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Use of Working Time in the Teaching Profession in Spain: The Cases of Galicia and the Basque Country

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Abstract: Within the framework of studies on teacher professionalization, this study aims to analyze and compare the degree of professional dedication among non-university teachers in two autonomous communities of Spain: Galicia and the Basque Country. Data were collected through a questionnaire—previously validated by external experts—comprising 18 items grouped into four domains (1–5 school-teacher domain, 6–10 technical-political domain, 11–14 teacher training domain, and 15–18 scientific-academic domain). A total of 1,318 non-university teachers responded to the survey (742 from Galicia and 576 from the Basque Country). Inferential analyses were conducted using the nonparametric Mann–Whitney U test for independent samples, and various Chi-Square Automatic Interaction Detector (CHAID) classification trees were generated to identify patterns in teachers' work dedication. The results reveal highly similar work dedication patterns in both regions, with only minor differences observed in the scientific-academic domain. Overall, the findings suggest a fragmented structure of the educational field with a hierarchical distribution of tasks, although a widespread, emerging involvement of teachers in nontraditional activities—beyond the school and classroom settings—is also evident. Among other conclusions, the study emphasizes the benefits of teachers expanding their roles outside of school.

Keywords: teacher professionalizsation, educational field, teacher working time, participation

1. Introduction

The teaching profession is at the center of the international pedagogical debate. Academic literature [1–7] and reports from supranational organizations document its relevance.[1] However, the educational field still distributes tasks and responsibilities unequally. Teachers are often excluded from areas and tasks related to their work, as well as from making decisions on educational policy or other important matters [8–10]. This exclusion creates a lasting hierarchy dividing actors, academics, and teachers, and reinforces disparities [11, 12].

Emerging research exposes how systemic hierarchies confine teachers to narrowly defined professional roles. Monarca [5] and Reimer [12] show that educators primarily work within classroom and school boundaries, while current structures effectively marginalize research, curriculum development, and professional learning as "restricted zones" [8, 13]. Monarca et al.'s [13] comprehensive study of 7,145 teachers across all educational levels and Spanish autonomous communities further confirms this persistent stratification of the educational landscape.

OECD data highlights significant disparities in teaching hours across educational levels. Primary teachers in OECD countries average 773 annual instruction hours, while lower secondary teachers average 706. In Spain's public non-university schools, teachers work 37.5 hours weekly, with primary teachers spending 25 hours on instruction, secondary teachers 20 hours, and all teachers required to complete 30 on-site hours.[2] In Spain, the total weekly working time for teachers in non-university public schools is 37.5 hours, of which 25 hours are allocated to teaching in primary education, 20 hours in secondary education, and 30 hours are compulsory on-site hours at the school [14].

According to the international TALIS report (Teaching and Learning International Survey), in its 2013 edition focused on secondary education, Spanish teachers dedicate 77% of their working time to teaching, 7% to administrative work, and 15% to maintaining classroom order. In terms of weekly hours, Spanish teachers spend 18.6 hours on instruction, slightly below the OECD average of 19.5 hours. Beyond teaching, they allocate 7 hours per week

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[1]https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/es/eurypedia/spain/condiciones-de-trabajo-del-profesorado-de-educacion-infantil-primaria-y-secundaria

[2]https://estadisticas.educacion.gob.es/EducaJaxiPx/Datos.htm?path=/no-universitaria/profesorado/estadistica/2022-2023-rd/resumen/l0/&file=resumen01.px#!tabs-grafico

to lesson preparation, matching the OECD average.[3] In addition, the expanded 2019 TALIS report, incorporating primary education data, indicates that Spanish primary teachers work 35 hours weekly (a mid-range figure internationally), with 23 hours devoted to direct teaching. Meanwhile, secondary teachers work 37 hours per week, of which 20 hours involve classroom instruction—aligning with the OECD-31 average and slightly exceeding the EU-23 average [15].

Regarding classroom time distribution, primary education teachers in Spain allocate 74% of classroom time to teaching and learning, 8% to administrative tasks, and 18% to maintaining order. In secondary education, approximately 75% of classroom time is dedicated to teaching and learning—compared to the OECD-31 average of 78%—8% to administrative tasks, and 16% to classroom management [15].

This persistent hierarchical structure of teaching tasks fundamentally undermines teachers' autonomy in three critical areas: time management, professional decision-making, and access to professional development opportunities that enhance teaching effectiveness [16–18]. Extensive research demonstrates that these structural constraints directly correlate with concerning trends: elevated job dissatisfaction rates, increased sick leave usage, and higher medium-to-long-term attrition from the profession [17–21].

The system's failure to incorporate frontline education professionals—those with the most direct classroom experience—in problem-solving and improvement initiatives represents a critical institutional flaw. This exclusionary practice jeopardizes educational quality long-term, demanding immediate systemic intervention and reform.

The use and distribution of teachers' working time also impact both job satisfaction and student learning outcomes. The literature shows that excessive workload and lack of time to adequately plan and develop teaching tasks are significant factors that negatively affect teachers' job satisfaction [8, 22–24]. In relation to the impact on student learning, the study conducted by Martínez and Murillo [25] highlights that the more time teachers devote to tasks, such as lesson planning and assessment preparation, the higher their students' performance in reading and mathematics. These findings are consistent with earlier research by Grant et al. [26] and Zhang and Konstantopoulos [27].

To transition toward a more equitable, horizontal educational structure, systemic reforms must critically reevaluate task distribution and teacher agency [28]. A profound transformation of existing structures—one that fully acknowledges teachers as agents of change—is essential in order to harness their knowledge and experience for the improvement of education [29–32]. In this regard, understanding how teachers use their working time—what tasks or functions they are engaged in—provides valuable information to guide improvement measures, professional development, and innovation [33]. It helps reveal the current configuration of the educational field in terms of functions, as well as teachers' opportunities to act, speak, and decide regarding their work and broader educational matters [5, 9–11].

Melesse and Belay [34] as well as Radulovic et al. [35] argue that cultural capital—particularly prior training—plays a key role in expanding teachers' opportunities to engage in educational domains beyond the classroom and school. Strengthening teachers' cultural capital—particularly in innovation, research, and pedagogical training—is a necessary pathway to ensure genuinely active and democratic participation among all educational stakeholders.

