching positions more appealing in order to attract educators. This is a concern in multiple countries, specifically in Lithuania, where there is a lack of educators in schools, and a higher proportion of older teachers compared to the European average (per Eurostat data). Although Lithuanian municipalities pay a monthly bonus of €300-500 in the first year and provide housing benefits to attract teachers, these measures do not sufficiently motivate teachers.*

The aim of this paper is to highlight the measures that motivate teachers to work as teachers in relation to the recognition of teachers' competence, communication and cooperation.

The authors of the article conducted a study to find out what motivates teachers to do pedagogical work (Stasiukynas, Zemaitaityte, Gudelis, Zibeniene, 2020). The paper presents results of the part of this large study, which involved 873 teachers.

In April and May of 2020, a survey of teachers in the city of Vilnius was conducted using the online survey platform Qualtrics. The research adhered to principles of ethical scientific conduct. Participants were given the freedom to participate and withdraw at any time, were informed of the study's purpose, data usage, and their anonymity was protected. The researchers also committed to upholding ethical standards and safeguarding participants from any potential harm.

The survey data analysis showed that teachers considered working collaboratively with their peers within the educational institution as a crucial factor in motivating them in their teaching roles.

Leisure time with colleagues in joint outings outside the educational institution and the opportunity to meet colleagues from different countries to share good practices were also highly rated by respondents. Reducing the administrative burden on teachers and protecting and safeguarding teachers' rights were also highlighted as important motivational factors. In order to retain already working teachers and attract new ones, teachers expressed the

expectation that confidence in teachers' opinions and professional competence would be increased.

Keywords: *communication and cooperation, educational institution, motivating measures, motivation, teachers,*

Introduction

Various European countries are facing the problem of teacher shortages and ageing. According to Eurostat data, in 2018, in European countries, out of 5.2 million teachers, as many as 39% were over the age of 50, and in Lithuania it is more than 52% (Teacher ES. Eurostat, 2020). At the European level, solutions are being sought to attract teachers and keep them in the education system, how to motivate them. Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) contains 5 strategic priorities, one of them: Strategic priority 3: Enhancing competences and motivation in the education profession. „Teachers, trainers, educational and pedagogical staff and education and training leaders, at all levels, are at the heart of education and training. To support innovation, inclusion, quality and achievement in education and training, educators must be highly competent and motivated, which requires a range of professional learning opportunities and support throughout their careers“ (Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)., 2021, p. 6). Pauwels, Van Loon, Tanghe, and Schelfhout (2022) highlight the importance of studying the motivations of teachers, particularly in light of the teacher shortage crisis. Their study specifically examines the motives of student teachers in secondary education teacher training programs and how these motivations may change throughout their education. This research is particularly relevant given the ongoing discussions about teacher shortages and the motivations behind teaching as a profession among education policymakers and the general public. We notice what, in particular, education politicians and the public are discussing the problems of teacher shortages and what motivates pedagogical work.

The study aimed to uncover the factors that drive educators in their teaching profession, and a large number of teachers were surveyed as part of this research (Stasiukynas, Zemaitaityte, Gudelis, & Zibeniene, 2020). The article presents the findings of this study, in which 873 educators participated, with the goal of determining which elements, such as recognition of competence, communication, collaboration, and the characteristics of educational institutions in the Vilnius Municipality, are most motivating for teachers. A quantitative survey was organized, a questionnaire survey of teachers of general education schools was conducted from April to May of year 2020 by the help of electronic survey tool ‘Qualtrics’.

Theoretical framework

In the scientific literature of education and in society, there is a lot of discussion about the problems of lack and motivation of teachers, what to do to make it attractive for teachers to work in an educational institution. In Europe, and particularly in Lithuania, there is a significant shortage of teachers, particularly those over the age of 50 (Teacher ES. Eurostat, 2020). This shortage is exacerbated by the fact that relatively few graduates of primary teacher education institutions actually go on to work in their field. To try to address this problem, municipalities in Lithuania offer incentives such as monthly bonuses and housing benefits, but these measures have not been effective in motivating enough teachers to join the profession (Education and Training Monitoring Bulletin Lithuania, 2019).

Different theories have been used to understand what factors motivate teachers, whether they work in secondary schools or universities. Studies have been conducted to investigate the various aspects of teacher motivation and how they relate to job satisfaction and performance (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2020; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014; Guerriero, 2017; Thoonen, Slegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geijsel, 2011; Han & Yin, 2016). This study utilizes F. Herzberg's theory of hygienic and motivational factors to develop the research instrument.

