VALUE ORIENTATIONS, PROFESSIONAL SELF, AND ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SCHOOL IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The knowledge of professional values has increasingly become a necessity in the job orientation and construction of professional identity in adulthood: so, it is interesting to understand, in a group of teachers, whether the representation of the professional Self, the students, and the school (De Caroli et al., 2007) influenced the value orientations (Boerchi and Castelli, 2000) related to the Result (RES), the Relationship (REL), the Career (CAR), the Leadership (LD), the Salary (SAL), the Self-improvement (IMP), the Innovation (INN), the Variety of activities (VAR), the Responsibility (RESP), the Mobility (MOB), and the Physical Activity (PHA). The results showed that the representation of the Professional Self was significantly more positive than that expressed toward the students and the school. A better self representation as a teacher influenced the importance attributed to the results, self-perception in the employment sphere, looking for news, and responsibility arising from the subjective decisions. The representation of the students affected on the career, leadership, and variety of activities. Future studies will investigate the role of other psychological dimensions, e.g. perceived self-efficacy, on the value priorities and the relationships between teachers and students.

Keywords: values, professional Self, teachers, social attitudes

1. INTRODUCTION

I valori lavorativi, relativamente stabili e duraturi nel tempo, possono essere considerati come linee guida utili a definire obiettivi e realizzare azioni in ambito professionale (Dose, 1997).The work

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values, relatively stable and long-lasting, can be considered as useful guidelines to establish goals and implement actions in professional environment (Dose, 1997). Ogni persona ricerca contesti professionali che corrispondano al proprio sistema valoriale e tende ad sottolineare determinati aspetti del lavoro ea preferire alcune attività ad altre (Perron et al ., 2004; Catalano et al ., 2006). Each person seeks out professional contexts that correspond to own value system and tends to emphasize certain aspects of the work and to prefer some activities to other ones (Perron et al., 2004; Catalano et al., 2006).Le priorità in ambito professionale appaiono strettamente collegate ai valori di base, individuati da Schwartz (1992), che ha definito il "valore" nei termini di "un concetto che un individuo ha di uno scopo trans-situazionale (terminale vs strumentale) che esprime interessi (individuali vs collettivi) collegati a domini motivazionali e valutato su un continuum di importanza (da molto importante a poco importante) che funge da principio guida nella vita" (Schwartz e Bilsky, 1987, p.553, cit. in Capanna et al. , 2005, p.29). Con riferimento all'ambito professionale ed ai bisogni soddisfatti dal lavoro, mutuando le aree valoriali indicate da Schwartz e Bilsky (1990) e da Sagiv e Schwartz (1995), alcuni studiosi italiani (Avallone, Farnese e Porcelli, ISFOL 2007) hanno realizzato una recente ricerca su un campione di 1211 giovani tra i 20 ei 30 anni e 623 adulti fra i 31 ei 65 anni.

La letteratura sull'analisi dei valori professionali testimonia che essi rappresentano ciò che per l'individuo assume importanza nel lavoro in sé, in quanto portatore di soddisfazione derivante dal suo stesso svolgimento (Boerchi e Castelli, 2000, p.6).The literature on the analysis of professional values showed that they represent what is important for the individual in the work as the source of satisfaction derived from its own realization (Boerchi and Castelli, 2000, p.6). In questa prospettiva e alla luce della nota analisi realizzata mediante il Work Importance Study (WIS) e ritenuta parte integrante della "teoria sullo sviluppo vocazionale" di Super (1970), Boerchi e Castelli (2000) hanno sviluppato l'analisi delle priorità valoriali in campo professionale nel contesto italiano, individuando undici specifici orientamenti valoriali che il soggetto può considerare più o meno importanti nella sua vita lavorativa (ibidem , pp.9-11):In this perspective and in light of known analysis carried out with the Work Importance Study (WIS) and considered part of the "theory of vocational development" by Super (1970), Boerchi and Castelli (2000) have developed the analysis of value priorities in professional field in the Italian context, identifying eleven specific value orientations that person can consider more or less important in working life:

the Result (RES): it indicates the importance attributed by individuals to achieve the predetermined goals and to overcome obstacles and difficulties encountered in the path of life with determination and energy.

