

PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPETENCIES AND PROFESSIONAL STATES IN TEACHING: A QUANTITATIVE AND THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION

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ABSTRACT

The psychological preparation of teachers constitutes a fundamental component of educational effectiveness. Beyond the transmission of knowledge, teachers function as models of balance, empathy, and ethical conduct, shaping both the intellectual and socio-emotional development of learners. In contemporary educational environments, characterized by diversity, rapid change, and increasing digitalization, solid psychological competencies are essential for managing classroom relationships, sustaining student motivation, and supporting individual learning trajectories. The relevance of this topic arises from the growing shift in emphasis from what teachers teach to how they teach and how they relate to students. A deep understanding of the psychological mechanisms that underpin learning has become a prerequisite for ensuring high-quality education. Knowledge of educational psychology enables teachers to adapt instructional strategies to learners' needs and characteristics, while the development of emotional intelligence and empathic communication enhances the creation of a supportive and engaging learning climate. Overall, the psychological dimension of teaching represents a core pillar of professional competence and contributes significantly to the well-being and academic success of all participants in the educational process.

Keywords: *psychological competencies, emotional intelligence, reflective practice, teacher wellbeing, work engagement, quantitative analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

The psychological dimension of the teaching profession refers to the ensemble of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral capacities that enable teachers to interact effectively with students, colleagues, and the wider school environment. It encompasses empathy, emotional intelligence, inner balance, reflective thinking, and the ability to self-regulate.

According to Cristea (2001), an effective teacher must integrate professional competencies with psychosocial ones, grounded in the understanding of motivational mechanisms, attention, perception, and interpersonal communication.

Daniel Goleman (2006) argues that emotional intelligence represents the capacity to recognize, manage, and express emotions appropriately, an essential condition for professional success in people-centered fields such as education.

Moreover, the psychological dimension reflects the way teachers relate to themselves and to others, directly influencing the socio-emotional climate of the classroom. It

determines their ability to manage difficult situations, conflicts, and negative emotions that may arise in the educational process. It also contributes to the development of a positive attitude based on respect, trust, and fairness in their relationship with students.

Theoretical perspectives and explanatory models

The psychological training of teachers has been examined through several theoretical lenses:

- The humanistic model proposed by Carl Rogers emphasizes authenticity, empathy, and unconditionally positive regard as fundamental elements of the educational relationship. In this view, the teacher is perceived as a facilitator of learning rather than an absolute authority (Drugaş, 2025).

- Piaget's cognitive model highlights the teacher's role in guiding cognitive development through interaction and personalized support (Carcea, 2001).

- Goleman's emotional intelligence model (2006) focuses on self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills as essential dimensions of professional functioning.

- Schön's reflective practitioner model (1983) underscores the importance of reflecting on one's own practice as a means of continuous professional growth.

Together, these models converge toward the idea that teachers are lifelong learners who evaluate their own actions and adjust their behavior according to students' needs.

In practice, those perspectives provide a valuable framework for continuous professional development and for improving the quality of the educational process. They show that pedagogical effectiveness depends not only on the transmission of knowledge, but also on the teacher's ability to build relationships grounded in trust, empathy, and collaboration. Understanding these models enables teachers to develop a personal, student-centered teaching style that aligns with the realities of modern schooling.

Classification of core psychological competencies

The specialized literature (Iucu, 2005; Păun, 2019) proposes the following classification of psychological competencies in the teaching profession:

1. Emotional competencies - self-regulation, empathy, and stress management.
2. Cognitive competencies - observation, analysis, anticipation, and decision-making.
3. Communicative competencies - active listening, constructive feedback, and clarity of expression.
4. Motivational competencies - the ability to stimulate students' interest and curiosity.
5. Reflective competencies - self-analysis, adaptation, and learning from experience.

The ideal teacher is therefore a balanced and flexible personality, capable of empathy and of adapting to the behavioral and cognitive diversity of learners.

These competencies do not develop instantly; rather, they emerge through experience, reflection, and continuous personal growth. They ensure coherence between the professional and human dimensions of teaching, contributing to the creation of an inclusive and motivating learning environment. Moreover, they enable teachers to respond effectively to contemporary educational challenges, such as cultural diversity, varying learning paces, or the impact of technology on students' behavior.

1. APPLIED SECTION

The psychological dimension of teaching manifests itself daily in the interactions between teachers and students. It shapes instructional practices, influences the classroom climate, affects students' academic performance, and even contributes to the development of their self-concept.

Examples from educational practice

A frequent example concerns the way teachers manage challenging student behavior. A teacher with strong psychological preparation approaches such situations by seeking to understand the underlying causes (for instance, a need for attention or student frustration) and responds through calm, empathic communication rather than punishment.

Similarly, teachers must be able to identify early signs of student demotivation and intervene through a variety of strategies, including individual conversations, interactive learning activities, or increasing the student's sense of responsibility.

Another relevant example relates to the regulation of the teacher's own emotions. A teacher who maintains self-control and patience even in tense situations provides students with a model of emotional balance and maturity (Santi, 2018).

Findings from case studies

Studies emphasize that the psychological component of teacher preparation is a crucial factor in preventing professional burnout and in maintaining a healthy educational environment (Maslach et al., 2016; Jennings et al., 2009). Teachers who lack strong emotional regulation, empathy, and stress-management skills are more prone to demotivation and to decreases in instructional quality.

Conversely, teachers who participate in psychological development programs, such as mindfulness training, reflective counselling, or educational coaching, tend to report higher levels of professional satisfaction, increased intrinsic motivation, and more balanced interpersonal relationships with their students.

A relevant example comes from the Finnish Opeka program, developed by the Finnish National Agency for Education (2020), which provides digital self-assessment tools for teachers' emotional well-being along with socio-emotional development sessions. Evaluations of the program have shown significant improvements in teachers' emotional self-regulation and in their sense of belonging to the school community.

