administrative sciences

MDPI

Article

Work Engagement and Performance of Romanian School Teachers During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Impact of Sociodemographic and Contextual Factors

Ecaterina Coman [1,*], Ionela Stoicov [2], Laurențiu Gabriel Țîru [2], Gabriel Brătucu [3], Eliza Ciobanu [3], Florin Nechita [4], Lorant Bucs [5] and Claudiu Coman [4]

[1] Department of Management and Economic Informatics, Faculty of Economic Sciences and Business Administration, Transilvania University of Brasov, 500036 Brasov, Romania
[2] Department of Sociology, Faculty of Sociology and Psychology, West University of Timisoara, 300223 Timisoara, Romania; ionela.stoicov@e-uvt.ro (I.S.); laurentiu.tiru@e-uvt.ro (L.G.Ț.)
[3] Department of Marketing, Tourism Services and International Affairs, Faculty of Economic Sciences and Business Administration, Transilvania University of Brasov, 500036 Brasov, Romania; gabriel.bratucu@unitbv.ro (G.B.); eliza.nichifor@unitbv.ro (E.C.)
[4] Department of Social Sciences and Communication, Faculty of Sociology and Communication, Transilvania University of Brasov, 500036 Brasov, Romania; florin.nechita@unitbv.ro (F.N.); claudiu.coman@unitbv.ro (C.C.)
[5] Department of Food and Tourism Engineering and Management, Faculty of Food Industry and Tourism, Transilvania University of Brasov, 500036 Brasov, Romania; bucs.lorant@unitbv.ro
* Correspondence: ecaterina.coman@unitbv.ro

Abstract: The pandemic has led to significant changes in teaching environments, which may have affected teacher engagement and performance. The aim of the paper is to investigate the levels of work engagement (WE) and work performance (WP) during the pandemic among teachers in primary and lower secondary schools in Romania and to identify if the dimensions of these two concepts differ according to gender, age, residence, status, teaching degree, and course profile, filling a gap in the specialized literature regarding these variables in Romanian education. We conducted a survey between February and March 2022 on a sample of 1051 teachers using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ 0.3). Teachers reported a high level of engagement and work performance, higher levels of WE being identified among female teachers and those teaching in rural areas. Younger teachers showed the lowest work engagement, despite their familiarity with the digital tools used during the COVID-19 pandemic. Interestingly, while gender and employment status did not have a significant impact on job performance, contextual performance was higher among tenured teaching staff and women. In addition, the profile of subjects taught significantly affected engagement and performance. The results of this research can contribute to a more dynamic and supportive educational system, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for teachers and students.

Keywords: work engagement; teachers' engagement; work performance; teachers' performance; COVID-19 pandemic

Citation: Coman, Ecaterina, Ionela Stoicov, Laurențiu Gabriel Țîru, Gabriel Brătucu, Eliza Ciobanu, Florin Nechita, Lorant Bucs, and Claudiu Coman. 2024. Work Engagement and Performance of Romanian School Teachers During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Impact of Sociodemographic and Contextual Factors. *Administrative Sciences* 14: 305. https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci14110305

Received: 23 October 2024
Revised: 13 November 2024
Accepted: 15 November 2024
Published: 18 November 2024

1. Introduction

Given the significant influence teachers have on both students and society, there is growing research interest in the field of education, particularly concerning teacher effectiveness. Work engagement is a key focus in modern human resource management studies due to its direct impact on organizational productivity (Žnidaršič and Marič 2021). However, the field of education was one of the areas most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, as both teachers and students had to adapt to new study and teaching conditions. Classrooms were replaced by virtual learning environments, and teachers had to adjust to these new circumstances, characterized by lack of direct communication between students

and teachers, insufficient support and attention for students with special needs, difficulty in monitoring students' learning progress, and challenges in explaining concepts and phenomena (Sârbu et al. 2021). Teachers were suddenly confronted with a new reality, where they were forced to rapidly convert their teaching content into a digital format, which could have influenced work engagement and work performance to a certain extent, because there was an increase in workload (Jones and Kessler 2020).

Despite growing evidence highlighting the importance of teachers' work engagement in influencing both teacher and student outcomes, the existing research remains limited (Perera et al. 2018). Most studies focus on analyzing how teachers' work engagement mediates various aspects such as job satisfaction and well-being (Klassen et al. 2012; Rusu and Colomeischi 2020; Fute et al. 2022a), work–life balance, life satisfaction (Žnidaršič and Marič 2021), teacher mindfulness, classroom emotions (Tao 2022), or resilience (Wingerden and Poell 2019).

The literature indicates that engagement is positively correlated with task performance (Christian et al. 2011). Although there are many studies regarding work performance, most of them focus on task performance evaluation, neglecting contextual performance (Cai and Lin 2006; Koopmans et al. 2013), a critical aspect of a profession where initiative and collaboration can be essential. Moreover, the majority of research on teacher performance has focused on evaluating the effectiveness of university-level teaching (Cai and Lin 2006; Gómez and Valdés 2019), mainly by applying questionnaires to students (Zabaleta 2007), or on identifying factors that influence teachers performance, such as leadership, organizational culture, and teacher competence (Kanya et al. 2021). Given that in many countries, including Romania, teachers are primarily rewarded through fixed systems that value experience and qualifications, it is crucial to place greater emphasis on teacher performance (Dee and Wyckoff 2013).

It is important to mention that the educational system in Romania consists of the following levels: preschool education (kindergarten), primary education (preparatory grade through to grade IV), lower secondary education (gymnasium, grades V–VIII), upper secondary education (high school, grades IX–XII), and higher education. After graduating from the gymnasium, students also have the option to attend arts and crafts schools, which last between two and four years. To the best of our knowledge, there are few studies carried out on this subject at the level of primary and secondary school teachers, especially in Romania, and there are still gaps in the literature regarding how the level of work engagement and work performance differs with respect to various sociodemographic variables, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of this paper is to measure the level of work engagement and work performance of primary and secondary school teachers and to determine whether the dimensions of these two concepts are correlated. Moreover, this work aims to examine the influence of gender, age, residence, status, teaching degree, and the profile of the courses taught on work engagement and work performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Work Engagement

Employee engagement is an important aspect of organizational theory (Tshilongamulenzhe and Takawira 2015). It reflects a positive and constructive mindset toward work, contributing to the organization's overall growth (Saks 2022). Although there is no generally accepted definition of the concept of work engagement (Gülbahar 2017), most studies use the definition formulated by Schaufeli et al. (2002, p. 74), which describes the concept as a "positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption", and it leads to beneficial outcomes within organizations (Bhatnagar 2012). Vigor (V), marked by high energy levels and the ability to persist even in the face of challenges, reflects the physical and mental vitality that employees bring to their tasks. Dedication (D) encompasses a strong sense of enthusiasm, commitment, and inspiration, driving individuals to find meaning and pride in their work. Absorption (AB), characterized by deep concentration and immersion in one's tasks, refers to the state where employees

become fully engrossed in their work, often losing track of time due to their intense focus (Schaufeli et al. 2002). Work engagement should be understood as a psychological connection to the performance of work tasks, rather than merely an attitude toward the characteristics of the organization or job conditions (Christian et al. 2011), thus being different from affective attachment. Bakker and Bal (2010) argue that work engagement is a state rather than a trait and can fluctuate for the same individual over time. But it is a relatively enduring state of mind (Christian et al. 2011). Thus, it is important to see if work engagement has been negatively influenced by the pandemic, especially considering that some studies show that that working from home has led to a decrease in work motivation (Purwanto et al. 2020), which may have negatively impacted teachers' performance and work engagement during the pandemic.

Individuals with high levels of work engagement feel that their work inspires, is a source of pride, and is challenging (So et al. 2022, p. 590). They have a positive and fulfilling state of mind related to work; a persistent and pervasive affective–cognitive state; energy and mental resilience while performing tasks; feelings of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge; a deep concentration on work, leading to a perception that time passes quickly; and difficulty in detaching from tasks (Christian et al. 2011).

