


Teacher motivation: permanence or withdrawal in the profession?¹

*Motivação docente:
permanência ou desistência na profissão?*

*Motivación docente:
¿permanencia o abandono de la profesión?*

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Abstract: The aim of the study was to understand Elementary School teachers' concept about teacher motivation and their reasons for permanence or withdrawal in this profession. The research was developed during the "Motivational processes and creative methodologies" graduate program in Education at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS). The study methodology was characterized by a qualitative approach. For data collection, we conducted an online questionnaire and applied a structured interview, through the content analysis methodology proposed by Bardin (2011), and two categories have emerged from that process: "teacher motivation" and "reasons for permanence or for withdrawal the teaching profession". As results, we identified that the intrinsic motivation appears as a preponderant factor and that teachers demonstrated personal and professional fulfillment. Extrinsic motivation was evidenced by the need for social recognition and appreciation.

Keywords: Teacher Motivation. Basic Education. Teachers.

Resumo: O objetivo do estudo foi compreender as concepções de professoras, dos Anos Iniciais do Ensino Fundamental da Educação Básica, sobre motivação docente e quais os motivos para permanência ou desistência da profissão. A pesquisa foi desenvolvida na disciplina "Processos motivacionais e metodologias criativas" do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação da Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS). A metodologia caracteriza-se pela abordagem qualitativa. Para coleta de dados, realizamos questionário online e entrevista estruturada. Por meio da análise de conteúdo proposta por Bardin (2011) emergiram as categorias "motivação docente" e "motivos para permanência ou para desistência da profissão docente". Como resultados, identificamos que a motivação intrínseca aparece como fator preponderante para as professoras, que demonstraram realização pessoal e profissional. A motivação extrínseca foi observada pela necessidade de reconhecimento social e de valorização.

Palavras-chave: Motivação Docente. Educação Básica. Professoras.

Resumen: El objetivo de este estudio fue comprender las concepciones de profesoras de los Años Iniciales de la Enseñanza Fundamental de la Educación Básica, sobre motivación docente y cuales los motivos para la permanencia o abandono de la profesión. La investigación fue desarrollada en la disciplina "Procesos motivacionales y metodologías creativas" del Programa de Posgrado en Educación de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Rio Grande del Sur (PUCRS). La metodología se caracteriza por un abordaje cualitativo. Para la colecta de datos, aplicamos cuestionarios online y entrevistas estructuradas. Por medio del Análisis de contenido propuesta por Bardin (2011), surgieron las categorías "motivación docente" y "motivos para permanencia o para abandono de la profesión docente". Como resultados, identificamos que la motivación intrínseca aparece como factor preponderante y que las profesoras demostraron realización

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personal y Profesional. La motivación extrínseca fue evidenciada por la necesidad de reconocimiento social y de valorización.

Palabras clave: *Motivación del Maestro. Educación Primaria. Maestras.*

Introduction

In Brazil and in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (RS), we are undergoing a period of many challenges in the teaching profession. Souza, Brasil and Nakadaki (2017) emphasize that the devaluation of teaching is a historical fact and represents a social “abandonment”. In this sense, the context of policies of education has become a scenario of demonstration and dissatisfaction through struggles for better salaries and for the recognition of teachers, and Education is not a priority.

In the State Development Index (*Índice de Desenvolvimento Estadual*), “*Caminhos para o futuro do RS*” (Paths to the future of RS), in 2017 (iRS, 2017), explanatory factors were presented on the reality of Education, and the discontinuity of pedagogical and administrative policies pertain to the government, not to the State, thus promoting breaks in projects and programs that have already begun, lack of investment in teacher training and enhancement of the professional value.

According to Souza, Brasil and Nakadaki (2017, p. 60) “[...] no matter how consolidated is the role of the teacher, collective recognition is much below its real functions and importance”. Thus, keeping the new and experienced teachers motivated to teach is a challenge of contemporaneous times, as well as making the profession attractive for those who wish to enter this career. In this context the objective of the study was to understand the concepts of the teachers of the early years of Basic Education, regarding teacher motivation and what reasons they have for remaining in the profession or quitting it.

A search performed by Davoglio and Santos (2017, p. 204),

in the Scientific Electronic Library Online – Scielo Brasil and *Bibliografia Brasileira de Educação* (BBE) – Inep bases, including the period from 2000 to 2015, confirmed the scarcity of Portuguese-language publications about teacher motivation, and also the low indexation of these studies in relevant periodicals. Moreover, it was found that most of the studies primarily explore correlated constructs, such as satisfaction at work, implications for learning, stress or occupational health, and motivation is observed mainly as a coadjutant factor.

