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PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF TEACHERS IN SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT: EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS BASED ON TIMS SCALE

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The professional identity of teachers is a central area of interest for contemporary educational research, because the way in which teachers perceive themselves and their social role directly influences pedagogical practices, educational relationships and learning outcomes. In the context of current social, cultural and educational transformations, the analysis of formation and development of professional identity becomes essential for understanding the dynamics of teaching profession. The teacher's identity is the result of interaction between individual, psychosocial and cultural factors, which shape professional perceptions, values and motivations. However, quantitative comparative studies on this subject remain relatively limited, respectively, this research aims to analyze the particularities of teachers' professional identity in the Republic of Moldova. The study valorizes empirical data obtained by applying the TIMS scale (The Teacher Identity Measurement Scale), providing an analytical perspective on the way in which teachers construct and define their professional identity.

Keywords: *professional identity, social identity, teacher, education, critical thinking, creativity, social competences, sociocultural context.*

IDENTITATEA PROFESIONALĂ A CADRELOR DIDACTICE ÎN CONTEXT SOCIOCULTURAL: ANALIZĂ EMPIRICĂ BAZATĂ PE SCALA TIMS

Identitatea profesională a cadrelor didactice reprezintă un domeniu central de interes pentru cercetarea educațională contemporană, deoarece modul în care profesorii se percep pe sine și rolul lor social influențează direct practicile pedagogice, relațiile educaționale și rezultatele procesului de învățare. În contextul transformărilor sociale, culturale și educaționale actuale, analiza modului de formare și dezvoltare a identității profesionale devine esențială pentru înțelegerea dinamicii profesiei didactice. Identitatea profesorului este rezultatul interacțiunii dintre factori individuali, psihosociali și culturali, care modelează percepțiile, valorile și motivațiile profesionale. Totuși, studiile comparative cantitative privind acest subiect rămân relativ limitate, respectiv, cercetarea dată își propune să analizeze particularitățile identității profesionale ale cadrelor didactice din Republica Moldova. Studiul valorifică date empirice obținute prin aplicarea scalei TIMS (The Teacher Identity Measurement Scale), oferind o perspectivă analitică asupra modului în care profesorii își construiesc și definesc identitatea profesională.

Cuvinte-cheie: *identitate profesională, identitate socială, profesor, educație, gândire critică, creativitate, competențe sociale, context sociocultural.*

Introduction

A topic of real interest for today's specialists is the professional identity of teachers and the cultural context in which it is formed. Considering that there are fewer existing studies that refer to comparative quantitative research on these topics, a study was initiated that addresses the given topic. Thus, using a quantitative cross-sectional design, contents were highlighted regarding the dependence of teachers' professional identity on cultural factors [8]. The countries that participated in this study were: Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, Hungary and Poland. Moreover, the selection of these countries is based on geographical proximity, history and common socio-cultural context. We consider it relevant to present some data collected from research subjects from the Republic of Moldova with reference to the patterns of professional identity of teachers in the flow of changes.

Concept and Argument

This paper refers to the teacher's professional identity, namely we will analyze, from the very beginning, the psychological perspective of the notion of identity which is defined as a characteristic of persons, real or represented objects, events, statements, etc. considered as substitutable for each other, and the notion of social identity is – part of the representation that the individual makes about himself/herself (personal identity) and which is linked to the roles and social statuses of the groups or categories to which he/she belongs [3, p. 554]. This notion refers to both the cognitive and emotional aspects related to these affiliations. It has its origin, from an intellectual point of view, in two schools of thought. The first is philosophical and psychological in nature, and the second, psychoanalytic in nature. G. H. Mead argues that social interactions generate individuality. The individual is formed as a being by integrating on the one hand the social roles and values of his/her group and, on the other hand, reacting to them. E.H. Erikson introduces the notion of identity, understood as a synthesis of the various identifications made in childhood: with parents, of course, but also with the social roles they transmit. Identity is a process of constructing meaning through which people seek to position themselves in certain ways in various environments, in the conceptions of authors Akkerman and Meijer [apud 7, p. 453]. The social identity of an individual can be compared to a prism whose facets are temporarily activated one by one, depending on the type of situation encountered [3, p. 557].

From a psychosocial perspective, D. Cristea highlights that the social identity of a person is the result of interactive processes that operate in the area of interference between the individual and the social. Consequently, on the one hand there are the person's psycho-individual structures (Ego, Self, self-image and self-awareness, etc.), and on the other hand the structures of social field in which the person is formed and objectified through action (values, norms, statutory models and social roles). Thus, identity appears as a psychosocial construct, through which the person inserts himself/herself into his/her relational system, having a structuring function for their profile [1, p. 250].