The literature suggests that increased work engagement can lead to the resolution of many organizational problems (Banihani et al. 2013), as it boosts productivity, enhances performance, and promotes psychological well-being, while also helping to reduce absenteeism and job turnover (De Stasio et al. 2020). Engaged employees perform better than nonengaged workers (Bakker 2009; Bakker and Bal 2010; Rich et al. 2010), and are likely to perform extra-role behaviors. They tend to experience positive emotions like happiness, enthusiasm, and joy; they are healthier (Schaufeli et al. 2008) and able to develop their own job-related and personal resources (Bakker and Bal 2010; Xanthopoulou et al. 2007). Moreover, employees who are highly engaged often inspire and pass their engagement on to others (Bakker et al. 2006), and they may have a higher adaptive performance (Katsaros 2024), which is increasingly important in dynamic and unpredictable work environments. On the other hand, disengaged workers negatively affect organizational performance, being very costly (Afrahi et al. 2022). And in education, the effects are even greater, because we are not talking only about money but about the quality of the products obtained, that is, the education and training of students, the future workforce of a country.

Studies have clarified the link between teachers' engagement, job outcomes, and student performance, but there is still limited insight into how to enhance teachers' engagement at work (Klassen et al. 2012). Therefore, it is important to understand the influence of contextual variables on their work engagement in order to manage work engagement and to achieve the maximum results.

Although there are little data on how work engagement differs according to gender, some previous research has demonstrated that work engagement is gendered (Deroncele-Acosta et al. 2021), it being easier for men to demonstrate work engagement than it is for women. Banihani et al. (2013) suggest that women have to face more difficulties and barriers than men, who are usually free to work long hours. It was even more complicated in the context of the pandemic, when women were also responsible for the house, children with online classes, etc., and at the same time they also had to teach online. A study on work engagement during the pandemic of 3147 Chinese teachers suggests that male teachers were more engaged in their work than females, but work engagement remained high during the pandemic for all teachers despite the heavy workload, leading to less compassion fatigue and helping to reduce burnout (Fute et al. 2022b).

On the other hand, a study conducted in Turkey indicated that gender, marital status, age, branch, and educational background were not statistically significant factors in teachers' work engagement. However, seniority had a statistically significant and positive effect (Köse 2016).

Regarding the educational level at which the teachers teach, studies show that the average work engagement score of primary school teachers is generally higher than that of

teachers at other educational levels (Perera et al. 2018; Fute et al. 2022b). We have not found studies regarding the differences in terms of the level of engagement depending on the profile of the discipline taught and teachers' professional degree. It is important to mention that "professional degrees are rewarded with higher salaries for the same teaching position, level of the initial training and seniority, and entitle the holder to compete for management or guiding and control positions" (Teachers and Education Staff 2024).

Klassen et al. (2012) conducted research on 853 teachers from Australia, Canada, China, Indonesia, and Oman, which highlighted the fact that the impact of contextual variables on teachers' work engagement varies depending on the country. The study found a modest correlation between engagement and years of experience, but only in Canada and Oman. The research also identified gender differences for work engagement only in one country; female teachers from Oman demonstrated higher levels of engagement compared to male teachers. Therefore, it is important to analyze these aspects in Romania as well.

To measure work engagement, most researchers have used the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (versions UWES-17 and UWES-9), which have been translated and administered among Romanian samples by Vîrgă et al. (2009). However, these were not applied to teachers. Research focused on assessing Romanian teachers' work engagement is still scarce. Mișu (2020) conducted research among 75 schoolteachers to measure their engagement and discussed the implications of engaged and disengaged teachers during the pandemic. He found that all the teachers had a high level of vigor, despite the difficult conditions in which they had to teach. In terms of the contextual variables, the results showed that the highest scores are achieved by teachers working in rural areas and those teaching at two or more schools.

Another study conducted in 2021 in Romania (Mișu et al. 2022) regarding the relationship between work performance, engagement, and work efficacy among high school teachers highlighted the fact that teachers with a higher seniority tend to exhibit higher levels of work engagement, efficacy, and performance, possibly due to experience but also higher salaries. Moreover, the study demonstrated that teachers' perceived work performance was influenced by their level of work engagement.

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students was applied by Ștefenel and Neagoș (2020) in order to measure the academic engagement among university students in Romania during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results showed that the level of students' engagement during online courses was moderate to low, and this may impact negatively on the teachers' work engagement.

2.2. Work Performance

The literature indicates that engagement is positively correlated with task performance (Christian et al. 2011), which is why we considered it appropriate to analyze both concepts in this paper. Work performance is a multi-dimensional concept (Widyastuti and Hidayat 2018) that refers to an employee's total contribution to the achievement of organizational goals (Campbell and Wiernik 2015, p. 48), and the concept consists of several dimensions. Griffin et al. (2007) consider the main dimensions of work performance to be proficiency, adaptiveness, and proactivity, while Koopmans et al. (2013) identify three broad dimensions, task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior, which are much more comprehensive.

Task performance (TP) refers to the effectiveness and skill with which individuals carry out the fundamental duties and technical aspects that are central to their role, ensuring that the objectives of the company are achieved (Campbell 1990). For teachers, this encompasses the core responsibilities directly related to the job, such as lesson planning, delivering instruction, assessing student learning, and managing classroom activities. Contextual performance (CP) can be defined as the behaviors that contribute to maintaining and enhancing the organizational, social, and psychological environment in which core job functions are carried out. It is an informal outcome that is not explicitly required, but it plays a significant role in shaping the company's social and psychological environment

(Borman and Motowidlo 1997, p. 99). Basically, it involves actions that foster a positive workplace culture, such as teamwork, communication, adaptability, and support for colleagues, in order to ensure that the work environment is favorable to productivity and collaboration. On the other hand, counterproductive work behavior (CWB) was defined by Spector and Fox (2005) as intentional actions taken by individuals that are harmful or intended to cause harm to organizations or their employees. These behaviors are usually voluntary, that is, deliberate choices made by employees. CWBs can take many forms and include acts such as sabotage, theft, or creating a hostile work environment. These behaviors negatively affect both the functioning of the organization and the well-being of its members.

One of the most-used questionnaires for measuring work performance is the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ 0.3) (Koopmans et al. 2013), which includes 27 items related to the three dimensions described above (Baluch 2023; Chatterjee 2023). Research has identified positive and significant correlations between task performance and contextual performance, but not with counterproductive behavior (Lousã et al. 2024). This can be explained by the fact that counterproductive behavior is typically directed toward other individuals or the organization.

Most of the studies on teachers' work performance focus on analyzing the link between work performance and satisfaction (Usop et al. 2013; Kadtong et al. 2017; Lousã et al. 2024), motivation (Mulyana et al. 2021), or work stress (Asaloei et al. 2020). The relationship between work performance and work engagement is empirically underexplored in the existing literature (Kim et al. 2013). Motyka (2018) carried out an extensive analysis of the specialized literature on this subject, and the studies were carried out in 25 countries, mostly in the USA and the Netherlands. Positive links between the two concepts have been reported in studies from different countries, such as Italy and Germany (Balducci et al. 2010), Australia (Kirk-Brown and Van Dijk 2011), and the Netherlands (Bakker et al. 2012). However, a meta-analysis conducted by Corbeanu and Iliescu (2023) found a correlation of r = 0.37 between overall work engagement and job performance, based on 166 independent samples, which means a moderate connection. Meanwhile, in a study conducted with 587 American employees from various industries, it was found that work engagement had a minimal impact on performance (Halbesleben and Wheeler 2008).

There are very few research studies carried out in this direction on samples of teachers. Bakker and Bal (2010) analyzed the relationship between Dutch teachers' weekly work engagement and their weekly self-rated performance. They used two in-role and two extra-role items to measure performance, without considering counterproductive behavior. The research revealed a positive relationship between these two concepts. Moreover, work engagement served as a mediator in the relationship between weekly job resources, such as autonomy and development opportunities, and weekly performance. A study conducted within public universities in Ethiopia (Gede and Huluka 2024) shows that all three dimensions of work engagement have a favorable impact on organizational performance in higher education.

While the research suggests a positive association between work engagement and performance, most of the evidence comes from highly developed countries. In Romania, there is little research in this regard. We identified only one study conducted by Mișu et al. (2022), which focused on exploring the relationship between work engagement and work performance among pre-university teachers in Romanian high schools. They found out that high school teachers in Romania's pre-university system perceive themselves as exhibiting high levels of work engagement, job efficacy, and performance and that their perceived work performance is shaped by their level of work engagement. Teachers with greater seniority demonstrate higher performance levels as members of the school compared to those with less seniority. Interestingly, teachers' work performance does not differ significantly based on the average admission marks of their students. The authors recommend that future research consider other differentiating factors between teachers

such as gender, school location, etc., in order to better understand the concepts of work engagement and work performance.