Teaching requires multiple knowledges that go well beyond academic training and experience. In this sense, professional insertion is a stage marked by ambiguities and by various feelings such as satisfaction, joy, insecurity and anxiety, and it is a complex moment. According to Huberman (2000), during their career teachers experience the “professional teaching life cycle”, phases of the professional that can be evidenced by the distance between ideals and reality, with a feeling of belonging to the teaching institution or the sensation of routine and exhaustion or with a motivation to continue. There is no linearity between the phases, they are different moments for each teacher, and the time and way in which each person experiences these phases are influenced by various elements. Thus, here we have to

consider the uniqueness of each teacher, their life story, their experiences and influences exerted by the work environment on the professional.

Motivation consists of motives (reasons) and goals, personal and professional, as well as intrinsic and extrinsic factors. For Bzuneck (2009, p. 9), “motivation or motive is something that moves a person or makes them act or change course; motivation has been understood sometimes as a psychological factor or set of factors, sometimes as a process”. Thus, each subject has a motivation regarding the choice of profession, the practice of teaching and remaining in the career. For Santos, Antunes and Schmitt (2010, p. 23): “there is no way to understand the process without considering a vast network of personal inter-relations, in which multiple factors, seen as parts, interfere in the whole”. The motivations related to expectations, to work environment factors and to interpersonal relations are linked to the intrinsic motivation, referring to the conditions of the subject himself.

According to Bzuneck (2009), the first factor of intrinsic motivation is competence, which is the organism’s capacity to interact satisfactorily with its environment. This motivation depends exclusively on the teacher, on stimuli and internal factors, and not on external factors, associated with personal and professional fulfillment, which is relevant and thus in the teaching profession it is necessary to have people who really like teaching and are committed to Education. On the other hand, the extrinsic motivation is related to external motives, such as recognition, better salaries, teacher appreciation and factors connected to the cognitive system. We evidence that the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are distinguished as to whether the origin is external or internal.

For Bzuneck (2009), the extrinsic motivation is less elaborate than the intrinsic one, and it is predominant in the educational context, since it works with the external, with teaching as obtaining material or social rewards. For instance, when a teacher seeks a Continued Education Course or a Postgraduate Program, they develop this action with an extrinsic motivation, if, they believe that the training may bring them knowledge, recognition and a better salary in the profession, and this motivation involves benefits.

The motivation for teaching is also related to the subject, to which sense and meaning are attributed to the profession, but also to the work environment and the school environment, which interfere in the level of motivation. Thus, according to Davoglio and Santos (2017, p. 203) “A teacher who is intrinsically motivated tends to actively explore their own capacities, becoming involved and remaining spontaneously involved in the activities perceived as interesting and rewarding”, as well as, “dealing with challenges, developing skills and competencies needed for their work”.

Still, according to Davoglio and Santos (2017, p. 203), Self-Determination Theory (SDT), “in its meta-theory, assumes that self-determined motivation may be supported or contradicted by contextual social influences that are processed by means of psychological needs for autonomy, competence and belonging/affiliation”. The “self-determined motivation of teachers can, therefore, be affected by both personal (beliefs, expectations, self-knowledge) and contextual aspects, such as: institutional pressures, valuation and social support, group functioning” (DAVOGLIO; SANTOS, 2017, p. 204). We also highlight that

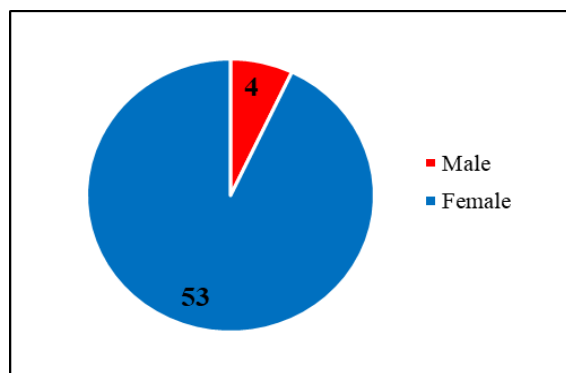
the feeling of belonging and establishing ties at the place of work, have reflections in the profession and on the motivation.

