



The Factors Affecting the Work Engagement among Teachers in Lower Secondary Schools in Albania

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ABSTRACT

Work engagement among the teachers in a lower secondary school in Albania reflects their attitude towards the task which conditions on a set of factors related to his enthusiasm and energy, commitment and level of psycho-emotional and spiritual involvement during the task performance process. Dedication is the largest contributor subscale to the work engagement of lower secondary school teachers. Vigor ranks second and Absorption is the subscale that has the least effect. Gender, work experience and age of the teacher are significant factors ($p < 0.05$) while the relationship between property status of the school, its location and the level of work engagement among the teachers is not significant ($p > 0.05$).

KEYWORDS

Work Engagements, Factors, Teachers, Lower Secondary School.

Introduction

The achievement of objectives in the education system depends on many factors, among which can be listed the ability of the system to harmonize the interaction between social, economic, cultural and traditional factors, which condition the behavior of teachers, pupils and the characteristics and features of the social and school environment; policies and reforms made to increase system capacity; quality in the professional training of teachers, etcTeacher and pupils are the two basic elements in the whole education system. Behavior, the level of their commitment in performing tasks, actions and interaction between them, coordinated with the interaction with the community, are very important factors for the success of the education system.



After the changes in the political and economic system, in the early 90s of the last century, Albania faced the challenge of profound changes in the education system.

The need for institutional and human capacity building in the education system, necessary to respond to developments in economics and technology and to facing the challenges of open market demands and globalization processes, conditioned the review and redesign of the education system in Albania.

The result of the reforms made in the education system is the profound changes in the curricula of the programs, in all cycles of pre-university study. Changes in the methodology of administration and management of the education system, building a new system for the qualification of teaching bodies and, along with them, new policies and methodologies designed for the recruitment and evaluation of the teachers' performances, are results of these reforms, as well.

Meanwhile, it is important to note that the analysis of this whole transformational process in the pre-university education system in Albania shows that it almost lacks a very important component. Efforts and scientific research to study the behavior of teachers towards the task and identify the factors that condition their job satisfaction, motivation, work engagement, stress and performance, are necessary to develop, as part of the above component, missing.

In the literature, work engagement is treated as an employee's attitude towards the task which conditions the action of a set of factors related to his enthusiasm and energy, commitment and level of psycho-emotional and spiritual involvement during the task performance process. (Schaufeli, 2002; Hakanen, et al. 2006; San and Nuri, 2016; Minghui, et al, 2018). Engagement at work is an indicator that reflects the quality of professional life of teachers (Hakanen et al., 2006; Field and Buitendach, 2012). Leal-Soto, et al. 2018) It is significantly and positively correlated with teacher efficiency at work (Hoigaard et al., 2012).

Referring to Schaufeli et al., (2002a, b) and Schaufeli and Bakker, (2010), teacher work engagement is the result of the action and interaction between three groups of factors or subscales:

- (i) Vigor - the psycho-emotional state of the teacher, his mental strength and willingness to work even in difficult conditions and with prolonged time with pupils,
- (ii) Dedication - the feeling of enthusiasm and pride for working with pupils, which is performed as a mission and challenge.
- (iii) Absorption - full physical, mental and emotional involvement in working with pupils, which brings a sense of happiness and a sense of loss of time.

According to Bakker et al., (2010) all three of these components/subscales are responsible for forming a positive and psychologically fulfilled mood in teachers. Hakanen et al., 2006; Field et al., 2012 emphasize that

the work engagement concept has become a core indicator that reflects the quality of teachers' occupational lives by accounting for significant variation in the prediction of their occupational and organizational outcomes, such as teaching performance, problem solving, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. A research published by Hoigaard et al., 2012 shown that work engagement was significantly and positively correlated with teacher efficacy.

In Albania there are no studies to assess the effect of demographic and social factors on the work engagement of teachers in lower secondary schools. There have been no studies to evaluate the results that can be obtained from the implementation, in the conditions of Albania, of the proposed model Schaufeli et al., (2002), Schaufeli et al. (2008) and Bakker et al (2010).

The current study investigated the predictor effects of socio-demographic factors on work engagement among teachers in lower secondary schools. The study is an attempt to implement the Schaufeli et al. model in the conditions of Albania.

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the study are:

1. Assessment of the level of work engagement of teachers in lower secondary schools in Albania.
2. Identification of factors that affect the work engagement of teachers in lower secondary schools.
3. Evaluation of the relationship between the factors that affecting the work engagement and the work of teachers in lower secondary schools.

Research questions

According to the purpose of the study, the following questions are posed

1. What is the overall level of work engagement?
2. What are the factors that affect work engagement?
3. Do demographic factors affect work engagement?

