Teachers' Emotional Burnout, Psychological Detachment from Work and Self-Reported Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of the COVID-19 infection has created unprecedented changes in the education system. The emotional burnout of teachers increased during the pandemic, unfavourably affecting their physical and mental health. In this context, teachers' ability to psychologically detach themselves from work to recharge is of special relevance. Research about the quality of teachers' professional life and emotional burnout during the pandemic is not sufficient. Therefore, the aim of the current research is to investigate the relationship between teachers' emotional burnout, their psychological detachment from work, and self-reported health during the pandemic, involving teachers working both face-to-face and remotely.

The sample consisted of 506 teachers, with the majority aged from 2–64 years, of whom 472 were female and 34 were male. Of these, 269 teachers worked mainly face-to-face, whereas 237 worked in a hybrid form or mainly remotely. Data were collected from October to December 2021 during periods of varying restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents completed the Teachers' Burnout and Teachers' Self-Perceived Health scale, designed for the Erasmus+ project "Teaching to Be: Supporting Teachers' Professional Growth and Wellbeing in the Field of Social and Emotional Learning", and the Psychological Detachment from Work scale. It was found that higher emotional burnout in teachers is related to a lower ability to detach themselves psychologically from their work. Moreover, teachers with higher emotional burnout reported lower health indicators. Comparing data from teachers who worked face-to-face and those working mixed or remotely, differences were found in their levels of emotional burnout; specifically, teachers who worked face-to-face reported higher burnout. These results have practical implications supporting the necessity to promote teachers' mental health and wellbeing in their workplaces.

Keywords: burnout, COVID-19, pandemic, psychological detachment from work, self-reported health, teachers

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Introduction

The outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in 2019 and its continuation have created unprecedented challenges for the education system and the work of teachers in general. It has been estimated that COVID-19-related difficulties have affected 63 million teachers and 117 million students worldwide (Giannini et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2020), and the pandemic is still continuing. The social distancing practices that were introduced and the closing of schools significantly changed the organization of the learning process and the everyday lives of educational institutions, teaching staff, students, and their parents (Ferri et al., 2020; Herman et al., 2021; Sokal et al., 2021). The latest research highlights the negative aspects of the pandemic crisis, such as fatigue from the protracted situation and the continuation of uncertainty, as there is no point of reference when and whether the situation in the field of education will return to that of the pre-pandemic period. Uncertainty can create and/or maintain additional work stress and adaptation disturbances and increase the burnout risks of those involved in the situation (Chan et al., 2021; Kazlauskas & Quero, 2020; Reynolds et al., 2021).

The teaching profession belongs to those areas of professional activity that are associated with a high risk of emotional burnout (Mahoney et al., 2011; Marcionetti al., 2018), and recent research suggests that teachers' stress and burnout may have increased significantly during the pandemic (Allen et al., 2020; Chan et al., 2021; Reynolds et al., 2021). The pandemic is still continuing, and there is simultaneous uncertainty regarding the future, causing chronic fatigue from crisis management over a long period of time, which does not raise hopes that work tension will decrease soon and that there will be an opportunity to recover from the situation (DiStaso & Shoss, 2020; Kazlauskas & Quero, 2020). Taking this into account, there is a significant need to focus on strengthening teachers' wellbeing and search for protective factors against emotional burnout (Herman et al., 2021). Recent research has targeted teachers' health issues as a consequence of burnout (Collie, 2021; De Clercq et al., 2021), while their ability to distance themselves psychologically from their work, thus balancing the professional and personal aspects of their lives, has been recognized as a protective factor.

Studies have shown that creating psychological distance from work – the ability to rest without performing work-related activities outside working hours and without thinking about work – reduces work stress and burnout and acts as a protective factor against burnout (Fritz et al., 2010). It provides employees with opportunities to reduce the symptoms of work stress and recharge the emotional and physical resources spent during working hours, thus increasing their psycho-emotional wellbeing and work quality indicators in general (Gerber et al., 2020; Ouyang et al., 2019; Sonnentag et al., 2017). Studies using samples

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of teachers have found that the experience of psychological distancing significantly reduces the damage caused by emotional burnout (Klusmann et al., 2016; Yang & Hayes, 2020).