the Relationship (REL): it regards the importance assigned by individuals to the cooperation and relations with other people for individual and collective success;

the Career (CAR): it expresses the importance assigned to the attainment of professional positions and progression in career as a result of possible promotions;

the Leadership (LD): it indicates the importance given to the possibility to assume leadership roles, in which dominance and exercise of power are the strengths of the performed task;

the Salary (SAL): it shows the emphasis placed on economic remuneration resulting from the performed jobs;

the Self-improvement (IMP): it identifies the importance given to what can help the grow professionally and personally;

the Innovation (INN): it indicates the importance given to the possibility of working in a creative and innovative way in carrying out own profession;

the Variety of activities (VAR): it indicates the importance attributed to the performance of different and not repetitive or habitual tasks;

the Responsibility (RESP): it indicates the importance given to act in honest and responsible manner;

the Mobility (MOB): it expresses the importance given by the person to the tasks that require travels and trips to know cultures, values and work experiences different from own culture;

the Physical Activity (PHA): it indicates the importance assigned to jobs that require the performance of manual and physical work.

From this framework, it appeared possible to understand what is deemed important by the individual within own profession in order to analyze the possible relationships with other psychological dimensions, not directly observable and measurable in this approach, e.g., perceived self-efficacy (Gibson and Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Eisenberger et al., 2005), emotional intelligence (Penrose et al., 2007), job satisfaction (Woolfolk Hoy and Davis, 2006) and, especially, the representation of professional self, which is one of the key elements discussed in this research contribution.Questi elementi giocano un ruolo fondamentale anche nella professione docente e nella qualità del clima lavorativo in ambito scolastico. These elements play a fundamental role in the teaching profession and in the quality of working climate in school.

Dalla letteratura specialistica è, ad es., emerso che una positiva immagine di sé a livello professionale, accompagnata da elevati livelli di auto-efficacia percepita, è correlata all'espressione di atteggiamenti positivi verso la scuola: in particolare, è stato rilevato che più i docenti si sentono efficaci nella loro attività, più appaiono propensi ad accettare le idee proposte dal Dirigente scolastico, dai colleghi e da parte dei genitori degli studenti in maniera concorde con gli obiettivi istituzionali e più percepiscono la scuola come sistema capace di far fronte alla sua missione educativa (Caprara et al. , 2003a; Caprara et al. , 2003b).The literature has shown that a positive self-image at professional level, accompanied by high levels of perceived self-efficacy, is related to the expression of positive attitudes toward the school; in particular, it was noted that the more teachers feel themselves efficient in their work, the more they are likely to accept the ideas proposed by the school manager, colleagues, and parents of students in accordance with the institutional goals and the more they perceive the school as a system able to cope with its educational mission (Caprara et al. 2003a; Caprara et al., 2003b).Più i docenti mostrano elevati livelli di self-efficacy , più si impegnano nella loro attività professionale e si sentono soddisfatti anche nelle relazioni con i colleghi e con i genitori degli studenti (Imants e Van Zoelen, 1995). The more teachers showed high levels of self-efficacy, the more they engaged themselves in their work and felt themselves satisfied in the relationships with colleagues and parents of students (Imants and Van Zoelen, 1995).In aggiunta, i docenti con elevati livelli di self-efficacy risultano più propensi ad impiegare strumenti innovativi in ambito didattico (Fuchs et al. , 1992), ad usare metodi di insegnamento che incoraggiano l'autonomia degli studenti e riducono l'esercizio del controllo e della custodia (Cousin e Walker, 1995), a gestire meglio i problemi in classe (Chacon, 2005), influenzando direttamente anche la self-efficacy degli studenti, migliorando il loro coinvolgimento nelle attività in classe e riducendo gli sforzi per superare le difficoltà (Woolfolk et al. , 1990; Ross et al ., 2001). In addition, teachers with high self-efficacy were more likely to use innovative tools in teaching (Fuchs et al., 1992), to utilize teaching methods that encourage the autonomy of students and reduce the exercise of control and custody (Cousin and Walker, 1995), to manage in a good way the problems in the classroom (Chacon, 2005), also directly influencing self-efficacy of students by improving their involvement in classroom activities and reducing efforts to overcome difficulties (Woolfolk et al., 1990, Ross et al., 2001).

Therefore, empirical evidence emerging from the literature demonstrated the influence of some psychological dimensions on the quality of school life and on social attitudes expressed by teachers towards the school and students.

