WORK ENGAGEMENT AND BURNOUT AMONG POLISH LABOUR MIGRANTS

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Abstract

Objectives: The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between work engagement, burnout and coworker support, social climate at work, work-language proficiency and post-migration job skill change, among international migrant workers. **Material and Methods:** Polish versions of *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale*, *Burnout Assessment Tool*, and the second *Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire* were used for the measurement of the studied variables. All participants were recruited using announcements at Polish diaspora online forums and snowball sampling. The questionnaire was submitted to them in a form of an anonymous online survey. **Results:** From 420 questionnaires filled in by the respondents, 411 were qualified for analysis. The results of a multiple regression analysis indicate that a positive perception of the social climate at work increases the scores of general work engagement ($\beta = -0.22$, $p = 0.001$), as well as all its subscales: dedication ($\beta = -0.14$, $p = 0.002$), vigor ($\beta = -0.20$, $p = 0.001$) and absorption ($\beta = -0.22$, $p = 0.001$). Support received from coworkers has a positive influence on the vigor dimension ($\beta = -0.14$, $p = 0.002$). Furthermore, work-language proficiency can be associated with more engagement $F_{(1, 409)} = 37.66$, $p = 0.000$ and less burnout $F_{(1, 409)} = 11.68$, $p = 0.000$ than limited work-language knowledge. In a similar manner, increased or similar job skill level compared to one's last employment in the sending country may be associated with better engagement $F_{(2, 408)} = 33.88$, $p = 0.000$ and fewer symptoms of burnout $F_{(1, 409)} = 7.96$, $p = 0.005$ than post-migration decrease of job skill. **Conclusions:** The perception of social climate at work and coworker support have shown to be positive predictors for particular dimensions of work engagement. Moreover, work language proficiency and job skill have been shown to associate with work engagement and burnout. Int J Occup Med Environ Health. 2024;37(4):433–51

Key words:
burnout, migration, work engagement, language proficiency, coworker support, social climate at work

INTRODUCTION

According to estimates presented by the International Labour Organization [1], migrant workers constituted almost 5% of workforce of their receiving countries in 2019. As estimated by the United Nations [2] during the upcoming decades, migration will continue to be the sole driver of population growth in high-income countries. Due to the constantly diversifying workforce, receiving countries' economies face the increasing challenges of migrant integration, who are however reported to experience various difficulties on the labour market and in their workplace,

impeding successful adaptation in the receiving country. Among these barriers, one can mention precarious employment conditions, such as reduced worker rights, atypical working hours, or limited access to social security [3–5], low development opportunities, e.g., temporary employment, no access to promotions [6–8], as well as work below qualifications due to nonrecognition of diplomas [6,9,10], limited settlement or work permit [10], discriminatory behaviours by co-workers and supervisors [11,12], language barriers [10,13–15] and legal difficulties resulting from non-registered stay, illegal work

or lack of civic rights guaranteed by citizenship [16,17]. In consequence, migrants often perceive themselves as alienated and discriminated [18], experience physical health problems and psychological distress [19,20] as well as reduced security in their daily life [21].

Migrants' functioning at work, is therefore filled with obstacles often being greater than those faced by local population, which in turn leads to impairing of particular resources and the need for increased effort to deal with daily-life problems [22,23]. In the context of work, a situation of increased distress and limited resources may lead, as proposed by Bakker and Demerouti [24], to burnout and decreased work engagement.

Work engagement and burnout

According to Schaufeli et al. [25], work engagement can be defined as a "positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption". These 3 dimensions of work engagement are linked to 3 processes: emotionally-motivational, cognitive and physiological-behavioural [26]. Among the organizational outcomes of work engagement, one can mention enhanced organizational citizenship [27], better job satisfaction and job commitment [28], extra role performance [29] and last but not least, increased job performance [30].

Burnout on the other hand, as defined by Schaufeli et al. [31], is a "work-related state of exhaustion that occurs among employees, which is characterized by extreme tiredness, reduced ability to regulate cognitive and emotional processes, and mental distancing". Besides the harmful influence on employee health and well-being, consequences of burnout can be also found on the occupational level. Swider and Zimmerman [32] in their meta-analysis name, among others, absenteeism, depersonalization and decreased job performance.

Both work engagement and burnout were included in the job demands-resources (JD-R) model [24], which was chosen as the theoretical foundation of this research. As stated

by Bakker et al. [33], both variables are determined by the presence of personal and organizational resources, as well as various work demands. The more resources are available to the worker, the more engaged he will be, and more negative effects of work demands will be buffered.