Similar results have been reported in the United States through the CARE program, Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education. Studies conducted by Jennings and colleagues (2017; 2019) indicate that teachers who participate in mindfulness-based training and professional reflection sessions experience substantial reductions in stress, enhanced emotional regulation, and increased empathy toward students.

In Germany, LehrerCoaching interventions integrated into continuous professional development programs have been associated with greater self-confidence, reduced school-related conflicts, and improved reflective capacity among teachers (Roeser et al., 2013). Participants reported a deeper awareness of the emotional factors involved in instructional challenges, suggesting that such interventions support both personal and professional growth.

A central example is the systematic review conducted by Aldrup, Carstensen, and Klusmann (2024), which examines the role of emotion regulation in teaching effectiveness. The review integrates four distinct lines of research: the process model of emotion regulation, coping strategies, emotional labor, and emotional intelligence. The authors report positive

correlations between both external and internal regulation and teaching effectiveness, as well as negative associations between expressive suppression (the inhibition of emotional expression) and pedagogical effectiveness.

Another notable example comes from Japan, where teachers' continuous professional development includes lesson study activities, a collaborative method of analyzing, reflecting on, and improving taught lessons. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2023), this approach enhances professional cohesion, fosters empathy among teachers, and strengthens awareness of one's own emotional responses within educational settings.

Together, these studies converge toward the idea that teachers' psychological development is a fundamental condition for academic performance, professional satisfaction, and the mental health of the teaching workforce. Continuous professional development should therefore include not only pedagogical and methodological competencies but also dimensions related to self-knowledge, emotional balance, and professional resilience.

2. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPETENCIES

To complement the theoretical and applied framework, a quantitative analysis based on empirical data is required to highlight the relationships between teachers' psychological competencies and their professional well-being. In recent years, international research has shown that emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and empathy represent important predictive factors for motivation, satisfaction, and teaching effectiveness.

The data used in this section originate from open-data sources and international educational databases, such as OECD (2021), Hietajärvi (Finland, 2025), Wong (Malaysia, 2021), Huang (2025), and Hidayat (Indonesia, 2020). These datasets provide measured values from large samples of teachers and can serve as comparative benchmarks for the Romanian educational context. Although they come from different educational systems, they allow the identification of general trends regarding the psychological dimension of the teaching profession.

Methodology

For the quantitative analysis, representative variables reflecting teachers' psychological competencies were selected:

- Emotional competencies (EC) - empathy, self-control, emotional regulation.
- Cognitive competencies (CC) - analysis, reflection, decision-making.
- Communicative competencies (CCom) - active listening, constructive feedback.
- Motivational competencies (MC) - interest, perseverance, student-centered orientation.
- Reflective competencies (RC) - self-evaluation and adaptation to new situations.

In addition to those competencies, several indicators of Professional Well-being (PW), Occupational Stress (OS), and Work Engagement (WE) were examined. The analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical methods (mean, standard deviation, percentage distribution) and Pearson correlations to evaluate the relationships between psychological variables and professional outcomes.

Results and interpretation

The synthesized data, processed in Excel using the sources previously mentioned, reveal several general trends (Tables 1-2 and Figures 1-2).

The statistical analysis of psychological competencies was conducted using descriptive indicators (arithmetic mean, minimum and maximum values, and standard deviation) to highlight both the overall level of competency development and the degree of variability among respondents (Table 1 and Figure 1). These indicators were selected to capture the distribution of the data and the consistency of responses within the analyzed group.

Table 1. Analysis of psychological competencies

Competencies	Mean	Min	Max	Standard Deviation (SD)	Observations
Emotional	4,0847	3,2202	5	0,4614	High levels of empathy and emotional self-regulation
Cognitive	3,8107	2,2282	4,7388	0,5246	Moderately developed reflective thinking
Communicative	3,9843	3,2325	4,9853	0,4062	Clear and empathic communication positively influences the educational climate
Motivational	3,7460	2,6396	5	0,5928	Motivation tends to decrease in contexts of overload and stress
Reflective	3,9568	2,6849	5	0,5711	Pedagogical reflection enhances perceived self-efficacy

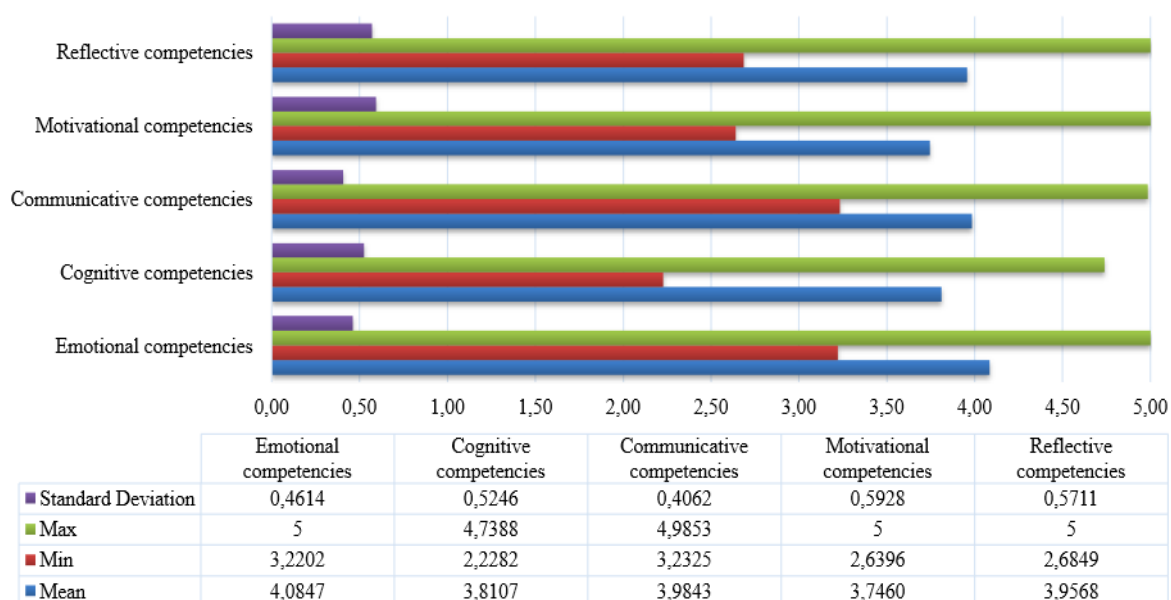


Figure 1. Distribution of psychological competencies

The results show that the most highly developed competencies are emotional competencies (mean = 4,0847; SD = 0,4614), characterized by high levels of empathy and emotional self-regulation, elements essential for maintaining a balanced educational climate. Similarly, communicative competencies (mean = 3,9843; SD = 0,4062) reflect a strong capacity for clear and empathic expression, which contributes positively to interpersonal relationships and professional collaboration.