The hierarchical division of educational functions in Spain presents a critical case study for international education systems. Spain's unique governance model delegates educational authority to its 17 autonomous communities, which operate within a national framework aligned with European standards while maintaining distinct linguistic, legal, and cultural identities. Although current research has not fully examined the consequences of this hierarchical structure, multiple studies indicate that actual outcomes frequently deviate from expected results, underscoring the need for deeper investigation [32, 36, 37].

The Basque Country and Galicia represent particularly significant cases as historic nations with robust cultural identities and bilingual status, where regional languages maintain co-official status alongside Spanish [38]. Our study selected these regions based on sample availability, representing 1.82% of Galicia's and 1.55% of the Basque Country's teaching workforces (Spanish Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports).[4] While focused on these two communities, the findings provide transferable insights for other Spanish regions and international contexts with similar educational structures.

This contextual framework justifies the present study's objective "to systematically analyze and compare teacher professional engagement across four key dimensions in Spain's autonomous communities of the Basque Country and Galicia across four key domains": (a) school-teacher domain, (b) technical-political domain, (c) teacher training domain, and (d) scientific-academic domain [5, 13]. To meet this overarching goal, the study is structured around three specific objectives: (1) to describe the distribution of teachers' working time, (2) to determine whether statistically significant differences exist between the two regions in terms of time allocation, and (3) to identify the pattern of work time distribution in each region, considering teacher characteristics.

To achieve the first objective, we will analyze regional response patterns using descriptive statistics (frequency distributions and percentages). For the second objective, we will assess the statistical significance of regional disparities through mean difference tests. Finally, to address the third objective, we will construct Chi-Square Automatic Interaction Detector (CHAID) decision trees for each domain, stratified by region, to identify demographic and professional factors influencing time allocation patterns.

This article aims to provide evidence that can inform reflection and potential action by teachers, school leadership teams, and educational authorities, with the goal of fostering a horizontally structured professionalism within the educational field [5, 29, 39, 40]. It is worth noting that, while this study focuses on two autonomous communities, its relevance extends beyond these regions. It serves as a basis for formulating hypotheses applicable to the rest of Spain and even to other countries with similar educational histories and system characteristics.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Participants

The target population of this study comprises early childhood, primary, and secondary education teachers from Galicia and the Basque Country, working in both public and publicly subsidized private schools. Participants were selected through random sampling, resulting in a final sample of 1,318 teachers: 742 from Galicia and 576 from the Basque Country, representing 1.82% of the teaching

[3] https://www.libreria.educacion.gob.es/ebook/181772/free_download/.

[4] https://www.libreria.educacion.gob.es/libro/panorama-de-la-educacion-indicadores-de-la-ocde-2024-informe-espanol_184584/

staff in Galicia and 1.55% in the Basque Country, according to the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports. This sample proportion with respect to the total population guarantees that this study has a representative sample that allows for broad generalization of the study's results.

The average age of participants was 47.19 years (SD = 9.96), with a slightly higher mean age in Galicia (M = 47.65; SD = 9.63) compared to the Basque Country (M = 46.60; SD = 10.36). Regarding gender, 902 participants identified as women and 379 as men, while 2.8% of the sample either did not identify with either of the two main gender categories or preferred not to disclose their gender. Specifically, in Galicia, 70.2% of respondents identified as women and 27.5% as men, while in the Basque Country, the figures were 68.5% women and 31.5% men. This distribution aligns with official gender statistics provided by the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports. Figure 1 displays the population pyramids corresponding to the study sample.

In relation to the sample composition, by educational level, 829 participants performed their main work in secondary education, 280 in primary education, and 99 in early childhood education, with 8.3% of participants performing their main work outside of teaching. Regarding the type of institution, 83.8% of the teaching staff work in public schools or institutes, 14.1% in semi-private schools, and 2% in private schools. Figures 2 and 3 show the frequency distribution of these variables according to the autonomous community.

The higher proportion of teachers from public and secondary schools compared to other options is due to the greater number of teachers at these levels in the Spanish educational system. These differences are proportional to official data from the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports in Spain.

2.2. Research design

This is a cross-sectional, quantitative, descriptive, and inferential study with a descriptive-comparative approach, using a survey as the primary data collection technique. The objective, as outlined in the introduction, is to examine the extent to which teachers in Galicia and the Basque Country are engaged in specific tasks and functions within the educational field.

