PERSONAL PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHING CAREER AMONGST PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ISRAEL: CAREER MOTIVATORS, CAREER DRIVEN AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

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The research purpose is to expose patterns of personal development in teaching career amongst teachers in elementary schools. The study was conducted with a qualitative methodology, and the data was collected by means of in-depth interviews with the aim of a deep understanding of factors that have affected the research objects. The interviews were focused on several predetermined issues; however, an opportunity was given to the interviewees to tell their story freely, with their words and in their own way and to put forward unpredictable things. In their interviews, the teachers who have developed in their professional career were asked to detail their professional life story. The stories were analyzed by a filed rounded theory approach, which is directed at creating a new theory from data collected in the field. The research findings present three personal development patterns of teachers: career motivated pattern, career driven pattern and career opportunities pattern. Recommendations were suggested regarding teachers' empowerment on the part of their superiors to raise the level of motivation for self-development.

Keywords: personal development, professional development, professional development pattern, career motivated, career driven, career opportunities.

MODELE PERSONALE ÎN DEZVOLTAREA CARIEREI DIDACTICE LA PROFESORII DIN ISRAEL: MOTIVAŢIA CARIEREI, MERSUL CARIEREI ŞI OPORTUNITĂŢI DE CARIERĂ

Scopul cercetării este de a expune modele de dezvoltare personală în cariera didactică în rândul cadrelor didactice din şcolile primare. Studiul a fost realizat prin utilizarea unei metodologii calitative, iar datele au fost colectate prin intermediul interviului. Datele obţinute au fost analizate în baza unor teorii ce prevăd trei modele de dezvoltare personală a cadrelor didactice: carieră model motivat, model de carieră condus şi oportunităţi de carieră pattern. Recomandările adresate managerilor se referă la necesitatea sporirii nivelului de motivaţie pentru autodezvoltare.

Cuvinte-cheie: dezvoltare a personalului, dezvoltare profesională, pattern al dezvoltării profesionale, motivare pentru carieră, dezvoltarea/ evoluţia carierei, oportunităţi de carieră.

Preface

The research purpose is to expose the patterns of personal development amongst teachers who started their professional career as teachers in Primary schools, and hereafter the concepts of motivation and personal development will be defined.

Motivation

Motivation relates to the willingness to invest time and effort in certain activity, even when difficulties, high tolls and non-succeeding are entailed. According to this definition, motivation is an inner mental entity and its strength can still be appreciated in various manners, for example, by conversations and verbal reports, or by following up on behavior expressions, such as investing effort and time in relevant actions, attendance and accuracy, diligence and effort despite hardship or failure, response to challenges and sticking to commitments (Asor, 2005). It is customary to distinguish between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Dessi & Ryan, 2000). Intrinsic motivation – performing of activity for the sake of satisfaction hidden in it rather than other outcomes such as motivation for fun or for the sake of challenge. Extrinsic motivation – performing of activity that leads to a certain result, such as motivation out of incentives, pressures or external rewards.

Personal development

In the research literature (Maslow 1954, 1970; Rogers 1959, 1961; Sligman 2005; Ben-Shahar, 2008; Kaplan, 2011), personal development is defined as an improvement process a person is going through, during his life. While physical existence is common to all people, personal development is unique to each individual, in accordance with his advancement aspiration towards gaining achievements and/or towards achieving the goals one has set for himself. Personal development is expressed throughout self-realization that is defined as

an inherent tendency of a person to be the best self his inherent nature allows him to. In actual fact, self-realization is a person's powerful motivation to advance himself and to improve his destiny. The extent of self-realization is a function of realization of a person's ambitions in a field of life that is focal for him, and this field can be learning, family, leisure or work. The process of personal development includes a person's sense of faith in his ability to make decisions and to solve his problems (Keiser & Shen, 2000; London, 1993; Muijs & Harris, 2003). Personal development is accompanied by an increased feeling of self-respect, self-evaluation, self-assurance and self-capability (Reitzug, 1994; Steinem,1992).

Personal development in school

In professional literature, personal development is being revealed as a pattern which theoreticians use to explain organizational efficiency (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). A working individual or alternatively, a teacher in school, is a professional and during his work he goes through processes of personal development (Rice & Schneider, 1994). A teacher who is active and confident in his power will be active beyond the range of his job description; he will initiate, invent and contribute to the success of an organization or a school he works in and to his personal success (Irwin, 1996).

Research purpose

The research purpose is to reveal the patterns of personal development amongst teachers who started the teaching career as teachers in Primary schools. The study wishes to examine how those teachers interpret their experiences as teachers, and how this interpretation assists the explaining of a phenomenon of personal development. The question the study attempts to answer is what are the factors that motivate teachers for personal development and what are the implications of personal development on their work motivation?

