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Engagement and Disaffection of Roma Students from Portugal, Spain and Romania: A perspective of antecedents, mediators and outcomes

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Students from Portugal, Spain, and
Romania: A perspective of antecedents,
mediators, and outcomes**

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O que é bonito neste mundo, e anima,
É ver que na vindima
De cada sonho
Fica a cepa a sonhar outra aventura...
E que a doçura
Que se não prova
Se transfigura
Numa doçura
Muito mais pura
E muito mais nova...

Miguel Torga, em "*Confiança*"

Por muito promissor que possa parecer o sonho, nada se constrói sem empenho e sem a confiança, de nós próprios, e daqueles que nos incentivam a confiar. A todos os confiaram no meu sonho: obrigada! Agradeço em especial:

Ao meu pai, José Manuel, e à minha mãe, Rosa, que me ensinaram a sonhar

À minha irmã, Mariana, que sempre confiou neste e em tantos outros sonhos

Ao Pedro, que ensinou a importância de esperar pelo sonho

À Doutora Tânia, desafiou o sonho e me norteou nesta aventura do sonhar

Ao Professor Pedro, que fortaleceu e poliu o sonho

Aos meus avós e restante família, que fizeram de tudo para manter o sonho aceso

Ao meu avô, António, que partiu antes de ver o sonho realizado, mas que não menos o guiou

Às minhas "GUIA Girls", Rafa e Beatriz, com quem partilhei as doçuras e amarguras deste sonho comum

À Inês, ao Guga, ao Cruz e a todos os amigos que partilharam este sonho comigo

Resta agora sonhar outra aventura...

STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

I hereby declare having conducted this academic work with integrity. I confirm that I have not used plagiarism or any form of undue use of information or falsification of results along the process leading to its elaboration.

I further declare that I have fully acknowledged the Code of Ethical Conduct of the University of Minho.

University of Minho, October 17, 2022

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Engagement e Disaffection de Estudantes Roma de Portugal, Espanha e Roménia: Uma perspectiva de antecedentes, mediadores e resultados.

Resumo

Abordar os percursos dos estudantes Roma na educação é uma das metas abrangentes das estratégias de educação na União Europeia. Embora a figura educacional seja cada vez melhor, os estudantes de origem Roma ainda enfrentam muitos desafios ao longo dos seus percursos de aprendizagem, nomeadamente o absentismo e o abandono escolar precoce. O presente estudo explora a relevância dos recursos pessoais (i.e., forças motivacionais) na mediação do impacto das fontes de apoio próximas (i.e., pais e professores) sobre o *engagement* e *disaffection* de estudantes pertencentes a grupos Roma. A amostra é composta por 735 estudantes de vários países. Os resultados indicam que as perceções dos estudantes sobre aspetos distintos do apoio contextual (i.e., envolvimento de pais e professores) contribuíram diferentemente para reforçar as forças motivacionais (i.e., perceção da relevância da escola, pertença à escola, e crenças de controlo), influenciando assim o *engagement* e *disaffection* comportamentais e emocionais. Os efeitos de invariância entre género e entre país também foram discutidos. Concluímos que receber apoio da família e dos professores é relevante para os perfis de *engagement* e *disaffection* dos estudantes com origem Roma.

Palavras-chave: School Engagement; Estudantes Roma; Análise Multi-país; Condições de Aculturação; Forças Motivacionais.

Engagement and Disaffection of Roma Students from Portugal, Spain, and Romania: A perspective of antecedents, mediators and outcomes.

Abstract

Tackling Roma students' paths in education is one of the far-reaching targets for education strategies in the European Union. Although the educational figures are increasingly better, students with Roma background still face many challenges throughout their learning paths, namely truancy, and early school leaving. The present study explores the relevance of personal assets (i.e., motivational forces) in mediating the impact of proximal sources of support (i.e., parents and teachers) on SE and disaffection among students from Roma groups. Participants were from a multi-country sample of 735 students. Findings indicate that student perceptions of distinct aspects of contextual support (i.e., parent and teacher involvement) contributed differentially to strengthen motivational forces (i.e., perceived relevance of school, belonging at school, and control beliefs), thereby, influencing behavioral and emotional SE and disaffection. Invariance effects of gender and between countries were also discussed. We concluded that receiving support from family and teachers is relevant for engagement and disaffection profiles of students with Roma background.

Keywords: School Engagement; Roma Students; Cross-country analysis; Acculturation conditions; Motivational forces.

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Engagement and Disaffection of Roma Students from Portugal, Spain, and Romania: A perspective of antecedents, mediators and outcomes.

The twenty-first century has been marked by a growing movement in Europe regarding Roma¹ people's inclusion, involving several policy measures and interventions. Among the multiple topics of Roma inclusion, the EU (European Union) Action Plan against racism 2020-2025, "aims to allow all Rom to realize their full potential" (European Commission, 2020). Regardless of the political and economic investment, education is still one of the main contexts where social inequalities are perpetuated. The profile of students with Roma background is still characterized by school failure, grade retention, and falls short of the expected benchmarks (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights [FRA], 2016, 2017, 2019; Mendes et al., 2020). When compared to other ethnocultural groups (e.g., immigrants, descendants of immigrants, and ethnic minorities), European students with Roma background are overrepresented in underachievement and early school leaving rates (FRA, 2017). For example, Portugal, Spain, and Romania contribute to this societal picture. In these countries, the education profiles of students with Roma backgrounds are deeply marked by low levels of academic achievement and a high number of students dropping out of school (FRA, 2017).

Student engagement (SE) is well-identified in the literature as one of the main predictors of students' interest and academic achievement, and a protective factor against early school leaving (Fredricks et al., 2005; Lei et al., 2018). Particularly among ethnic minority groups such as Roma, SE plays a central role while addressing the gradual process of students' disaffection with education. As literature warns (e.g., Fall & Roberts, 2012; Nouwen & Clycq, 2021) successful school transitions among Roma groups need further understanding of the antecedents of SE and the dynamics underlying the relationship with self-system processes. Grounded on Skinner's Self-System Model of Motivational Development, the present study addresses the potential influences of contextual assets (i.e., teachers' support and parental socialization practices) and personal assets (i.e., belonging at school, the relevance of school,

¹ According to the European Commission and Council of Europe definitions, the umbrella-term "Roma" is widely used in formal contexts to cover a wide diversity of groups, such as Roma, Sinti, Kale, as well as Traveller populations, and the Eastern groups, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. With the recognition of the diversity of lifestyles and cultural backgrounds and the need to be sensitive to framings that problematize the minority, the term Roma evolves away from the repeated (mis)representations of Roma groups (Tremlett., 2009).

and control beliefs) on the SE of students with Roma background from three European countries (Portugal, Spain, and Romania).

We believe that running a cross-national study will allow us to further learn how the educational policies set for each country impact the educational paths of students with Roma backgrounds: how the various individual and contextual mechanisms support or undermine students from Roma communities' participation in school.

Theoretical Framework

The motivational and learning outcomes of ethnic minority students, such as those from Roma groups, depend on contextual assets and hassles and students' psychological processes related to school (Skinner et al., 2008; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2013). To capture the complexity of the processes undergone by students with Roma backgrounds regarding their trajectories of engagement/disengagement in and with school, we grounded the current study on ecological models of acculturation (Ward & Geeraert, 2016), and on the Self-System Model of Motivational Development (SSMD; Skinner et al., 2008, 2009a, 2009b).

