

Motivations of the University Teacher and Performance of Transversal Competences in the Classroom [†]

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Abstract: The development of transversal ethical competences is one of the aspects on which the efforts of the teaching innovation group “Ethics of University Teaching Staff” are focused. In this sense, the studies that have been carried out to date focus their interest on the results achieved among the students, being limited those that have been developed on the teacher. In an attempt to deepen this line of research, we present this work on the analysis of the motivations and professional commitment of university professors. The analysis resulting from this report will allow us to have a first approach to this vision from a different point to the one we had previously addressed in other works. In this way we can complete other investigations about this same profile carried out previously with students.

Keywords: ethics; motivation; university teaching staff

1. Introduction

Having as a main objective the development of transversal ethical competences on university students, for some years now, we are carrying out diverse research experiences with students and teachers of different university degrees. The objective of this work is to share the results obtained in an interdisciplinary experience with teachers from different Spanish universities carried out in the current academic year.

2. Experimental Phase

The study that we present has been carried out on a sample of 31 professors from 9 Spanish universities, who teach in the five fields of knowledge (Scientific, Humanistic, Biomedical, Social and Technical) and who have registered as participants in the group course, G9 “*¿Ethics and commitment in the university? Towards achievement of transversal competences in the university teaching staff*”. The research carried out with this group of teachers during this course aims at a double objective:

1. Provide a reflection that allows us to work on the development of competencies for the creation of ethically responsible students.
2. Design teaching activities for the development of the ethical competences that can be applied in the Degree and Master.

At the same time, this work has allowed us to generate a space for the reflection and analysis of teachers' own motivations on their teaching task, and the relationship of these motivations with the internal/external goods of the teaching profession. After the activities of the type task that were raised, the observation of these motivations of this group of teachers was made using a hybrid type methodology:

- Firstly, we have carried out a qualitative analysis of the texts delivered as a task activity, categorized using the qualitative software WebQD® [1] to identify internal and external good factors.
- As a complement and as a tool of contrast, we have applied a quantitative analysis instrument, asking them to give their answers to the "*Questionnaire on motivations of university teaching staff*", validated by a panel of experts and which has been applied in previous works. The questionnaire consists of 21 closed questions with answers of type "Lickert", ranging from 0 (totally disagree) to 10 (totally agree) related to the internal and external good of the teaching profession, and which coincides with the scheme of categorization that has been applied to the first task analyzed.

In the analysis of results, which will be explained later, we have taken into account mainly the information obtained by the qualitative procedure, in which we have worked on the texts that the teachers of the sample have prepared, giving their answers to these questions:

1. Who am I as a teacher? What features can I highlight from my professional practice?
2. Am I comfortable with my work as a teacher?
3. What could motivate me to dedicate passion and effort to the teaching profession?
4. How do I foresee the rest of my years in teaching? [1].

The categorization of the analysis carried out with the WebQDA program has been done in relation to the following concepts:

- Indicators with an intrinsic motivation: social utility, helping others, being a better person, compatibility with their own values, ability, creativity, type of organization and vocation.
- Indicators with an extrinsic motivation: Guarantee of sustenance, well seen in the social sphere, employability, expectation of success, work-studies relationship, family tradition, an adequate social level, adequate economic level and employment as the only possibility [2].

3. Results and Discussion

The qualitative and quantitative results show us a greater incidence of the internal goods of the teaching profession, that is to say, that the vocation and the liking for the profession and the possibilities that this offers them, predominate over other factors such as the recognition at the social level or the economic-social position that it can provide them. Previous studies have indicated that the effectiveness of current curricula is to achieve professionals who are competent in their skills of moral reasoning as well as in technical knowledge [3].

Despite the limits of the sample size studied, these results could invite to have a moderate optimism regarding the development of transversal competences in the Spanish University, which have traditionally been relegated to the background by the agitating changes in social thought, deriving in the absence of beliefs and values that can sometimes influence the university teacher[4].

It is interesting the vocational and service vision to the educational community and society in general that is transmitted through the texts written by the teachers and that have been analyzed in our work, in contrast to the low motivation of external factors, such as social positioning or economic recognition. In this order of ideas, we agree in part with previous studies [5].

4. Conclusions

The contrast of results of both procedures presents a clear indicator that the teachers asked give a greater punctuation to the internal goods in front of the external ones in relation to the exercise of the teaching, and that, among the motivations, stand out the help to the others (especially students) and vocation. Some demotivating factors at the professional level for these teachers are due to factors such as job instability and lack of recognition both in society and in the university itself.

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