Methodology

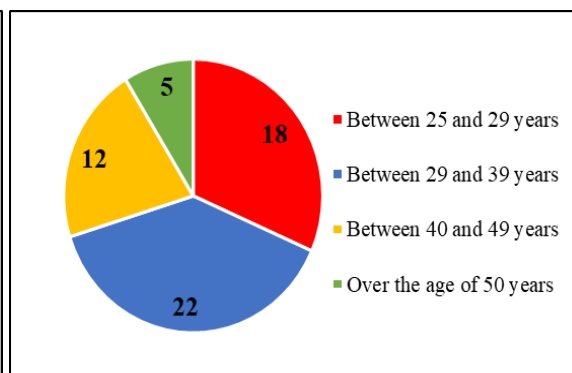
The study is characterized by the qualitative approach, which “is applied to the study of history, relations, representations, beliefs, concepts and opinions, products of interpretations made by humans regarding the way in which they live [...]” (MINAYO, 2010, p. 57). Thus, we seek to obtain indicators of professional permanence, defining the elements that influence the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and the understanding of the relations between these factors.

In order to collect data, we performed an online questionnaire with close-ended questions for teachers who work at schools in the interior of the State of Rio Grande do Sul (RS). We sent the link by e-mail and obtained 57 participants. In this sense, corresponding to the initial stage of the research, we present some data of the participants, such as age, teaching experience, etc.

Graph 1. What is your gender?



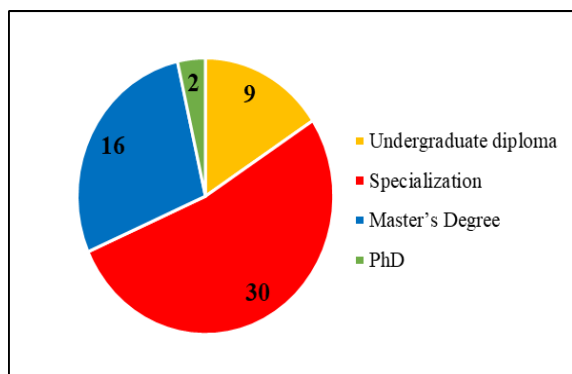
Graph 2. How old are you?



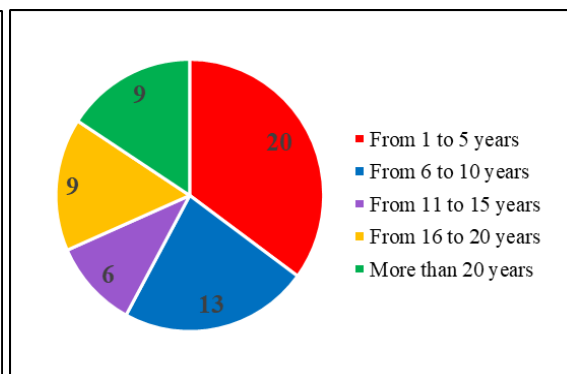
Source: Elaborated by the authors (2019).

In graph 1, we found that we had more female participants and as to age in graph 2 we found the greatest number of respondents between 29 and 39 years, but we found that the range between 25 and 29 years is also significant.

Graph 3. What is your education?



Graph 4. How long have you worked as a teacher?

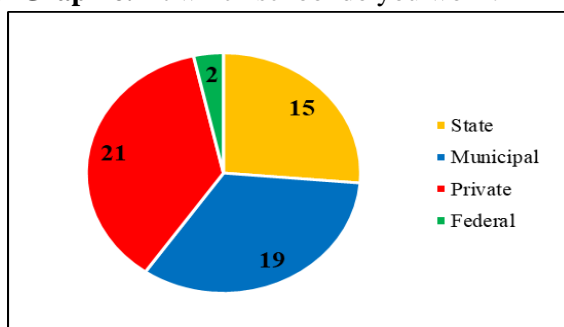
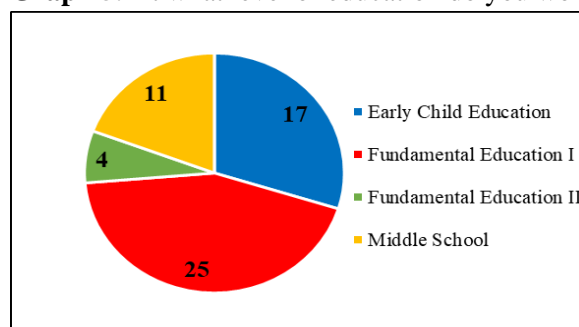


Source: Elaborated by the authors (2019).