Although many studies have been carried out on the emotional burnout of teachers, less research has been done on the relationship of teachers' burnout with variables characteristic of the pandemic conditions (Yagil, 2020). The practical usefulness of research carried out in the context of the pandemic can be attributed both to the assessment of the quality of teachers' working life and to the clarification of protective factors in order to reduce the risk of emotional burnout.

The term "emotional burnout" is described in psychology as a condition in which chronic work stress has reached a level at which an individual experiences emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a sense that his or her personal abilities have decreased (Aluja et al., 2005; de Beer & Bianchi, 2019; Kim & Burić, 2020; Maslach et al., 1996; Yang & Hayes, 2020). Particular emphasis is placed on emotional, physical and mental exhaustion (Petitta & Jiang, 2020), which is characteristic mainly of those working in the social sphere and occurs in situations of prolonged emotional overload (Maslach et al., 1996; Schonfeld et al., 2019).

Emotional burnout is facilitated by a working environment with a high intensity and a low support system (Ogińska-Bulik & Michalska, 2021). Dimensions of burnout such as depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishment are commonly used in psychological research to determine emotional burnout rates in different samples (Guthier et al., 2020) because they are related to negative effects on an individual's psychological wellbeing and health, work achievements, ability to distance themselves from work, absenteeism, and even their departure from the profession (Burgess et al., 2020). Emotional exhaustion reduces productivity and effectiveness and is associated with interpersonal and family life problems, an inability to detach from work out of hours and insomnia (Cordes, 2021; Estevez Cores et al., 2021; Klusmann et al., 2016; Warren et al., 2013).

Depersonalization is characterized by cynicism and a tendency to treat others negatively, intolerantly and formally to protect one's own internal resources from the consequences of emotional exhaustion by being less involved in work (de Beer & Bianchi, 2019; Schonfeld et al., 2019). The underestimation of personal achievements is related to a sense of incompetence, a sense of guilt for feeling negative at work and dissatisfaction with belonging to one's profession (Aluja et al., 2005; de Beer et al., 2019; Schonfeld et al., 2019; Taris et al., 2001). Both of these aspects can significantly hinder the quality of work of a teacher as well as negatively affect the health of an individual (Almen et al., 2020). If stressful situations at work are frequent and long-lasting, they contribute to the development of chronic conditions such as anxiety and depression that lower one's quality of life (Collie, 2021; Schonfeld et al., 2017).

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The research shows high rates of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in samples of teachers because their work includes specific tasks – responsibility for the educational process of students and its management – in addition to maintaining intensive interactions with different groups, including colleagues, the school administration, and students and their parents (Kim & Buric, 2020; Mahoney et al., 2011; Marcionetti et al., 2018). Students benefit from their teachers' ability to raise their interest and provide support in the learning process, parents would like to get an individual approach for their child, while the school administration requires high levels of achievement and successful classroom management (Kim & Buric, 2020; Pas et al., 2010; Philipp & Schüpbach, 2010).

In the context of distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, such work-related resources as a predictable working environment, close cooperation with colleagues, and positive feedback in the workplace are limited (Collie, 2021). There are also technological, pedagogical and social challenges to distance learning, such as the availability of technological devices and the internet and the necessity of parental involvement in their children's learning (Martinsone & Stokenberga, 2021). Pedagogical challenges may be related to the digital competence of teachers, the need to adapt teaching materials to remote learning, and providing positive feedback to ensure that students have learnt the subject's content and stayed motivated (Chan et al., 2021; Ferri et al., 2020). This also entails the time needed to prepare for the online learning process, which creates a risk of additional workload and emotional burnout (Kersten et al., 2021).