Acculturation

When two or more cultural groups are exposed to permanent contact, acculturation processes unfold either at the group or the individual levels, resulting in changes in cultural behaviors, values, and identities (Berry, 2006). Acculturative outcomes result from a variety of acculturation strategies followed by both cultural groups. Depending on the strategies followed by the mainstream group, ethnic minority groups can acculturate to other cultures or enculturate (i.e., the process of maintaining their own culture's behaviors, knowledge, and values). The extent to which ethnic minority groups acculturate or enculturate combines into four strategies, according to Berry's model: assimilation, separation, marginalization, or integration. While a dynamic and dual process, acculturation and subsequent psychological (i.e., "feeling well" and socio-cultural (i.e., "doing well") adjustment of individuals with ethnic minority backgrounds are shaped by the ecological context (e.g., familial, institutional, and societal; Berry, 2006, 2019; Makarova, 2019; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Particularly for children and youth from marginalized ethnocultural groups, family and school are the two main proximal contexts where acculturation unfolds (Makarova, 2019; Vedder & Motti-Stefanidi, 2016). In the school context, the acculturation processes can be measured considering

students' school adjustment (e.g., SE and achievement), which involves cultural identity development, psychological adjustment (e.g., self-esteem and/or sense of belonging), and behavioral adjustment (e.g., truancy and/or at-risk behaviors; Makarova & Birman, 2015, 2016). Along the acculturation processes, the acculturation hassles, to which students from ethnically marginalized groups are often exposed, are likely to weaken motivational forces, which may translate into school disengagement and poor learning outcomes (Tian et al., 2014). Particularly, schools tend to deliver assimilative pressure efforts on minority youth rather than supporting their bicultural orientation (Trickett & Birman, 2005). For ethnic minority children belonging to communities with strong ethnic identity, such as Roma, the assimilationist school culture may thwart the development of positive socialization experiences and, in turn, diminish the students' efforts to engage in school (Poteet & Simmons, 2016).

Self-System Model of Motivational Development

The growing amount of research on SE and subsequent models resulted in some conceptual haziness on the term (see Wong & Liem, 2021). One of the most widely explored conceptualizations proposed by Fredricks et al. (2005) posits SE as a tridimensional construct comprising: (1) behavioral engagement, which includes respecting norms and doing work; (2) emotional engagement, which includes feelings of inclusion and value; and lastly (3) cognitive engagement, which includes students' efforts to become cognitively and strategically involved on the learning process; for example, using self-regulatory strategies. According to Skinner et al. (2008), emotional and behavioral forms are core dimensions of engagement. Regarding the antecedents of SE, under the lens of the Self-System Model of Motivational Development (SSMMD; Skinner et al., 2008, 2009a, 2009b), engagement is determined by contextual assets (e.g., family influences, teacher and peer involvement) and by personal assets (i.e., perceptions, goals, expectancies) experienced throughout students' learning paths. Importantly, the ecological context shapes students' self-system processes ([SSPs]; Skinner & Pitzer, 2012) influencing their understanding of and agency displayed in their learning experiences (Reeve, 2012). The self-system processes refer to the students' beliefs, values, attitudes, and perspectives about their capabilities (including effort and ability) and the fulfillment of the psychological basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness

(Connell & Wellborn 1991; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Skinner et al. 2009a; Skinner & Pitzer, 2012). According to this model, contextual assets facilitate or inhibit individuals' fulfillment of the psychological processes therefore related to students' engagement/disengagement trajectories (Skinner et al., 2008, 2009a, 2009b; Skinner & Pitzer, 2012).

Acculturation and SE trajectories of students with Roma backgrounds

From an ecological perspective, family, school, and peers are the main drivers of students' engagement/disengagement trajectories (Fredricks, 2014). As supported by Wang & Eccles (2012), students' motivational and learning outcomes are not equally impacted by the different sources of social support. For example, findings reveal that support provided by adults within both families (e.g., parental involvement and engagement) or school settings (e.g., teacher support) is highly related to students' engagement (Fernández-Zabala et al., 2016; Gutiérrez et al., 2017), acting as a buffer against the decline of students' SE over time (Wang & Eccles, 2012). However, there is no consensus among researchers and the literature show mixed results. While some researchers (e.g., Wang & Eccles, 2012) posit that family involvement predicts stronger levels of engagement when compared to teachers' support, others (e.g., Fernández-Zabala et al., 2016) defend the opposite.

Particularly for ethnic minority groups, such as Roma, who must navigate between cultures, prior literature (e.g., Makarova et al., 2021) shows that parents' perspectives toward children's education and efforts made to support children's educational trajectories influence students' school adjustment. Among ethnic minority groups, beliefs, attitudes, and expectations/aspirations regarding education conveyed by parents (i.e., parents' academic socialization practices) are more predictive of greater academic achievement than traditional forms of involvement (e.g., Boonk et al., 2018; Wilder, 2014). Along with their role in supporting cultural transmission and ethnic orientation, families are important 'allies' to support the participation in and adoption of mainstream culture endeavoring academic socialization efforts (e.g., conveying messages regarding educational utility; (Moreira et al., 2021; Schachner et al., 2014). Moreover, families may help to buffer the impact of acculturative hassles and perceived obstacles (e.g., perceived discrimination in the school setting; (Makarova & Birman, 2016; Schachner et al., 2014; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). On the other side, school dynamics and students' interactions within this context also play a

crucial role in the ongoing development of self-system processes and, therefore, in engagement/ disengagement trajectories. For example, as documented by Engels et al. (2020), the perceived support in the school setting, specifically from teachers, is crucial to help students feel engaged in and with the school. Fredricks (2014) had previously highlighted the predictive role played by the quality of student-teacher relationships in boosting motivational beliefs and engagement. In this regard, Wang & Eccles (2012) found that supportive teachers are likely to positively predict school compliance, school identification, subjective valuing of learning, control beliefs, and self-efficacy acting as a buffer against the expected declines in SE over time.

The Present Study

The achievement gap of students with Roma background is a top priority of European policymakers and researchers (Rutigliano, 2020; European Commission, 2020). According to official reports, 68% of the students from Roma background leave school early (compared to the 10% target set by the EU), with only 18% moving to higher education (FRA, 2019). Data indicate that, in general, children from Roma groups are more predisposed to leave education early (i.e., before the end of the compulsory school age) without the necessary basic skills required to guarantee full participation in society (FRA, 2016). For example, international data picture that around 63% of individuals from Roma communities aged between 18 and 24 years are excluded from training or long-term and stable jobs (FRA 2019). Among the European countries contributing to these statistics, Portugal, Spain, and Romania occupy the worst positions. In these countries, almost all respondents aged between 16 and 64 years old are no longer pursuing an education track or have not completed higher levels of school attainment (FRA, 2017). Despite the growing research attention to the field of education among Roma groups, literature claims the need to combine efforts to check for cross-national perspectives to improve current knowledge and transferability among European countries (Levinson & Hooley, 2014). Drawing on Skinner's Self-System Model of Motivational Development, this study aims to answer to these claims. Concretely, we examined the relationships between distinct contextual antecedents (parental involvement forms and teacher support) and SE (i.e., engagement or disaffection) of students with Roma background, mediated by the influences of personal assets (i.e., belonging at school, school utility, and control beliefs). According to

the literature, social support from parents and teachers is expected to influence individuals' educational values and beliefs (e.g., the value attributed to school for its instrumental worth) and expectations, school belonging, control, and self-efficacy beliefs (e.g., Rosenfeld et al., 2000; Wang & Eccles, 2012), therefore, resulting in a change in their intentions for performance and preventing their school disengagement (e.g., (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Reschly & Christenson, 2012; Tarabini & Curran, 2019). Accordingly, a path model was set to analyze the SE and disaffection (i.e., both emotional and behavioral) of students with Roma background. It is argued that personal assets (i.e., belonging at school, school utility, and control beliefs) fully mediate the relationship between contextual-related assets (i.e., teacher involvement, parental involvement, and academic socialization) and SE (i.e., emotional and behavioral engagement) or disaffection (i.e., emotional and behavioral disaffection). Specifically, it is hypothesized that the greater the students perceive family and teacher involvement, the more they report positive perceptions of school belonging, school utility, and control beliefs, and, therefore, the greater their SE and the lower their disaffection. Figure 1 represents this model for the student's SE and Figure 2 shows the students' school disaffection model.