As stated above, the situation of a migrant worker is marked by deprivation of resources and cumulation of stressors greater than those experienced by native employees [22]. In this article, the authors aim to focus on relationships of work engagement and burnout with particular variables, which can be interpreted as resources or demands, depending on the value they are taking for particular workers.

Co-worker support and language proficiency

According to studies conducted in multinational organizations [19,34], support received from co-workers significantly reduces migrants' distress at work. As found by Hoppe et al. [35] in their *post-hoc* interviews, migrants are more prone than native workers to seek help among co-workers in situations of distress and psychological difficulties. Further, according to Aalto et al. [5], lack of professional support burdened migrants more than native workers. Support received at work, particularly from co-workers, occurs therefore to be a crucial resource in the work environment of an international migrant. However, research shows that migrant workers find it usually more difficult to develop affective relationships based on trust with native co-workers and managers [36], which leaves them socially excluded.

A factor possibly underlying these difficulties was identified in a survey conducted by Amit et al. [17]. Migrant workers mentioned their limited knowledge of local language as the main cause for impaired communication with their colleagues. The crucial importance of language knowledge as a barrier in many aspects of work in the receiving country was reported in numerous studies [10,13–15]. Besides limiting interpersonal communication, lack of work-language knowledge also leads to difficulties e.g., in using the

workplace equipment and facilities [17]. Personal consequences of host country language knowledge among migrants were identified by Aiyar et al. [37].

Considering the results mentioned above, one can state that both support received from colleagues and work-language knowledge can function as work resources in the understanding of JD-R theory [33]. Their lack on the other hand, due to creating additional difficulties, can be interpreted as work demands. Further, as shown by Amit et al. [17] work-language knowledge is also a crucial factor determining the quality of communication with co-workers, which might influence the amount and quality of support received from them. Therefore, the authors hypothesize as follows:

– H1: reported co-worker support will positively predict work engagement of migrant workers.
– H2: migrant workers with work-language proficiency will report receiving higher support from co-workers than those with worse language knowledge.
– H3: migrant workers with work-language proficiency will report higher work engagement and lower burnout than those with worse language knowledge.

Social community at work

The feeling of social community at work can be defined as a sense of belonging to community and a positive perception of social climate at one's workplace [38]. Such a condition is relatively hard to reach for most migrant workers due to language barriers, worse understanding of the local culture's societal norms as well as possible discrimination and social exclusion [17,39]. The latter 2 can be attributed to social processes of in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination. Identifying with one's group, individuals favour its members and discriminate against members of other groups [40]. As shown by numerous research results [35,41,42], this process takes place in the context of multinational organizations, resulting in discriminatory behaviours towards migrants by native workers.

Considering the factors mentioned above, one can conclude that the migrant workers' socialization process at the organizational level may often be challenging and create tensions, which persist long after the initial onboarding [43]. Feelings of discrimination and exclusion can further result, for instance, in less motivation to engage in voice behaviour beyond in-role duty [44], depletion of one's psychological capital [10], and repression of negative emotions leading to mental exhaustion [45]. On the other hand, migrants who manage to become members of their workplace-community may anticipate positive consequences on their personal level, as increased job satisfaction and better integration into host society [46–48]. Consequently, migrants have more salient needs for belonging than native workers [4].

It seems therefore apparent that a positive perception of social community at work serves as an important social resource for a migrant employee. Furthermore, knowledge of work-language acts as an important condition for the inclusion in workplace community [17,39]. Therefore, the authors hypothesize as follows:

– H4: migrant workers with work-language proficiency will report experiencing better social community at work than those with worse language knowledge.
– H5: reported perception of social community at work will positively predict work engagement of migrant workers.

Job skill level

Living in their receiving countries, migrant workers often fall victims to the dualization of the labour market, ending up in the secondary sector, regardless of their skills, education, and human capital in general [3,49,50]. Consequently, they often have to deal with the difficulties of precarious employment [51]. As shown by Martinescu et al. [16], the higher the job skill level of performed work, the lesser were depressive states exhibited by studied migrant workers. These in turn correlated negatively with work engagement.

As reports show [52,53], migrant workers often compare their present situation with conditions of employment experienced in their sending country, which influences perceptions of their current job. It is therefore possible that migrants perceive their current job skill level in comparison to requirements of their previous job in the sending country and that this phenomenon has similar consequences on engagement to those reported by Martinescu et al. [16]. The authors therefore hypothesize that:

– H6: migrants reporting lower job skill level compared to the requirements of their last job in the sending country will report less work engagement and more burnout than those, reporting a similar or higher job skill level.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The aim of the study has been to examine the associations of work engagement and burnout with particular variables: co-worker support, social climate at work, work-language proficiency, and current job skill level compared to one's last job in the sending country.