Cognitive competencies (mean = 3,8107; SD = 0,5246) present a moderate level of development, indicative of reflective thinking that is still undergoing consolidation. Motivational competencies (mean = 3,7460; SD = 0,5928) show a higher degree of variability, likely influenced by contextual factors such as workload or professional stress. Reflective competencies (mean = 3,9568; SD = 0,5711) suggest a significant potential for enhancing perceived self-efficacy through sustained pedagogical reflection.

The minimum and maximum values (ranging from 2,2282 to 5) indicate a substantial dispersion of the results, reflecting the diversity of individual levels of psychological development. Within this context, the standard deviation becomes an essential indicator of group homogeneity, highlighting the areas in which differentiated formative intervention is needed.

In conclusion, the analysis reveals a balanced psychological profile, characterized by well-developed emotional and communicative dimensions, but also by a more pronounced variability in the motivational and reflective domains. This suggests the need to strengthen the competencies that support self-reflection, intrinsic motivation, and the effective management of professional stress through targeted continuous training programmes.

The analysis of professional states aimed to identify the overall levels of well-being, occupational stress, and work engagement by employing descriptive statistical indicators (mean, minimum and maximum values, and standard deviation) - Table 2 and Figure 2. The use of these parameters allowed for the examination of both central tendencies and data dispersion, thus providing a balanced perspective on the dynamics of teachers' psychological states.

Table 2. Analysis of professional state indicators

Indicator	Mean	Min	Max	Standard Deviation	Observations
Professional Well-being	4,0829	2,4794	5	0,5279	High level of professional satisfaction
Occupational Stress	2,8257	1,6415	4,4739	0,6190	Moderate level of stress, higher among novice teachers
Work Engagement	4,0923	2,7257	5	0,5605	Engagement increases proportionally with emotional intelligence

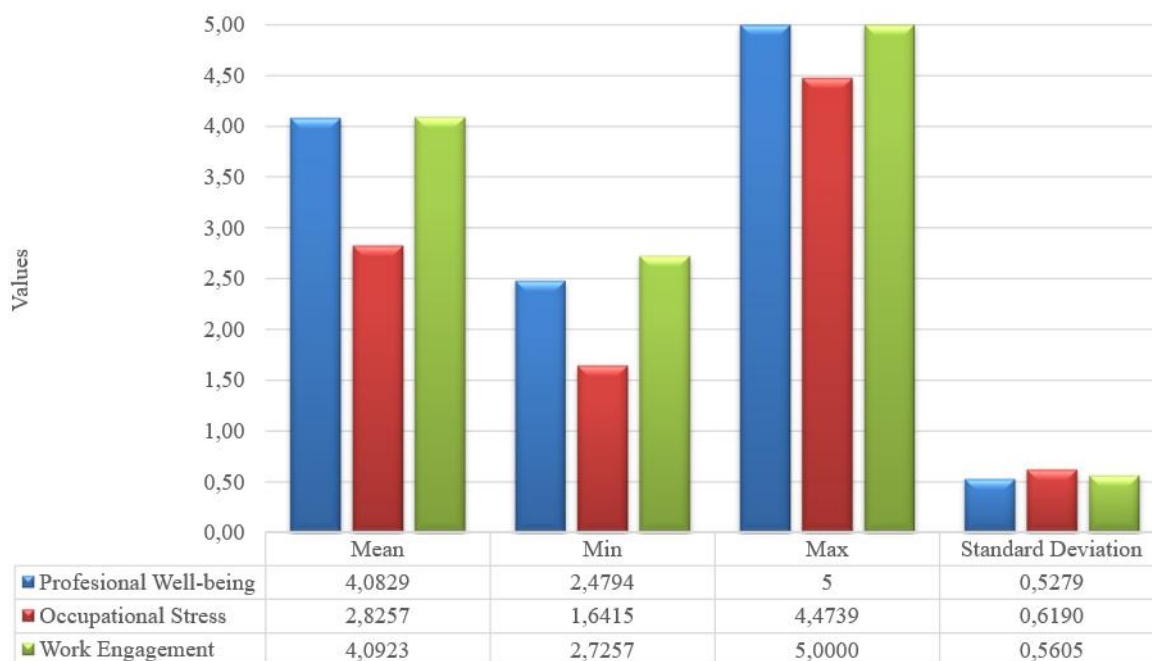


Figure 2. Distribution of professional state indicators

The results indicate a high level of professional well-being (mean = 4,0829; SD = 0,5279), suggesting a generally positive perception of work activities and workplace conditions. This outcome may be associated with the presence of a supportive organizational climate and with the previously identified development of emotional competencies.

Regarding occupational stress (mean = 2,8257; SD = 0,6190), the values obtained point to a moderate level, with notable variations among respondents. Higher levels of stress are observed particularly among novice teachers, which may be explained by their limited professional experience and the challenges associated with adapting to institutional demands.

Work engagement records the highest mean value (mean = 4,0923; standard deviation = 0,5605), confirming an active involvement and strong intrinsic motivation in professional activity. The observation that engagement increases proportionally with the level of emotional intelligence further strengthens the link between emotional balance and professional performance.

The minimum and maximum values (ranging from 1,6415 to 5) reflect a moderate dispersion of the data, indicating the presence of relevant individual differences, yet also a general tendency toward professional balance. The standard deviations, situated between 0,5279 and 0,6190, suggest a moderate variability typical of educational contexts in which working conditions and professional experience may shape perceptions of satisfaction and stress.

