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INTERDEPENDENCE BETWEEN TEACHERS' MOTIVATION AND STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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Motivation represents one of the central psychological factors that influence the efficiency of the educational process and the quality of the implementation of the school curriculum. The article analyzes the relationship of interdependence between teachers' motivation and students' motivation, highlighting the psychological mechanisms through which they mutually influence each other within the educational context. It is argued that the implementation of the curriculum is not only a technical act of applying normative contents, but also a dynamic process mediated by the attitudes, beliefs, values, and motivational states of the actors involved. The implications regarding teachers' and students' motivation for monitoring the psychological dimension of the curriculum are presented.

Keywords: *motivation, teacher, student, curriculum, educational climate, academic performance.*

INTERDEPENDENȚA DINTRE MOTIVAȚIA PROFESORILOR ȘI MOTIVAȚIA ELEVILOR ÎN REALIZAREA CURRICULUMULUI ȘCOLAR

Motivația reprezintă unul dintre factorii psihologici centrali care influențează performanța procesului educațional și calitatea implementării curriculumului școlar. Articolul analizează relația de interdependență dintre motivația cadrelor didactice și motivația elevilor, evidențiind mecanismele psihologice prin care acestea se influențează reciproc în context educațional. Se argumentează că realizarea curriculumului nu este doar un act tehnic de aplicare a conținuturilor normative, ci un proces dinamic, mediat de personalitatea profesorului, precum și de atitudini, convingeri, valori și stări motivaționale ale tuturor actorilor implicați în procesul educațional. Sunt prezentate și analizate implicațiile privind motivația cadrelor didactice și a elevilor pentru monitorizarea dimensiunii psihologice a curriculumului.

Cuvinte-cheie: *motivație, profesor, elev, curriculum, climat educațional, performanță academică.*

Introduction

The implementation of the school curriculum involves more than simply covering content and achieving operational objectives. It implies a complex process of interaction between teacher and student, in which the motivation of both actors becomes decisive for the quality of learning. From a psychological perspective, the curriculum is mediated by cognitive, affective, and volitional processes, and motivation represents the internal energy that directs, sustains, and regulates both teaching activity and learning.

From this perspective, the role of teacher motivation in the implementation of the curriculum is very important, because the way in which the teacher understands and capitalizes on the formal curriculum directly influences the organization and development of the educational process. Thus, as Oana Popa emphasizes in the work *The Teacher and the Curriculum: Connections, Dissonances, Constraints*, "the way teachers relate to the formal curriculum (knowledge, adherence, level of confidence in the possibilities of implementing the formal curriculum) interrelates with the way teachers assume their own role in the implementation of the formal curriculum (awareness of the role and its nature, attitude towards their own role)" [Apud 1, p.19]. The author also highlights that the way in which the teacher relates to the formal curriculum directly influences the way in which teaching activity is carried out. This depends on how well the teacher understands the philosophy and principles of the curriculum, the extent to which these principles are accepted and supported, the level of confidence in the possibility of applying them in practice, as well as the manner in which the teacher assumes their own role in the implementation of the curriculum. Therefore, the

implementation of the curriculum does not represent merely a technical application of curricular prescriptions, but rather a process mediated by the teacher's interpretation and professional motivation, which gives meaning and coherence to teaching and learning activities.

The interdependence between teachers' motivation and students' motivation must be analyzed systemically, within a paradigm that integrates the psychological dimension of the curriculum with the relational dynamics in the classroom. In this context, teacher motivation is not merely an individual factor, but a catalytic element of the educational climate, directly influencing students' engagement, interest, and perseverance in learning activities. The teacher's attitudes, expectations, and teaching style can create either a stimulating learning environment or, conversely, a demotivating one. At the same time, students' reactions and level of participation feedback into the teacher's motivation, shaping a dynamic process of mutual influence. Thus, educational success largely depends on the quality of this bidirectional motivational relationship, which fosters the development of a climate of trust and recognition of effort. From this perspective, curriculum design should explicitly include mechanisms that support and strengthen the motivation of both parties involved in the educational process.

The interdependence between teachers' motivation and students' motivation in the implementation of the school curriculum can also be explained through the theoretical perspective developed by Joseph Nuttin. He was a Belgian psychologist. Nuttin is known for his important contributions to the psychology of motivation and personality psychology. In his theory, motivation is understood as a system oriented toward goals and future perspectives, which organizes and directs an individual's behavior in relation to the objectives set. From this perspective, the interaction between teacher and student in the educational process becomes a space of mutual influence, where the motivations of both parties are shaped and supported in the effective realization of curricular activities. Joseph Nuttin considers motivation to be the dynamic element of the interaction between the individual and the environment. According to him, motivation directs behavior toward situations or objects that are perceived as important or desirable. From this perspective, motivation can be understood as a cognitive and dynamic structure. It guides human actions toward the achievement of concrete goals.