Figure 1
Population pyramids of Galicia and the Basque Country

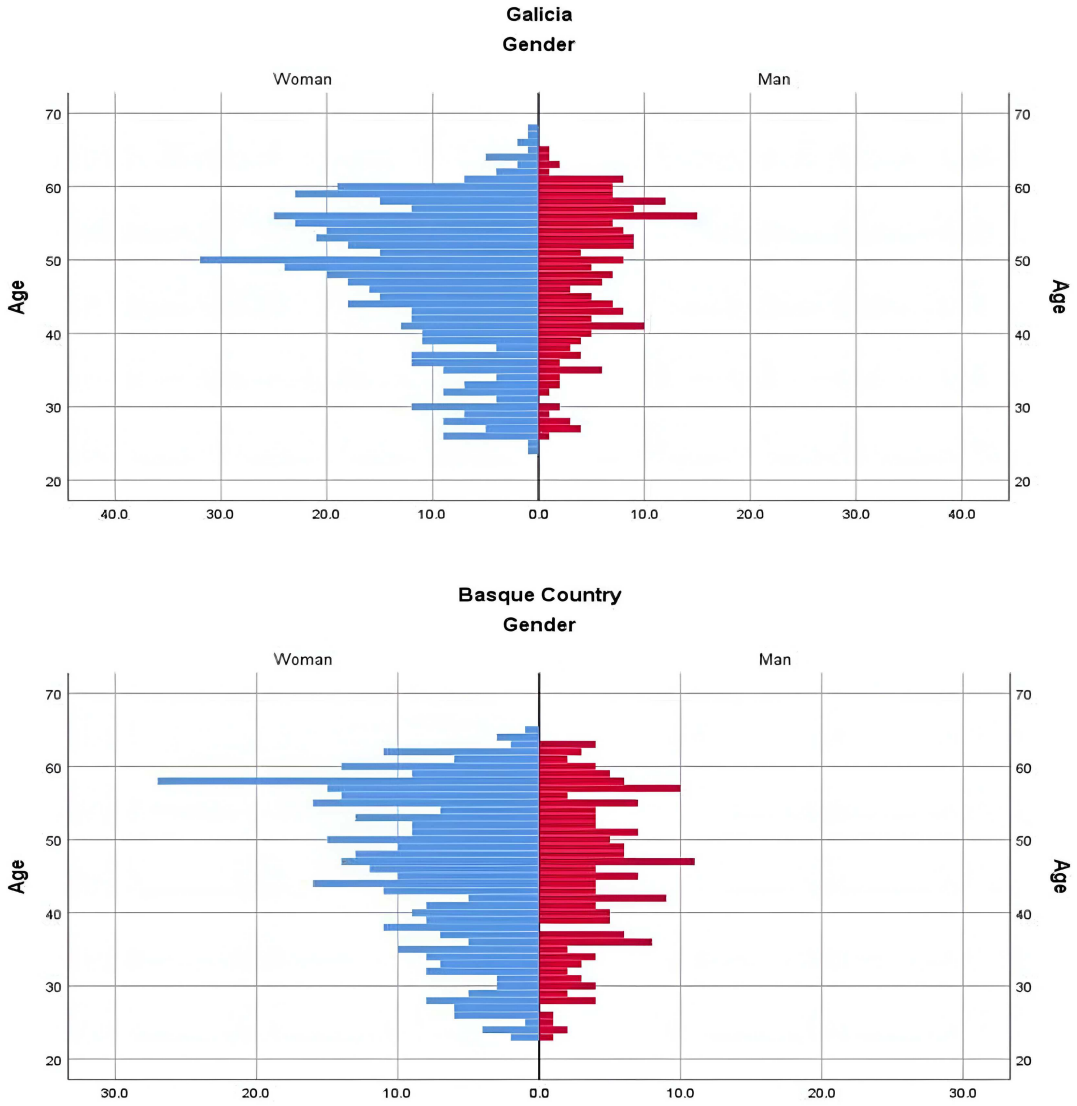


Figure 2
Sample distribution by educational level in Galicia and the Basque Country

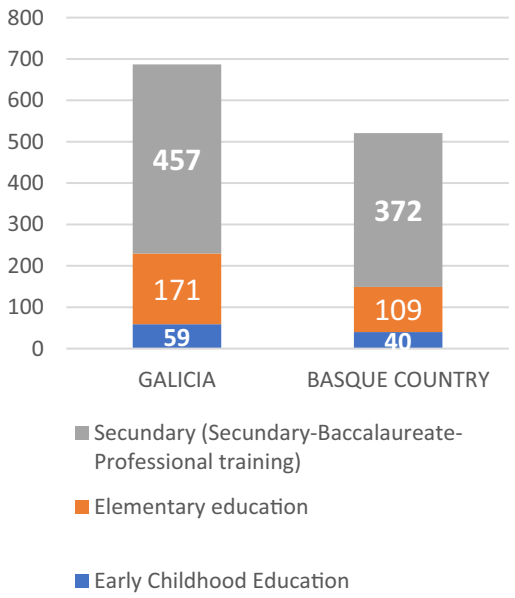
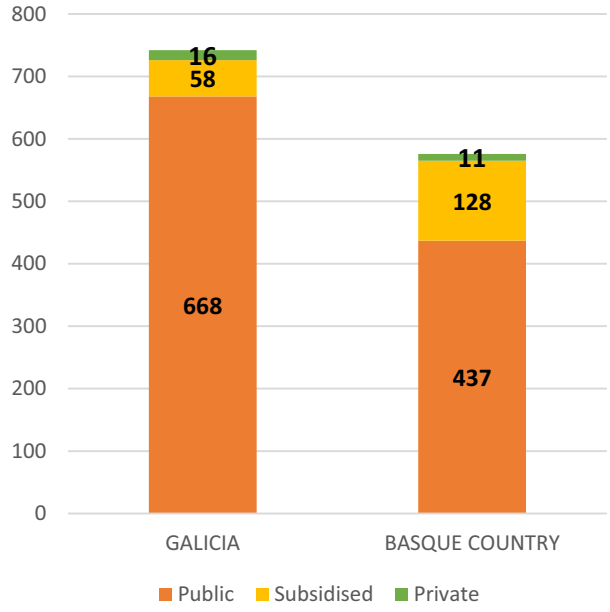


Figure 3
Sample distribution by type of institution in Galicia and the Basque Country



2.3. Instrument

Prior to its administration, the survey underwent a validation process to assess the relevance and clarity of its items through an inter-judge procedure involving eight experts, applying an expert evaluation inspired by a reduced and simplified version of the online Delphi method [41]. This process included the calculation of the Content Validity Index (CVI) and the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) according to Lawshe's method [42].

All items were deemed relevant for use, each achieving a CVR > 0.58, with an average CVR for overall item relevance of 0.90 (on a scale from 0 to 1). Validation results for item clarity were similarly positive, with an average CVR of 0.80. Most items achieved CVIs close to 1, typically ranging between 0.50 and 1.00. The reliability of the survey was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, obtaining a score of 0.87, which reflects high reliability for the 1,318 participants in the survey configuration of 18 items. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: a sociodemographic section with 16 items and a second section composed of 18 items, each measured on a four-point Likert-type scale (Minimum = 1; Low-Medium = 2; Medium-High = 3; Maximum = 4). The items in the second section were designed to assess the level of teacher engagement in various tasks and functions, grouped into the four domains structuring the educational field as previously described. Table 1 presents the items categorized by domain, alongside an alphanumeric code assigned for use in the results section.

The survey was written in Spanish, Basque, and Galician and designed to be sent online via the Google Forms platform under the name "Survey on Teacher Professionalization." The email included the research objectives, participants' rights, the guarantee of data anonymization, and a voluntary participation consent form, which provided access to the questions.