The concept of social identity has not generated many theories that have the ambition to predict behavior. In fact, many of the studies that appeal to this concept are descriptive and propose an *a posteriori* interpretation of their results. H. Tajfel's theory of social identity is perhaps the most complete attempt to develop a coherent predictive set of the links between social affiliations, intrapsychic factors, behavioral reactions and social change processes [3, p. 558]. On the other hand, the complexity of the relationships system through which a person's social identity is configured has led to the formulation of theories regarding its genesis, development and manifestation. The most important theories regarding this issue are those of the authors: Erikson, R.D. Laing, J. Marcia, Waterman [1, p. 250]. D. Cristea, referring to the main dimensions of social identity, from a relational perspective, highlights among them sexual identity, ideological identity, moral identity, role identity and vocational identity. This last type of identity is the result of fundamental options, which aim at choosing a profession. Vocational identity crystallizes following processes of self-exploration and exploration of the environment, following which the child and then the adolescent, the young adult become aware of their own acquired skills, interests, values, abilities and competences, on the one hand, and the range of activities, professions, work styles, training opportunities and moral and material motivations offered by the social environment, on the other hand. Professional identity is obtained following a relatively long process, during which self-evaluations, vocational experiments, internalization of values and professional models, as well as groping of social offers to which the subject believes they can have access take place [1, p. 256].

Professional identity is defined by Kramer, Hoffman, Tickle as teachers' sense of belonging to and identification with the teaching profession. There is a reciprocal effect between self-identity and professional identity, affecting each other. Thus, Kozminsky and Kluer argue that any change in one of the identities generates an impact on the other. The perception of professional identity affects the sense of self-efficacy, professional judgment and decisions [apud 6, p. 11].

Since professional identity is part of teachers' self-awareness, it includes their values, motivation, norms, goals and moral considerations. Over the past 20 years, research (Chaaban et al., 2021; Schutz et al., 2018; Zhang and Wang, 2022) on teachers' professional identity has shown that it influences teachers' professional development, practices, and attitudes [apud 7, p. 453].

N. Dvir and A. Shaz-Oppenheimer delineate four interrelated aspects of professional identity: 1. how the profession and its essence are perceived by society; 2. how professionals perceive the profession they practice; 3. how the professional perceives himself/herself as a specialist, what he/she considers to be important in his/her work and professional life, based on his/her experience and background; 4. how the professional is perceived by others: clients, colleagues, peers, and the public [apud 2].

From the same perspective, authors C. Rodgers and K. Scott highlighted four basic characteristics of professional identity: 1. professional identity is contextual - it is built under the impact of social, cultural, historical and political contexts; 2. professional identity assumes specific forms in specific contexts - it develops through interpersonal relationships; 3. professional identity is dynamic - it is built and changes depending on contexts, situations and relationships; 4. professional identity has a coherent character, which is formed under the impact of everyday events [9].

In this context, the authors argue that professional identity is obtained in close connection with the way of assimilating certain values and social models; however, the process has a dynamic and sometimes contradictory character, not always being an attempt to achieve congruence between personal characteristics and those of the respective profession, a congruence that would become a source of well-being, satisfaction, stability and personal achievements. Social, psychosocial or circumstantial factors can also orient the professional option in another direction, different from that of achieving the aforementioned congruence. However, whatever the situation, the process by which a person's professional identity is achieved takes place in several stages, amply described in the specialized literature by the authors Super, Ginsberg et.al. [1, p. 256].

The notion of professional identity of the teacher refers to two interrelated aspects. *The first* refers to the way in which a school teacher perceives himself/herself as a teacher and is related to the psychological aspect - the school teacher's identification with his/her work, the way in which he/she perceives his/her traits, skills, professional values and the interaction with students, colleagues, principals and other people he/she meets in his/her activity; *the second* refers to the way in which the school teacher is perceived by others as a teacher: by students, colleagues, parents and society in general, it is related to the professional aspect – his/her professional image and social appreciation as a professional [apud 2].

Accordingly, in the following we will refer to the peculiarities of teacher's identity from the perspective of teachers' and future teachers' views - students who study in the *Education Sciences* specialty.

Methodology

The Teacher Identity Measurement Scale (TIMS) is based on a questionnaire and includes factors that highlight determining characteristics of the teacher's identity. The scale contains five sections: 1. General information about the questionnaire; 2. Information about the experimental subjects; 3. The reasons that led the subject to become a teacher; 4. Information about the extent to which the teachers agree with the opinions regarding the activity carried out. 5. Information regarding the way the experimental subjects were grouped, relationships with management, etc.

