

Social Support and Work Engagement Among Secondary School Teachers in Hong Kong

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Abstract—This study investigated work engagement and social support for 386 secondary school teachers in Hong Kong. It was driven by highly documented issues regarding their below-optimal physical and psychological well-being, which degrades personal well-being as well as the quality of education. Not only was it the aim of this research to quantitatively quantify these two variables, but also to establish a proactive approach to establish how to cultivate positive psychological strengths to maximise engagement. The goal was to provide a pathway for improving the quality of life and overall professional performance of teachers, creating a circle of virtuousness to the advantage of both students and teachers. Data was collected via well-designed web questionnaires and were processed using a stringent statistical approach. The key results offered a mixed and eye-opening picture: while a promising 63.7% of teachers demonstrated social support scores above the median, a much lower but disturbing percentage (43.3%) reflected high work engagement. This disconnection between support systems and engagement suggests that support systems per se are in place, yet perhaps not being maximally applied or to optimal targets. Most notably, the researchers have identified a moderate positive correlation, statistically confirming that greater perceived social support is associated in concrete terms with enhanced work engagement. This turns the finding from anecdotal observation to empirical fact. The relevance of the study transcends mere academic diagnosis to providing actionable intelligence for principals and policymakers alike. It emphasizes the sheer necessity to intentionally strengthen structural and affective support systems and, simultaneously, try to remove the underlying psychological health barriers facing teachers. These findings are highly relevant to teacher training colleges in course design, for school administration in setting supportive working cultures, and to the broader public that relies on a secure, motivated teaching profession.

Keywords—professional growth, school management, secondary education, social support, work engagement

I. Introduction

The Hong Kong secondary teaching profession operates in a peculiar demanding and high-stakes education setting. Teachers fight against an excessive workload that transcends the classroom to include extensive administrative responsibilities, curriculum revisions, and the pervasive pressure to prepare students for high-stakes public examinations. This environment, coupled with the stress of dealing with different students' requirements and parents' expectations, subjects secondary school teachers to considerable chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout. This has rendered their professional resilience [1] and effectiveness a subject of great concern, with academic studies targeting psychological factors that may act as buffers against such adverse effects. The subject of this discussion is the interconnected concepts of social support and work engagement.

Work engagement [2] is a positive, involving, work-centered mindset characterized by three primary dimensions: vigour (high resilience and energy), dedication (sense of significance and passion), and absorption (being very much involved and focused on one's work).

For teachers, high engagement equates to greater enthusiasm in the classroom, more investment in students' development at the individual level, and greater use of new instructional methods. It is a buffer against burnout and an essential motivator of job satisfaction [3] and classroom teaching quality. For the challenging context of Hong Kong, social support is a key job resource that has the direct potential to stimulate and sustain this commitment.

According to models like the Job Demands-Resources model [4], social support allows one to achieve work goals, buffer job demands and support personal growth [5].

For secondary school teachers, this support is not consistent but from a multi-level setting. Support from superiors like principals and senior staff through recognition, distributive leadership [6], and allocation of resources required gives a teacher's perception of organizational value. Collegial support, articulated in terms of cooperation, joint planning, and healthy team atmosphere, provides emotional comfort and practical solutions to immediate problems.

Finally, parents' and students' support, articulated in terms of respectful relationships and constructive participation, validates the worthwhileness of the teacher's effort and increases their commitment. Therefore, an examination of the way these distinct sources of social support dynamically interact with secondary school teachers' work engagement in Hong Kong is of the greatest importance. A nuanced account of how support from diverse stakeholders specifically boosts a teacher's vitality, commitment, and absorption can move beyond clichéd well-being tips.

It provides a firm, research-based foundation for schools and policymakers to develop goal-oriented interventions, foster positive school climates [7], and ultimately establish a resilient, engaged, and effective teaching profession capable of succeeding in the challenges of the 21st-century classroom.

Problem statement

Despite the noted importance of intangible incentives for knowledge workers like teachers, there is a wide research gap in how social support by itself impacts their work engagement and, subsequently, their performance. Literature validates that spiritual incentives, like social support, work better for these types of employees than tangible incentives [8] because they foster engagement while burnout is prevented. For teachers, this support (gained from individual, organizational, and societal levels) acts as a major stimulator.

