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Well-Being of Academic Staff in Teaching and Research Roles: A PERMA Model Analysis in Higher Education

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Abstract

Aim: This study aimed to identify how the dual professional roles of academic staff, as educators and researchers, are associated with their well-being within higher education institutions.

Methodology: A quantitative approach was used based on the adapted PERMA Profiler questionnaire, distributed among 140 academic employees at a single Polish university. The responses were analysed using descriptive statistics, paired t-tests, effect size measurements, and correlation analyses to compare well-being between teaching and research roles.

Results: The findings indicated that academics experience higher levels of Positive Emotions, Meaning, and Accomplishment in teaching than in research. No significant differences were found in Engagement and Relationships between the roles. Correlations ranged from low-to-moderate (Positive Emotions) to strong (Relationships), indicating partial but uneven consistency of well-being across roles.

Implications and recommendations: The study highlights the need for institutional strategies that recognise and support the well-being of academic staff in both teaching and research contexts. Since teaching and research involve different requirements, separate assessment of these aspects allows institutions to balance these roles more effectively, tailor support and avoid applying one-size-fits-all solutions. Future research should include comparative and longitudinal studies across institutions, as well as qualitative exploration of coping mechanisms used by the faculty.

Originality/value: This study provides role-specific insights into academics' well-being through an intra-individual comparison of their teaching and research roles. The use of adapted PERMA framework allowed for the identification of well-being patterns across the dual roles, which may be otherwise masked, especially if aggregated approach to measuring well-being is used.

Keywords: well-being, PERMA, higher education institutions, academic staff, teaching and research

1. Introduction

Well-being in organizations is increasingly recognised as a critical factor influencing a productive and sustainable work environment (Jaskeviciute et al., 2021; Tortia et al., 2022). The concept encompasses not only the physical and mental health of employees, but also their emotional and social well-being. Research indicates that enhancing employees' well-being leads to improved performance, reduced absenteeism, and lower turnover rates, ultimately benefiting organizational sustainability and success (Aryanti et al., 2020; Di Fabio, 2017; Olaniyi, 2022). Organizations that prioritise well-being create a positive workplace culture, crucial for attracting and retaining talent (Di Fabio, 2017). Furthermore, the well-being culture is essential for building strong and lasting interpersonal relationships in modern organizations that rely on teamwork, collaboration, and knowledge sharing (Bartels et al., 2019).

Within higher education institutions (HEI), well-being plays a role in shaping both academic productivity and teaching effectiveness (Han & Gao, 2023). Unlike a corporate environment, where financial performance is often prioritised, academia focuses on autonomy, research development, and educational impact (Fishman et al., 2021). Academics are responsible for multiple activities including teaching, research, student supervision, and administrative tasks, making well-being an important factor in sustaining long-term engagement and effectiveness (Mudrak et al., 2018). Excessive workload and research pressure can lead to burnout, mental health challenges, and reduced satisfaction (Hui & Lee, 2024; Nicholls et al., 2022). Although studies on teacher well-being emphasise workload, classroom management, and resilience as important factors (Avola et al., 2025; McCallum & Price, 2010), these findings only partially capture academic work, which extends beyond teaching to research and service roles (Hughes, 2010; Hui & Lee, 2024). While studies have examined factors influencing academic well-being in general, few address how teaching and research roles contribute differently to academic staff well-being (Mudrak et al., 2018; Nicholls et al., 2022; Shen & Slater, 2021). In the higher-education literature, well-being is typically modelled at an aggregate level across academic duties, with limited role-differentiated analyses, which motivates the present within-person comparison of teaching and research. Recent research from Poland further indicates that academic teachers are exposed to high occupational burnout and chronic fatigue, often linked to workload intensity and role expectations (Nowak et al., 2025; Springer et al., 2023). Hence there is a need to identify in detail the factors affecting the well-being of academic staff in order to counteract their reduced job satisfaction, impaired performance, and heightened turnover intentions.