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2. OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The aims of this research were focused on the exploration, in a group of teachers employed in primary and secondary schools in Catania, of a) the direction of the social attitudes towards the School and Students, b) the representation of Professional Self, Students, and the School, c) the importance assigned to the value orientations, and d) the relationship among representations of Professional Self, Students, the School and value orientations.Appare, inoltre, interessante verifica-re l'incidenza del genere, dell'età, del titolo di studio, del tipo di scuola e degli anni di insegnamen-to sui costrutti analizzati. It also appeared interesting to investigate the effects of sex, age, educa-tional qualifications, type of school, and years of teaching on the analyzed dimensions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants

The sample of this research consisted of 101 teachers (13 men – 12,9%; 88 women – 87,1%) aged between 29 and 65 years (range 29-44: younger teachers; range 45-65: older teachers), ser-ving in some of primary schools (52,5%) and secondary schools (47,5%) in Catania (Sicily). I docenti sono stati divisi in due gruppi in relazione agli anni di insegnamento: 53 docenti junior (52,5%; range 2-16 anni di attività) e 48 docenti senior (47,5%; range 17-41 anni di attività)The tea-chers were divided into two groups in relation to the years of teaching: 53 junior teachers (52,5%, range 2-16 years of teaching) and 48 senior teachers (47,5%, range 17-41 years of teaching).In rela-zione al titolo di studio, il 58,4% dei docenti è in possesso del diploma di scuola superiore, mentre il 41,6% del diploma di laurea e post-lauream. In relation to educational qualification, 58,4% of tea-chers was in possession of high school diploma, while 41,6% of teachers was in possession of uni-versity degree and post-degree.

3.2. Materials and procedure

Materials were constituted by background questions, useful to define the characteristics of partici-pants to the current study, and also by two scales of social attitudes toward the school and students (De Caroli and Sagone, 2008), by Inventory of Professional Values (IPV) of Boerchi and Castelli (2000), and three Semantic Differentials (Osgood et al., 1957; Di Nuovo and Licciardello, 1997; De Caroli et al., 2007) aimed to investigate on the representation of Professional Self, Students, and the School.

The two scales of social attitudes were used to analyze the ideas regarding the future of the stu-dents (•=.59) and the school in general (•=.70).Ogni scala è composta da 6 affermazioni inerenti il futuro degli alunni e da 7 affermazioni riferite all'istituzione scolastica: ai partecipanti è stato chies-to di esprimere il proprio grado di accordo/disaccordo con le affermazioni proposte in una scala a 7 intervalli (da 1=totalmente in disaccordo a 7=totalmente in accordo). Each scale consisted of 6 sta-tements regarding the future of the students and 7 statements related to educational institution: the participants were asked to express their degree of agreement / disagreement with proposed state-ments in 7-points scale (from 1=totally disagree to 7=totally agree).

L'IVP è un questionario self-report , diviso in 11 subscale, composte ciascuna da 6 affermazio-ni a risposta scalare (da 1=per niente importante per me a 4=molto importante per me).The IVP is a self-report questionnaire, divided into 11 subscales, each consisting of 6 statements on a response scale ranging from 1 ("not at all important for me") to 4 intervals ("very important to me"). Ogni subscala indica l'importanza che il soggetto attribuisce ad un determinato orientamento valoriale nella sua professione attuale e futura:Each subscale indicates the importance that the individuals attributes to a particular orientation of values in their current and future profession:

the Results (RES): "to have clearly in mind what are the goals that I would like to achieve", "to have clear indications about my professional results" (•=.77);

the Relationship (REL): "to engage in activities that require the collaboration of many people", "to share with colleagues the successes and failures" (•=.81);

the Career (CAR): "to do a job that gives me prestige", "to receive the appreciation by others for my skills" (•=.85);

the Leadership (LD): "to make decisions about my work and that of the others", "to have the authority to manage the activities of groups or individuals" (•=.86);

the Salary (SAL): "to get good earnings", "to have a job that provides economic security" (•=.83);

the Self-improvement (IMP): "to increase my competences and abilities", "to learn from my work even at the risk of making a mistake" (•=.69);

the Innovation (INN): "to solve in an innovative way the problems I encounter", "to create new objects or activities" (•=.79);

the Variety (VAR): "to perform a non-repetitive work", "to have the ability to use different tools" (•=.64);

the Responsibility (RESP): "to feel a strong sense of responsibility", "to perform my duties" (•=.64);

the Mobility (MOB): "to engage in activities that require movement and travel", "to know different work environments" (•=.84);

the Physical Activity (PHA): "to execute tasks that require physical activity", "to carry out manual activities" (•=.82).