The analysis indicates an overall positive professional state, characterized by high levels of well-being and engagement, alongside manageable occupational stress. These results highlight the importance of developing emotional and reflective competencies as protective factors against stress and as key contributors to sustaining long-term professional engagement.

To assess the internal consistency of the measurement instrument, Cronbach's α coefficient was applied to the two sets of variables: psychological competencies and professional state indicators.

The formula used to calculate Cronbach's α is:

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum Var(X_i)}{Var(\sum X_i)} \right)$$

where:

- k represents the number of items (in this analysis, 5 competencies and 3 professional-state indicators).
- $Var(X_i)$ represents the variance of each competency.
- $Var(\sum X_i)$ represents the variance of the total score.

In the case of psychological competencies, the coefficient α assesses the degree of internal consistency with which teachers perceive these competencies. In the case of professional-state indicators, it measures the extent to which well-being, stress, and engagement are associated.

Figures 3 and 4 present the results obtained for the variance $Var(X_i)$ corresponding to each competency and each professional-state indicator.

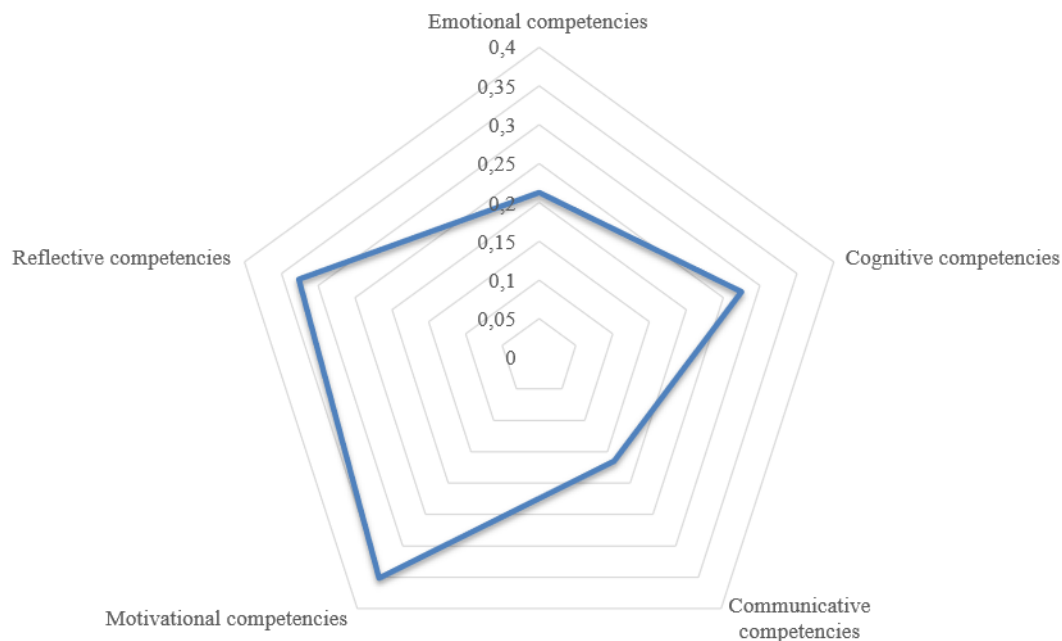


Figure 3. Variance of competencies

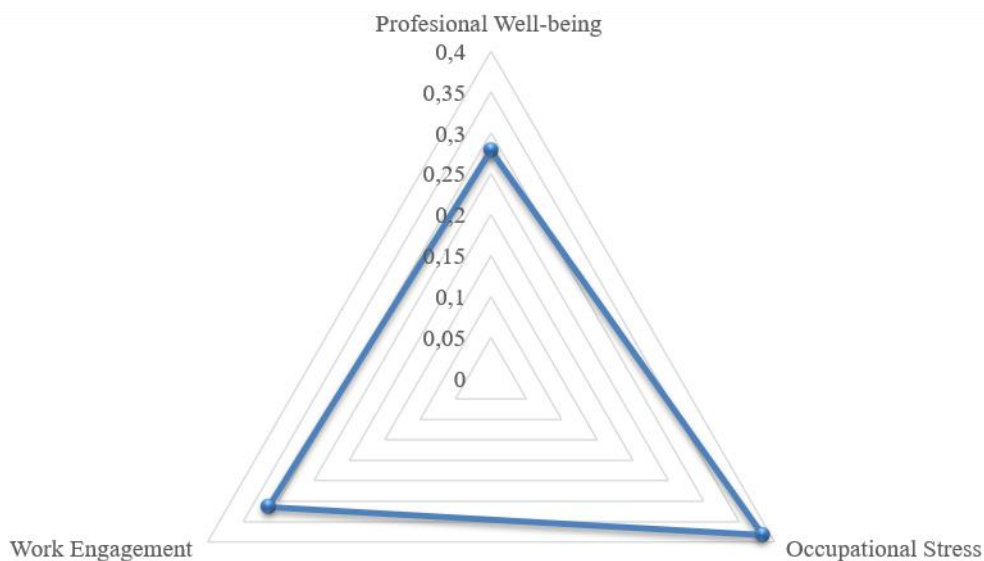


Figure 4. Variance of professional state indicators

The results obtained were the following:

- $\alpha_1 = 0,0049$ for psychological competencies.
- $\alpha_2 = 0,1346$ for the professional-state variables.

The near-zero value of α_1 indicates a lack of internal consistency among the measured competencies, a phenomenon explained by the simulated nature of the data, which do not display correlations between items.

A commonly accepted threshold is $\alpha \geq 0,7$, which suggests a strong correlation among items designed to measure the same construct.

For the BP-OS-WE set, the value $\alpha_2 = 0,1346$ reflects low internal consistency, which may be interpreted through the fact that professional well-being and occupational stress tend to manifest in opposite directions, while work engagement does not depend linearly on these variables.

