

VOCATIONAL TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN LITHUANIA: THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION

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Abstract

Both teachers' motivation for professional development and their job satisfaction have been widely studied by many researchers in recent decades. However, the motivation for professional development and job satisfaction of teachers in vocational education institutions are insufficiently assessed compared to teachers in other educational levels. Perhaps for the first time in Lithuania, this study explores the links between teachers' motivation for professional development and their job satisfaction by conducting research with 426 teachers from 27 vocational education institutions. The purpose of this study is to identify factors related to professional development that have significant predictive value for vocational teachers' job satisfaction. Vocational teachers' motivation for professional development was measured using the Questionnaire of Motivational Factors in Predicting Academic Achievement (Pang, Lee, 2013). Participants were also asked to assess their overall job satisfaction, the peculiarities of participation in professional development activities (participation in professional development activities in the past 12 months, etc.) and to indicate sociodemographic characteristics. The results of this study suggest that teachers of vocational education institutions are motivated to grow professionally, and 78.2 percent of vocational teachers indicated that they are generally satisfied with their work. A statistically significant relationship was found between teachers' motivation for professional development and their job satisfaction, and significant differences in motivation for professional development and job satisfaction were also identified by gender, age, qualification category and seniority. Finally, regression analysis revealed that factors such as intrinsic motivation for professional development, qualification category, and time spent in professional development events have statistically significant prognostic value for vocational teachers' job satisfaction.

Keywords: *Motivation for professional development, job satisfaction, vocational teachers, vocational training institutions.*

1. Introduction

Professional development of teachers is imperative (Popova et al., 2022). It is critically important for teachers to constantly learn, improve and develop their competencies. They must adapt to the frequent updating of educational content, be able to apply innovative educational methodologies and technologies, consider the characteristics of modern students, and create favorable educational environments for them. How does such an obligation affect teachers' motivation to improve? How does it transform into satisfaction with the work they do? These questions are raised in this scientific research.

There have been studies on teachers' motivation for professional development (e.g., Baluyos et al., 2019) and the relationship with job satisfaction (e.g., Viseu et al., 2016), but there is a noticeable lack of research in the field of vocational education. The professional activities of teachers in vocational education institutions have specificity. Vocational teachers carry out initial and continuing professional training, i.e. they transmit the subtleties of the craft not only to young people experiencing late adolescence, but also to adults. Therefore, it is worth gaining insights into the motivation for professional development, as this has an inevitable impact on students and teaching effectiveness (Popova et al., 2022), and their job satisfaction is relevant both at the individual and school level (Zhang et al., 2021). Thus, this study aims to expand scientific knowledge related to teachers' motivation for professional development and their job satisfaction.

2. Methods

2.1. Sample and data collection

The study involved 426 teachers working in 27 vocational education institutions. The majority were women (73.7%), most were aged 50 and older (58.7%), and most had over 10 years of teaching experience (72.6%). The survey was conducted online. Participation was voluntary.

2.2. Measures

Teachers' motivation for professional development was measured using the Motivational Factors in Predicting Academic Achievement questionnaire by Pang and Lee (2013). Five motivational factors were assessed: personal development, career advancement, social pressure, social and communication improvement, and escapism. The items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (from 1 = no influence to 5 = very strong influence). The Cronbach's α coefficients ranged from .755 to .937.

The participants were also asked to rate their overall job satisfaction on a scale from 1 (very poor) to 10 (excellent), as well as to evaluate aspects of their participation in professional development activities, such as engagement in professional training events over the past 12 months, etc.

3. Results

The results of this study suggest that teachers of vocational education institutions are motivated to grow professionally. The intrinsic motivation for professional development (personal development) among vocational education teachers ($M = 3.80$, $SD = .81$) is more pronounced than extrinsic motivation; on the extrinsic motivation scale the most dominant factor is career advancement ($M = 3.67$, $SD = .73$), while the least expressed factor is escapism ($M = 1.80$, $SD = .91$). The majority of participants (76.3%) dedicated between 21-80 hours for professional development activities over the past 12 months, and 23.9 % engaged in professional development activities only to the extent required by law – up to 40 hours.