The purpose of this article was to identify differences in well-being between the teaching and research roles of academic staff within HEI. Using the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) and the adapted PERMA Profiler (Butler & Kern, 2016), the author examined whether and how teaching and research roles differ across five dimensions of well-being: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. These dimensions represent emotional satisfaction, task involvement, social bond, sense of purpose, and achievement. The participants were 140 academic staff (a 30% response from the 466 invited) from a single Higher Education Institution, recruited via an anonymous, voluntary institutional email survey. The research sample was balanced by gender/title but skewed towards mid and late-career academics, applying an intra-individual comparison design, which examined the same participants in both roles in order to address this underexplored area.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Well-Being in Organizations

Well-being is a broad concept that covers various aspects of an individual's life, including physical, psychological, and social well-being. Subjective well-being refers to an individual's cognitive and affective evaluations of their own lives (Chang & Hsu, 2022). It is important to distinguish that the well-being of the workforce is one of the factors in that of the overall population (Schulte & Vainio, 2010). In the context of the workplace, well-being refers to the quality of working conditions, focusing on elements such as occupational safety, health, work-life balance, and overall job satisfaction (Schulte & Vainio, 2010).

Implementing and shaping well-being in the workplace requires a comprehensive approach that targets both the physical and psychological work environment (Kuoppala et al., 2008). While most organizational initiatives focus on risk reduction and problem-oriented strategies, fewer emphasise positively framed interventions that enhance inner aspects of well-being such as meaning, optimism, resilience, and gratitude (Kun & Gadanecz, 2022). Fostering self-efficacy and incorporating sustainable practices further support emotional resilience and job satisfaction (Singh et al., 2019).

Organizations can benefit from implementing well-being initiatives as they can lead to improvement in employee psychological wellness, consequently reducing sickness absences (Kuoppala et al., 2008). By promoting such programmes, organizations can enhance job satisfaction, resulting in overall higher motivation within the workforce, which in turn positively impacts performance and commitment (Zhao et al., 2018). Focusing on well-being can create a culture of wellness within the workplace that can help fight issues like burnout and improve working conditions (Trockel & Fischer, 2023). This can lead to greater educational and occupational success, stronger friendships, and better physical health of the workforce (Choi et al., 2019). Moreover, by improving psychological working conditions and providing stress-coping mechanisms, organizations can positively influence the mental health of their employees (Azagba & Sharaf, 2011).

Various factors influence well-being within organizations. Leadership types which promote employee autonomy have been found to have positive influence on the employee well-being (Jones et al., 2020). There is proof indicating that social support plays an important role in reducing workplace loneliness and enhancing the well-being of employees, especially those with special needs (Ramzan et al., 2021). To enhance well-being in the workplace, organizations can implement several strategies. One crucial aspect is focusing on employee satisfaction with work and life, as well as their health (Schulte & Vainio, 2010). Interpersonal aspects of work, such as open workspaces, teamwork, and effective communication technologies, also play a central role in enhancing well-being (Bartels et al., 2019).

Measuring well-being within organizations is important for evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives and the understanding of the overall health and satisfaction of employees. Various methods have been developed to measure well-being in the workplace such as measures used in research is the Eudaimonic Workplace Well-Being Scale (EWWS), introduced by Bartels et al. (2019). EWWS consists of multiple items that assess how well employees feel their work contributes to their overall sense of meaning and fulfilment, thereby capturing the eudaimonic aspects of well-being that go beyond mere job satisfaction. Another tool is The Employee Well-Being Index (Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2021), which provides a multifaceted approach to measuring well-being in the workplace. This index encompasses various factors, including quality of life, meaning in work, likelihood of burnout, work-life integration, and even suicidal ideation. Another widely used instrument is PERMA-Profiler (Butler & Kern, 2016), which allows organizations to assess the psychological health of their employees by dimensions, critical for fostering a positive work environment. The tool was translated and validated by many researchers in various environments and cultures (Alves et al., 2023; De Carvalho et al., 2023; Giangrasso, 2021; Grenawalt et al., 2022; Ryan et al., 2019; Umucu et al., 2020; Wammerl et al., 2019). Recent studies also confirmed its relevance in education contexts. Fitzsimons et al. (2025) highlighted PERMA's role in teacher educators' resilience, while Wammerl & Lichtinger (2025) reported how PERMA-based interventions increased teachers' life satisfaction.

2.2. Specifics of the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) as Workplaces

Higher Education Institution's (HEI) environment differs from other public, private, and corporate sectors, which are most often a subject of consideration for workplace well-being. It is focused on education, research, and community service. Unlike a corporate environment where profit motives and organizational goals drive activities, universities prioritise academic freedom, intellectual autonomy, and the dissemination of knowledge (Fishman et al., 2021). Academics are involved in activities such as teaching, advising students, conducting research, publishing scholarly work, and participating in academic committees and administrative tasks (Hughes, 2010). These roles demand a high level of intellectual engagement, creativity, and continuous learning, which can be both fulfilling and demanding (Hui & Lee, 2024). Additionally, the cyclical nature of teaching semesters and research deadlines create distinct work patterns that contrast with the continuous workflow typical of the corporate environment (McCallum & Price, 2010).