Data

The data for this study derived by the answers received from 198 teachers in lower secondary schools, distributed in the central region of Albania, where about 69% of the entire population lives. The questionnaire was designed using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) and similar questionnaires compiled by Albanian authors, Bezati, F. (2012); Kotherrja, O. (2015). Three aspects of work engagement vigor (six items), dedication (five items) and absorption (four items) were used to assess the core dimensions of engagement. All items were scored on a five-point rating scale, ranging from: 1 (extremely disagree) to 5 (extremely agree). Consequently, the minimum score that can be obtained from the scale is 15, and the maximum score is 75. Accordingly, 15-35 or 1-2.33 scores were interpreted as the low level of work

engagement, 36-56 or 2.34-3.73 scores were interpreted as the medium level of work engagement, and 57-75 or 3.74-5.0 scores were interpreted as the high level of work engagement.

The Cronbach's alpha was 0.76 for vigor, 0.83 for dedication, and 0.77 for absorption.

Characteristics of sample

The demographic characteristics of the sample are given in the Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the sample.

Demographic features	Female	Male	Total
Number	162 (81.8%)	36 (18.2%)	198 (100%)
Age ($M \pm SD$)	34.6 \pm 4.3	36.2 \pm 3.2	34.9 \pm 4.1
Seniority ($M \pm SD$)	10.3 \pm 6.8	11.4 \pm 7.2	10.6 \pm 7.0

About 18% of teachers interviewed are male. In Albania, male teachers in lower secondary schools make up about 12-16%. The average of the age of teacher 34.6 years (F) and 34.6 years (M) and averages of seniority are 10.3 years (F) and 11.4 years (M).

Regarding the indicator of ownership over the school, public or private school, the sample structure does not differ from the structure at the national level (12.6% vs 10.2%, $p < 0.05$). The same is the feature of the sample regarding the distribution of schools in urban and peri-urban / rural areas, (sample: 71.8% / 28.8% vs country: 67.3% / 32.7%, $p < 0.05$).

Data analysis methods

Descriptive statistical analysis will be used to assess the level of work engagement of teachers in the lower secondary education cycle. To understand the mechanism by which work engagement is realized, to identify the relationship between different factors and work engagement and to evaluate the contribution of these factors on teacher work engagement and this engagement, a hierarchical multiple-regression analysis will be performed. The total scores of work engagement among teachers in the lower secondary schools will take as the dependent variable. Independent variables will be socio-demographic factors in step 1 and work engagement subscales: vigor, dedication and absorption in step 2. The binary logistic regression linear model is:

$$Y_{ijn} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}X_{1ij} + \beta_{2j}X_{2ij} + \varepsilon_{ijn}$$

where:

Y - dependent variable, whose value is one of two states:

Teacher is engaged (1), Teacher is not engaged (0).

X_{1ij} - independent variables- demographic characteristics of teachers: gender, age, seniority, civil status

X_{2ij} - independent variables: socio-economic factors-property status of schools and residential area where the school is located.

The values of the dependent variable, which reflects the work engagement of teachers, were calculated according to the rule:

Teachers for whom the average value of total score work engagement is ≤ 2.9 , are classified in the group of teachers that are not engaged in work, $y = 0$.

Teachers for whom the average value of total score work engagement is ≥ 3.0 , are classified in the group of teachers that are engaged in work, $y = 1$.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

The averages scores for each of the items contained in the questionnaire and the mean scores for three subscale of work engagement are given in Fig. 1. As seen, the average level of engagement in the work of teachers in the lower secondary school is 3.55 ± 0.47 scores. This means that their

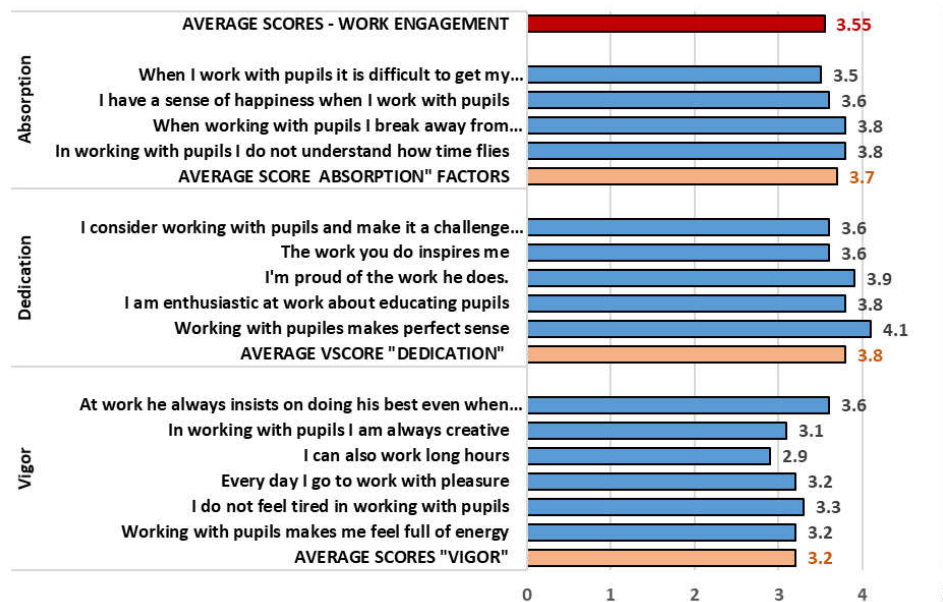


Figure 1 Average scores for the items responsible for the work engagement of teachers in the lower secondary school.

