

Article

Participation in Tasks Outside the Classroom and the Educational Institution of Non-University Teachers in Spain

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the most significant characteristics of non-university teaching staff within the general system in Spain who participate in non-traditional tasks outside the school and the classroom within the educational field. An exploratory study was conducted on a sample of 6512 teachers in Spain, using a 13-item Likert-scale questionnaire structured into three scopes (Technical–Political, Scientific–Academic, and Teacher Training). The results identify three distinct profiles of teachers who participate in tasks away from the classroom and the educational institution, according to the educational level at which they work. In the case of Early Childhood Education teachers who participate most in such tasks, the most significant variables are gender, holding a management position, type of school, and Continuous Teacher Training (CTT). For Primary Education teachers, the most important variables are teaching experience, holding a management position, and CTT. Finally, for Secondary Education teachers who participate most in these tasks, the most significant variables across all three scopes are teaching experience, holding a management position, and CTT. Although the proportion of teachers who report dedicating time to tasks outside the classroom and the school is small, a deeper understanding of the characteristics of those who do such activities for the consideration and design of strategies, plans, and policies, targeted by educational level, in order to increase or improve the degree of teacher participation in the three scopes under investigation.

Keywords: educational field; professionalization; teaching profession; participation; teaching functions



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1. Introduction

Teacher professionalization refers to a heterogeneous set of policies, discourses, and practices aimed at the improvement and/or regulation of the work of educators that have held a central place globally for decades (Dumay et al., 2024; Hilferty, 2008; Matarranz, 2023; Sánchez-Cabrero, 2023; Sánchez-Cabrero & Pericacho-Gómez, 2021; Tatto, 2024; Valle López & Matarranz, 2023), albeit from perspectives that are at times vastly different (Monarca et al., 2024).

Works addressing this topic concur on the importance they assign to the participation and involvement of teaching staff in various matters of the educational field. This insistence, however, warrants some clarifications: (1) it often forms part of a certain rhetoric that is not correlated with governmental initiatives that actually stipulate mechanisms for this to happen, (2) it is usually confined to a limited understanding of participation, referring mainly to specific consultations, and (3) it fundamentally pertains to certain very delimited

aspects of the educational field (Azorín & Hernández, 2024; Bakır & Altunay, 2025; Monarca et al., 2024, 2025).

This is reinforced by the epistemological assumptions predominant in the mainstream approaches to this topic, which focus on the current structure and functioning of the teaching profession and the educational field (Monarca, 2021). These approaches reproduce dynamics of fragmentation, differentiation, and hierarchization among actors and scopes of action linked to decision-making, as well as to the possession and distribution of the knowledge (cultural capital) legitimized for it. This configuration represents an additional obstacle for the creation of a type of knowledge capable of promoting reflection and guiding towards a more horizontal and democratic teacher professionalization (Monarca, 2021; Monarca et al., 2024).

This reality is not only documented in a wide variety of texts (Apelehin et al., 2025; Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2024; Cochran-Smith et al., 2022; Ohlemann et al., 2023; Ostinelli & Crescentini, 2024) but is also clearly exposed in recent empirical research. These studies confirm that teachers dedicate most of their working time to tasks/functions within the classroom and, occasionally, to other tasks within the school. In contrast, their participation in other types of tasks/functions within the educational field is very incipient (Harris & Jones, 2025; Monarca et al., 2025; Sánchez-Cabrero et al., 2025).

Related to the above, several studies indicate that, in general terms, debates and discourses on teacher professionalism scarcely represent teachers as a collective with decision-making and response power. This is because these discourses are constructed from outside the profession, following the logic of the “authorized expert” who is legitimized to do so (Hilferty, 2008; Ji, 2021; Lewis & Hogan, 2019; Monarca et al., 2024).

The truth is that, beyond the discourses that encourage teacher participation in various educational matters beyond the classroom and the school, the educational field has historically been structured in a differentiated, fragmented, and hierarchical manner in its tasks/functions (Evans, 2019; Kostoulas et al., 2019; Lewis & Hogan, 2019; Smaller, 2015).

From this theoretical perspective (Monarca et al., 2024, 2025), it is possible to identify four scopes that currently structure the educational field in Spain, although this structure is often very similar in a wide variety of countries:

- The scope of the School and the Teaching Staff, whose main function is to deliver the teaching prescribed by existing regulations.
- The Technical–Political scope, whose function is to regulate and supervise the education system.
- The Teacher Training scope, with the function of preparing individuals for the teaching role.
- The Scientific–Academic scope, with the function of producing knowledge for the teaching profession and the educational field in general; sometimes articulated with the previous scope.

As noted in recent research (Monarca et al., 2025), both teachers and other professionals in the educational field perceive the fragmentation, differentiation, and hierarchization of the tasks and functions of the teaching profession as naturalized. This is because each of them has been socialized into the current structure of the field and its respective habitus (Bourdieu, 2002).

For this reason, the possibilities for teachers to transition between the different structuring scopes of the educational field are not only limited by the opportunities offered by professionalizing policies and practices. As deduced from recent research, they are also conditioned by the participants’ own interests and expectations, as well as the cultural capital they possess (Monarca et al., 2025; Sánchez-Cabrero et al., 2025).

In this regard, beyond the interests and intentions of the policies and discourses that invite or suggest participation, the reality is that, according to recent research (Monarca et al., 2025; Sánchez-Cabrero et al., 2025), the educational field operates inside delimited-closed-demarcated zones. Within these zones, participants are permitted—or not—to participate based on the positions they occupy within the field (Bourdieu, 2002, 2014; Monarca, 2021). It is precisely these zones and their boundaries that demarcate the functions and tasks of each of the scopes structuring the educational field and its associates. These boundaries are naturalized, normalized, and taken for granted by both teaching staff and other colleagues (Monarca et al., 2024).

It is here that this study aims to make an impact by identifying the characteristics of the teaching staff who dedicate the most time to non-traditional activities within the educational field, according to the educational level at which they work. Understanding the profile of teachers who participate in tasks and functions beyond the classroom and the school will contribute to designing policies that, if genuinely interested in enhancing participation and democratization of the educational field, can effectively promote it. This highly relevant issue has scarcely been addressed in the manner proposed here. As outlined thus far, the majority of studies focus on traditional functions within the school (Bergmark, 2023; Carlson et al., 2024; El Oraiby, 2025; García-Martínez et al., 2021) and, primarily, within the classroom (Creagh et al., 2025; Kraft & Novicoff, 2024; Romiszowski, 2024; Sánchez-Cabrero et al., 2025). This hinders the strengthening of the teaching profession and limits the increase in levels of participation and engagement in future social and educational challenges (Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2024; Shieh, 2023; Jerrim & Sims, 2021).