The university environment is founded on academic freedom, which allows academics to pursue their research interests and express their ideas without external interference (Fishman et al., 2021). This principle is rarely seen in a corporate setting where activities are planned to align with the organization's strategic goals (Heracleous & Werres, 2016), however autonomy comes with the pressure to continuously contribute to one's field, secure research funding, and maintain a robust publication record, which often leads to stress (Fanelli, 2010). This pressure is particularly visible within the 'publish or perish' culture widespread in academia. The imperative to disseminate research findings can lead to ethical dilemmas that compromise the integrity and objectivity of scholarly work (Fanelli, 2010). The continuous need to secure grants and produce high-impact publications can lead to long working hours and a disrupted work-life balance. These pressures contribute to significant mental health challenges, including anxiety and depression (Hui & Lee, 2024; McCallum & Price, 2010).

The university environment is characterised by a strong emphasis on collaboration and professional networking integral to academic success and innovation. Academics are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues within and outside their research and teaching practices (Ramos-Pla et al., 2021). This collaborative culture is vital for the dissemination of knowledge and the development of new ideas (Hui & Lee, 2024), yet it also adds to the complexity of the academics' roles as they must balance individual responsibilities with collaborative projects (Owusu-Boateng, 2023). Continuous professional development and collaboration with colleagues are recommended to enhance the scholars' career prospects (Owusu-Boateng, 2023), and can provide support and reduce the sense of isolation that can occur in academia, but also require effective time management and organizational skills (McCallum & Price, 2010). In Poland they are embedded within a system that combines centralised regulations with institutional autonomy. National legislation specifies employment categories and teaching load requirements, while universities retain a certain flexibility in distributing research and administrative responsibilities (European Commission, 2017).

While the well-being of teachers has been widely examined, studies in this area primarily focused on school settings and emphasise stressors such as workload, classroom management, and student behaviour, alongside factors like resilience and meaning derived from pedagogical work (Avola et al., 2025; McCallum & Price, 2010). Although informative, these findings only partially translate to higher education, where academics not only teach but also conduct research, secure funding, supervise students, and carry administrative responsibilities (Hughes, 2010; Hui & Lee, 2024). Consequently, research limited to 'teacher well-being' does not sufficiently capture the complexity of academic work, whereas assessing academics' well-being is often conceptualised on a general, aggregated level, without examining how distinct professional roles may differently shape experiences of stress, accomplishment, or meaning (Hammoudi Halat et al., 2023; Mudrak et al., 2018). Taken together, these strands of literature reveal that while teachers' well-being has been investigated and there is a growing number of studies on general academics' well-being, whilst the role-specific well-being of academics remains underexplored.

The current state of academics' well-being at higher education institutions causes an increasing concern as university staff report higher levels of stress, burnout, and mental health issues, driven by the demands of research, teaching and administrative responsibilities (Hammoudi Halat et al., 2023; Johnson & Lester, 2022; Nicholls et al., 2022). Evidence from Poland also shows elevated levels of burnout and chronic fatigue among academic teachers (Nowak et al., 2025; Springer et al., 2023), confirming that these challenges are not only visible globally but also locally. Programmes aimed at improving academics' well-being such as mentoring and well-being grants, have demonstrated the potential for lowering stress and strengthening social ties between university staff (Olson et al., 2023; Stuckey et al., 2019). However, the overall HEI environment remains challenging, with many academics feeling disconnected and overwhelmed. The relationships between academics' well-being and their teaching and research success shows the necessity for institutions to prioritise mental health initiatives since university staff's well-being directly influences educational and research outcomes (Joarder et al., 2022; Roos & Borkoski, 2021).

3. Methods

3.1. Research Goal and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to identify how dual professional roles of academic staff as educators and researchers, affect their well-being within higher education institutions. Using the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) and the adapted PERMA Profiler (Butler & Kern, 2016) developed for this research, the study examined how teaching and research roles differ across the five dimensions of well-being: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. The author also investigated the consistency of individual well-being experiences across these two roles.