Engagement to work evaluated at the level "medium." The Dedication subscale bring the greatest positive contribution to the values of this engagement, 3.80 ± 0.43 scores, followed by the factors that correspond to the Absorption subscale 3.70 ± 0.51 scores. The smallest effect has vigor subscales 3.20 ± 0.42 scores.

The sample data identifies as factors with the greatest weight in teacher work engagement, the factors: "Working with pupils makes full sense" (4.1 ± 0.34), and "I'm proud of with job that I do." (3.9 ± 0.36). They are followed by: "When I am working, I forget everything else around me" (3.8 ± 0.31), "Time flies when I am working" (3.8 ± 0.36) and "I am enthusiastic about my job" (3.8 ± 0.42)

These results show that Albanian teachers in lower secondary schools, for the most part, are psychologically and spiritually committed to becoming the teaching profession. Such a psychic concentration at work is a factor with a significant effect on the quality of teaching.

The data in Table 2 show that the average level of work engagement of teachers in the lower secondary school depends on the gender of the teacher. Work engagement is higher to female teachers (about +8.88 points, $p < 0.05$) than to male teachers. Significant difference (+6.66 scores, $p < 0.05$) was also identified between averages of work engagement` teachers in public and private schools ($p < 0.05$).

Table 2. Averages scores of work engagement

	Numner	Min	Max	Average±Dev.st.	Sign (p).
Overall work engagement	198	15	75	53.25 ± 2.42	
Gender					
-male	36	15	75	45.13 ± 1.41	0.04
-female	162	15	75	55.01 ± 2.51	
Propriety status					
-public school	173	15	75	54.09 ± 1.86	0.05
-privat school	25	15	75	47.43 ± 2.03	

Hierarchical multiple - regression analysis

Table 3 summarizes the results of hierarchical multiple-regression analysis. In step 1 of the analysis, socio-demographic factors accounted for 16.7% ($R^2 = 0.167$, $p < 0.01$) of the total variance of work engagement among teachers. All demographic features and propretystaus of the school have significant effects to the total variance of work engagement among teachers in lower secondary schools.

The introduction of factors that are related with the work engagement in step 2 accounted for 26.0% (R^2 change =0.26, $p < 0.01$) of the variation in teachers work engagement. Together, all predictors accouted 42.7% ($R^2 = 0.427$, $p < 0.01$). Referring to the regression (Step 2) civil status of teacher and area where is locate the school have no significant effect ($p > 0.05$) on the variance of work engagement.

Table 3 Hierarchical multiple-regression results

Predictor variables	Step 1			Step 2		
	β	β Standardized	t	β	β Standardized	t
Gender (1 female, 0 male)	0.194	0.186	2.11*	0.172	0.136	1.94*
Age	0.207	0.211	2.89*	0.187	0.194	2.56*
Seniority	0.311	0.307	4.13**	0.265	0.218	3.78*
Civile status (1 single, 2 married, 3 divorced, 4 widow)	0.092	0.089	2.00*	0.084	0.082	1.48 ^{NS}
School property status (1 public, 0 privat)	0.081	0.079	2.02*	0.067	0.059	1.97*
Area (1 rural, 0 urban)	0.094	0.082	1.45 ^{NS}	0.073	0.067	1.21 ^{NS}
Vigor				0.306	0.297	8.22**
Dedication				0.324	0.329	7.35**
Absorption				0.201	0.199	4.33**
R ²	0.167*			0.427**		
F	17.12			20.11		
ΔR^2	0.176			0.260		

Gender, work experience (seniority) and age of the teacher are significant factors ($p < 0.05$). Referring to the values of the standardized coefficient β , the ranking of these items according to the effect they have on the work engagement of teacher’s results: seniority, age and gender. The effect of status on school ownership ($p < 0.05$) is relatively small.

The standardized partial regression coefficients show that Dedication is the largest contributor subscale to the work engagement of lower secondary school teachers. Its effect is estimated to be about 10.8% greater than the effect of subscale Vigor and about 65.3% higher than the effect of subscale Absorption.

