

The influence of socio-demographic variables on teachers' job performance

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Abstract

Performance is a concept that indicates the importance of work. The purpose of this article is to highlight the influence of socio-demographic characteristics on teachers' job performance. This study is conducted in the pre-university system. In this study, the quantitative method is used and the empirical data were collected using questionnaires. The main findings of the study show that there are no significant differences in the relationship between demographic factors, such as seniority in education and experience in education. There is, however, a meaningful relationship between performance and education level where teachers teach and the area (rural/urban) where they teach. It is suggested that there is a need for more studies, trainings or focus groups, which would help to identify the factors that have an impact on teachers' job performance.

Keywords: Education; performance; socio-demographic factors; teacher; workplace

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1. Introduction

1.1. Conceptual and theoretical framework

Job performance is an important factor in the development and fulfilling of functions in every field, such as in education, society, different levels of governance, institutions, organisational planning in the community and broader. Job performance management offers a framework for professional growth and common positive development of employees and educational institution. According to Hellriegel et al. (1998, p. 180) performance is high when '(1) challenging aims are present; (2) ability, communication, cooperation, feedback and complexity of tasks are present; and (3) components, such as management, efforts, strategic tasks and persistence, are interconnected in action'.

Job performance and productivity of teachers in schools should be considered as important elements of educational institutions, and more broadly as a concern for the entire society. Indicators of teachers' job performance are a demonstration of the quality of teaching, shortcomings in techniques and methodology of teaching, the level of cooperation and the contribution they give to society.

In order to be effective, an institution must focus on employees' motivation and their satisfaction at work as potentials that increase productivity. According to Hellriegel et al. (1998, p. 138), the key to employees' motivation is based on their abilities and mechanism of motivation. Based on this assertion, it should be understood that no task can be well performed if it is not based on the employees' abilities to perform it. The way teachers perform in educational institutions is very important because their performance has a direct impact on the academic progress of the younger generation.

Hwang et al. (2017) describe teachers' job performance as an action to achieve educational goals. The teacher is the most important subject in the teaching process and serves as a model for various aspects of life of every individual. Professionalism in teachers is essential for effective functioning of the educational system and improvement of information in the process of students' learning.

Panda and Mohanty (2003) argue that the teacher who fulfils his/her role in a qualitative way influences the learning and success of the students. The factors that play an important role in shaping the role of the teacher in the workplace are age, gender, teaching experience, working hours, professional skills and learning development environment. Teachers display their teaching style based on various methods and strategies with the aim of maximising students' learning. Students' academic success is often an indicator of the teacher's performance at the workplace.

According to Wolomasi et al. (2019), learning and teaching are interactive processes between teachers and students and is influenced by the conditions of the social environment. The roles of students and teachers within this system are defined in which teachers provide information and students are expected to be active in the teaching process. Performance evaluation must be present in all its activities because it aims at measuring all objectives through work. Many studies have been carried out on performance providing various models as to how it is measured. Performance evaluation is widely perceived to have begun around year 1980 or at the beginning of year 1990. The interest regarding the effectiveness of performance of institutions/organisations, whether public or private, has to do with the simple fact of answering the question as to how well they have achieved organisational goals (Talbot, 2010). Within this framework, it should be emphasised that key elements in the performance analysis are the behaviour the individuals display, the results they achieve in workplace and the overall productivity of an institution.

Burz (2013) states that 'performance is not a simple solution of a result, but the consequence of a comparison between the outcome and the goal, of an excellent result towards an action, the result of

an action, and, that it is not important if the action is of high level or not'. The performance of every employee in an institution where he/she works is important for the entire organisation and for the individual employee, in particular, because of the fact that if the employee has high performance, this means that even the productivity of the institution/organisation would be high. In addition, Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) state that 'the performance in workplace refers to multidimensional actions of behaviour and results within which employees engage themselves, or behaviours that are related to it, therefore, contributing to the accomplishment of the organisational goal'.