2.4. Procedure

After obtaining the favorable report no. CEI-125-2576 from the Research Ethics Committee of the Autonomous University of Madrid, the survey was sent. It was emailed during 2023 to all public and semi-private schools in Galicia and the Basque Country, covering early childhood, primary, and secondary education, requesting in the email body its distribution to all teaching staff at each school.

The data collected through the survey were analyzed using the statistical program IBM SPSS Statistics 28.0. Frequency distribution was used as a descriptive technique, allowing us to understand the frequency and proportion of each response given by teachers in Galicia and the Basque Country for each item. In this test, those who answered "not applicable" were classified as missing cases, thus maintained in the total sample size but not considered in the analysis. This is because the data collected in this category were not of interest to the study.

In relation to inferential analyses, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used to determine the normal distribution of the data, which showed that none of the distributions of the measures followed a normal distribution. Therefore, the nonparametric Mann–Whitney U test for independent samples was used for mean contrasts.

Finally, CHAID classification trees were developed for each analysis domain and each autonomous community, allowing comparison of the mediation patterns of the variables by domain and autonomous community.

3. Results

Regarding the first specific research objective, the tasks in the school-teacher domain to which Basque and Galician teachers dedicate the most time are direct tasks with students (Table 2), with 71.3% of Basque teachers and 81.8% of Galician teachers giving maximum dedication. Preparing classes is the second task to which they dedicate the most time, with 57.1% of Basque teachers and 67.8% of Galician teachers dedicating a maximum of their time.

Teachers dedicate slightly less time to meetings with colleagues and families compared to the previous tasks; thus, 76.5% of Basque teachers and 73.4% of Galician teachers give

Table 1
Items from the second block of the survey and their alphanumeric codes

Items	Code
A) School-Teacher Domain	
1. Direct tasks with students	A1
2. Preparing classes	A2
3. Meetings with colleagues for coordination, advising, debating, etc.	A3
4. Meetings with students' families	A4
5. Research within the school-classroom	A5
B) Technical-Political Domain	
6. Advising other professionals outside the school	A6
7. Participating in socio-educational debates with other external actors-professionals	A7
8. Participating in the development of educational regulations/policies	A8
9. Advising and/or collaborating on educational issues with foundations/associations, unions, international organizations, etc.	A9
10. Participating with opinions, knowledge, and/or materials on social networks	A10
C) Teacher Training Domain	
11. Training future teachers in early childhood or primary education degrees	A11
12. Training future teachers in the secondary education master's program	A12
13. Providing continuous training courses for other teachers	A13
14. Developing materials for teacher training	A14
D) Scientific-Academic Domain	
15. Conducting research with other institutions outside the school	A15
16. Presenting papers at conferences	A16
17. Developing textbooks and/or teaching materials for students/teachers	A17
18. Writing books or book chapters, articles in journals or newspapers	A18

medium-maximum or maximum dedication to these meetings. Similarly, 52% and 52.9% of Basque and Galician teachers, respectively, dedicate medium-maximum or maximum time to meetings with families at the school.

The tasks in this domain to which both Basque and Galician teachers dedicate the least time are research within the school-classroom. We find that 77.2% of Basque teachers and 63.2% of Galician teachers dedicate minimal or medium-minimal time to these tasks.

Regarding the tasks/functions in the technical-political domain, teachers in Galicia and the Basque Country dedicate little time to them (Table 3). We observe that the tasks in this domain to which teachers in both communities give the least dedication are participating in the development of educational policies, where 70.5% of Basque teachers and 80.8% of Galician teachers give minimal dedication, and advising or collaborating on educational issues with foundations/associations or international organizations, where 70.9% of Basque teachers and 72.9% of Galician teachers dedicate minimal time.

Most teachers also dedicate minimal time to the other tasks in this domain: 68% of Basque teachers and 61.3% of Galician teachers to participating with opinions or knowledge on social networks, 59.8% of Basque teachers and 58.7% of Galician teachers to advising other professionals outside the school, and 53.3% of Basque teachers and 59.2% of Galician teachers to participating in socio-educational debates with other external actors-professionals.

In the teacher training domain (Table 4), we find something similar to the previous case. Most teachers in both communities give minimal dedication to all tasks and functions in this domain. The task to which Basque (81.5%) and Galician (85.5%) teachers dedicate the least time is training future teachers in early childhood or primary education degrees, followed by providing continuous training courses for other teachers (80.1% of Basque teachers and 77.3% of Galician teachers).

Similarly, most Basque (78.6%) and Galician (76.8%) teachers give minimal dedication to training future teachers in the Secondary Education Master's program. The task in this domain to which

Table 2
Degree of commitment (%) of Basque and Galician faculty to tasks and functions within the center-faculty domain

	Basque Country			
	Mínimum	Low-Medium	Medium-High	Maximum
A1	3.4	7.1	18.3	71.3
A2	3.9	10.8	28.2	57.1
A3	3.9	19.6	38.0	38.5
A4	19.7	28.3	28.3	23.7
A5	46.1	31.1	17.6	5.1
	Galicia			
	Mínimum	Low-Medium	Medium-High	Maximum
A1	0.4	4.4	13.5	81.8
A2	1.2	7.9	23.1	67.8
A3	4.4	22.2	39.0	34.4
A4	20.5	26.6	27.1	25.8
A5	35.0	28.2	24.4	12.4

Note: Basque Country: A1: N. Valid=564 Lost=12; A2: N. Valid=564 Lost=12; A3: N. Valid=571 Lost=5; A4: N. Valid=519 Lost=57; A5: N. Valid=505 Lost=71.
Galicia: A1: N. Valid=735 Lost=7; A2: N. Valido=732 Lost=10; A3: N. Valid=735 Lost=7; A4: N. Valid=689 Lost=53; A5: N. Valid=685 Lost=57.