Graph 3 showed us that most teachers have Postgraduate education, that is, they sought a Continued Education Course to improve and qualify. As to the time they have worked, most of the participants have been working from 1 to 5 years in the profession.

In graphs 5 and 6 we present the level of teaching at which they work and the sphere of coverage of the schools, which are State, Municipal, Private and Federal.

Graph 5. At what level of education do you work? **Graph 6.** At which school do you work?

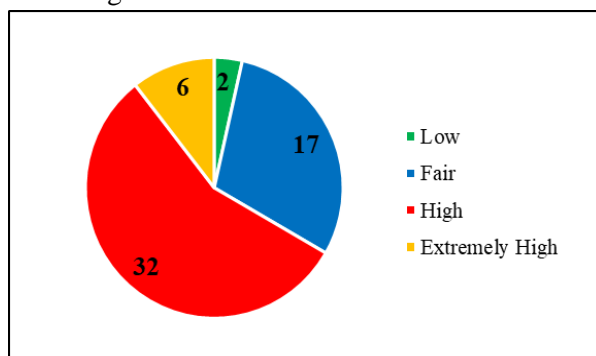


Source: Elaborated by the authors (2019).

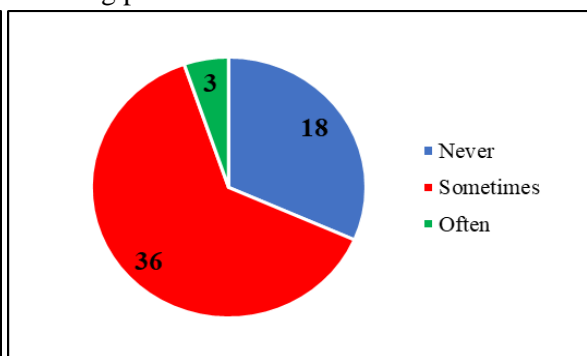
We had more participants who work in Fundamental Education I, corresponding to the Initial Years of the 1st to 5th grade in Basic Education. As to the sphere of schools, most of them work in Private (21) and Municipal schools (19).

Later we wanted to know the teaching motivation of the participants, and whether they have already thought of quitting the profession.

Graph 7. What is your degree of motivation for teaching?



Graph 8. Have you ever thought of quitting the teaching profession?



Source: Elaborated by the authors (2019).

For most participants the degree of motivation is high, but they have sometimes thought of quitting the profession. This shows that the feeling regarding the profession cannot be perceived as linear. Depending on their professional phase this feeling may change.

Concluding the analysis of the questionnaire data, aiming to obtain a homogeneous and intentional sample to perform the interview, we established the following criteria: working from 1 to 5 years and age range 25 to 39 years. The participants were all female, 10 young female teachers who work in the Early Years of Fundamental Education I in Basic Education and whose personal data were kept confidential.

In order to interpret the data we analyzed the content based on Bardin (2011). In this way we evidenced the categories of research that allow us to validate the relationship between the motivation and the motives that are essential, for permanence in teaching in Basic Education, avoiding quitting the profession.

Results and discussions

In the weave of this study, the data were grouped and analyzed so that we could understand the senses and meanings attributed to the motivation, In the process of analysis, the following categories emerged: “teaching motivation”, which involves the teachers’ concepts on the motivation and factors that most influenced the motivation and “motives for permanence and for quitting the teaching profession”, that involve the factors that influenced the motivation and the motives to quit or continue teaching. Thus, here we present each category and the main findings of the study.

In the first category “teaching motivation”, we evidenced great enthusiasms among the interviewees. Huertas (2001, p. 54) corroborates, saying that “human motivation must be understood as a process of activation and orientation of action”. Thus, we can identify it as a process that potentiates or inhibits actions and inter-relationship, by means of multiple extrinsic and intrinsic factors. The study enables establishing nexuses between these structures of motivational representation and professional development in teaching which

presents specific characteristics, considering that the teachers are beginning their teaching career.

For Huberman (2000), the first three years correspond to the phase of discovery, which involves enthusiasm at teaching and survival in the profession, because of the challenges that arise in everyday school life. The stabilization phase is considered four to six years of career, involving commitment and the teacher taking responsibilities. In this sense reflections were made about the concepts regarding the definition of teaching motivation:

I see motivation as movement, action. An impulse to continue acting according to a given positive conduct, a motivated teacher is creative (TEACHER 4).

