

# Factors that motivate foreign language teachers in Romania.

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## **Abstract:**

Motivation deals with the reasons why people engage in an activity, the perseverance with that activity and the energy they spend on it. Studies on teachers' motivation are abundant, nevertheless, in many countries, including Romania, teacher shortage is an alarming concern.

Teaching is an emotionally demanding profession, thus, understanding factors that motivate education staff can increase the quality of the instruction. This research explores factors that motivate foreign language teachers in Romania taking into consideration participants' age, working experience and geographic location (urban vs. rural). To address the research objectives a mixed method strategy was adopted. A combination of interviews and questionnaire survey narrowed down the research objectives and made possible the implementation of the FIT Choice model (Watt and Richardson 2007) in the Romanian context, allowing cross-country comparison.

The outcomes show that there are no significant differences of Romanian foreign language teachers' motivation from the motivations of foreign language teachers in other contexts. Interview participants declared that they are more intrinsically than extrinsically driven. In addition, participants are motivated by the desire to shape the youths' values and inspire the young generation. Interestingly, their prior positive language learning experiences also encourage them to teach. Survey data are almost similar to the interview data. Thus, the desire to make a social contribution and inspire the young generation are the main motivational factors.

However, satisfaction with salary and the opportunities that teaching allows, scored less: teachers are demotivated by their working conditions, issues in the Education system, poor salary and humble social status (same issues as in Tomuletiu et al., 2011). Surprisingly, survey participants are more motivated by learners' performance than the passion for teaching, the interest in the subject matter or their positive learning experiences.

Not surprisingly, teachers stated that online teaching imposed by the COVID-19 decreased their level of motivation. Young participants in particular consider online teaching to be a challenge, while mature participants feel more confident teaching remotely.

Against my expectation, urban and rural foreign language teachers do not differentiate in relation to motivation degree or motivation type. On the other hand, participants' age and teaching experience marginally influence the type of motivation.

The issue of teachers' motivation needs particular attention, especially it is important to lobby the Government to consider the problems in education, ameliorate the working conditions of teachers and elevate their social status.

### **Keywords:**

Intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, foreign language teachers, job satisfaction, Romania