The motivation of teachers is studied in various aspects, in connection with a specific theory of motivation or not. The study examines various factors that motivate teachers in the context of a specific motivation theory proposed by F. Herzberg. (Herzberg, 2013). The research utilizes a survey instrument designed based on Herzberg's typology of hygienic and motivational factors. Hygienic factors refer to the work environment and are necessary to prevent dissatisfaction, but do not necessarily lead to increased motivation. These factors include: 1) administrative policies, 2) working conditions, 3) compensation, 4) relationships with managers, colleagues, and subordinates, and 5) level of direct control. Motivational factors, on the other hand, are related to the nature and content of the work and can lead to increased motivation and satisfaction. These factors include: 1) success, 2) career and professional development, 3) recognition, 4) responsibility, and 5) opportunities for creativity and subject development.

T. Pauwels et al. studied the motives of students of pedagogy and educators who began to work, chose the motives distinguished by W. Meeus, M. Baeten, L. Coertjens: subject orientation; work perspective; work dynamic; educational orientation; pupil orientation; idealism; combination possibilities (Pauwels et al., 2022; Meeus, Baeten, & Coertjens, 2015). The research found that individuals starting their education in teaching tend to have an idealized view of the profession, and also discovered distinctions in attitudes, showing that factors such as "career outlook, subject focus, educational focus, student focus, and idealism

are less significant motivators for students who are already working compared to those who are not currently employed in the field" (Pauwels et al., 2022, p. 13).

The authors of the literature review have identified various theories surrounding the motivation of teachers. According to Canrinus, Helms-Lorenz, Beijaard, Buitink and Hofman, the main motivating factors for teachers include factors such as salary, bonuses, opportunities for career advancement, respect, a positive and creative work environment, and positive feedback from superiors. (Canrinus et al., 2011; p.115–132).

Research part

Survey organization and sampling.

The teachers of Vilnius city were surveyed through an electronic survey tool Qualtrics in April-May 2020. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles, ensuring that participants were informed of the purpose of the study, able to withdraw at any time, and guaranteed anonymity. The survey link was distributed to all teachers in the city through email by the employees of the Vilnius City Municipality Administration. 1660 teachers began filling out the questionnaire, but after removing incomplete responses, a final database of 873 fully completed responses was obtained. The survey's precision level is 95% with a 3% allowance for inaccuracies. The demographic information of the survey participants is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents (Zibeniene et al., 2022)

| | N = 873 | Percent |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Type of educational institution | | |
| gymnasium | 344 | 39.4 |
| primary school | 118 | 13.5 |
| progymnasium | 289 | 33.1 |
| primary school | 122 | 14.0 |
| Pedagogical work experience (years) | | |
| up to 5 years | 88 | 10.1 |
| 6-10 years | 60 | 6.9 |
| 11-15 years | 101 | 11.6 |
| 16-20 years | 97 | 11.1 |
| 21-25 years | 157 | 18.0 |
| 26 years and more | 370 | 42.4 |
| Position | | |
| teacher | 141 | 16.2 |
| senior teacher | 399 | 45.7 |
| teacher methodologist | 278 | 31.8 |
| teacher expert | 31 | 3.6 |
| other | 24 | 2.7 |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------|-----|------|
| Age | | | |
| | 26-30 years | 49 | 5.6 |
| | 31-35 years | 65 | 7.4 |
| | 36-40 years | 78 | 8.9 |
| | 41-45 years | 140 | 16.0 |
| | 46-50 years | 169 | 19.4 |
| | 51 years and older | 372 | 42.6 |
| Gender | | | |
| | woman | 802 | 91.9 |
| | man | 71 | 8.1 |
| Distance (km) from the place of residence to the main place of work | | | |
| | up to 1 km | 91 | 10.4 |
| | 1 - 5 km | 241 | 27.6 |
| | 6 - 10 km | 293 | 33.6 |
| | 11 km and more | 248 | 28.4 |
| The work is going on | | | |
| | on foot | 149 | 17.1 |
| | in your car | 418 | 47.9 |
| | public transport | 286 | 32.8 |
| | taxi | 5 | .6 |
| | by bicycle | 5 | .6 |
| | scooter | 1 | .1 |
| | by other means | 9 | 1.0 |

The study participants were primarily female (91.9%). They were also varied in age, but the largest group was those 51 years or older (42.6%). In terms of length of teaching experience, the majority had been working for 26 years or more (42.4%). The majority of respondents worked in gymnasiums and pre-gymnasiums (39.4% and 33.1%, respectively) and were primarily male teachers and teacher methodologists (45.7% and 31.8%, respectively).

Research instruments.