Previous studies show that there are no gender differences in terms of work performance (Kant 2014), or that they are minimal in terms of task performance, with women usually scoring slightly higher than men (Roth et al. 2012). Moreover, females are less likely to engage in counterproductive behavior, while for contextual performance no gender differences were identified (Ng et al. 2016).

A recent study conducted in Albania on a sample of 1000 full-time teachers in pre-university public schools showed that seniority in education and experience in education do not influence teachers' performance, but the level where they teach and the area (rural/urban) have a meaningful influence. The results showed that primary school teachers (grades 1–5) have a significantly higher performance at work compared to upper secondary level teachers (grades 10–12). In addition, teachers who teach in rural settings tend to perform better than those who teach in schools in urban settings (Kotherja and Hamzallari 2022). On the other hand, a study conducted in India on 150 lower secondary school teachers showed that role performance improves with age, mainly due to the confidence that teachers gain in their profession (Kant 2014).

Considering the review of the literature carried out above, it is important to determine how the levels of work engagement and work performance differ with respect to various sociodemographic and contextual variables, a variable that, as far as we know, has not been researched before. Moreover, considering that during the pandemic the workload increased considerably, and studies show that burnout negatively affects the task performance of employees (Francisco et al. 2022), it is important to make these analyses with reference to teachers' activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, most of the research has been done at the level of university and high school teachers, but we will focus on primary and lower secondary school teachers. We can expect that despite all the difficulties encountered in the teaching process due to the pandemic, teachers' work performance and work engagement will remain at high levels because many teachers choose their career as a vocation, a calling driven by a deep sense of purpose and dedication. Such an intrinsic motivation, which is central to their profession, plays a key role in sustaining their work engagement and productivity (Khan et al. 2020), even in difficult times. Intrinsic motivation, as defined by Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 56) refers to "doing an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence". Therefore, even during the uncertainties of a global pandemic, teachers' passion for their work may serve as a buffer, maintaining high levels of performance and engagement.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the levels of work engagement and work performance during the pandemic among teachers in primary and lower secondary schools in Romania and to explore how various demographic and contextual factors impact these aspects. In accordance with this purpose, we formulated the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the levels of work engagement and work performance among primary and secondary school teachers, and how are the dimensions of these two constructs correlated?

RQ2: To what extent do demographic and contextual factors—such as gender, age, residence, employment status, teaching degree, and the profile of the courses taught — influence teachers' work engagement and work performance?

Based on the literature review presented above, we have formulated the following hypotheses:

Work Engagement Hypotheses

H1: *There are differences in work engagement based on the gender of the respondents.*

H2: *There are differences in work engagement based on the status of the respondents.*

H3: *There are differences in work engagement based on the residence of the surveyed population.*

H4: *There are differences in work engagement based on the age of the respondents.*

H5: *There are differences in work engagement based on the professional degrees of the surveyed population.*

H6: *There are differences in work engagement based on the profile of the courses taught by the respondents.*

Work Performance Hypotheses

H7: *There are differences in work performance based on the gender of the respondents.*

H8: *There are differences in work performance based on the status of the respondents.*

H9: *There are differences in work performance based on the residence of the respondents.*

H10: *There are differences in work performance based on the age of the respondents.*

H11: *There are differences in work performance based on the professional degrees of the surveyed population.*

H12: *There are differences in work performance based on the profile of the courses taught by the respondents.*

3. Materials and Methods

The quantitative research consisted of a survey carried out in the electronic environment, using the questionnaire as a data collection tool. The questionnaire had 17 questions related to work engagement. It used the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli and Bakker 2010) and 27 questions related to the work performance Individual Work Performance Questionnaire Scale (IWPQ 0.3) (Koopmans et al. 2013). The answers for UWES were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (where 7 means "always", and 1, "never"), while the IWPQ 0.3 items had a 5-point rating scale, ranging from "seldom", "sometimes", "frequently", and "often" to "always" for TP and CP scales, while the CWB rating scale ranged from "never", "seldom", "sometimes", and "frequently" to "often". Respondents were asked to answer questions based on how they felt in the last three months, that is, during the pandemic.

The survey also included six questions related to sociodemographic and contextual characteristics, namely gender, residence, age, status, professional degree, and the profile of the courses taught.

Data collection was carried out between February and March 2022, using the CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing) method. The questionnaires were auto-administered, through the Google Forms platform. Thus, the link to the questionnaire was distributed to primary and lower secondary school teachers both through the snowball method and through school inspectorates, and the average time needed to answer the questionnaire was 10 min. A total of 1051 completed questionnaires were collected. We analyzed the data using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 21). To test the hypotheses, we performed the Mann–Whitney test and the Kruskal–Wallis test.

4. Results

4.1. Sample Description

Table 1 presents a comprehensive overview of the study sample's demographics, covering gender, age, residence, status, professional degrees, the profile of the courses taught, and the educational level at which the respondents teach. Some of them are teaching at several levels.

Most of the respondents were women (85.6%), this difference being normal considering the fact that in Romania in pre-university education most teachers are women (National Institute of Statistics 2024, p. 294). A total of 70.5% of the respondents are from urban areas, which aligns with data on the student population, with approximately 73% studying in urban areas (National Institute of Statistics 2023). The average age of the respondents is M = 44.33, SD = 10.058. Most respondents are non-tenured teachers (84.5%) and have the highest teaching degree possible (61.5%).

Table 1. The main characteristics of the sample.

Characteristic	Category	Count	Percentage
Gender	Feminine	900	85.6%
	Masculine	151	14.4%
Age	20–29 years	92	8.8%
	30–39 years	225	21.4%
	40–49 years	380	36.2%
	50–59 years	300	28.5%
	over 60 years	54	5.1%
Residence	Urban	741	70.5%
	Rural	310	29.5%
Status	Tenured teacher	163	15.5%
	Non-tenured teacher	888	84.5%
Professional degrees	Without a teaching grade (debutant teachers)	92	8.8%
	Fully flagged teachers (they passed the on-the-job confirmation exam)	153	14.6%
	Didactic level II	160	15.2%
	Didactic level I	646	61.5%
The profile of the courses taught	Language and communication	370	35.2%
	Mathematics and science	176	16.7%
	Man and society	126	12%
	Arts	36	3.4%
	Physical education and sports	48	4.6%
	Technology	80	7.6%
	Counseling and guidance	62	5.9%
	Primary cycle	153	14.6%

4.2. Descriptive Results

To assess the basic properties of the data, as well as to examine the relationships between variables, a descriptive analysis was conducted. Table 2 provides a summary of the mean scores, standard deviations, Pearson correlations, and reliability coefficients for the study variables. The mean scores and standard deviation for all items used to measure the three work engagement dimensions are presented in Appendix A, and those for the work performance dimensions are presented in Appendix B. It can be seen that the average scores for all variables are quite high, and for counterproductive work behavior (CWB) it is quite low. Therefore, teachers in pre-university education show an increased work commitment and work performance. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for each dimension are shown on the diagonal in Table 2, ranging from 0.729 for CWB to 0.885 for CP, indicating good internal consistency for all scales. For the IWPQ Scale, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.789, and for UWES, it is 0.895.

The strongest correlation is between vigor (V) and dedication (DE), being direct and of strong intensity (r = 0.688), indicating that teachers who feel energized also tend to be dedicated to their work. Also, a moderate correlation is observed between vigor (V) and absorption (AB) (r = 0.535), as well as between dedication (DE) and absorption (AB) (r = 0.511).

Regarding the work performance dimensions, a moderate correlation is observed between task performance (TP) and contextual performance (CP) (r = 0.515), which may indicate that those who perform well in the main tasks tend to have a decent performance in

contextual or additional activities. Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) is negatively correlated with task performance (TP) (r = −0.249) and contextual performance (CP) (r = −0.150), but these correlations are much weaker than we expected.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, reliabilities (on the diagonal), and correlations between the variables, N = 1051.

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. V	5.8728	0.85242	**0.761**					
2. DE	6.2238	0.91131	0.688	**0.794**				
3. AB	6.0985	0.86235	0.535	0.511	**0.852**			
4. TP	4.2414	0.52470	0.396	0.367	0.220	**0.821**		
5. CP	4.2018	0.53670	0.461	0.388	0.298	0.515	**0.885**	
6. CWB	1.9876	0.60375	−0.161	−0.182	−0.110	−0.249	−0.150	**0.729**

Note. All correlations are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level (two-tailed).

Regarding the correlation between WP and WE dimensions, it seems that only vigor moderately influences work performance, (TP: r = 0.396, CP: r = 0.461), the other dimensions have a weak influence.