According to Conway (1999), performance evaluation strategies aim to assess the quality of work engagement and to promote behaviours that ensure that the requirements and tasks set out in the job profile are met. According to the author, the main elements in tasks performance include cognitive abilities of the profession, knowledge of task description and abilities to perform multiple assignments simultaneously without much supervision. Based on this, it is significant to understand the importance teachers have in their job performance, and in solving various problems in the schools where they work. The way teachers approach their job, their profession, their tasks and the existing problems at school varies, depending on their age, seniority in education or the area where they teach, whether they teach in schools close to urban areas or they teach in schools located in the periphery.

The study of the impact of socio-demographic characteristics on teachers' job performance at work is very important. Its findings would serve as a basis for taking into consideration the importance of such characteristics in the organisational and institutional performance of schools because, very often, these factors are largely ignored and are not given proper importance. The teacher is a central actor in the administration and the organisation of the teaching process in the classroom and, through their experience, they improve their teaching process.

In Albania, there is a lack of studies that focus on the importance of teachers' job performance. Moreover, there are no studies that examine the impact of demographic variables on teachers' performance in schools. Interdisciplinary research studies consider the role of school as an important factor that influences the individual throughout his/her course of life. This study is an important contribution in the area of education, and its empirical results can be included in the strategy of the development of education, with particular focus on the importance of socio-demographic variables on teachers' job performance in the teaching process.

1.2. Related research

Directors and managers of institutions/organisations evaluate the way employees accomplish their tasks. It is important to understand that often, once the employee's evaluation is completed, employees' motivation and their performance at work is based not only on salaries or the rewards they receive to accomplish the tasks, but on the perceptions the employees have towards evaluation basis, i.e., if evaluation is based on honesty, procedures and cooperation they have in the work setting. This is to be found even in educational institutions.

According to Robinson (2004), equality at work is not only related to the salaries employees receive, but the salary ones receive is measured in relationship to their ability, their experience and seniority at work because teachers differentiate themselves from others based on the abilities, experience or seniority at work. The teaching process presents many challenges and difficulties for teachers. The ways in which teachers deal with these challenges and difficulties depend on the socio-demographic characteristic of teachers. Demographic variables display a constant tendency in terms of their influence on teachers' job performance.

A number of studies in various scientific disciplines have focused on the interrelation of socio-demographic factors and job performance. This body of research has consistently shown that these variables greatly influence the performance of workers, whether in private or public institutions. Most recently, attention is being paid to the professional evaluation of socio-demographic variables in the development and their influence on job performance. Often, as a result of geographic differences, gender-based differences, length of time at work, age, rural versus urban areas and differences in the level of productivity are observed.

As a result of this, more studies need to be conducted on the integrated role of socio-demographic characteristics in the educational development of schools. Socio-demographic variables that have been researched by various scholars have shown significant changes, but there are also those variables that do not show changes. Socio-demographic variables most often taken into account by different researchers are gender, age, rural or urban area where teachers work, educational level where they teach, seniority in education etc. (Alyaha & Mbogo, 2017).

Along these lines, Hai (2018) conducted a study with 152 employees of the University of Hanoi in Vietnam. The study found out that socio-demographic variables of age and education, among others, had significant (both negative and positive) effects on employees' attitudes toward organisational change. At the end of the study, the author stressed on the fact that it is very important that managers who aim to implement policies to change work environments and to change the study curriculum should consider the response of professionals depending on their socio-demographic profiles. In addition, they need to propose suitable solutions for each group of employees based on their socio-economic characteristics.

A considerable body of scholarly work has demonstrated the influence of socio-demographic characteristics in teachers' performance. Teachers who have participated in these studies have taught at different pre-university education levels. In their analysis, these studies have taken into consideration the influence of socio-demographic variables on performance.

For example, Amadi and Allagoa (2017), in their research with 639 teachers in lower secondary schools in Nigeria, explored the impact of teacher demographic variables on effectively managing teaching space and student management. The study identified that the age of the teacher, teacher's qualification level and teaching experience had a significant impact on their classroom management effectiveness, while gender, on the other hand, had no statistically significant impact. Thus, teachers play an important role in transmitting values to their students, while certain socio-demographic characteristics play an important role in the teaching process.