One aspect already identified in our previous work is the level of knowledge and competencies that teaching staff report having to perform certain tasks (Monarca et al., 2025). These findings align with prior research on professions in general and the teaching profession in particular (Aldrich & Ruef, 2006; Evans, 2019; Kostoulas et al., 2019; Monarca et al., 2024; Ostinelli & Crescentini, 2024). This analysis consistently emphasizes some key aspects, many of which are absent or scarcely present in the case of teachers:

- The existence of prolonged, systematic initial training with a significant common theoretical base for all future professionals in the field, prior to any specialization.
- Initial training characterized by high academic and professional demands, equally reflected in the requirements for obtaining the degree or certification.

In addition to the above, the prior studies highlight other characteristics of professions:

- (a) Participation in debates, policies, and other matters that define the field and the profession.
- (b) Direct participation in the production of insights related to their field.
- (c) Involvement in initial and continuous training practices for future professionals in the field.

These characteristics are scarcely present in the teaching profession (Monarca, 2021; Monarca et al., 2024, 2025; Sánchez-Cabrero et al., 2025).

1.1. Specific Background on Teacher Participation in the Three Scopes of Action

Regarding specific background on teacher participation in the three scopes of action, it is first necessary to acknowledge recent research that documents, at least for the Spanish context, the low participation of teachers in non-traditional tasks of the educational field (Monarca et al., 2025; Sánchez-Cabrero et al., 2025). In this formerly cited research over 60% of teachers report that they do not participate in such activities or do so only minimally. However, there exists a wide variety of studies with diverse interests and approaches which, although often not aligned with the perspective offered in this framework, are worth highlighting.

With respect to the Technical–Political scope, a line of research developed over decades emphasizes the political dimension of teacher training, broadly focused on empowering teachers through training that offers them possibilities to actively participate in decision-making and/or debate processes (Butera et al., 2021; Cochran-Smith et al., 2022; Creagh et al., 2025; de Almeida & Viana, 2023; Monarca et al., 2024). Occasionally, as part of the aforementioned literature, but other times from a primarily technical rationale, there is another group of studies focused on teacher participation in the development of educational policies and programs (Bakır & Altunay, 2025; Lewis & Hogan, 2019). Although some articles in this group focus on teacher participation within schools, the ones that are most prominent try to connect the norms regulating processes of reform or change with what happens in educational institutions and classrooms (Azorín & Hernández, 2024; Brown et al., 2023; Creagh et al., 2025; de Almeida & Viana, 2023; Gordon et al., 2022). Finally, another type of work highlights teacher participation in unions or other types of associations that seek to influence decision-making through these means (Govender, 2015).

Regarding teacher participation in the Scientific–Academic scope, one can find both classic and recent theoretical-normative works that discuss teacher research (Evans, 2019; Kostoulas et al., 2019; Lambirth et al., 2019). However, it is important to note that a significant portion of these studies refer exclusively to research conducted within the classroom and/or the school (Bergmark, 2023; Carlson et al., 2024; Jegstad et al., 2022; Lambirth et al., 2019), rather than to the integration of teachers into research scopes or their participation, as suggested in this study. Furthermore, it must be noted that there is a scarcity of empirical studies in this line of inquiry. Among the few, one can mention the research by Monarca et al. (2025) and Sánchez-Cabrero et al. (2025), which highlight the low participation of teachers in these tasks/functions; or the research by Khairiah et al. (2024), which identifies problems teachers face in writing and publishing academic papers.

On the other hand, previous work on teacher participation in the scope of initial or continuous training for other professionals is very scarce. One notable example is the research conducted by Torres et al. (2024), which shows teacher participation in continuous training processes through unions. Furthermore, the work of Clarke et al. (2014) highlights the importance of teachers within the schools themselves in training student teachers during their practicums; although they acknowledge that, while common, their role is not sufficiently valued. Finally, we can highlight the work of Ji (2021) who, in line with the previous study, indicates the importance of participating in co-formative processes with colleagues for the improvement of educational practice.

1.2. Common Tasks That Define Each Scope

Specifically, according to the exploratory study of the Spanish teaching reality by Monarca et al. (2025), it is possible to define the three main non-traditional scopes of teacher participation through a series of common tasks that define each scope. The most common are presented below:

- (1) Participation of teaching staff in tasks/functions within the Technical–Political scope:
 - Counseling professionals external to the school.
 - Taking part in socio-educational debates with other external professionals.
 - Participating in the development of educational regulations/policies.
 - Advising and/or collaborating on educational matters with foundations/associations, unions, international organizations, etc.
 - Sharing opinions, knowledge, and/or materials on social media.
- (2) Participation of teaching staff in tasks/functions within the Scientific–Academic scope:
 - Conducting research with other institutions outside the school.
 - Presenting papers at conferences.

- Developing textbooks and/or didactic materials for students/teaching staff.
 - Writing books or book chapters, articles in journals or newspapers.
- (3) Participation of teaching staff in tasks/functions within the Teacher Training scope:
- Training future teachers in undergraduate degrees for Early Childhood or Primary Education.
 - Training future teachers in the master's program for Secondary Education.
 - Providing continuous training courses for other teachers.
 - Developing materials for teacher training.

Considering the issues related to teacher participation beyond their traditional functions—and its importance—along with the state of the question, the main objective of this work is to identify the predominant profile and the characteristics of the teaching staff who participate the most in non-traditional or unusual functions/tasks within the educational field. This is specifically differentiated by each of the three scopes of study considered and for each non-university educational level (Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, Secondary Education, Baccalaureate, as well as Vocational Training).

Acknowledging the importance of teacher participation, this study seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge on this topic to help improve their involvement and to aid in the development of discourses, policies, and practices that help to guarantee it.

2. Materials and Methods

This study is framed within an exploratory and descriptive survey method, as it aims to understand the characteristics of a population within a specific context regarding a particular topic—in this case, the level of dedication of teaching staff to a set of non-traditional tasks within the educational field, according to the educational level at which they work (Gómez-Núñez et al., 2020).