Thus, in the version placed on docs.google, the first section includes information about how to complete the questionnaire, in the second section the interviewed subjects filled in information about themselves, but which respects personal data, general information about the experimental group (professional status; marital status; age; background; level of education (last graduated); teaching experience; quality: teacher or student/trainee), and in sections 3-5 the items that reflect the views of experimental subjects with reference to the concept of education are presented, presenting the results for items such as *Think about the reasons that led you to become a teacher; To what extent do you agree with the following opinions?; Place your answer on a scale from 1=totally disagree, to 5=totally agree for the items: The well-being of the group is more important than individual rewards; Group success is more important than individual success; It is very important to be accepted by the members of your professional group, etc.*

Results and Discussion

Following, we will describe the results obtained for only a few items of *the Teacher Identity Measure-*

ment Scale (TIMS). In fact, the full content of scale offers the opportunity to explore in depth the specifics and contexts of professional identity construction.

The research results obtained for the second section of questionnaire illustrate the fact that the research involved an experimental group consisting of 288 teachers and future teachers (students) from the Republic of Moldova, aged between 18 and 65 years, of which only 284 provided answers for all the questionnaire items, which were used in the research, 4 answers being excluded.

According to the results obtained for *the professional status* of experimental subjects, we identified that 62.0% (176 people) of the subjects are teachers, 36.6% (104 people) have the status of future teachers – being students in the specialty of education sciences, and 1.8% (5 people) have both qualities. At the same time, 57.0% of the interviewed subjects indicated that they are married, 40.5% are single, and 2.5% are engaged.

The experimental group was divided according to the *gender* criterion, thus we identified that 92.6% of the subjects are female, and 7.4% are male. So, regarding the gender aspect, the indicated data attest, once again, the excessive feminization of personnel in the educational system. Existing studies show that there are significant imbalances between the sexes in terms of personnel at different educational levels [5, p. 17]. At the same time, 33.5% of the subjects from the mentioned group are from urban areas, and 66.5% are from rural areas. The level of education, the last graduated, is as follows: 7.4% middle school, 26.8% high school; 28.2% licentiate (bachelor's) degree; 26.1% master's degree, 3.9% college, 1.4% PhD studies et al. The teachers indicated that they have different teaching experience, from 1 year to 42 years, being predominantly middle school teachers, high school teachers, primary school teachers.

Next, we will describe some items from the third section of scale. Thus, the results for item *Think about the reasons that led you to become a teacher* referred to the specific answer options, for example *Because I am interested in education* (it was possible to choose only one option), the answers being placed on a scale from 1=totally disagree, to 7=totally agree. The results obtained demonstrate that 47.9% (136 people) of the teachers interviewed claim that they completely agree with the fact that interest in education was the reason that led them to become teachers, quantifying this item at level 7; 23.6% at level 6; 15.1% at level 5; 8.8% at level 4; 2.5% at level 3; 0.4% at level 2; and only 1.8% of the teachers interviewed indicated that they completely disagree with this aspect. Thus, we observe that most teachers/future teachers, which constitutes 86.6% of the entire experimental group, quantified the answers for this item at levels 5-7, stating that interest in education was the reason that led them to become teachers.

We consider important the data presented with reference to another reason that led teachers to become teachers - the pleasure of being a teacher (item *Think about the reasons that led you to become a teacher: Because I like being a teacher*). Thus, the results demonstrate that 50.0% (142 people) of the teachers interviewed claim that they completely agree with the fact that the pleasure of being a teacher was the reason that led them to become teachers, quantifying this item at level 7; 20.1% at level 6; 19.7% at level 5; 5.3% at level 4; 1.4% at level 3; 0.7% at level 2; 2.8% of the total number of teachers indicated that they completely disagree with the fact that the pleasure of being a teacher motivated them to select this profession. Similar to the case described previously, we conclude that for a large number of teachers/future teachers, the pleasure of being a teacher was the reason that led them to become specialists in this field.

The study also referred to the views of experimental subjects regarding the search for opportunities to work in education (item *Think about the reasons that led you to become a teacher: I actively sought opportunities to work in education*), (according to the scale 1= totally disagree, and 5 =totally agree). Of the total number of subjects interviewed, 32.4% (92 people) of the teachers, quantify this item at level 5 (total agreement) mentioning that they actively sought opportunities to work in education; 30.6% (87 people) of the teachers, quantify this item at level 4; 22.2% of the total number of teachers quantify this item at level 3; 7.7% of the total number of teachers quantify this item at level 2 and only 7.0% (20 people) of the teachers quantify this item at level 1 of the scale, stating that they did not actively seek opportunities to work in education. We emphasize that only 14.7% of the subjects, from the entire experimental group, obtained the quality of teacher without having actively sought opportunities to work in education.

Another item of the questionnaire refers to the views of experimental subjects with reference to the

extent to which they can get involved in helping students value learning (the item *Think about the reasons that led you to become a teacher: How much can you do to help your students value learning?*), (similar to the previous case, according to the scale 1=totally disagree, and 5=totally agree). Thus, the results obtained show that 32.4% (92 people) of the teachers quantify this item on level 5, stating that they can do a lot to help their students value learning; 49.3% (140 people) of the teachers quantify this item on level 4; 15.5% of the total number of teachers quantify this item on level 3; 1.4% of the total number of teachers quantify this item on levels 2 and 1 of the scale, respectively, considering that they cannot do much to help their students value learning. It is worth noting that most of the experimental group quantified this item on levels 4 and 5, meaning that teachers are willing to make great efforts to help students value learning.