The origin of motivation cannot be reduced solely to internal or external stimuli, but derives from the dynamic character of the relationship between the individual and the surrounding environment. Motivation can be understood as a set of internal, structured, and interdependent factors that condition and regulate human behavior [1]. Nuttin's approach to motivation as a dynamic process between the individual and the environment can be applied directly in the educational context, where the interaction between teacher and student becomes central. A student's motivation is not determined solely by learning tasks or external stimuli, but is also built and sustained through the relationship with the teacher, who shapes learning objectives and conditions. In this framework, the teacher acts not only as a provider of information but also as a facilitator of motivation, guiding the student toward concrete and relevant goals within the curriculum. The interdependence between teacher motivation and student motivation thus becomes an essential factor in the effective implementation of the school curriculum, generating a stimulating learning climate and supporting students' perseverance and engagement. Therefore, integrating a dynamic perspective on motivation can guide teaching strategies and curriculum planning, ensuring alignment between the teacher's effort, the student's commitment, and the desired educational outcomes.

A study conducted by De Voider and Lens examined the relationship between students' future time perspective and their academic performance. The findings showed that students who attach greater importance to long-term educational and professional goals usually achieve better academic results. At the same time, these students perceive learning activities and the effort invested in studying as necessary for achieving their goals [3].

These findings also have important practical value. Teachers who support students in setting clear and meaningful long-term goals, as well as in understanding the connection between effort and results, can contribute to the creation of a stimulating learning environment. The study highlights that teachers' and students' motivation support each other and should be connected with effective teaching strategies.

Teacher motivation plays a fundamental role in the educational process, directly influencing how the

curriculum is interpreted, adapted, and translated into concrete activities for students. It represents a psychological process that enables the initiation, goal-orientation, and sustained energy of individual activity. Through motivation, human behavior acquires direction and meaning, determining the choice of teaching strategies, engagement in activities, and the maintenance of the effort necessary to achieve educational objectives. Thus, teacher motivation not only stimulates personal performance but is also directly reflected in the quality of the teaching process and in students' outcomes, highlighting its importance in the successful implementation of school activities.

The Romanian psychologist Ion Neacșu, in a study on the relationships between curriculum, competencies, motivation, learning, and academic outcomes, highlights the importance of student motivation for success in the learning process. Teachers have at their disposal numerous effective motivational strategies that can transform student engagement and stimulate curiosity and the desire to learn. As Neacșu emphasizes, "the place of natural learning behavior will be taken by its opposite, the behavior of rejecting learning," which demonstrates that the correct application of positive techniques can prevent disinterest and reinforce learning habits [Apud 4, p.28]. The use of subtle and varied motivational methods supports the development of students' competencies, increases their engagement, and contributes to better academic performance, transforming the educational process into an active and stimulating experience. Therefore, in order to ensure the effective implementation of the curriculum, teachers use different motivational strategies. These strategies are aimed at increasing students' participation and interest in learning. The main types of these strategies are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of Motivation Through Which the Teacher Stimulates the Student for Curriculum Implementation

Type of Motivation	Description	Examples/Techniques Applied by the Teacher	Effect on the Student
Intrinsic Motivation	Based on the student's natural interests and curiosity, passion for the subject, and the pleasure of learning.	Encouraging exploration, creative projects, autonomy in choosing topics, connecting content with students' interests.	Increases active engagement, curiosity, and desire to learn; supports sustainable academic performance.
Extrinsic Motivation	Based on external factors that influence the student's behavior, such as rewards or sanctions.	Grades, prizes, certificates, public recognition, positive feedback.	Stimulates effort and adherence to curriculum requirements, but may be less sustainable if rewards are absent.
Motivation through Negative Sanctions	Techniques that discourage undesirable behaviors, based on fear or punishment.	Reprimands, low grades, threats, warnings.	May lead to temporary compliance but risks rejection of learning and a reduction in natural motivation.
Motivation through Positive Sanctions	Subtle and constructive techniques that increase motivation and positive behavior.	Praise, encouragement, recognition of progress, symbolic rewards, interactive activities.	Increases engagement and the pleasure of learning, fostering consistent and sustainable performance.

Starting from the concepts of the cognitive approach to motivation and goal theory, teacher motivation can be understood as an internal process through which the teacher's professional and personal needs are transformed, through cognitive elaboration, into concrete educational goals that guide and regulate teaching activity.