Work engagement is a psychological state that offers the necessary connection between determinants of motivation like social support and ultimate teaching performance.

Engaged educators exhibit positive cognition and affect, which leads to higher-quality work and the full utilization of their human capital. However, while its function is identified as key, the specific mechanisms and influence of multi-level social support in producing such engagement on the part of teachers are poorly understood. This lack of detailed understanding constitutes a basic theoretical lacuna. Thus, the most essential problem is the absence of consideration of the relationship between work engagement and social support [9], which does not allow for the development of targeted, effective actions on the improvement of teacher performance and the overall quality of secondary school education.

Research questions

- (a) What are the social support and work engagement levels among Hong Kong secondary school teachers?
- (b) What are the most important social support factors impacting teachers' work engagement?
- (c) What is the relationship between social support and work engagement?
- (d) To what extent does secondary school teachers' work engagement correlate with demographic factors?
- (e) How to increase the level of social support and work engagement of secondary school teachers in Hong Kong?

Significance of the study

This research has significant theoretical, practice, and methodology implications. Theoretically, it makes clear that social support is a significant determinant of teachers' work engagement and therefore boosts psychological and behavioural research on teachers. While previous research has focused on variables such as leadership and self-efficacy, this research contributes by exploring the influence of social support and its causal relationship with engagement and, therefore, broadening the theoretical basis in the field. In practice, the study provides school leaders with effective recommendations to enhance continuously teachers' social support systems and well-being.

By alleviating unnecessary physical or psychological burdens, it enables the teachers to devote themselves fully to teaching. The findings guide the principals to maximize working engagement for performance's sake, suggesting that they should note the various needs of novice and experienced teachers. Since the primary executing agents of education are the teachers, and teachers directly influence the quality of education, this study offers theoretical evidence for enhancing educational quality and updating teacher incentive mechanisms. Methodologically, the study offers valuable information that act as a guide to further research into Hong Kong teachers' work engagement. It supports the use of new approaches in collecting effective information and positively used exploratory factor analysis [10] to restrict the number of independent variables, an approach that contributes to future studies' corpus.

II. Literature Review

The profession of teaching is inherently challenging, yet Hong Kong's unique socio-educational climate presents a unique set of circumstances to the secondary school teacher. Intense academic competition, high-stakes testing, and burdensome administrative responsibilities fuel a high-risk environment for burnout and stress [11]. In response, educational research has focused more on the quest for protective factors promoting teachers' well-being and effectiveness, and work engagement and social support are being identified as important constructs.

Work engagement in the teaching context

Work engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind [12] characterized by three key dimensions: vigour (high energy and mental persistence at work, the willingness to exert effort, and resilience in the face of adversity), dedication (strong involvement in one's work combined with feelings of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge), and absorption (being completely concentrated and pleasantly absorbed in one's work, so that time passes easily and one has difficulty detaching from the task). This three-component model moves beyond mere job satisfaction to encode an active and chronic cognitive-affective state that is a causal determinant of teacher performance and institutional health. In the school setting, engaged teachers are not merely present; they are psychologically committed to their work.

They are more motivated in class, more resistant to daily stressors, and more invested in student development, which directly impacts quality of instruction and academic and social-emotional student achievements [13].

Their involvement in curriculum planning and investment in pedagogical change led to a more engaging and effective learning space. But maintaining and achieving this higher status is a serious endeavor in the specific Hong Kong context. The local education climate is dominated by long-term and intense job stresses, including the pressure of high stakes standardized testing (Diploma of Secondary Education), an extremely packed curriculum, dense administrative demands, and high parental expectations. These relentless requests can mechanistically deplete teachers' psychological resources, leading to emotional exhaustion, the core component of burnout. Accordingly, based on research specifically in Hong Kong, many secondary school teachers have only moderate job engagement, coupled with high turnover intent to exit the teaching profession [14]. This situation propels an unstable cycle in which the same elements that deplete participation compromise the educational quality and may result in greater teacher turnover and loss of experienced teachers.

This points to the need to identify and build job resources that are susceptible to the adverse impact of these demands and actively foster activation. These resources are not nice-to-haves but psychological nutrients that are essential in assisting employees in dealing with demands, achieving work goals, and facilitating personal development and growth [15], as the Job Demands-Resources model suggests. Therefore, the upkeep of Hong Kong's teacher population relies upon understanding and leveraging such important resources for protection and enhancement of teacher engagement.