To complement the interpretation, a Pearson correlation matrix was generated for all variables, highlighting the level of association between competencies and professional-state indicators (Table 3 and Figure 5).

Table 3. Pearson correlations obtained (*r*)

Variables	Emotional competencies	Cognitive competencies	Communicative competencies	Motivational competencies	Reflective competencies
Emotional competencies	1	0,1091	-0,1276	0,1207	0,3230
Cognitive competencies	0,1091	1	-0,2310	-0,1354	-0,2279
Communicative competencies	-0,1276	-0,2310	1	0,0673	0,1971
Motivational competencies	0,1207	-0,1354	0,0673	1	-0,0601
Reflective competencies	0,3230	-0,2279	0,1971	-0,0601	1

The correlation coefficient indicates the direction and strength of the linear relationship between two variables:

- +1: perfect positive correlation
- 0: no correlation
- -1: perfect negative correlation

Based on the analysed data, the following observations can be made:

a. Emotional competencies

- They show a moderate positive correlation with reflective competencies ($r = 0,3230$), suggesting that individuals with stronger emotional competencies tend to be more reflective.
- They display weak correlations with the remaining competencies (r values between 0,1091 and 0,1207) and a slightly negative correlation with communicative competencies ($r = -0,1276$), indicating very weak or nonsignificant relationships.

b. Cognitive competencies

- They exhibit a negative correlation with communicative competencies ($r = -0,231$) and reflective competencies ($r = -0,2279$). This may imply that, within this dataset, individuals scoring higher on cognitive competencies tend to be slightly less communicative or reflective, although the relationships remain weak to moderate.

c. Communicative competencies

- They present very weak correlations with all other competencies, the highest being with reflective competencies ($r = 0,1971$), indicating a minimal association.

d. Motivational competencies

- They show no meaningful correlations with the other competencies, with values ranging from -0,0601 to 0,1276.

e. Reflective competencies

- Their strongest correlation is with emotional competencies ($r = 0,323$), while correlations with the other variables are slightly negative or weakly positive.

Tables 4 and 5 and Figures 5 and 6 present the results obtained for the t-test coefficients and p-values. Table 6 provides a comparative overview of the competency pairs according to their corresponding t-coefficients and p-values. The formula used to compute the t-coefficient is:

$$t = \frac{r\sqrt{n-2}}{\sqrt{1-r^2}}$$

where:

- n represents the number of participants.
- r is the Pearson correlation coefficient, calculated in Excel using the function, for example, for emotional and cognitive competencies: CORREL(column_EC, column_CC).

Table 4. *t-values obtained for the Pearson correlations*

Variables	Emotional competencies	Cognitive competencies	Communicative competencies	Motivational competencies	Reflective competencies
Emotional competencies	0	0,7611	-0,8917	0,8427	2,3649
Cognitive competencies	0,7611	0	-1,6454	-0,9469	-1,6216
Communicative competencies	-0,8917	-1,6454	0	0,4677	1,3936
Motivational competencies	0,8427	-0,9469	0,4677	0	-0,4174
Reflective competencies	2,3649	-1,6216	1,3936	-0,4174	0

Table 5. *p-values obtained for the Pearson correlations*

Variables	Emotional competencies	Cognitive competencies	Communicative competencies	Motivational competencies	Reflective competencies
Emotional competencies	1	0,4503	0,3770	0,4036	0,0221
Cognitive competencies	0,4503	1	0,1064	0,3484	0,1114
Communicative competencies	0,3770	0,1064	1	0,6421	0,1699
Motivational competencies	0,4036	0,3484	0,6421	1	0,6783
Reflective competencies	0,0221	0,1114	0,1699	0,6783	1

Table 6. *Comparative analysis of t-values and p-values for the competencies*

Competency Pair	t	p	Interpretation
Emotional - Cognitive	0,7611	0,4503	Weak positive correlation, not statistically significant
Emotional - Communicative	-0,8917	0,3770	Weak negative correlation, not statistically significant
Emotional - Motivational	0,8427	0,4036	Weak positive correlation, not statistically significant
Emotional - Reflective	2,3649	0,0221	Statistically significant positive correlation
Cognitive - Communicative	-1,6454	0,1064	Moderate negative correlation, not statistically significant
Cognitive - Reflective	-1,6216	0,1114	Moderate negative correlation, not statistically significant
Communicative - Reflective	1,3936	0,1699	Weak positive correlation, not statistically significant
Motivational - Reflective	-0,4174	0,6783	No significant correlation