The three Semantic Differentials, composed, for each concept, by a set of 36 pairs of bipolar adjectives, assessed on a 7-points scale (with the intermediate value equal to 4), were used to explore the representation of Professional Self (I as a teacher, •=.89), the majority of Students (•=.95), and the School (•=.94).

The examination of the statistical significance of results was carried out using the SPSS 15.0 software (Statistical Package for Social Science), by means of the following tests: One-Way Anova, t Student, and stepwise linear regression.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Social attitudes towards students and school

As shown in Table I, teachers expressed a fair degree of agreement especially with the idea that "their students will be able to continue the educational course until the conclusion of their schooling", "to satisfy themselves with what life offers them", and "to find the job they are more likely".Ridotto grado di accordo esprimono, invece, con l'idea che i loro alunni potranno "intraprendere lavori di prestigio" e che "non combineranno niente di buono". Teachers expressed a reduced level of agreement with the idea that "their students will undertake prestigious jobs" and "their students wouldn't combine any good".

Table I: Means and standard deviations – Total sample (N=101)				
My students will be able in their future to …	N	M	SD	One-test / Sig. (value=4)
1. undertake prestigious jobs	101	2,86	1,5	-7,44*
2. satisfy themselves with what life offers them	101	4,28	1,9	1,50
3. continue the educational course until the conclusion of their schooling	101	4,69	1,6	4,39*
4. make choices without considering about possible future consequences	101	3,66	1,8	-1,86
5. find the job they are more likely	101	4,20	1,6	1,23
6. do no good	101	2,15	1,5	-12,41*
$F(5,96)=42,78$, *$p<.001$				

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Teachers expressed high degree of agreement especially with the idea that "the teaching profession is no longer appreciated as it once", followed by the idea that "students are increasingly unruly", "the salary of teachers is unsatisfactory", and "the social prestige attributed to the school as an agency of education and socialization has reduced".Intorno al punto di indifferenza è l'accordo con l'idea che "la scuola oggi non è in grado di soddisfare le esigenze dei suoi utenti". The degree of agreement with the idea that "today the school is unable to meet the needs of its users" was around the intermediate point (Table II).

Table II: Means and standard deviations – Total sample (N=101)				
With regard to more popular ideas about the school…	N	M	SD	One-test / Sig. (value=4)
1. today the school is unable to meet the needs of its users	101	3,98	1,6	-,12
2. the social prestige attributed to the school as an agency of education and socialization has reduced	101	5,05	1,7	6,38*
3. the teaching profession is no longer appreciated as it once	101	5,72	1,6	10,98*
4. teachers are unmotivated in carrying out their work	101	4,55	1,9	3,01**
5. the school doesn't keep up with scientific and technological progress of our times	101	4,36	1,7	2,09***
6. students are increasingly unruly	101	5,39	1,7	8,44*
7. the salary of teachers is unsatisfactory	101	5,32	1,8	7,54*
$F_{(6,95)}=18,57$, *$p<.001$ **$p<.01$ ***$p<.05$				

4.2. Professional values

About the analysis of mean scores on the value priorities (Table III), it was possible to find that teachers attributed greater importance, in descending order, to the value orientations related above all to the "responsibility, "results", and "relationship" and, subsequently, to the "physical activity", "innovation", and "self-improvement".