In this context, we will also present the selective description of items in the fourth section of the teacher identity measurement scale. In order to identify the professional identity models of teachers, their opinions were valued with reference to the item *To what extent do you agree with the following opinions?* Thus, the information about the extent (from 1 to 5) to which teachers agree with opinions referring to the activity carried out outlined the visions for the items: - I believe that my most important task is to teach students to have a critical attitude towards society. - I believe that my main task is to teach students social skills. - I believe that my main task is to introduce students to different cultures and religions. - I believe that my most important task is to transfer the values and norms of society to students. - In addition to my teaching duties, I also have a broader educational task. - I believe that my most important task is to determine students to take others into account. - I believe that if students want to achieve more later, I need to teach them more now. - I believe that if students learn more at school, they will have less chance of being unemployed later. - I believe that students should learn well at school so that they can be successful socially. - I believe that a good education for students is the key to social success. - In the classroom, order and discipline are important to me. - In my class, students should be quiet and attentive. - In my class, students must listen to me. - In my class, it is important that students behave well. - It is my duty to demand commitment from students. - I believe it is important to take into account the wishes of my students. - In my class, I believe it is important for children to have a say. - I believe it is normal for students to criticize me as a teacher.

Next, we will analyze in detail the results of some of the items above, from the 4th section of the teacher identity measurement scale.

Figure 1 presents the views of the experimental subjects regarding the item *I believe that my most important task is to teach students to have a critical attitude towards society.*

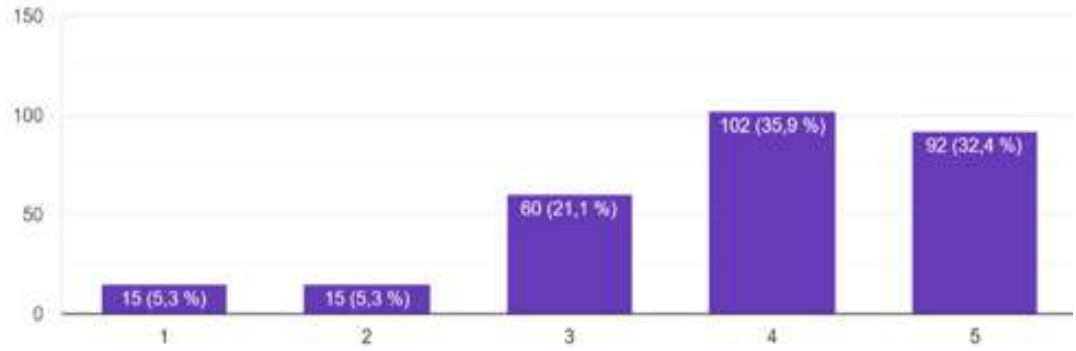


Fig. 1. Views of Experimental Subjects on Importance of Teachers' Task of Teaching Students to Have a Critical Attitude Towards Society

The results indicate that 32.4% of teachers quantify this item at level 5 (total agreement), meaning they believe that their most important task is to teach students to have a critical attitude towards society, but a larger number of teachers - 35.9% - quantify this item at level 4; 21.1% of the total number of teachers quantify this item at level 3; 5.3% of the total number of teachers interviewed quantify this item at levels 2 and 1 of the scale, meaning that they do not completely agree that their most important task is to teach students to have a critical attitude towards society (figure 1). We thus identify that the data highlight a

mostly positive trend among teachers regarding the role of education in shaping students' critical attitudes towards society. The significant proportions of respondents who selected levels 4 (35.9%) and 5 (32.4%) indicate that most teachers consider this dimension to be important or very important in their educational work. However, the existence of a percentage of 21.1% of respondents who express a neutral position, as well as the 10.6% who express a low level of agreement (levels 1 and 2), suggests a certain diversity of perspectives on educational priorities. These results indicate the need to deepen pedagogical reflection and develop training strategies that strengthen the role of education in stimulating critical thinking and responsible participation of students in society.

The results obtained for the item *I believe that my main task is to teach students social skills are also important.* In this case, 46.5% of teachers quantify this item at level 5 (total agreement); 36.6% quantify this item at level 4; 12.7% of teachers quantify this item at level 3; 2.5% at level 2, and 1.8% of the total number of teachers quantify the given item at level 1 - disagreeing with the fact that their main task is to teach students social skills. Here we emphasize that there is a large number of experimental subjects (83.1% of the total number of people interviewed) who claim that their main task is to teach students social skills, which is encouraging. In fact, in this case, the results highlight a strong support from teachers for the role of education in developing students' social skills. As we have highlighted, the high percentage of respondents who indicated level 5 (46.5%) and level 4 (36.6%) demonstrates that most teachers consider the training of social skills as an essential component of their pedagogical activity. In total, 83.1% of the participants show a high degree of agreement with the analyzed statement, which reflects a clear orientation of educational practices towards the development of students' relationship skills, cooperation and social integration. At the same time, the low percentages of those who expressed a neutral position (12.7%) or a disagreement (4.3%) indicate that, although there are certain differences in perception, these do not affect the general positive trend. Thus, the results confirm the importance given by teachers to the training of social skills, considered a fundamental element in preparing students for active and responsible integration into society.

