



Examining the role of motivation in shaping future primary school teachers' professional competence in Kazakhstan

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Abstract

The issue of developing the professional competence of teachers is one of the priorities in the Kazakhstani education system. One of the most significant challenges in the context of improving abilities is increasing students' motivation. This study aims to examine the role of motivation in shaping future primary school teachers' professional competence. The methods of multivariate correlation analysis, a method for finding structure diagrams of motives and their integral subsystems with their subsequent analysis were used to conduct the study. The research was conducted at the Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University (Kyzylorda, Kazakhstan). A sample of 57 participants was used for the study. The majority of respondents were female (92.36%) and male (7.64%). According to the study, it has been found that the main reason for studying among students is to receive vocational training in order to find a good and well-paid job which provides the opportunity to use personal abilities and receive higher education in their specialty. Following the findings of this study, practical recommendations are offered to increase student motivation as a factor in developing professional competence. The developed assessment-criteria diagnostic tools can be used in pedagogical monitoring in universities and in advanced training courses for teachers.

Keywords: Examining, Future teachers, Motivation, Professional activity, Professional competence, Shaping.

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Contents

1. Introduction	395
2. Research Content	396
3. Method	396
4. Findings and Discussion	397
5. Recommendations	402
6. Conclusion	402
7. The Suggestions and Future Implications	402
References	402

Contribution of this paper to the literature

This study adds to the existing literature by investigating the role of motivation in shaping future primary school teachers' professional competence to develop tools for measuring motivation and, as a result, diagnosing its dynamics with external factors of activity and the internal as well as how Kazakh students determine how motivated they are for future professional activity performance.

1. Introduction

Forming competency is a prerequisite for education that is gaining popularity as a result of our country adopting the Bologna Process qualification system. The fundamental differences in the qualification framework from the usual system of post-Soviet education can be considered to be the focus on training proactive, possessing leadership qualities and taking responsibility for the professional decisions of specialists.

A capable competent who can autonomously and creatively solve professional problems and tasks, integrate knowledge and pedagogical skills in various contexts and be capable of creativity and professional self-improvement is needed in Kazakhstan's modern, dynamically changing schools (Nagima et al., 2023; Ospankulov, Zhumabayeva, & Nurgaliyeva, 2023).

Few teachers in Kazakhstan are able to meet the high expectations set by society for them. However, a significant number of graduates believe teaching to be a challenging profession. As a result, predictions show that a relatively small percentage of graduates attend pedagogical universities.

Thus, according to the admissions committee of Korkyt Ata University in Kyzylorda in 2022, 50% of students at the school had “satisfactory” grades. This indicates an insufficient level of school preparation for admitted students which is characterized by the following indicators: low level of proficiency in the content of specialized disciplines (level of training); a low level of development of general educational skills in educational activities (level of learning ability), including the level of proficiency in intellectual operations and a low level of development of reflection (students' assessment of their capabilities and abilities vision of the problems of their training). Thus, the starting level of incoming freshmen is very low.

As a result of studying the learning process at a university, it was found that the motivation factor for successful studies turned out to be stronger than the intelligence factor (Liem, 2021; Steinmayr, Weidinger, & Wigfield, 2018). According to another study, many students are motivated to go to university not because they want to learn but they want to get a higher education diploma (Hudig, Scheepers, Schippers, & Smeets, 2023; Von Suchodoletz, Rahn, Nadyukova, Barza, & Achtziger, 2020). If we proceed from the section “tasks of professional activity of a bachelor” in the standard, the inevitable conclusion is that a bachelor's qualification, for example, “primary education,” is justified for professional activity immediately after graduation. Obtaining this goal appears difficult for two reasons: the time required to prepare for graduation with a bachelor's degree is short (4 years in total) and the learning objectives are broad and do not aim at mastering a specific set of professional competencies that a graduate must apply in their professional activities.

Thus, the theoretical and practical preparedness of a specialist to carry out teaching tasks is an indicator of professional competence for a teacher especially a primary school teacher. This is consistent with the claims made by Gümüs (2022), Supardam, Prayitno, and Wimatra (2021) and Andayani et al. (2022) that sustaining a teacher's competitiveness requires regular evaluation and assessment of professional ability. In our opinion, we can talk about students' motivation for future professional activities or their motivational readiness for the requirements of the profession. A timely diagnosis of professional inclinations and interests is an essential factor in predicting satisfaction with the profession in the future. It has been proven that there is a certain connection between personality traits and professional interests. At the same time, an individual's personality formations such as how their character aligns with the professional requirements, skills, and interests of a future teacher will be crucial for the development of motivation in addition to their understanding of their professional interests (Barni, Danioni, & Benevene, 2019).

The provisions of substantive and procedural motivational theories explain individual behavior equally based on both situational and individual factors related to the needs of the learners (Puhakka, Nokelainen, & Pylväs, 2021). Second, not every theory of motivation is designed to allow for the empirical testing of its predictions (Bergmark, Lundström, Manderstedt, & Palo, 2018).