Table III: Means and standard deviations for each value orientations Total sample (N=101)			
Value orientations	N	M	SD
1. Results	101	**59,59**	17,9
2. Relationship	101	**57,71**	14,3
3. Career	101	43,81	14,6
4. Leadership	101	43,74	12,1
5. Self-improvement	101	**51,23**	13,7
6. Innovation	101	**52,79**	13,6
7. Variety of activities	101	49,72	11,2
8. Responsibility	101	**62,50**	16,9
9. Mobility	101	46,17	11,7
10. Salary	101	48,07	15,5
11. Physical activity	101	**53,50**	11,7
$F_{(10,91)}=31,01$, $p<.001$			

Significant differences related to type of school (primary vs. secondary schools) were found: teachers serving in primary schools showed higher mean scores than those obtained by teachers serving in secondary schools on the orientation to the "results" (M=63,04 vs. M=55,79; t(99)=2,06, p=.042), to "salary" (M=51,85 vs. M=43,90; t=2,66, p=.009), and to "physical activity" (M=56,72 vs. M=49,96; t=3,01, p=.003). Ciò significa che i primi ritengono più importante, rispetto ai secondi, raggiungere i risultati attesi e stabiliti nella propria attività professionale, essere ricompensati economicamente nel lavoro e svolgere attività che richiedano anche impegno fisico e non solo

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mentalThis datum indicated that the first considered more important to achieve the expected and established results in own profession, to be financially rewarded in the job, and also to perform tasks that require physical and not only mental efforts than the latter.

Differences for sex on the "leadership" (t=2,29, p=.034) and the "career" (t=2,13, p=.04) were found in the sense that men attributed greater importance than women both to tasks involving the coordination of others and managing of own work and that of colleagues (men: M=50,08, SD=10,4; women: M=42,81, SD=12,1), and to the ability to grow in the professional area satisfying the personal needs for recognition of a formal status (men: M=50,15, SD=10,9; women: M=42,88, SD=14,9).

Years of teaching had an impact on the orientation to the "variety" (t=2,38, p=.019), in the sense that the junior teachers assigned greater importance to novelty and change against the monotony of activities (M=52,19, SD=10,6 vs. M=47, SD=11,3) than senior ones. In addition, the Anche l'età incide sull'orientamento all'"avanzamento di carriera" (t =2,88, p =.005), considerato più importante dai docenti più giovani (M =47,75, ds =13,04 vs. M =39,63, ds =15,2)age of teachers had an effect on the orientation to the "career" (t=2,88, p=.005), considered more important by younger teachers (range 29-44: M=47,75, SD=13,04 vs. range 45-65: M=39,63, SD=15,2).

4.3. Rappresentazione del Sé, degli alunni e dell'istituzione scolastica 4.3. Representation of Self, Students, and school

The representation of Professional Self expressed by teachers was more positively connoted (M=5,49, SD=,61; one-test: t=24,56, p<.001) than that expressed on the majority of Students (M=4,30, SD=,86, one-test: t=3,55, p=.001) and the School (M=4,40, SD=1,01; one-test: t=3,91, p<.001)(F (2,99)=85,00, p <.001)(F(2,99)=85,00, p<.001).

The type of school had a significant impact on the representation of Professional Self (t=3,05, p=.003) and of Students (t=3,79, p<.001): in fact, teachers in primary schools expressed a more positive representation of Self (M=5,66 vs. M=5,30) and of Students (M=4,59 vs. M=3,98) than that expressed by colleagues in secondary schools. No significant differences in relation to sex, age and years of teaching were found.

4.4. Relation between value orientations and representation of Professional Self, students, and school

Dall'analisi delle correlazioni lineari tra gli orientamenti valoriali e la rappresentazione del Sé professionale e degli alunni (Tab.IV), è possibile evidenziare, tra i risultati più rilevanti, che:Analysis of linear regressions with stepwise method showed the impact of the representation of Professional Self and Students expressed by teachers on value orientations; especially, the representation of Professional Self had positive effects on the priority of the "results" (•=,303, t=3,16, p=.002), the "self-improvement" (•=,214, t=2,18, p=.031), the "innovation" (•=,225, t=2,29, p=.024), and the "responsibility" (•=,288, t=2,99, p=.003).

These results were affected by type of school and years of teaching: in fact, Professional Self had a positive impact on the orientation to the "result" (•=,280, t=2,08, p=.042) and to the "innovation" (•=,295, t=2,20, p=.032) in primary school teachers, and on the "responsibility" (•=,305, t=2,17, p=.035) in secondary school teachers. Furthermore, this representation affected on the orientation to the "result" (•=,344, t=2,61, p=.012) in junior teachers and to the "innovation" (•=,297, t=2,11, p=.04) and the "responsibility" (•=,419, t=3,13, p=.003) in senior teachers.