Figure 2 presents the views of experimental subjects with reference to the extent to which they can adjust the lessons to the appropriate individual level for each student. The results are indicated according to the scale 1=to a small extent, and 5=to a large extent.

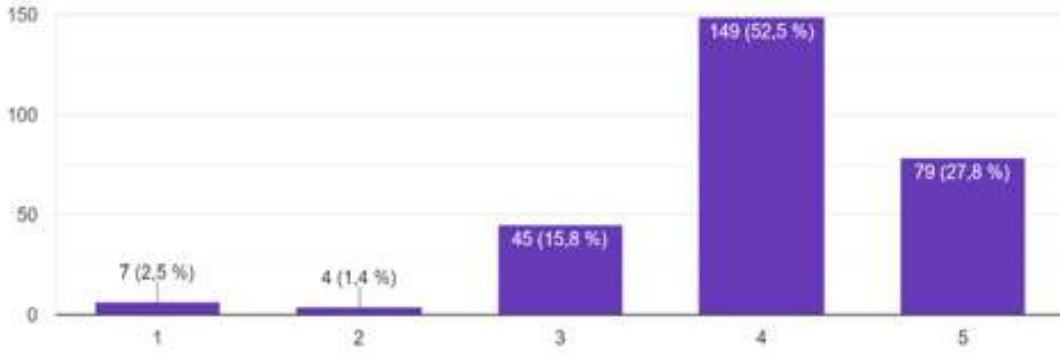


Fig. 2. Views of Experimental Subjects Regarding Extent to Which They Can Adjust Lessons to Appropriate Individual Level for Each Student

We identify that the teachers' opinions are, in this case, varied. From figure 2 it results that only 27.8% (79 people) of the teachers, quantify this item on level 5, mentioning that to a large extent they can adjust the lessons to the appropriate individual level for each student; most subjects - 52.5% (149 people) quantify this item on level 4; 15.8% (45 people) of the total number of teachers quantify this item on level 3; 1.4% (4 people) quantify this item on level 2; 2.5% (7 people) of the total number of teachers quantify this item on level 1 of the scale, respectively considering that to a very small extent they can adjust the lessons to the appropriate individual level for each student.

In summary, we note that the data indicate a predominantly positive perception of teachers regarding their ability to adapt the teaching process to the individual needs of students. Most respondents rated this aspect at high levels of the scale, with 52.5% indicating level 4 and 27.8% level 5, which suggests that a

significant proportion of teachers believe that they are able to, to a large or very large extent, adjust lessons according to the particularities of each student. At the same time, the existence of a percentage of 15.8% of respondents who adopt a moderate position, as well as a small number of teachers who perceive this possibility as limited (3.9% at levels 1 and 2), indicates that the individualized adaptation of teaching can be influenced by various factors, such as available resources, time or class size. Therefore, the results highlight both the willingness of teachers to personalize the educational act and the need to strengthen the conditions and pedagogical strategies that facilitate differentiated and student-centered learning.

Figure 3 presents the views of the experimental subjects regarding the extent to which they can help students think critically (1=to a small extent, and 5=to a large extent).

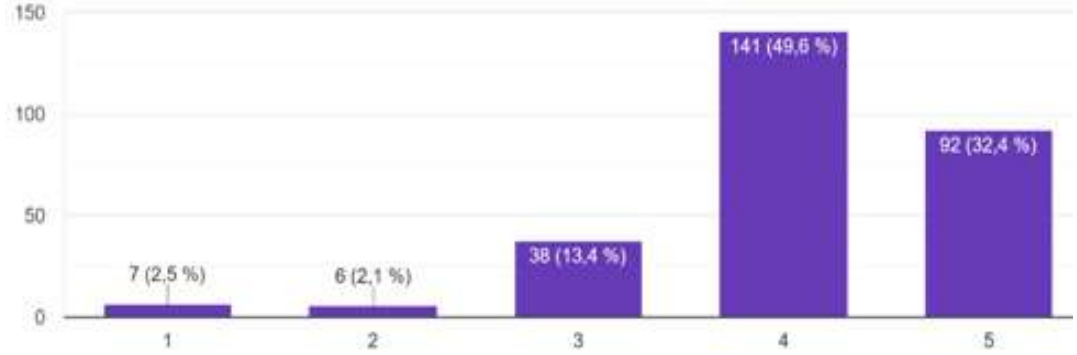


Fig. 3. Views of Experimental Subjects Regarding Extent to Which They Can Help Students Think Critically