Therefore, increasing students' motivation is one of the most important problems from the perspective of improving competencies (Lavrijsen, Vansteenkiste, Boncquet, & Verschuere, 2022). In the process of teaching students, there should be an awareness of the value of professional competence and the effect of its practical application which ensures the personal activity of students and the possibility of a transition from cognitive to professional motivation (Gamage, Dehideniya, & Ekanayake, 2021). However, the challenge lies in evaluating this attribute which not only signifies an individual's motivational tendencies but also the efficacy of future professionals (Barber & Klauda, 2020).

We offer a new perspective on research to explore how Kazakh students determine how motivated they are for future professional activity performance. We examine the formation of a student's holistic professional activity with all its structural components based on the previous studies by Wigfield and Koenka (2020) and Bowden, Tickle, and Naumann (2021) because of the lack of measurement of the key factors of competence in previous studies (Wallo, Kock, Lundqvist, & Coetzer, 2020).

1.1. Research Questions

Q1: What types of student motives are included in the hierarchical structure of motivation?

Q2: What are the content features of the sources of motivation and motivators of learners?

Q3: How do Kazakhstan's future primary school teachers rate the development of their professional competence?

1.2. Objectives

The study aims to examine the role of motivation in shaping future primary school teachers' professional competence.

1.3. Significance of the Study

The paper's contribution is a critical examination of motivation in shaping future primary school teachers' professional competence in Kazakhstan. Modern pedagogical practice is confronted with the need to constantly improve a teacher's professional competence and insufficient study of the problem of teacher motivation for creative development and self-improvement, conditions, factors and mechanisms for the formation of adequate motivation for professional growth. Low levels of professional satisfaction drastically diminish the efficacy of professional endeavors and are usually an indicator of staff turnover in educational institutions. This leads to negative economic consequences for the country. In this regard, the importance of the issue of developing positive professional motivation among future teachers is undeniable. An analysis of teacher training practice shows that the educational process in modern pedagogical universities does not sufficiently stimulate the individual and professional development of students. This study is important because the components of teachers' motivation for professional development and the possibilities for their development in a university setting have been identified and systematically, qualitatively and quantitatively described. The result includes a comprehensive description of the system of motivation for the professional development of a teacher, its originality and its hierarchical structure. The significance of the research findings lies in the identification, description and systematization of the content and directions of the impact that teacher motivation has on the effectiveness of professional growth and the success of teaching activities.

2. Research Content

2.1. Literature Review An analysis of the concepts, approaches and substantive components of professional competence presented in the literature was carried out within the framework of this aspect. Modern approaches and interpretations of professional competence are very different (Mashizume, Watanabe, Fukase, Zenba, & Takahashi, 2020; Olsen & Jentoft, 2023). Competence is a set of properties of a subject that are manifested in activity. The main activity of a student is educational but focused on acquiring a profession (Schneider, 2019). Therefore, the assumption that a future teacher's competence can only be developed through activities both professional and educational is reasonable. Researchers view "competence" as a system with motivation, intelligence and skills recognised as its primary components (Antera, 2021; Salman, Ganie, & Saleem, 2020). Researchers identify various components within the concept of "professional competence," including methodological, knowledge-based, motivational, didactic, reflective, and others indicating that it is a complex concept with multiple facets (Cattaneo & Motta, 2021).

The motivational component of our study consists of a set of professional (professional interest, orientation towards a selected specialization) reasons that govern and lend purposeful character to action. Researchers discovered that motivation and intelligence have a significant impact on other aspects of competence (Darman & Adha, 2021; Mulang, 2021).

Jones and Schüz (2022) emphasizes that a motive is a stable formation of the motivational sphere. However, the terms "motivation" and "motivational sphere" are not well-defined in the study. Motivation for educational activity is considered a system of conscious motives for educational activity and their value bases vary depending on the period of study (Urhahne & Wijnia, 2023). Each stage is characterized by certain changes in the composition of motivation, the structure and degree of expression of motives, changes in the "weight" of motives and motivational attitudes, the dominance of certain motives as well as methods and conditions for their implementation when performing professional tasks and activities.

The concept of "professional motivation" can have two interpretations (Andah et al., 2021). This is due to the analysis of the stages of professionalization of the individual, at each of which the leading mechanisms for determining professional activity change, its goals, and accordingly, motivation change (Hirschi & Koen, 2021; Yağan, Özgenel, & Baydar, 2022). In the early phases, if the subject's aim is to select a career, become proficient in it and adjust to its demands, he can work to modify the field's parameters and criteria later on. The first definition of "professional motivation" has to do with professional decision-making and is similar to the idea of "reason for choosing a career" (Kass & Miller, 2018).

The profession can be viewed as the object; the means by which the need is satisfied if the purpose is understood as an objectified need. It should be noted that the concept of "professional motivation" will be similar in content to the concept of "motivational attitude" towards professional activity in the absence of the opportunity to implement professional activity "here and now" (for example, among applicants, first-year students in the first months of study) (Onturk & Yildiz, 2020). In this case, professional motivation like the motivational attitude will include potential motives for future professional activity that have been formed but are in a latent state of readiness to satisfy needs and realize intentions. Moreover, these potential motives will be more desirable than fully consistent with the meaning and content of the chosen profession. We will consider motivational orientation towards professional activity as a potential motive that acts as a motivator for choosing a profession that will be able to satisfy the latent needs of the individual.