Table 3
Degree of commitment (%) of Basque and Galician faculty to tasks and functions within the technical-political domain

	Basque Country			
	Mínimum	Low-Medium	Medium-High	Maximum
A6	59.8	23.8	11.5	4.9
A7	53.3	25.9	15.4	5.3
A8	70.5	16.5	10.5	2.5
A9	70.9	19.6	7.2	2.3
A10	68.0	17.9	9.9	4.2
	Galicia			
	Mínimum	Low-Medium	Medium-High	Maximum
A6	58.7	22.7	11.6	7.0
A7	59.2	22.2	12.0	6.5
A8	80.8	9.1	5.0	5.0
A9	72.9	16.0	6.3	4.9
A10	61.3	23.6	8.9	6.2

Note: Basque Country: A6: N. Valid=488 Lost=88; A7: N. Valid=505 Lost=71; A8: N. Valid=474 Lost=102; A9: N. Valid=474 Lost=102; A10: N. Valid=503 Lost=73.
Galicia: A6: N. Valid=630 Lost=112; A7: N. Valid=657 Lost=85; A8: N. Valid=614 Lost=128; A9: N. Valid=639 Lost=103; A10: N. Valid=661 Lost=81.

teachers in both communities dedicate the most time is developing materials for teacher training. However, this is a task to which a majority of Basque (62.8%) and Galician (72.7%) teachers give minimal dedication.

Finally, teachers in both communities dedicate little time to tasks in the scientific-academic domain, although Galician teachers do so slightly more (Table 5). A large majority (88.9%–75.9%) of teachers in both communities dedicate minimal time to all tasks in this domain.

The task to which Basque (88.9%) and Galician (81.4%) teachers dedicate the least time in this domain is writing books or book chapters and articles in journals or newspapers. Similarly, 85.3% of Basque teachers and 78.7% of Galician teachers dedicate minimal time to presenting papers at conferences.

The tasks in this domain to which teachers dedicate the most time are conducting research with other institutions outside the school and developing textbooks and/or teaching materials for students and teachers. However, these are still tasks to which the majority of Basque (80.2% and 72.6%, respectively) and Galician (75.9% and 76.2%, respectively) teachers give minimal dedication.

The observed distribution of work time between the two autonomous communities shows differences that may be due to chance or reflect systematic trends that need to be analyzed for improvement in the near future. For this, it is necessary to use

Table 4
Degree of commitment (%) of Basque and Galician faculty to tasks and functions within the faculty training domain

	Basque Country			
	Mínimum	Low-Medium	Medium-High	Maximum
A11	81.5	8.0	6.8	3.6
A12	78.6	9.9	7.9	3.5
A13	80.1	12.1	5.2	2.6
A14	62.8	20.8	9.4	7.1
	Galicia			
	Mínimum	Low-Medium	Medium-High	Maximum
A11	85.5	6.6	3.6	4.3
A12	76.8	8.9	7.2	7.1
A13	77.3	12.2	4.9	5.6
A14	72.7	13.0	8.8	5.5

Note: Basque Country: A11: N. Valid=439 Lost=137; A12: N. Valid=453 Lost=123; A13: N. Valid=462 Lost=114; A14: N. Valid=481 Lost=95.
Galicia: A11: N. Valid=559 Lost=183; A12: N. Valid=594 Lost=148; A13: N. Valid=609 Lost=133; A14: N. Valid=622 Lost=120.

Table 5
Degree of commitment (%) of Basque and Galician faculty to tasks and functions within the scientific-academic domain

	Basque Country			
	Mínimum	Low-Medium	Medium-High	Maximum
A15	80.2	12.5	4.5	2.8
A16	85.3	9.4	4.0	1.3
A17	72.6	12.7	8.5	6.2
A18	88.9	7.2	3.0	0.9
	Galicia			
	Mínimum	Low-Medium	Medium-High	Maximum
A15	75.9	11.1	7.2	5.7
A16	78.7	12.2	4.9	4.3
A17	76.2	9.7	7.3	6.8
A18	81.4	9.7	5.1	3.8

Note: Basque Country: A15: N. Valid=464 Lost=112; A16: N. Valid=470 Lost=106; A17: N. Valid=471 Lost=105; A18: N. Valid=461 Lost=115.
Galicia: A15: N. Valid=610 Lost=132; A16: N. Valid=609 Lost=133; A17: N. Valid=617 Lost=125; A18: N. Valid=606 Lost=136.

inferential statistical analysis techniques in response to the second research objective.

Initially, the K-S test was applied to the results to assess whether they conformed to a normal distribution of the data and, therefore, recommended the use of parametric analysis tests. For the four evaluated domains, the K-S test concluded that the data did not follow a normal distribution, leading to the general recommendation of using nonparametric tests.

Next, Table 6 shows the results of the comparison between the two communities for each item and each general category, determining, through the significance in the nonparametric Mann–Whitney U test for independent samples, which differences may be due to nonrandom causes.

It can be observed in Table 6 that, overall, the school-teacher domain shows statistically significant differences, as well as in the items related to direct tasks with students, preparing classes, and research within the school-classroom.

Regarding the technical-political and teacher training domains, these do not show significant differences overall. Only participating in the development of educational regulations/policies and on social networks in the technical-political domain and developing materials for teacher training show individually statistically significant differences.

Finally, in relation to the scientific-academic domain, statistically significant differences are observed between Galicia and the Basque Country individually, except for developing textbooks and/or teaching materials for students/teachers.

In relation to the third specific research objective, the CHAID classification trees that reflect the relationships between the most relevant variables for each of the four domains considered, taking into account each autonomous community, are shown below.