Recent studies confirm that the pandemic has had negative consequences on the wellbeing of teachers and pupils and on the quality of learning indicators in general (Chan et al., 2021; Ferri et al., 2020; Herman et al., 2021; Hilger et al., 2021). An additional stressor was related to teachers' concerns about their health and fear of becoming infected with the virus (Pressley et al., 2021). Finally, teachers' workload increased due to the need to replace colleagues who were ill or left their jobs during the pandemic. Taking the experience of the difficulties with the distance learning process during the initial period of the pandemic into account, maximum efforts are currently being made to ensure the learning process remains face-to-face. During the pandemic, three forms of organization of the learning process could be conditionally distinguished: on-site learning/face-to-face, where groups of classes were physically and socially distanced; remote/online learning; and the so-called hybrid form of learning, where the process took place both face-to-face and remotely (Pressley et al., 2021). These forms of educational organization altered in a natural and sudden manner in response to the dynamics of COVID-19 infections spreading in the country or within the framework of the illness and quarantine status of a particular class, teacher or pupil being determined. Nevertheless, little research has been done on teachers' wellbeing in the context of hybrid learning, which will be addressed in this study.

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At the same time, scientific studies have concluded that remote work has reduced the preservation of a healthy relationship between working and non-working life boundaries, reducing the chances of restoring resources after work (Kossek et al., 2021). Studies have shown that the greater the stress of work has been on a working day, the more time is needed for rest, so the balance of work life and out-of-work life is vital to restore the energy lost during a working day (Karabinski et al., 2021; Schulz et al., 2021). Psychologically distancing oneself from work – the ability to rest from work without performing work-related activities outside working hours and without thinking about work – is a recovery strategy (Fritz et al., 2010; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). The concept includes not only a physical absence from work and not performing work-related activities during out-of-work hours but also the ability to disconnect mentally from work and stop thinking about work-related problems (Schulz et al., 2021), thus restoring resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Psychologically distancing oneself from work has also been shown to increase an employee's wellbeing and reduce the risk of emotional burnout (Bennett et al., 2016; Ouyang et al., 2019; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007; Sonnentag et al., 2017). It has been found that the experience of psychological distancing significantly reduces exhaustion and emotional emptiness, and therefore teachers who use individual strategies and distance themselves from work are better able to reduce the risk of burnout and health problems (Ebert et al., 2015; Fritz et al., 2010).

Based on this brief review of the literature and taking into account the aim of the study to find out the relationship between the indicators of emotional burnout of teachers, their psychological detachment from work, and their self-reported state of health in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the following research questions were posed:

1. What is the relationship between the indicators of teachers' emotional burnout, their psychological detachment from work, and their self-reported state of health?
2. Are there differences in levels of emotional burnout, psychological detachment from work and self-reported health between teachers who work face-to-face and teachers working remotely or in a hybrid form of learning?
3. How do teachers' psychological detachment from work and self-reported health explain the variation in teachers' emotional burnout, controlling for their demographic indicators and the form of learning employed during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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Methodology

Study participants

Five hundred and six teachers teaching at the elementary, primary and secondary school stages of general and vocational education institutions in Latvia participated voluntarily in this study, with the majority being between the ages of 21 and 64 (11% were aged 21–29; 34% were 30–44; 33% were 45–54; 19% were 55–64; and 3% were 65 and over). Women made up 93% of the sample ($n = 472$), and men made up the remaining 7% ($n = 34$). In terms of location, 269 teachers worked mainly face-to-face where measures were put in place to limit COVID-19 infection, and 237 worked remotely or in a hybrid form. Analyzing the indicators of teachers' total work experience, it can be seen that 30% of respondents' work experience is 26 years or more, 17% had worked as a teacher for 21–25 years, while 18% had working experience of just 1–5 years. According to the information provided by the respondents about their workload, 455 teachers (90%) were employed full-time, while 51 (10%) worked part-time.