3. Method

The basis of the study was the methods of multivariate correlation analysis, a method for finding structure diagrams of motives and their integral subsystems with their subsequent analysis (Boon, Den Hartog, & Lepak, 2019). An important feature of all these methods is that they can be implemented in combination with each other for the processing of the same arrays of empirical and experimental data (Cárdenas, Martínez-Seoane, & Amero, 2020). This creates grounds for verifying the results obtained by different methods and accordingly increases the degree of validity of the general conclusions of the study.

3.1. Sample for Research

The research was conducted at the Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University (Kyzylorda, Kazakhstan). The representativeness of the sample is distributed according to the academic year (2019–2023) when the study was conducted. The main idea of the experimental methodology is as follows: groups are recruited for the designated specialty so in this experiment, there are no control groups and the results were obtained only from the experimental group for 4 years. From the total sample ($N = 57$), groups studying in the program "6B01303: Pedagogy and methodology of primary education" were formed which we tentatively called "A" and "B": 30 participants (group "A") and 27 students (group "B"). The majority of respondents were female (92.36%) and male (7.64%).

3.2. Research Instruments

Diagnosis of both individual motives and main motivational subsystems was carried out using (1) a questionnaire on "motivation for professional activity" (2) a questionnaire to determine motivational sources and (3) the "motivational profile" test.

The questionnaires embodied several techniques that helped increase the degree of objectivity and reliability of the results. In addition, it is possible to quantify the general degree of development of motivation and reveal the patterns of the structural organization of motivational subsystems. Therefore, it is possible to solve two problems simultaneously: effective and structural diagnostics. At the same time, the techniques were subjected to several basic procedures. The final version of the method was tested for validity and reliability. First-year students of Korkyt Ata University receiving education in this specialty (35 students) were tested twice with an interval of 2 weeks for the purpose of assessing the test-retest validity of the methods. The lowest satisfactory value for re-test reliability was 0.5. The values of the correlation coefficient for the expectancy scale were 0.6 and for the strength of motivation were 0.8. When assessing another type of test reliability, internal consistency is the relationship of each specific test element with the overall result. All scales of methods (valence, instrumentality and expectations) showed significant correlations (at the level of $p = 0.01$ and 0.05) with the general indicator of the strength of motivation which confirms the validity of the proposed motivating factors and reflects the contribution of each test variable to the measurement of characteristics that the tests are aimed at.

3.3. Procedures

The logic of the study involved the implementation of the following stages:

1. During the implementation of this stage, the structure of motivation for professional activity was studied which included three components: internal motivation (IM), external positive motivation (EPM) and external negative motivation (ENM). We determined each participant's motivational complex after considering the gender distribution in the group.
2. In the second stage, a diagnosis was made of motivation factors that students value highly as well as those factors that are given little weight as potential sources of satisfaction with the work performed. The test allowed us to identify students' needs and aspirations, gain some insight into the participants' motivational factors and compare the importance of these factors.
3. Next, we studied the structural organization of the professional motivation of the experiment participants. The ranking was carried out on the resulting types to conduct a rank correlation between the types in the empirically selected blocks and to find out whether there is a correlation between the types within each block. The resulting intercorrelation matrices in blocks were subjected to factor analysis.
4. At this stage, the participant's professional competence was assessed using a technological map-based assessment system that determined certification thresholds (see Table 1) and points for mastering competencies as well as the score's dependence on points (see Table 2).

Table 1. The certification thresholds.

Assessment system	Certification thresholds	Certification thresholds
Certification 1	10	22
Certification 2	23	39
Certification 3	40	60

Table 2. The points for mastering competencies and the score's dependence on points.

Score	Points
Excellent	90 or more
Good	from 75 to 89
Satisfactory	from 60 to 74

During each stage, specific didactic changes were made aimed at improving experimental work on the development of professional competence.

4. Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study on the structure of motivation are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The structure of motivation for professional activity.

Motivation	Participants (n=57)	Gr 1 (n=20)	Gr 2 (n=28)	Gr 3 (n=9)	Male (n=10)	Female (n=47)
IM > EPM > ENM	67.4	64.1	65.6	87.6	86.2	63.2
IM = EPM > ENM	10.7	20.7	7.4	-	5.24	10.8
IM < EPM > ENM						
ENM	21.9	15.2	27.0	12.4	8.56	26

We have identified the leading motivational complexes. Half (37.4%) of the participants have internal motives for professional activity. The most important things to them are their primary school work, teaching, interacting with students and striving to share their knowledge. The second group of participants is students. Along with the importance of professional work, the factor of success or career plays a role or this motive even prevails. It represents 10.7% of all surveyed participants. However, a fifth of all respondents (18.0%) have an external negative motive as their leading motive for work. The results for the age group showed that more than half of the participants (64.1%) and the second group (65.6%) have optimal internal motivation for the profession and it increases with age. Thus, in the third group, 87.6% of participants were identified as relative professionals and this group is also not interested in a career. However, a tenth of the participants have an external negative motive for their activity. In the first group, there is an interest in career growth (20.7%) and 15.2% show rejection (for various reasons) of their work. The largest number of participants with external negative motivation is observed in the second age group. Almost a quarter of all those who responded to the questionnaire turned out to be 27.0%. In the same age group, the desire for career growth and prestige decreased and was detected in only 7.4% of participants. Data from the study of motivation for professional activity among participants from a gender perspective revealed that among men with a predominance of internal motivation for professional activity, a significant majority (86.2%), there are 1.4 times more of them than among women (63.2%). The surveyed men are concerned about issues of career growth and prestige half as much as women (5.24% and 10.8%) respectively.