The method

The study employs a qualitative paradigm and within it the strategy of life stories as a research of personal development phenomenon amongst teachers who started their teaching career as teachers in Primary schools. A need of performing a qualitative research is derived from the fact that an analysis of life stories is a method which relays on the natural knowledge of a person himself (Liblich, 1993).

The sample

The study included 10 teachers who have personally developed in their teaching career, with at least 8 years of experience in teaching. The selection of teachers was done out of the researcher's familiarity with position holders in the educational system.

The tools

Life stories of teachers who have developed personally, were exposed during the study by means of an in-depth interview (Shkedi, 2003) which lasted for about two hours. The interview included open questions that had a frame of relation to the subject related to the research purpose. The teachers were asked to think reflectively about their professional development. The interview enabled teachers to describe their professional life in the various positions they have had filled, starting with their entering the teaching position and in other duties.

The process

In the interviews, teachers were asked to describe the experience of their personal development in teaching career and to spread out their pedagogic theories. The qualitative data were analyzed in a thematic analysis and in orderly stages, out of intention to understand things as they are presented by the interviewees (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The primary stage was the first analysis, were the interviews were divided into parts while each one relates to the context of things, as presented by the interviewee. Each of these parts was defined by a name that reflects its context. In the second stage, the mapping analysis, the different parts were organized into categories common to all interviews. In the third stage, the focusing analysis, the researcher focused on same categories that looked significant to the research purpose (Shkedi, 2003; 2011).

Findings

Based on an analysis of the data that was collected amongst the teachers who have developed in their teaching career, three distinct patterns were found, which components are different from one another and are characterized by the teachers in different forms. These are: career motivators, career driven and career opportunities. The central question that was examined is, which motives are related by each interviewee to professional development in describing of his experiences starting with choosing teaching as a profession, through the motives to reduce teaching hours for another duty and ending with the motivation level for further professional development. Following is a description of each of these.

Career driven

A career driven pattern is characterized by position holders whose professional career is driven by external factors. 6 teachers out of 10 were classified to this category (60% of the interviewees).

The phenomenon of being driven by an external figure is starting with choosing of teaching as a profession. Teachers' turning to teaching is originated by social or family pressure rather than by a free choice to become teachers. For instance, this is how Ruthy describes it:

"The reason I went to teaching is my mother [...] and my spouse who is presently my husband, pressured on me to go to teaching. I wanted to study accounting. And... they said to me: "No! Teaching is better, try it" (Ruthy). Yafitas well, like Ruthy, emphasizes that choosing teaching as a profession is not out of a personal choice but a social pressure.

"[…] Insome way I can't say I had it within me and I knew I am going to teaching. There was family pressure" (Yafit).

The transition from a position of a teacher to another one, was also brought about by external figures. Some of the teachers were led to the position by the principal and some by the inspector. This is how Smadar describes it:

"[…] It is not like I wanted [to be vice-principal] the principal marked me. One day he came and told me: 'you are going to principals' course'. I told him: 'tell me, are you out of your mind? I am only few years in teaching'. He told me: 'go, study and see that it is not so bad […]" (Smadar).

The continuation of Smadar's personal development was also from external factors. The transition from Primary school to High school was done through the school inspector and as well, receiving the duty of vice-principal in a school she was transferred to, was done by the school principal.

"[…] In the Master's degree studies, an inspector who was looking for teachers for a new school studied with me. She [the inspector] asked me: 'Smadar, what do you think about it [moving to Junior High school]?' I told her: 'what are you saying?' she answered: 'listen, in a new school […] you will be able to develop, there are lots of position in High school'. I told [the inspector]: 'you know what, I think I will come'. That's it. This is how I got to teach in high school. After a very short acquaintance [in the new school] the principal told me: 'you will be my vice principal', so I became in fact the vice principal […]" (Smadar).

Smadar's conduct along the professional career teaches that she is driven by external figures and does not motivate her career independently. Ruthy like Smadar, does not initiate in order to receive a position but rather waits for the first step will be made on the part of the organizational environment.

"I started as a class teacher. I taught mathematics in an additional class… after two years a senior mathematics coordinator retired and I was offered the role. There was a tender but […laughter] I was hinted that I should participate [laughter]" (Ruthy). The position of vice principal was given to Ruthyalso through her superiors. This role was not at all in her statement of intents. It seems that Ruthy is fills the expectations of her superiors.

"This [being vice-principal] is not something I said 'I want to be vice-principal', no! [ah…] The vice principal position was in a tender with 4 candidates, but somewhere I was expected to participate in the tender" (Ruthy).