Instrumentation

To indicate the rates of teachers' emotional burnout and self-reported health, the Erasmus + project's "Teaching to Be: Supporting Teachers' Professional Growth and Wellbeing in the Field of Social and Emotional Learning" developed questionnaire was used.

The nine claims of the Teachers' Burnout Scale measure teachers' emotional burnout. Each statement is evaluated on a Likert scale from 1 to 6, where 1 is "Completely agree" and 6 is "Completely disagree". The scale includes three subscales of emotional burnout assessment: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishment. The sum of all subscales indicates the level of burnout of the respondent, but the sum of each subscale indicates the specific burnout dimension, and the higher the sum of the scale and subscales, the more pronounced the respondent's burnout rates.

On a scale to self-report their health, teachers performed a subjective assessment of their health in response to individual statements on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, which was rated as follows: 1 – bad, 2– medium, 3 – good, 4 – very good, and 5 – excellent. The sum obtained on the scale indicates the level of self-reported health of the respondent, and the higher the sum, the more positive the self-assessment of the respondent's health.

The Psychological Detachment from Work scale was used to determine the teachers' psychological detachment from work (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007; in 2016, Berga adapted the survey for use in Latvia). The scale measures the level of psychological distancing with four statements on a Likert scale from 1 to

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5, where 1 is "Completely disagree" and 5 is "Completely agree". The level of psychological distancing is obtained by summing up the self-assessment scores and dividing it by the number of statements (arithmetic mean), and the higher the sum, the more pronounced and positive the psychological distancing of the respondent from work is.

The survey of teachers' demographic data included questions about their gender, age, experience of pedagogical work, workload, and the way in which the teaching/learning process took place in the last month (face-to-face, mainly remotely, remotely, and face-to-face).

Procedure

The research data were collected from October to December 2021 when, due to the measures intended to contain the spread of COVID-19 infections in Latvia, both the learning process and the work of teachers were undertaken in all three formats: face-to-face, remotely, or in a hybrid form. When respondents were asked to participate in the survey, they confirmed their informed consent to participate voluntarily in the study. The survey was carried out using Google Forms. A link to the questionnaire was sent to various e-mail addresses of Latvian educational institutions or to the directors of educational institutions, who then forwarded the information to teachers and invited them to participate in the study anonymously and voluntarily. An additional link to the survey was posted in several teachers' discussion groups on social networks. The participants were informed that the study would be kept confidential and that the data obtained would only be used in the aggregate. The data collection was carried out individually and without a time limit.

The design of the study is a correlated cross-cut study. The obtained data were collected in Excel and then exported to and processed in SPSS v.26.0.

Results

The data on the reliability indicators of the surveys used in the study and the empirical distribution of the data obtained are summarized in Table 1 and show that the overall internal coherence indicators of the scales are very good or excellent. Since the indicators of scales and subscales do not correspond to a normal distribution, non-parametric statistical methods were used for further calculations.

After evaluating the averages of the study variable values, it can be concluded that the overall burnout rate of the teacher sample ($M = 3.98$) is above average and indicates a trend of emotional burnout. Overall, the average rate of psychological detachment from work ($M = 2.62$) shows a positive trend, which indicates an above-average psychological distancing of teachers from their work.

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Table 1. Reliability indicators for the burnout scale and its subscales, self-reported health scale, and psychological detachment from work scale (n = 506)

Variable	M	Min.	Max	SD	a	K-S
Burnout (total)	3.98	1	6	1.17	0.95	0.07[*]
Emotional exhaustion	4.43	1	6	1.22	0.87	0.12[*]
Depersonalization	3.85	1	6	1.36	0.91	0.12[*]
Diminished personal accomplishment	3.66	1	6	1.32	0.86	0.09[*]
Self-reported health	2.38	1	5	0.73	–	0.29[*]
Psychological detachment from work	2.62	1	5	1.08	0.94	0.11[*]

*$p < .05$

Teachers' self-reported state of health (M = 2.38) is slightly below average, as evidenced by the most frequent answers provided by teachers, 51% of whom described their health condition as average and 36% as good.