It is noteworthy that compared to male representatives, there are nearly four times as many female teachers (8.56% and 26.0%) who reported having external negative motivation.

Comparative data are described in Figure 1.

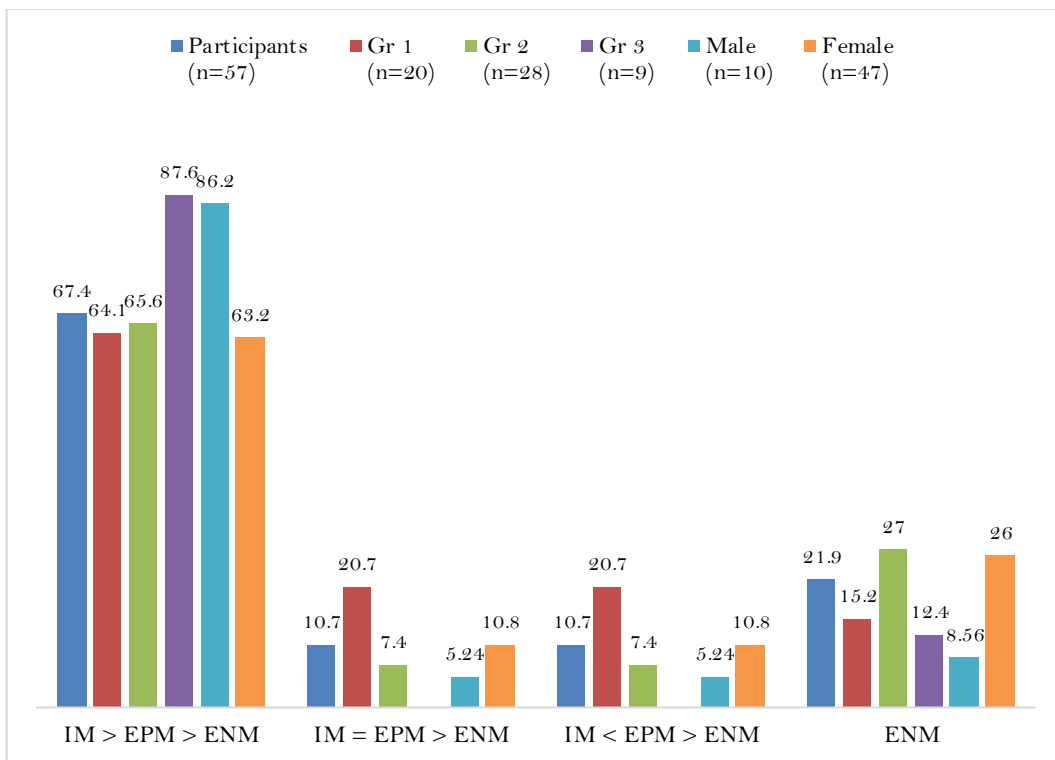


Figure 1. Participants' levels of motivation for professional activity.

The results of statistical data on participants' motivating factors for future professional activities are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The significance of differences in motivational factors between groups.

Motivator factors	Group "A"	Group "B"	U	p-level
High salary and financial incentives	34	33	338,4000	0.841
Physical working conditions	26	28	304,0000	0.411
Structuring	30	27	300,0000	0.371
Social contacts	21	25	305,4000	0.427
Relationships	22	25	238,4000	0.073
Confession	36	34	280,0000	0.282
Striving for achievement	25	24	330,4000	0.854
Power and influence	18	14	260,0000	0.143
Diversity and change	29	28	307,4000	0.448
Creativity	27	27	330,4000	0.868
Self-improvement	30	31	294,5000	0.322
Interesting and useful work	37	34	305,0000	0.432

Significant differences in motivating factors were obtained for the factor of the need to form and maintain long-term and stable relationships. Research by Martinsone and Žydzūnaite (2023) and Masoom (2021) reveal that the primary driving force behind most teachers' work is a positive attitude at school, involving students and colleagues. According to our results, this need is more pronounced among teachers working in group B. Findings from an extensive review of the data indicate that members of Group B had comparatively equal levels of professional motivation. They have high needs for interesting and useful work, recognition and high material earnings. Accordingly, a system of motivational support for teachers must be built on these factors. The basis for motivation is obvious. It can also be stated that the new wage system being introduced in schools does not satisfy

the need for high material earnings. Thus, the results obtained made it possible to identify the hierarchy of motives for the future professional activities of participants.