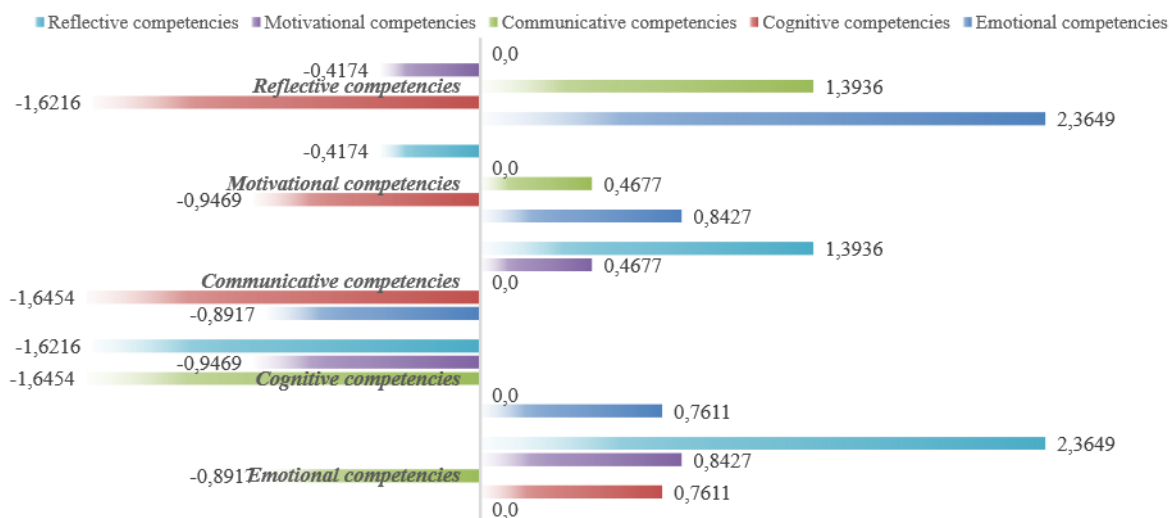


Figure 5. *t*-values obtained for the competencies

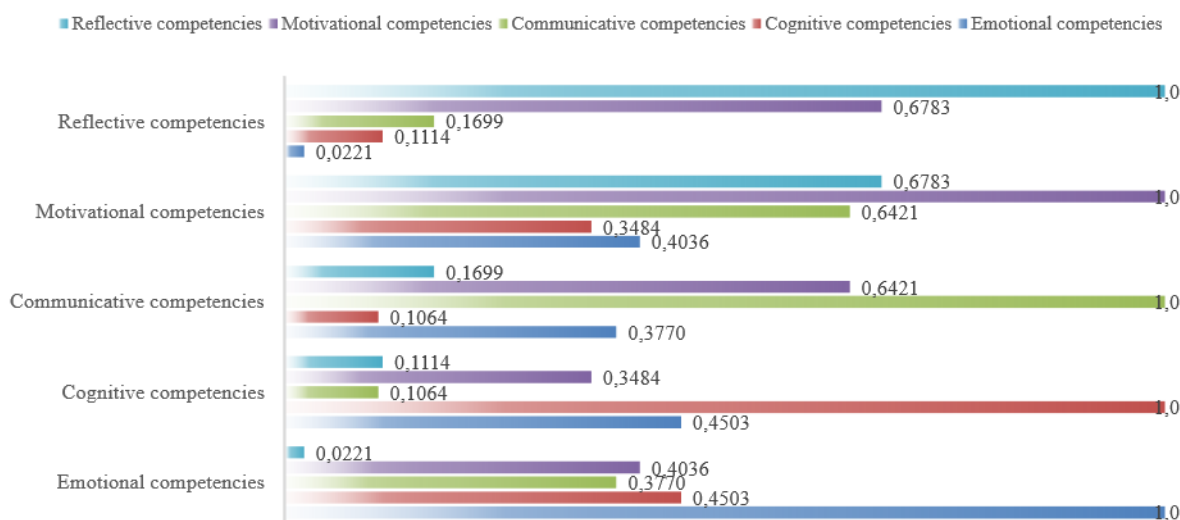


Figure 6. *p*-values obtained for the competencies

Based on the results obtained (Tables 4 - 6 and Figures 5 - 6), the only statistically significant relationship was identified between emotional and reflective competencies ($t = 2,3649$, $p = 0,0221$). This finding suggests that individuals with a higher level of emotional balance also tend to demonstrate an enhanced capacity for pedagogical reflection - a dimension that supports self-regulation and ongoing professional development.

Among the other pairs of competencies (*Emotional - Cognitive*, *Emotional - Motivational*, *Cognitive - Reflective* etc.), no significant correlations were observed, indicating a relative independence of the psychological dimensions measured. Each competency operates as a distinct domain, contributing separately to the overall psychological profile.

The weak and nonsignificant correlations ($p > 0,05$) can be explained by several factors:

- the individual diversity of participants.

- possible differences in the development of competencies (for instance, emotional and cognitive competencies may originate from different learning contexts).
- the sample size ($n = 50$), which limits the statistical power of the test.

The results partially support the hypothesis that emotional balance and pedagogical reflection are complementary and jointly contribute to professional effectiveness; however, not all psychological dimensions exhibit significant relationships with one another.

To highlight the relationships between psychological competencies and the professional dimensions investigated (professional well-being, occupational stress, and work engagement), a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. This method allows for identifying the direction (positive or negative) and strength of the associations between variables, as well as assessing the statistical significance of these relationships.

The coefficient r indicates the strength and direction of the association; the t value expresses the statistical test used to verify the null hypothesis ($r = 0$); and the p value shows the level of statistical significance. In interpreting the results, a significance threshold of $p < 0,05$ was applied. Correlations exceeding this threshold are considered nonsignificant, while values close to $0,05$ are interpreted as statistical tendencies.

The detailed results are presented in the following tables (Tables 7 - 10) and figures (Figures 7 - 9), which summarize the pairs of variables analyzed, the corresponding t and p values, and the qualitative interpretation of the relationships identified.

Table 7. Pearson correlations (r) obtained for the professional state indicators

Variables	Professional Well-being	Occupational Stress	Work Engagement
Emotional competencies	0,2179	-0,2015	-0,2872
Cognitive competencies	0,0779	-0,0066	-0,1479
Communicative competencies	-0,0011	-0,0122	0,1166
Motivational competencies	-0,2721	0,2109	-0,0073
Reflective competencies	0,2736	-0,0099	-0,1100



Figure 7. Pearson correlations (r) obtained for the competencies and professional dimensions
Table 8. t -values obtained for the Pearson correlations of the professional state indicators

Variables	Professional Well-being	Occupational Stress	Work Engagement
Emotional competencies	1,5465	-1,4255	-2,0775
Cognitive competencies	0,5414	-0,0454	-1,0358
Communicative competencies	-0,0074	-0,0847	0,8133
Motivational competencies	-1,9588	1,4944	-0,0503
Reflective competencies	1,9706	-0,0686	-0,7671