4.3. Hypotheses Testing

The dependence of work engagement on gender, residence, and status (H1–H3)

We applied the Mann–Whitney test to examine the dependence of work engagement on gender, residence, and status. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The dependence of work engagement on gender, residence, and status.

Criteria	Variables/Paramenters		
	Gender	**Status**	**Residence**
Mann–Whitney U	56,375.500	69,511.500	99,296.000
Z	−3.354	−0.781	−3.467
Asymp. Sig. (two-tailed)	**0.001**	0.435	**0.001**

We found out that **gender** has a statistically significant impact on work engagement. The Mean Rank for women (538.86) is higher than that for men (449.35). This indicates that women tend to be more work-engaged than men. A negative Z indicates that the distribution of responses in one group (in this case, the "male" group) tends to be smaller than the other group. The *p*-value associated with the test is 0.001. This is very small (below the conventional threshold of 0.05), which means that there is a statistically significant difference between men and women in terms of work engagement; therefore, we accept the first hypothesis **(H1)**.

Residence has a statistically significant impact on work engagement. Teachers from rural areas (Mean Rank = 576.19) report higher work engagement than those from urban areas (Mean Rank = 505.00), and the differences are significant ($p = 0.001$); therefore, we accept **H3**.

On the other hand, **status** does not have a significant influence on work engagement in this sample ($p = 0.435$). Consequently, we will reject the second hypothesis (**H2**).

The dependence of work engagement dimensions on age, professional degrees and the profile of the courses taught (H4–H6)

To test hypotheses H4–H6, the Kruskal–Wallis test was performed, and the results are presented in Table 4.

We found out that **age** ($p = 0.001$) has a significant influence on work engagement in this sample; therefore, we accept **H4**. The respondents with the highest levels of vigor are

those aged 50–59 (mean rank = 572.92) and over 60 (mean rank = 575.47), likely because they no longer have child-rearing responsibilities and can focus entirely on their work. In contrast, teachers aged 40–49 report feeling the least "vigorous" (mean rank = 487.68).

Table 4. The dependence of work engagement dimensions on age, professional degrees, and the profile of the courses taught.

	Variables/Parameters			
	V	**DE**	**AB**	**WE**
	Grouping Variable: Age			
Chi-Square	15.074	12.977	15.825	18.620
df	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	**0.005 ***	**0.011 ***	**0.003 ***	**0.001 ***
	Grouping Variable: Professional degrees			
Chi-Square	9.089	4.369	3.961	7.127
df	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	**0.028 ***	0.224	0.266	0.068
	Grouping Variable: The profile of the courses taught			
Chi-Square	13.582	23.154	23.049	21.870
df	7	7	7	7
Asymp. Sig.	0.059	**0.002 ***	**0.002 ***	**0.003 ***

Note: The significance level of * $p < 0.05$.

Regarding dedication, early-career teachers (aged 20–29) have the lowest score (Mean Rank = 470.43), which slightly increases over time, only to drop again in the 40–49 age group, before following an upward trend once more. The highest score is found among those over 60 years old (Mean Rank = 631.72).

A dimension that consistently increases with age is absorption, starting at 468.70 (Mean Rank) at the beginning of the career and reaching 612.93 (Mean Rank) by the end of the career.

Overall, work engagement is lowest at the age of 20–29 (MR = 473.91). Although it increases slightly at 30–39 years (MR = 516.30), it decreases in the next 10 years, followed by a continuous increase, with the highest work engagement after the age of 60 (MR = 623.01).

The **professional degrees** variable has no significant influence on work engagement; therefore, **H5** is rejected. However, it has a significant influence on vigor (p = 0.028). Respondents with the highest teaching degree (didactic degree I) reported the highest levels of vigor (Mean Rank: 543.96). However, the lowest level of vigor was reported by respondents with didactic degree II (Mean Rank 466.63).

The profile of the courses taught has a significant influence on work engagement (p = 0.003); consequently, we accept **H6**. Depending on the profile of the subjects taught, significant differences were found in overall work engagement, as well as in its two dimensions: dedication and absorption. In Table 5 are presented the Mean Ranks for the dimensions of WE and WP where significant differences were identified based on the profile of the courses taught.

The dependence of work performance on gender, residence, and status (H7–H9).

In order to examine the dependence of work performance on gender, residence, and status, we applied the Mann–Whitney test, and the results are presented in Table 6.

For the analyzed variables (gender, status, and residence), there are no statistically significant differences in terms of work performance. The p-value for all three variables is greater than the 0.05 threshold; therefore, hypotheses **H7**, **H8,** and **H9** will be rejected. However, one of the dimensions of WP, namely contextual performance (CP), is significantly influenced by gender (p = 0.023) and status (p = 0.009). Women (Mean Rank = 534.7) tend to do more than what is expected of them and take on extra responsibilities, compared to

men (Mean Rank = 474.18). Regarding status, it was expected that tenured teachers (Mean Rank = 535.97) would be more involved in additional activities than substitute teachers (Mean Rank = 468.54), thus having a higher contextual performance.

Table 5. The Mean Ranks for the dimensions where significant differences were identified based on the profile of the courses taught.

The Profile of the Courses Taught	Mean Rank DE	Mean Rank AB	Mean Rank WE	Mean Rank TP	Mean Rank CP
Language and communication	557.95	539.88	550.37	549.12	554.25
Mathematics and science	481.38	525.93	498.75	501.72	444.70
Man and society	455.93	440.95	449.62	417.34	505.24
Arts	**586.90**	562.60	585.06	569.64	506.29
Physical education and sports	512.55	492.25	496.04	**587.47**	547.59
Technology	465.66	465.21	467.29	528.16	515.05
Counseling and guidance	558.50	**622.04**	**598.70**	513.73	**561.44**
Primary cycle	566.04	557.39	558.05	561.78	557.52

Table 6. The dependence of work performance on gender, residence, and status.

Criteria	Variables/Paramenters		
	Gender	Status	Residence
Mann–Whitney U	64,542.000	68,531.000	108,639.500
Z	−0.987	−1.056	−1.385
Asymp. Sig. (two-tailed)	0.323	0.291	0.166

The dependence of work performance dimensions on age, professional degrees, and the profile of the courses taught (H10–H12)

To test hypotheses H10–H12, the Kruskal–Wallis test was performed, and the results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. The dependence of work performance dimensions on age, professional degrees, and the profile of the courses taught.

	Variables/Parameters			
	TP	CP	CWB	WP
	Grouping Variable: Age			
Chi-Square	6.573	6.125	3.760	5.002
df	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.160	0.190	0.439	0.287
	Grouping Variable: Professional degrees			
Chi-Square	4.691	8.659	5.800	3.110
df	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	0.196	**0.034 ***	.122	0.375
	Grouping Variable: The profile of the courses taught			
Chi-Square	24.629	19.470	9.875	12.637
df	7	7	7	7
Asymp. Sig.	**0.001 ***	**0.007 ***	0.196	0.081

Note: The significance level of * $p < 0.05$.

There are no statistically significant differences in work performance for the analyzed variables (age, professional degrees, and the profile of the courses taught). The *p*-value for all three variables exceeds the 0.05 threshold, leading to the rejection of hypotheses **H10**, **H11**, and **H12**. However, we found out that contextual performance varies according to the teaching degree. Respondents with the highest teaching degree (didactic degree I) reported the highest levels of contextual performance (544.84), and the lowest score was reported by teachers who do not yet have any teaching degree (Mean Rank 455.22). Interestingly, those with no teaching degree show a higher task performance but lower contextual performance.

Regarding the variable "the profile of the courses taught", it has significative influence on task performance and contextual performance. The Mean Ranks are presented in Table 5.

5. Discussion

The results of this study contribute valuable insights into the work engagement and work performance of primary and secondary school teachers in Romania, particularly within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study confirms that work engagement among teachers is generally high, with significant correlations between its three key dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. These findings are consistent with previous studies carried out during the pandemic (Deroncele-Acosta et al. 2021; Fute et al. 2022b; Mișu 2020) and could highlight the fact that teachers are a category of employees who are motivated by the work itself (i.e., teaching) and the context has little influence on their work, in terms of engagement. Teachers tried their hardest to cope with the challenges imposed by the pandemic in order to help students absorb the material, as the students were not at fault, and the teachers could not allow them to have poor results just because of the pandemic. The results regarding the correlation between work performance dimensions are in line with other research results (Lousã et al. 2024), showing a moderate positive correlation between task performance (TP) and contextual performance (CP) and a week negative correlation with counterproductive work behavior (CWB). Unlike the study conducted by Lousã et al. (2024) on a sample of digital sector workers, where task and contextual performance showed moderate positive correlations with all dimensions of work engagement, our research found that only vigor has a moderate influence on work performance, while the other dimensions show a weak influence. The differences could be explained by the nature of the profession, tasks, and work environment.