The basic sources of motivation of the participants were compared using the Mann-Whitney test. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Significance of differences in sources of professional motivation between groups.

Sources of motivation	Group "A"	Group "B"	U	p-level
Internal processes	26	29	198,4000	0.027
Instrumental motivation	25	27	302,4000	0.857
External concept of self	25	25	276,0000	0.615
Inner concept of self	28	32	257,4000	0.385
Goal internalization	28	31	214,0000	0.087

There were notable variations in the sources of motivation such as internal processes and goal internalization which also suggest that participants' presence depends on their future actions. Thus, participants in group "B" are more internally motivated by the process of future activity than participants in group "A." Furthermore, participants in group "B" exhibit more professional behavior as a result of internalization of the goal. In general, in the structure of motivation for teaching activities, internal motivation prevails over external motivation.

The structural analysis of motivation in Group A is shown in Figure 2. The correlation analysis method was used to process the data to construct intercorrelation matrices and corresponding structure grams.

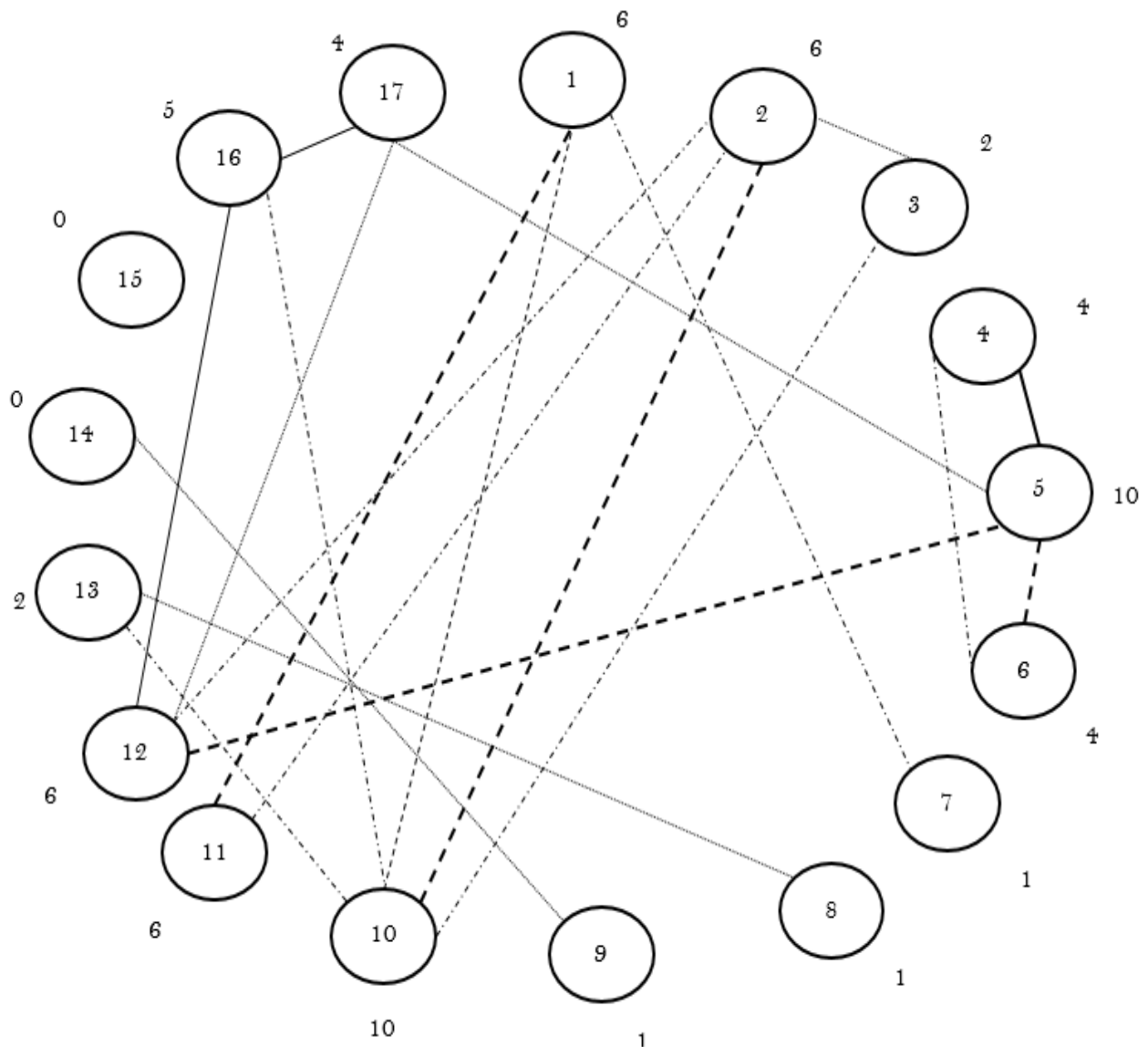


Figure 2. Structure diagram of the professional motivation of participants in group A.

The digital symbols located in the center of the circle indicate motivating factors and sources of motivation and are shown in Figure 3.