2.1. Population and Sample

The population consists of all active non-university teachers in Spain. The total sample is composed of 6512 teachers (70.0% women, 28.5% men, and 1.5% who did not identify with either of the two major genders), with a mean age of 46.52 years. They belong to different types of educational institutions across the 17 Autonomous Communities of Spain and its two autonomous cities, Ceuta and Melilla. Figure 1 shows, through a population pyramid, the distribution of the sample by gender and age, considering only the two major genders, as the proportion of the other selected options is negligible. This is presented without any intention of discrimination whatsoever.

Regarding the ownership of the educational institution where each participant is currently employed, 86.55% of participants work in a strictly publicly funded institution, 10.45% work in a state-subsidized private institution (*concertada* in Spanish), and 3% work in a strictly privately funded institution.

The sampling was achieved by requesting participation from all educational institutions across the 17 Autonomous Communities and 2 autonomous cities of Spain (McMillan & Schumacher, 2008). The total sample that responded to the survey represents 0.93% of all teachers in Spain at the educational levels under study, according to the latest available official data (Ministerio de Educación, 2025). Furthermore, the distribution of the sample by gender and age aligns percentagewise and structurally with the official data of the target population (Ministerio de Educación, 2025). Thus, the sample is representative of the population of non-university teachers in Spain, considering official statistics, as the modal age range for teachers in Spain falls within the 40–49-year bracket and 72.3% of all teachers are women.

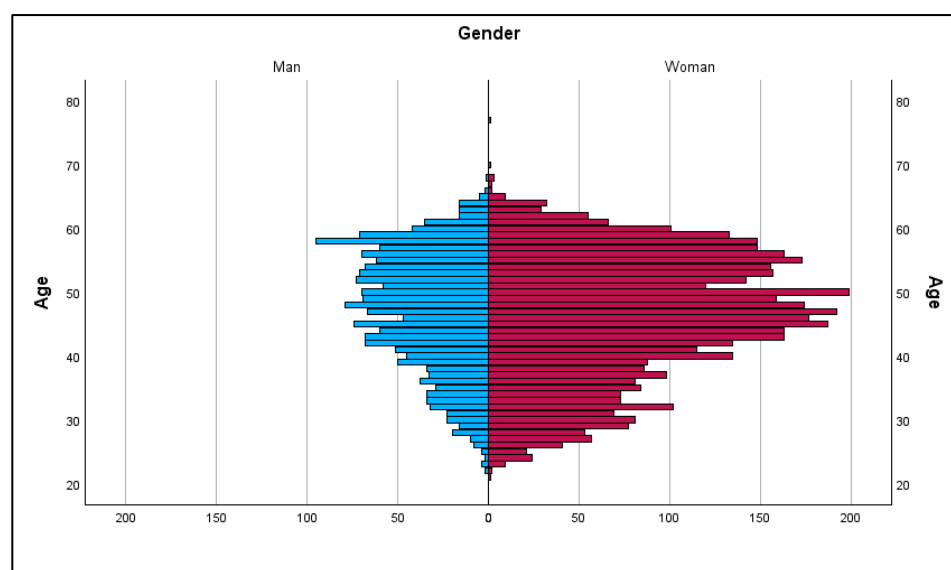


Figure 1. Population pyramid of the study sample.

Regarding the frequency distribution by educational level, 57.9% of the teachers work in Secondary Education, 29.3% in Primary Education, and 12.7% in Early Childhood Education.

Following this, Table 1 presents the distribution of the sample across all attributive variables considered in this study, along with their percentage proportions. In addition to the previously mentioned variables of Age, Gender, School Ownership, and Educational Level, the frequency distribution and percentage proportion are also described for the following: Teaching experience at the current educational level, Continuous teacher training courses of +10 h taken during the last 6 years, Type of institution where the qualifying educational degree was obtained and Current role in a management position.

Table 1. Distribution of the sample according to the attributive variables used in the study.

Variable	Level	Count	%
Educational stage where main duties are performed (greatest number of hours)	Early Childhood Education	830	12.75
	Primary Education	1910	29.33
	Secondary Education	3772	57.92
Gender	Female	4560	70.02
	Male	1855	28.49
Teaching experience at current educational level	Under 5 years	1277	19.61
	5–9 years	955	14.67
	10–14 years	710	10.90
	15–19 years	1050	16.12
	20–24 years	981	15.06
	25–29 years	730	11.21
	Over 30 years	809	12.42
Type of school where you currently work	Public	5634	86.52
	Subsidized	680	10.44
	Private	198	3.04
Continuing Teacher Training Courses of +10 h over the last 6 years	None	94	1.44
	1–3	678	10.41
	4–6	1372	21.07
	7–9	1175	18.04
	10 or more	3193	49.03

Table 1. *Cont.*

Variable	Level	Count	%
Ownership of the school where you completed your training for your teaching qualification	Public	5512	84.64
	Private	1000	15.36
Current position as a manager	Yes	1611	24.74
	No	4901	75.26
TOTAL		6512	100

2.2. Measuring Tool

The instrument employed was a 13-item Likert scale designed to measure the level of faculty dedication to a specific set of tasks across four tiers (1 = Minimum dedication, 2 = Low-Medium dedication, 3 = Medium-High dedication, and 4 = Maximum dedication). The instrument is structured according to the three aforementioned domains: Technical–Political, Scientific–Academic, and Teacher Training. Each domain encompasses a set of tasks/functions within the educational field that are performed outside the classroom and school settings.

Content validity was analyzed through expert judgment (Souza et al., 2017). To this end, eight subject-matter experts were asked to assess the relevance and clarity of the questionnaire items, and the Content Validity Index (CVI) (Lawshe, 1975) was calculated. The value of CVI for all items comprising the questionnaire was 0.90.

Subsequently, the phrasing of the items was reviewed, resulting in a CVI value of 0.80 for this parameter. Based on these results, a preliminary version of the survey was proposed. The scale's Cronbach's alpha was 0.90, indicating excellent internal consistency among the items (Salkind, 2010). Regarding each of the three dimensions, Cronbach's alpha was 0.82 for five items in the Technical–Political Domain, 0.76 for four items in the Teacher Training Domain, and 0.81 for four items in the Scientific–Academic Domain.