Data for the study was collected in November–December 2023 as part of a larger project investigating migrant work engagement and burnout. Respondents were recruited from Polish diaspora groups on social media by responding to posts announcing the study and further, by the snowball method. Before agreeing to participate, respondents were informed that the necessary conditions were: 2 months of minimum duration of work abroad and being 18 years old as the lower age limit. All respondents have given informed consent before participating in the research.

The study obtained a positive opinion from the ethical commission of the Faculty of Management and Social Communication at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland.

Participants

Data from 420 respondents was collected. After excluding 9 surveyed workers, 411 were qualified for analysis. Rea-sons for eliminating particular participants were duration of work abroad shorter than 2 months and naming Poland or countries not being a member of the UN as their current place of stay.

The final sample included 113 men and 297 women (1 participant did not indicate gender). Their average age was 40.41 years (SD = 11.02). The mean length of current stay abroad was 11.30 years (SD = 10.48) and for the duration of stay in the current receiving country 10.45 years (SD = 10.24). Of all respondents 289 worked full-time, 41 were employed part-time, and 81 claimed that their time schedule was not defined. The largest group of respondents (67.6%) had obtained higher education, 22.1% indicated secondary education, 6.3% answered they had received technical education or a form of industry secondary education, finally 2.7% mentioned they had received vocational education. Of all surveyed, 74.7% reported proficient knowledge of dominant work language, 25.3% limited or none. Private-owned companies, with 84.4% answers, were the most prevalent type of employer among the surveyed, 15.6% claimed to have been working in public organizations or state-owned companies. In general, respondents mentioned 27 host countries, among them most popular were Germany (14.1%), Iceland (11.9%), Italy (11.4%), Greece (7.8%) and the United Kingdom (7.0%). Among them, mentioned were also countries from North America (e.g., 5.8% from both USA and Canada), Asia (e.g., 2.9% from Singapore) and Australia with 6.8%.

Measures

Four tools were used in the research: socio-demographic questionnaire, work engagement questionnaire, burnout scale, and the second edition of the *Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire* (COPSOQ-II).

Job skill level difference and work language knowledge

The first, socio-demographic sheet was developed by the authors and consisted of purposeful demographic vari-

ables, involving job skill level difference and work language knowledge. The respondents were asked to choose respectively whether their job skill level is lower, similar or higher compared to their last employment in their country of origin or if they assess their knowledge of the main language used at work as proficient, enough for simple communication, based on a few words or to communicate lack of its knowledge.

Work engagement

Work engagement was measured by the Polish version of the 9 item *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (UWES-9) questionnaire developed by Szabowska-Walaszczyk et al. [54], a shorter version of the UWES measure [55]. The scale consisted of 9 items, where respondents were expected to respond to 9 presented statements using a 7-point Likert scale (from 0 – "never", to 6 – "always/every day"). The UWES scale is based on 3 dimensions of commitment to work – vigor, dedication, and absorption, each of them having 3 questions assigned. Cronbach's α for the scale was 0.92.

Burnout

Burnout was measured by the Polish version of *Burnout Assessment Tool* (BAT) [56], originally developed by Schaufeli et al. [31]. For the study, the authors decided to choose a shortened version of BAT scale (BAT-C), measuring core symptoms of burnout. The scale consisted of 4 subscales: exhaustion, mental distancing, cognitive and emotional impairment, 3 items each. Respondents were meant to respond to each question on a 5-point Likers scale (from 1 – "never", to 5 – "always). Cronbach's α was 0.95 for the general BAT-C scale, 0.92 for exhaustion, 0.83 for mental distancing, 0.90 for cognitive and 0.89 emotional impairment.

Co-worker support and community at work

Co-worker support and community at work were measured by scales of *Social Support from Colleagues* and *Social Community at Work* from the Polish version of COPSOQ II [38] translated from the original measure developed by Pejtersen et al. [57]. Each of the scales contained 3 questions, which respondents were expected to answer on a 5-point Likers scale (from 1 – "always", to 5 – "never/almost never"). As the study was aimed to include also migrants working singlehandedly (e.g., single entrepreneurs), the scales were optional to answer. Cronbach's α for the *Social Support from Colleagues* scale was 0.79, for *Social Community at Work* – 0.88.

Statistical analysis

Multiple regression analysis using stepwise forward selection method, as well as Pearson's correlation test and one-way ANOVA have been conducted using IBM SPSS and Statistica by StatSoft.