The representation of Students had positive effects on the "career" (•=,236, t=2,41, p=.018), the "leadership" (•=,287, t=2,97, p=.004) and the "variety" (•=,310, t=3,24, p=.002). Questi risultati risentono del tipo di scuola e degli anni di insegnamento: infatti, la rappresentazione degli alunni

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incide sull'orientamento alla "leadership" (•=,359, t =2,74, p =.008) e alla "varietà" (•=,462, t =3,79, p <.001) nei docenti della scuola primaria; inoltre, tale rappresentazione incide sui valori dell'"avanzamento di carriera" (•=,309, t =2,20, p =.033) e della "leadership" (•=,369, t =2,69, p =.010) nei docenti senior (range 17-41 anni di attivitàThese results were affected by type of school and years of teaching: in fact, the representation of Students has positive effects on the "leadership" (•=,359, t=2,74, p=.008) and the "variety" (•=,462, t=3,79, p<.001) in primary school teachers; in addition, this representation influenced the values of the "career" (•=,309, t=2,20, p=.033) and the "leadership" (•=,369, t=2,69, p=.010) in senior teachers.

Nessuna relazione significativa viene registrata tra la rappresentazione dell'istituzione scolastica e gli orientamentWe divided the teachers on the basis of the evaluations produced in some pairs of polar adjectives in which the frequency distribution concerning the representation of Professional Self was heterogeneous. It was possible to observe that:

i docenti che si considerano più "forti" attribuiscono maggiore importanza al risultato, al miglioramento di sé, all'innovazione e alla varietà, rispetto a quelli che si considerano più "deboli";teachers who evaluated themselves as "strong" attributed more importance to the results (M=64,16 vs. M=54,13; t=-2,90, p=.005), the self-improvement (M=54,02 vs. M=47,89; t=-2,27, p=.025), the innovation (M=56,89 vs. M=47,89; t=-3,48, p=.001), and the variety (M=52,87 vs. M=45,96; t=-3,23, p=.002), compared to those who considered themselves as "weak";

i docenti che si considerano più "ottimisti" attribuiscono maggiore importanza al risultato, alla leadership, alla retribuzione e alla mobilità, rispetto a quelli che si considerano più "pessimistiteachers who considered themselves as "optimistic" assigned more importance to the results (M=64,56 vs. M=55,61; t=-2,56, p=.012), the leadership (M=47,13 vs. M=41,02; t=-2,60, p=.011), the salary (M=51,56 vs. M=45,27; t=-2,07, p=.042), and the mobility (M=48,76 vs. M=44,09; t=-2,03, p=.045), compared to those who evaluated themselves as "pessimistic";

i docenti che si considerano più "resistenti" attribuiscono maggiore importanza al risultato, alla retribuzione, al miglioramento di sé, all'innovazione, alla varietà, alla responsabilità e alla mobilità, rispetto a quelli che si considerano più "fragili"teachers who assessed themselves as "resistant" attributed more importance to the results (M=64,06 vs. M=51,53; t=-3,55, p=.001), the salary (M=50,40 vs. M=43,86; t=-2,07, p=.04), the self-improvement (M=53,35 vs. M=47,39; t=-2,13, p=.036), the innovation (M=55,00 vs. M=48,81; t=-2,23, p=.028), the variety (M=52,82 vs. M=44,14; t=-4,00, p<.001), the responsibility (M=66,15 vs. M=55,89; t=-3,04, p=.003), and the mobility (M=48,12 vs. M=42,64; t=-2,31, p=.023), compared to those who considered themselves as "fragile";

i docenti che si ritengono più "capaci" attribuiscono maggiore importanza alla relazione, al miglioramento di sé e alla varietà, rispetto a quelli che si valutano più "incapaciteachers who perceived themselves as "capable" attributed more importance to the relation (M=59,79 vs. M=52,80; t=-2,68, p=.009), the self-improvement (M=52,97 vs. M=47,10; t=-2,41, p=.018), and the variety (M=51,44 vs. M=45,67; t=-2,42, p=.017), compared to those who assessed themselves as "incapable";

i docenti che si considerano più "efficienti" attribuiscono maggiore importanza al risultato, alla varietà e all'attività fisica, rispetto a quelli che si valutano più "inefficienti"teachers who considered themselves as "efficient" assigned more importance to the results (M=61,94 vs. M=50,67; t=-2,64, p=.01), the variety (M=51,29 vs. M=43,76; t=-3,34, p=.002), and the physical activity (M=54,71 vs. M=48,90; t=-2,05, p=.043) than those who valued themselves as "inefficient".

