THE IMPORTANCE OF ALTRUISTIC MOTIVATION IN CHOOSING THE PEDAGOGICAL PROFESSION

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The choice of a profession has always been an endeavor, and the choice of the pedagogical profession has implied thorough considerations of the advantages and disadvantages of this decision. The motivations in choosing specifically the pedagogical profession diversify themselves and imply not only extrinsic and intrinsic, but altruistic as well. Therefore, this article approaches this problem, moreover it stresses the importance of altruistic motivation in choosing the teaching profession thus highlighting the complexity of this profession among others from the perspective of the technocratic society.

Key-words:: teaching, motivations, intrinsic, extrinsic, altruistic, 'The sense of the desirable'

Education is ascribed importance in every culture as a central area contributing to the formation of a person's personality, to the formulation of society and as a factor influencing individual and communal accomplishments in various areas. In light of this, the need for good teachers was and remains a highly important objective for any advanced society. However, there is a gap between the great importance of the teacher's role and the constant erosion in their social standing, which derives – among other things – from the existence of a labor market with an attractive supply of jobs for academics, diverse and more rewarding in pay, in social benefits and in professional status than those teaching offers.

This reality raises the need to examine the motivations for choosing the teaching profession. The theoretical rationale for such an examination is anchored in findings of studies which have pointed to the fact that the choice of a profession, which meets the personal needs and inclinations of the individual, leads to professional satisfaction, stability and achievements [3, 11, 16, 24, 25]. Hence, a more complete understanding of the motivations for choosing the

teaching profession could assist in improving the personal welfare of those engaged in the profession, thus contributing to the entire education system.

Aspects in the process of choosing a profession

One of the most important decisions for an adult person is the choice of a professional occupation, in which they would like to invest their energy and skills. This choice has great influence on a person and on their perception of self both psychologically, socially and economically, even if in our days an occupational choice is more dynamic than in the past, and may change of the course of a person's life.

Theories regarding the choice of a profession focus on two central aspects of the choosing process: the personality aspect and the developmental aspect. Super [31] claims that the profession a person chooses allows them to express the gamut of the abilities, traits and tendencies that make up the self. However, in his perception, the choice of a professional career is not a one-time event, but a dynamic process that could change over a person's life, in accordance with a person's age and the developmental stage they are in. Moreover, Levinson et al. [14] note that even for a person with a long professional career, occupation is characterized by transitions between stability and dynamicity, between indecision and decision making, in a sort of recurring choice of the profession and the job at every stage.

Findings from studies in the field of occupational psychology concerning the process of choosing a profession point to the fact that a suitable choice of a profession, meeting the needs and personal tendencies of a person, leads a person to a sense of personal wellbeing that is expressed by high levels of satisfaction with work, by persistence and achievements [9,25, 27, 29].

This finding was reinforced in studies concerning the teaching profession. In the study conducted by Kyriacou & Coulthard [13], participants were asked to rank the importance of the factors influencing their choice of a profession from a given list, as well as the degree in which the teaching profession enables one to realize each of the examined factors. The study showed that the higher the tendency was to choose the teaching profession, so there was a higher level of congruence between the desired characteristics of the profession and the perception of teaching as a profession that enabled one to achieve them.

The study by Katzir, Sagee & Gilat [11] showed that among other considerations for choosing the teaching profession among teaching students was also the consideration of utilizing previous knowledge and experience. This characteristic expresses the perception of teaching as a profession that enables one to utilize knowledge and experience that were accumulated during previous experiences, both in the personal context and as part of the education system. This reflects on the perception of teaching as a professional field having strong ties to the personal experiences and identity of those engaged in it.

Motivations for choosing the teaching profession- The characteristics of choosing teaching as a profession were discussed extensively by Lortie [16], a pioneer in sociological research concerning the teaching profession, who divided the motivations for choosing instruction into facilitating factors [facilitators], and factors that attract one to engage in it in the first place [attractors]. According to Lortie [16], the facilitators are usually less apparent and are based on social mechanisms that help a person choose a profession.