Similarly to Smadar and Ruthy, Mor speaks of similar things. She emphasizes that she simply didn't evaluate herself as being capable of donating beyond a position of teacher. The inspector was the one who pushed her to personal development.

"I was developing without knowing, I had the ability to advance outside of the school […] the person who knew me was the school inspector […]. She [the inspector] made a condition that should I remain in teaching I would have to give a day for instruction of teachers […]" (Mor).

Career opportunities pattern

Similarly to the career driven pattern, this pattern is characterized by the fact that teachers' career is motivated by external factors. However, as differently from it, occasional incidents are lying behind professional development. These are only 2 teachers (20% of the interviewees).

The reason Dana turned to teaching is due to an opportunity that fell into her lap. Dana does not check the extent of compatibility between the position and her abilities and skills and she accepts the offer. It seems that turning to teaching is completely incidental.

"[…] In the draft office, I was offered it [teaching] as an option. […] I got there, I did a course […] when I was discharged I have already had two years of teaching studies and then I completed as a civilian a third year and I had a teacher's diploma, so I started working" (Dana).

The transition from a position of a teacher to a different one, like choosing teaching as a profession, was done following incidents which have occurred and they encountered on their path. These teachers do not advance in their teaching career as a result of their initiative or their choosing it.

"Three years before I went to study, there was a tender for vice-principal position in a school. I felt I was very suitable to the position and I submitted myself [for the tender]. In retrospect I can say that I approached it in good faith. I didn't understand what was going on underneath […]. As a matter of fact, it was sealed and clear that someone else accepts it. That 'someone else' was a friend of mine. I literally got a resounding slap in the face […]. Emotionally it was uncomfortable for me to be there anymore… it shocked me. I said to myself: 'that's it, you have to find something else for yourself'" (Dana).

The "shock" from the incident led Dana to look for something else. Her negative emotions following the incident, led her to the conclusion that she can't stay in that place anymore. Dana decides to leave the place but did not know where she was headed to. She was not interested and checking other options before leaving. As a proceeding of same conduct, Dana doesn't execute her plans but rather waits for a "hidden force" to act for her.

"Now I am on principals' course, […] I don't know whether I will go for it now […meaning] if I will run for a tender in one year or in two years (…) so when it will come, it will happen. It should happen." (Dana).

Sagie's professional advancement, like Dana's, has not happen as a result of personal decision but rather following an incident that has occurred. The sabbatical year pulled in studies of educational counseling for her, and from these a transition from a teacher to a counselor has begun. It must be said that choosing counseling as a study course was not done out of examination of the extent of compatibility between future position and her personal abilities and skills but is rather quite incidental. Sagie intended to study something else and found herself study counseling.

"It all started in a sabbatical year […] I felt I needed to rest. And then the thoughts came: 'what do I do [in the sabbatical year]?' In the first stage I thought I would take courses for fun and enjoyment for the soul […] it looked like there is also a need for a degree on the way. I joined a friend from work, I realized she is also looking for something to study. We saw educational counseling. We thought this [the counseling] might contribute at home with the private children and something with which we can remain in the educational system but in a slightly different niche. I went to study […] There was already the first stage of the change" (Sagie).

Career motivators pattern

This pattern, in difference from the previous two patterns is characterized by motivations for professional development being interior. An educated decision-making while considering compatibility between the position and abilities, skills and personal preferences are from the expressions of this pattern. 2 teachers belong to this pattern (20% of the interviewees).

The choosing of these teachers of teaching as a profession derives from their free will. It was clear for them that they want to work as teachers.

"I can't say what exactly brought me [to teaching], but I have always known that this is what I want to do. It was always clear to me that I will be a teacher, I don't know how to explain why. But it was clear that I will be a teacher" (Oren).

Oren states that the occupation of teaching was derived from personal decision alone and emphasizes that he has always known this was his favorite occupation. To Simcha, like Oren, it was clear that the occupation she wants is teaching. This suggests that for them, the motives for teaching are an intrinsic motivation, as they are derived from their personal will.

"[…] When I was discharged [from the army] and I thought what I want to study, it was clear to me I am going to study teaching. And then what was needed was only to choose the field. What do I like? The field I liked most was science […] and when I started studying, there was no study orientation in science […] I felt I was not connecting […] I wanted the field of science. I knew this was the field I want and it does not exist […] I went to the dean and asked him: 'if I want to open a study orientation, what does it mean?' he answered: 'we have a great instructor for science teaching, if you find a group of 10 girls that are willing [to study science]

I will open a study orientation next year'. I said: 'excellent'. And this is what I did. I put to work all my charms and my persuasion skills on the girls in the group. We were a group of 40 trainees, I convinced girls that have no connection to science (laughter)[…]" (Simcha).