A correlation analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between the indicators of the emotional burnout of teachers, their psychological detachment from work, and their self-reported state of health (see Table 2).

Table 2. Spearman correlation coefficients between the burnout scale and its subscales, self-reported health scale, and psychological detachment from work scale

Variable	Self-reported health	Psychological detachment from work
Burnout (total)	−0.46[**]	−0.36[**]
Emotional exhaustion	−0.41[**]	−0.43[**]
Depersonalization	−0.42[**]	−0.32[**]
Diminished personal accomplishment	−0.38[**]	−0.25[**]
Self-reported health	–	0.36[**]
Psychological detachment from work	0.36[**]	–

$N = 605$; ** $p < .01$

Looking at the relationship between teachers' burnout and self-reported health, it was concluded that self-reported health indicators presented significantly negative results that correlated with the burnout scale and its subscale indicators. This demonstrates that the increase in burnout rates leads to a reduction in teachers' self-reported health as a positive construct.

In terms of the relationship between teachers' burnout and psychological detachment from work, it can be concluded that psychological detachment correlates negatively and significantly with burnout; in other words, the lower the

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assessment of psychological detachment, the higher the burnout rates. The correlation between the subscale of emotional exhaustion and psychological detachment is also statistically significant, which indicates the difficulty for teachers to psychologically distance themselves from work, causing them to suffer from emotional exhaustion. The correlation between diminished personal accomplishment and psychological detachment is statistically negative. Teachers' psychological detachment and self-reported health are positively and significantly correlated, which indicates that their ability to distance themselves psychologically from work is positively related to self-assessed health. These conclusions have also been reached in other scientific studies (Ebert et al., 2015; Fritz et al., 2010; Schulz et al., 2021; Sonnentag et al., 2017).

In order to address the differentiation in levels of emotional burnout, psychological detachment from work and self-reported health indicators for teachers working face-to-face and those working both remotely and face-to-face, Mann-Whitney tests were conducted for a comparison of independent samples (see Table 3).

The results indicate that teachers who basically work face-to-face report higher overall rates of emotional burnout, depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishment than teachers working remotely or in a hybrid form. However, there are no significant differences in the two groups' levels of self-reported health and psychological detachment from work.

A stepwise regression analysis was used to assess how teachers' psychological detachment from work and self-reported state of health predict their emotional burnout by controlling for demographic variables and form of teaching organization (see Table 4).

Table 3. Differences in levels of teachers' emotional burnout, self-reported health and psychological detachment from work by form of teaching

| Variable | Form of teaching | | | | |
| | Face-to-face (n = 269) | | Hybrid and remotely (n = 237) | | Mann-Whitney output |
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*U*
Burnout (total)	4,11	1,13	3.84	1,20	27841,00[*]
Emotional exhaustion	4,54	1,13	4,32	1,30	29210,00
Depersonalization	3,96	1,34	3,71	1,37	28547,00[*]
Diminished personal accomplishment	3,82	1,29	3,48	1,34	27450,00[**]
Self-reported health	2,36	0,73	2,39	0,73	31315,50
Psychological detachment from work	2,62	1,11	2,63	1,07	31486,50

*p ‹ .05; **p ‹ .01

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Table 4. Regression analysis for the dependent variable 'emotional burnout of teachers' ($n = 506$)