To achieve the research aim, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: How do teaching and research roles differ in terms of positive emotions?
RQ2: How do teaching and research roles differ in terms of engagement?
RQ3: How do teaching and research roles differ in terms of relationships?
RQ4: How do teaching and research roles differ in terms of meaning?
RQ5: How do teaching and research roles differ in terms of sense of accomplishment?
RQ6: How do individual well-being scores in the five PERMA dimensions correlate between teaching and research roles?

The PERMA Profiler was adapted to enable the identification of differences between teaching and research experiences by administering each item twice, once per role, while retaining the original five-domain structure and scoring (Butler & Kern, 2016). The study applied an intra-individual comparison design, measuring the same participants in both roles, to provide insights into which aspects of academic work are experienced as more fulfilling or more challenging. This approach highlighted the distinct psychological and professional demands associated with each role and offered evidence relevant to institutional strategies supporting academic staff well-being.

3.2. Study Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to assess the well-being of academic staff within a Polish public higher education institution. The analysis focused on the phenomenon of role-related well-being rather than on institutional diagnosis, carried out using a questionnaire based on the validated PERMA Profiler scale (Butler & Kern, 2016), and was chosen for its established reliability and relevance in assessing well-being across diverse populations. The scale was adapted to the higher education institutions (HEI) context (Appendix 1).

PERMA Profiler measures five core elements of well-being: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. These elements, collectively known as PERMA, provide a comprehensive

understanding of well-being. The questionnaire was designed to capture data on each of the five PERMA dimensions with three items per subscale, allowing for a detailed analysis of the well-being of the academic staff. The original PERMA Profiler was translated into Polish and adapted to reflect the academic work environment. Items were rated on a scale from 0 (not at all/never) to 10 (completely/always). To account for the dual roles of university lecturers as both researchers and educators, each question regarding the PERMA dimensions was asked twice: once in the context of scholarly work and once in the context of teaching. In addition to PERMA items, demographic questions were included to analyse how factors such as age, gender, years of experience, and institutional support may correlate with well-being outcomes.

3.3. Participants

The participants of this study were the academic staff from various faculties and departments at a single public higher education institution (HEI). Due to the sensitive character of the collected data, the institution remained anonymous, following the advice of the University Ethics Committee. The survey was distributed via email to all 466 academic staff of the institution. Participation was anonymous and voluntary, and all the participants provided informed consent before taking part in the study, resulting in a response rate of 30% (*N* = 140). This indicates that the results should be interpreted with caution, as self-selection bias may have influenced the findings.

Table 1. Participants' demographics

Participants	*N* = 140
Gender	
Female	77
Male	60
Preferred not to specify	3
Age range	
18-30 years	1
30-40 years	22
40-50 years	54
More than 50 years old	59
Preferred not to answer	4
Academic Title	
Professor	65
Doctor	64
Master's degree	11

Source: author's study.

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the research sample, overall relatively balanced by gender and academic title, but skewed toward older and more experience academics, with fewer early-career staff represented. This distribution suggests that the findings primarily reflect the perspectives of mid and late career academics of the institution. The sampling method was non-random and relied on voluntary participation following an institutional email invitation. While this approach ensured access to the entire staff population, it may have favoured individuals with a greater interest in well-being, which should be considered when interpreting the results.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data obtained from the adapted PERMA Profiler were analysed using Microsoft Excel and its built-in data analysis tools. The dataset was first divided according to the two professional roles teaching and research, to allow for role-specific analysis. First, internal consistency of the instrument was confirmed with Cronbach's alpha coefficients, ensuring the reliability of responses across all PERMA dimensions.

Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were then calculated separately for teaching and research in each of the five PERMA dimensions: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. To assess the differences in well-being between the two roles, paired t-tests were conducted with a significance threshold set at $\alpha = 0.05$. The assumptions of normality were examined using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which indicated significant deviations from normality in all the dimensions, therefore Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were additionally performed. As the Wilcoxon results were consistent with the t-tests, the conclusions can be considered robust despite non-normality. To evaluate the magnitude of observed differences, both Cohen's d and Hedges' g were calculated, with the inclusion of Hedges' g accounting for potential small-sample bias. To further explore how well-being experiences in teaching and research aligned at individual level, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed for each PERMA dimension. Lastly, 95% confidence intervals were calculated to estimate the range within which the true mean differences between roles were likely to fall, providing an additional measure of precision in interpreting the results.