According to the results (figure 3), 32.4% (92 people) of the entire sample, quantify this item at level 5, stating that to a large extent they can help students think critically; a larger number of subjects – 49.6% (141 people) quantify this item at level 4; 13.4% (38 people) of the total number of teachers quantify this item at level 3; 2.1% (6 people) quantify this item at level 2; 2.5% (7 people) of the total number of teachers quantify this item at level 1 of the scale that presents the extent to which they can help students think critically. In this context, we note that the results highlight a predominantly positive perception of teachers regarding their ability to stimulate students' critical thinking. Most respondents rated this aspect at high levels of the scale, level 4 and level 5, which shows that a considerable proportion of teachers believe that they succeed, to a large or very large extent, in helping students develop critical thinking competences. At the same time, the percentage of 13.4% of respondents who opted for level 3 indicates the existence of a moderate position regarding the effectiveness of this approach, while the low percentages of those who chose levels 1 and 2 (4.6%) suggest that only a small number of teachers perceive significant difficulties in stimulating critical thinking. Thus, the data confirm the importance given to the development of critical thinking in the educational process and highlight the need to strengthen pedagogical strategies that support the formation of this essential competence for the active and responsible participation of students in contemporary society.

The perceptions of experimental subjects regarding the extent to which they can stimulate students' creativity (1=to a small extent, and 5=to a large extent) are presented in Figure 4.

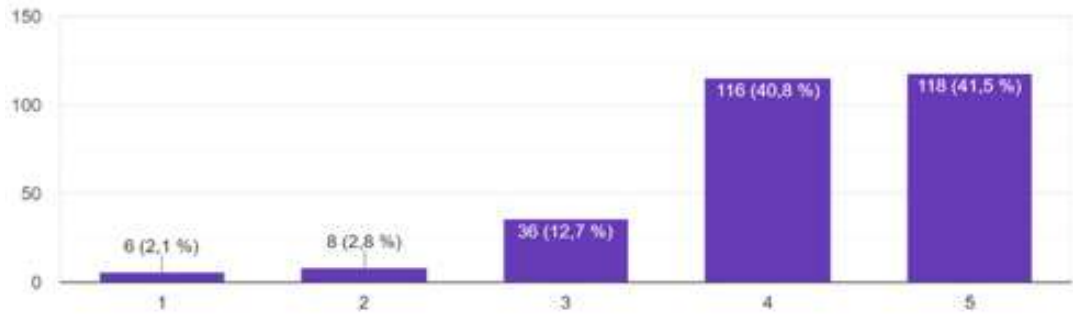


Fig. 4. Opinions of Experimental Subjects Regarding Extent to Which They Can Stimulate Students' Creativity

We note that the data in Figure 4 indicate a large number of experimental subjects who quantify this item at level 5 (41.5%) and at level 4 (40.8%), stating that they can stimulate students' creativity to a large extent. Then, in consecutive order, 12.7% quantify this item at level 3; 2.8% (8 people) of the total number of teachers quantify this item at level 2; and only 2.1% (6 people) quantify this item at level 1 – considering that they can stimulate students' creativity to a small extent. Summing up, we identify that the results highlight a predominantly favorable perception of teachers regarding their ability to stimulate students' creativity within the educational process. The high percentages of respondents who rated this aspect at the higher levels of scale — at level 5 and at level 4 — indicate that most teachers believe that they succeed, to a large or very large extent, in encouraging the manifestation and development of creativity among students. Also, the percentage of 12.7% of those who opted for level 3 suggests the existence of a moderate perception of this approach, while the low percentages corresponding to levels 2 and 1 (4.9% cumulative) indicate that only a small number of teachers perceive difficulties in stimulating students' creativity. These results emphasize the importance given to the development of creativity in the teaching-learning process and highlight the need to maintain and diversify teaching strategies that favor free expression, innovative thinking and active involvement of students in educational activities. In this context, we mention that these results are very important also because in the research conducted in 2022 on the subject of *Value Orientations and Psychosocial Adaptation of Adolescents* (PhD thesis in Psychology) [4] by administering *the Value Orientations Test - M. Rokeach* to adolescents, we obtained the hierarchies of terminal and instrumental value orientations in which the *creation* value was placed 17th out of 18 in the hierarchy of terminal values, which means that it remains in the category of non-priority values.

We also consider the perceptions of experimental subjects important with reference to the extent to which they can establish routines so that activities can proceed harmoniously, without problems (1=to a small extent, and 5=to a large extent). The results for the given item are presented in Figure 5.