RESULTS

Preliminary analysis

Table 1 displays descriptive statistics as well as results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test among the main study variables. The respondents demonstrated on average a moderate level of work engagement, burnout, and co-worker support. Social climate at work remained at a relatively low level. The results of the K-S test show that all of the variables, except general BAT value, display non-standard deviations. On the other hand, skewness and kurtosis indicators, located between –2 and 2, suggest that the dispersion is not far from standard. In order to present the data more clearly, the means for UWES and BAT dimensions, as well as co-worker support and workplace social climate are additionally presented in Figure 1.

Table 2 presents results of ANOVA tests between work engagement, burnout, co-worker support, social climate at work and nominal variables: sex, job skill level compared to requirements of the previous job in one's sending country and knowledge of language predominantly used at work. Among effects of sex, the only statistical-

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests results of 411 migrants of Polish origin, November–December 2023

Tool/subscale	Participants [n]	Score				Skew-ness	SE	Kurtosis	SE	D	p
		min.	max	M	SE						
Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)	411	0	45	3.33	9.90	−0.71	0.12	0.07	0.24	0.095	<0.01
vigor	411	0	15	1.20	3.57	−0.74	0.12	0.19	0.24	0.095	<0.01
dedication	411	0	15	1.67	3.65	−0.77	0.12	−0.09	0.24	0.121	<0.01
absorption	411	0	15	9.46	3.83	−0.62	0.12	−0.15	0.24	0.136	<0.01
Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT)	411	11	55	24.33	6.46	0.48	0.12	0.72	0.24	0.106	<0.01
exhaustion	411	3	15	7.95	2.72	0.42	0.12	−0.24	0.24	0.057	<0.15
mental distancing	411	2	10	5.33	1.88	0.12	0.12	−0.46	0.24	0.126	<0.01
cognitive impairment	411	3	15	5.96	2.04	0.56	0.12	0.66	0.24	0.112	<0.01
emotional impairment	411	3	15	5.09	2.01	0.99	0.12	1.26	0.24	0.150	<0.01
Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire, second version (COPSOQ II)											
Social Support from Colleagues	328	3	15	7.75	2.81	0.58	0.13	−0.24	0.24	0.161	<0.01
Social Community at Work	373	3	15	5.95	2.56	1.04	0.13	0.91	0.27	0.135	<0.01

D and p according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

The number of respondents in the analysis of *Social Support from Colleagues* (N = 328) and *Social Community at Work* (N = 373) is lower since the scales were not obligatory to fill out for people working solitarily.

ly significant difference can be found for exhaustion subscale of BAT (F(1, 408) = 13.91, p = 0.000). Job skill level difference has shown statistically significant effects for
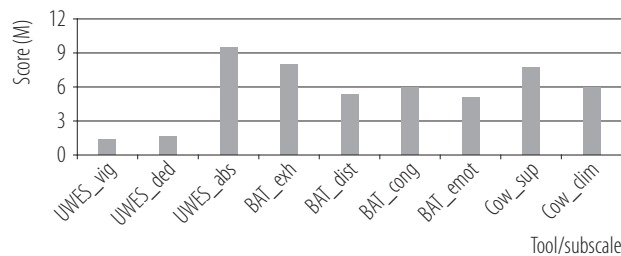
BAT_cogn – *Burnout Assessment Tool* (BAT) cognitive impairment subscale; BAT_dist – BAT mental distancing subscale; BAT_emot – BAT emotional impairment subscale; BAT_exh – BAT exhaustion subscale; Cow_clim – *Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnair*e, second edition (COPSOQ II) *Social Community at Work*; Cow_sup – COPSOQ II *Social Support from Colleagues*; UWES_abs – *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (UWES) absorption subscale; UWES_ded – UWES dedication subscale; UWES_vig – UWES vigor subscale.

Figure 1. Mean scores obtained for the subscales of work engagement, burnout, and the scales of *Social Support from Colleagues* and *Social Community at Work* on 411 migrants of Polish origin, November–December 2023

general results of UWES (F(2, 408) = 33.88, p = 0.000), as well as its subscales: vigor (F(2, 408) = 19.50, p = 0.000), dedication, (F(2, 408) = 39.84, p = 0.000) and absorption (F(2, 408) = 22.83, p = 0.000). The effect of job skill level difference was also significant on general BAT result (F(2, 408) = 7.16, p = 0.000) and its subscales: exhaustion (F(2, 408) = 13.91, p = 0.000) and mental distancing (F(2, 408) = 7.03, p = 0.001). The following pattern is to be observed: the higher the job skill level, compared to the last job in the sending country, the more work engagement was reported by respondents. On the other hand, lowest burnout scores were reached by those whose jobs required similar skill to their previous job in their country of origin. The dichotomic variable of work language knowledge can be associated with intergroup differences for all scales of work engagement: general results of (UWES F(1, 409) = 37.66, p = 0.000), vigor (F(1, 409) = 20.46, p = 0.000), dedication, (F(1, 409) = 41.40, p = 0.000) and absorption,