Figure 1.

Path Model Hypothesized for Student Academic Engagement.

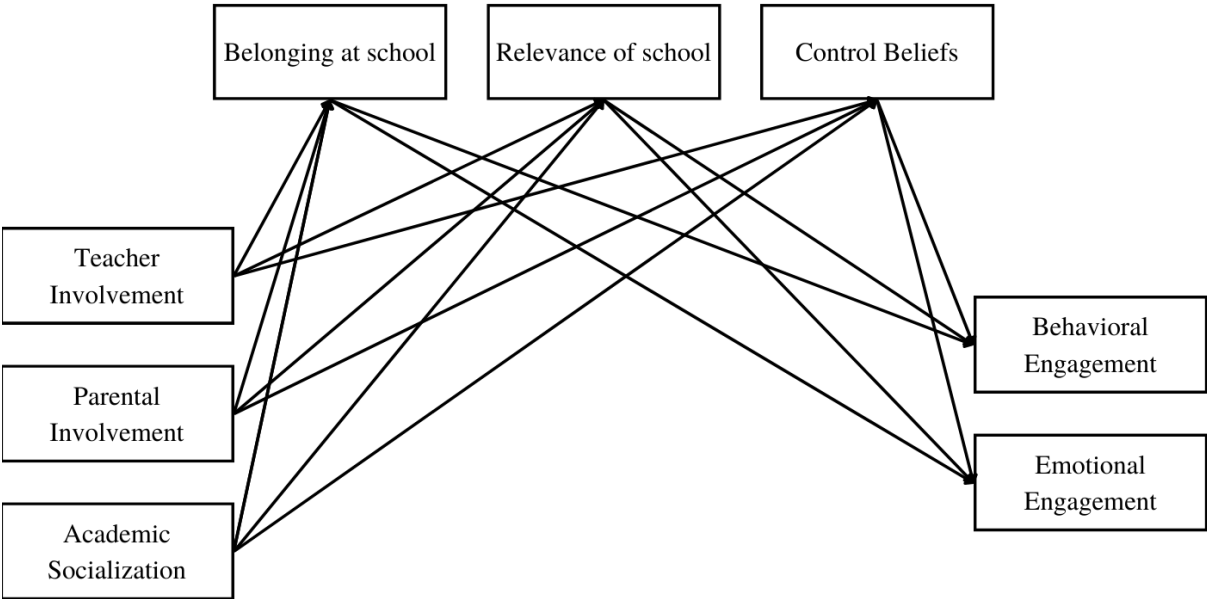
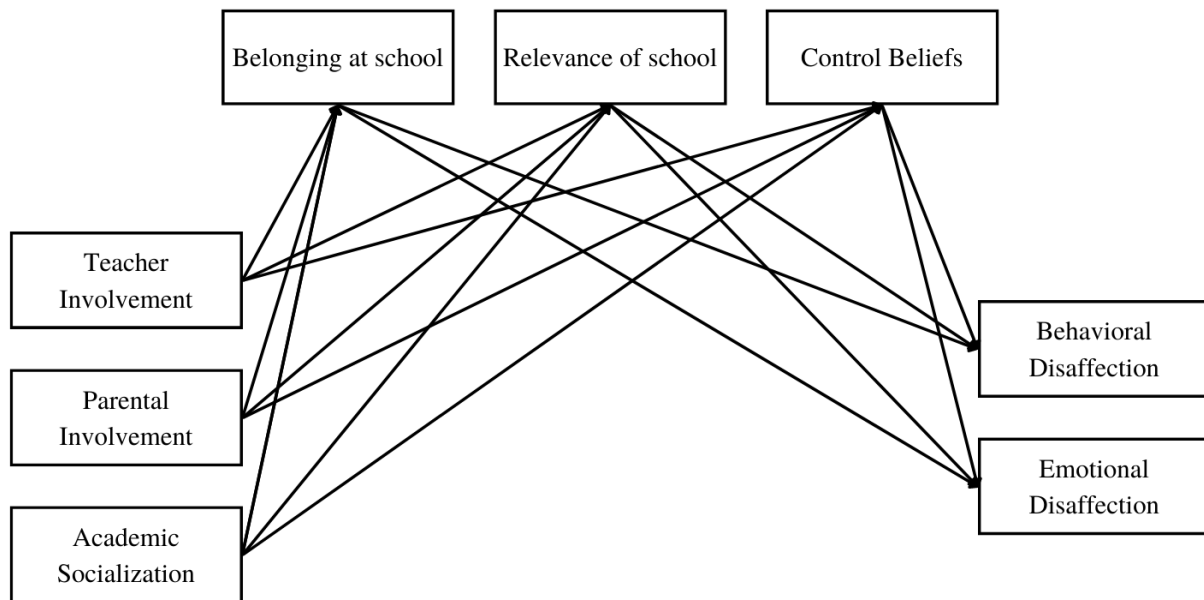


Figure 2.

Path Model Hypothesized for Student Academic Disaffection.



Method

Participants

Data comprise a total of 735 children from three distinct countries: Portugal, Spain, and Romania. The participants were randomly selected from Roma communities across the countries, to gather a representative sample of the group's heterogeneity. The Portuguese sample includes 204 students with Roma background (56% male), aged 10 to 19 years old, with a mean of 14 years old ($SD=2$). The Spanish sample includes 305 students with Roma background (44% male), between the ages of 10 and 18 years old, with a mean of 13 years old ($SD=2$). Lastly, the Romanian sample includes 226 students with Roma background (47% male), aged 9 to 16 years old, with a mean of 12 years old ($SD=1$).

Procedures

The study was formerly authorized by the Ethics Committee of each university. The project supported all expenses related to data collection. In each country, schools were randomly selected and invited to participate in the study with a brief description explaining the research purpose and the requirements to participate in the data collection. The schools accepting to enroll in the study were asked to inform on the class composition and distribution across each school level of students from Roma groups. The student's legal representatives

were further asked to sign an informed consent. Regarding possible doubts or questions, the contact of the researcher-in-charge in each country was provided to parents. Wherever possible, the support of social assistants and social mediators was required to better reach Roma communities.

The self-report questionnaires were administered in regular classes to avoid segregation and discriminatory attitudes. Students without informed consent were alternatively enrolled in academic activities (e.g., class assignments). Each data collection session lasted approximately 45 minutes. The pages of the survey were delivered one at a time to avoid drop-offs and prevent students from skipping questions. Items were read aloud, and the researchers answered students' questions to help them overcome any difficulties. Data were further disaggregated by ethnicity and gender.

Measures

Contextual Variables

Parental Involvement. A 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (all the time) was used to assess the perceptions about parental involvement and participation in home and school-related activities. The measurement of the perceived parental involvement in school was adapted from the Parental Involvement Scale (Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999), comprising a total of 5-items regarding the school context. The scale properties for each country are presented in Table 1.

Academic socialization. The perceived academic socialization was assessed using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (almost every day). The measurement comprised 8 items of the Educational Socialization Scale with 4 from the effort subscale and 4 from the future subscale (Bempechat, Graham, & Jimenez, 1999). The scale properties for each country are presented in Table 1.