Predictor	B	B SE	β	t
Step 1				
Self-reported health	−0.62	0.07	−0.40	−9.49[**]
Psychological detachment from work	−0.24	0.04	−0.23	−5.38[**]
Form of teaching organization	−0.22	0.09	−0.09	−2.43[*]
Gender	−0.10	0.18	−0.22	−0.56
Age	−0.01	0.07	−0.01	−0.17
Work experience	−0.02	0.04	−0.04	−0.58
Marital status	−0.03	0.03	−0.04	−1.01
Workload	−0.39	0.15	−0.10	−2.55[*]
Step 6				
Self-reported health	−0.61	0.64	−0.39	−9.57[**]
Psychological detachment from work	−0.24	0.04	−0.23	−5.66[**]
Form of teaching organization	−0.23	0.09	−0.10	−2.60[**]
Workload	−0.38	0.15	−0.10	−2.60[**]

Note. For reasons of space, only the first and last steps of the analysis are included. In step 1, $R^2 = .30$, $p < .01$. In step 6, $R^2 = .29$, $p < .01$.

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$

The results of the regression analysis show that the emotional burnout of teachers is statistically significantly predicted by lower self-reported health, less psychological detachment from work, the face-to-face form of teaching, and a full workload. These variables in the study sample explain 29% of the variation in teachers' emotional burnout ($R^2 = .29$).

Discussion

The results of this study mostly coincide with those of other studies. Teachers who indicate higher rates of emotional burnout assess their state of health more negatively. This is in line with the conclusions of other researchers on the relationship between emotional burnout and deteriorating health (Collie, 2021; Estevez Cores et al., 2021; Kazauskas & Quero, 2020).

The relationship between emotional burnout and psychological detachment from work coincides with the guidelines of the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018), which indicates the potential for recovery from psychological detachment from work and provides opportunities to reduce symptoms related to work stress and replenish the resources spent during work. It has previously been confirmed that experience of psychological detachment from work significantly reduces the damage caused by emotional exhaustion, which, in the case of the emotional burnout of teachers, can be especially high and associated

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with negative health consequences (Ebert et al., 2015; Fritz et al., 2010; Klusmann et al., 2016). This also explains the significant correlation between psychological detachment from work and self-reported health, which shows that the ability of teachers to distance themselves psychologically from work interacts positively with their self-assessments of their health.

With regard to differences between indicators of emotional burnout, psychological detachment from work and self-reported health, the results are different from those of other scientific studies. Teachers who worked mostly face-to-face rather than in a hybrid form or remotely reported significantly higher rates of emotional burnout, particularly in the dimensions of depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishment. This result may be explained by the situation relating to the pandemic in Latvia during the collection of research data, which was characterized by high rates of infection, serious restrictions in social distancing, increasing workload due to the necessity to replace colleagues who were ill or quarantined, and additional job responsibilities that were not related to teachers' direct duties (e.g., COVID testing and monitoring the use of personal protective equipment). Finally, in parallel with working with students face-to-face, teachers needed to organize the online learning process for those students who were ill or quarantined. Some other scientific studies reached similar conclusions related to issues of uncertainty and unpredictability in the working environment, including worries about personal health and fear of contracting COVID-19, excessive workload and poorer results (Chan et al., 2021; Pressley et al., 2021; Venkatesh et al., 2021).

The comparatively higher rates of the depersonalization subscale among teachers who worked mostly face-to-face can be explained by taking into account that the depersonalization of the individual acts as a defence mechanism to protect oneself from the exhaustion of internal and external resources at work (de Beer et al., 2019; Schonfeld et al., 2019).

The significant differences between teacher groups in the diminished personal accomplishment subscale can be explained in light of the findings of other studies on the academic achievements of pupils who have declined during the pandemic, which could lead teachers to a reduced and negative self-assessment of their professional abilities (Chan et al., 2021; Ferri et al., 2020; Herman et al., 2021; Hilger et al., 2021). It should also be mentioned that teachers who carried out activities during the study period in addition to their direct duties and activities not related to their pedagogical work, such as testing students, could have experienced additional workload.