From this perspective, the teacher is not only responsible for implementing the curriculum, but also plays an active role in organizing and directing the teaching process according to the goals that he or she sets. Teachers' professional needs, such as the desire for achievement, recognition, teaching effectiveness,

or personal growth, are initially broad and general. Through reflection and analysis, these needs are gradually transformed into clear educational objectives, such as improving students' academic results, developing their competencies, creating a positive classroom climate, or ensuring the efficient implementation of the curriculum. The establishment of instructional goals is accompanied by the planning of the means and strategies necessary to achieve them. The teacher anticipates teaching methods, learning activities, forms of assessment, and educational resources that may lead to the attainment of the proposed objectives. In this process, the teacher continuously evaluates the results obtained in relation to the established criteria and may adjust both the strategies used and the initial goals, depending on the educational context and the particular characteristics of the students.

Teacher motivation is closely related to the capacity for self-regulation and professional development. The teacher assumes responsibility for achieving educational goals, demonstrating initiative, flexibility, and creativity in adapting teaching activities to the concrete situations in the classroom. This internal regulation of professional behavior contributes to the individualization of the pedagogical style and to increasing the effectiveness of the teaching–learning process.

Therefore, from the perspective of goal theories, teacher motivation represents a dynamic process through which professional needs are transformed into pedagogical goals, and through planning, reflection, and self-regulation the teacher directs his or her activity toward achieving educational objectives and supporting students' development.

Students' Motivation – An Indicator of Curriculum Relevance

Students' motivation shows how relevant, understandable, and meaningful the curriculum is for them. Motivated students usually show real interest in learning activities, make consistent efforts in completing academic tasks, use different learning and self-regulation strategies, and continue working even when they face difficulties.

Research in the field emphasizes that students' motivation is influenced by several important educational factors. One of these is the teacher's instructional style, which can increase students' interest and involvement in learning. Another important factor is the clarity of learning objectives, because clear goals help students better understand the purpose of school activities. The practical value of the taught content also plays an important role, since students become more motivated when they see how knowledge can be applied in real-life situations. In addition, opportunities for active participation and autonomy encourage responsibility, initiative, and authentic engagement in the learning process.

The authors Isabel Soares, Maria Salomé Lemos, and Cristina Almeida, in the study *Attachment and Motivational Strategies in Adolescence: Exploring Links*, analyze the motivational strategies of adolescents, specifically high school students, starting from the cognitive perspective on motivation and from the way individuals set goals and organize their behavior in order to cope with difficult situations. Based on five dimensions of analysis—intentionality, behavior, coherence between goal and behavior, adaptability, and emotions—the authors identify four main types of motivational strategies: the flexible strategy, the rigid strategy, the passive strategy, and the disorganized strategy [Apud 5, p. 13].

The flexible and rigid motivational strategies are considered constructive, as they reflect active, goal-oriented behavior. Students employing a flexible strategy demonstrate cognitive and behavioral engagement: they analyze situations, seek information, evaluate alternatives, and set priorities to find appropriate solutions. In contrast, the rigid strategy involves the active pursuit of goals, but in a less adaptable manner, characterized by limited cognitive elaboration and a tendency to apply the same modes of action regardless of the situation. Conversely, the passive and disorganized strategies are less adaptive. The passive strategy is characterized by the absence of a clear goal, mechanical behaviors, and low involvement in problem-solving. The disorganized strategy reflects incoherence, impulsivity, and difficulties in establishing and maintaining a coherent course of action, often accompanied by intense negative emotions. Research findings indicate that the passive strategy is the most frequent (36%), followed by the disorganized strategy (23%), the flexible strategy (25%), and the rigid strategy (15.9%). These results highlight the diversity of ways in which adolescents organize their motivational behavior and emphasize the importance of cognitive and emotional processes in guiding their actions [Apud 5, p. 14].

Students' motivation can also be explained and understood by reference to the phases of the motivational process, as students' learning behavior follows, in a similar way, the stages of goal-setting, initiation, maintenance, and disengagement [6]. In the educational context, these phases reflect how students set learning goals, initiate school activities, sustain effort throughout the learning process, and, at times, give up or redirect their efforts.

In the goal-setting phase, the student establishes learning objectives and directs effort toward specific tasks or subjects. Personal interests, academic aspirations, as well as the influence of the educational environment, the teacher, and the social context, all contribute to defining these goals. At this stage, the teacher plays an important role by clearly formulating instructional objectives, ensuring the relevance of the content, and stimulating interest in knowledge, which contributes to the positive orientation of students' motivation.