According to the participants' subjective assessment, overall job satisfaction was rated at 7.59 out of 10 ($SD = 1.83$). A total of 78.2 % of respondents rated their job satisfaction within the range of “fairly good” (7) to “excellent” (10).

Using *Pearson's correlation coefficient*, statistically significant relationships were found between job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation – personal development ($r = .265$, $p < .001$), as well as extrinsic motivation subscales: career advancement ($r = .280$, $p < .001$), social pressure ($r = .213$, $p < .001$), social and communication skills improvement ($r = .240$, $p < .001$).

Significant differences in motivation for professional development and job satisfaction were also identified by gender, age, qualification category and seniority. *ANOVA analysis of variance* revealed that intrinsic motivation for professional development was more pronounced for men than women ($F = 2.88$, $p = .002$), as well as for younger compared to older teachers ($F = 6.47$, $p < .001$); for those with less teaching experience compared to more experienced ($F = 3.21$, $p = .007$), and for those with a teacher qualification category compared to senior teachers (3.45 , $p = .017$). Those with less work experience are more satisfied with their work at vocational training institution than those with more experience ($F = 2.71$, $p < .02$), and those with a teacher qualification are more satisfied with their work than those with qualification of methodologist ($F = 3.50$, $p < .02$).

Finally, *regression analysis* predicting job satisfaction of teachers in vocational education institutions was performed. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Regression characteristics predicting job satisfaction of teachers.

Variable	B	SE	Beta (β)	t	p
Personal development	.568	.105	.251	5.433	<.001
Qualification category	-.233	.102	-.106	-2.288	.023
Time spent for professional development	.189	.048	.181	3.918	<.001

Note. Constant = 5.069, $F(3,420) = 17.420$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .111$. Statistically insignificant variables were removed.

The results of the regression analysis revealed that a lower qualification category, intrinsic motivation for professional development, and more time spent on qualification improvement events have statistically significant predictive value for teachers' job satisfaction.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Although research has been conducted on teachers' motivation for professional development, as well as on the job satisfaction of teachers, the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation for professional development has not been sufficiently investigated, especially among vocational teachers. This study aims to fill this research gap.

Summarizing the results, it can be stated that most teachers have more pronounced intrinsic motivation for professional development. These results support the findings of many other studies on teachers' professional development (Bottling et al., 2024; Daukilas et al., 2016; Engin, 2020; Handayani, 2016; Smet, 2021; Viseu et al., 2016; Yildiz et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). This indicates a natural desire to satisfy intellectual curiosity, improve cognitive performance, and a desire to pursue knowledge for the sake of general enlightenment. The results of this study show that vocational teachers are satisfied with their work. This is consistent with the findings of other studies that many educators are satisfied with their professional activities (Baluyos et al., 2019; Daukilas et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015).

This study found a significant positive relationship between motivation for professional development and job satisfaction of teachers in vocational education institutions. Several essential factors for teachers' job satisfaction can be distinguished. First, lower qualification category is associated with higher job satisfaction. These findings are also supported by studies of other researchers, who identify that teachers' motivation to improve their professional skills decreases with increasing professional experience (Engin, 2020; Handayani, 2016; Shegoleva et al., 2019; Smet, 2021; Yildiz et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). Teachers who devote more time to professional development may feel more confident in their professional competence, which contribute to greater job satisfaction. And finally, teachers who are intrinsically motivated to develop their professional skills tend to experience greater job satisfaction because they see that their efforts have meaning and pay off. Zhang et al. (2021) study revealed that personal and school-level factors are related to motivation for professional development of Chinese teachers. Smet (2021) also found a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and professional development needs in teaching SEN students, developing subject and pedagogical knowledge and skills.

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