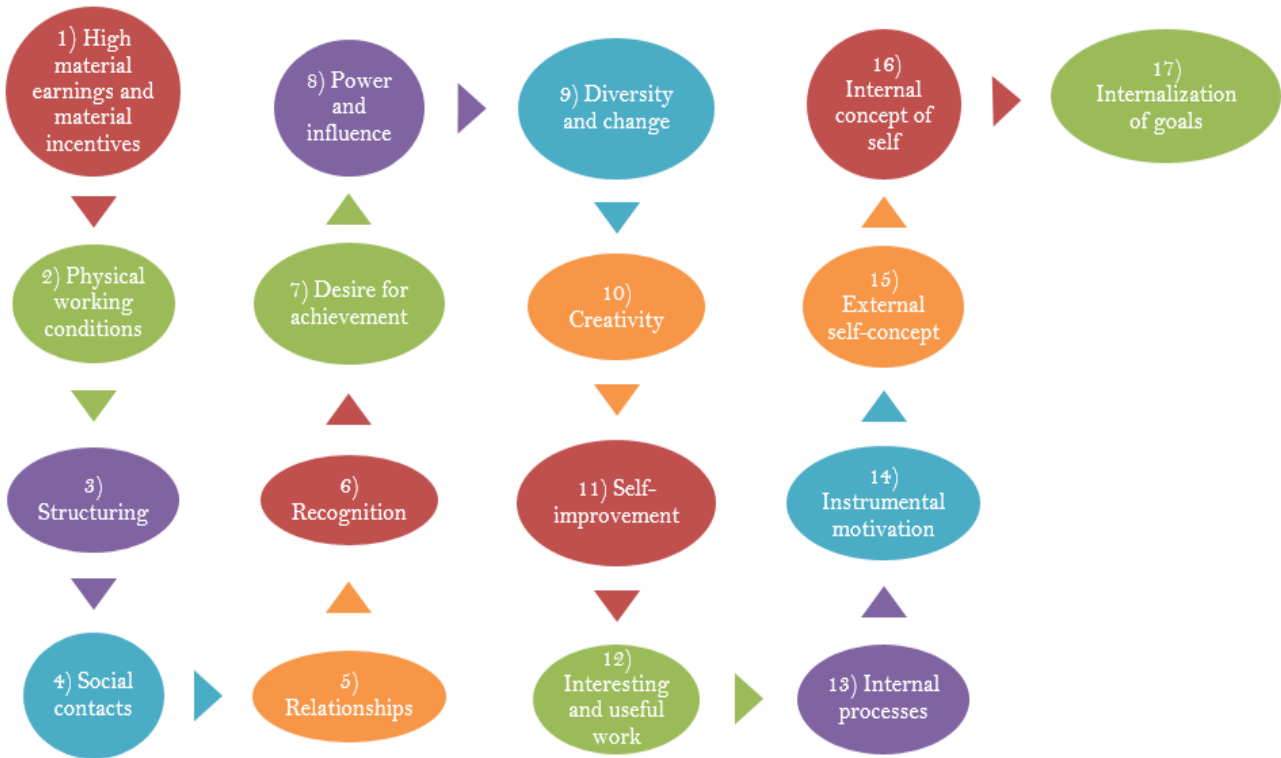


Figure 3. Digital designations of motivating factors and sources of motivation.

The following motives are connected in a remarkable way: relationships, fascinating and valuable work and internalization of the objective. The motive for relationships is inversely correlated with the pursuit of interesting and useful work. The low qualitative assessment of the work content in this sample is compensated by the dominance of the communication component of the activity. The orientation towards the fundamental objective of professional activity which aligns with the value systems of aspiring teachers is linked to both of these motivations. The compensating function of communicative motives is also manifested which determines the possible lack of public recognition of the teacher, a characteristic of modern Kazakh society.

The presented structure is also characterized by the different structural weights of the characteristics included in it. Parameters are identified that carry a relatively large load compared to others. These are motivators such as relationships and creativity. The high structural weight of the relationship motive indicates its compensatory function.

The structural load of the motive associated with the possibility of creativity in activity is formed due to a significant number of negative connections with other motives. This suggests that the innovative possibilities that primary school teachers' instructional work primarily offers may also overcome the negative elements of low pay, a lack of professional reputation, etc. in terms of motivation. This is typical only for a sample from the group "A."

The structural analysis of motivation in Group B is shown in Figure 4. The correlation analysis method was used to process the data to construct intercorrelation matrices and corresponding structure grams.