The initiation of motivation occurs when the student moves from intention to action, becoming actively engaged in learning activities. At this stage, the level of engagement depends on the importance the student assigns to the goal and on their confidence in their own abilities to succeed. The teacher can facilitate this phase by providing accessible tasks, creating opportunities for success, and fostering students' sense of self-efficacy.

The maintenance of motivation is the phase in which the student sustains effort over a longer period to achieve the proposed objectives. In the learning process, this phase is supported by the continuous feedback provided by the teacher, recognition of progress achieved, and the existence of a positive educational climate. Perseverance, the ability to overcome difficulties, and social support from teachers and peers contribute to sustaining students' engagement in learning activities.

In the disengagement phase, the student may reduce or abandon effort toward achieving a particular goal, either because the goal has already been attained, because the obstacles are perceived as too great, or because the goal is no longer considered relevant. In the educational context, disengagement can occur when students do not understand the content, do not receive adequate support, or do not perceive the usefulness of learning activities. However, this phase can also serve an adaptive function, allowing the student to redirect effort toward other, more meaningful educational objectives [6].

Student Motivation and Academic Performance

Student motivation represents a means for achieving academic performance and fulfilling the curriculum, as it stimulates active engagement in the learning process, perseverance in completing learning tasks, and orientation toward the attainment of educational objectives. In school activities, students typically act under the influence of a motivational constellation, with their behavior often determined by multiple motives. These motives interconnect like a parallelogram of forces, generating a certain level of activation and engagement in the learning process. Within this motivational constellation, momentary factors can be distinguished, which influence students' participation in immediate learning activities, and enduring factors, which sustain interest in learning and engagement in school activities over the long term.

Among the momentary factors are interest in a particular lesson, the way the teacher organizes the instructional activity, the classroom atmosphere, the feedback received, or the desire to obtain a good grade. In contrast, enduring factors include a stable interest in knowledge, educational values developed over time, students' academic and professional aspirations, as well as support provided by the family and the educational environment. Together, these factors contribute to maintaining motivation for learning and to achieving curricular objectives.

Motivation should not be considered an end in itself, but rather a means to achieve performance. The relationship between the level of motivation and the performance attained is influenced by the difficulty of the task a person must perform. Psychological studies show that, when tasks are simple, repetitive, or routine and offer few solution options, an increase in motivation generally leads to improved performance. In contrast, for complex tasks that require creativity, analysis, and multiple possible solutions, an increase in motivation initially enhances performance, but beyond a certain point, it may begin to decline. Thus, in simple activities, increasing motivation does not affect the ability to identify correct responses.

However, in complex tasks, the presence of multiple alternative courses of action makes the decision-making process more difficult, and excessive motivation can reduce critical analysis and negatively influence decision-making. The relationship between the level of motivational activation and the performance achieved is not directly proportional throughout the task. As the level of activation increases, performance tends to improve until it reaches an optimal threshold. Beyond this level, further increases in motivation can lead to a decrease in performance, and overmotivation may produce negative effects on outcomes.

Therefore, the effectiveness of an activity does not depend solely on the relationship between the intensity of motivation and task complexity, but also on the alignment of motivation with the level of task difficulty. The better the match between the level of motivation and the difficulty of the activity, the higher the likelihood of achieving better results. In this context, the concept of the “motivational optimum” refers to the appropriate level of motivation that facilitates the attainment of high performance. According to the Yerkes–Dodson law, this optimal level varies depending on the complexity and difficulty of the task.

Recent research indicates that the law of the motivational optimum requires certain nuances. Specifically, the relationship between the level of activation and performance does not apply identically in the case of intrinsic cognitive motivation. When a person demonstrates genuine interest or passion for a particular domain of knowledge, task efficiency can increase even without a significant rise in the level of activation. Furthermore, for simple, repetitive, or easily automated tasks, the level of activation required for efficient task completion may be lower, which can sometimes hinder the achievement of optimal performance. In these situations, the perception of task difficulty plays an important role. If a task is perceived as too easy, it may be underestimated and approached with less attention, whereas if it is perceived as very difficult, it can generate tension or negative emotions prior to its execution. Underestimating a task may lead to neglect, while overestimating it can provoke stress or anxiety. Therefore, for the effective completion of simple tasks, a slight increase in motivation before and during the activity can be beneficial.

At the same time, studies highlight that the optimal level of motivation also varies according to the characteristics of each individual’s nervous system. Individuals with a strong and balanced nervous system generally manage difficult and demanding tasks more effectively, whereas those with a more sensitive or less balanced nervous system may encounter difficulties in mobilizing themselves efficiently to complete complex tasks.

