



Transforming Teachers' Motivation from Failure Avoidance to Achievement Motivation through Andragogical Facilitation

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in-school teacher training, motivation to avoid failure, motivation to achieve, andragogical facilitation, professional development of teachers.

Abstract

This article presents the results of an empirical study of the transformation of motivation in comprehensive school teachers from a dominant motivation to avoid failure to a motivation to achieve. Methodology and Methods. The primary method is andragogical facilitation, applied within the framework of in-school professional development. An empirical experiment was also used, including diagnostic and formative methods (interviews, case studies (solving real pedagogical problems), reflective circles (group discussions of personal experiences), role-playing (simulating situations of success and failure), and paired consultations. The aim of the study was to examine the impact of andragogical facilitation in in-school professional development on the transformation of teachers' motivation. Scientific Novelty. This article represents an original contribution to the field of andragogy, educational psychology, and teacher professional development, as it systematically combines classical theories of motivation (Atkinson, McClelland, Heckhausen) with the principles of andragogical facilitation (Knowles, Rogers) to empirically study the transformation of teachers' motivation in the context of in-school professional development. The results of the study provide empirical confirmation of the transformation of motivation through facilitation, which contributes to the evolution of andragogy from theoretical principles to applied models adapted to the challenges of modern education. (education reform, digital transformation, staff shortages). Practical Relevance. This article has high practical value for the Russian education system, especially in the context of the reforms of the Russian Ministry of Education and Science and global trends [23], where teacher motivation directly impacts the quality of education and staff sustainability. The researcher proposes a proven model for implementing andragogical facilitation in in-school programs, which can improve professional effectiveness and reduce teacher burnout.

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Introduction.

The effectiveness of a teacher's professional activity is an integral characteristic reflecting the relationship between the educational and developmental results achieved (depth of knowledge, development of competencies, personal growth of students) and the resources expended—time, emotional, and methodological (Lobanova & Sapozhnikov, 2025; Shingareva et al., 2025; Yarina & Lomovtseva, 2024). Unlike in the industrial sphere, pedagogical effectiveness is deferred and manifests itself not in the moment of "information transfer," but in the student's ability to learn independently, in the depth of material assimilation, and in the maintenance of the psychological health of all participants in the process.

The key feature of this effectiveness is its two-way cyclical relationship with teacher motivation. On the one hand, intrinsic motivation (motivation to achieve success), manifested through interest in the subject, the desire for self-actualization, and the value of children's development, is the primary driver of high effectiveness: it encourages teachers to seek innovative methods, optimize time expenditures, and build trusting relationships. While extrinsic motivation (motivation to avoid failure), manifested through fear or the pursuit of a bonus, pushes students toward mere formal performance or short-term "drilling." On the other hand, students' actual achievements serve as powerful feedback loops: by seeing results, teachers satisfy their need for competence, which greatly enhances their intrinsic motivation and creates a sustainable "professional growth loop."

Thus, motivation is not simply an accompanying factor, but a system-forming catalyst for effectiveness. It is a meaningful intrinsic motive that transforms a routine workload into a creative challenge, and the teacher from a mere implementer of the curriculum to an architect of the educational process. True effectiveness is achieved only when the personal meaning of a teacher's work aligns with the needs of students. As a result, costs cease to be perceived as losses, and the results acquire long-term value that extends beyond formal performance indicators.

Teacher effectiveness is impossible without meaningful motivation. A formally fulfilled plan is effective, not efficient. True effectiveness is born only when a teacher's motive (why am I doing this) aligns with the needs of the student. In this symbiosis, costs are perceived as a resource, not a loss, and the result is maximized.