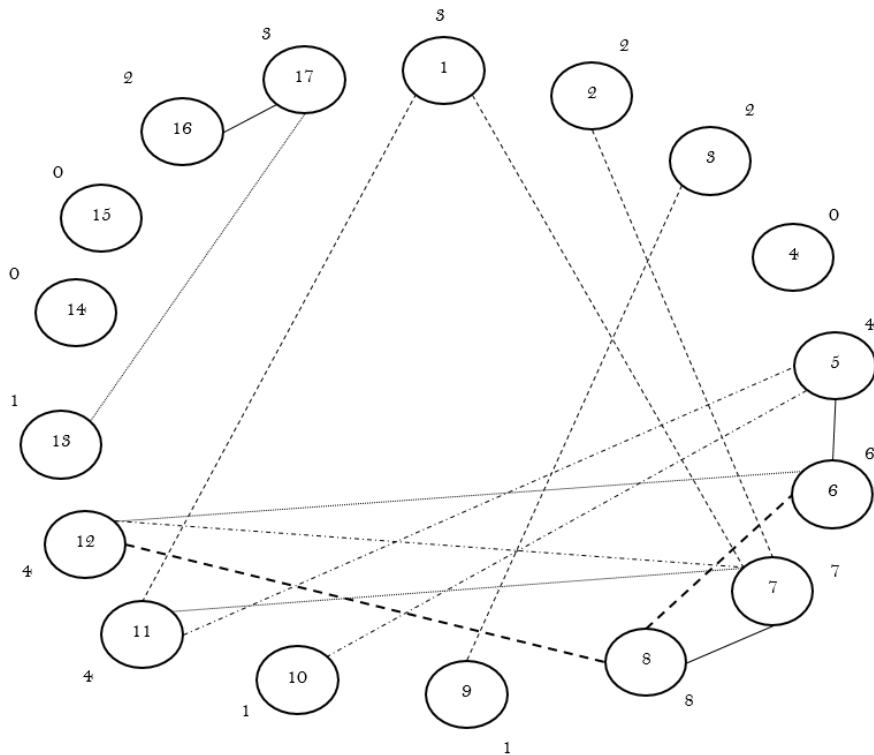


Figure 4. Structure diagram of the professional motivation of participants in group B.

1. The professional motivation structure diagram for aspiring fourth-year teachers identified two motive symptom complexes: Interesting and useful work-recognition-power and influence in which the motives of

power and recognition, power and interesting work are connected by a negative connection and the motives of recognition and interesting work by a positive connection;

- High earnings: The desire for achievement and self-improvement in which the motive of material wealth is connected by a negative connection with the motives of self-improvement and the desire for achievement and the motives of the desire to achieve and self-improvement are connected by a positive connection.

This indicates the mutual compensation of negatively related motives indicating that the absence of one compensates for the presence of the other. Thus, if a participant feels underappreciated for his professional work and sees it as insufficiently interesting and useful, he may compensate with a sense of power.

Similarly, low satisfaction with the material motive determines an increased desire for achievement and self-improvement. At the same time, the compensating factors themselves are positively related to the structure of the gram.

The greatest structural load in this structure is carried by such motives as power, influence and the desire for achievements and changes.

The structural stage showed that particular symptom complexes developed through a multitude of circumstances and qualitatively distinct linkages separated individuals in the second and fourth years of the study. This suggests that such structures are qualitatively heterogeneous.

An examination of the homogeneity and heterogeneity of the participants' motivational structures was conducted using the χ^2 criterion (116.26) in order to verify the validity of this assumption. The statistical analysis carried out showed that the criterion value is statistically significant at the level of 0.001. This means that the analyzed structures are qualitatively heterogeneous.

The results of training in experimental groups from 2019 to 2023 are summarized in a table that reflects the average scores of all certifications, points, and exam scores (see Table 6).

Table 6. The average scores of all certifications, points and exam scores.

Year of study	1 certification	2 certifications	3 certifications	Exam
2019	10.0	27.3	48.6	79.7
2020	10.0	29.4	47.8	80.2
2021	10.4	30.6	49.8	82.4
2022	12.6	27.3	49.6	84.7
2023	14.8	31.8	49.8	86.8
Average score	11.8	28.6	52.3	90.6

The table reflects the changes in the results of professional knowledge over 4 years of experimental work. Points from 10 to 22 are assigned based on the degree of knowledge and skill manifestation in the first semester as recorded in the Korkyt Ata University system. In the future, points are accumulated and by the second certification, the student can score from 23 to 39 points. By the third certification, the student is guided by 40 – 60 points which is the result that allows the student to take the exam. The student can score a total of 60 to 100 points in the exam which determines their final grade. The teacher assigns 20 to 40 points for each competency the student shows.

Figure 5 presents the data as a graph for clarity.