In Figure 4, the CHAID trees generated for Galicia are presented, showing that the variable that best explains the distribution of teachers' working time in Galicia is the educational level at which

Table 6
Contrasts of mean differences in the results of Galicia and the Basque Country

	Galicia		Basque Country		
Item	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Up
Center-Faculty Domain	**3.05**	**0.54**	**2.93**	**0.56**	**189317.5****
A1	3.77	0.54	3.57	0.77	184161.0**
A2	3.57	0.69	3.38	0.83	182353.5**
A3	3.04	0.86	3.11	0.85	199296.5
A4	2.58	1.08	2.56	1.06	176541.0
A5	2.14	1.04	1.82	0.90	143464.0**
Technical-Political Domain	**1.57**	**0.72**	**1.58**	**0.69**	**183876.5**
A6	1.67	0.94	1.61	0.87	150598.0
A7	1.66	0.93	1.73	0.91	156973.0
A8	1.34	0.79	1.45	0.78	131775.0**
A9	1.43	0.81	1.41	0.73	149666.5
A10	1.60	0.89	1.50	0.84	155700.5*
Faculty Training Domain	**1.45**	**0.72**	**1.46**	**0.71**	**159531.0**
A11	1.27	0.73	1.33	0.76	117959.5
A12	1.45	0.90	1.36	0.78	131146.5
A13	1.39	0.82	1.30	0.69	136127.0
A14	1.47	0.87	1.61	0.92	135887.5**
Scientific-Academic Domain	**1.43**	**0.71**	**1.33**	**0.59**	**150394.5**
A15	1.43	0.86	1.30	0.69	134259.5*
A16	1.35	0.76	1.21	0.57	133111.5**
A17	1.45	0.90	1.48	0.89	140853.0
A18	1.31	0.74	1.16	0.50	128630.5**

Note: * Significance greater than 0.05/Significance greater than 0.01.

the teacher works, determining that the lower the educational level, the more hours are invested in direct teaching, which is the area that receives the most working time overall.

On the other hand, regarding the technical-political and scientific-academic domains, the best predictor would be teacher training. It is especially noted that in the degrees of pedagogy and psych-pedagogy, more working time is dedicated to these domains. Finally, in relation to the teacher training domain, the best predictor would be the number of teacher training courses received in the last year.

Regarding the autonomous community of the Basque Country, Figure 5 shows the relationships between the most relevant variables for each of the four domains considered, through four CHAID Classification Trees.

As can be observed in Figure 5, in the Basque Country, the variable that best explains the distribution of teachers' working time is again the educational level at which the teacher works, determining that, as in Galicia, the lower the educational level, the more hours are invested in direct teaching, which is the area that receives the most working time overall.

There is also a coincidence regarding the technical-political domain, with teacher training being the best predictor, and in relation to the teacher training domain, where the best predictor is again the number of teacher training courses received in the last year.

The main difference between the two autonomous communities is in the scientific-academic domain, as in the Basque Country, the type of institution is the best predictor of work dedication to this domain, specifically determining that working in a semi-private school in the Basque Country is associated with greater dedication to this domain.

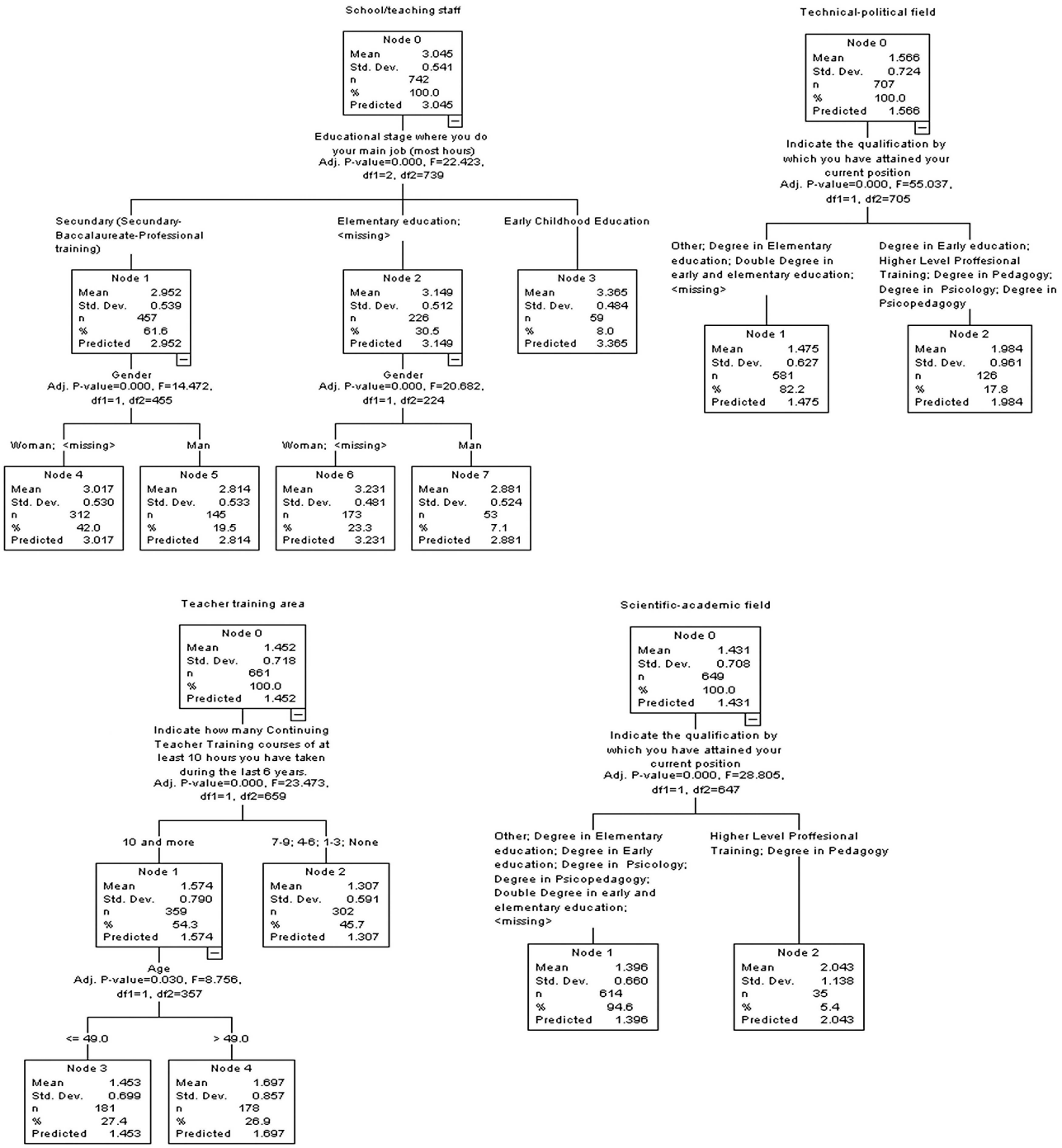
4. Discussion

As observed in the frequency distribution of the domains analyzed in the two autonomous communities addressed, in line with the OECD [15] reports and studies, such as Martínez-Garrido and Murillo [25], most of the working time is spent on direct tasks with students within the classroom or other school-related tasks. While this is not inherently problematic, it does raise certain questions about the truly minimal participation in other educational tasks or functions.