In addition to Spanish, the final version of the survey was translated into the other four co-official languages of Spain: Catalan, Galician, Basque, and Valencian. All versions were designed and distributed using the Google Forms platform. Subsequently, Table 2 presents the 13 survey items and their distribution across the three considered domains.

Table 2. Items on the measurement instrument according to the three scopes of study.

Items
Technical–Political scope
1. Counseling other professionals outside the school
2. Taking part in socio-educational debates with other external actors-professionals
3. Participating in the development of educational regulations/policies
4. Advising and/or collaborating on educational issues with foundations/associations, unions, international organizations, etc.
5. Participating in opinions, knowledge, and/or materials on social networks
Teacher Training scope
6. Training future teachers in Early Childhood or Primary Education degrees
7. Training future teachers in the Secondary Education Master's program
8. Providing continuous training courses for other teachers
9. Developing materials for teacher training

Table 2. *Cont.*

Items	
Scientific–Academic scope	
10.	Conducting research with other institutions outside the school
11.	Presenting papers at conferences
12.	Developing textbooks and/or teaching materials for students/teachers
13.	Writing books or book chapters, articles in journals or newspapers

2.3. Measurement Variables

To define the profiles of teachers with functions outside the classroom and school in Spain, according to their scope of involvement and educational level, this study incorporated the following key measurement variables:

- (1) Scopes of teacher participation outside the classroom-school: Continuous quantitative variables obtained by summing the scores of the items from each dimension of the questionnaire. Three main non-traditional scopes of teacher participation were considered: the Technical–Political scope, the Scientific–Academic scope, and the Teacher Training scope.
- (2) Educational Level: An ordinal variable with three levels (Early Childhood, Primary, and Secondary Education). This is defined as the educational level at which the teacher performs their primary or sole professional duties.

Furthermore, another set of relevant variables was included in the study in order to calculate their direct relationship with professional participation outside the school classroom:

- (3) Gender: A dichotomous nominal variable (Man and Woman). For analytical purposes, despite offering the option to leave this item blank or select choices such as “Other” or “Prefer not to say,” these response options were excluded from the analysis due to their very small sample size.
- (4) Age: A discrete quantitative variable within an age range of 18 to 67 years (the current mandatory retirement age in Spain).
- (5) Work Experience: An ordinal variable with seven levels, distributed in closed five-year intervals, except for the last, which is an open-ended interval. This is defined as the length of time the teacher has been practicing in their current profession, categorized in five-year ranges.
- (6) School Type: A nominal variable with three levels (Public, Government-Subsidized Private, and Private). This defines the type of school based on its funding source: public, private, or mixed.
- (7) Management Role: A dichotomous nominal variable (Yes/No) determining whether the teacher currently holds a role in the school’s management team.
- (8) Institutional Affiliation of Credential-Granting University: A nominal variable with three levels (Public and Private). This defines the type of the teacher training institution based on its funding source, whether public or private.
- (9) Continuing Teacher Training (CTT): An ordinal variable with five levels, distributed in closed three-year intervals, except for the last which is an open-ended interval. This is defined as the number of CTT courses of at least 10 h completed within the last 6 years.

2.4. Data Analysis Process

Following data collection, the SPSS statistical software package (Version 29) was used to perform all calculations and inferences. The arithmetic mean per item was employed as a

descriptive statistic of central tendency to summarize the data and facilitate an unequivocal and clear comparison of the scores across each dimension and variable.

Subsequently, to conduct inferential statistical analyses, the initial step involved assessing the normality of the data distribution to evaluate the suitability of parametric tests. This was performed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K-S) test. As the results indicated non-normal distributions for all variables, it was determined that non-parametric tests would be used to calculate statistical significance and effect sizes (calculated with η^2).

Specifically, the Mann–Whitney U test was used for dichotomous variables (Ownership of the institution where the qualifying degree was obtained and Current management position), the Kruskal–Wallis test was applied to nominal variables with more than two levels (Educational level, Gender and Type of institution where currently employed), and Spearman’s Rank Correlation was used for ordinal and quantitative variables (Age, Work Experience, and Continuing Teacher Training).

A 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$) was established to determine statistical significance. However, the Bonferroni correction was applied to adjust the alpha level for multiple comparisons when the analyzed factor had more than two levels.

Following the identification of statistically significant factors for each educational level and scope, the predominant profiles defining teachers with out-of-classroom functions in Spain were determined.

3. Results

First, Table 3 presents the descriptive results for the two main variables of the study. Specifically, it displays the descriptive results for the three scopes broken down by the educational level at which participants perform their primary teaching duties. The associated level of statistical significance, as determined by the Kruskal–Wallis test with the Bonferroni correction applied for variables with three levels, is also shown.

Table 3. Descriptive results and statistical significance according to educational level.

		Technical– Political Scope	Teacher Training Scope	Scientific– Academic Scope
Educational stage where you perform your main work	<i>Kruskal–Wallis test</i>	51.741 **	6.448	2.438
	<i>Size effect (η^2)</i>	0.008	0.001	0.001
	<i>Levels</i>	Mean per item	Mean per item	Mean per item
	<i>Early Childhood Education</i>	1.624	1.375	1.3025
	<i>Primary Education</i>	1.504	1.3625	1.26
	<i>Secondary Education</i>	1.436	1.33	1.2975

** = 99% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.01$) for p -value.

At a general descriptive level, Table 3 reveals that participation in tasks or functions outside the classroom and school is limited across all educational levels and domains, as indicated by all arithmetic means per item being close to the lower end of the dedication scale (Minimum Dedication = 1).

Regarding the statistical significance of the observed differences according to educational level, despite the arithmetic means per item showing considerable variation by level and domain, only the Technical–Political domain demonstrates statistically significant differences.

Concerning the relationship between the different variables considered in the study and the main outcome variables, Table 4 below presents the descriptive results and the significance levels for participants who work in Early Childhood Education.

Table 4. Descriptive results and statistical significance of participants working in early childhood education, considering the variables considered.