The research used a questionnaire that included 18 questions on a ranking scale, where participants were asked to rank 5 options for motivating teachers and their motivational measures from 1 (most preferred) to 5 (least preferred). Additionally, there were 4 Likert scale questions where participants were asked to rate the motivational factors of teachers on a scale of 1 (most motivating) to 5 (least motivating). The questionnaire also included a standard section for socio-demographic information.

Respondents were not allowed to select multiple options with the same ranking for the ranking scale questions, but could assign the same score for different factors when answering the Likert scale questions. To minimize missing

data, participants were required to answer at least one option in order to move on to the next page of the survey.

The answers to the ranking scale questions were analyzed by calculating and comparing the sums and averages of the scores assigned to each option. Non-parametric tests were used to determine if there were any significant differences between the rankings of similar options. The data was also examined for trends among different groups of participants (such as gender, length of service, and type of educational institution) using averages and non-parametric tests.

The questionnaire was designed by distinguishing relevant blocks of questions, such as demographic information and factors related to the teacher's work environment and salary. The theory of external and internal motivational factors by F. Herzberg was used to guide the formation of the question blocks, and the structure of the questionnaire was later refined based on the research goals and the characteristics of the participants.

Research ethics

The research was conducted in accordance with ethical principles, and all participants were informed of the purpose of the study and how their data would be used. They were also guaranteed anonymity.

Results

The motivating factors of educators were found to be linked with being acknowledged for their abilities. Participants in the survey were asked to select and prioritize five motivating factors related to their decision-making capabilities, participation in school governance, and other such factors. Additionally, factors related to communication and collaboration with colleagues were also taken into consideration.

The summarized results of the ranking of these factors are presented in Table 2.

The proposal that received the most positive feedback was the creation of a system that would grant teachers more rights in their interactions with parents and would clearly define unacceptable behavior from parents. Additionally, the respondents felt they would be motivated by the formation of a permanent group of teachers focused on addressing issues related to teacher well-being and making proposals to school and city administration, with financial compensation for their participation in the group. The least popular proposal among the respondents was that the group's focus would be on introducing new subjects or educational initiatives.

Table 2 The motivating factors of teachers (related to the recognition of the competence of the teacher) (compiled by the authors)

| Factors of motivating pedagogues associated with the recognition of the competence of the teacher | Average N=873 | Rank scoring total |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| an order to ensure the teacher's greater rights in communicating with the parents (e.g. to clarify which actions of the parents of the students are inappropriate, etc.) | 3.11 | 2711 |
| a permanent, paid committee of teachers to initiate questions related to the teachers' well-being of teachers | 2.67 | 2331 |
| a permanent, paid committee of teachers as an advisory voice to the Administration of Vilnius City Municipality to solve teachers' issues | 2.45 | 2136 |
| introduction of changes and innovations in Vilnius schools, only after prior discussion with representatives of Vilnius teachers | 2.36 | 2060 |
| constantly functioning, paid subject groups of teachers to initiate subject innovations in Vilnius | 2.29 | 1999 |
| a permanent, paid group of teachers to initiate educational innovations in Vilnius | 1.97 | 1724 |
| Other | 0.15 | 134 |

The motivating factors of educators are associated with the recognition of the competence of the teacher. The participants selected five key motivators that pertain to interacting and working together with their colleagues and then assigned them a level of importance.

The summarized results of the ranking of these factors are presented in table 3.

Table 3 The motivating factors of teachers (related to communication and cooperation with colleagues) (compiled by the authors)

| Factors of motivating pedagogues, related to communication and cooperation with colleagues | Average N=873 | Rank scoring total |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| cooperation between teachers in an educational institution | 2.69 | 2351 |
| leisure time with colleagues at joint external events outside the educational institution | 2.62 | 2284 |
| the opportunity to meet colleagues from educational institutions from different other countries at joint cultural-professional events, events for the exchange of good practices, through the mediation of the Administration of Vilnius City Municipality | 1.79 | 1565 |
| the opportunity to meet colleagues from various Lithuanian educational institutions at joint cultural-professional and good practice exchange events | 1.71 | 1491 |

| | | |
|---|------|------|
| the possibility for the teacher to have an adviser-consultant (e.g. from a general list compiled by the Vilnius City Municipality Administration) on various issues related to pedagogical activity | 1.58 | 1381 |
| the opportunity to meet colleagues from various educational institutions in Vilnius at joint cultural-professional and good practice exchange events | 1.58 | 1375 |
| cooperation between teachers in urban methodological and other similar subject groups | 1.57 | 1367 |
| leisure with colleagues at joint events in an educational institution | 1.29 | 1129 |
| other | 0.17 | 152 |