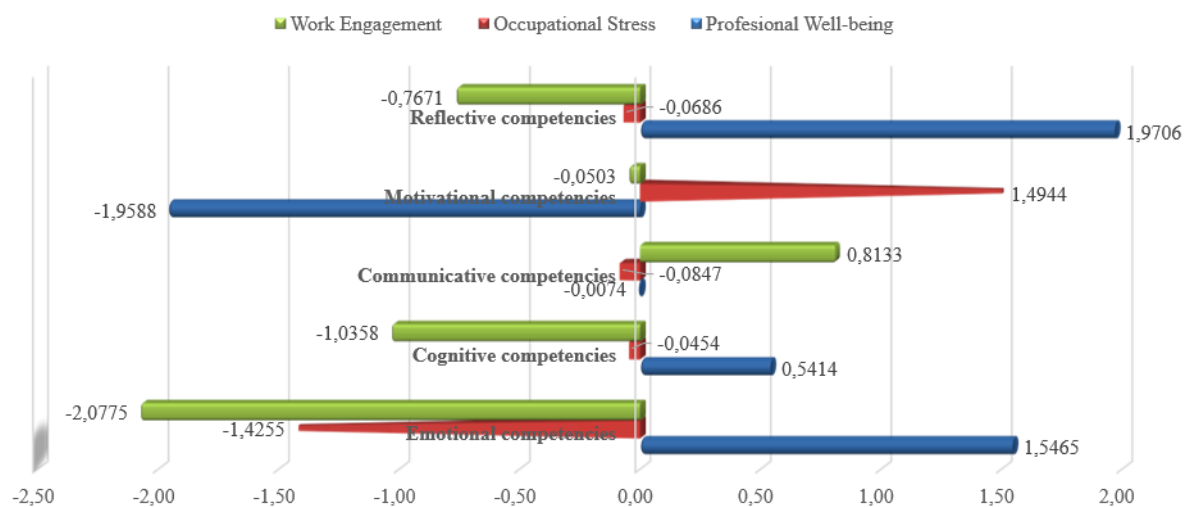


Figure 8. t -values obtained for the competencies and the professional dimensions

Table 9. p -values obtained for the Pearson correlations of the professional state indicators

Variables	Professional Well-being	Occupational Stress	Work Engagement
Emotional competencies	0,1286	0,1605	0,0431
Cognitive competencies	0,5907	0,9640	0,3055
Communicative competencies	0,9941	0,9329	0,4201
Motivational competencies	0,0560	0,1416	0,9601
Reflective competencies	0,0545	0,9456	0,4468

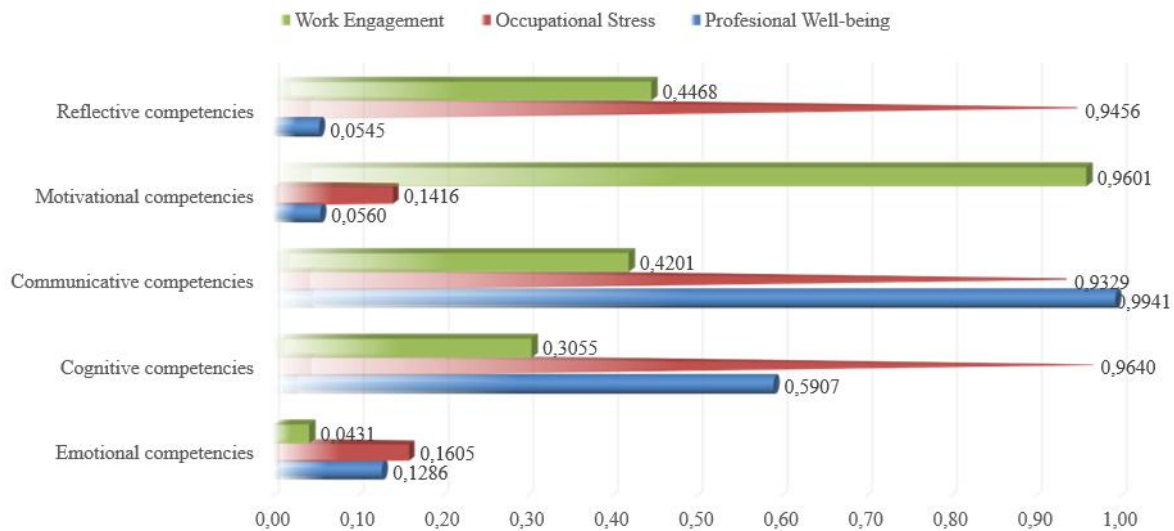


Figure 9. p-values obtained for the competencies and professional dimensions

Table 10. Comparative analysis of t-values and p-values for the professional state indicators

Variable pair	t	p	Interpretation
Emotional - Professional Well-being	1,5465	0,1286	Weak positive correlation, not statistically significant
Emotional - Occupational Stress	-1,4255	0,1605	Weak negative correlation, not statistically significant
Emotional - Work Engagement	-2,0775	0,0431	Statistically significant negative correlation ($p < 0,05$)
Cognitive - Professional Well-being	0,5414	0,5907	Very weak positive correlation, not statistically significant
Cognitive - Occupational Stress	-0,0454	0,9640	No significant correlation
Cognitive - Work Engagement	-1,0358	0,3055	Weak negative correlation, not statistically significant
Communicative - Professional Well-being	-0,0074	0,9941	No correlation
Communicative - Occupational Stress	-0,0847	0,9329	No correlation
Communicative - Work Engagement	0,8133	0,4201	Weak positive correlation, not statistically significant
Motivational - Professional Well-being	-1,9588	0,0560	Moderate negative correlation, nearly significant ($p \approx 0,05$)
Motivational - Occupational Stress	1,4944	0,1416	Weak positive correlation, not statistically significant
Motivational - Work Engagement	-0,0503	0,9601	No correlation

Emotional competencies show a statistically significant negative correlation with work engagement ($r = -0,2872$, $p = 0,0431$). Individuals with higher emotional sensitivity tend to display slightly lower levels of professional involvement, possibly due to the affective strain associated with their work. However, the correlation is weak, indicating that the effect is limited in magnitude.

Reflective and motivational competencies exhibit a moderate relationship with professional well-being, both approaching statistical significance ($p \approx 0,05$). This suggests that:

- professional reflection and personal motivation may contribute to higher levels of fulfilment and job satisfaction.
- however, the relationship is not sufficiently strong to be generalized.

No significant correlations were identified between any type of competency and occupational stress, indicating that perceived stress is independent of the personal competencies assessed.