In another study, Kant (2014) investigated the effect of demographic factors such as gender, age, teaching experience and educational qualification on the performance of 150 lower secondary school teachers in the districts of Moradabad, UP, India. The research findings showed that there was no significant difference between male and female teachers in realising the performance of their role. On the other hand, a significant relationship was found between age and role performance, i.e., as age increased, the role performance became more significant. According to the author, one reason behind this positive relationship can be the fact that over time, teachers gain more confidence in their profession. Similarly, the study found a significant positive relationship between teaching experience and role performance, i.e., more experienced teachers displayed a higher job performance. Additionally, educational qualifications had a positive relationship with role performance. More qualified teachers were better at role performance because as the teachers gain more knowledge, they show more responsibility towards their profession.

Francisco (2020), in her study with 37 English teachers and 400 students in the Philippines, explored the effect of teachers' socio-demographic characteristics on teachers' job performance. The results indicated that these socio-demographic variables had an influence on teachers' job performance at work.

Along the similar lines of research, Andambi (2018) assessed the influence of teachers' demographic variables on the performance in their teaching process in research carried out in lower secondary schools in Kenya. About 9 out of 29 lower secondary schools, 807 students and 17 teachers participated in the study. The empirical results showed that teachers' cultural characteristics and their religious background had a significant influence on their teaching process. Teachers with a religious influence based on their culture influenced the content of information based on sexual education. They were reserved in the communication of information, therefore directly affecting the limitation of information transmitted, minimising the importance of sexual education. Religious background can be considered as a demographic factor of teachers that affects their performance at work in matters of education on the importance of sexually responsible behaviours.

1.3. Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to describe the connection among socio-demographic characteristics and teacher performance at school. In line with the purpose of the study, the study's objectives and corresponding research questions are as follows:

The objective of the research study is to identify the influence of demographic characteristics (gender, seniority in education and rural/urban area) on teachers' job performance.

Research question 1: Are there any differences between teachers' job performance and their seniority in education?

Research question 2: Does teachers' job performance depend on the education level that they teach?

Research question 3: Is there a difference in the performance between teachers who teach in rural areas compared to those who teach in urban areas?

2. Method and materials

2.1. Research model

The qualitative method of data collection was used in this study. This method is often used in the field of education and it is based on numerical data of non-experimental studies (Muijs, 2011). According to the conception of the non-experimental study, the aim is to analyse the correlation of interest variables (Hancock & Mueller, 2010, p. 343).

2.2. Participants

The population in this study consisted of teachers of pre-university public institutions; more specifically, the participants were teachers from Tirana and Elbasan districts. Sampling consisted of 1,005 teachers (the final number was 1,000 because the other questionnaires administered did not have enough information to be included in the study). The total number of 1,000 participants represents 10% of the teachers' population in Tirana and Elbasan districts. The main criteria used in selecting the participants of the sample were being a full-time teacher in pre-university public school. The sample was randomly selected.

The sampling distribution based on the districts consists of the following: the district of Tirana, given it is the largest school district, and has most teachers, has also the largest number of participants in the

sample, about 634 teachers or 63.4% of the total. On the other hand, there are 366 teachers or about 36.6% of the sample from Elbasan district. Regarding gender, 74.9% ($n = 749$) of the sample were female and 25.1% ($n = 251$) were male. The reason for the larger percentage of females in the sample is because women make up a larger share of teachers in education, in particular in primary and lower secondary level of education. With regard to the area of work, 56.2% of the teachers work in urban areas and 43.8% work in rural areas.

2.3. Data collection tools

These data are part of a larger study conducted by the authors. This article will analyse previously unanalysed variables. The data collection for this study was based on the random sampling selection. The selection of the sample at random gives the possibility to each subject to have equal chances to be selected (Salkind, 2010, p. 83). The questionnaire used in this study has two sections: demographic variables and performance in teaching.

