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The Training Needs of Academic Professors in Romania

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze several factors that determine the performance of higher education students. Were taken into account in particular training of teachers, initial and continuous training of professors, psycho - pedagogical but especially training. We wanted to establish correlations between the interests of higher education for training teachers and their involvement in specific activities (continuing education courses, attending conferences and studies in the field of psycho-pedagogical etc.) and how they support their teaching activities and motivating the students. The issue of teacher education is a burning issue because the number of people willing to go through higher education is falling (due to multiple causes: small percentage of baccalaureate graduates, access to the labor market is not conditioned by a university degree, except for top positions, etc.). We cannot say the interests and training of teachers in their field of expertise or of psycho-pedagogy is conducive to attracting students towards higher education, but it is an important and motivating factor for students to take part in teaching or research activities and to be motivated to graduate, as well as to embrace a career in education in the future. Preparing teachers and their interest in continuing training cause changes in the style of organization and development of teaching activity generating motivation for learning among students.

Keywords: Training of teachers; Initial training of Professors; Psycho-Pedagogic training; Higher education; Higher performance.

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Initial Training of Academic Professors

The initial training of academic professors includes the study of a series of psycho-pedagogic disciplines (Level 1: Education Psychology, Pedagogy I - Introduction to Pedagogy, Theory and Methodology of the Curriculum, Pedagogy II - Theory and Methodology of Teaching and Evaluation, Specialty Didactics, Computer-aided Teaching, Class Management, Teaching Practice and Level 2: Adult Psycho-pedagogy, Design of Education Programs,

Educational Organization's Management, Sociology of Education, Communication, Didactics of the Curricular Area) throughout university and master's programs (students that wish to pursue a didactic career study through the two Levels of the Psycho-pedagogic module simultaneously with their specialisation classes obtaining teaching skills in their field of specialization). The more diverse pedagogical disciplines studied in initial training, the more teachers realize educational values in educational activities with students. A brief initial training of teachers pedagogical will limit the relationship with students and their creativity in creating them their learning motivation will be low.

1.2. Training of Teachers (Level I and Level II)

Those who want to teach their subjects of specialisation in compulsory education (grades 1-10) need their university degree and the Psycho-pedagogic Module Level I, and those who want to teach grades 10-12 and at academic level need their Master's degree and the Psycho-pedagogic Module Level II. Thus, the initial training of those who become teachers is insufficient from the point of view of the content covered (there lack skills that should be formed, trained and developed through subjects such as Time Management, Conflict Management, Management of Institutions, Educational Marketing, Educational Management, etc.), but also in terms of the number of hours (the number of hours spent in Teaching Practice is insufficient).

The current study aimed to investigate, observe and poll the perceptions of academic professors in several Universities across country, their specializations are in different areas and highlights the current views of teachers.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Target Group

The current study aimed to investigate, observe and poll the perceptions of 26 academic professors in several Universities across country (Technical University Cluj, Bucharest Polytechnics University, University of Petroleum and Gas in Ploiesti, Nicolae Titulescu University, Spiru Haret University). Their specializations are in different areas - administrative sciences, foreign languages, engineering and humanities.

2.2. The Hypotheses of the Research

The hypotheses of the research were: General hypothesis - *If professors go through professional development classes in the psycho-pedagogic field, they relate to students and develop alternative pathways for them to achieve high performance*; secondary hypotheses - *The more complex the psycho-pedagogic training of academic professors the more attractive their classes and the way they communicate with their students. If professors are always preoccupied about updating their knowledge and teaching skills, then students will have higher performance.*

2.3. The Research Instruments

Among the research instruments used there have been surveys, observation scales, questionnaires, analysis of statistical documents. Thus, the 26 professors were interrogated about the need for ongoing training on certain areas specific to psycho-pedagogy, in view of the fact that academic professors, in accordance with the legislation in force in Romania, do not have an obligation to complete courses of ongoing vocational training with a view to updating their knowledge and skills, neither in their specialty, nor in the field of psycho-pedagogy (as all the 26 teachers have attended and completed the Psycho-pedagogic Module and 15 have participated in ongoing training courses or refresher courses in their specialisation within the last 3 years). Forty-three questionnaires have been applied to the students of those 26 professors.

2.4. During Research

The research was conducted over a period of 6 months, in 2014 with the support of the professors in the Teacher Training Departments in the respective universities.