Among the **factors facilitating the choice of instruction** are socialization agents, which influence the molding of the process of choosing instruction, and which may be an important factor in the recruitment of new teachers to the profession at an early age. These agents may be divided into two groups: 1. Agents in the educational environment – meaning educators and professional teachers serving as an example for the pupils in both the professional and personal aspects, and creating an interest in teaching already when pupils meet with them during the studies at the school [3,4,7, 12, 16, 24,] ;2. Agents in the primary group – meaning teachers who are family members and friends, the connection with whom leads to identification with the profession.

Lortie [16] found that one third of the teachers asked had a relative in teaching. The teachers asked stated that this relative was a figure that brought them closer to teaching, encouraged them and influence their choice. The study by Katzir, Sagee & Gilat [11] also found that the primary agents had a stronger influence on the choice of teaching as a profession, and among all agents participating in the formation of the decision; the mother had the strongest influence. It was also found that there was a distinction between teaching students who had chosen the profession before the age of 18, and those who had chosen it later in life. Those who chose the profession at a young age attributed their choice of teaching to self-realization, and presented a higher level of professional commitment compared with those who made the decision at a later age. This finding is explained by the fact that the students in the former group developed a positive cognitive-emotional position towards teaching, on both the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects, following a sense of identification with educational models at home and at school at an early age. This process, which began at a relatively early age, created in them a strong sense of commitment to teaching. The study by Arnon, Frenkel and Rubin [3] also reinforces the finding that being related to a teacher has a positive influence on the perception of the teaching profession and on one's willingness to engage in it.

Another facilitating factor for choosing the teaching profession is related to the influence of positive experiences from previous engagement in education, such as counseling in a youth movement, during the military or national service in Israel, as well as movies and books about exemplary models from the world of education [1]. An enhanced and advanced study of a specific area of specialization – such as arts and sciences – at an early age, due to special attraction and interest in it, may also serve as a motivational factor for choosing the instruction of the studied discipline [4, 10].

In conclusion, various aspects of early acquaintance with teaching, along with an interest in the discipline, make occupation in this profession more accessible, and thus serve as a facilitator to choosing it.

Attractors to occupation in teaching- From findings of studies concerning the perception of the teaching profession and the reasons for choosing teaching as a career, three main categories of considerations for choosing this profession arise – intrinsic considerations, altruistic considerations, and extrinsic considerations. These categories appear in different variations in studies concerned with the field [3, 5, 10, 11, 19, 22, 28, 32].

Intrinsic considerations are being dealt with by Pink [25], who pointed out that in the choosing process people are first and foremost motivated by intrinsic motives, such as autonomy, room for development, growth and control. Similarly, studies dealing with motivations for choosing the teaching profession indicate that the intrinsic motives – connected with the essence of the profession – are those most prominent in the choice of it. These considerations are connected with the satisfaction that is derived from the act of teaching itself and from its inherent characteristics, which are perceived by the person as suiting their skills and personality [6, 10, 19]. These motives are more significant than motives connected with material rewards, such as wages, work conditions and welfare, as well as social rewards derived from the acknowledgement of the professional status of teaching [2, 3, 5, 8, 16, 24, 28, 33].

In studies that dealt with the considerations for choosing teaching it was found that most of those who turn to teaching are people who perceive themselves as having a good ability for teaching, and define themselves as people who love children, looking for an occupation that involves interpersonal communication. Active teachers emphasized utilitarian aspects such as satisfaction and the joy from the act of teaching itself and from the possibility of promoting children; creating enriching interpersonal connections; interest in the discipline taught; potential for self-realization; a high level of autonomy; mobility between age groups and levels of teaching; the possibility of choosing the population (ethnic, religious, or social background); the use of life experience and professional knowledge, as well as the possibility of realizing personal abilities such as creativity at work [7, 11, 16, 26].

An explanation to the importance of the intrinsic utilitarian aspects gained by those in the teaching profession is provided by the sociologist Meyer [17]. He claims that in light of the fact that the prestige of the teaching profession in society is doubtful, teachers' expectation for self-realization and fulfillment from their work is especially high, since this expectation validates their choice of teaching, and attests to their autonomy and to their control over their destiny [10, 16, 33].