	Levels	Technical– Political Scope	Teacher Training Scope	Scientific– Academic Scope
		Mean	Mean	Mean
Age	<i>Spearman’s Rank Correlation</i>	−0.012	−0.024	−0.016
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.079	0.078	0.079
Gender	<i>Kruskal–Wallis test</i>	9.814 **	14.416 **	15.443 **
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.018	0.023	0.023
	<i>Female</i>	1.60	1.35	1.28
	<i>Male</i>	2.07	1.79	1.70
	<i>Other</i>	–	–	–
	<i>Not answered</i>	1.6	1.25	1.42
Teaching experience in current position	<i>Spearman’s Rank Correlation</i>	0.050	−0.019	0.018
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.012	0.007	0.008
	<i>Less than 5 years</i>	1.54	1.37	1.29
	<i>5–9 years</i>	1.71	1.34	1.33
	<i>10–14 years</i>	1.47	1.32	1.20
	<i>15–19 years</i>	1.71	1.47	1.36
	<i>20–24 years</i>	1.59	1.37	1.25
	<i>25–29 years</i>	1.64	1.41	1.39
	<i>Over 30 years old</i>	1.70	1.30	1.31
Type of institution where currently employed	<i>Kruskal–Wallis test</i>	12.636 **	8.344 *	5.548
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.019	0.005	0.003
	<i>Public</i>	1.56	1.35	1.29
	<i>Subsidized</i>	1.85	1.48	1.39
	<i>Private</i>	1.77	1.41	1.26
Continuing Teacher Education	<i>Spearman’s Rank Correlation</i>	0.064	0.101 **	0.074
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.007	0.018	0.012
	<i>None</i>	1.97	1.22	1.38
	<i>1–3</i>	1.66	1.39	1.30
	<i>4–6</i>	1.54	1.29	1.28
	<i>7–9</i>	1.57	1.26	1.18
	<i>10 or more</i>	1.67	1.47	1.37
Ownership of the institution where the qualifying degree was obtained	<i>Mann–Whitney U test</i>	56,761.5 *	45,572.5	43,779
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.003	0.005	0.002
	<i>Public</i>	1.60	1.35	1.29
	<i>Private</i>	1.70	1.46	1.36
Current management position	<i>Mann–Whitney U test</i>	58,865 **	56,381	55,196
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.028	0.004	0.001
	<i>Yes</i>	1.78	1.43	1.33
	<i>No</i>	1.51	1.34	1.28

* = 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$) for *p*-value/** = 99% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.01$) for *p*-value.

Table 4 shows that the significant variables for early childhood education teachers to have tasks outside the classroom are Gender in all three scopes (significantly more men than women) and the variable Type of center where they currently work for the Technical–political scope and for the Teacher training scope (significantly more in the Government-Subsidized Private school type). Continuing Teacher Education is only significant in the Teacher Training scope (significant direct relationship) and the variables Current management position and Ownership of the institution where the qualifying degree was obtained only in the Technical–Political scope (significant direct relationship).

Table 5 indicates that the significant variables associated with out-of-classroom functions for Primary Education teachers are: Work Experience in their current position for the Teacher Training domain (exhibiting a curvilinear relationship, reflecting that both novice teachers and those nearing retirement report significantly fewer out-of-classroom functions), and Continuing Teacher Training and Current Management Role for both the Technical–Political domain and the Teacher Training domain (demonstrating a significant positive correlation in both cases). Finally, concerning teachers in Secondary Education, Table 6 below presents the descriptive results and significance levels for each mediating variable.

Table 5. Descriptive results and statistical significance of participants working in primary education, considering the variables considered.

	<i>Levels</i>	Technical– Political Scope	Teacher Training Scope	Scientific– Academic Scope
		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Age	<i>Spearman’s Rank Correlation</i>	−0.002	0.005	−0.016
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.031	0.028	0.031
Gender	<i>Kruskal–Wallis test</i>	1.641	2.742	1.872
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.001	0.001	0.001
	<i>Female</i>	1.50	1.35	1.26
	<i>Male</i>	1.53	1.39	1.26
	<i>Other</i>	1.4	2	1.25
	<i>Not answered</i>	1.32	1.29	1.13
Teaching experience in current position	<i>Spearman’s Rank Correlation</i>	0.038	0.047 *	−0.004
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.004	0.005	0.003
	<i>Less than 5 years</i>	1.43	1.30	1.33
	<i>5–9 years</i>	1.49	1.33	1.23
	<i>10–14 years</i>	1.52	1.39	1.28
	<i>15–19 years</i>	1.58	1.42	1.28
	<i>20–24 years</i>	1.49	1.41	1.26
	<i>25–29 years</i>	1.49	1.30	1.22
	<i>Over 30 years old</i>	1.50	1.35	1.23
Type of institution where currently employed	<i>Kruskal–Wallis test</i>	0.068	0.704	7.316
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.000	0.000	0.003
	<i>Public</i>	1.50	1.36	1.25
	<i>Subsidized</i>	1.50	1.39	1.36
	<i>Private</i>	1.52	1.40	1.38
Continuing Teacher Education	<i>Spearman’s Rank Correlation</i>	0.110 **	0.085 **	0.048
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.011	0.009	0.006
	<i>None</i>	1.33	1.13	1.35
	<i>1–3</i>	1.40	1.29	1.29
	<i>4–6</i>	1.44	1.34	1.25
	<i>7–9</i>	1.41	1.26	1.17
	<i>10 or more</i>	1.56	1.41	1.29
Ownership of the institution where the qualifying degree was obtained	<i>Mann–Whitney U test</i>	225,329	202,996	189,347.5
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.000	0.000	0.001
	<i>Public</i>	1.50	1.36	1.27
	<i>Private</i>	1.50	1.36	1.22
Current management position	<i>Mann–Whitney U test</i>	309,870 **	291,601 **	279,433.5
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.010	0.007	0.000
	<i>Yes</i>	1.60	1.44	1.26
	<i>No</i>	1.46	1.32	1.26

* = 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$) for *p*-value/** = 99% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.01$) for *p*-value.

Table 6. Descriptive results and statistical significance of participants working in secondary education, considering the variables considered.