Simcha's professional orientation appears both from her choosing of teaching and from her conduct during studies. Simcha knows that she definitely wants to practice teaching in general and science teaching in particular. She does everything to achieve science teaching, even with the price of convincing her friends. From her conduct it can be concluded that all means are dedicated to the target. She does not give in to limitation coming up in her environment and does not compromise. It can be said that career constitutes for Simcha a central motive as is suitable for the career motivated. A transition from a position of a teacher to a different one was done out of intrinsic motivation. Simcha and Oren knew how to independently identify the right time for professional advancement and even acted for it. These teachers didn't wait for an external figure that will offer them a position and not for an opportunity to fall into their lap.

"After 14 years I felt that I was exhausted and my patience has run out. As soon as I felt I don't give a proper answer to the kids which they deserve […] I decided this was a time for change […] I decided I will leave the system, I looked through wanted adds [in the newspapers] and saw there is nothing that I know how to do as good as this [teaching] and then I decided to move forward, enrolled a principals' course and was accepted and… at the end of the first year [of principals' course] I applied myself for a tender and received a school […]" (Oren).

The decision to resign from the educational system following a feeling of exhaustion from the position, looking for alternative positions, the insight that teaching is the most suitable job for him and the offering of candidacy in a tender for management indicates an intrinsic motivation. From the way Oren conducts it seems he does not wait for his superiors to identify him as is coming up from the "career driven" pattern, and does not wait for opportunities as comes up from "career opportunities" pattern. He listens to his heart and to the things happening in his environment and acts out of a desire for self-realization. Oren chooses a position after inspecting the existing possibilities according to the extent of their suitability to him. In a view for the future, Oren is certain he will keep on progressing and developing and he also states the range of time for the next position. The fact that he is content with current position and the fact that he hasn't yet fulfilled the position he is in, does not mean he doesn't prepare himself for a scenario to come. It must be stated that Oren emphasizes in his words that the reason he doesn't know the path of advancement stems from the fact that he has not yet examined and checked existing possibilities. The meaning is that for Oren, career originates in self-orientation.

"In 10-12 years I will definitely be ripe to the next position […] right now I am still far from it. I really love what I do and I enjoy greatly what I do [ahm…]" (Oren).

Simcha could also identify the right time for a position change, the right direction for her and to take operative steps to achieve the goal.

"I started as a teacher; it was clear to me from the start I will not stay for a long time in same position, that I will do something else. […] When I felt I start getting bored… [I realized] I need something for myself, to develop, to advance, to study […]" (Simcha).

Simcha starts as a professional science teacher and as early as in beginning of the career she declares she will not remain in the position for a long time. She well recognizes the symptoms of position fulfillment: boredom, repeatingness and realizes it is time for professional development. She does not wait for opportunities or for external factors to develop but initiates them by herself. Despite the fact that "after eight years of teaching, there was an opportunity to go to principals' course (the principal suggested to me), I said 'yes I am going'. Not that I intended to become a principal after eight years, but I said: 'this is an opportunity to learn'. I went to principals' course. I enjoyed the studying very much, and the process, and I said I need to wait some more time, this is not my time [to manage] especially from personal/ familial considerations. Inside [I felt that] I wanted […]" (Simcha).

Simcha accepts the offer of the school principal to go to a principals' course. She understands that the offer conceals a potential for professional development in a future view. Nonetheless, she puts family considerations into action and decides to postpone managing for later time out of these reasons. From the way Simcha conducts, it is obvious that she is quite active regarding her career. Even if the activism is not always expressed in operative steps, it is apparent in making considerations of personal gain that are an obvious evidence of career being a key component.

"When I finished the principals' course I wanted to study something and make a change. […] I said: 'let's go to counseling [I studied for Master's degree in educational counseling …] and then it was clear that the first career change I do is a change from teaching to counseling. In counseling I haven't fulfilled myself yet" (Simcha).

As was already said, Simcha knows not only to identify the right moment for a change in position but also knows to indicate the right path for her personally and her family and from the aspect of her personal preference. She takes the called-for steps for achieving the goal she wants. When she feels she is bored she realizes she needs a change. She operates rationally in choosing each of the positions she has taken upon herself and continues stating that current position is also temporary.