Teacher Involvement. Teacher involvement was measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true). Students responded to a 6-item scale adapted from Skinner and Belmont (1993) by rating the degree to which they felt cared for by their teachers. The total score reflects the student-teacher relationship quality. The scale properties for each country are presented in Table 1.

Personal Assets

Belonging at school. Students' sense of belonging or relatedness to their school was accessed using a 5-item scale adapted from Connell & Wellborn (1991). The scale properties for each country are presented in Table 1.

Relevance of school. The perceived utility of education and school for the participants' future and the future of the Roma community was accessed using a 5-item scale adapted from the students' survey developed by Skinner et al. (2012). The scale properties for each country are presented in Table 1.

Control Beliefs. The extent to which students believe they can produce positive or negative outcomes in the school domain was assessed using a 6-item scale adapted from the Control Beliefs scale of Student Perceptions of Control Questionnaire (SPOCQ; Wellborn et al., 1989). The scale properties for each country are presented in Table 1.

Student Engagement

School engagement. Student's behavioral and emotional engagement were captured using a 9-item scale adapted from Fredricks et al. (2005). The measure includes 4-items of behavioral engagement and 5-items of emotional engagement. The scale properties for each country are presented in Table 1.

School disaffection. The measure of students' disaffection was adapted from Skinner et al. (2009b), comprising 4 items of behavioral and 5 items of emotional disaffection. The scale properties for each country are presented in Table 1.

Demographic variables

Variable gender was dummy-coded (boy=0 and girl=1). Age was measured in years and was calculated according to the date of birth. Ethnicity was chosen according to the participants' sense of belonging. The scale properties for each country are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Psychometric properties of scales.

Construct	Measures	Psychometric Properties		
		PT	RO	SP
<i>Academic Socialization (AS)</i>	"My parents say I could do better in school if I worked harder." (Effort)	$\alpha = .80,$ $\omega = .81$ (Effort)	$\alpha = .54,$ $\omega = .54$ (Effort)	$\alpha = .80,$ $\omega = .80$ (Effort)

Bempechat & Williams (1995)	“My parents talk about different kinds of jobs I can have when I grow up” (Future)	AVE=.68; CR=.89 $\alpha = .86$; $\omega = .86$	AVE=.36; CR=.67 $\alpha = .67$ $\omega = .68$	AVE=.64; CR=.87 $\alpha = .69$; $\omega = .69$
<i>Parental Involvement (PI)</i> Voydanoff & Donnelly (1999)	“Attended a PTA or other school meeting.” “Attended a school play, concert, sporting event, or other school activity.”	$\alpha = .67$ $\omega = .66$ AVE=.38; CR=.74	$\alpha = .60$, $\omega = .61$ AVE=.32; CR=.69	$\alpha = .72$, $\omega = .73$ AVE=.43; CR=.78
<i>Teacher Involvement (TI)</i> Skinner et al. (2012)	“My teachers really care about me.” “I can’t really count on my teachers.”	$\alpha = .83$; $\omega = .84$ AVE=.58; CR=.89	$\alpha = .60$; $\omega = .61$ AVE=.31; CR=.70	$\alpha = .68$, $\omega = .68$ AVE=.46; CR=.83
<i>Relevance of school (RS)</i> Skinner et al. (2012)	“I need to learn a lot in school so I can take charge of my future.” “If I do well in school now, I’ll have a better future.”	$\alpha = .79$; $\omega = .79$ AVE=.57; CR=.87	$\alpha = .63$; $\omega = .63$ AVE=.45; CR=.79	$\alpha = .71$, $\omega = .70$ AVE=.52; CR=.84
<i>Control Beliefs (CB)</i> Wellborn et al., (1989)	“I can do well in school if I want to.” “I can’t get good grades, no matter what I do.”	$\alpha = .67$; $\omega = .63$ AVE=.41; CR=.79	$\alpha = .71$; $\omega = .69$ AVE=.41; CR=.80	$\alpha = .72$, $\omega = .78$ AVE=.50; CR=.85
<i>Belonging at school (BS)</i> Connell & Wellborn (1991)	“This school is a good place for students like me.” “Sometimes I feel like I don’t belong at this school.”	$\alpha = .78$; $\omega = .78$ AVE=.53; CR=.85	$\alpha = .55$; $\omega = .56$ AVE=.28; CR=.66	$\alpha = .68$, $\omega = .74$ AVE=.53; CR=.84

School Engagement (SE)

Fredricks et al. (2004)

<i>Behavioral Engagement (BE)</i>	“I pay attention in class.” “In class, I work as hard as I can.”	$\alpha = .70$ $\omega = .71$ AVE=.46; CR=.77	$\alpha = .55$ $\omega = .59$ AVE=.32; CR=.	$\alpha = .57$ $\omega = .68$ AVE=.35; CR=.68
<i>Emotional Engagement (EE)</i>	“I feel happy in school.” “I am interested in the work at school.”	$\alpha = .78$; $\omega = .79$ AVE=.49; CR=.83	$\alpha = .59$; $\omega = .57$ AVE=.29; CR=.62	$\alpha = .71$; $\omega = .72$ AVE=.37; CR=.74
<i>Behavioral Disaffection (BE)</i>	“When I am in class, I just act as if I am working.” “I don’t try very hard at school.”	$\alpha = .70$ $\omega = .72$	$\alpha = .53$ $\omega = .55$	$\alpha = .71$ $\omega = .72$

		AVE=.37; CR=.68	AVE=.28; CR=.64	AVE=.39; CR=.75
<i>Emotional Disaffection (ED)</i>	“When we work on something in class, I feel bored.”	$\alpha = .72$ $\omega = .75$	$\alpha = .50$ $\omega = .51$	$\alpha = .71$ $\omega = .74$
	“Class is not all that fun for me.”	AVE=.49; CR=.78	AVE=.28; CR=.60	AVE=.48; CR=.78

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed in several stages. First, we analyzed the statistical properties of the variables included in the path model (means, standard deviations, asymmetry, kurtosis), as well as the correlation matrix and the missing values. As the percentage of missing values was low, about 0.8%, they were treated through the multiple imputation procedure. Secondly, the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to examine the reliability and validity of the constructs. The Cronbach’s alpha (α), McDonald’s omega (ω), and Composite Reliability (CR) were used as key indexes for reliability. Overall, values greater or equal to 0.7 are indicative of good reliability (Hair et al., 2010). The convergent validity was examined with the help of CR and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al. (2010), AVE values equal to or greater than .50 and lower than CR are indicative of an adequate convergent validity. However, if AVE is less than 0.5, but CR is higher than 0.6, the convergent validity of the construct can be also adequate (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Then, the path model was fit with the AMOS 22 program in SPSS (Arbuckle, 2013), using maximum likelihood (ML). The model was fit and the results were evaluated according to the following goodness-of-fit indices: χ^2 (Chi-Squared), χ^2/df , RMR (Root Mean Square Residue), AGFI (Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), and AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) and ECVI (Expected Cross-Validation Index). There is evidence of a good fit when χ^2 has a $p > .05$, $\chi^2/df < 3$, RMR $< .05$, AGFI $\geq .90$, CFI $\geq .95$, and RMSEA $\leq .06$. AIC provides information to determine whether the model is the best fit for the data set, while ECVI informs of the extent to which these results could be replicated in an independent sample. AIC and ECVI scores lower than that of the saturated model indicates that the model is the best fit. Lastly, we conducted a multigroup analysis to determine the invariance of the path model for gender and country. Specifically, we tested the similarity of the model for gender and country concerning structural weights, structural covariances, and structural residuals. Age was treated as a covariate. The effect size of the regression

coefficients was evaluated using Cohen's (1988) *d* statistic ($d = 0.20$ small; $d = 0.50$ medium; $d = 0.80$ large).