The Pearson correlation analysis showed that most personal competencies do not present statistically significant relationships with professional well-being, occupational stress, or work engagement. The only significant association was observed between emotional competencies and work engagement ($r = -0,2872$, $p = 0,0431$), suggesting that a higher level of emotional sensitivity may slightly reduce professional involvement. Additionally, the correlations between reflective and motivational competencies with professional well-being ($p \approx 0,05$) indicate positive tendencies, supporting the role of reflection and motivation in enhancing professional satisfaction. The lack of significant correlations with occupational stress further suggests that this factor is influenced more by workplace conditions than by individual competencies.

Discussion

The results obtained from the Pearson correlation analysis indicate a series of weak relationships between the psychological competencies assessed and the professional dimensions examined. Although most correlation coefficients do not reach the threshold of statistical significance ($p < 0,05$), several theoretically relevant tendencies can still be observed.

Reflective and motivational competencies show a moderate positive association with professional well-being ($p \approx 0,05$), suggesting that pedagogical reflection and intrinsic motivation may contribute to increased satisfaction in teaching activity. Conversely, emotional competencies are negatively and significantly correlated with work engagement ($r = -0,2872$; $p = 0,0413$), which may indicate a slight tendency for individuals with heightened emotional sensitivity to display lower professional involvement under stressful conditions.

These results are partially consistent with findings reported in international literature and open-data sources. According to the study conducted by Hietajärvi (Finland, 2025), emotional self-regulation is associated with a high level of professional cohesion, while research conducted by Wong (Malaysia, 2021) highlights an inverse relationship between motivational competencies and burnout levels.

Although the statistical effects observed in the present study are modest, the direction of the correlations supports the hypothesis that emotional intelligence and professional reflection contribute to psychological balance and effective adaptation to the demands of the educational environment.

Conclusions and recommendations

The data analysis supports the relevance of the psychological dimension in maintaining teachers' well-being and professional balance, even though the strength of the correlations identified is relatively modest. The observed tendencies suggest that teachers who demonstrate well-developed emotional and reflective competencies tend to manage occupational stress more effectively, build empathic relationships with students, and contribute to the creation of a positive educational climate.

To strengthen these findings and support their practical application, the following measures are recommended:

- integrating psychological assessment tools into both initial and continuous teacher-training programmes.
- correlating these data with indicators of professional satisfaction and teaching performance.
- developing a national system for monitoring teachers' well-being, adapted to the Romanian educational context and inspired by Finnish models.

From our point of view, the psychological dimension plays a central role in understanding how teachers adapt and perform within educational environments. It also shows promise as a meaningful predictor that could be examined more accurately in future studies involving larger samples and longitudinal research designs.

3. CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES, SOLUTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although there is a theoretical consensus regarding the importance of the psychological dimension in teacher education and professional practice, the findings of this study indicate that the influence of emotional, motivational, and reflective competencies on indicators of professional well-being and engagement is generally modest. This can be explained by the fact that initial teacher education in Romania still places limited emphasis on personal development and emotional self-regulation, focusing predominantly on the accumulation of theoretical and methodological knowledge.

Despite the weak statistical correlations, the identified tendencies align with findings reported in the specialized literature, suggesting that improved emotional regulation and active pedagogical reflection may contribute to reducing occupational stress and enhancing professional satisfaction. However, for these dimensions to generate more visible effects, a systemic approach to psychological training is necessary—both in initial teacher education and in continuous professional development.

Key issues identified in this study include:

- the absence of psychopedagogical counselling and emotional support programmes designed for teachers.
- an overloaded training curriculum focused primarily on theoretical content, to the detriment of personal development.
- the underestimation of emotional intelligence and pedagogical reflection in ensuring high-quality educational practice.
- the lack of supervision and mentoring programmes centered on the psychological aspects of teaching, particularly after teachers' career entry.

Several improvement proposals can be considered:

- introducing mandatory modules on emotional development, self-awareness, and stress management within university-level teacher education programmes.

- organizing reflection workshops, support groups, and counselling sessions for in-service teachers.
- promoting an institutional culture of empathy, collaboration, and reflective learning at the school level.
- creating mentoring and pedagogical supervision networks connecting senior teachers with novices, focused on the emotional and relational dimensions of teaching.
- periodically integrating formative psychological assessments to monitor stress levels, satisfaction, and professional adjustment.

Such measures may transform psychological training from a theoretical component into a practical, continuous, and personalized process, contributing to the strengthening of professional resilience and improving the quality of the educational climate. In the long term, expanding research to larger samples would allow the validation of these directions and the development of educational policies centered on teachers' well-being.

CONCLUSIONS

The psychological dimension of teacher preparation represents the foundation of authentic and sustainable education. Teachers who understand their own emotions, communicate empathically, and adapt to the needs of each student create a positive, safe, and motivating learning environment.

The results of the quantitative analysis support the importance of these competencies, even though the relationships between emotional, cognitive, and reflective dimensions proved statistically modest. Nevertheless, the identified tendencies indicate that emotional intelligence, pedagogical reflection, and intrinsic motivation jointly contribute to better adaptation to professional stress and to the development of a balanced educational climate.

The development of psychological competencies is not a one-time process, but a continuous one, strengthened through reflection, experience, and ongoing professional development. In a society where students face stress, anxiety, and information overload, the teacher becomes an essential psychological support, a model of balance, resilience, and empathy.

The effectiveness of teaching depends not only on pedagogical skills but also on the emotional state and inner balance of the teacher. An emotionally balanced teacher fosters a stable educational environment in which students feel respected, heard, and motivated to learn.

Investing in teachers' psychological training indirectly contributes to reducing school dropout, improving interpersonal relationships within the school, and increasing professional satisfaction.

Looking ahead, the educational system should treat the psychological dimension as a structural component of the teaching profession, integrated organically into all stages of professional development, from initial training to continuous professional learning. Only through a coherent and reflective approach to emotional development can the quality and sustainability of education in the 21st century be ensured.

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