Discussion

Motivation for work constitutes an important and essential ingredient that keeps teachers in their work. From many studies (Maslow, 1954, 1970; Alderfer, 1969; McClelland, 1961; Vroom, 1964; Locke, 1968; Adams, 1963, 1965; Ryan &Deci, 2000; Ryan & Netta, 2009; Madjar 2001; Katz, 2002; Fink, 2012) as in current study what comes up is that motivation constitutes a driving force. There are teachers who are motivated in their work by the teaching profession, the love for children and perception of teaching as a mission, which is perceived in the professional literature as intrinsic motivation (Asur, 2005; Ryan&Netta, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000), and therefore they don't have motivation for personal development beyond their current status. As opposed to them, there are teachers that personal development and climbing up the ladder of professional advancement motivate them and keep them in their work. Allegedly the requested conclusion is that professional development is originated in intrinsic motivation for personal development, meaning, teachers that have intrinsic motivation will develop professionally and teachers that don't have intrinsic motivation will not develop (Asur, 2005; Ryan&Deci,2000; Ryan & Netta, 2009). The interviews with teachers who have advanced in the teaching career present a much more complex picture. From description of a professional development of these teachers, three types of motivation reactions were found: career motivators, career driven and career opportunities. The finding by which only 20% are career motivators as opposed to 80% from the teachers are career driven and career opportunities, teaches that the source of professional development is not in intrinsic motivation only, and that the intrinsic motivation that exists in the majority of teachers who have advanced professionally needed an external figure. The fact that an external factor believed in them and in their ability and convinced them to develop professionally and also a fact that they received an opportunity led them to acknowledge their powers. It might be that without recognition of the abilities and skills by external factors and without the opportunities, those teachers would have remained in their position as teachers along the career. The meaning that 20% of the teachers advanced in the career out of intrinsic motivation is that there is a need of change in relation of superiors (principals/inspectors) to the issue of their teachers' professional development. They must transmit to teachers a faith in their abilities and skills. The representative sample of teachers in the study can teach that there are many teachers in the educational system who are afraid of change and wait for an external factor in order to advance. Therefore superiors must not address the issue of professional development as an issue originated by intrinsic motivation alone, but rather they must acknowledge the power hidden within them in motivation for professional development of their teachers. They must create supportive working environment that will raise the level of self-capability and self-efficiency of teachers (Bandora, 1977; Katz, 2002). It can be said that the nature of requested relationships between a teacher and a principal is "a constructive leadership" (Serjiovani, 2002) which essence is creating conditions that enable teachers to experience satisfaction at work and to realize their personal and professional potential.

The fact that making the decision for professional development was not involved with consideration of alternatives amongst 80% of the teachers and there was no resistance to the acceptance of a position offered to them, teaches that aspiration for personal development exists in everyone but there are some types that need assistance in order to realize that aspiration. Theoretical support can be found in the theories of Maslow (1954, 1970) and Rogers (1959, 1961) by which the source of personal development is in inherent tendency for self-realization that means being the best self one's inherited nature allows him. In actual fact, self-realization is a person's powerful motive to enhance himself and to improve his destiny. The assumption is that all teachers have motivation to advance and develop in professional career be it external or internal, strengthens the importance of teachers' courses of development. It seems that in the school system, there are subject coordinators, age-group coordinators and more positions to be filled. It would be correct to direct all teachers to develop professionally, at least within the limits of a school.

The importance of development in teaching intensifies in the light of post-modern life reality that is characterized by lack of stability and by multiple changes (Aviram, 2000, 2010; Lavi, 2000). A reality in which the term "career" receives a different meaning. Not one career anymore, which is steady along ones' life, but a dynamic and changing career. A reality in which the working week shortens and leisure time gets longer, and a reality in which employees don't have to go to the working place but can also work from home, work should receive a different meaning then it had before. Presently, people consider the work as something that enables personal development and self-realization. Therefore, post-modern reality characterizations should find their expression in the educational system as well. The teaching profession should include within it a development horizon that will be expressed in teachers' advancement courses to prevent functioning in a condition of discontent, cause for motivation amongst the teachers and will create optimal functioning. The essentiality and importance of motivation in teaching is supported in studies that indicate the relation between motivation of teachers for teaching and the motivation of pupils for learning and their study achievements (Ofoegbu, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2009). Therefore, the motivation of teachers in the educational system is not an interest of teachers alone but also an interest of the organization (Bar-Haim, 2004; Robbins, 2000; Steers & Porter. 1987).

Thus, in a systematic plain, cultivation and personal enhancement programs can be formulated that lead to development of self-awareness of points of strength of teachers and to plan for them an occupational horizon. On a personal level, it is possible to focus on personal counseling with teachers regarding their feelings, following the position while examining personal considerations and personal doubts and the opportunities hidden in teaching for each one of those having doubts.

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