Social support as a key job resource

The Job Demands-Resources model is an elegant and parsimonious theoretical model of the dynamic interplay between workplace stressors and motivators that is especially apt in the teaching environment. The model subsumes all job characteristics under two broad categories: job demands and job resources. Job demands are the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of work that require extended physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with some physiological and psychological costs, such as burnout and exhaustion. In teaching, this includes heavy workload, time pressure, and problem student behavior. Conversely, job resources are those that are functional in achieving work goals, reducing job demands and the accompanying physiological and psychological costs, or stimulate personal growth, learning, and development.

It is in this second category that social support is positioned as a major resource. The JD-R model proposes a dual process. First, in the health impairment process, chronic job demands exhaust employees' mental and physical resources, leading to burnout. Here, job resources like social support can buffer this negative effect, serving as a protective shield that allows teachers to cope with and counter the depleting effect of their demands. Second, and equally important, is the motivational process, whereby work resources themselves possess motivational potential leading to positive consequences like work engagement. They do this by fulfilling basic human needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, and by instilling the willingness to invest one's effort and talent in the work task.

For teachers, social support is a multi-dimensional rather than a unidimensional construct that feeds this motivational process from several different sources. Literature consistently differentiates between support from various sources with a differing functional role. Supervisor support, conveyed in terms of constructive feedback, praise, and distributive justice, confirms a teacher's sense of organizational value and justice [16]. Collegial support, provided through professional collaboration, shared planning, and a spirit of teamwork, brings invaluable emotional comfort and practical, instrumental support in daily challenges. Finally, student and parental support, shown in respectful relationships, positive feedback, and appreciation, directly validates the teacher's work's significance and social worth, a powerful motivator for their dedication. The JD-R model thus provides a comprehensive lens to see how such multi-level support arrangements not peripheral benefits are but are fundamental psychological nutrients that directly buffer strain and actively promote a thriving, committed teacher workforce.

Research gap in the Hong Kong context

While the general positive association between social support and work engagement in the Western management literature is firmly grounded, direct application of these findings within Hong Kong's singular educational and cultural setting requires further questioning and contextual research. Hong Kong's distinctive socio-cultural fabric [17], where a combination of collectivist Confucian values and a highly competitive, performance-driven mindset co-exist, gives rise to a unique context guaranteed to shape the way support is given and received by teachers. For instance, the traditional hierarchical school organization may suggest that supervisor support is interpreted in terms of paternal concern and power, possibly having more impact (or expectations) than in more egalitarian Western systems. Similarly, the collectivist culture with an emphasis on harmony is coupled with scholarly pressures that can foster competition rather than cooperation among peers, possibly altering the dynamic and impact of peer support [18].

Moreover, there is a striking shortage of local studies to date. Earlier research in Hong Kong has been practicing with a brush-stroke methodology and overreliance on negative measures such as occupational stress and burnout. While both are current concerns, this deficit-focused approach has come at the expense of a nuanced, detailed examination of the positive psychological drivers of teacher effectiveness. There is glaring lacuna of scholarship that investigates systematically how different sources of support (from principals, peer teachers, students, and parents) contribute in a distinctive manner to the specific dimensions of engagement: namely,

the vigour energy of energy, the sense of significance in dedication, and the immersion of absorption. It is not a matter of slight academic curiosity to understand whether collegial support has greater significance to instill vigor, or parental approval is the primary driving force for commitment. This is a gap that is pressing from an intervention standpoint, as a nuanced, source-specific understanding is a prerequisite for school administrators and policymakers to be able to create targeted, effective, and culturally responsive strategies [19] that move beyond blanket wellness programming to fuel directly the drivers that enable teachers to flourish. In conclusion, the literature conclusively demonstrates that work engagement (characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption) is a critical resource in ensuring education quality as well as teaching staff retention.