	<i>Levels</i>	Technical– Political Scope	Teacher Training Scope	Scientific– Academic Scope
		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Age	<i>Spearman’s Rank Correlation</i>	0.012	0.052 **	0.031
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.013	0.016	0.009
Gender	<i>Kruskal–Wallis test</i>	4.292	14.896 **	23.331 **
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.001	0.003	0.007
	<i>Female</i>	1.43	1.31	1.26
	<i>Male</i>	1.44	1.37	1.36
	<i>Other</i>	1.69	1.57	1.66
	<i>Not answered</i>	1.28	1.2	1.27
Teaching experience in current position	<i>Spearman’s Rank Correlation</i>	0.046 **	0.108 **	0.055 **
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.001	0.007	0.001
	<i>Less than 5 years</i>	1.40	1.28	1.28
	<i>5–9 years</i>	1.43	1.28	1.29
	<i>10–14 years</i>	1.42	1.31	1.31
	<i>15–19 years</i>	1.43	1.36	1.30
	<i>20–24 years</i>	1.47	1.41	1.32
	<i>25–29 years</i>	1.44	1.32	1.27
	<i>Over 30 years old</i>	1.47	1.40	1.34
Type of institution where currently employed	<i>Kruskal–Wallis test</i>	9.136 *	21.379 **	2.980
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.002	0.007	0.002
	<i>Public</i>	1.42	1.31	1.29
	<i>Subsidized</i>	1.52	1.45	1.33
	<i>Private</i>	1.51	1.49	1.43
Continuing Teacher Education	<i>Spearman’s Rank Correlation</i>	0.081 **	0.115 **	0.064 **
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.009	0.013	0.006
	<i>None</i>	1.37	1.13	1.29
	<i>1–3</i>	1.40	1.30	1.32
	<i>4–6</i>	1.36	1.24	1.24
	<i>7–9</i>	1.39	1.31	1.26
	<i>10 or more</i>	1.50	1.40	1.34
Ownership of the institution where the qualifying degree was obtained	<i>Mann–Whitney U test</i>	712,013	636,692.5	624,173
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.000	0.000	0.001
	<i>Public</i>	1.44	1.33	1.31
	<i>Private</i>	1.41	1.32	1.25
Current management position	<i>Mann–Whitney U test</i>	790,576.5 **	712,811.5 **	784,657 **
	<i>Size effect (eta²)</i>	0.009	0.012	0.000
	<i>Yes</i>	1.57	1.47	1.32
	<i>No</i>	1.41	1.30	1.29

* = 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$) for *p*-value/** = 99% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.01$) for *p*-value.

Table 6 indicates that the significant variables associated with out-of-classroom functions for Secondary Education teachers are: Age in the Teacher Training domain (demonstrating a significant positive correlation), Gender in both the Teacher Training and Scientific–Academic domains (with men reporting significantly higher involvement in both cases), Work Experience in their current position across all three domains (showing a significant positive correlation in all cases), Current School Type in the Technical–Political and Teacher Training domains (with significantly higher involvement in government-subsidized private schools for the Technical–Political domain, and in private schools for

the Teacher Training domain) and Continuing Teacher Training and Current Management Role across all three domains (demonstrating a significant positive correlation in all cases).

4. Discussion

The objective of this study was to identify the characteristics of Early Childhood, Primary, and Secondary Education teachers in Spain who are most involved in tasks/functions outside the classroom and school; that is, in non-traditional activities within the educational field (Monarca et al., 2024, 2025). To this end, we specifically considered the three domains of the educational field in which teachers typically do not participate: the Technical–Political, the Scientific–Academic, and the Teacher Training domains, for each of the non-university educational levels in which teachers perform their work.

To develop the discussion, it is first necessary to highlight that, as reflected in the results, participation in non-traditional tasks/functions for teachers across all educational levels falls within a range from minimum to low-medium dedication. This indicates that, before delving into the profile of those who do participate in the non-traditional tasks/functions of the educational field, it is pertinent to note, in accordance with the data presented in Table 3 and consistent with our previous research (Monarca et al., 2025; Sánchez-Cabrero et al., 2025)—that, in general terms, teachers participate very occasionally, barely participate, or do not participate at all in tasks outside the school and classroom.

Regarding the teachers who do perform non-traditional tasks/functions within the domains examined in this study, it is important to emphasize that we found significant differences within each educational level. The results allow us to define profiles or characteristics of these teachers according to the variables considered, with important singularities based on the educational level at which the teachers perform their main duties.

As has been evident in previous sections, these characteristics were derived from a set of pre-defined variables which, according to prior studies (Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2024; El Oraiby, 2025; Jerrim & Sims, 2021; Ostinelli & Crescentini, 2024; Shieh, 2023), were considered potentially significant for defining these profiles. However, these variables have behaved differently in defining the characteristics of each educational level. Consequently, although some variables do appear to carry significant weight across all cases, the idiosyncrasy of each educational level suggests that it should serve as the organizing framework for the discussion.

4.1. Early Childhood Education

Regarding Early Childhood Education teachers who are most involved in tasks outside the classroom and school, four variables emerge as significant (Table 4), albeit in a distinct manner for each domain of study.

The results indicate that among Early Childhood Education teachers who participate most in out-of-classroom and out-of-school tasks, men are more involved than women across all three domains. Although it may seem striking that this is the case in an educational level where over 90% of the workforce is female, this finding aligns with the traditional structure of the educational field (Monarca et al., 2024), which, according to recent studies, largely persists (Pozas et al., 2023; Saldaña Vadillo, 2024). Specific studies on work in contemporary society offer a possible explanation for this situation: women continue to dedicate more time outside of working hours to domestic tasks (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022; Lázaro et al., 2022; Magda et al., 2024). It is therefore logical to surmise that men have more time available to engage in other types of tasks or functions.

Furthermore, the results indicate that teachers working in government-subsidized private schools (*centros concertados*) tend to dedicate more time to out-of-classroom and out-of-school tasks within the Technical–Political and Teacher Training domains. There is no

direct interpretation from the collected data that provides a definitive explanation, and no prior studies specifically address this finding. However, it is possible to formulate explanatory hypotheses for their participation in the Teacher Training domain. It is important to consider that while government-subsidized private schools in Spain receive public funding, their ownership is private. Often, this ownership is structured within organizations that encompass multiple educational levels, including higher education (Muñoyerro González, 2022). This structure could provide opportunities for teachers within these networks to engage in activities across different educational tiers. Similarly, the inherent characteristics of government-subsidized private schools (Muñoyerro González, 2022) may offer a degree of flexibility in work schedule organization that facilitates this type of participation.