Findings

Descriptive statistics

Table 2 provides the descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix of the variables included in the model, age and country. Although the multivariate Mardia coefficient was statistically significant ($M = 4.449$; $t = 4.829$; $p < .001$), the variables show univariate normality (asymmetry and kurtosis within values likely to be considered indicative of normal distributions). Results indicate that the correlations between the variables included in the model (independent, mediating, and dependent) are all statistically significant at $p < .01$.

Table 2.

Correlation matrix and descriptive statistics for the total sample.

	GE	CO	TI	AS	PI	BS	RS	CB	EE	BE	ED	BD
GE	–											
CO	.10*	–										
TI	.08*	.23*	–									
AS	-.04	.09*	.15*	–								
PI	.00	.07	.13*	.49*	–							
BS	.01	.11*	.26*	.29*	.22*	–						
RS	.01	.06	.11*	.43*	.41*	.45*	–					
CB	.04	-.01	.26*	.30*	.14*	.39*	.33*	–				
EE	.06	.14*	.11*	.33*	.37*	.58*	.58*	.35*	–			
BE	.05	.00	.18*	.21*	.17*	.41*	.39*	.48*	.44*	–		
ED	-.04	.00	.17*	.15*	.18*	.40*	.34*	.44*	.48*	.46*	–	
BD	.01	.00	.14*	.20*	.14*	.35*	.34*	.43*	.38*	.61*	.52*	–
<i>M</i>			3.48	3.96	3.16	3.88	4.19	3.93	3.63	3.65	2.52	2.5
<i>SD</i>			0.84	0.80	1.00	0.90	0.77	0.79	0.86	0.89	0.98	0.8

<i>Ske</i>	0.11	-0.95	-0.10	-0.77	-1.10	-0.33	-0.45	-0.35	0.27	0.3
<i>w</i>										2
<i>Kurt</i>	-0.93	0.76	-0.83	0.12	1.00	-0.87	-0.28	-0.69	-0.66	-
										0.2
										8

Note: GE (gender: 1 boys, 2 girls), CO (country: 1 Portugal, 2 Romania, 3 Spain), TI (teacher involvement), AS (academic socialization), PI (parental involvement), BS (belonging at school), RS (relevance of school), CB (control beliefs), EE (emotional engagement), BE (behavioral engagement), ED (emotional disaffection), BD (behavioral disaffection). Escala de medida de las variables del modelo: 1 mínimo, 5 máximo. Given that gender and country are categorical variables, Spearman's Rho has been estimated.

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

Adjustment of the hypothesized path models

Model of the students' SE

An acceptable fit was found from the initial model of students' SE [$\chi^2_{(6)} = 28.435$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 4.739$, AGFI = .945, CFI = .987, RMR = .019, RMSEA = .070 (.046 - .097)]; still, the examination of the residuals and the modification indices, and the corresponding gains, concurred to the modification of the initial tested model. Specifically, the direct effect of parental involvement on emotional engagement (PI → EE) was included and the direct effect of parental involvement on control beliefs (PI → CB) was eliminated. These changes resulted in a significant increase of the fit of the model [$\chi^2_{(6)} = 5.723$, $p < .05$, $\chi^2/df = 0.954$, AGFI = .989, CFI = 1.000, RMR = .009, RMSEA = .001 (.000 - .046)]. Consistently, we found AIC and ECVI data supporting the modified model. The AIC for the initial model was higher than that of the final model (88.435 and 65.723, respectively), and the ECVI value of our final model was lower than the ECVI value of the saturated model (.087 and .096, respectively); therefore, there is a reasonable expectation that this final model fits equally well in an independent sample.

Model of the students' school disaffection

The initial model of students' school disaffection fits well to data [$\chi^2_{(6)} = 14.201$, $p > .05$, $\chi^2/df = 2.367$, AGFI = .972, CFI = .994, RMR = .011, RMSEA = .043 (.013 - .072)]. Note that this fit was better than that of the initial model for students' SE. However, a close examination of the residuals and the modification indexes indicated the need to include the direct effect of academic socialization on emotional disaffection (AS → ED) and eliminate the effect of parental involvement on control beliefs (PI → CB) due to a lack of statistical significance. The result of these changes was a significant increase in model fit [$\chi^2_{(6)} = 9.595$, $p < .05$, $\chi^2/df =$

1.599, AGFI = .981, CFI = .997, RMR = .014, RMSEA = .028 (.000 - .060)]. Moreover, the AIC and ECVI of the final model were more positive than the initial ones. Specifically, the AIC of the initial model was higher than that of the final model (74.201 and 69.595, respectively), and the ECVI value of the final model was lower than the ECVI value of the saturated model (.092 and .097, respectively). These data suggest that this model would fit in an independent sample with good fit indices.

Assessment of the final model of students' SE and disaffection

Table 3 provides the standardized regression coefficients, their statistical significance, and the effect sizes.

Table 3.

Standardized direct effects of the final path models for students' SE and disaffection¹.

	SRW	SE	<i>d</i>
Regression coefficients common to both models			
Teacher involvement → Belonging at school	.251***	.037	0.543
Teacher involvement → Relevance of school	.104***	.030	0.233
Teacher involvement → Control beliefs	.223***	.032	0.490
Parental involvement → Belonging at school	.151***	.034	0.294
Parental involvement → Relevance of school	.276***	.028	0.576
Academic socialization → Belonging at school	.183***	.044	0.345
Academic socialization → Relevance of school	.285***	.036	0.583
Academic socialization → Control beliefs	.267***	.034	0.594
Regression coefficients of the engagement model			
Belonging at school → Emotional engagement	.367***	.029	0.975
Belonging at school → Behavioral engagement	.200***	.035	0.424
Relevance of school → Emotional engagement	.336***	.035	0.834
Relevance of school → Behavioral engagement	.184***	.040	0.398
Control beliefs → Emotional engagement	.077**	.031	0.196
Control beliefs → Behavioral engagement	.341***	.037	0.805
Parental involvement → Emotional engagement	.140***	.024	0.369
Regression coefficients of the disaffection model			
Belonging at school → Emotional disaffection	-.222***	.040	0.457
Belonging at school → Behavioral disaffection	-.161***	.035	0.321
Relevance of school → Emotional disaffection	-.165***	.047	0.326
Relevance of school → Behavioral disaffection	-.157***	.040	0.322
Control beliefs → Emotional disaffection	-.319***	.043	0.711
Control beliefs → Behavioral disaffection	-.317***	.038	0.701
Academic socialization → Emotional disaffection	.082**	.040	0.181

Note: SRW (standardized regression weights), SE (standardized errors), *d* (Cohen's *d*). ¹ Only the statistically significant relationships are presented.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Current data support a total mediation model for the students' SE and disaffection models, except for the two direct effects not initially hypothesized (PI → EE and AS → ED). Therefore, it can be stated that the effect of contextual assets on students' SE or disaffection is totally mediated by personal assets. On the other hand, the direct effect sign matches our hypothesis: the greater the contextual assets, the greater the personal assets, the greater the academic engagement, and the lower the disaffection. In general, the size of the effects varies, although it tends to be medium. The variance explained of students' SE is higher than that of school disaffection (EE = 48.3%, BE = 31.5%, ED = 26.8%, BD = 24.4%). In both models, the explained variance of personal assets was moderate (CB = 13.9%, BS = 15%, RS = 24.6%).

Finally, all the indirect effects of contextual assets (i.e., parental involvement, teacher involvement, and academic socialization) on students' SE (i.e., emotional and behavioral engagement) and students' school disaffection (i.e., emotional and behavioral disaffection) are statistically significant, particularly those corresponding to teacher involvement and academic socialization (see Table 4).