4. Results

4.1. Internal Consistency

The PERMA Profiler, a validated and widely used tool for assessing well-being across five dimensions, was adapted and used to evaluate the participants' experiences in teaching and research roles. The internal consistency for all PERMA dimensions was acceptable to high across both roles, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from $\alpha = .69$ to $\alpha = .89$, indicating the reliable measurement of well-being in both teaching and research contexts.

Table 2. Survey internal consistency across PERMA dimensions in education and research

PERMA dimension	Teaching – internal consistency	Research – internal consistency
Positive emotions	$\alpha = .89$	$\alpha = .89$
Engagement	$\alpha = .69$	$\alpha = .76$
Relationships	$\alpha = .84$	$\alpha = .76$
Meaning	$\alpha = .84$	$\alpha = .88$
Accomplishments	$\alpha = .73$	$\alpha = .82$

Note: Each PERMA dimension in both the education and research settings were assessed using three items.

Source: author's study.

4.2. Results across PERMA Dimensions

As presented in Table 2, the employees were asked to assess their well-being in both teaching and research roles across the five PERMA dimensions. Their responses revealed certain differences, with the most notable observed in Positive Emotions, Meaning, and Accomplishment. As the normality assumptions were violated in all the dimensions (Shapiro–Wilk tests, $p < .05$), Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were performed in addition to paired t-tests. Both tests produced consistent results, confirming the reliability of the findings.

Academics reported significantly higher **Positive Emotions** in teaching ($\mu = 7.17$) than in research ($\mu = 6.50$), with a small effect size ($d = 0.33$). The 95% CI confirmed the difference, and correlation ($r = 0.35$) suggested low-to-moderate consistency across roles. **Engagement** scores were similar for teaching ($\mu = 7.23$) and research ($\mu = 7.30$), with no significant difference and a negligible effect size ($d = -0.04$). The correlation ($r = 0.40$) indicated that engagement was experienced consistently across both roles. There was also little difference in **Relationships** (teaching $\mu = 6.29$; research $\mu = 6.09$), with a very small effect size ($d = 0.09$) and no statistical significance. A strong correlation ($r = 0.66$) demonstrated that

this dimension was stable across contexts. In contrast, the dimension of **Meaning** showed a higher score for teaching (μ = 7.60) than research (μ = 6.79), with a small effect size (d = 0.37) and a correlation of r = 0.45. The same pattern was observed in **Accomplishment**, where teaching (μ = 7.86) was rated higher than research (μ = 7.20). The effect size was small (d = 0.39), and the correlation was r = 0.40. Overall, the differences were mainly found in Positive Emotions, Meaning, and Accomplishment, where teaching tended to be rated higher. Relationships showed the greatest consistency (r = 0.66), while Positive Emotions were the most context sensitive (r = 0.35).

While the observed mean differences were statistically significant in Positive Emotions, Meaning, and Accomplishment, they were relatively small in absolute terms (ranging from 0.6 to 0.8 points on a 0-10 scale), suggesting that the practical significance of these differences may be modest. The effect sizes (Cohen's d = 0.33–0.39) fell into the small range, meaning that the differences were consistent but not large.

Table 3. Comparison of Teaching and Research Role Scores Across PERMA Dimensions with Effect Sizes, Confidence Intervals, and Correlations

PERMA	Teaching Mean (μ)	Teaching Standard Deviation (σ)	Research Mean (μ)	Research Standard Deviation (σ)	Cohen's d	95% Confidence Interval (CI)	Correlation (r)
Positive Emotions	7.17***	2.21	6.50***	2.35	0.33	(0.28, 1.07)	0.35
Engagement	7.23	2.51	7.30	2.41	-0.04	(-0.41, 0.28)	0.40
Relationships	6.29	2.73	6.09	2.63	0.09	(-0.11, 0.51)	0.66
Meaning	7.60***	2.37	6.79***	2.56	0.37	(0.42, 1.19)	0.44
Accomplishment	7.86***	2.09	7.20***	2.22	0.39	(0.35, 0.97)	0.40

Note: Asterisks (*, **, ***) indicate statistically significant differences between teaching and research scores (p < .05, p < .01, p < .001), and Cohen's d represents standardised effect sizes. The 95% Confidence Interval (CI) reflects the estimated range of the mean difference, whilst Pearson's r denotes the correlation between teaching and research scores for each dimension.