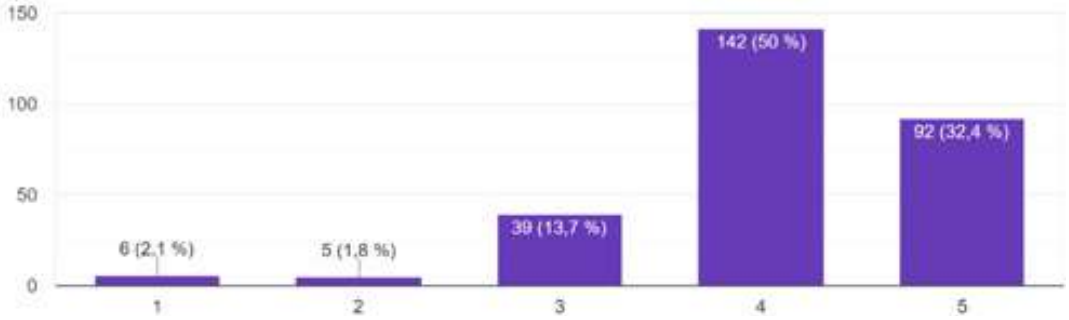


Fig. 5. Opinions of Experimental Subjects Regarding Extent to Which They Can Establish Routines So That Activities Can Proceed Harmoniously, Without Problems

Analyzing the results obtained for the item *How well can you establish routines so that activities can proceed harmoniously, without problems?* we identify that 92 interviewed subjects, which represents 32.4% of the entire group - quantify this item on level 5; then 142 subjects, which represents 50.0% of the entire group, being also the most numerous group - quantify this item on level 4. For the following levels there are fewer people who quantify, in consecutive order, this item on level 3 (13.7%); on level 2 (1.8%) and on level 1 - only 2.1% (6 people). We emphasize here that in the perceptions of a larger number of teachers, namely half of the sample, this item is placed at level 4 indicating that they cannot *very well* establish routines so that activities can be carried out harmoniously, without problems. In other words, the analysis of results highlights the fact that the majority of teachers consider that they have relatively solid competences in establishing the routines necessary for the harmonious conduct of educational activities. The high share of respondents who evaluated this aspect at levels 4 (50.0%) and 5 (32.4%) suggests that teachers generally perceive themselves as capable of efficiently organizing the teaching environment so that the teaching-learning process can be carried out in an orderly and predictable manner. However, the fact that half of the participants opted for level 4, and not for the maximum level of the scale, indicates the existence of a certain reserve in the assessment of their own abilities to manage educational routines. At the same time, the low percentages corresponding to the lower levels of the scale confirm that major difficulties in this area are relatively

rare. Therefore, the results suggest the need to strengthen classroom management practices and organizational strategies, so that teachers can ensure, to an even greater extent, a stable and efficient educational climate.

For the item *I believe that my most important task is to transfer the values and norms of society to students* - the results are as follows: 48.9% of teachers quantify this item at level 5 (to a large extent); 32.0% quantify this item at level 4; 12.7% - at level 3; in consecutive order 3.9% of the number of teachers interviewed quantify this item at level 2 and only 2.5% of the total number of teachers interviewed quantify this item at level 1 of the scale. Accordingly, these data indicate that teachers/future teachers consider their most important task to be teaching students to transfer the values and norms of society to students.

Figure 6 presents the opinions of experimental subjects regarding the extent to which students should learn well at school in order to be socially successful (1=to a small extent, and 5=to a large extent).

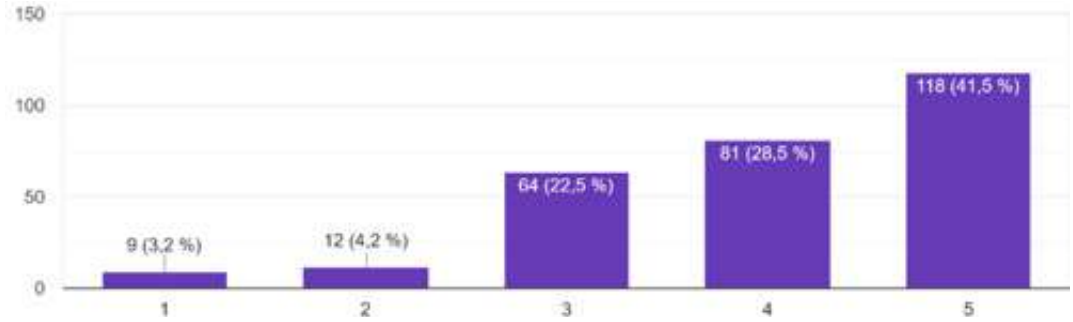


Fig. 6. Perceptions of Experimental Subjects Regarding Extent to Which Students Should Learn Well at School in Order to Be Socially Successful