Referring to the list of items that contribute to the dedication of teachers of lower secondary education, it can be argued that, the appreciation they have for the work, is an important factor for their work engagement. For them, work is a meaningful activity, which makes them feel proud in society. Such an emotional approach of teachers exposes them and makes them sensitive to the effects of factors that do not support or trample on these feelings. This finding highlights the need and demand for policy makers and leaders of educational institutions and schools, to create working conditions for teachers and a social and organizational environment, which to stimulate more these feelings and not to disappoint teachers.

Logistic regression analysis

The results of the binary logistic regression analysis are given in Table no. 4. The data in this table reconfirm the results shown above. Demographic factors included in the logistic regression model, have small effects on the variance of the dependent variable, work engagement. The value of the coefficient of determination $isr^2 = 0.22$. This means that the factors involved in linear model explain only about 22% of the total variance of the

dependent variable. The quality of this model in reflecting the links between demographic factors and the work engagement of teachers is moderate. Referring to the values of the *odds ratio* coefficients it can be stated that: Female teachers are about 1.65 times more likely than male teachers to be engaged at work. This result is similar to the results published by Bezati, (2012);Iyer, (2016);Minghui, L.et al (2018).

The relationship between age and work experience with work engagement of Albanian teachers in the lower secondary education cycle is similar to what other authors have published(Hakanen, et al. 2006; Hultell, et al. 2011; Klassen, et. al. 2012; Konermann, 2012; Can, et. al. 2017;AminiFaskhodi, and Siyyari, 2018).

With increasing age increases, on a proportional basis and the level of engagement at work. Teachers in the 31-40 years old are about 1.87 times more likely to feel engaged in work compared to teachers in the 20-30 years old. Teachers over the age of 40 years old are declared to be more engaged in work. The chances of them being engaged in work are about 1.95 times greater than teachers in the 20-30 years old.

Table 4 Results-logistic regression analysis

Faktori	Dependent variable Teacher is engaged (1), Teacher is not engaged (0)	
	β	odds ratios
Gender Reference: Male		
Female	0.500*	1.648
Age Reference: 20-30 years old		
31-40 years old	0.627*	1.872
>40 years old	0.671*	1.956
Seniority Reference: < 5 years		
5-10 years	0.846**	2.331
>10 years	0.749**	2.116
Civil status Reference: celibate		
Married	0.501*	1.650
Divorced	0.351 ^{NS}	1.421
Widow	0.159 ^{NS}	1.173
Ownership Reference: Private school		

Public school	-0.285 ^{NS}	0.752
Areas		
Reference: Rural areas		
Urban areas	0.108 ^{NS}	1.114

Seniority at work affects the level of work engagement of teachers. Teachers who have 5-10 years of experience in this work, turn out to have about 2.3 times more opportunities to be engaged in work, compared to their colleagues who have less than 5 years of work experience. Meanwhile, teachers with over 10 years of work experience have 2.1 times more opportunities to be engaged in work compared to teachers with less than 5 years of work experience. This reduction of opportunities for more work engagement in the group of teachers with over 10 years of work experience, compared to teachers who have 5-10 years of work experience, is a result similar to that published by Bezati, (2012) in case of the albanian teachers in basic education cycle.

The civil status of the teacher is a factor that does not play any significant role in the engagement of teachers. Differences in the chances of being engaged in work, between teachers with single civil status, married, divorced or widowed, are confirmed only in case of married teachers. They are about 1.65 times more likely to be engaged in work than their single colleagues ($p < 0.05$).

The binary logistic regression analyse does not support the hypothesis about the relationship between property status of the school, its location and the level of work engagement among the teachers. This result supports the above statement when interpreting the results obtained from the multi factors linear regression analysis for the relationship between work engagement and energy, dedication and absorption, according to which, in most of them, teachers in the cycle of lower secondary education consider their work as a mission. Consequently, engaging in such work is not very unlikely to be influenced by factors such as ownership of the school or its location.

Conclusion

The methodology developed by Schaufeli et al., (2002a, b), Bakker, et al (2008) for the study of work engagement can be successfully used in the case of Albanian teachers in lower secondary schools.

Work engagement among the teachers in lower secondary school in Albania depends on demographic, social, psychological and behavioral factors.

Dedication is the largest contributor subscale to the work engagement of lower secondary school teachers. Vigor ranks second and Absorption is the subscale that has the least effect Gender, work experience and age of the teacher are significant factors ($p < 0.05$) while the relationship between property status of the school, its location and the level of work engagement among the teachers is not significant ($p > 0.05$).

Recommendations

In order to increase the level of work engagement of Albanian teachers in the lower secondary education cycle, it is necessary to design policies and implement programs to create conditions and a social and organizational environment, which will stimulate psycho-social status and behavior. of teachers, which affect the growth of this engagement.

Leadership in educational institutions should plan and implement the administration and management of the activity, in accordance with the demographic characteristics of teachers - age groups, work experience and gender.

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