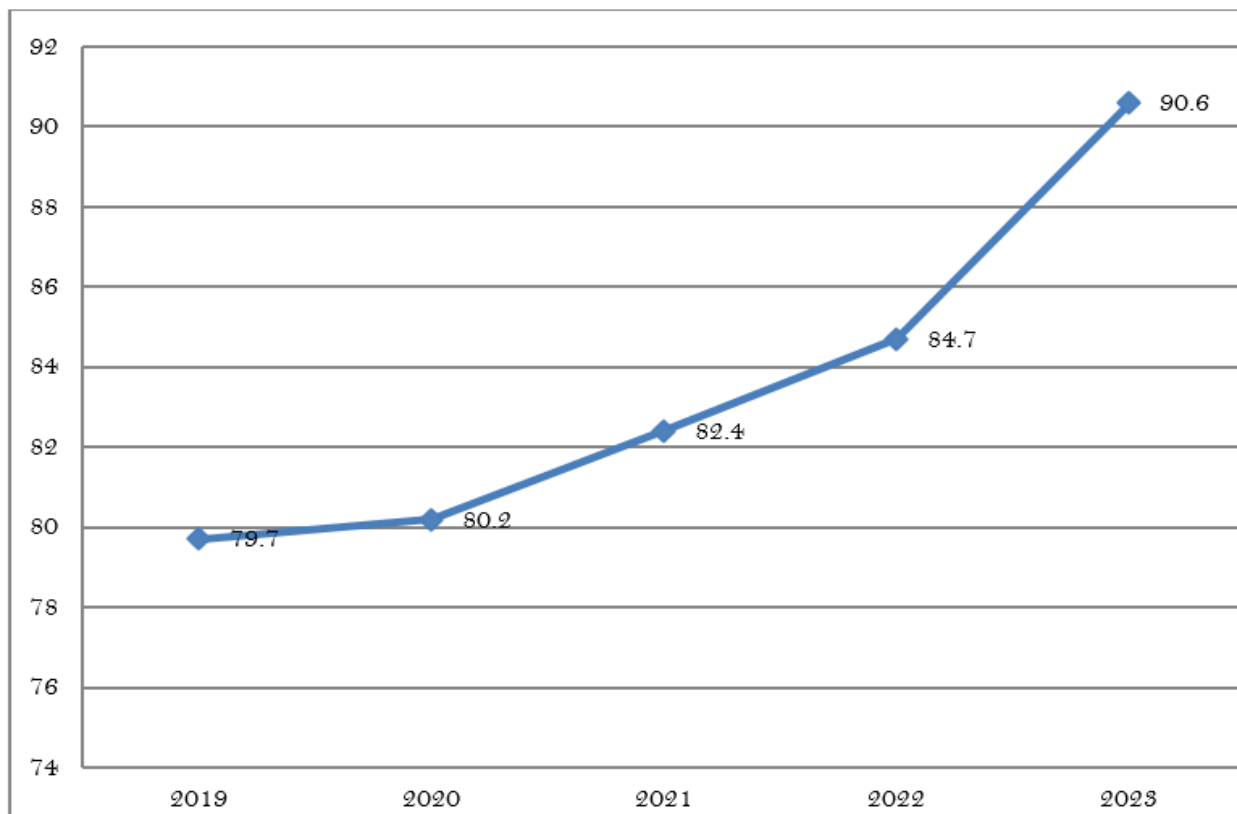


Figure 5. Diagram of the dynamics of assessing the acquisition of professional knowledge.

The diagram indicates that the experimental groups have continuously scored 85 throughout the past three years compared to a baseline score of 77. Changes in scores for 2021-2023 are in a confidence interval. The results point to the value of organizing teacher education programs based on multiple motivations which are expected to

contribute positively to teacher education completion and retention. The essence of such changes in the consolidation of motivational subsystems into a single, coordinated motivational system for both groups is to shift the vector of increasing academic performance towards professional competence formation based on the direct relationship between taking students' motivation into account and the effectiveness of this process.

5. Recommendations

A university needs to create a system of means for developing direct and indirect motives based on taking into account the motives of students choosing an educational institution and develop a monitoring program for the development of student motives in order to develop high cognitive motivation in students (as a factor in improving the quality of training). Considering the low level of their cognitive motives, it is necessary to conduct additional research to identify their capabilities based on which to include them in extracurricular activities to develop indirect motives.

We recommend using the research results in the activities of the university when organizing career guidance and counseling, conducting training with 1-4-year old students, selecting content for lectures and practical classes with students and developing elective courses that contribute to the development of the professional and educational motivation of student teachers.

The obtained empirical materials provide an opportunity for professional practitioners working in a higher educational institution to quickly solve specific problems related to motivating the professional activities of students.

6. Conclusion

It is possible to conclude that motivation is an internal driving factor in the development of professionalism and personality based on the findings of the study on the effect of motivational characteristics on the successful development of a student's professional competence and future professional activity performance. The aim of this study is to reveal the features of professional motivation among students, determine the factors of the attractiveness of the teaching profession for university students, motivation for success and failure in educational and professional activities as well as the motivational complex of professional activities of students. The relationships between the characteristics of motivation have been identified. A cross-cultural analysis of the characteristics of motivation was carried out based on a comparative study of the structure of professional motivation among students. Problems of motivation among students under the influence of culture and as an independent factor determined by the choice of the teaching profession were considered. In general, both groups of students tend to have positive motivation for success. At the same time, specific differences were identified in the structure of significant factors that determine students' attitudes towards their chosen profession and motives for educational activities. In a nutshell, it can be stated that the personal form of professional development can be represented as follows: the structure of professional motivation and its content do not remain unchanged; they change with the personal growth of a specialist who finds in it more and more new facets, new meaning and new forms within the framework of the same profession.

7. The Suggestions and Future Implications

The transformation of professional motivation and pedagogical activity as well as the deepening of ideas about them, stimulate individuals. Professional competence is transformed to a qualitatively new level which leads to further personal growth. Consequently, the key values and dominant motives of the subject perform as the final basis for the choice of those objects, means and methods that form an integral activity.

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