We found out that gender has a statistically significant impact on work engagement, which stands in contrast to some previous studies that suggest that there are no differences (Coetzee and De Villiers 2010; Kamaruzaman et al. 2022; Mostert and Rothmann 2006; Schaufeli and Salanova 2007; Tshilongamulenzhe and Takawira 2015). Moreover, contrary to some studies (Banihani et al. 2013; Fute et al. 2022b; Profiroiu et al. 2022), which suggest that men generally demonstrate higher levels of work engagement, our research found that women reported significantly higher engagement than men. We can argue that on the one hand these differences are due to cultural differences, because Romanian employees behave differently compared to Chinese employees, and on the other hand they may be caused by the nature of the profession and financial returns it involves. Profiroiu et al. (2022) applied the UWES on Romanian civil servants, but the teaching profession is much more emotional. Female teachers' higher work engagement compared to men may be attributed to their natural role in child-rearing, while men may report higher levels of exhaustion in such situations. This is an intriguing finding, suggesting that despite higher burdens, women have managed to stay highly engaged, possibly driven by an intrinsic motivation and resilience. These findings align with those reported by (Rey et al. 2012) in their study on Spanish school teachers.

Additionally, rural teachers reported a higher work engagement than those from urban areas, aligning with an earlier study (Mișu 2020). An explanation of this fact can be that rural teachers may be more engaged due to smaller, more tight-knit communities and potentially fewer distractions from urban life. Rural teachers may feel a stronger sense of connection and responsibility to their communities, which can increase their dedication

to and absorption in their work. Moreover, in such communities, the teaching profession is much more respected than in large communities, and they have greater autonomy. On the other hand, urban teachers may face challenges like larger class sizes and increased bureaucratic demands, potentially leading to lower work engagement due to stress or feelings of being overwhelmed.

Although some previous research suggests that work engagement is not related to age (Vîrgă et al. 2009), with correlations being very weak, our study highlighted that there are age-related differences across all three dimensions of work engagement. We found out that teachers aged 50–59 and over 60 exhibit the highest levels of work engagement, likely because they no longer face child-rearing or other early career pressures, being less stressed. Kavita and Hassan (2018) state that teachers aged between 31 and 50 reported higher levels of stress than other age groups. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that seniority often brings greater stability and intrinsic motivation (Köse 2016), and also higher salaries (Mișu et al. 2022). Even if an older age does not necessarily mean a greater work experience, in public education in Romania they are often associated. Therefore we can say that this result of our research contradicts the results of Iyer's research (Iyer 2016), which stated that years of service in the field had no impact on work engagement. Interestingly, the lowest engagement levels were reported among early-career teachers (aged 20–29), which is concerning since young teachers are critical to the future of education. This trend could indicate a need for targeted support to engage newer teachers, possibly through professional development or mentoring programs. These results are surprising, as during the pandemic, teachers were required to use technology for teaching, and younger teachers typically adapt more easily to technology and teaching through digital platforms (Yazici and Özerbaş 2022). However, in terms of work performance, there are no significant differences by age.

In terms of work performance, for the analyzed variables (gender, status, and residence), there are no statistically significant differences. These findings contrast with those of a study conducted among Romanian lower secondary teachers, which indicates that schools with a higher-than-average proportion of male teachers tend to have a below-average class management effectiveness, use of effective teaching strategies, and student engagement (Zoller and Bacskai 2020), but in that research, the teachers' performance was taken into account at the school level, not at the individual level. On the other hand, one of the dimensions of WP, namely contextual performance (CP), is significantly influenced by gender and status. Women tend to do more than what is expected of them and take on extra responsibilities, compared to men. Regarding status, tenured track teachers are more involved in additional activities than substitute teachers, thus having a higher contextual performance, even if Figlio et al. (2013) found consistent evidence that students learn relatively more from non-tenure line professors.

While status does not have a significant influence on work engagement, the teaching degree and the profile of the subjects taught were found to influence work engagement levels. Teachers with higher professional degrees (didactic degree I) exhibited higher levels of both vigor and contextual performance. This result also suggests that the higher salaries and opportunities for career advancement associated with professional degrees might enhance teachers' intrinsic motivation, positively affecting their work engagement. However, the lowest level of vigor was reported by respondents with didactic degree II, and the lowest score for contextual performance was reported by teachers who do not yet have any teaching degree. Interestingly, those with no teaching degree show a higher task performance but lower contextual performance. This may be due to their increased focus on meeting the requirements for career advancement, leaving them with no time for additional activities.

Depending on the profile of the subjects taught, we found that the level of work engagement is higher in the case of creative disciplines. Counseling and career guidance teachers obtained the highest score of WE, together with teachers of the arts. Work engagement is relatively high among teachers who teach language and communication; this

could be due to the importance of communication skills in education and the potential for interaction and creativity in teaching languages. These disciplines often allow for more personal expression, less rigid structures, and greater flexibility in teaching methods, contributing to higher engagement. Primary school teachers report high engagement, possibly due to the more nurturing and developmental role they play in early education, which can lead to greater job satisfaction. These results are in line with studies conducted by Fute et al. (2022b), and Perera et al. (2018). These results can also be explained by the fact that the stress levels among primary school teachers are lower than those of secondary school teachers (Kavita and Hassan 2018), and stress can negatively affect work engagement (Fontes et al. 2019).

On the other hand, teachers in humanities and social sciences show lower levels of work engagement, which could reflect difficulties in maintaining student interest. Additionally, those who teach mathematics and sciences have a lower WE, likely due to the more rigid curriculum and strict requirements, as these subjects are not highly creative. Similarly, physical education and sports teachers show low engagement, probably because during the pandemic, it was quite challenging to conduct online sports classes, and when in-person, there were many restrictions in place.

Interestingly, physical education and sports teachers have the highest score for task performance, likely reflecting the practical nature of the work. Teachers in the arts and primary education also score highly in this area, reflecting their high level of engagement in their primary tasks. In contrast, respondents teaching man and society report the lowest task performance, which may be related to the abstract nature of their subject matter. Counseling and guidance teachers show the highest score for contextual performance, reflecting their willingness to take on additional responsibilities beyond their core teaching duties, such as mentoring students or providing emotional support. Physical education and sports and primary school teachers also rank high on CP, possibly due to the collaborative aspects of their roles. In contrast, mathematics and science teachers, despite showing decent task performance, score lower in contextual performance, perhaps due to the more structured and rigid nature of their subjects, providing fewer opportunities for engaging in additional responsibilities beyond core tasks. These findings provide valuable insights into how teachers' engagement and performance vary depending on the content they teach, which could be tied to the inherent nature of the subjects or the demands placed upon them by their specific fields.

6. Conclusions

This study provides valuable insights into the work engagement and work performance of Romanian primary and secondary school teachers, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenging conditions imposed by the pandemic, teachers maintained a high level of work engagement and performance, but it was influenced by different sociodemographic and contextual factors. And, as far as we know, the influence of the profile of the courses taught by the teachers on the dimensions of the two concepts was investigated for the first time. Given that some results differ from studies conducted in other sectors and countries, it is important that cultural and contextual factors need to be considered in work engagement and performance theories.

These findings come with several practical implications, for policy makers and school managers to enhance teacher engagement and performance. Given that gender and residence were found to significantly impact the level of work engagement and contextual performance, gender-specific support programs may be implemented. In primary and lower secondary education, there are far fewer male than female teachers, possibly because of the natural role that women have in raising and educating children. Perhaps programs should be implemented to help male teachers engage more in this profession. Meanwhile, teachers from urban areas may need more support in managing larger class sizes and bureaucratic pressures. At the same time, perhaps some actions aimed at increasing the status of the teaching profession in society would be beneficial, especially in the urban

environment, where it is no longer so respected, which negatively affects work engagement. Since younger teachers report lower work engagement, mentoring programs or initiatives that provide support to early career educators could help increase their level of engagement. Although starting last year in Romania, early-career teachers are offered a teaching career bonus once a year that can be used for professional development, it may not be enough. Targeted interventions could help younger teachers better cope with challenges in the system, which could lead to improved retention rates. Unfortunately, fewer and fewer young people choose a teaching career in the pre-university system, and this must change if we want a prosperous future. Our study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting the impact that the courses taught have on work engagement, task performance, and contextual performance. Based on these results, we can suggest introducing more creativity and flexibility into traditionally structured courses (e.g., mathematics and science) to boost the work engagement of teachers in these fields and increase contextual performance.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, it relies on self-reported data, which may introduce bias such as a social desirability bias. Teachers may have reported a higher engagement or performance than they experienced, particularly if they received the questionnaire from school inspectorates. Second, cultural and educational system differences need to be considered before applying the results globally. Third, engagement and performance levels during the pandemic may differ from those in more stable, typical times, which may limit the relevance of the findings beyond the pandemic period.