Section I – demographic variables – includes information on the participants, such as rural/urban area where the teacher teaches, gender, educational level etc. In addition, there are questions about their seniority in education and their experience in teaching.

Section II – perceptive performance of teaching – is measured with 10 questions based on a Likert scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) (Mawoli & Babandako, 2011).

Based on the analysis, Cronbach's alpha was acceptable for each level. The value of the instrument on the performance in teaching was 0.895. These high levels of values give us an opportunity to apply it in this study. The reliability of the degree of measures, standard deviation, minimal and maximal values is presented in Tables 1–5 to provide a clear and accurate picture of the empirical data.

The reliability of the measurement scales, standard deviation with minimum and maximum values, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability of the measuring scale

Scale	No. statement	Cronbach's alpha	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Performance	10	0.895	4.56	4.83	4.2	4.77

2.4. Data collection process

Data collection was based on the application of questionnaires to randomly selected teachers. After collecting the data, a database with the answers of the respondents was built. Data processing and analysis were carried out through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences programme and was based on descriptive and inferential statistics.

2.5. Data analysis

In this study, two types of statistical analysis were used for data analysis, i.e., descriptive and inferential. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the impact of sample characteristics on behaviour, while inferential statistics were used to analyse how subjects' traits influence behaviour (Burton, 2000, p. 363). Data processing was based on the correlation analysis in accordance with the objective and research questions of the study. In addition to this analysis, linear regression analysis and *t*-test for independent groups were used to see the differences between socio-demographic data and performance. It is worth noting that the research questions were analysed to have a 95% confidence level.

3. Results

The empirical results of the research's objectives assessed the impact of demographic characteristics [experience in education, seniority in education, education level that teachers teach and the area (urban/rural)] on teachers' job performance.

Research Question 1: Are there differences in teachers' job performance based on their seniority in education and their experience in education? In order to answer this research question, findings on both seniority in education and experience in education are presented. With regard to experience in education, the findings are given below.

In order to obtain a more accurate response to the question on the difference between teachers' job performance and their experience in education, first an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test of homogeneity was run. Sig-value = 0.026 < 0.05 and F (2:997) = 3.671 indicate that the groups are not homogenous. Regarding job performance among these group, sig-value (two-tailed) test analysis is 0.263 > 0.05, which shows that the differences are not statistically significant. These indicate that teachers' job performance does not depend on the years of work experience, which means, whether the teacher has many years or a few years of work experience in education is not important. This implies that other factors in the educational system (internal or external) or socio-economic variables have a greater impact on job performance. This is also confirmed by the value of the chi-squared (two-tailed) test, which is 0.208 > 0.05, demonstrating that these variables do not depend on each other.

Table 2. Test of independence between performance and work experience in education

Experience in education	Performance			Total
	Partially agree	Agree	Completely agree	
1–10 years	5	99	232	336
11–20 years	2	79	224	305
Over 20 years	7	82	270	359
Total	14	260	726	1,000

Chi-squared tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. sig. (2-sided)
Pearson's chi-square	5.881 ^a	4	0.208
Likelihood ratio	6.095	4	0.192
Linear-by-linear association	2.377	1	0.123
No. of valid cases	1,000		

a. Two cells (22.2%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.27.

Regarding the relationship between teachers' job performance and their seniority, the independence test used to analyse the above-mentioned research question indicated that performance does not depend entirely only on seniority in education because the value of asymp. sig. (two-sided) is 0.235 > 0.05. Performance in teaching, especially nowadays, when the means of communication and information technology advance rapidly cannot depend only on the teachers' seniority in education and experience in education, but also includes other factors.