5. DISCUSSION

The aims of this paper were focused on the exploration of social attitudes toward school and students, the analysis of representation of Professional Self, Students, and the School and value orientations in a group of Sicilian teachers.Inoltre, la relazione tra la rappresentazione del Sé professionale, degli alunni e dell'istituzione scolastica e gli orientamenti valoriali è stata oggetto di analisi, verificando gli effetti dell'età, del titolo di studio, del tipo di scuola e degli anni di insegnamento sui costrutti analizzati. In addition, the relation between the representation of Professional Self, Students, and the School and the value orientations was assessed, testing the effects of age, educational qualification, type of school, and years of teaching on the analyzed dimensions.

Dai risultati si evince che i nostri docenti esprimono atteggiamenti sociali caratterizzati da una visione critica della loro attività professionale in ambito scolastico: infatti, lamentano che la professione dell'insegnante non sia più apprezzata e adeguatamente retribuita, che gli alunni siano sempre più indisciplinati e che sia diminuito il prestigio sociale attribuito alla scuola quale agenzia di educazione e socializzazionThe results showed that teachers expressed social attitudes characterized by a critical view of their job at school: in fact, they complained that the teaching is no longer appreciated as it once and adequately remunerated, the students are increasingly unruly, and the social prestige attributed to the school as agency of education and socialization has been reduced. Questa evidenza empirica risente probabilmente del clima politico-istituzionale vigente in Italia, caratterizzato da continui cambiamenti sul piano legislativo e sul piano delle prassi educative, come rilevato da Cavalli e Argentin (2010), e trova ulteriore conferma nei risultati derivanti dalle recenti indagini condotte da Fischer (2010), il quale ha messo in evidenza la presenza di atteggiamenti di insoddisfazione, sfiducia e pessimismo, derivanti dalla riduzione, in costante aumento, del prestigio attribuito alla professione docente, e da Farinelli e Barbieri (2010), che hanno rilevato una preoccupante insoddisfazione per il salario inadeguato, anche rispetto alla media europea, nonostante l'elevata percentuale di insegnanti intervistati sia favorevole a scegliere nuovamente questa professionThis empirical evidence probably has been influenced by the political and institutional climate in Italy, characterized by continuous changes in terms of law and educational practices, as pointed out by Cavalli and Argentin (2010); it has been further confirmed by the results derived from recent survey realized by Fischer (2010), in which it has been highlighted the presence of attitudes of dissatisfaction, lack of confidence, and pessimism, resulting from the reduction of the prestige attributed to the teaching profession. Also Farinelli and Barbieri (2010) found a worrying dissatisfaction for the inadequate salary compared to the European average, despite the high percentage of teachers were in favour again of choosing this job.

In merito agli orientamenti valoriali connessi alla professione, i risultati della nostra indagine mostrano che i docenti attribuiscono maggiore importanza all'agire in modo corretto e responsabile, al conseguimento degli obiettivi stabiliti e delle mete prefissate, alla collaborazione con altre persone per la buona riuscita individuale e di gruppo, alla possibilità di operare in modo innovativo nello svolgimento della propria professione ea tutto ciò che permette di crescere e migliorare a livello professionale e personalWith regard to value orientations related to the job, the results of the current study showed that teachers attributed importance to acting honestly and responsibly, to achieve the established goals in collaboration with other colleagues for the success of individual and group, to operate in an innovative manner in the development of their profession and to all that is useful to grow and improve professionally and personally.In particolare, i docenti della scuola primaria appaiono più orientati al risultato, alla retribuzione ed all'attività fisica rispetto a quelli della scuola secondaria di primo grado; gli uomini ritengono più importante, rispetto alle donne, l'assunzione di mansioni che comportano il coordinamento degli altri e la gestione del proprio lavoro e di quello dei

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colleghi e il riconoscimento di uno status formale; i docenti junior , rispetto ai senior , attribuiscono maggiore importanza alle novità e ai cambiamenti e all'avanzamento di carriera. In particular, primary school teachers appeared to be more results-, remuneration- and physical activity-oriented than those of secondary schools; men believed more important the employment of tasks involving the coordination of others and the management of own work and that of colleagues, and the appreciation of a formal status than women; junior teachers, compared with senior ones, placed emphasis on novelty and change, and on career progress.