Motivation to teach is that which makes me seek alternatives and methodologies that fit my reality of professional action so that, motivated, I can also motivate those who are part of my group of teachers (TEACHER 8).

I consider motivation to teach everything that moves us, makes us go, following our plans and objectives as professionals of Education (TEACHER 9).

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Based on the answers we observe that motivation is related to actions, movements, objectives and strategies that move the teachers in the profession. According to Bzuneck (2009), the term motivation corresponds to a motive that drives the individual to act, and it can be due to internal or external factors, which will determine the behaviors, wishes and sentiments. In this context we see motivation as an important part in this construction, that has implications in the field of action of teaching and in professional development. In the answers we can evidence that the feelings are diverse, making a single definition impossible. However, a specific spectrum of transformation and one of the environment are materialized, acknowledging the impact of action on the work environment at school, with the students, the teachers, school management and the community.

Even with the many challenges that teachers are currently facing in Education, we identify a motivation of the teachers in relation to the profession. Stimuli and incentives that potentiate them, may be involved in this motivation, in the sense of expectations. They believe in a better Education and in enhancement of professional value. In this process we establish goals and objectives and seek personal and professional growth throughout the teaching profession.

“In terms of public policies in favor of the cause of teaching, it is undeniable that there has been a great advance, but when analyzing the real context of action of this teacher it becomes evident that the negative status or the social burden faced before is still present today” (SOUZA; BRASIL; NAKADAKI, 2017, p. 62). Thus, the development of public policies for Education and the improvement of teaching are external instruments of action in the motivational process of the professionals and should be emphasized in teacher training, in the progression of the career and in social acknowledgment, which are aspects that are currently not much appreciated.

We can point out that aiming to strengthen the motivational processes of the profession, the public policies for education should include mechanisms to participate and

value teachers. It is in this complex weave of elements that we ask about the factors that are most influential in motivation:

A very important aspect that interferes in the motivation of the teacher is the relationship with the students. The participation and involvement of the families also motivate and satisfy the professionals, as well as the enhanced value and support of the directing team (TEACHER 3).

The aspects are school management, the school infrastructure, the interpersonal relations, the salary and professional acknowledgment, as well as the return given by the student to learning (TEACHER 5).

Every professional needs to be motivated to act. In the field of Education, it is not different. I emphasize, as the main aspect of teacher motivation, the wish for social change, for humanization, for improvement in the field of education (TEACHER 8).

With the narratives we identify the motivation related to intrinsic motives, for instance, professional fulfillment, interpersonal relations with the students, and as extrinsic motives the involvement, acknowledgment and participation of the families, such as appreciation of the value and support to school management. This motivation is related to emotional, affective, relational elements, to personal and professional development and to school reality.

We also underscore that the school environment, classroom, infrastructure, resources are also major factors of motivation. But an evaluation of the current scenario of precarization of the material, remunerative determinants and infrastructures marks the immanent dynamics of the profession in reproducing motivational elements. “It is thus necessary to have a greater offer of pedagogical materials and good infrastructural conditions, which the school often lacks and when it has them they are not in appropriate conditions” (SOUZA; BRASIL; NAKADAKI, 2017, p. 62).

The profession presents a number of challenges: low pay, long work days, overcrowded classrooms, lack of infrastructures, lack of discipline, violence, precarious investments to cover the need of education, in other words, the demand taken on is much greater than that presented, besides poor social recognition. Jacomini, Alves and Camargo (2015) underscore that the devaluation can be noticed in the national context, but also in the international one: this is because teaching work does not take place only in the classroom, there is also an overload of work that is ignored.

The very bad working conditions are elements that contribute to the fact that the teachers do not invest in their career, and because they do not find the return they hoped for in the profession, ultimately lose motivation to teach. According to Bozzella (2019) the profession that should be assigned greater value in Brazil occupies the last position in the ranking, in other words there is no recognition of teaching. However, it is found that even with all difficulties presented, the teachers interviewed are prepared to deal with adversities and do their job.

From this perspective we also emphasize that teacher must be urgently recognized again in contemporary society, because increasingly young people do not wish to take teacher training (*licenciatura*) courses at universities, since the profession has been depreciated. As

Almeida and Soares (2011) say, the depreciation of teaching also depends on the government ensuring appropriate work and pay conditions. It is essential for professionals in education to be appreciated, considering that the quality of teaching depends a lot on the teacher's motivation to practice the profession. This appreciation is imbricated in the recognition of teachers, in the pay and in the respect for this professional.