Mechanisms of Motivational Interdependence

The interdependence between teachers’ motivation and students’ motivation can be explained through several psychological mechanisms:

1. Social Modeling – Students adopt the teacher’s attitudes and level of engagement.
2. Classroom Emotional Climate – Motivated teachers create a safe environment that supports initiative and self-expression.
3. Bidirectional Feedback – Positive responses from students reinforce teacher motivation, while instructional success strengthens the sense of professional efficacy.
4. Reciprocal Self-Regulation – Both the teacher and students adjust their behaviors based on each other’s responses.

Thus, motivation operates within a circular loop: a motivated teacher stimulates motivated students, and motivated students, in turn, reinforce the teacher’s motivation. Through their teaching style, the organization of activities, and the type of feedback provided, the teacher creates a framework in which students’ motivation can be either stimulated or diminished. At the same time, students’ level of engagement, interest, and reactions influence the teacher’s motivation, prompting adjustments in teaching strategies and interaction with the class.

This interdependence manifests through several mechanisms. First, the relational mechanism, in which positive relationships and a climate of trust between teacher and students foster the emergence of intrinsic motivation. Second, the cognitive-regulatory mechanism, through which the teacher provides feedback, sets clear objectives, and structures learning activities, contributing to students’ motivational self-regulation. Third, the emotional mechanism, in which the teacher’s attitude, enthusiasm, and recognition of students’ progress generate positive affective states that support engagement in learning.

Teacher and student motivation operate within a reciprocal system of influences, in which behaviors, attitudes, and teaching strategies contribute to the creation of an educational climate that fosters interest in learning and the achievement of academic performance.

To stimulate students' motivation, the teacher plays a role in developing a set of competencies that help students become more aware of their own learning process and more engaged in school activities. An important first aspect is supporting students in the process of self-knowledge by identifying their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their preferences, interests, and expectations regarding learning.

The teacher should encourage students to set their own learning goals and to develop self-direction skills by providing opportunities for personal choice in completing school tasks. At the same time, it is important for the teacher to guide students in planning and prioritizing activities that contribute to achieving the proposed objectives.

Another important role of the teacher's activity is the development of students' self-regulation capacities, at affective, cognitive, and behavioral levels. In this regard, the teacher can support students in monitoring their own progress relative to established goals, reflecting on the results obtained, and adjusting their learning strategies. Through such actions, the teacher contributes to strengthening motivation for learning and to students' active engagement in achieving educational objectives.

In addition, to enhance students' motivation, the teacher organizes learning activities in a manner that draws on their interests and real-world experiences. Teachers' involvement in fostering intrinsic motivation can be achieved by presenting, during lessons, problems or situations inspired by real life. In this way, students are able to better understand the usefulness of the knowledge acquired, which contributes to the development of their personality and to the formation of competencies necessary for professional activity and social life. An increase in learning motivation is supported by enhancing the quality of the teaching process. In this context, the teacher should focus on identifying and prioritizing key information, preventing excessive content, and guiding the instructional process toward a thorough and meaningful understanding of knowledge. Employing an active-participatory teaching style, which encourages dialogue, cooperation, and student engagement in learning activities, contributes to strengthening the teacher-student relationship.

At the same time, emphasizing the practical dimension of the taught content, through the use of concrete examples, practical exercises, or case studies, helps students establish the connection between theory and practice. Through such approaches, the teacher creates a stimulating educational environment that promotes students' active engagement and the development of motivation for learning.

Conclusion

Teacher motivation and student motivation constitute primary factors in the process of implementing the school curriculum. The relationship between these two forms of motivation is dynamic, reciprocal, and dependent on the educational context, with each influencing and supporting the other. The teacher's level of engagement, attitude, and enthusiasm can stimulate students' interest and active participation, while their positive responses, in turn, contribute to reinforcing the teacher's professional motivation.

The results of the theoretical reflection indicate that the effective implementation of the curriculum does not depend solely on the structure and content of curricular documents, but also on how these are applied in educational practice. The quality of education is largely determined by the engagement and motivation of educational actors, who transform the formal curriculum into an authentic learning experience. Thus, the process of curriculum implementation acquires a relational and participatory character, with students becoming co-creators of the educational experience rather than passive recipients of information. Integrating the motivational dimension into curriculum development and monitoring becomes a crucial condition for enhancing the efficiency of the educational process. This implies incorporating psychological indicators into the assessment of curriculum implementation, providing teachers with training in motivation and strategies for fostering learning interest, supporting teachers' professional autonomy, and ensuring that curricular content corresponds to students' actual needs and interests.

An effective curriculum is not limited to the transmission of knowledge; rather, it creates learning con-

texts that generate meaning, engagement, and a desire for progress, leveraging teacher and student motivation as fundamental resources for educational development.

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