

Student teachers' motivations for the profession and career advancements in the Carpathian Basin

Pál I. Szontagh

College Associate Professor, Faculty of Pedagogy of Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary

Abstract

Attractiveness of the educator's career path, the number, quality and motivation of candidates starting this profession has been in the focus of domestic and international professional discourse for decades now. 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.

Keywords: career motivations, profession motivation, teacher training