Table 3. Chi-squared independence test between seniority in education and performance

Seniority in education	Performance			Total
	Nothing/partly agree	Neutral	Agree/completely agree	
1–5 years	2	49	87	138
6–10 years	3	50	145	198
11–15 years	1	35	95	131
16–20 years	1	44	129	174
Over 20 years	7	82	270	359
Total	14	260	726	1,000

Chi-squared tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. sig. (2-sided)
Pearson's chi-square	10.440 ^a	8	0.235
Likelihood ratio	10.315	8	0.244
Linear-by-linear association	3.864	1	0.049
No. of valid cases	1,000		

a. Four cells (26.7%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.83.

Research question 2: Does teachers' job performance depend on education level that they teach?

Based on the data in Table 4, the value of *Chi Square* asymp. sig. (two-sided) is $0.017 < 0.05$ demonstrating that job performance and level of education where teachers teach are dependent on each other.

Table 4. Chi-squared test of independence between the level of education and performance

Performance	Level of education system			Total
	Primary (1–5)	Lower secondary (6–9)	Upper secondary (10–12)	
Partially agree	1	0	0	1
Neutral	2	4	7	13
Agree	62	124	74	260
Completely agree	238	315	173	726
Total	303	443	254	1,000

Chi-squared tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. sig. (2-sided)
Pearson's chi-square	15.460 ^a	6	0.017
Likelihood ratio	15.016	6	0.020
Linear-by-linear association	8.341	1	0.004

No. of valid cases 1000

a. 5 cells (41.7%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.25.

The correlation coefficient among them is $r_{xy} = -0.091$, which is a weak negative correlation. In fact, the value of $\text{sig.} = 0.014 < 0.05$ in ANOVA analysis shows that differences among groups regarding job performance are statistically significant. In this case, the question is: Where do we observe the difference among them regarding performance in teaching process?

Regarding this question, we first examine if there are differences among teachers' job performance based on the education level that they teach.

Table 5. Performance based on Tukey's HSD procedure based on the education level

(I) Education level	(J) Education level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.	95% confidence interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Primary (1-5)	Lower secondary (6-9)	0.07	0.036	0.128	-0.01	0.16
	Upper secondary (10-12)	0.12*	0.041	0.012	0.02	0.22
Lower secondary (6-9)	Primary (1-5)	-0.07	0.036	0.128	-0.16	0.01
	Upper secondary (10-12)	0.05	0.038	0.414	-0.04	0.14
Upper secondary (10-12)	Primary (1-5)	-0.12*	0.041	0.012	-0.22	-0.02
	Lower secondary (6-9)	-0.05	0.038	0.414	-0.14	0.04

* Significance of correlation coefficient

Based on Tukey's procedure, the results in Table 5 show that primary school (grades 1-5) teachers have the highest job performance compared to teachers of the upper secondary level (grades 10-12), while the other groups are homogeneous among them.

Research question 3: Are there differences in job performance between teachers who teach in rural areas and those who teach in urban areas?

In order to answer this question, *t*-test of independence was used regarding job performance as an important factor in the teaching process. First, Leven's test is used to assess the homogeneity of variance of these two groups. The value of $\text{sig.} = 0.000 < 0.05$ that shows that variance among these two groups (urban versus rural teachers) are equal is rejected (this is also supported by the values of standard deviations).

Then, test for the difference between means is used. According to this test, the mean of difference for job performance of teachers who teach in rural areas is higher ($M = 4.75$ and $SD = 0.447$) than the mean of performance for teachers who teach in urban areas ($M = 4.68$ and $SD = 0.515$). This difference is statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, $t(986) = -2.478$ and $\text{sig.} = 0.013$ (2-sided) < 0.05 . This shows that there are differences in the means of performance between teachers who teach in rural areas and those who teach in urban areas.

4. Discussion

Discussion on research question 1 – Performance in teaching, seniority and experiences in education

Research data in this study demonstrate that there exist no significant differences in job performance among groups with regard to variables such as seniority in education and experience in education. This means that teachers' seniority or experience in education do not impact teachers' performance because this is connected to external or internal factors in the education system.