Social support appears here to be an essential antecedent, being a critical job resource capable of guarding against demands and actively stimulating motivation. However, the equally clear and contextually descriptive understanding of how different sources of social support (supervisors, peers, students, and parents) affect the distinct facets of work engagement in different ways are under-explored, particularly in the difficult and unique environment of Hong Kong secondary schools. The complex interplay of hierarchical structure, collectivistic society, and intense academic competition in Hong Kong will most probably shape these dynamics in as-yet-unexplained ways. This study sets out to fill this significant knowledge gap by providing contextualized, empirical evidence. The goal is to enlighten the development of focused, nurturing schools of education in which teachers are supported not just to endure the difficulties of the profession, but to thrive and perpetuate their beneficial influence.

III. Methodology

Research approach

The study in this research will be quantitative and shall employ a survey method to investigate the association between work engagement and social support among Hong Kong secondary teachers. While both qualitative and quantitative approaches have varied strengths [20], the quantitative method was employed due to its capability of efficiently gathering information for a huge sample size and facilitate statistical treatment capable of identifying patterns and correlations within a large population. This is particularly beneficial in the situation where generalizable findings are to be developed about the prevalence and relationships among these constructs within the target population.

The survey will be a key instrument to evaluate the levels of social support as stated by various sources (supervisors, colleagues, and parents) and the corresponding levels of work engagement through the aspects of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Through measurement of the variables, the study aims to provide an interpretive lens through which to look at teacher well-being and quality of support system-professional relationship. The data provided by participants will give precious insights into their lived experience and perceptions. Lastly, the analysis of such empirical data is intended to provide a foundation upon which evidence-informed, actionable interventions can be recommended to enhance professional support systems and job engagement, and through such means, to enhance teacher retention and education performance in Hong Kong secondary schools.

Participants and sampling

The research targets local secondary school teachers in Hong Kong, with a predetermined sample size of 386 participants. This figure aligns with statistical recommendations for a 95% confidence level, ensuring the findings are representative and generalizable to the wider population of secondary teachers in the region.

Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire designed to measure perceived levels of multi-source social support and the core dimensions of work engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. The subsequent quantitative analysis will provide an empirical basis for understanding the relationship between these variables. The ultimate objective is to translate these statistical insights into actionable, evidence-based strategies to enhance support systems and foster work engagement, thereby contributing to improved teacher well-being and educational quality in Hong Kong's secondary schools.

Instrumentations and procedures

Data for this study were collected by a self-administered web-based survey, distributed to 386 secondary school educators in Hong Kong.

The tool was divided into two broad categories. The first gathered demographic data, including rank, gender, age, and teaching experience, to allow for comparison between different groups of teachers. Part two measured the key variables using adapted, established scales. Social support was measured using a 30-item measure adapted from the Support for Workers with Disability Scale [21], assessing support from six sources: organization, supervisor, colleagues, family, students, and parents. Work engagement was measured using the 17-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale [22], assessing the dimensions vigor, dedication, and absorption. There was a six-point Likert scale for every item that forced a clear positive or negative response, enhancing discrimination and reliability. The draft of the questionnaire was reviewed by experienced principals and academics who provided content validity and clarity. The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete and was administered over a period of two months from May 1, 2025, through June 30, 2025.

IV. Results and Data Analysis

Demographic characteristics of participants

The demographic profile of the 386 teachers provides a representative sample of Hong Kong secondary school teachers. The highest rank was Graduate Master (GM) at 72.5%, with a well-balanced gender breakdown of 52.6% male and 47.4% female, different from the national teaching population. Most teachers (87.3%) were aged between 21-50, and nearly all had a bachelor's degree or above (99.4%). There was a balanced breakdown by marital status as single or married.

A large percentage (76.2%) reported a high family monthly income (over HK\$40,001), and half of the participants were childless. Teaching service was also varied, with 44.6% reporting over 11 years of service. Participants were almost evenly divided across Band 1, 2, and 3 schools, and a large percentage (71.0%) reported a working week of 41-50 hours. This pattern allows for rigorous comparative analysis across key demographic and professional subgroups.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants

| Characteristics of participants (n = 386) | | Number | Percentage (%) |
|---|--|--------|----------------|
| Rank | PGM / SGM | 51 | 13.2 |
| | GM | 280 | 72.5 |
| | Contract Teacher | 55 | 14.2 |
| Gender | Male | 203 | 52.6 |
| | Female | 183 | 47.4 |
| Age | ≤ 30 | 68 | 17.6 |
| | 31–40 | 142 | 36.8 |
| | 41–50 | 127 | 32.9 |
| | ≥ 51 | 49 | 12.7 |
| Marital status | Single | 175 | 45.3 |
| | Married | 188 | 48.7 |
| | Widowed / Divorced | 23 | 6.0 |
| Qualification | Certificate of Education or Associate degree | 0 | 0 |
| | Bachelor's degree | 212 | 54.9 |
| | Master's degree or above | 174 | 45.1 |
| Family monthly income | ≤ \$40,000 | 92 | 23.8 |
| | \$40,001–\$70,000 | 96 | 24.9 |
| | \$70,001–\$100,000 | 102 | 26.4 |
| | ≥ \$100,001 | 96 | 24.9 |
| Number of children | None | 205 | 53.1 |
| | 1 | 79 | 20.5 |
| | 2 | 87 | 22.5 |
| | ≥ 3 | 15 | 3.9 |
| Teaching experience | ≤ 3 years | 90 | 23.3 |
| | 4–10 years | 124 | 32.1 |
| | 11–20 years | 130 | 33.7 |
| | ≥ 21 years | 42 | 10.9 |
| School banding | Band 1 | 124 | 32.1 |

| | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|-----|------|
| | Band 2 | 137 | 35.5 |
| | Band 3 | 125 | 32.4 |
| Working hours per week | ≤ 40 hours | 8 | 2.1 |
| | 41 – 50 hours | 274 | 71.0 |
| | ≥ 21 hours | 104 | 26.9 |

Source: Data from questionnaire

Perceptions of teachers toward social support

Analysis of 386 complete questionnaires, processed using SPSS Version 25, revealed distinct patterns in teachers' perceptions of social support. They were measured on a 1-to-6 Likert scale, and descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis were calculated for six subscales of support.

The statement, "My family encouraged me to work hard," received the highest mean score (M=4.66), implying that it was the strongest form of agreement encouragement. Its low standard deviation ($\sigma=1.035$) implies highly consistent agreement among respondents, implying highly consistent and strong family encouragement.

Conversely, the lowest mean score (M=3.48) was for the item, "School knows how to manage well and allocate work equally," under school (organizational) support. This shows that teachers perceive huge room for improvement in administrative justice and workload distribution. The accompanying low standard deviation ($\sigma=0.994$) shows that this poor perception was also prevalent in the sample.

Finally, the calculated skewness and kurtosis values for each of the data points confirmed that the overall dataset for social support perceptions was normally distributed, which legitimized the use of following parametric statistical tests.

The mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the social support subscales are indicated in Table 2. Family support possessed the largest mean value is 4.528 and smallest standard deviation is 0.5248 among the subscales, whereas school support possessed the smallest mean value is 4.307 and smallest standard deviation is 0.4899 among the subscales.

Table 2: Means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis of social support subscales

| Item description | Mean | Standard Deviation | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|------------------|-------|--------------------|----------|----------|
| School | 4.307 | 0.4899 | -0.473 | 1.347 |
| Supervisor | 4.453 | 0.5084 | -0.530 | 1.675 |
| Colleagues | 4.423 | 0.5155 | -0.671 | 1.747 |
| Family | 4.528 | 0.5248 | 0.150 | 0.976 |
| Students | 4.510 | 0.5055 | -0.502 | 1.274 |
| Parents | 4.331 | 0.6042 | -0.757 | 0.696 |

Source: Data from questionnaire

There were six social support subscales with high correlation as shown in Table 3. The correlation between the social support subscales showed that the social support subscales were not strongly correlated. The Cronbach's alpha for six social support subscales is 0.629, which implied an acceptable consistency or reliability.

Table 3: Correlations among six social support subscales

| | supervisor | colleagues | family | students | parents |
|------------|------------|------------|---------|----------|---------|
| school | 0.152** | 0.243** | 0.123** | 0.198** | 0.175** |
| supervisor | | 0.230** | 0.325** | 0.263** | 0.148** |
| colleagues | | | 0.229** | 0.390** | 0.280** |
| family | | | | 0.264** | 0.171** |
| students | | | | | 0.153** |
| | | | | | |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Source: Data from questionnaire

Figure 1 is the histogram of 386 participants' total social support scores. The mean, standard deviation, mode, and median of total social support scores were 132.76, 9.337, 133.00, and 133.00 respectively. It was negatively skewed (-0.591) and almost normal distribution. 63.7% of participants' social support scores are above the median, and 23.1% of participants' social support scores are above the third quartile.