Another significant characteristic among Early Childhood Education teachers, in this case influencing participation in the Technical–Political domain, is holding a Management Role. This trait aligns with previous studies on school leadership (Creagh et al., 2025; Cruz-González et al., 2021; Grantham-Caston & DiCarlo, 2023; Kesim et al., 2025), which show a tendency for leaders to engage in various types of tasks, including those that extend beyond the school and classroom. Moreover, their inherent functions within the educational institution more or less directly necessitate engagement with the Technical–Political domain.

Finally, another notable variable is the number of Continuing Teacher Training (CTT) courses completed, which significantly impacts the participation of Early Childhood Education teachers in the Teacher Training domain. As mentioned in the first section of this article, few studies exist on this specific matter. Although works such as those by Clarke et al. (2014), Torres et al. (2024), or Ji (2021) reference the importance of this participation, they do not address the characteristics of the teachers who typically engage in it. Nevertheless, the fact that CTT is a key factor in teacher participation in non-traditional tasks/functions—in this case, those related to the training of other teachers—is consistent with other research on role knowledge plays in professional development, increased autonomy, and, directly, enhanced engagement (Apelehin et al., 2025; Butera et al., 2021; Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2024; Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013; Wideen et al., 2002).

4.2. Primary Education

In the case of Primary Education teachers who are most involved in tasks outside the classroom and school, three variables emerge as significant (Table 5), albeit distinctly for each domain of study.

On the one hand, Work Experience stands out as a significant explanatory variable for teacher participation in the Teacher Training domain. Consistent with previous studies, it is teachers at intermediate stages of their careers—with between 10 and 24 years of teaching experience—who participate the most or are in a position to do so (Abror et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2021). This contrasts with the participation of novice teachers, which appears quite reasonable in light of research on beginning teachers (Karlberg & Bezzina, 2022; Stewart & Jansky, 2022), and of teachers nearing retirement (Drouin-Rousseau et al., 2024).

Finally, the variables Continuing Teacher Training (CTT) and holding a Management Role significantly influence teacher participation in tasks and functions within the Technical–Political domain. Regarding CTT, as already mentioned for the Early Childhood Education level, there is evidence that increased knowledge and competencies contribute to broadening teachers' opportunities for participation (Apelehin et al., 2025; Butera et al., 2021; Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2024; Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013; Wideen et al., 2002). This relationship is also confirmed here concerning tasks and functions in the Technical–Political domain. Similarly, as observed in the previously analyzed level, Primary Education teachers who hold a Management Role also participate significantly more than their peers in

tasks within this domain. As discussed previously, this finding aligns with research on this professional role (Creagh et al., 2025; Cruz-González et al., 2021; Grantham-Caston & DiCarlo, 2023).

4.3. Secondary Education

Regarding secondary education teachers who participate most extensively in tasks beyond the classroom and the school itself, six of the seven variables considered are notably prominent (Table 6), albeit to differing degrees across the three scopes studied.

Three variables significantly influence the participation of secondary education teachers in all three scopes: Teaching Experience, Ongoing Teacher Training, and Holding an Administrative Position. In the first case, the role of accumulated work experience in performing tasks beyond the classroom and school has already been discussed. As teaching experience increases, teaching staff acquire a body of knowledge that enables them to operate in multiple educational scenarios (Abror et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2021), as corroborated by the results of this study. Concerning the weight of Ongoing Teacher Training as an explanatory variable for secondary teachers across the three scopes, one can only refer to what has already been mentioned for the two previous educational levels. Staying updated with new knowledge and competencies undoubtedly broadens the possibilities for acting in various scopes of the educational field (Apelehin et al., 2025; Butera et al., 2021; Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2024; Monarca et al., 2025; Sánchez-Cabrero et al., 2025).

On the other hand, within the Technical–Political scope, in addition to the aforementioned variables, the Type of School where the teacher works stands out markedly as an explanatory variable for participation in the tasks and functions of this scope. In this case, it is teachers working in government-subsidized private schools (concertados) who participate the most. As expected, there is no specific research with relevant contributions to explain this situation. However, a potential hypothesis may be found in a recent study which suggested that some government-subsidized private schools often have an innovative profile, with some operating within learning communities that transcend the school environment (Sánchez-Cabrero et al., 2025). Similarly, as already mentioned, it may be influenced by the fact that these institutions sometimes possess a flexibility that facilitates participation in other tasks outside the classroom and the school (Muñoyerro González, 2022).

In the Scientific–Academic scope, in addition to the three variables already mentioned, gender considerably explains the participation of “male professors” in this scope. As mentioned above, the rationale could be found in the distribution of domestic tasks, which continue to be more concentrated among women (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022; Lázaro et al., 2022; Magda et al., 2024), which is why they have less time to participate in other activities than men.

Finally, regarding the scope of Teacher Training, in addition to the variables already cited, the Gender variable behaves similarly to the previous scope; that is, male teachers participate significantly more than their female counterparts. The explanation appears to be the same, namely that the structure of domestic task distribution places women at a disadvantage (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022; Lázaro et al., 2022; Magda et al., 2024), affording them fewer opportunities to participate in the various tasks and functions of this scope. Furthermore, the Type of School variable also appreciably explains the greater participation of teachers working in private schools within this Teacher Training domain. As mentioned previously, the characteristics of these institutions—which sometimes encompass all educational levels, including university—coupled with the flexibility they typically offer, could help explain this situation (Muñoyerro González, 2022). As already noted for the Primary Education level, these studies provide a cultural capital particularly conducive to participating in the training of other teachers (Sánchez-Cabrero et al., 2025). Additionally,

the role of an associate professor in Spanish universities, a part-time position, is specifically designed to be filled by other professionals in the field, notably practicing teachers

5. Conclusions

This article outlines some of the relevant characteristics of non-university teaching staff who participate in tasks and functions beyond the classroom and the school within Spain's general education system. Thus, this work contributes to a better understanding of the oft-cited processes related to teacher participation in various non-routine matters, which have been organized here into three scopes: Technical–Political, Scientific–Academic, and teacher training.

The contribution of this work can be appreciated in two key directions. On the one hand, it lies in the relevance it assigns to this participation by non-university teachers, based on the premise that, as in other professional fields, it is important for the teaching profession to develop a more horizontal and democratic structure (Monarca, 2021; Monarca et al., 2024, 2025). This is reflected, among other things, in the tangible possibilities for teacher participation beyond the classroom and the school. On the other hand, the more specific and concrete contribution, aligned with the former, relates to the identification of the characteristics of Early Childhood, Primary, and Secondary Education teachers in Spain who currently participate in the aforementioned sense.