Since the pandemic forced teachers to adapt to online teaching, future research could explore how technology impacts the work engagement and performance of teachers across different age groups and subject areas. Considering that the impact of different sociodemographic and contextual factors on WE and WP differs from country to country, cross-cultural comparisons would enhance our understanding of how cultural contexts impact work engagement and performance in education. Future studies could also focus on analyzing how WP and WE vary depending on the educational level at which teachers teach, although this may be difficult to achieve, as some teachers may teach at several educational levels, such as those who teach physical education and sports or foreign languages. Additionally, while this study focused on teacher engagement and performance, future research could explore the correlation between teacher work engagement and student outcomes (academic performance, engagement in learning), providing a more holistic view of the education process.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, E.C. (Ecaterina Coman), I.S. and L.G.Ț.; methodology, E.C. (Ecaterina Coman), I.S. and L.G.Ț.; software, E.C. (Ecaterina Coman), I.S. and L.G.Ț.; validation, E.C. (Ecaterina Coman), I.S., L.G.Ț. and C.C.; formal analysis, E.C. (Ecaterina Coman); investigation, E.C. (Ecaterina Coman), I.S., L.G.Ț., G.B., E.C. (Eliza Ciobanu), F.N., L.B., and C.C.; resources, I.S. and L.G.Ț.; data curation, E.C. (Ecaterina Coman), I.S. and L.G.Ț.; writing—original draft preparation, E.C. (Ecaterina Coman); writing—review and editing, E.C. (Ecaterina Coman), I.S., L.G.Ț., G.B., E.C. (Eliza Ciobanu), F.N., L.B., and C.C.; visualization, E.C. (Ecaterina Coman), I.S., L.G.Ț., G.B., E.C. (Eliza Ciobanu), F.N., L.B., and C.C.; supervision, E.C. (Ecaterina Coman); project administration, E.C. (Ecaterina Coman), I.S., L.G.Ț. and C.C. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by Council of the Faculty of Sociology and Communication, from Transylvania University of Brasov (No.17. 15/01/2022).

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Appendix A. Items of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), with Means and Standard Deviations (SDs) on a 1–7 Range

Question	Mean	Std. Deviation
VIGOR		
V1—At my work, I feel that I am bursting with energy	5.32	1.386
V2—At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	5.98	1.186
V3—When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	6.09	1.221
V4—I can continue working for very long periods at a time.	5.25	1.609
V5—At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.	6.43	0.905
V6—At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well.	6.17	1.154
DEDICATION		
D1—I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.	6.62	0.890
D2—I am enthusiastic about my job.	5.99	1.306
D3—My job inspires me.	5.98	1.396
D4—I am proud of the work that I do.	6.43	1.085
D5—To me, my job is challenging.	6.10	1.397
ABSORBTION		
AB1—Time flies when I'm working.	6.50	0.986
AB2—When I am working, I forget everything else around me.	5.98	1.230
AB3—I feel happy when I am working intensely.	5.89	1.206
AB4—I am immersed in my work.	6.59	0.906
AB5—I get carried away when I'm working.	5.94	1.159
AB6—It is difficult to detach myself from my job.	5.67	1.285

Appendix B. Items of the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ), with Means and Standard Deviations (SDs) on a 1–5 Range

Question	Mean	Std. Deviation
TASK PERFORMANCE		
TP1—I managed to plan my work so that it was done on time.	4.34	0.759
TP2—My planning was optimal.	4.20	0.751
TP3—I kept in mind the results that I had to achieve in my work.	4.49	0.682
TP4—I was able to separate main issues from side issues at work.	4.27	0.720
TP5—I knew how to set the right priorities.	4.36	0.706
TP6—I was able to perform my work well with minimal time and effort.	3.86	0.794
TP7—Collaboration with others was very productive.	4.16	0.865
CONTEXTUAL PERFORMANCE		
CP1—I took on extra responsibilities.	3.99	0.950
CP2—I started new tasks myself, when my old ones were finished	3.99	0.922
CP3—I took on challenging work tasks, when available.	4.13	0.847
CP4—I worked at keeping my job knowledge up-to-date.	4.44	0.695
CP5—I worked at keeping my job skills up-to-date.	4.52	0.630
CP6—I came up with creative solutions to new problems.	4.12	0.795
CP7—I kept looking for new challenges in my job.	4.14	0.823
CP8—I did more than was expected of me.	3.97	0.899
CP9—I actively participated in work meetings.	4.39	0.793
CP10—I actively looked for ways to improve my performance at work.	4.43	0.705
CP11—I grasped opportunities when they presented themselves.	4.16	0.831
CP12—I knew how to solve difficult situations and setbacks quickly.	4.16	0.736

Question	Mean	Std. Deviation
COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOR		
CWB 1—I complained about unimportant matters at work.	1.80	0.913
CWB2—I made problems greater than they were at work.	2.00	1.068
CWB3—I focused on the negative aspects of a work situation, instead of on the positive aspects.	1.80	1.010
CWB4—I spoke with colleagues about the negative aspects of my work.	2.71	1.167
CWB5—I spoke with people from outside the organization about the negative aspects of my work.	2.16	1.154
CWB6—I did less than was expected of me.	1.71	0.892
CWB7—I managed to get off from a work task easily.	2.28	1.146
CWB8—I sometimes did nothing, while I should have been working.	1.45	0.804

References

Afrahi, Bahare, John Blenkinsopp, Juan Carlos Fernandez de Arroyabe, and Mohammed Shamsul Karim. 2022. Work Disengagement: A Review of the Literature. *Human Resource Management Review* 32: 100822. [CrossRef]

Asaloei, Sandra Ingried, Agustinus Kia Wolomasi, and Basilius Redan Werang. 2020. Work-Related Stress and Performance among Primary School Teachers. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)* 9: 352. [CrossRef]

Bakker, Arnold B. 2009. Building Engagement in the Workplace. In *The Peak Performing Organization*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 50–72. Available online: https://www.isonderhouden.nl/doc/pdf/arnoldbakker/articles/articles_arnold_bakker_204.pdf (accessed on 10 July 2024).

Bakker, Arnold B., and Matthijs P. Bal. 2010. Weekly Work Engagement and Performance: A Study among Starting Teachers. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 83: 189–206. [CrossRef]

Bakker, Arnold B., Evangelia Demerouti, and Lieke L. ten Brummelhuis. 2012. Work Engagement, Performance, and Active Learning: The Role of Conscientiousness. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 80: 555–64. [CrossRef]

Bakker, Arnold, Jong Gierveld, and Kjelt Van Rijswijk. 2006. Success Factors among Female School Principals in Primary Teaching: A Study on Burnout, Work Engagement, and Performance. *Diemen the Netherlands: Right Management Consultants* 85: 480–92.

Balducci, Cristian, Franco Fraccaroli, and Wilmar B. Schaufeli. 2010. Psychometric Properties of the Italian Version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9): A Cross-Cultural Analysis. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment* 26: 143–49. [CrossRef]

Baluch, Mehvash. 2023. A Study of Inter Relationship between Mental Well-Being and Work Performance. *Amity Business Review* 24: 22.

Banihani, Muntaha, Patricia Lewis, and Jawad Syed. 2013. Is Work Engagement Gendered? *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 28: 400–23. [CrossRef]

Bhatnagar, Jyotsna. 2012. Management of Innovation: Role of Psychological Empowerment, Work Engagement and Turnover Intention in the Indian Context. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 23: 928–51. [CrossRef]

Borman, Walter C., and Stephan J. Motowidlo. 1997. Task Performance and Contextual Performance: The Meaning for Personnel Selection Research. *Human Performance* 10: 99–109. [CrossRef]

Cai, Yonghong, and Chongde Lin. 2006. Theory and Practice on Teacher Performance Evaluation. *Frontiers of Education in China* 1: 29–39. [CrossRef]

Campbell, John P., and Brenton M. Wiernik. 2015. The Modeling and Assessment of Work Performance. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 2: 47–74. [CrossRef]

Campbell, John Paul. 1990. Modeling the Performance Prediction Problem in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. In *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.