The descriptive statistics and the percentage of frequency selection regarding the degree of dedication of Galician and Basque teachers to educational tasks and functions indicate a significant concentration of commitment to those responsibilities traditionally assigned to their roles [5, 9]. Based on the presented results and supported by various studies highlighting substantial changes within the educational sector [43, 44], a plausible explanatory hypothesis can be proposed. Despite discourse emphasizing the importance of teacher participation in policy implementation and other educational matters [45–48], a fragmented and differentiated structure—originating from the historical and genealogical processes that shaped the educational field [10, 11]—remains largely unchanged over time [5, 49]. Consequently, although there is persistent advocacy for comprehensive teacher involvement across technical-political, training, and scientific-academic domains, such participation continues to be deferred [15, 43, 45].

Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that restricting teachers' roles to classroom instruction alone erodes their professional autonomy, job satisfaction, and instructional effectiveness [16–19]. This raises a critical question: Why do teachers in Galicia

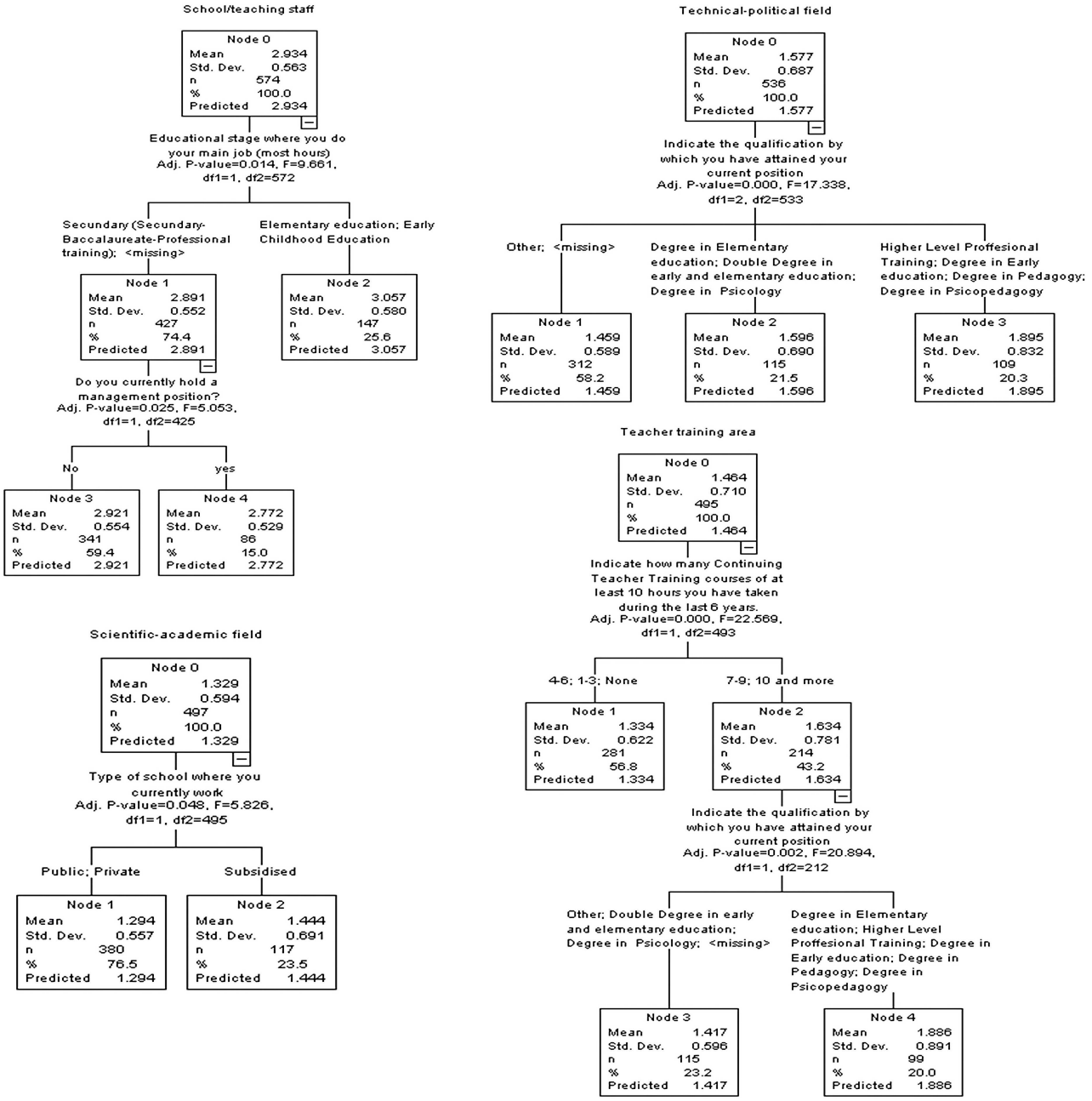
Figure 4
CHAID classification trees for each of the four domains considered for Galicia



and the Basque Country—despite institutional rhetoric emphasizing their participation in broader educational decision-making—still face limited opportunities to engage in tasks beyond classroom and school responsibilities? This issue transcends regional boundaries, reflecting a systemic pattern across Spain and, indeed, most educational systems worldwide [47, 48, 50, 51]. As the study by Meyer et al. [49] has shown, the global expansion of mass schooling has historically reproduced this marginalization of teachers in educational governance.

However, despite the general structural aspects in relation to the degree of teacher dedication to various educational tasks and functions in the domains specified on previous pages, in addressing the second specific objective of our research, the nonparametric Mann–Whitney U test allowed us to identify statistically significant differences between Galicia and the Basque Country: (a) general by domain and (b) specific tasks/functions within them. These differences were globally located in the school-teacher domain and specifically in three of the four tasks/functions in the scientific-academic domain considered in the applied teacher professionalization survey. Explaining these differences would require further investigations, although a hypothesis could be formulated associated with the specific characteristics related to the

Figure 5
CHAID classification trees for each of the four domains for the Basque Country



political-administrative decisions of the autonomous communities in question, considering that in Spain, there is a transfer of competencies in educational management that offers some decision-making margin to them. At the same time, this hypothesis could be supported by previous studies analyzing how these regional differences influence various aspects of educational functioning [52, 53].