Table 4.

Standardized indirect effects of the final path models for students' SE and disaffection.

	SRW	<i>d</i>
Students' School Engagement		
Teacher involvement → Emotional engagement	.144***	0.396
Teacher involvement → Behavioral engagement	.145***	0.398
Parental involvement → Emotional engagement	.148***	0.404
Parental involvement → Behavioral engagement	.081**	0.264
Academic socialization → Emotional engagement	.184***	0.481
Academic socialization → Behavioral engagement	.180***	0.473
Students' School Disaffection		
Teacher involvement → Emotional disaffection	-.144***	0.396
Teacher involvement → Behavioral disaffection	-.127***	0.360
Parental involvement → Emotional disaffection	-.079**	0.260
Parental involvement → Behavioral disaffection	-.068*	0.237
Academic socialization → Emotional disaffection	-.173***	0.457
Academic socialization → Behavioral disaffection	-.159***	0.427

Note: SRW (standardized regression weights), *d* (Cohen' *d*).

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Multigroup Analysis

Gender invariance

Results showed invariance concerning gender, both for students' SE and disaffection. For both models the fit was good [engagement: $\chi^2_{(12)} = 28.621$, $p < .01$, $\chi^2/df = 2.385$, AGFI = .942, CFI = .990, RMR = .020, RMSEA = .044 (.023 - .065); disaffection: $\chi^2_{(6)} = 14.027$, $p > .05$, $\chi^2/df = 1.169$, AGFI = .971, CFI = .999, RMR = .018, RMSEA = .015 (.000 - .042)]. Table 5 provides a model fit summary considering weights, covariances, and residuals for students' SE and disaffection.

Table 5.

Model fit summary.

	χ^2	<i>df</i>	χ^2/df	AGFI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
Students' School Engagement							
Structural weights	43.243	27	1.602	.961	.990	.029	.029
Structural covariances	58.955	33	1.787	.957	.984	.050	.033
Structural residuals	72.129	42	1.717	.959	.981	.049	.032
Students' School Disaffection							
Structural weights	34.229	27	1.268	.968	.995	.028	.019
Structural covariances	49.941	33	1.513	.963	.988	.048	.027
Structural residuals	73.764	42	1.756	.957	.977	.049	.032

Note: χ^2 (Chi-Squared), χ^2/df , AGFI (Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), RMR (Root Mean Square Residue), RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation).

These data show the equality of the models taken as a whole; however, we intended to determine the extent to which the model is invariant in all its parameters. Specifically, and assuming that the unconstrained model is similar in the three groups, data for the students' SE model show that (i) no statistically significant differences were found in structural weights [$\Delta\chi^2(15) = 14.622$, $p > .05$, NFI = .009, TLI = -.028]; (ii) no statistically significant differences were found in structural covariances [$\Delta\chi^2(6) = 15.712$, $p < .05$, NFI = .010, TLI = .007]; and (iii) no statistically significant differences were found in structural residuals [$\Delta\chi^2(9) = 13.174$, $p > .05$, NFI = .008, TLI = -.002]. Data on the model of students' academic disaffection, assuming that the unconstrained model is similar in all groups, show (i) no statistically significant differences in structural weights [$\Delta\chi^2(15) = 20.203$, $p > .05$, NFI = .014, TLI = -.004]; (ii) no statistically significant differences in structural covariances [$\Delta\chi^2(6) = 15.712$, $p < .05$, NFI = .011, TLI = .010]; and (iii) no statistically significant differences in structural residuals [$\Delta\chi^2(9) = 23.822$, $p < .01$, NFI = .016, TLI = .010].

Country invariance

Data on the country invariance show that the model is significantly different depending on the country (Portugal, Romania, Spain). This lack of invariance was found for both models (i.e., the student engagement model and the disaffection model). Table 6 provides the results of the invariance analysis for students' SE and disaffection considering the samples of the three countries. Results show that invariance is ruled out for the three sub-models (weights, covariances, residuals).

Table 6.

Model fit summary.

	χ^2	<i>df</i>	χ^2/df	AGFI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
Students' School Engagement							
Unconstrained	65.707	21	3.129	.893	.977	.025	.053
Structural weights	285.911	49	5.835	.828	.876	.074	.080
Structural covariances	444.705	61	7.290	.805	.799	.108	.092
Structural residuals	529.601	79	6.704	.815	.764	.117	.087
Students' School Disaffection							
Unconstrained	82.461	18	4.581	.849	.963	.032	.069
Structural weights	323.372	48	6.737	.808	.843	.091	.087
Structural covariances	482.166	60	8.036	.792	.759	.121	.097
Structural residuals	561.887	78	7.204	.808	.724	.121	.091

Note: χ^2 (Chi-Squared), χ^2/df , AGFI (Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), RMR (Root Mean Square Residue), RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation).

Table 7.

Regression weights for each country.

		<i>Portugal</i>		<i>Spain</i>		<i>Romania</i>				
		Estimate	SE	<i>d</i>	Estimate	SE	<i>d</i>	Estimate	SE	<i>d</i>
<i>Parental</i>										
<i>Involvement with</i>										
Belonging	at	-.050	.084	-	.081	.046	-	.049	.077	-
Relevance	of	.130*	.064	.28	.089*	.043	.24	.220***	.057	.52
Control Beliefs		-.012*	.061	-	-.122**	.044	-.33	.201**	.071	.037
<i>Academic</i>										
<i>Socialization with</i>										
Belonging	at	.166	.086	-	.063	.057	-	.477***	.085	.79

Relevance of school	.309***	.066	.68	.220***	.054	.48	.299***	.062	.66
Control Beliefs	.066	.062	-	.240***	.055	.52	.334***	.078	.58
<i>Teacher Involvement with</i>									
Belonging at school	.497***	.080	.94	.601***	.063	1.32	-.387***	.094	-.56
Relevance of school	.408***	.062	1.02	.259***	.058	.53	-.088	.069	-
Control Beliefs	.276***	.058	.69	.671***	.060	1.69	-.394***	.086	-.62
<i>Belonging at school with</i>									
Behavioral Engagement	.175**	.057	.43	.199***	.056	.041	.216**	.070	.41
Emotional Engagement	.420***	.052	1.32	.326***	.047	.86	.274***	.048	.80
<i>Relevance of school with</i>									
Behavioral Engagement	.322***	.068	.69	.096	.060	-	.094	.093	-
Emotional Engagement	.366***	.062	.88	.403***	.051	1.02	.252***	.064	.53
<i>Control Beliefs with</i>									
Behavioral Engagement	.242**	.078	.44	.522***	.055	1.30	.355***	.071	.68
Emotional Engagement	.130	.072	-	.107*	.046	.27	.190***	.049	.52

Discussion

The current study extended prior research by taking a multi-dimensional approach to investigate the reported school attitudes and behaviors of students with Roma backgrounds living in three European countries: Portugal, Spain, and Romania. Based on the theoretical framework of the SSMD, two path models were tested to explore the role played by students' personal assets (i.e., relevance of school, school belonging, and control beliefs) on the relationship between context-related variables (i.e., parent involvement teacher involvement, academic socialization) and SE and disaffection profiles. Data are consistent with previous studies under the frame of the SSMD (e.g., Nouwen & Clycq, 2021; Rickert & Skinner, 2022; Skinner et al., 2008, 2009a, 2009b), providing empirical support for the study's general hypothesis. Overall, support from parents and teachers heightens the perceived relevance of school, belongingness, and control beliefs, and therefore behavioral and emotional

engagement while weakening disaffection attitudes and behaviors. At last, gender and country invariance were examined to measure their potential impact on the relationship between the self-system processes and the SE and disaffection of students with Roma background.