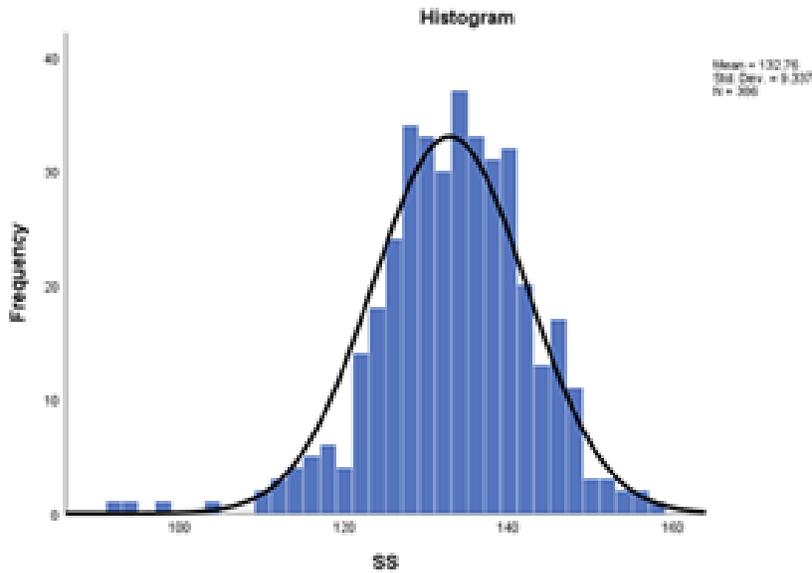


Figure 1: Histogram of overall social support scores

Source: Data from questionnaire

Figure 2 shows the histogram of secondary school teachers' attitudes towards work engagement scores among 386 participants. The mean, standard deviation, mode, and median total performance scores were 76.68, 6.286, 77, and 77.00 respectively. It was positively skewed (0.102) and close to normally distributed. 43.3% of participants' work engagement scores are higher than median, and 24.4% of participants' work engagement scores are higher than the third quartile.

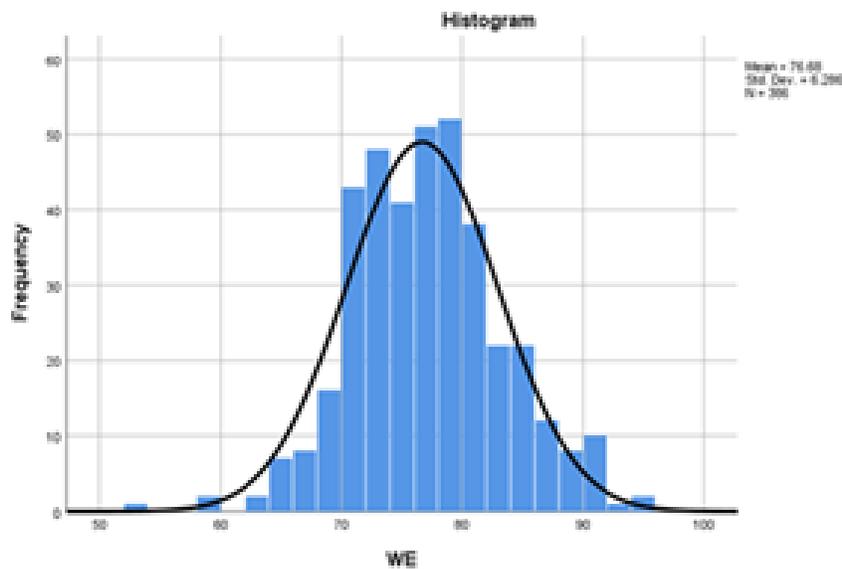


Figure 2: Histogram of work engagement scores

Source: Data from questionnaire

The results validate that central demographics like gender, age, marital status, and qualification did not register any substantial difference in perceptions of social support. However, differences were found between socioeconomic and occupational demographics. Educators from the highest family income category ($\geq \$100,001$) reported significantly higher school support than lower-income groups ($\leq \$40,000$). Also, support at school varied significantly with experience of teaching, banding of the school, and hours worked weekly, and those working over 51 hours a week had lower support. Parents' support varied significantly between Band 1 and Band 2 schools.