This final contribution allows us to move beyond the majority of existing studies on teacher characteristics, which, as has been shown, focus primarily on aspects related to what we term traditional functions—that is, work within the classroom and the school (Apelehin et al., 2025; Chand & Kamal Kumar, 2025; Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2024; Dolenc Orbanić & Kovač, 2021; Salavera et al., 2024; Setyawati, 2023).

Naturally, this type of study is noteworthy and provides elements for understanding the current functioning of the teaching profession and the educational field in general. However, our intention in this case is to go a step further, as existing studies do not offer sufficient insight to broaden the perspective and contribute to an issue that has been emphasized for decades, yet seen minimal progress: the participation of non-university teaching staff beyond the classroom and the educational institution.

This assumption is made because we posit that teacher participation in tasks beyond the classroom and the educational institution does not have repercussions solely for this professional group. Their involvement would benefit the entire educational field and foster collaborative work among all its stakeholders (Azorín & Hernández, 2024). The literature on teacher collaboration is extensive and clearly demonstrates its benefits (Brown et al., 2023; Creagh et al., 2025; de Almeida & Viana, 2023; Gordon et al., 2022); however, it is necessary to expand the focus to encompass the entire educational field. In this sense, the possibility for teachers to participate in activities and functions that extend beyond the school, and the classroom would, from this perspective, have a more significant impact on educational quality. This is based on the understanding that educational quality is influenced by a multiplicity of factors that extend far beyond what happens within educational institutions and their classrooms.

It is true that there is insufficient research demonstrating the effects of this participation on the educational field as a whole. This limitation could be overcome by new studies that delve deeper into the contribution of such participation to overall educational improvement. Concretely, this study has sought to be a contribution in this line of inquiry, focusing on defining the characteristics of those teachers who currently participate in these non-routine tasks.

All evidence suggests that the body of knowledge compiled by teachers through their own professional practices—particularly when strategies are designed to lend it coherence—

constitutes an irreplaceable complement to other forms of expertise. This would enrich and improve the functioning of the scopes addressed here: the Technical–Political, the Scientific–Academic, and that of Teacher Training; and, completing the cycle, it would consequently also enhance the realm of the school and teaching work itself. This has been reflected in the present study: the significant influence of teaching experience, holding an administrative position, and ongoing teacher training as explanatory variables for teacher participation across the various scopes studied reinforces the notion of the centrality of knowledge. This encompasses both the knowledge generated by the teacher through their own teaching and that which is generated in the performance of a specific function, alongside the contributions of Ongoing Teacher Training (FDC) courses.

This study presents several limitations that should be taken into account. First, it was conducted from an exclusively quantitative approach, which may reduce the possibility of gaining a deep understanding of certain meanings, perceptions, and motivations that teachers associate with their participation (or lack thereof) in non-traditional tasks. Second, the use of self-report measures can introduce various biases, primarily related to the subjective interpretation of the questions, difficulties in accurately recalling past information, and the tendency to respond in accordance with normative expectations. Finally, since this is a synchronic rather than a diachronic study, it entails certain limitations in identifying potential processes of change, as well as in analyzing continuities and discontinuities over time.

Regarding potential future lines of research, it is recommended to move toward qualitative studies and mixed-method approaches that integrate both quantitative and qualitative data. This type of analysis would allow for a deeper exploration of the experiences, discourses, and meanings that teachers attribute to their involvement in non-traditional tasks, thereby facilitating a richer and more nuanced understanding. Likewise, it would be pertinent to develop longitudinal studies that examine changes over time, identifying the factors that promote or hinder teacher engagement across different areas of the educational field.

Despite the considerable scope for further progress in this line of inquiry, the practical implications of this study consist of providing empirical evidence on the characteristics of teaching staff in Spain who participate in tasks and functions beyond the classroom and the educational institution. Although most non-university teaching staff do not typically devote time to these tasks and functions, our work, in line with previous studies ([Monarca et al., 2025](#); [Sánchez-Cabrero et al., 2025](#)), documents that some of them do. This research has delved into their characteristics, highlighting the distinctiveness of the teaching staff at each educational level.

The evidence gathered in this work offers relevant clues to guide both pedagogical reflection and the design of educational policies that promote greater participation and democratization of the educational field. This should consider both the general characteristics of teachers who typically participate in tasks and functions beyond the classroom and school, as well as the important singularities of the teaching staff at each educational level. In line with the above, the results can impact on the design of initial and continuing teacher training programs, challenging the role traditionally assigned to teachers and opening the possibility of participating in other tasks/functions beyond the classroom and the school. As the first study to address this subject of analysis in a specific manner, it constitutes a major contribution to the field of teacher professionalization.

In this sense, these findings can be highly useful for generating or reinforcing the role of teaching staff in processes of pedagogical, curricular, and organizational change and reform, in the training of other teachers, and in research. Their guidance can be significant and constitute valuable input for overall educational improvement. To this end, this

work provides clues for devising strategies and policies that contribute to this purpose by articulating the experience of in-service teachers, the experience of those holding positions with specific functions, Ongoing Teacher Training (FDC), and opportunities to participate in tasks within the Technical–Political, Scientific–Academic, and Teacher Training scopes in a more systematic and regulated manner.

In conclusion, current knowledge regarding the characteristics of teachers who participate in non-traditional tasks within the educational field is limited, highlighting a gap in academic literature. Based on the findings of our work, we strive to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence that encourages the debate on designing policies aimed at fostering participation and the democratization of the educational field, as well as reflection on the scope and possibilities for developing a more horizontally articulated teacher professionalism. Transforming the structure of the educational field and the dispositions internalized by its professionals (Bourdieu, 2002) requires sustained effort. This change will only be possible through policies and practices that operate systematically and over an extended period.

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Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and approved in 30 September 2022 by the Ethics Committee of Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (CEI-125-2576) for studies involving humans.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data supporting this work will be available in the “e-ciencial-Datosrepository” (<https://edatos.consorcioamadrano.es/dataverse/UAM>, accessed on 12 September 2025) after an embargo from the date of publication until the end of the project (November 2025).

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