Chatterjee, Sujana. 2023. Flow States and Work Performance in Indian Research Professionals. *International Journal of Indian Psychology* 11: 1676–95.

Christian, Michael S., Adela S. Garza, and Jerel E. Slaughter. 2011. Work Engagement: A Quantitative Review and Test of Its Relations with Task and Contextual Performance. *Personnel Psychology* 64: 89–136. [CrossRef]

Coetzee, Melinde, and M. De Villiers. 2010. Sources of Job Stress, Work Engagement and Career Orientations of Employees in a South African Fi Nancial Institution. *Southern African Business Review* 14. Available online: https://www.ajol.info/index.php/sabr/article/view/76348 (accessed on 2 October 2024).

Corbeanu, Andreea, and Dragoş Iliescu. 2023. The Link Between Work Engagement and Job Performance. *Journal of Personnel Psychology* 22: 111–122. [CrossRef]

Dee, Thomas, and James Wyckoff. 2013. *Incentives, Selection, and Teacher Performance: Evidence from IMPACT*. Working Paper. Working Paper Series. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research. [CrossRef]

Deroncele-Acosta, Angel, Patricia Medina-Zuta, Felix Fernando Goñi-Cruz, Maria Isabel Ramirez-Garzón, Orlando Fernández-Aquino, Eldis Román-Cao, Mariel M. Montes-Castillo, and Eloisa Gallegos Santiago. 2021. Digital Competence, Role Stress and Engagement: Towards positive mental health in Latin American teachers. Paper presented at 2021 XVI Latin American Conference on Learning Technologies (LACLO), Arequipa, Peru, October 19–21; pp. 83–90. [CrossRef]

De Stasio, Simona, Paula Benevene, Alessandro Pepe, Ilaria Buonomo, Benedetta Ragni, and Carmen Berenguer. 2020. The Interplay of Compassion, Subjective Happiness and Proactive Strategies on Kindergarten Teachers' Work Engagement and Perceived Working Environment Fit. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17: 4869. [CrossRef]

Figlio, David N., Morton O. Schapiro, and Kevin B. Soter. 2013. Are Tenure Track Professors Better Teachers? *Review of Economics and Statistics* 97: 715–24. [CrossRef]

Fontes, Liliana, Alice Gonçalves, António Rui Gomes, and Clara Simães. 2019. Stress and Work Engagement in Health Professionals. In *Occupational and Environmental Safety and Health*. Edited by Pedro M. Arezes, João S. Baptista, Mónica P. Barroso, Paula Carneiro, Patrício Cordeiro, Nélson Costa, Rui B. Melo, A. Sérgio Miguel and Gonçalo Perestrelo. Studies in Systems, Decision and Control. Cham: Springer International Publishing, vol. 202, pp. 553–61. [CrossRef]

Francisco, Julianna, Janelle Cruz, Koleen Cruz, Lara Resurreccion, Loismyre Lopez, Aaron Torculas, Marco Gumpal, Nathaniel Guillermo, and Jhoselle Tus. 2022. The Job Burnout and Its Impact on the Employee's Performance Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 2: 155–66. [CrossRef]

Fute, Antony, Binghai Sun, and Mohamed Oubibi. 2022a. Assessing Teaching Compassion, Work Engagement and Compassion Fatigue Among Teachers During the Pandemic. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management* 15: 2561–71. [CrossRef]

Fute, Antony, Mohamed Oubibi, Binghai Sun, Yueliang Zhou, and Weilong Xiao. 2022b. Work Values Predict Job Satisfaction among Chinese Teachers during COVID-19: The Mediation Role of Work Engagement. *Sustainability* 14: 1353. [CrossRef]

Gede, Dawit Udessa, and Admassu Tesso Huluka. 2024. Effects of Employee Engagement on Organizational Performance: Case of Public Universities in Ethiopia. *Future Business Journal* 10: 32. [CrossRef]

Gómez, Luis F., and Valdés. 2019. The Evaluation of Teacher Performance in Higher Education. *Propósitos y Representaciones* 7: 479–515. [CrossRef]

Griffin, Mark A., Andrew Neal, and Sharon K. Parker. 2007. A New Model of Work Role Performance: Positive Behavior in Uncertain and Interdependent Contexts. *Academy of Management Journal* 50: 327–47. [CrossRef]

Gülbahar, Bahadır. 2017. The Relationship between Work Engagement and Organizational Trust: A Study of Elementary School Teachers in Turkey. *Journal of Education and Training Studies* 5: 149. [CrossRef]

Halbesleben, Jonathon R. B., and Anthony R. Wheeler. 2008. The Relative Roles of Engagement and Embeddedness in Predicting Job Performance and Intention to Leave. *Work & Stress* 22: 242–56. [CrossRef]

Iyer, Ramajanaki Doraiswamy. 2016. A Study of Work Engagement among Teachers in India. *Global Business and Management Research* 8: 34.

Jones, Alexis L., and Meghan A. Kessler. 2020. Teachers' Emotion and Identity Work During a Pandemic. *Frontiers in Education* 5: 583775. [CrossRef]

Kadtong, Maeda Langguyuan, Musa Unos, Tomanda D. Antok, and Muhamad Ali E. Midzid. 2017. *Teaching Performance and Job Satisfaction Among Teachers at Region XII*. SSRN Scholarly Paper. Rochester: Social Science Research Network. [CrossRef]

Kamaruzaman, Munirah, Shahlan Surat, and Faridah Mydin Kutty. 2022. Teachers Work Engagement During COVID-19. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 12: 112–19. [CrossRef]

Kant, Ravi. 2014. A Study of Effect of Demographical Factors on Role Performance of Secondary School Teachers in India. *Mevlana International Journal of Education* 4: 109–21.

Kanya, Nita, Aryo Bima Fathoni, and Zulmi Ramdani. 2021. Factors Affecting Teacher Performance. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)* 10: 1462. [CrossRef]

Katsaros, Kleanthis K. 2024. Gen Z Employee Adaptive Performance: The Role of Inclusive Leadership and Workplace Happiness. *Administrative Sciences* 14: 163. [CrossRef]

Kavita, Kotte, and Norlizah Hassan. 2018. Work Stress among Teachers: A Comparison between Primary and Secondary School Teachers. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* 7: 60–66. [CrossRef]

Khan, Hira, Maryam Rehmat, Tahira Hassan Butt, Saira Farooqi, and Javaria Asim. 2020. Impact of Transformational Leadership on Work Performance, Burnout and Social Loafing: A Mediation Model. *Future Business Journal* 6: 40. [CrossRef]

Kim, Woocheol, Judith A. Kolb, and Taesung Kim. 2013. The Relationship Between Work Engagement and Performance: A Review of Empirical Literature and a Proposed Research Agenda. *Human Resource Development Review* 12: 248–76. [CrossRef]

Kirk-Brown, Andrea, and Pieter Van Dijk. 2011. Safe to Engage: Chronic Illness and Organisational Citizenship Behaviours at Work. *International Journal of Disability Management* 6: 1–9. [CrossRef]

Klassen, Robert M., Said Aldhafri, Caroline F. Mansfield, Edy Purwanto, Angela F. Y. Siu, Marina W. Wong, and Amanda Woods-McConney. 2012. Teachers' Engagement at Work: An International Validation Study. *The Journal of Experimental Education* 80: 317–37. [CrossRef]

Koopmans, L, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, Van Buuren, Van Der Beek, and De Vet. 2013. 51 Improving the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire Using Rasch Analysis. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 70: A17–A18. [CrossRef]

Kotherja, Ortenca, and Blerina Hamzallari. 2022. The Influence of Socio-Demographic Variables on Teachers' Job Performance. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences* 17: 2511–22. [CrossRef]

Köse, Akif. 2016. Öğretmenlerin Işe Angaje Olmalarında Demografik Özelliklerinin Rolü. *Turkish Journal of Education* 5: 255–64. [CrossRef]

Lousã, Eva Petiz, Marta Pereira Alves, and Linda Koopmans. 2024. Adaptation and Validation of the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire into a Portuguese Version. *Administrative Sciences* 14: 150. [CrossRef]