For work engagement, while gender and qualification had no notable difference, some subscales had other impacts. Vigour varied significantly by age and income. Dedication varied significantly among teachers with different numbers of children, and Absorption was significantly lower among teachers working over 51 hours a week.

Statistically, critical analysis showed a moderate, positive relationship between work engagement and social support ($r = 0.536$, $p < 0.01$) since greater perceived support is associated with higher levels of teacher engagement. The overall work engagement score was 76.68, with 43.3% of participants above the median.

V. Discussion

Levels of social support and work engagement

Results indicate that 63.7% of the participants scored higher than the median on their social support, suggesting overall positive support feelings. The work engagement level was lower, with 43.3% scoring higher than the median. All six social support subscales varied from family support, being highest ($M=4.528$), to school (organizational) support, which was lowest ($M=4.307$). This highlights a critical intervention area, as greater institutional reinforcement by schools and government is needed to enhance participation, potential increased job satisfaction, and reduced burnout.

Factors affecting teachers' work engagement

The determinants of work engagement are multi-level. Micro (individual) drivers are career ambition (professional identity and motivation), teaching self-efficacy (belief in capability to teach), and optimism (positive outlook). At the environmental (meso) level, work requirements (e.g., workload, skill demand, work-conflict with family) and work resources (e.g., interpersonal networks: leaders, colleagues, students, parents), autonomy, and fair allocation of work—take center stage. At the societal (macro) level, pay and social status directly impact professional identity and talent recruitment and retention.

Relationship between social support and work engagement

Moderate positive correlation was established between social support and work engagement. The correlation can be explained through the "principle of reciprocity" where teachers who are appreciated by the school will likely reciprocate with increased commitment and performance. Supplied by supervisors, colleagues, and family members, social support is capable of reducing work stress and increasing job satisfaction, thereby enhancing overall engagement.

Work engagement related to demographic variables

Analysis revealed that perceptions of social support and work engagement varied between groups. For instance, higher family income, two or more children, and more years of teaching experience were linked to rising social support scores. Variations in specific support subscales were present based on school banding and weekly working time. In work engagement, "vigour" was significantly varied by age and income, and "Dedication" by number of children. Remarkably, gender and qualifications did not vary significantly in levels of engagement.

Improvement for social support and work engagement

In order to enhance student involvement, teachers are encouraged to:

- (a) foster career interest through internal motivation and dedication.
- (b) improve professional caliber through continuous learning and building capacity to build trust among students and improve self-efficacy.
- (c) foster a positive attitude to build resilience to adversity.
- (d) actively seek assistance and support from supervisors, peers, and members of their household, rather than sitting back passively, to build a stronger support system.

VI. Conclusion

The current study confirms a moderate positive relationship between work engagement and social support for Hong Kong secondary school teachers and validates the six-subscale social support framework as a reliable measurement tool. While 63.7% of the teachers reported levels of social support above the median, only 43.3% were similarly high in work engagement, indicating a strong gap for enhancement. The findings point out that emotional support (being understood, cared for, and listened to) is more predictive of engagement than informational support.

To address this requirement, multi-level recommendations are established. Public policies need to enhance compensation and employment security while promoting school-family partnership and professional development funding. Principals require transformational leadership—this encompasses the setting of clear organizational objectives, maintaining open communication, providing constructive feedback, and providing teachers with a feeling of power through delegated work and opportunities for professional development. Supervisors need to have a supportive team environment, offer timely assistance with work-life problems, and provide positive, developmental feedback.

Peers are encouraged to construct supportive, problem-solving relationships to serve as stress buffers and enhance collective efficacy. The highest-ranking subscale is family support; families must provide emotional support and have an interest in the work of the teacher. Students must assist by being actively involved and respectful during class, and parents must work collaboratively with teachers by participating in school life and reinforcing learning at home. Finally, teachers themselves should be seeking help, growing as professionals and in self-efficacy as well, and possess a passionate, positive mindset towards their profession.

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