On the other hand, the CHAID classification trees allowed us to identify those variables most related to the distribution and degree of teacher dedication to various tasks/functions in each of the analyzed domains. One of the clearest relationships was between dedication to direct tasks with students and the educational level at which the teacher works: the lower the educational level at which the teacher works, the greater the dedication to these direct tasks with students in both communities. The explanation seems clearly normative-structural, as the laws regulating the Spanish educational system establish more classroom working hours for early childhood and primary education than for secondary education. As seen at the beginning of this work, the structure of teaching and non-teaching hours is different at each educational level, although there may also be small differences between autonomous communities. On the other hand, again, we find a historical explanation, as despite changes, a fragmented structure between educational levels that reproduces certain historical traits still prevails [9, 49]. This raises certain questions about the unequal opportunities teachers have depending on the educational level at which they work to engage in other nontraditional tasks/functions, not only outside the school but also within it [5, 9].

Similarly, from the CHAID classification trees, we have been able to highlight the difference between the two communities regarding dedication to the scientific-academic domain. While in Galicia this dedication is associated with higher training, especially in pedagogy studies, in the Basque Country, the best explanation is the type of institution, specifically the semi-private school. The first case seems more or less evident: pedagogy studies offer a broad approach to the educational field with links to pursue an academic career later or simultaneously with teaching, as well as to participate in other domains [54]. In Spain, this is generally reflected through the figure of an associate professor who explicitly enables this possibility.[5] On the other hand, the fact that, in the Basque Country, teacher dedication to the scientific domain is related to their belonging to a semi-private school as a workplace requires further exploration to reach an explanation. Even so, a hypothesis could be formulated related to the importance of Ikastolas in the Basque Country's educational system. These are educational centers organized as cooperatives, grouped in a single confederation and federations within it, with a long history of educational innovation [55]. These centers have historically valued educational innovation and research [56].

5. Conclusions

The work carried out allows us not only to draw some general conclusions but also to identify nuances that may be important for exploring changes and improvements in the educational field, with results that invite analysis and reflection, while also showing possible ways to advance decision-making: plans, programs, and/or policies that deepen the processes of teacher participation.

First, as a general conclusion, in line with previous works, the results reflected in this research confirm the existence, in the two communities addressed, of a fragmented structuring of the educational field, with a hierarchical distribution of tasks and functions that enable differentiated participation possibilities for the various actors in the educational field.

In line with the above, it is important to mention that these differentiated participation possibilities for teachers in tasks/functions beyond the classroom and the school occur not only across the entirety of the educational field but also within the same teaching staff according to the educational level at which they work. Here, a line of action is identified from a technical-political point of view, as the existing laws establish this conditioning. Therefore, a change in these laws regarding the dedication of work within the classroom and other school tasks could be an important starting point to equalize the participation possibilities in other tasks or functions for teachers at all educational levels.

On the other hand, it is important to mention the nuances to the generality previously mentioned about fragmentation and differentiation within the educational field. In this sense, it is worth highlighting the incipient participation of teachers in traditionally unusual tasks. Although the frequency distribution data reflects a minimal degree of dedication to task functions in other domains, such as technical-political, training, or research, this information could be pointing to something worth paying attention to, to advance toward possible change and improvement in the educational field.

Expanding teachers' engagement in technical, political, and scientific domains beyond classroom instruction can substantially enhance educational quality by bridging classroom realities with systemic improvement opportunities. This broader participation yields dual benefits: it elevates overall educational standards while simultaneously increasing teachers' professional satisfaction and emotional well-being.

In line with the above, we want to highlight an aspect that seems relevant: cultural capital, prior training received, seems to be an essential condition to increase the participation possibilities of teachers in other domains of the educational field beyond the classroom and the school. Pedagogical training, along with a strong emphasis on innovation and research within educational initiatives, enhances teachers' ability to engage in professional activities beyond the classroom. For this reason, strengthening the cultural capital of teachers, including aspects associated with innovation, research, and, in general terms, pedagogical training, seems to be an avenue to promote if truly active and democratic participation of all actors in the educational field is desired.

In closing, we want to mention some limitations of this research whose identification can contribute to future investigations, as well as when thinking about actions to improve teacher participation in the educational field.

First, it should be noted that this study focuses specifically on two autonomous communities in Spain. Although we consider that this is not a limitation in itself, mainly because the "significance" of the sample from these communities and the relative equality or similarity of the educational system throughout the Spanish territory can help to think beyond the chosen cases, it is important to keep in mind that direct extrapolations cannot be made without considering the singularities of the contexts.

Second, although the unequal distribution of the sample by educational level responds to the same structure of the educational system of these autonomous communities and, in general terms, of the entire Spanish territory, the type of research conducted does not allow for capturing nuances that could derive from other types of qualitative studies. Undoubtedly, qualitative research examining how teachers at different educational levels allocate their efforts across various professional domains would provide valuable complementary insights to this study.

Finally, as this is a synchronic study, and not diachronic, the data capture a snapshot of a specific moment; therefore, they do not allow observing temporal evolution, which restricts the possibility of analyzing the dynamics of change or continuity.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to this work.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting this work will be available in the "e-ciencialDatosrepository" (https://edatos.consorciomadrono.

[5] https://www.observatoriuniversitari.org/es/2020/07/informe-profesorado-asociado-2020/

es/dataverse/UAM) after an embargo from the date of publication until the end of the project (September 2025).

Author Contribution Statement

Roberto Sánchez-Cabrero: Methodology, Software, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Data curation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Supervision, Project administration. **Francisco Javier Pericacho-Gómez:** Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Supervision. **Raquel Moraleda-Esteban:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Héctor Monarca:** Conceptualization, Validation, Investigation, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Supervision, Project administration, Funding acquisition.

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