Thus, motivation is a key factor in teachers' professional effectiveness, influencing the quality of education and the effectiveness of teaching. Numerous works by scholars and practitioners (Arutyunyan, 2012; Atkinson, 1957; Britkevich & Sergeeva, 2018; Ermolaeva, 2018; Gavrishova, 2012; Heckhausen, 2003), etc., have been devoted to the study of motivation. Of particular interest to us are works exploring types of motivation. In modern pedagogy, two types of motivation are distinguished: achievement motivation (focus on success, overcoming difficulties) and failure avoidance motivation (the desire to avoid risk, criticism and failure). Russian and foreign scientists are studying this phenomenon. L.V. Borozdina is developing a psychodiagnostic scheme for diagnosing the motivation to achieve success and avoid failure (Borozdina, 2012); E.V. Gavrishova is studying the regulation of students' motor activity (Gavrishova, 2012); T.O. Gordeeva is studying the psychology of achievement motivation (Gordeeva, 2015), N.V. Lebedeva is examining the psychological mechanisms and features of motivation for educational activity in adults (Lebedeva, 2014); M.Sh. Magomed-Eminov is studying the structure and mechanisms of achievement motivation (Magomed-Eminov, 1987); L.G. Semenova is studying the professional training of economists at a university based on the formation of motivation to achieve success (Semenova, 2010); E.A. Sidenko is developing a mechanism for the formation of achievement motivation (Sidenko, 2013), G.I. Tikhomirova is studying its influence on the productivity of verbal memory (Tikhomirova, 2004); Atkinson (1957) and McClelland (1961) develop the theory of achievement motivation.

A comparative analysis of the works allows us to conclude that the issue of motivation transformation in the system of in-school professional development is insufficiently addressed.

Research shows that many teachers, especially in the context of educational reforms (in particular, the transition to the Federal State Educational Standard, digitalization), demonstrate a predominance of motivation to avoid failure, which leads to a decrease in innovative activity, emotional burnout, and a decline in the quality of teaching, as evidenced by the works of Vorobyova (2016), Dimukhametov (2003), Ermolaeva (2018), Maslow (1999), Sidenko (2013), Heckhausen (2003), OECD (2021) and others.

Andragogic facilitation, as a method of adult learning based on the principles of andragogy (Knowles, 1980), involves the active involvement of students in the process, supporting autonomy and reflection. In-school professional development using facilitation can contribute to the transformation of motivation, reorienting teachers from the avoidance of failure to the pursuit of achievement. The relevance of this topic stems from the need to improve teacher motivation in the context of the digital transformation of education and a shortage of qualified personnel. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of andragogical facilitation in in-school professional development on the transformation of teacher motivation. Objectives: (1) assess the initial level of motivation; (2) analyze the dynamics of change; (3) identify factors that influence facilitation effectiveness (Chernyavskaya, 2024; Ahmadov, 2026).

Hypothesis: The use of andragogical facilitation in in-school education contributes to a significant transformation of teacher motivation from the avoidance of failure to the motivation to achieve.

The theoretical foundations of this study are based on the integration of the concepts of achievement motivation and failure avoidance developed in motivational psychology with the principles of andragogy and facilitation, adapted to the context of teacher

professional development. These foundations help explain the mechanisms of transformation in teachers' motivational spheres and justify the choice of intervention method.

According to J. Atkinson's achievement motivation theory (Atkinson, 1957), achievement motivation represents an individual's desire to succeed, overcome difficulties, and achieve goals, even if this entails risk. In contrast, failure avoidance motivation is characterized by a focus on preventing failure, avoiding criticism and frustration, which leads to challenge avoidance and conservative behavior. Atkinson proposed a mathematical model in which the strength of achievement motivation (M_s) is calculated as a function of the expectancy of success (P_s) and the value of achievement (I_s): $M_s = P_s \times I_s$. In the context of pedagogy, this manifests itself in teachers with high achievement motivation actively innovating, experimenting with teaching methods, and seeking feedback to improve results, while teachers with a dominant failure-avoidance motivation prefer standard approaches, avoid risky changes, and experience stress from potential errors.

McClelland (1961) developed these ideas within the framework of acquired motivation theory, identifying the "need for achievement" (nAch) as a key factor influencing task selection and effort. McClelland empirically demonstrated that individuals with high nAch prefer tasks of moderate difficulty, where success is possible but requires effort, which promotes personal growth. In a pedagogical context, this means that teachers with achievement motivation see professional challenges (e.g., integrating digital technologies into lessons) as opportunities for growth rather than threats. Research by Heckhausen (1986) complements this picture, emphasizing the role of cognitive processes: motivation is formed through expectations, attributions of success/failure, and self-esteem. For example, teachers who attribute failures to external factors (e.g., "the education system does not support me") tend to have avoidance motivation, whereas internal attributions ("I can improve my lessons") strengthen achievement motivation.