Source: author's study.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

5.1. Discussion

This study aimed to examine the well-being of academic staff in a specific higher education institution by investigating how their dual professional roles, as educators and researchers, influence distinct dimensions of well-being. Drawing on the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) and the adjusted PERMA Profiler (Butler & Kern, 2016), the research focused on five key dimensions of academic well-being: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Specifically, the author addressed two core objectives: to determine whether significant differences exist in each well-being dimension between teaching and research roles (RQ1–RQ5), and to assess the correlation of individual well-being experiences across those roles (RQ6).

The findings revealed that teaching contributes more positively to well-being, particularly in the areas of Positive Emotions, Meaning, and Accomplishment, implying that academics often derive greater emotional satisfaction, purpose, and a sense of achievement from their teaching responsibilities. Other studies were found to be equally engaging and continued to support the development of academic relationships, although in a distinct and often more individualised manner. Moreover, correlations across PERMA dimensions ranged from low-to-moderate (Positive Emotions, r = .35) to strong (Relationships, r = .66), suggesting that while some dimensions of well-being are stable across roles, others vary depending on the context. The comparison of teaching and research through the PERMA model indicated that both roles contribute to well-being. The findings show that academics experience different forms of psychological and emotional fulfilment depending on their responsibilities yet, while

statistically reliable, the observed role-based differences were small in size (Cohen's d in the 0.33–0.39 range), meaning their practical impact on day-to-day well-being should be seen as modest.

One of the key findings was the significant difference in Positive Emotions, with teaching demonstrating higher levels of emotional well-being than research. Although the mean difference was under one scale point, its consistency across participants revealed a meaningful but modest practical effect. This was consistent with the research emphasising that direct student engagement, real-time feedback and structured progress create immediate emotional rewards for teachers (Joarder et al., 2022; Roos & Borkoski, 2021). Teaching provides direct affirmation through student interactions, classroom discussions and visible learning progress, fostering a greater sense of satisfaction (Avola et al., 2025). Conversely, academic research is slower, with delayed recognition and extended periods of uncertainty, contributing to lower levels of immediate emotional well-being. The competitive nature of academia, combined with publication pressure and funding challenges, has been linked to higher stress and reduced positive emotions in research-focused roles (Fanelli, 2010). While research can provide deep intellectual satisfaction, longer feedback loops can explain relatively lower positive emotion scores.

In contrast to Positive Emotions, Engagement showed no significant difference between teaching and research, indicating both roles require high levels of cognitive engagement and commitment. This supports findings that academics experience mental flow and stimulation in both activities, as they require problem-solving, creativity and professional knowledge (Perkmann et al., 2013). Engagement in teaching comes from dynamic interactions with students, the need to adapt and develop the curriculum, while engagement in research stems from intellectual curiosity, analytical work and the pursuit of knowledge. Given the comparable engagement scores, the results demonstrate that academics derive motivation from both roles, supporting previous findings that intellectual work, whether in education or science, stimulates professional engagement and fulfilment.

Relationships also showed no significant differences between teaching and research, suggesting that academics experience social interaction in both roles, although in different ways. Teaching fosters interaction with students, mentoring and engagement in the classroom, whilst research fosters peer collaboration, academic networks and teamwork in scientific projects. Previous research emphasises the social interactions are critical to academic well-being, whether mediated by peers, students, or institutional networks (Nicholls et al., 2022). Although teaching offers face-to-face, structured interactions, research often requires an independent effort to build and maintain collaborative relationships. The comparable results on relationships may suggest that academic work by its very nature remains a highly social profession, despite differences in how these interactions occur.

A significant difference was also observed in terms of Meaning, where teaching was seen as more meaningful than research. Academics view their impact on student development, mentoring, and educational contributions as highly rewarding. Teaching provides an immediate, observable impact on student learning and development, fostering a strong sense of purpose and social contribution (Gougou et al., 2025). Although research also holds long-term significance, its impact is less immediate and often less visible. Many academics struggle with delayed recognition, uncertain outcomes, and the increasing competitiveness of research funding, which may weaken the perceived meaning of research activities (Fanelli, 2010). However, scholars who view their work as contributing to broader societal advancements or scientific breakthroughs may still experience high levels of Meaning in research, suggesting that this dimension may be particularly dependent on individual perception and external validation. Even though the difference was statistically significant, it was small, pointing to a consistent but modest practical effect between the roles.