Table 2. ANOVA tests results of 411 migrants of Polish origin, November–December 2023

Variable	Score		Participants (N = 411) [n]	F	p
	M	SE			
Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)					
total	30.33	9.90	411		
sex				0.53	0.469
male	30.90	0.93	113		
female	30.11	0.58	297		
job skill level				33.88	0.000
higher	33.92	0.74	156		
similar	31.02	0.79	137		
lower	24.77	0.85	118		
work language knowledge				37.66	0.000
proficient	32.00	0.54	307		
less proficient or none	25.39	0.93	104		
vigor					
sex				0.77	0.382
male	10.46	0.34	113		
female	10.11	0.21	297		
job skill level				19.50	0.000
higher	11.13	0.27	156		
similar	10.53	0.29	137		
lower	8.59	0.31	118		
work language knowledge				20.46	0.000
proficient	10.65	0.20	307		
less proficient or none	8.87	0.34	104		
dedication					
sex				0.38	0.539
male	10.84	0.34	113		
female	10.59	0.21	297		
job skill level				39.84	0.000
higher	12.09	0.27	156		
similar	10.94	0.29	137		
lower	8.47	0.31	118		
work language knowledge				41.40	0.000
proficient	11.31	0.20	307		
less proficient or none	8.77	0.34	104		

Table 2. ANOVA tests results of 411 migrants of Polish origin, November–December 2023 – cont.

Variable	Score		Participants (N = 411) [n]	F	p
	M	SE			
Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)– cont.					
absorption					
sex				0.22	0.636
male	9.60	0.36	113		
female	9.40	0.22	297		
job skill level				22.83	0.000
higher	10.70	0.29	156		
similar	9.55	0.31	137		
lower	7.70	0.34	118		
work language knowledge				29.28	0.000
proficient	10.03	0.21	307		
less proficient or none	7.76	0.36	104		
Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT)					
total	24.33	6.46	411		
sex				0.67	0.414
male	23.88	0.61	113		
female	24.47	0.37	297		
job skill level				7.16	0.001
higher	23.65	0.51	156		
similar	23.50	0.54	137		
lower	26.20	0.59	118		
work language knowledge				7.96	0.005
proficient	23.81	0.37	307		
less proficient or none	25.87	0.63	104		
exhaustion					
sex				3.99	0.046
male	7.51	0.25	113		
female	8.11	0.16	297		
job skill level				13.91	0.000
higher	7.54	0.21	156		
similar	7.49	0.23	137		
lower	9.03	0.24	118		
work language knowledge				11.68	0.001
proficient	7.69	0.15	307		
less proficient or none	8.73	0.26	104		

Table 2. ANOVA tests results of 411 migrants of Polish origin, November–December 2023 – cont.

Variable	Score		Participants (N = 411) [n]	F	p
	M	SE			
Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) – cont.					
mental distancing					
sex				0.00	0.979
male	5.32	0.18	113		
female	5.31	0.11	297		
job skill level				7.03	0.001
higher	5.14	0.15	156		
similar	5.07	0.16	137		
lower	5.86	0.17	118		
work language knowledge				6.85	0.009
proficient	5.19	0.11	307		
less proficient or none	5.74	0.18	104		
cognitive impairment					
sex				0.69	0.407
male	5.82	0.19	113		
female	6.01	0.12	297		
job skill level				0.67	0.514
higher	5.96	0.16	156		
similar	5.83	0.17	137		
lower	6.13	0.19	118		
work language knowledge				0.02	0.876
proficient	5.95	0.12	307		
less proficient or none	5.99	0.20	104		
emotional impairment					
sex				0.78	0.378
male	5.23	0.19	113		
female	5.03	0.12	297		
job skill level				0.25	0.776
higher	5.01	0.16	156		
similar	5.11	0.17	137		
lower	5.18	0.19	118		
work language knowledge				3.41	0.065
proficient	4.98	0.11	307		
less proficient or none	5.40	0.20	104		

Table 2. ANOVA tests results of 411 migrants of Polish origin, November–December 2023 – cont.

Variable	Score		Participants (N = 411) [n]	F	p
	M	SE			
Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ II)					
Social Support from Colleagues					
work language knowledge				7.76	0.006
proficient	7.50	0.18	246		
less proficient or none	8.49	0.31	82		
Social Community at Work					
work language knowledge				24.14	0.000
proficient	5.57	0.15	277		
less proficient or none	7.02	0.25	96		

The results of *Social Support from Colleagues* and *Social Community at Work* have not been reversed for analysis purposes, therefore the lower the score on those scales, the better the level of perceived support/climate.