In Russian pedagogy, these concepts have been adapted to the conditions of school education. The works of Ermolaeva (2018), Prokhorova (2006), Dneprova (2025), Litvinova (2004), Sidenko (2013) and others show that in the context of educational reforms (profiling, Federal State Educational Standards, Unified State Exam, digitalization), many teachers demonstrate a motivation to avoid failure due to a fear of administrative control and uncertainty, which leads to decreased creativity and increased burnout. Similarly, OECD (2021) reports (TALIS, 2021) confirm a global trend: teachers with low achievement motivation are less likely to participate in professional development, scientific conferences, and master classes, which worsens the quality of education.

Principles of Andragogy and Facilitation. Andragogy, as a theory of adult learning, developed by Knowles (1980) and his followers Vershlovsky and Sukhobskaya (2007), Britkevich and Sergeeva (2018), Gromkova (2006), Zmeev (2006) and others, is contrasted with traditional child-oriented pedagogy. Knowles (1980) identified five key principles: (1) adults need to recognize the need to learn (motivation from experience); (2) they are focused on problem solving, not abstract knowledge; (3) their learning depends on experience; (4) they prefer independence and autonomy; and (5) motivation is linked to internal needs and practical applications (Shingareva et al., 2025).

In the context of teacher professional development, andragogy implies that learning should be contextualized to their daily practice, for example, through the analysis of real lessons and discussion of difficulties.

Facilitation, as a method for implementing andragogy, was described by Rogers (1969) as a process in which the facilitator creates conditions for self-directed learning, encouraging dialogue, empathy, and reflection. Rogers emphasized that facilitation differs from directive teaching: the facilitator does not impart knowledge but moderates group processes, helping participants discover their own solutions. For example, in a pedagogical context, facilitation may include group discussions about motivational barriers, where teachers share experiences of failure and jointly seek strategies for overcoming them.

In-school professional development that uses facilitation differs from traditional forms (lectures, seminars) in its active involvement: teachers are not passive listeners but active participants, which corresponds to the principles of self-determination proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985) and the specific features of professional development discussed by Britkevich and Sergeeva (2018), Dimukhametov (2003), Prokhorova (2006), and others.

Empirical studies confirm the effectiveness of facilitation in changing motivation. Knowles (1980) and Rogers (1969) noted increased intrinsic motivation in adults participating in corporate and educational programs (Shingareva et al., 2025; Vorobyova, 2016; Najafov, 2026). In Russian pedagogy, Zimnyaya (2004) integrated andragogical principles into professional development programs, demonstrating that facilitated sessions promote reflection and professional growth. However, research on transforming teacher motivation remains limited, making this study a valuable contribution to the field. The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its synthesis of these concepts: andragogical facilitation overcomes barriers associated with failure-avoidance motivation by stimulating reflection and autonomy, leading to a shift toward achievement motivation.

The study was repeated in 2025 in two comprehensive schools in the Moscow region using a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design with experimental and control groups (diagnostic, intervention, and delayed follow-up phases). This design allowed for comparison of the effects of the intervention (andragogical facilitation) with traditional instruction while minimizing the influence of external factors several years after the initial experiment.

Sample and Selection Criteria. The sample consisted of 40 teachers (20 in the experimental group and 20 in the control group), selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representativeness. Stratification was conducted according to key variables: age (30–55 years; median = 42 years), teaching experience (5–25 years; median = 15 years), subject specialization (humanities, natural sciences, and technical disciplines), and school type (urban/rural). Inclusion criteria included a higher education degree in teaching and at least five years of teaching experience. Exclusion criteria included participation in other professional development programs during the previous six months, chronic illnesses affecting motivation (e.g., medically diagnosed depression), and refusal to participate. This procedure ensured group homogeneity and minimized potential confounding variables. Differences between the groups at the pretest stage were examined using ANOVA and were not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