The final significant difference was observed in Accomplishment, where academics reported a greater sense of achievement in teaching. The structured nature of teaching, with clear learning objectives, course completion milestones and regular feedback, often reinforces the sense of success (Joarder et al., 2022). Research, on the other hand, requires sustained effort over an extended period, and success is often dictated by external factors such as journal acceptance rates, funding availability and peer

recognition, which can lead to a delayed sense of achievement, as scholarly contributions may take years to gain recognition. Similarly, the moderate statistical effects observed in Accomplishment also point to a reliable but practically modest role difference.

5.2. Conclusions

The findings demonstrated that the two roles have distinct impacts on academic staff well-being, influencing various aspects of professional satisfaction in different ways. While teaching was found to be somewhat more satisfying and rewarding, research was just as interesting and socially rewarding, but less so in terms of emotional return and the feeling of achievement. Individual differences were seen, i.e. some faculty members reported higher job satisfaction in research while others reported higher satisfaction in teaching. Overall, the role-based differences observed were small but consistent, implying that even modest shifts in well-being across roles can be meaningful for institutional policy.

These results support the need for institutions to adopt a role-sensitive approach that assesses well-being separately for teaching and research in order to avoid aggregation bias. Thus universities should calibrate workloads across the academic cycle with predictable teaching and protected research time, align recognition and rewards across both domains, and target support to the role-specific stressors such as grant and administrative assistance. Given the relative stability of Relationships, this dimension appears to be a strength within academic work and may not require major additional interventions. Instead, institutions should aim to preserve these existing social supports while focusing improvement efforts on areas where differences between roles were more pronounced. Due to the differences observed, institutions should make sure that teaching is well recognized and appreciated and that the negative aspects of research, are minimised through administrative support and research funding.

This study was subject to limitations and potential biases, which should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the focus on a single higher education institution limits the external generalisability of the results, as the single organizational context may not fully reflect the experiences of university lecturers in other settings. Second, the reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, where participants may have provided responses they perceived as favourable rather than fully accurate. Efforts were made to mitigate these biases by emphasising anonymity and encouraging honest responses. In addition, the cross-sectional design did not allow for causal conclusions, and repeated questioning across two contexts (teaching and research) may have introduced anchoring effects. The sample was skewed towards older and more experienced academics, which may have influenced the reported patterns of well-being, yet may also represent the academic institution's demographics. Finaly the response rate of 30%, while typical for voluntary surveys, raises the potential for non-response bias, as those who chose to participate might differ systematically from non-respondents in their experiences or perceptions of well-being. However, such a response rate within the studied institution provided a sufficient empirical basis to formulate managerial implications and recommendations.

Although this study adds to the knowledge on well-being among academics in higher education institutions, future work should extend to cross-institutional comparisons and the long-term effects of institutional policies on faculty well-being. Further research should extend this role differentiated perspective beyond a single site through multi-institutional and cross-national samples and longitudinal designs. Mixed-methods triangulation, for example, PERMA metrics paired with qualitative interviews/focus groups, and field experiments that test role targeted supports are recommended. Given the adapted instrument, future validation in HEI populations and comparisons with alternative well-being frameworks are needed. In future studies should focus more on model moderators such as career stage, contract type, teaching load, funding pressure, gender, and age.

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Appendix 1. Full Survey Items in Polish and English

This appendix presents all original survey questions in Polish alongside their English translations. These items were used to assess academic well-being in teaching and research roles.

M1

Polish: W jakim stopniu ocenia Pan/Pani, że Pana/Pani praca jest celowa?
English: To what extent do you consider your work purposeful?

E1

Polish: Jak często w pracy jest Pan/Pani całkowicie pochłonięty tym, co robi?
English: How often are you completely absorbed in what you are doing at work?

P1

Polish: Jak często odczuwa Pan/Pani radość?
English: How often do you feel joy?

A1

Polish: Jak często ma Pan/Pani poczucie, że robi Pan/Pani postępy w realizacji stawianych Panu/Pani celów?
English: How often do you feel that you are making progress towards your goals?

E2

Polish: Na ile praca, którą Pan/Pani wykonuje, budzi w Panu/Pani zainteresowanie i pasję?
English: To what extent does your work interest and inspire you?

R1

Polish: W jakim stopniu otrzymuje Pan/Pani pomoc i wsparcie od innych, gdy ich Pan/Pani potrzebuje?
English: To what extent do you receive help and support from others when you need it?