$(F_{(1, 409)} = 29.28, p = 0.000)$. For burnout, the effect was significant on general BAT scale $(F_{(1, 409)} = 7.96, p = 0.005)$ and subscales of: exhaustion $(F_{(1, 409)} = 11.68, p = 0.001)$ and mental distancing $(F_{(1, 409)} = 6.85, p = 0.009)$. In general, respondents who claimed advanced language knowledge demonstrated higher scores of work engagement and lower scores of burnout than those who reported limited language knowledge. Moreover, those who had work-language proficiency reported receiving better support from their colleagues $(F_{(1, 326)} = 7.76, p = 0.006)$ and experiencing better workplace social climate $(F_{(1, 371)} = 24.14, p = 0.000)$. It should be noted that the results for co-worker support and *Social Community at Work* have not been reversed for analysis purposes, therefore the lower the score on those scales, the better the level of perceived support/climate.

Table 3 contains results of correlation tests for UWES, BAT, their subscales, as well as co-worker support and *Social Community at Work*. All relationships reached a statistically significant level. Work engagement measures correlated positively with co-worker support and *Social Community at Work*, on the other hand negatively with burn-

out. The latter in turn, correlated negatively with both support from colleagues and social community.

Supplementary analysis

To verify the hypotheses assuming particular variables predicting work engagement, a multiple regression analysis using stepwise forward selection method has been conducted. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.

The following independent variables have been incorporated to the regression equation: mental distancing, exhaustion, cognitive and emotional impairment as well as *Social Community at Work* and *Social Support from Colleagues*. The analysis was conducted separately for the general UWES scale, as well as for its subscales. Among all dimensions of work engagement, regression equation was most predictive for vigor, explaining 48% of the variance $(\Delta R^2 = 0.48)$.

All independent variables except cognitive impairment have been ultimately included in the equation for vigor. The analysis indicated exhaustion as the strongest predictor with $\beta = -0.37$. Further variables predicting work engagement were: *Social Community at Work* $(\beta = -0.20)$,

Table 3. Correlations tests results of 411 migrants of Polish origin, November–December 2023

Tool and subscale	Pearson's r										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)*											
2. UWES vigor	0.871***										
3. UWES dedication	0.922***	0.721***									
4. UWES absorption	0.895***	0.634***	0.759***								
5. *Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT)*	–0.478***	–0.520***	–0.452***	–0.321***							
6. BAT exhaustion	–0.537***	–0.610***	–0.482***	–0.362***	0.836***						
7. BAT mental distancing	–0.442***	–0.424***	–0.431***	–0.337***	0.696***	0.533***					
8. BAT cognitive impairment	–0.206***	–0.234***	–0.217***	–0.107*	0.708***	0.394***	0.302***				
9. BAT emotional impairment	–0.189***	–0.214***	–0.178***	–0.119*	0.716***	0.438***	0.275***	0.447***			
10. COPSOQ II *Social Support from Colleagues*	–0.397***	–0.455***	–0.332***	–0.286***	0.300***	0.323***	0.182***	0.154***	0.216***		
11. COPSOQ II *Social Community at Work*	–0.517***	–0.552***	–0.465***	–0.378***	0.467***	0.481***	0.347***	0.229***	0.293***	0.670***	

COPSOQ II – *Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire*, second edition.
The number of respondents in the analysis of *Social Support from Colleagues* (N = 328) and *Social Community at Work* (N = 373) is lower since the scales were not obligatory to fill out for people working solitarily.
* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

mental distance (β = –0.17), *Social Support from Colleagues* (β = –0.14) and emotional impairment (β = 0.12). Besides the last variable, all predictors showed negative associations.

In other words, vigor grows when exhaustion and mental distancing remain low, assuming no existing emotional impairment. In addition, growth of vigor is also supported by good social climate and colleague support. It is crucial to mention that the results for co-worker support and *Social Community at Work* have not been reversed for analysis purposes, therefore they are in line with theoretical assumptions.

It is also worth mentioning that co-worker support was a significant predictor only for vigor. For other variables: absorption, dedication and general work engagement, co-worker support would not be included in the model.

Prediction equations for dedication (ΔR² = 0.35) and absorption (ΔR² = 0.23) were not as strong as for vigor. In the case of dedication, 4 variables entered the equation: exhaustion (β = –0.24) as the strongest predictor, mental distancing (β = –0.21), *Social Community at Work* (β = – 0.14) and emotional impairment (β = 0.09). The latter dimension of work engagement, absorption, was explained by only 3 predictors: exhaustion (β = –0.41), mental distancing (β = –0.26) and *Social Community at Work* (β = –0.22).