The results presented graphically in Figure 6 demonstrate that there is a large number of subjects who believe that students should learn well at school in order to be socially successful. Thus, we identify that 118 interviewed subjects, which represents 41.5% of the entire group - quantify this item at level 5. At the same time, 81 subjects, which represents 28.5% of the entire group, quantify this item at level 4, then, in consecutive order, we have that 64 subjects, which represents 22.5% of the total number of teachers surveyed - quantify this item at level 3; 12 (4.2%) at level 2 and at level 1 - only 9 subjects, which represents 3.2%. The high proportion of respondents who rated this aspect at the maximum level of scale, as well as the significant share of those who opted for level 4, indicate that the majority of participants attribute a key role to school education in preparing students for integration and affirmation in society. At the same time, the existence of a segment of respondents who chose level 3 (22.5%) suggests that some teachers adopt a more balanced perspective, probably also recognizing the influence of other factors in achieving social success. The low percentages corresponding to lower levels confirm that only a small number of participants do not consider school learning to be a major determinant of social success. In this context, the analyzed data underline the importance that teachers attach to the role of education in developing the competences and resources necessary for active and effective participation in social life.

The perceptions of experimental subjects regarding the extent to which they believe that a good education for students is the key to social success are presented in Figure 7. For interpretation, the data are indicated according to which 1 means - to a small extent, and 5 means to a large extent.

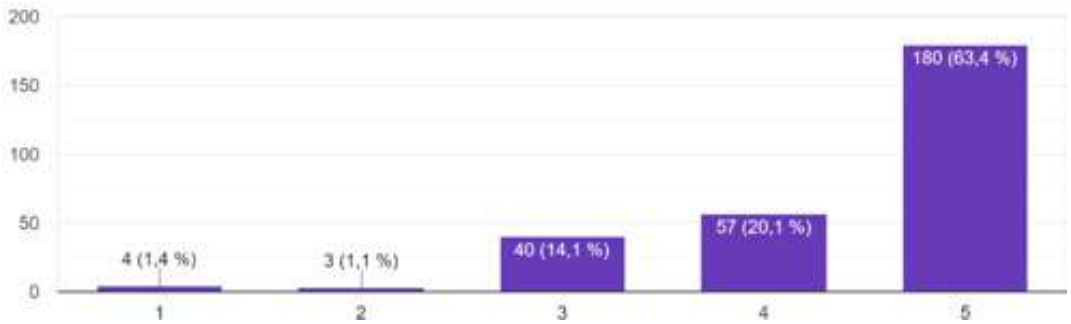


Fig. 7. Perceptions of Experimental Subjects Regarding Extent to Which They Believe That a Good Education for Students Is Key to Social Success

From figure 7, we observe that for the item *I believe that a good education for students is the key to social success* – most teachers/future teachers opted for level 5. More specifically, the results are as follows: 63.4% of teachers quantify this item at level 5 (to a large extent); in consecutive order 20.1% quantify this item at level 4; 14.1% of the total number of teachers quantify this item at level 3; 1.1% of the subjects quantify this item at level 2 and 1.4% of the total number of teachers interviewed quantify this item at level 1 of the scale. The analysis of presented results highlights a strong conviction among teachers regarding the determining role of education in achieving students' social success. The very high percentage of respondents who selected level 5 indicates that most teachers largely believe that a quality education is the foundation for success in social life. This perspective is also reinforced by the percentage of those who opted for level 4, which reinforces the idea of a widely shared perception of the decisive importance of education. At the same time, the moderate or low percentages recorded at levels 3, 2 and 1 suggest the existence of more reserved opinions, but these do not change the general trend of data. Moreover, the results reflect an optimistic view of the role of education, with teachers perceiving it as an essential tool for the personal development and successful social integration of students.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the research results highlight a complex and dynamic image of the professional identity of teachers, built at the intersection of personal motivations, educational values and the socio-cultural context in which they carry out their activity. The analysis of data collected through the Teacher Identity Measurement Scale (TIMS) indicates that the majority of participants display a positive orientation towards the teaching profession, with interest in education and the pleasure of being a teacher being essential reasons for choosing this career. At the same time, the results suggest that teachers perceive themselves as educational actors actively involved in the formation of students not only from a cognitive point of view, but also socially, morally and culturally.

The high proportion of respondents who consider important the development of critical thinking, the stimulation of creativity, the formation of social skills and the transmission of societal values confirms the complex nature of the teacher's role in contemporary society. Teachers also have a relatively favorable perception of their own ability to adapt the teaching process to the needs of students, to efficiently organize educational activities and to create a climate conducive to learning. At the same time, the results highlight the widespread belief that quality education is a determining factor in the social success of students, which reflects teachers' confidence in the transformative role of education. Moreover, the data obtained suggest that teachers' professional identity is structured around a set of solid educational values and a significant commitment to the formative process. These findings highlight the importance of supporting teachers' continuous professional development and of strengthening institutional and cultural contexts that favor the affirmation of a coherent and reflective professional identity.

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