Comparing with each other the motivating factors related to communication and cooperation with colleagues (see Table 2), respondents awarded the highest-ranking scores to such a factor as teacher-to-teacher cooperation in an educational institution. Leisure with colleagues at joint external events outside the educational institution and the opportunity to meet colleagues from educational institutions of various other countries at joint cultural-professional, good practice exchange events, mediated by the Administration of Vilnius City Municipality, were also highly appreciated. Fewer rank scores were allocated to the opportunity for the teacher to have an adviser-consultant on various issues related to pedagogical activity, to meet with colleagues from various Vilnius educational institutions at joint cultural-professional, good practice exchange events, for cooperation between teachers in city methodological and other similar subject groups (the differences between the assessments of these answer options were not statistically significant), the opportunity to spend leisure time with colleagues at joint events in an educational institution. T. Mitchell has noted that school communities are important in many aspects: quality of learning, innovation, change, good, motivating for positive change, good well-being of community members, the community must be collaborative, collaborative, supportive of each other (characterized by good relationships), learning (Mitchell, 2020).

The factors of motivation of educators are associated with the signs of educational institutions. Respondents were also asked to choose and rank the most motivating factors for pedagogical work related to the characteristics of educational institutions (see Table 4). The highest number of ranking scores was given to reduce the administrative burden on the teacher's activities. The second choice of the respondents was the defence and enforcement of teacher rights, in third place in terms of the amount of ranking points is the increase of confidence in the opinion and competence of the teacher. Slightly less scores were given to such signs as a benevolent, realistically cooperative school community and a reduction in control of the teacher's performance.

Table 4 The motivating factors of teachers (related the signs of educational institutions)
(compiled by the authors)

| Factors of motivation of educators are associated with signs of educational institutions | Average N=873 | Rank scoring total |
|--|---------------|--------------------|
| reducing the administrative burden ("paperwork") in the teacher activities | 2.80 | 2443 |
| defending and ensuring the rights of the teacher, not only duties | 2.59 | 2260 |
| increasing confidence in the opinion and competence of the teacher | 2.30 | 2006 |
| a benevolent, realistically cooperative school community | 2.21 | 1925 |
| using control over the teacher's performance | 2.16 | 1886 |
| promoting learning and personal development | 1.30 | 1133 |
| learning with and from others | 0.67 | 586 |
| openness of the educational institution to the world | 0.40 | 352 |
| focus | 0.30 | 262 |
| reflexivity | 0.21 | 185 |
| other | 0.07 | 57 |

Also, the respondents compared with each other motivating factors related to various features of the management and organizational culture of educational institutions ("administrative changes"). The best ratings were received by statements about the head of the educational institution listening to the school community and effective administration ("transparent, simple, unburdening, convenient administration, effective distribution of resources and their economical use"). The top five statements that received the most rank scores also included statements about the transparency of the formation of posts ("I know in advance what kind of post I will work in the coming school year"), ensuring that a full-time position will be formed for each teacher, creativity and the will to act ("the development of ideas, experimentation, the courage to take risks, to make difficult decisions and perseverance in their implementation") received lower scores.

Conclusions

When researching the tools that motivate educators, it is associated with the recognition of the competence of the educator, communication, cooperation and signs of the educational institution, it was revealed these motivating factors of teachers:

- the constant, clear support of the teacher by the school administration and the creation of a safe well-being through the application of the existing clear rules, a procedure that would ensure the broader teacher rights in communicating with parents, would clearly define which actions of the parents of the students would be inappropriate;
- a permanent working group of teachers has been set up to consider issues related to the well-being of teachers and submit relevant proposals to school administrations and the Administration of Vilnius City Municipality;
- more regular practices and opportunities for cooperation between teachers in an educational institution, systematic joint exit events or opportunities to meet colleagues from various educational institutions of other countries at joint cultural-professional, good practice exchange events, through the mediation of the Administration of Vilnius City Municipality;
- more liberal management and easier paperwork, where the teacher's administrative burden is reduced through the preparation of various reports, clear support in defending the rights of the teacher, securing them, and trusting the opinion of the teachers.

Teacher-to-teacher cooperation, favorable conditions for recreation, leisure, lower documentary reporting load – these aspects that motivate educators are not new, they are also revealed in the research of other authors. The survey results indicate that teachers place a high value on having support from school administration in their interactions with parents, and that they are motivated by having clearly defined rights and procedures in place for addressing and resolving conflicts with parents. This suggests that teachers may feel stress or tension when they feel unsupported by the school administration in these types of situations.

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