Summarizing the results, one should emphasize that among the analysed predictors, mental exhaustion was the strongest for all 3 subscales of work engagement. Surprising, on the other hand, was the weak or even no prediction of absorption and dedication by co-worker support and *Social Community at Work*.

DISCUSSION

Based on the JD-R theory [24], the study contributes to the relatively small body of research [58,59] addressing contextual and personal resources as factors related to work engagement and burnout among international migrants.

Table 4. Results of the multiple regression analysis of 411 migrants of Polish origin, November–December 2023

UWES	*Burnout Assessment Tool* (BAT)				COPSOQ II		Statistic values
	exhaustion	mental distancing	emotional impairment	cognitive impairment	*Social Support from Colleagues*	*Social Community at Work*	
Total							
t	6.308	−3.788	2.651	n.s.	n.s.	−4.496	
β	−0.37**	−0.17**	0.11*	n.s.	n.s.	−0.22**	
adjusted R²							0.44
ΔR²							0.42
F of Δ							38.926
p of Δ							0.001
Vigor							
t	−6.308	−3.788	3.074	n.s.	−3.008	−3.978	
β	−0.37**	−0.17*	0.12*	n.s.	−0.14*	−0.20**	
adjusted R²							0.48
ΔR²							0.48
F of Δ							64.094
p of Δ							0.001
Absorption							
t	−4.660	−4.241	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	−4.379	
β	−0.41**	−0.26**	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	−0.22**	
adjusted R²							0.24
ΔR²							0.23
F of Δ							21.116
p of Δ							0.001
Dedication							
t	−4.445	−4.374	2.121	n.s.	n.s.	−2.705	
β	−0.24**	−0.21**	0.09***	n.s.	n.s.	−0.14*	
adjusted R²							0.36
ΔR²							0.35
F of Δ							38.182
p of Δ							0.001

COPSOQ II – *Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire*, second edition; UWES – *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale*.
n.s. – not significant.
The number of respondents in the analysis of *Social Support from Colleagues* (N = 328) and *Social Community at Work* (N = 373) is lower since the scales were not obligatory to fill out for people working solitarily.
* p = 0.002; ** p = 0.001; *** p = 0.05.

To the best of the authors' knowledge, no study using the BAT [31,56] on a group of international migrants has been published yet. The respondents demonstrated a mod-erate level of work engagement, which is in line with the findings made by Turska and Mochnacka [59] on a group of Polish migrant workers in Great Britain as well as by

Martinescu et al. [16] on a multinational group of international migrants.

The vigor dimension of work engagement clearly increased when migrants experienced support from co-workers. No such relationship was found for other dimensions, as well as for the general work engagement scale. Therefore, this result partially confirms the assumptions of the first hypothesis, which were consistent with the assumptions of JD-R theory [24,33].

As found by Amit et al. [17] an essential factor limiting co-worker communication in multinational companies is the lack of work-language knowledge. In general, knowledge of the language predominantly used at work can improve various aspects of functioning at the workplace, e.g., use of equipment [17] and quality of customer service [60], being thus an important resource as well as potentially fostering the application of further resources as communicational soft skills. In consequence, as confirmed by results of this study, migrant workers with better work-language knowledge reported receiving better support from their colleagues, which confirms the assumptions of the second hypothesis. Moreover, they also, achieved higher work engagement scores and reported lower symptoms of burnout than those with worse language-knowledge, which is in line with the assumptions of the third hypothesis.

Good communicational skills can also interact with the perception of workplace community. As assumed in the fourth hypothesis migrants with work-language proficiency reported experiencing better social community at work than those with worse language skills. These results are in line with previous reports [17,39] of work-language proficiency acting as an important condition for the inclusion into co-worker community. For international migrants, the feeling of community in the social environment of one's workplace has many positive repercussions on the personal level, e.g. better integration into host society [46–48] as well as in the occupational domain, e.g., more voice behaviours [44]. It is therefore apparent that a positive perception of one's community at work can be interpreted as a work resource, leading to increased work engagement. This was confirmed by results of this study, as reported perception of social community at work positively predicted work engagement, supporting the assumptions of the fifth hypothesis. Consequently, social community at work can be interpreted as a work resource in the understanding of the JD-R theory [24].

Finally, job skill change has been shown to associate with work engagement and burnout. Respondents who reported that their current job requires lower skills than their last job in the sending country have reported less engagement and more symptoms of burnout than those who perform work requiring similar or higher skills. These results are in line with the assumptions made in H6. A possible explanation for this association is that migrants tend to compare their current occupational situation with their previous experience rather than with other migrants' similar situation in the receiving country. Such a comparison pattern has been identified in qualitative studies in the past [7,52]. In a situation of deskilling, results of such comparisons, among others, are job dissatisfaction and feeling of resignation when the opportunities for advancement are perceived as very limited [3,61]. Furthermore, low-skilled jobs are often flawed with characteristics of precarious employment, such as limited job security, monotonous, fragmented work, low autonomy and feedback, which discourage workers from work engagement and potentially lead to burnout [16,51].