Experiment Description. The experimental group participated in the in-school professional development program *Innovation as a Means of Achieving Educational Goals* (eight modules, four hours each, delivered weekly over two months). The program was based on the principles of andragogical facilitation and was implemented by three certified facilitators with more than ten years of experience in teacher training. Facilitation techniques included reflective circles (group discussions of personal experiences), role-playing (simulation of success and failure situations), case studies (analysis of authentic pedagogical problems), and peer consultations. For example, in Module 3, *Overcoming Barriers to Motivation*, teachers analyzed the case *Integrating Digital Technologies into the Lesson: Risks and Benefits*. Participants shared experiences of failure (e.g., “My students failed an online test, and I felt like a failure”), after which the facilitator guided discussion to help participants reinterpret these experiences as learning opportunities (e.g., “This revealed gaps in my preparation, but now I know how to improve”). The control group completed a traditional professional development program consisting of motivational lectures (passive learning) and question-and-answer workshops without active facilitation.

During the formative stage of the experiment, the final hypothesis was expanded to include four interconnected components: technological readiness, active productive activity, a situation of success, and the personal meaning of innovation.

The mechanism for transforming failure-avoidance motivation into achievement motivation consisted of three stages: analytical (identification of professional activity components), design (development and mastery of missing components), and organizational-activity (organization of teachers' activities by the facilitator through the integration of all identified components).

The procedure consisted of a pretest (before the program), intervention, and posttest (immediately after completion of the program). To control for testing effects, a parallel questionnaire was employed. The instrument was a modified version of Mehrabian's Achievement Motivation Questionnaire (AMQ) adapted by Magomed-Eminov (1987). The AMQ measures two stable personality motives: the motive for achievement and the motive for avoiding failure. The dominant motive for each participant was also identified. The instrument was adapted for research purposes to assess teachers' achievement motivation.

The study, conducted with a sample of 40 teachers using a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design with a control group, provides quantitative evidence regarding the effectiveness of andragogical facilitation in transforming teacher motivation.

A 28% increase in achievement motivation and a 22% decrease in failure-avoidance motivation ($p < .01$, $d = 0.80$) support the proposed hypothesis through methodological triangulation (questionnaires, interviews, and reflective diaries). These findings differ from qualitative investigations such as OECD (2021), in which motivational changes were described without experimental control. The study identified specific success factors—including reflection, autonomy, and social support—that had not previously been examined jointly within the framework of Atkinson's (1957) and McClelland's (1961) theories of achievement motivation. Consequently, the present methodology extends previous studies, such as Ermolaeva (2018), which relied primarily on descriptive approaches without experimental verification. The study is further strengthened by the integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence: interview excerpts and reflective diary entries illustrate the mechanisms underlying motivational transformation (e.g., reframing failures as learning opportunities), making this investigation a useful model for future longitudinal research.

Quantitative Data Collection Methods

A questionnaire adapted from the Atkinson Achievement Motivation Scale was used (20 items; 5-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The scale consists of two subscales: achievement motivation (e.g., “I strive for high results in my work,

even if it is risky”) and failure-avoidance motivation (e.g., “I avoid situations where I might fail”). Reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$ (pilot testing with 30 teachers). Validity was established through correlation with the McClelland Achievement Motivation Scale ($r = .72$). A typical response pattern was as follows: a teacher with strong achievement motivation might rate the statement “I see challenges as opportunities for growth” as 5, whereas a teacher dominated by failure-avoidance motivation might rate the same statement as 2.

Qualitative Methods

The study employed semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted with 20 teachers from the experimental group (10 before the intervention and 10 after the intervention) and lasted 30–45 minutes. The interview protocol included questions such as: “Describe a situation in which you avoided risk in teaching. What changed after the program?” and “How did facilitation influence your motivation?”

Reflective diaries were also used. Teachers in the experimental group completed weekly diary entries (200–300 words, open-ended format) describing changes in their motivation. A typical entry stated: “In Module 5, I analyzed my project failure and realized that I had avoided failure because of fear of criticism. Now I plan a new project involving greater risk because I view it as an opportunity for success.”

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0. Quantitative data were analyzed using Student's t -test to compare group means (pretest vs. posttest) and ANOVA to examine differences among subgroups (teaching experience and subject specialization). Effect size was estimated using Cohen's d ($d = 0.80$ for achievement motivation, indicating a large effect). Qualitative findings were integrated through methodological triangulation, whereby quantitative results were supported by interview quotations and diary evidence. For example, a 28% increase in achievement motivation ($t = 4.12, p < .01, d = 0.80$) corresponded with the emergence of the theme of reflection in teachers' diaries.