M2

Polish: W jakim stopniu odczuwa Pan/Pani, że to, co robi Pan/Pani w pracy, jest wartościowe i ma sens?
English: To what extent do you feel that what you do at work is valuable and meaningful?

A2

Polish: Jak często osiąga Pan/Pani ważne cele?
English: How often do you achieve important goals?

P2

Polish: Jak często odczuwa Pan/Pani pozytywne emocje?
English: How often do you feel positive emotions?

A3

Polish: Jak często udaje się Panu/Pani wywiązać z Pana/Pani obowiązków?
English: How often do you manage to fulfill your responsibilities?

E3

Polish: Jak często w pracy traci Pan/Pani poczucie czasu, robiąc coś, co sprawia Panu/Pani przyjemność?
English: How often do you lose track of time at work doing something enjoyable?

R2

Polish: W jakim stopniu czuje się Pan/Pani doceniany/a?
English: To what extent do you feel appreciated?

M3

Polish: Na ile czuje Pan/Pani, że ma Pan/Pani jasno określony kierunek?
English: To what extent do you feel you have a clear direction?

R3

Polish: Jak bardzo jest Pan/Pani zadowolony/a z Pana/Pani relacji zawodowych?
English: How satisfied are you with your professional relationships?

P3

Polish: W jakim stopniu czuje się Pan/Pani spełniony/a zawodowo?
English: To what extent do you feel professionally fulfilled?

Dobrostan pracowników akademickich w rolach dydaktycznych i badawczych: analiza przy użyciu modelu PERMA w szkolnictwie wyższym

Streszczenie

Cel: Celem tego badania jest zidentyfikowanie, w jaki sposób podwójne role zawodowe pracowników akademickich jako nauczycieli i badaczy, są powiązane z ich dobrostanem w instytucjach szkolnictwa wyższego.

Metodyka: Zastosowano podejście ilościowe oparte na zaadaptowanym kwestionariuszu PERMA Profiler, rozprowadzonym wśród 140 pracowników akademickich jednego z polskich uniwersytetów. Uzyskane odpowiedzi poddano analizie statystycznej z wykorzystaniem statystyk opisowych, testów normalności Shapiro-Wilka, testów t-Studenta dla prób zależnych, testów rangowanych znakowanych Wilcoxona, analizy siły efektu oraz korelacji, w celu porównania poziomu dobrostanu w rolach dydaktycznej i naukowej w obrębie tych samych uczestników.

Wyniki: Wyniki wskazują, że pracownicy akademiccy doświadczają wyższego poziomu Pozytywnych Emocji, Poczucia Sensu i Poczucia Osiągnięć w pracy dydaktycznej niż w badawczej. Nie odnotowano istotnych statystycznie różnic w zakresie Zaangażowania i Relacji społecznych. Korelacje wahały się od niskich do umiarkowanych (Pozytywne Emocje) oraz silnych (Relacje), co wskazuje na częściową, lecz nierówną spójność dobrostanu w obu rolach.

Implikacje i rekomendacje: Badanie podkreśla potrzebę wdrażania strategii instytucjonalnych wspierających dobrostan kadry akademickiej zarówno w pracy dydaktycznej, jak i naukowej. Ponieważ działalność dydaktyczna i naukowa wiążą się z odmiennymi wymaganiami, ujęcie dobrostanu w formie ogólnej może maskować różnice związane ze specyfiką poszczególnych ról. Oddzielna ocena tych aspektów pozwala uczelniom skuteczniej równoważyć obciążenia, dostosowywać formy wsparcia oraz unikać stosowania jednolitych, uniwersalnych rozwiązań. Rekomenduje się kontynuację badań porównawczych oraz badań podłużnych w różnych uczelniach, a także jakościową eksplorację mechanizmów radzenia sobie wykorzystywanych przez pracowników naukowych.

Oryginalność/wartość: W niniejszym badaniu, dotyczącym pracy naukowej charakteryzującej się wysoką autonomią i odpowiedzialnością, z wyraźnym podziałem zadań w zakresie nauczania i badań, przedstawiono specyficzne dla poszczególnych ról spostrzeżenia dotyczące dobrostanu pracowników naukowych poprzez porównanie wewnątrzindywidualne z wykorzystaniem modelu PERMA, próbując zidentyfikować wzorce, które mogą być maskowane przez analizę dobrostanu jako całości.

Słowa kluczowe: dobrostan, PERMA, szkolnictwo wyższe, kadra akademicka, dydaktyka i badania naukowe