Il Sé professionale è considerato più positivamente rispetto alla maggioranza degli alunni e all'istituzione scolastica e questo risultato appare più rilevante nei docenti di scuola primaria.The Professional Self was considered more positively than the majority of Students and the School and this result was found in primary school teachers.Una migliore rappresentazione di sé stessi nel ruolo di docenti incide sull'importanza attribuita al raggiungimento dei risultati sperati, alla buona percezione di sé nella sfera lavorativa, alla ricerca di nuove modalità di lavoro e anche alla responsabilità per le decisioni prese in conformità con l'agire onesto e affidabile. A better representation of themselves in the role of teachers affected on the importance assigned to achieve the desired results, good self-perception in the employment sphere, new ways of working, and also the responsibility for decisions taken in accordance with ways of acting honestly and reliably. TParticolarmente significativo appare il dato emerso dall'analisi delle coppie di aggettivi che definiscono il Sé professionale, in quanto i docenti che si percepiscono come più efficienti, capaci, ottimisti, forti e resistenti appaiono più orientati verso il raggiungimento degli obiettivi prefissati, la crescita professionale el'uso di metodologie didattiche varie e innovativehe data emerged from analysis of pairs of adjectives defining the Professional Self were particularly significant: teachers who perceived themselves as efficient, capable, optimistic, strong and resistant seemed to be more oriented towards achievement of the goals, professional growth, and use of different and innovative teaching methods.

La positiva rappresentazione che i docenti esprimono relativamente alla maggioranza dei loro alunni influenza l'importanza assegnata all'avanzamento nella carriera, alla gestione delle attività in collaborazione con gli altri e di tipo non ripetitivoThe positive representation that teachers expressed in relation to the majority of Students influenced the importance assigned to career advancement, management of non-repetitive activities and in cooperation with others.Dal presente studio emerge un quadro articolato secondo una duplice connotazione: da un lato, i nostri docenti esprimono una condizione di disagio riferito alla scarsa valutazione sociale del loro ruolo professionale e della funzione della scuola, dall'altro valutano positivamente se stessi in quanto docenti e ritengono prioritari i valori connessi all'operare in modo corretto, responsabile e con il coinvolgimento di altre risorse umane, all'innovazione nella propria attività e al raggiungimento degli obiettivi stabiliti.

This paper has shown a complex framework according to a double connotation: on the one hand, teachers expressed a condition of uneasiness related to the low social evaluation of their professional role and of functions of the school, on the other hand, they positively evaluated themselves as teachers and considered values priority connected to the ways of acting correctly, responsibly and with the involvement of other human resources, linked to innovation in own job and achievement of established goals.

6. CONCLUSION

From this analysis it is clear that a positive self-image is a predictor of professional value priorities, linked to the maintenance of intrinsic motivation, self improvement, looking for new educational challenges and taking responsibility for choices in professional activities. Da ciò potrebbe derivare la definizione di un modello di action-research applicato al contesto scolastico, in cui la realiz-

zazione di attività volte a potenziare le dimensioni psicologiche quali il professional self , la self-effi-cacy , l' emotional intelligence e la job satisfaction , possa costituire un fattore di cambiamento degli atteggiamenti sociali verso la propria professione e degli orientamenti valoriali in quelle situazioni in cui il contextual climate mostri segnali di malessere. From this evidence it is possible to define a model of action-research applied to the school context, where the implementation of activities use-ful to enhance the psychological dimensions such as professional self, self-efficacy, emotional inte-lligence and job satisfaction, could be a factor of change in social attitudes towards job and value orientations also in situations characterized by the contextual climate showing signs of unease.

Future studies will investigate the importance of the relationship between positive self-repre-sentation and professional psychological dimensions already mentioned on the professional value priorities and social attitudes towards the educational institution, differentiating, in Italian context, the analysis of this model between pre-service and in-service teachers (see, Hoy and Woolfolk, 1990), curricular and special needs teachers, and teachers of public and private schools.

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