Altruistic considerations are connected to a perception of teaching as a socially worthy profession, since it creates a sense of vocation and of giving to the other, it allows one to influence the lives of children and thus mold the future generation and work towards a better society [11, 19 ,33]. The altruistic perception is grounded in the Jewish, and even Christian, tradition, in which teaching is considered a service of a high moral value and it is apparent that the influence of this perception is more ingrained among traditional and religious societies [16]. In this context it is worth mentioning the 'The sense of the desirable' proposed by Nissan (19, 20) as an altruistic motivation for choosing a profession. The sense of the desirable present a person with an inner demand, or at least a recommendation, to take a certain course of action because it is right, and not because it is worthwhile.

Nisan [19] develops the concept 'The sense of the desirable' referring to the altruistic aspect when choosing the teaching profession. He claims that this choice expresses people's demand of themselves to act as an autonomous and unique personality, one that is guided by general and personal perceptions of goodness, and not only by their fleeting passions and preferences. This demand is based on the acknowledgement that certain behaviors are good and worthy of following, even if they do not involve an internal or external reward, or are not the result of a moral demand [19, 20, 22].
The sense of the desirable is normative and grows in a social-cultural context, and the considerations they entail are based on a person's belief that one ought to follow, and also educate towards, this behavior [19, 21]. Unlike behaviors that belong to the field of ethics, such as keeping a promise, and which are perceived as fully binding the person to act in accordance with the moral norm or accept a punishment, the motivating force of the sense of the desirable is significant to a person's identity, and is determined by the manner in which a person perceives how a certain behavior reflects their identity, while avoiding that behavior causes them to deny their identity [10, 20, 21].
However, there are researchers who believe that the altruistic considerations are included in the category of intrinsic considerations, since they believe that the desire of teachers to contribute to society is in fact an intrinsic motivation, the reward of which is meeting high needs of the self [18, 24, 28].

Extrinsic Considerations are connected to utilitarian aspects of the teaching profession, which are not part of its professional characteristics. These considerations related to aspects such as social status and work conditions – long vacations, the wage level, required profession and tenure. Another significant aspect is the fact that the teaching profession is suited to family life and to parenthood, such as the option for flexibility in work hours or for a part-time job, as well as a schedule that suits the schedule of the children [11,15, 16, 26].

Studies that examined the social-economic status of those turning to teaching pointed out differences between various population groups in regards to the significance of the extrinsic considerations. Findings indicated that teachers from a high social-economic background do not view teaching as a prestigious profession, and for them the intrinsic rewards are more significant than the material rewards. In contrast, teachers from a low social background view teaching as a profession that enables social mobility and ascribe importance to the material rewards as well. In light of this, those who turn to teaching come mostly from the low social-economic classes, while members of the high social-economic class prefer to turn to other professional routes, considered more prestigious [10, 16, 23, 30, 33].

In conclusion, the literature review shows that the process of choosing a profession is a dynamic process, the objective of which is to try and find an optimal match between a person's

skills and inclinations and the chosen work environment. The literature dealing with the motivations for choosing the teaching profession [3, 5, 10, 11, 16, 19, 28] indicates two groups of factors characteristic to the choice of the teaching profession: 1. Factors facilitating the choice of teaching – relating to the previous experience of those joining teaching in an area close to the profession, as well as the influence of relatives who are teachers or educational figures of teachers who served as role models. These factors facilitate the choice of teaching when it is already a probable course, but are usually not the factor attracting the person to the profession in the first place; 2. Factors attracting to the profession – in this group a distinction is customary between extrinsic motivations, related to material rewards such as pay, work and welfare conditions, and social status, and between intrinsic and altruistic motivations, related to an interest in the taught discipline, an aspiration for self-realization and a desire to contribute to the image of the next generation. As an explanation to the influence of the altruistic motivations Nissan [(19, 20] proposes the term 'The sense of the desirable' , which is a motivational factor presenting the individual with an inner demand to take a certain course of action because it is right and not because it is worthwhile, and even if this choice would contradict internal or external utilitarian interests.

It was found that the intrinsic and altruistic factors are the more significant considerations when choosing the teaching profession. Nurturing these aspects could assist in improving the personal welfare of teachers, thus contributing to enhancing their motivation to persist in their position in the education system, since the accumulated practical and theoretical knowledge of the teacher influences the quality of teaching and contributes to an improvement in the quality of life and the image of society as a whole [3, 35].

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