In the present sample of teachers, it was found that their emotional burnout rate was predicted by self-assessments of health and psychological distancing from work, as well as the form of organization of teaching and workload, which explained 29% of the variation in teachers' emotional burnout. These results

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are consistent with those of other studies. With regard to the job demands-resources model, especially in the context of the specifics of teachers' work and pandemic conditions, it can be concluded that teachers' lower self-assessed health is related to higher indicators of emotional burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Previous studies indicate that emotional burnout rates can be attributed to various aspects of mental and physical health that significantly lower the quality of life and wellbeing of employees (Collie, 2021; Schonfeld et al., 2017). In addition, employees who do not take sufficient care of themselves and are unable to maintain a healthy balance between working life and out-of-work life have a lower ability to psychologically distance themselves from work, which could cause higher emotional burnout (Almén et al., 2020; Hetland et al., 2021).

Previous research findings show similarities with the results of this study insofar as they predict the emotional burnout of teachers, taking into account the form of organization of their work (Chan et al., 2021; Kossek et al., 2021). This study shows that emotional burnout is significantly predicted by teachers' workload indicators; specifically, those teachers working face-to-face reported higher rates of burnout than those working remotely or in a hybrid form. The scientific literature extensively examines the impact of workload on burnout, revealing that a higher workload explains higher rates of emotional burnout (Marcionetti et al., 2018; Venkatesh et al., 2021; Warren et al., 2013).

It should be taken into account that the data for this study were obtained using self-assessment questionnaires. This creates a risk that the obtained data depend on the participants' subjective understanding of the questions, and the provision of socially desirable answers is also possible. The survey was conducted electronically, and therefore it can be assumed that the study's participants could comprise the most motivated respondents. The cross-sectional design of the study, which does not allow a conclusion of how the variables measured may change over time, could also be considered a limitation.

Overall, the findings of this study are mostly in line with the conclusions of previous studies, confirming that lower psychological distancing from work and self-assessed health are related to higher rates of emotional burnout among teachers. The comparison of teacher groups in this study provided new evidence on the possible interaction of face-to-face teaching with higher rates of emotional burnout. The study also addressed teachers' wellbeing in the hybrid teaching model, which has previously received insufficient research.

With regard to the implications of the findings, it is important to pay attention to the mental health of teachers in their professional life, firstly, by creating working conditions at a school as an institution in which psychological distancing from work is possible and supported. Secondly, one of the essential criteria for the quality of teachers' work to be considered is their ability to maintain a balance between their professional and personal lives, as well as their

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individual responsibility to consciously invest in their recovery. It is important to continue research on promoting teachers' mental health and finding a healthy balance between their at-work and out-of-work activities in future studies.

Conclusions

This study addressed the relationship between teachers' emotional burnout, psychological detachment from work and self-reported health in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was found that higher self-reported rates regarding the ability to distance oneself from work were associated with lower rates of emotional burnout among teachers. The relationship between psychological distancing from work and self-assessed health indicated that teachers' ability to psychologically distance themselves from work interacts positively with their self-assessed health. Their emotional burnout is statistically significantly predicted by their self-reported health, psychological detachment from work, the form of organization of teaching, and their workload. These factors explain 29% of the variations in the emotional burnout of teachers.

It was also found that teachers who mainly worked face-to-face indicated higher rates of emotional burnout both in general and in separate dimensions compared to those who worked remotely or in a hybrid form. This may be explained by the necessity to integrate additional activities into their everyday work, such as supporting those students who were in quarantine, replacing infected colleagues or organizing the testing of students. No differences in teachers' self-reported health and ability to psychologically detach themselves from work were found when comparing groups of teachers based on their teaching form.

This study illuminates the role of psychological detachment from work as a protective factor against emotional burnout. It also raises awareness of promoting teachers' physical and mental health, facilitating their psychological distancing from work and thus keeping a balance between teachers' professional work and their personal life. This should be considered as both an institutional obligation when organizing work and also a teacher's individual responsibility.

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