In the second category “reasons for permanence or quitting the teaching profession”, we seek to evidence the reasons imbricated in the teachers' motivation to work in this profession, and which are those that cause them to quit, absence of motivation to teach. As to the reasons why teachers continue teaching, we identified a diversity of answers, as per the narratives below:

What motivates me is to wake up and know that I'm going to make a difference at my work place. That I am an example of motivation and dedication in an environment that is often demotivated and “without light” (TEACHER 3).

I like the contact with people, the dynamics of the profession. It is not a static profession. Although Brazil is immersed in a moral, political and value crisis, I believe that Education makes the difference and that I can make a difference in society (TEACHER 6).

What I chose and prepared to do, together with the hope for a better future, a worthy and quality Education for the young, because they are the future of our country. I stay on in the teaching environment because I believe in Education. I wish that through my efforts and dedication something significant will result. Contributing to a better education of the students as citizens and as people of character, who participate in society and know their rights, but, above all their duties (TEACHER 9).

The teachers underscored aspects involving the social issue, student education, hope for a better future, since they wish to make a difference in society. Besides, they believe in Education and commitment to the profession, which is extremely relevant in a country like Brazil that invests little in Education. The social action of teaching is perceived as a mission and means of professional action. This element marks an agenda of differentiation in the category that might signal that the processes of quitting and social reality affect motivation, potentiating a level of positive motivation in the teaching career and influencing them to stay on. In the study we identify that the intrinsic motivation of the profession is also one of the elements that motivate permanence in teaching.

Liking what I do, the affection of the students, the methodology of the school where I work, the professional recognition that I receive from the students, their family and the school (TEACHER 1).

The students are my main reason to continue teaching, it is for them that I constantly seek updating and commitment in planning the classes. They motivate me to continue teaching (TEACHER 5).

The motivation of the teacher-student relation that we have in transforming the world, people, teaching and learning that never stops, because we are also learning, in other words, daily work also motivates me (TEACHER 10).

For the teachers, the motivation is related to the students, to teaching and learning in school. The appreciation of this professional is essential in Education, and it is necessary to

create better working conditions, a worthy career with remuneration that is in accordance with the training required and with the work done by the teachers. “With these and many other changes as regards teaching activities, it is necessary to establish permanent training actions for the educators” (ANTUNES; GUILHERME; SILVA, 2017, p. 52-53).

Keeping the teacher motivated depends on many factors and conditions that have repercussions on education, on the commitment to the teaching institution, on the perception of their social role, on the teacher student relation, on the satisfaction and dissatisfaction, on the work environment, among other elements that directly influence professional and personal life. In the interviews with the teachers we sought to discover which factors and personal and/or institutional factors mobilize this motivation:

All actions for recognition potentiate motivation. The union of the group, the value assigned to the work by the students, parents and institution. The concern of the institution to help the teaching professional seek improvement, continued education and a higher salary (TEACHER 6).

Motivation may be the result of different factors, often results obtained with the students in the classroom. At other times the institution itself may motivate the teacher, by praise and recognition of this teacher’s actions and dedication. When you perceive that you are performing your activities, that you have the recognition of the others and the recognition of the work itself, I continue to perform it the best I can (TEACHER 9).

What motivates this potentiation is the praise at school, the recognition of the families, my growth and self-fulfillment (TEACHER 10).

In the excerpts we observe which elements help motivate the teacher. If the teacher receives recognition, is appreciated by the students, the families and the school, they show their motivation in these extrinsic factors. For Huertas (2001), the motivational process is developed when the individual finds reasons and meanings, that change from person to person. Besides, school management needs to invest in teaching motivation, promoting the involvement of the teachers in workshops, training, updating activities, with motivational dynamics, that work with self-esteem, teamwork, affection, self-confidence and appreciation of professional value. Continued education was also mentioned as one of the elements that potentiate motivation to teach:

I try to constantly improve, be it through courses, talks and studies. Besides, the public requires us to always innovate and seek new knowledge (TEACHER 2).

Moments of formation provided by the institution, courses and talks that discuss subjects relevant for my daily work in the classroom (TEACHER 7).

We believe that the teacher needs to seek qualification courses, to be constantly learning, updating and thinking. Schools can also promote capacity–building, with a view to formative times and spaces. Thus, we understand continued education throughout the profession, articulated with the professional development and as a possibility of resignifying their action as a teacher. However, “this requires that we have an epistemologically broader look as regards the teachers’ actions and effective participation” (ANTUNES *et al.*, 2017, p. 37-38). Based on the authors, for the real continued formation it is necessary to bring back

the participation of the teachers and it is essential to realize that they are subjects who are undergoing a permanent learning process.