Discussion on research question 2 – Performance and education level that teachers teach

While the relationship between teachers' performance in teaching and education level that they teach is analysed based on chi-squared test, this test shows that asymp. sig. (two-sided) is $0.017 < 0.05$, i.e., performance depends on the education level where teachers teach. In addition, ANOVA results, where the value of sig. is $0.014 < 0.05$, demonstrate that these differences among groups with regard to performance are statistically significant. Leven's test shows that value of sig = (2-tailed) is $0.000 < 0.05$, meaning that these groups are not homogenous regarding their performance. For $\alpha = 5\%$ and $F(2:997) = 4.259$, the value of sig (2-tailed) = 0.014 , meaning it is smaller 5%, which shows that there is a significant statistical difference with regard to the education level that teachers teach and their performance in teaching.

Based on the analysis, according to Tukey's procedure, it was noted that those teachers who teach in primary school level (grades 1–5) have a higher performance level than the teachers who teach in upper secondary schools (grades 10–12). It could be argued that the low level of performance in teaching among teachers of upper secondary schools can be explained with the difficulties that they face.

Discussion on research question 3 – Performance and the area where teachers teach (rural/urban)

In order to answer this question, i.e., to investigate if there are differences in job performance between teachers who teach in rural areas and those who teach in urban areas, first the homogeneity of groups was examined based on their variance. The value sig. = $0.000 < 0.05$ shows that these groups are not homogenous among each other. The results show that teachers who teach in rural areas have a mean of 4.75 and SD of 0.447, while those who teach in urban areas have a mean of 4.68 and standard deviation of 0.515. These findings indicate that in terms of job performance, teachers in rural areas have a slightly higher performance compared to those who teach in urban areas. It could be argued that the findings may be due to the fact that classes in rural areas are smaller in size, and as a result, it is easier for teachers to manage small-sized classes and give more attention to each student. On the other hand, teachers in urban areas teach in classes that are much larger in size, and therefore, it is more difficult for them to manage a large number of students, hence their lower performance compared to their peers in rural areas.

5. Conclusion

There are differences between teachers who teach in rural areas compared to those who teach in urban areas with regard to teaching performance. The results indicate that the prejudice that teacher's performance in rural schools is lower than those in urban areas is not true. The findings show that there is a statistical difference in performance between teachers who teach in rural areas and those who teach in urban areas. Contrary to expectations, the teachers in rural areas had a slightly higher performance compared to those in urban areas.

The socio-demographic variable of education level had an impact on teachers' job performance. This is more so at the lower secondary education level and upper secondary school. This is meaningful because age groups differ, in particular adolescence, which is characterised by numerous socio-behavioural changes, including changes in attitudes towards school and learning. These, in turn, impact the teaching performances of those teachers who teach this particular group. Data analysis showed that seniority and experience in education are not a determining factor in teachers' performance. This indicator, not interacting with others, does not have an impact on the performance. It is important to point out that in order for teachers to have a high performance in teaching, they need to be highly motivated. Motivation influences the internal and external factors with which they interact during the teaching process.

6. Recommendations

According to the results of this research, it is important to take into serious consideration the importance of measuring and evaluating teacher's performance based on validated scientific instruments and methods by expert groups. Teacher's job performance must be evaluated periodically based on consolidated strategies in order to direct effective interventions towards the factors that hinder their quality of performance. The design and validation of scientific measurement instruments for assessing performance would provide objective data that would be independent from the subjective relationships between the evaluators and those who are being evaluated.

In addition, it is important to conduct similar comprehensive studies on a national level that focus on both public and private sector of pre-university schools in the Republic of Albania. Such studies would enable the creation of a more comprehensive, wider panorama of the importance of demographic factors in the teachers' job performance in the pre-university system in the Republic of Albania. They would serve as a basis for undertaking effective measures to address the improvement of quality of performance of teachers. It is also suggested that scholars whose research work focuses on education and those who design education policies need to undertake similar studies, even when it is not possible to conduct national studies. Such research projects would add to the body of empirical research, increasing the opportunity for comparison among studies on teacher's performance in the schools of the Republic of Albania.

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