Students' SE and Disaffection Trajectories

In line with previous findings (e.g., Nouwen & Clycq, 2021; Rickert & Skinner, 2022; Skinner et al., 2008, 2009a, 2009b), overall, the contextual-related variables included in the models – teacher involvement, parental involvement, and academic socialization – were directly or indirectly linked to dimensions of academic engagement and disaffection. Additionally, the hypothesized mediation role played by the self-system processes (i.e., perceived relevance of school, belonging at school, and control beliefs) on the relationship between context-related conditions and outcomes was supported by current data, except for parental involvement. Although the latter relationship is widely established in the educational research field (e.g., Boone & Demanet, 2020; Fall & Roberts, 2012; Guay et al., 2017; Nouwen & Clycq, 2019, 2021), empirical data on students from ethnic-minority groups is limited (Lauritzen & Nodeland, 2018). Roma students, like other students at risk for school failure (e.g., ethnically marginalized groups or low socioeconomic status) seem to particularly benefit from the warm involvement of parents and teachers, likely to help them navigate between both Roma and non-Roma cultures. According to Martin et al. (2016), students' perceptions of parental and teacher support are related to students' motivation and identification with school, therefore increasing students' emotional and behavioral engagement and decreasing the likelihood of disengaging from school.

Regarding parental involvement, there is a comprehensive understanding that when parents are supportive and interested in their offspring's academic activities, children are more likely to be motivated and engaged in and with learning and school (Fan et al., 2012; Fan & Williams, 2010; Mo & Singh, 2008). In general, our results confirm the hypotheses stating that the effects of different forms of parental involvement (i.e., home- and school-based and academic socialization) on behavioral and emotional engagement and disaffection occur through personal assets. In fact, as argued by Hyde et al. (2017), parents are in a privileged position to tailor students' expectations and value information on a personal basis, supporting their engagement in school and learning and hindering students' disaffection. However, two

interesting and unexpected findings emerge from the data. First, the non-significant path between home- and school-based forms of parental involvement (i.e., teacher-parent meetings, helping with homework) and control beliefs suggest that traditional forms of parental involvement do not boost students' beliefs about their capacity to perform well in school activities and tasks. A possible explanation may be related to systemic barriers (e.g., lack of cultural capital and tacit knowledge of the inner workings of the school system, negative experiences in education, discrimination, and stereotype threat) preventing the exercise of traditional forms of parental involvement (Grace & Gerdes, 2019; Sime et al., 2018; Zachos & Panagiotidou, 2019). The former are likely to affect the quality and quantity of parental involvement within the Roma community and its far-reaching impact on students' personal assets (e.g., the students' perceived control over their future academic selves). For example, following Lambrev (2020), parents' negative experiences with mainstream education seem to affect children's personal beliefs about the possibility of having future successful careers (i.e., control beliefs). Furthermore, the lack of cultural capital may prevent parents from the Roma community from successfully connecting their expectations and values with the long-term benefits of school. Importantly, this mismatch may prevent them from influencing the development of the children's perceptions of control of their educational experience. Second, data provide support on how different forms of parental involvement may be associated with different personal and academic outcomes. It is worthy of note that home and school-based forms of parental involvement impacted directly and positively students' emotional engagement, while academic socialization efforts undergone by parents were found to impact directly and negatively emotional disaffection. These findings suggest that providing students with a sense of care and support and fostering compliance with rules facilitates their emotional engagement in school (Hill et al., 2016; Jeynes, 2003, 2010, 2018; Jung & Zhang, 2016; Wang & Eccles, 2012; Wang & Huguley, 2012). However, those overt strategies were less efficacious than academic socialization efforts while mitigating maladaptive motivational states (emotional disaffection).

In line with previous studies (Nouwen & Clycq, 2021; Moreira et al., in press), this finding highlights the protective effect of parental academic socialization efforts on emotional disaffection, which might be of most interest to prevent students often exposed to acculturation hassles (i.e., stereotypes and discrimination, language barriers) from dropping

out of school. By engaging in academic socialization efforts (e.g., communicating with children about school, encouraging and transmitting aspirations and expectations) parents may help children to connect actual school participation and engagement with future relevant goals, and prepare them to cope with bias and acculturation hassles (e.g., ethnic discrimination; language barriers). Thereby, these encouragement messages and practices are likely to help students to counter, for example, states of boredom, disinterest, or frustration/anger (emotional disaffection; Andriessen et al., 2012; Benner et al., 2016; Bryan et al., 2012; Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Skinner et al., 2008). As well-documented in the literature (e.g., Eccles, 2009; Hughes et al., 2009), students who experience emotional disaffection (in particular those from ethnically marginalized groups) are more likely to recognize less utility value in school, increase truancy, and school absence, and decrease their effort and interest in attending school beyond compulsory school levels. What is more, differences found in the effect sizes of the relationships investigated are consistent with previous research on ethnically marginalized groups (Boonk et al., 2018; Erdem & Kaya, 2020; Fan et al., 2012; Kim & Hill, 2015; Tan et al., 2020; Wilder, 2014). These differences suggest that academic socialization efforts are more predictive of higher engagement than traditional behaviors of parental involvement (i.e., parent-teacher meetings, helping with homework), to which schools require and expect parents to comply. Together, the current findings support extant data (e.g., Moreira et al., 2021; Moreira et al., in press; Rosário et al., 2017; Sime et al., 2018; Zachos & Panagiotidou, 2019; Želinský et al., 2021) stating that parents with Roma background value education and make efforts to support their children's educational paths. Regardless of the extent and quality of the efforts displayed, the perceived parental involvement in its different forms plays a positive and protective role in school (dis)engagement trajectories while nurturing students' sense of belonging and control, and the perceived utility value of school (Rickert & Skinner, 2022).

Beyond family support, our data reveal that the perceived support from adults in the school setting, in the form of teachers' involvement, plays an important role in children's motivation, optimizing students' engagement in learning. Overall, the current findings are in line with previous studies (e.g., Assor et al., 2002; Engels et al., 2020; Fredricks, 2014; Green et al., 2008; Gutiérrez et al., 2017; Skinner et al., 2008, 2009a, 2009b). As Wilkins (2014) states, students' emotional, social, and academic experiences at school are shaped by teacher-

student interactions. Accordingly, teachers showing interest and care in students and praise their efforts are likely to foster their sense of belonging, competence, and control beliefs, and expand their perspectives on the value of education for their future (Fried & Konza, 2013), therefore affecting school (dis)engagement trajectories (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2009; Wilkins, 2014). A closer look at the effect sizes suggests that school-related factors in the form of teacher involvement showed a stronger effect on students' personal assets than that found for parent-related variables.

This interesting finding is consistent with data by Nouwen & Clycq (2019). These authors found that students from stigmatized groups can distance themselves from school, for example, by not setting goals for their education, especially when they feel their teachers – more than their parents – do not support them. Therefore, positive teacher-student relationships appear to be particularly relevant for academically at-risk students (Fredricks, 2014), as is the case of Roma groups, facilitating both psychological and behavioral adjustment outcomes.

Cross-Country Models of SE and Disaffection Trajectories

Results show no significant between-country differences in the latent mean scores. This finding provides evidence for the cross-country validity of the antecedents and mechanisms underlying SE and disaffection trajectories examined in this study. This suggests that the represented associations between our constructs may tend to be universal, regardless of the influence of broader macrosystems (e.g., macro-level policies, patterns of history, ideas, and societal relationships of the society in which students' lives, and cultural variations in Roma groups). Nevertheless, we also observed several interesting between-country differences in the relationships between specific constructs.