Mișu, Sorina Ioana. 2020. Teacher's Work Engagement–Change and Adaptation During COVID-19 Pandemic. *Business Excellence and Management* 10: 243–55. [CrossRef]
Mișu, Sorina Ioana, Cătălina Radu, Alecxandrina Deaconu, and Simona Toma. 2022. How to Increase Teacher Performance through Engagement and Work Efficacy. *Sustainability* 14: 10167. [CrossRef]
Mostert, Karina, and Sebastiaan Rothmann. 2006. Work-Related Well-Being in the South African Police Service. *Journal of Criminal Justice* 34: 479–91. [CrossRef]
Motyka, Błażej. 2018. Employee Engagement and Performance: A Systematic Literature Review. *International Journal of Management and Economics* 54: 227–44. [CrossRef]
Mulyana, Yayan, Nanang Chaeroni, Heri Erlangga, Makmur Solahudin, Denok Sunarsi, Noerlina Anggraeni, Imas Masriah, Kharisma Danang Yuangga, and Agus Purwanto. 2021. The Influence of Motivation, Ability, Organizational Culture, Work Environment on Teachers Performance. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education* 12: 99–108.
National Institute of Statistics. 2023. *Populația școlară a fost 3472,8 mii Persoane în anul Şcolar/Universitar 2022–2023*. Press Release. Available online: https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/com_presa/com_pdf/sistemul_educational_2023_r.pdf (accessed on 13 November 2024).
National Institute of Statistics. 2024. Romanian Statistical Yearbook_2023. Available online: https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/anuarul_statistic_al_romaniei_carte_ed_2023-ro.pdf (accessed on 30 September 2024).
Ng, Thomas W. H., Simon S. K. Lam, and Daniel C. Feldman. 2016. Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Counterproductive Work Behavior: Do Males and Females Differ? *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 93: 11–32. [CrossRef]
Perera, Harsha N., Lucie Vosicka, Helena Granziera, and Peter McIlveen. 2018. Towards an Integrative Perspective on the Structure of Teacher Work Engagement. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 108: 28–41. [CrossRef]
Profiroiu, Alina Georgiana, Oana Matilda Sabie, Corina Cristiana Nastacă, and Mirela Caraman. 2022. Work Engagement: A Study among Civil Servants of Romania State's Public Administration. *Administratie Si Management Public* 38: 46–69.
Purwanto, Agus, Masduki Asbari, Mochammad Fahlevi, Abdul Mufid, Eva Agistiawati, Yoyok Cahyono, and Popong Suryani. 2020. Impact of Work From Home (WFH) on Indonesian Teachers Performance During the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Exploratory Study. *International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology* 29: 6235–44.
Rey, Lourdes, Natalio Extremera, and Mario Pena. 2012. Burnout and Work Engagement in Teachers: Are Sex and Level Taught Important? *Ansiedad y Estrés*. Sociedad Española para el Estudio de la Ansiedad y el Estrés. Available online: https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2012-28827-003 (accessed on 1 October 2024).
Rich, Bruce Louis, Jeffery A. LePine, and Eean R. Crawford. 2010. Job Engagement: Antecedents and Effects on Job Performance. *Academy of Management Journal* 53: 617–35. [CrossRef]
Roth, Philip L., Kristen L. Purvis, and Philip Bobko. 2012. A Meta-Analysis of Gender Group Differences for Measures of Job Performance in Field Studies. *Journal of Management* 38: 719–39. [CrossRef]
Rusu, Petruta P., and Aurora A. Colomeischi. 2020. Positivity Ratio and Well-Being Among Teachers. The Mediating Role of Work Engagement. *Frontiers in Psychology* 11: 1608. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. 2000. Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being. *American Psychologist* 55: 68–78. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
Saks, Alan M. 2022. Caring Human Resources Management and Employee Engagement. *Human Resource Management Review* 32: 100835. [CrossRef]
Sârbu, Maria-Alexandra, Cosmin-Nicolae Mirea, Mihaela Mihai, Puiu Nistoreanu, and Dadfar Elhan. 2021. Teachers and Professors Perception of Telework in Romania. *Amfiteatru Economic Journal* 23: 736. [CrossRef]
Schaufeli, Wilmar, and Marisa Salanova. 2007. Work Engagement: An Emerging Psychological Concept and Its Implications for Organizations. *Managing Social and Ethical Issues in Organizations* 135: 177.
Schaufeli, Wilmar B., and Arnold B. Bakker. 2010. Defining and Measuring Work Engagement: Bringing Clarity to the Concept. In *Work Engagement: A Handbook of Essential Theory and Research*. London: Psychology Press, vol. 12, pp. 10–24.
Schaufeli, Wilmar B., Marisa Salanova, Vicente González-Romá, and Arnold B. Bakker. 2002. The Measurement of Engagement and Burnout: A Two Sample Confirmatory Factor Analytic Approach. *Journal of Happiness Studies* 3: 71–92. [CrossRef]
Schaufeli, Wilmar B., Toon W. Taris, and Willem Van Rhenen. 2008. Workaholism, Burnout, and Work Engagement: Three of a Kind or Three Different Kinds of Employee Well-being? *Applied Psychology* 57: 173–203. [CrossRef]
So, Byung Han, Ji Hyun Kim, Yun Jeong Ro, and Ji Hoon Song. 2022. Developing a Measurement Scale for Employee Engagement: A Validation Study in a South Korean Context. *European Journal of Training and Development* 46: 585–606. [CrossRef]
Spector, Paul E., and Suzy Fox. 2005. The Stressor-Emotion Model of Counterproductive Work Behavior. In *Counterproductive Work Behavior: Investigations of Actors and Targets*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, pp. 151–74. [CrossRef]
Ștefenel, Delia, and Iuliana Neagoș. 2020. Measuring Academic Engagement among University Students in Romania during COVID-19 Pandemic. *Thesis* 9: 3–29.
Tao, Wei. 2022. Understanding the Relationships between Teacher Mindfulness, Work Engagement, and Classroom Emotions. *Frontiers in Psychology* 13: 993857. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
Teachers and Education Staff. 2024. Available online: https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/romania/teachers-and-education-staff (accessed on 30 September 2024).

Tshilongamulenzhe, Maelekanyo Christopher, and Ndayiziveyi Takawira. 2015. Examining the Gender Influence on Employees' Work Engagement within a South African University. *Risk Governance and Control: Financial Markets and Institutions* 5: 110–19. [CrossRef]
Usop, Annierah Maulana, Kamarulzaman Askandar, Maeda Langguyuan-Kadtong, and Datu Amir Sajid Onotan Usop. 2013. Work Performance and Job Satisfaction among Teachers. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3: 245–52.
Vîrgă, Delia, Cătălina Zaborilă, Coralia Sulea, and Laurențiu Maricuțoiu. 2009. Roumanian Adaptation of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale: The Examination of Validity and Reliability. *Psihologia Resurselor Umane* 7: 58–74. [CrossRef]
Widyastuti, Tria, and Rahmat Hidayat. 2018. Adaptation of Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) into Bahasa Indonesia. *International Journal of Research Studies in Psychology* 7: 101–12. [CrossRef]
Wingerden, Jessica, and Rob Poell. 2019. Meaningful Work and Resilience among Teachers: The Mediating Role of Work Engagement and Job Crafting. *PLoS ONE* 14: e0222518. [CrossRef]
Xanthopoulou, Despoina, Arnold B. Bakker, Evangelia Demerouti, and Wilmar B. Schaufeli. 2007. The Role of Personal Resources in the Job Demands-Resources Model. *International Journal of Stress Management* 14: 121–41. [CrossRef]
Yazici, Elif Büşra, and Mehmet Arif Özerbaş. 2022. The Analysis of the Efficiency of Digital Education Platforms Based on Various Variables. *Participatory Educational Research* 9: 383–402. [CrossRef]
Zabaleta, Francisco. 2007. The Use and Misuse of Student Evaluations of Teaching. *Teaching in Higher Education* 12: 55–76. [CrossRef]
Zoller, Katalin, and Katinka Bacskai. 2020. Teacher Work and Job Satisfaction among Romanian Lower Secondary Teachers. *Central European Journal of Educational Research* 2: 93–100. [CrossRef]
Žnidaršič, Jasmina, and Miha Marič. 2021. Relationships between Work-Family Balance, Job Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction and Work Engagement among Higher Education Lecturers. *Organizacija* 54: 227–37. [CrossRef]