Ethical Considerations

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the ANO DPO Institute for the Development of Educational Technologies (Protocol No. 10/2025). All participants provided informed consent. The principles of voluntary participation (including the right to withdraw at any time without consequences) and confidentiality (data anonymization and secure storage) were strictly observed. Potential risks were minimized because all facilitators had completed ethics training, and interviews were conducted in a neutral and supportive environment.

Study Results

Baseline Motivation

At the pretest stage, both groups were characterized by a predominance of failure-avoidance motivation (mean score = 3.8/5), consistent with findings reported in Russian pedagogical research (Ermolaeva, 2018; Magomed-Eminov, 1987). The mean score for achievement motivation was 2.5/5. No statistically significant differences were observed between the groups ($p > .05$).

Dynamics of Change

Following completion of the program (posttest), teachers in the experimental group demonstrated a significant increase in achievement motivation to 3.2/5 (+28%; $t = 4.12, p < .01$), whereas failure-avoidance motivation decreased to 3.0/5 (–22%; $t = -3.85, p < .01$). In contrast, the control group showed only minimal changes: achievement motivation increased to 2.7/5 (+8%; $p > .05$), whereas failure-avoidance motivation decreased slightly to 3.6/5 (–5%; $p > .05$).

These findings indicate that facilitation contributes to the transformation of teacher motivation by encouraging innovation (e.g., implementation of digital technologies and experimental teaching methods), thereby improving teaching quality and student learning outcomes. For example, teachers with higher levels of achievement motivation participated more actively in professional development activities and reported lower levels of burnout. As one participant stated during the interview, “Now I see mistakes as opportunities for growth.”

Furthermore, the implementation of facilitation reduces the need for repeated retraining, improves educational outcomes, and contributes to achieving national educational development objectives. The proposed approach can be applied in schools throughout the Moscow region and other regions, where facilitation may serve as an effective mechanism for reducing the consequences of teacher shortages while improving educational competitiveness.

Discussion

The findings support the proposed hypothesis: andragogical facilitation effectively transforms teacher motivation, which is consistent with the theories of Knowles (1980) and Rogers (1969). Unlike traditional instructional approaches (e.g., lectures), facilitation enhances intrinsic motivation through experience and reflection, in accordance with Deci and Ryan (1985), while creating personal meaning for the adoption of educational innovations. Similar effects have been reported by OECD (2021), which demonstrated that facilitative professional development programs increase teacher motivation. Within the Russian educational context, facilitation remains underutilized in schools, which may partly explain teachers' relatively low levels of motivation (Ermolaeva, 2018; Zenkina, 2003; Lebedeva, 2014; Prokhorova, 2006; Dneprova, 2025; Sidenko, 2013).

Conclusion

The findings of this study expand the understanding of motivational mechanisms in andragogy by demonstrating how andragogical facilitation can overcome barriers associated with failure-avoidance motivation and promote the development of personal meaning in the implementation of educational innovations.

The results indicate that the use of andragogical facilitation within in-school professional development contributes to a significant transformation of teacher motivation from failure avoidance to achievement motivation. This transformation enhances teachers' willingness to implement innovative teaching practices, supports reflective professional growth, and improves the overall quality of the educational process.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that andragogical facilitation be systematically integrated into school-based professional development programs to promote the sustainable professional development of teaching staff. Future research should involve larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal research designs, longer intervention periods, and extended follow-up assessments to evaluate the long-term sustainability of motivational changes.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the ANO DPO Institute for the Development of Educational Technologies (Protocol No. 10/2025). All participants provided informed consent before participation. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and institutional ethical guidelines.

Consent for Publication

Not applicable.

Availability of Data and Materials

The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Competing Interests

The author declares that there are no competing interests.

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Author Contributions

E.A. Dneprova conceived and designed the study, collected and analyzed the data, interpreted the results, and wrote and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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AI Statement

No generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used to generate the research data, conduct the analyses, or develop the scientific conclusions of this study. AI-assisted tools, if used, were limited to language editing and proofreading. The author takes full responsibility for the content of this manuscript.

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