

## **Development of the Professional Motivation of Teachers from Rural Areas in Romania**

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### **Abstract:**

The conceptual understanding of teacher motivation draws from several established theoretical frameworks. Self-determination theory (Bouffard, Léandre, Ryan & Deci, 2017) posits that teachers' motivation stems from three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are satisfied in the workplace, teachers demonstrate greater enthusiasm, commitment, and effectiveness. Similarly, Herzberg's two-factor theory distinguishes between hygiene factors (salary, working conditions, administrative practices) that prevent dissatisfaction and motivators (recognition, achievement, responsibility) that actively promote satisfaction and engagement.

International research consistently demonstrates the correlation between teacher motivation and educational outcomes. The OECD's TALIS studies (2018) reveal that motivated teachers implement more innovative pedagogical approaches, demonstrate greater job satisfaction, and are less likely to leave the profession. UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report (2021) further emphasises that teacher motivation significantly influences student achievement, particularly in socioeconomically disadvantaged contexts—a finding with important implications for Romania's rural education system.

Romania, but also Europe, faces increasing challenges in recruiting enough qualified teachers. A lack of qualified teachers can affect pupils' learning and hinder the goal of providing quality education for all. Teacher shortages may be due to a combination of factors, including an ageing teacher population, a growing pupil population, low motivation among young people to start a teaching career and high levels of teacher attrition. Challenging working environments, stress, uncompetitive salaries and lack of recognition of competences can affect motivation to enter and remain in the teaching profession, the European Commission believes (European Commission, 2023).