First, there are some differences in the significance of paths between parents-related variables and motivational forces. Whereas academic socialization and personal assets (i.e., belongingness, the relevance of school, and control beliefs) were significantly correlated in the Romanian and the Spanish samples (except for academic socialization and belongingness which is nonsignificant in the Spanish sample), in the Portuguese sample, the parents' academic socialization efforts are uniquely correlated with the relevance of school. Moreover, in the Portuguese sample, control beliefs were not significantly related to any form of parental

involvement. These findings suggest that while in Romania and Spain parents play a critical role to initiate and develop students' motivational processes – which is in line with previous studies (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Furrer & Skinner, 2003) – in Portugal those processes are mostly influenced by other sources of support, such as teachers. One possible explanation for the differing results could be related to the quality of the parent-child relationship. Parents knowledge- or lack of tacit information on the inner workings of the school system, may influence the internalization of educational values transmitted by parents, because parent-child communication may be perceived as controlling instead of informative. For example, according to Rummel and Feinberg (1990), when communication is perceived as controlling, the locus of causality shifts, thereby reducing intrinsic motivation forces (e.g., control beliefs). Moreover, as stressed by Fan et al. (2012), parental involvement in the form of parent-teacher meetings to communicate academic and behavioral problems could negatively impact students' motivational processes. In the particular case of Roma groups in Portugal, most of the parent-school communication occurs due to poor behavioral adjustment of Roma students, parent-child communications about school may be discouraging and controlling, thereby decreasing students' confidence, interest, and belonging in school.

Second, the direction of relationships varied between countries. Whereas in Portuguese and Spanish samples, teachers' involvement and personal assets are positively correlated, in the Romanian sample, the significant correlations are negative. For example, in Portuguese and Spanish samples, data provide support to a wide body of literature (e.g., Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Skinner & Belmont, 1993) documenting the significant contribution of teachers' involvement to strengthen students' control beliefs, sense of belongingness, and beliefs on the relevance of school for their future. Regarding the Romanian sample, the negative correlations suggest that teacher-student relationships may play a detrimental role in the motivational processes and educational outcomes of students with Roma background. The reasons behind this adversarial relationship could be multifold. The teachers' negative effects on students' motivational forces are various and well-documented; among them the quality of teacher-student interactions is crucial. This relationship could be influenced by students-related factors (e.g., perception of the teacher's behavior, perceived threat, discrimination) or teachers-related factors affecting their performance (e.g., dissatisfaction with financial status and learning environments, excessive workload, lack of in-service

training, hostile attitudes and disliking in interactions with Roma community; Murnane, 2007; Ali et al., 2019).

Third and last, differences emerged in the magnitude of the correlations found. For instance, the correlations between the parents-related variables and personal assets were higher for the Romanian sample than for the Portuguese and Spanish samples. Whereas the correlations between the teachers-related variable and personal assets were higher for the Portuguese and Spanish samples than for the Romanian samples. In particular, for the Romanian sample, based on the current evidence it can be hypothesized that parents made unique contributions to students' engagement by supporting their sense of belonging, control, and competence beliefs and beliefs on the relevance of school, even when considering teachers. Regarding the correlations between personal assets and the dimensions of SE, intermediate to large effects were found in the correlations between control beliefs and behavioral engagement among Romanian and Spanish samples (respectively) compared to a small effect in the Portuguese sample. Also, an intermediate effect was found between control beliefs and emotional engagement in the Romanian sample compared to a small effect in the Spanish sample and no effect in the Portuguese. Along with the support provided to previous findings documenting the impact of control beliefs and competence on SE, these results stress the relevance to expand warm parental involvement efforts in Portugal and Spain. As Rickert & Skinner (2022) found, parents made a unique contribution to optimize their children's SE by promoting their sense of control and competence.

Altogether, current evidence supports the assertion that differences in student outcomes or personal development are likely to be more strongly influenced by micro-policies and micro-practices, than by macro-policies leveraged in European countries.

Gender Invariance of SE and Disaffection Trajectories

Results reveal that the hypothesized model was invariant across gender. This finding provides support to the extant research (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2017) while documenting that male and female students' motivational forces and engagement are influenced by the micro-level agents of socialization – parents, and teachers. However, it is worthy of note that the means and the extent to which those agents of socialization operate to optimize school-related outcomes may differ. For instance, following Ewing & Taylor's (2009) school risk hypothesis, supportive relationships in the proximal contexts would strongly benefit boys as they are more

prone to express school adjustment problems and negative feelings about school (Wang, 2009). In turn, girls are more prone to value school and learning, express high behavioral adjustment to school, and thereby report high levels of SE (Eccles et al., 1993; Moreira et al., 2021; Rosário et al., 2017; Wang & Eccles, 2012). Therefore, testing gender differences in the proposed associations would be of importance for theory and practical applications.

Conclusions

To sum up, the present results provide preliminary evidence for how and to what extent the support provided by primary agents of socialization and SE and disaffection are related in Roma communities from different countries. Notably, the associations between the proposed constructs were found to be very similar across the three countries, but some interesting differences between the three countries were also observed. By operationalizing motivational theories (e.g., Self-System Model of Motivational Development) in the design of this project and the interpretation of the results, this study provides a rich picture of the underlying factors affecting SE and disaffection paths of students with Roma background. Given their increasingly recognized relevance for student outcomes, recent research has documented both teacher and parental impact on student self-system processes and SE under the frame of the SSMMD (e.g., Fall & Roberts, 2012; Nouwen & Clycq, 2021; Rickert & Skinner, 2022). As for the present study, the SSMMD has proved to be a relevant framework to understand the engagement and disaffection trajectories of ethnic minority students, who have to navigate between cultures. Findings provide empirical evidence that Roma students' perceptions of social support predict changes in their self-system processes, revealing that teachers and parents play a central role in helping children handle acculturation challenges and hassles when fitting the school context. Altogether, the current findings hold substantive and methodological implications for researchers in the field and educators seeking to optimize the SE of students from Roma groups. As research continues to untangle the complexities of Roma students' educational paths, it has become increasingly relevant to move to a more holistic and culturally sensitive approach, to better understand the adjustment outcomes of students facing acculturation hassles and, as such, placed at a high risk of disaffecting completely from school.

Along with the several strengths of this study, some caveats and limitations must be considered. First, data are comprised of self-report information from students to the

measured constructs, including parental and teacher involvement and SE. Students may answer in a socially desirable way about their behavior or attitude or the perceived social support, thus introducing bias into the results. Future research may consider including multiple sources of information (e.g., teachers and parents) and different data collection methods (e.g., interviews, teacher-report) to provide more accurate information. A second limitation can be attributed to the sample size. While the study contains a large sample size, the sample from each country was drawn from some schools per country. Thereby, the samples could not capture the variability of the analyzed processes, given the heterogeneity of the Roma population. Moreover, future studies with larger samples might also want to assess information about socioeconomic status, school level, living conditions, and acculturation orientations to be able to explore their roles in the model across countries. Secondly, the unexpected direct path between emotional engagement and parental involvement uncovers the need to consider multiple self-system processes to fully scope the impact of home and school-based parental involvement on the emotional engagement of children with Roma background. Moreover, the present study did not take into consideration the different processes by which parents and teachers operate their involvement and the different and cumulative impact they may have on student engagement. An interesting finding by Rickert and Skinner (2022) stresses that both socializers' involvement differently and cumulatively predicts changes in student engagement; that is, parent and teacher contributions complement each other. As such, future research should compare the different processes by which parents and teachers operate their involvement to further understand how they complement or contrast with each other. In addition, future research could examine the impact of peer support on the relationships hypothesized in the models. On a final note, given the promising results of the present study, it may be of interest to develop future studies about the SE of ethnic minority students under the SSMMD theory.

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