Continued education may be one of the moments to promote and potentiate motivation to teach, recognizing and praising the work they do, showing support for the difficulties experienced in everyday life in the profession, and being a support in the challenges that are faced. It also may be “turned toward the development of realistic concepts regarding personal and professional qualities, besides providing the teachers’ professional satisfaction and personal well-being, it raises their level of motivation [...]” (ANTUNES *et al.*, 2017, p. 46). Thus, it is necessary to affirm the importance of the school being a welcoming, receptive environment, in which it is possible to share experiences, aspirations and frustrations about teaching.

In this sense, continued education is essential for the work as a teacher, considering the educational demands that arise in Brazilian society. Currently teachers have so many attributions and are so devalued that they have already thought about quitting the profession and wish to abandon it for several reasons, such as:

I gave up the contract I had with the State. For several reasons: lack of recognition, low salaries, powerlessness in several situations. For a teacher to have a medium salary they have to work at least 40 hours. Where is time to plan? To further qualify? For leisure? Another factors that really bothers is the devaluation by society. I have the impression that society sees the teacher as a person who did not have the opportunity to choose another profession (TEACHER 6).

The reasons involve the current difficulties: lack of commitment by the families, and consequently, accumulation of activities related to bureaucracy (records, notes, minutes, proof of requests for materials and activities. Loss of class time due to matters related to the lack of respect, family problems), lack of recognition by society, loss of salary value and exhaustive work load. As to the hours of work I ask myself, how can a teacher who works 40- or 60-hours plan and dedicate themselves to quality, to teaching? (TEACHER 7).

The wish to give up occurs at different times and in different situations. Be it due to the lack of financial value assigned to the teacher’s work, the difficulty of staying on a job, the lack of respect by some parents who wish to evaluate their children themselves as regards school topics. The situations of risk and lack of respect by the students and the lack of support from the institution itself, which should care for the safety, physical and mental health of the teachers (TEACHER 9).

The reasons why the teachers thought of giving up teaching involve the depreciation of teachers, lack of respect, work conditions, extensive work load, relationship with the family and low pay, making them lose their enthusiasm for the profession and becoming unmotivated to practice it. According to Souza, Brasil and Nakadaki (2017, p. 62): “The accumulation of activities, physical and mental health problems and a worn-down professional practice of the teacher are some of the reflexes of the ‘abandonment’ suffered by the category”. There are various demands, considering that the education system lives under stress because of social changes, requirements and changes of government, often overburdening the teachers and giving them the feeling of insecurity in the profession, which results in professional dissatisfaction.

Being a teacher in contemporary times is a great challenge, because even though they have training and experience, many professionals are shaken by the external circumstances that compromise their work and their life. For Ramirez and Stobäus (2010, p. 11): “The teaching profession, due to its many difficulties, especially in Brazil, is characterized by offering few incentives to the teachers”. The teachers highlight negative aspects that influence their lack of motivation to be a teacher and the lack of social recognition:

I emphasize the devaluation of salaries and of the professional himself by society, federal government and state. Not having one’s work appreciated, with lack of basic materials, or even not being properly paid to practice it is a true step backward. We end up thinking that being a teacher is an exercise that is only done for love, although the feeling is also part of the motivation, but no teacher is born ready. It is necessary to have years of study, research, expanding one’s knowledge in various fields, one of them psychology, in order to understand human behavior. Professionals of many different areas, without knowing things, judge and point to possible solutions for Education, but the teachers, the main promoters of knowledge, have their opinions discarded and not valued appropriately (TEACHER 8).

One of the factors of lack of motivation is mostly the devaluation of our work. Be it by society that does not value the effort, be it by the students that think themselves superior, those who believe that we cannot add anything to their education because they are self-sufficient. The belittling and consideration are explicit, creating discomfort and sometimes a feeling of incompetence (TEACHER 9).

Elements that demotivate the profession were evidenced, and this is an unsatisfactory scene of devaluation, social recognition and remuneration. “However it is not easy for the teacher to identify them self with a professional whose social image does not offer positive, common and mobilizing references” (GUIMARÃES, 2006, p. 60). In addition there are the diversity of roles taken on and the responsibility of being a teacher at precarious schools, with educational environments in which there is competition, a struggle for power or lack of ambition, leading to discontent, frustration, stress, uneasiness of the teacher, depression and the Burnout syndrome because of physical and mental exhaustion, resulting in the fact that those who lose hope of continuing their career quit.