3. The Results of the Research

3.1. Results Correlated With the Hypothesis

Following the general hypothesis *If academic professors go through professional development classes in the psycho-pedagogical field then they relate to students and they develop alternative pathways for their students to achieve high performance* the criteria were the following (as per the grid of observation of the activity of the 26 professors):

- What type of activities are carried out by professors apart from the didactic ones (school of excellence, summer school, student dedicated scientific sessions, organizing reading session of a psycho-pedagogic nature involving students from technical specializations, etc.)
- The frequency of these events (monthly, half-yearly, yearly)
- Participation and involvement of other university professors
- Participation of academic teachers in communication sessions, courses or training programs
- Advising students outside classes (frequency, topics, skills - both existing and required)

Results showed that only 20% of the 26 academic professors carry out and participate in the organization of activities other than didactic ones (all 26 have completed other training classes as well: TRAINER, LEADERSHIP, COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT, EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION,

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, ETC.). All the investigated professors communicate with\advise students on different issues outside their usual teaching activities. The most common are those relating to aspects of evaluation, topics of interest for students - career: preparing for interview, writing a CV; time management: time planning, choosing priorities; psycho-pedagogic literature: guidance toward personal development classes, literature with specific learning techniques, resolving crisis situations, etc.

The questionnaire applied to the 26 teachers had among its topics: the frequency of enrollment and completion of ongoing training classes, the topics of the classes they are interested in, the areas they would like to get training for, the skills they most often feel lacking at, the consequences and expectations they have following completion of such training programs.

Following the secondary hypotheses - *The more complex the professors' pedagogical training, the more attractive their courses and the way they communicate with students. If professors are always preoccupied about updating their knowledge and teaching skills, then students will have higher performance*, the results indicate a high percentage of students appraising professors that are available to communicate outside classes on topics like evaluation, career counseling etc. In the classes of the 26 teachers, the average attendance is between 72-100%, and in the classes of the 15 that have psycho-pedagogic training as well as ongoing training, the attendance is between 96-100%.

Students of professors that have undergone psycho-pedagogical training and manifest an interest in ongoing training:

- 100% -80% have passing grades,
- 46 % of them have grades in between 8 and 10
- under 5% of the number of those enrolled in the respective course have failed exams.

The percentage of students that enroll in Master's programs (out of those who have participated in the classes of the respective professors) is 37 %.

3.2. Limits of the Research

As limits of the research we mention - the small number of teachers and students in the sample and the intervention of other factors which may contribute to the final results and interpretations.

3.3. Need for Teacher Training

Academic professors need to have a complex psycho-pedagogic training that refers to the in-depth study of subjects such as Curriculum Design and Implementation, problematic aspects of evaluation, psycho-pedagogy of the family, social psychology, institution management, time management, priorities and stress management, the management of didactic institutions, etc.

3.4. Learning Motivation and Interest of Students and Teachers Training

The motivation and interest of students in the classes of the professors that have psycho-pedagogic skills are higher, they participate in greater numbers, actively and conscientiously taking part in debates.

3.5. Interest for Training Teachers

Most academic professors participate in scientific sessions and thematic conferences in their field of interest. Because the legislation does not provide for the obligation to participate in ongoing training courses, academic professors' interest in this opportunity is not very high.

3.6. Teacher Training and Labor Market Insertion

The issue of the initial and ongoing training of academic professors is a burning issue because the number of people willing to go through higher education is falling (due to multiple causes: small percentage of baccalaureate graduates, access to the labor market is not conditioned by a university degree, except for top positions, etc.).

4. Conclusions

Initial training of teachers is important because it provides a basis for building relationships with students psychosocial. The more diverse and thorough later (psycho-social-pedagogical skills), the more teachers are more gifted and successful in motivating students to authentic communication and teaching career. Teachers are higher interest to continue training (despite legislation that does not encourage this, to undergraduate education where there is a requirement that teachers in 5 years 5 to attend a continuing education), with both student performance are high (default is high motivation to learning). Better trained teachers inspire the attitude, behavior and values to embrace student teaching career. Therefore we can say that no theoretical training of teachers on student determines to be most efficient, as axiological and behavioral aspects (some research shows that attitude comes from the knowledge).

We cannot say the interests and training of professors in their field of expertise or of psycho-pedagogy is conducive to attracting students towards higher education, but it is an important and motivating factor for students to take part in teaching or research activities and to be motivated to graduate, as well as to embrace a career in education in the future.

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