Commenting further on the results one should note that intergroup differences for language proficiency and job skill change were found in the general scale of burnout, as well as in subscales of exhaustion and mental distancing but not in cognitive and emotional impairment (H3 and H6). A possible explanation is that due to their work ethics Polish migrants tend to declare performing their work efficiently and do not report weaknesses considering their cognitive or emotional engagement. Indeed,

as described by Friberg [11], Polish migrant workers in Norway try to adapt to a stereotype of a hardworking and conscientious Pole and therefore strive to create a positive image of themselves irrespective of their actual symptoms of burnout.

Another phenomenon which can be identified from the results is that those who performed work that was skilled higher than their last job in their sending country have reported higher work engagement but on the other hand higher burnout as well. These results may seem interesting, considering the fact that work engagement and burnout, as defined by authors of the JD-R theory, are to some extent opposite constructs [62,63] and have been shown to correlate negatively [56]. This contradiction is, however, ostensible. Migrant workers are often forced to maintain high efficiency during their work to keep up with supervisor expectations and demanding competition with their co-workers. Such work performance is often based upon a fear of negative evaluation from the foreign supervisor and, in consequence, losing one's employment [11,64]. While working in a new country employees may simultaneously experience other stressors, such as culture shock [65], which can have an unexpected, sudden and profound impact on an individual's identity [66,67]. Moreover, workers migrating to new countries may also potentially experience the Jerusalem syndrome or other psychological phenomena linked to adaptation to a new environment, which can also act as contextual stressors [68,69]. In such circumstances, productive work combined with a high level of work engagement may lead to a strong fear of rejection, as well as various environmental stressors, which may further lead to extensive stress and in consequence to burnout. Finally, it should be noted that the intergroup differences in burnout between those performing work requiring higher and similar skills are relatively small and, for some subscales, insignificant. Future research should therefore replicate these results to find out if they cannot be attributed to the effect of other potential factors.

Last but not least, the interaction between job skill change and work engagement may have a more complex nature than investigated in this study. Jobs vary in particular characteristics, which in turn have different effects on work engagement and burnout. These effects may exert contradictory influences and, in consequence, act in a way that one variable weakens the effect of another. Although it has been mentioned that highly skilled jobs usually offer better working conditions [51], the skill-demanding tasks may potentially act as demands in a situation when a person earlier performed work on a lower skill level.

Limitations

A limitation of the results obtained in this study is the fact that the collected data were based on respondents' declarations. In the case of measuring professional skills, self-reporting by respondents may be biased. Limitations also apply to the research sample (small number of people ≥50). As a recent study has shown [70], younger and better educated migrants adapt more quickly to the environment of a new country. Moreover, the variables were measured at a single point of time, therefore observation of the dynamics of the formation of work engagement or the emergence of burnout symptoms was not possible. Another limitation of the survey was the data collection method, which was based upon contacting respondents via a web application. Despite its many advantages, this method of data collection has several drawbacks, e.g., not being able to ask for details in the case of open-ended questions or lack of possibility of controlling the setting of the study environment. Finally, the study was dominated by female participants (twice as many as men). As shown by Milewski and Ruszczak-Żbikowska [49], the work activity (type of job) of migrant women differs significantly from that of men, which may also be related to the process of building social relationships. Further research should pay attention to this social aspect of migrant women's and men's labour activity.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study contributes to the growing body of research on work of international migrants, particularly extending the limited knowledge regarding factors related to their work engagement and burnout. The perception of social climate at work has been shown to positively influence work engagement. Moreover, co-worker support occurred to be a significant predictor for the vigor dimension of work engagement, but not for dedication and absorption. Among all dimensions of work engagement, vigor was best explained by the study variables. Emotional exhaustion, as the dimension of burnout, proved to be the strongest predictor for every dimension of engagement. Results also highlight the importance of work language proficiency and job skill, both of which have been shown to associate with work engagement and burnout. Moreover, the study emphasizes the role of language proficiency, as it was found to be associated with better perception of social climate at work and more frequently reported co-worker support. Finally, to the best of the authors' knowledge, this study is the first to apply the BAT among international migrant workers.

Author contributions

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Research methodology: Michał Kulisz, Antoni Wontorczyk

Collecting material: Michał Kulisz

Statistical analysis: Antoni Wontorczyk

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