It is thus necessary to look at the teacher from the point of view of the critical analysis of reality and of the daily coping and actions that can evidence the teacher’s well being, personal and professional self-fulfillment. Continued education may cover “besides the methods and teaching practices among teaching and learning processes, a personal action of lifelong learning, by which educators can seek their constant wishes for self-knowledge with a view to self-fulfillment” (ANTUNES; GUILHERME; SILVA, 2017, p. 52-53). From this perspective, we had teachers who would not quit the profession, arguing that they are personally and professionally fulfilled, even in the face of the multiplicity of elements that compose the demands of teaching and the complexity of the activities:

I never thought, I don’t see myself working in another field. I’m happy teaching! (TEACHER 2).

No, I never thought of giving up the teaching profession, I like the profession that I chose and at school I don’t let myself be influenced by the teachers who are unmotivated. They say that I have a motivation for teaching because I am beginning

as a teacher, but I have wanted to become a teacher ever since I was a small child, and teaching was my personal choice (TEACHER 5).

These teachers show that they feel fulfilled by teaching and motivated in the profession. These are fundamental elements in the profession, for them to continue seeking their goals, achievements, recognition and being appreciated. However, this reality is not present in all school contexts. Despite the national scenario of devaluation, idealism manages to sustain the motivation of the teachers interviewed, who believe in the perspectives of changes in their career and in being appreciated. “We know that it is not easy in Brazil to earn a living from this profession (low salaries, long work day and difficult material conditions), nor even to survive in this profession, considering the physical, emotional and cultural wear and tear” (GUIMARÃES, 2006, p. 90).

But the teachers have spelled out elements of the intrinsic motivation that are involved in the will and the motives for them to remain in the teaching profession, with the possibility of making a difference in the school contexts, believing in changes and improvements in Brazilian Education. They do not wish to abandon the profession, even with the diversity of challenges and of political, social and professional demands imposed. Thus, it is necessary to overcome the conflicts that arise and seek the means to open paths in the schools. In this sense, teacher resilience is also a way to overcome and adapt, in the face of the challenges that arise in the everyday school life.

Final considerations

Given the contemporary reality of education, we find that the process of teacher motivation is a topic that must be studied further. The study we performed allowed us to evidence the motivation of teachers, and their reasons for remaining (permanence) in the career, and why teachers quit. The results, although incipient and from a small sample, make us reflect on the actions that influence personal and professional life. We observe that the intrinsic motivation appears as a preponderant factor for the teachers, because they showed personal and professional fulfillment from the profession. On the other hand, the extrinsic motivation was perceived by the need for social recognition and recognition by the school, the family, better wages and appreciating the work of teaching.

In this sense we can say that the motivational processes in teaching occur based on several factors, thus requiring a systemic look, founded on an integral concept of being a teacher. The data presented show us the teaching profession in a more positive form, since the teachers who are beginning their career feel motivated. Therefore we reflect on the importance of keeping them motivated throughout their practice of the profession, appreciating and recognizing them, sharing good practices that can be socialized at school, pedagogical meetings and at school community events.

We see the need to create strategies to motivate the teachers in the school environment and think about suggestions to keep them motivated, such as: incentivizing continued education, providing positive feedbacks during the school year, recognizing teaching work,

attributing autonomy to the teachers in the class room, promoting actions for collaborative work, performing motivational dynamics, having a democratic and participatory school management, having moments of relaxation, of socialization at the school to get better acquainted with their colleagues with whom they work every day , but that these moments not be only pedagogical in character, rather they will be for relaxing, self-knowledge and reflecting on personal life and not only their professional life.

It was also possible to identify the existence of complex educational problems that need to be solved in Brazilian Education. According to the evidence the suggestions are: public policies that really appreciate the teacher and their work, and this requires appropriate remuneration, and also career plans that incentivize the teacher to seek post-graduate programs and constant updating. Recognition as a professional and social appreciation still have a long way to go.

As limitations we found that to give the results more consistency, this study can be performed with more participants and at different Schools of Basic Education. Furthermore one must investigate how the students perceive their teachers' motivation, and how the teachers perceive their students' motivation, and what are the impacts of this on the teaching and learning processes, considering that the teacher's motivation influences their work as teachers.

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Notes

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