



Teacher work values, motivation, and job satisfaction: Mediation professional development engagement

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Abstract: The present study explored how teacher professional development (PD) activities function as a mediator between teachers' perceptions of work value and policy orientation, their motivation, and their overall job satisfaction. The study drew on a sample of 3047 Chinese junior high school teachers from the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), of whom 74.47% were female. Results from the mediation model revealed that job satisfaction was positively associated with teacher motivation, as well as with teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation. The findings further revealed that teacher participation in PD activities played a partial mediating role in the links connecting altruistic motivation, perceptions of value and policy orientation, and job satisfaction. However, this mediating effect was not observed in the link between teacher extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. Our findings provide evidence for Schwartz's human values theory proposition that, when work values are aligned with teachers' values, their engagement in PD activities enhances job satisfaction. Practically, decision-makers should design PD programs and policy frameworks that help teachers internalize extrinsic motives into more autonomous forms.

Keywords: Altruistic motivation; extrinsic motivation; teachers' perceptions of values and policy orientation; professional development; teacher job satisfaction; TALIS

Introduction

Teachers' motivation and their perceptions of work value and policy orientation are strongly related to educational development. For instance, teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation explain their subjective assessment of how much their views and opinions are valued (OECD, 2018). Teachers' motivation to teach explains their job satisfaction (Fray & Gore, 2018; Tirana et al., 2023). Conceivably, teachers' motivation and their perception of value and policy orientations factor into their job satisfaction. This could be amplified through their engagement in professional development (PD) activities. There are few studies that have examined the role of teachers' PD activities in the relationship between teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation and their motivation and job satisfaction.

Teachers' perception of values and policy orientations, and their job satisfaction

Teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation refer to their subjective assessment of how much their views and opinions are valued (OECD, 2018). Numerous studies have found that teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation are positively related to their job satisfaction. For example, employing the South African sample from TALIS 2018, one study found that teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation were positively related to their job satisfaction (Oduro et al., 2024). Employing Hierarchical Linear Model (HLM) with samples from the U.S., Australia, Finland, and South Korea in TALIS 2018, another study found that teachers who felt undervalued showed lower job satisfaction (Akiba et al., 2023). This empirical finding regarding teachers' perceptions of value

and policy orientation is supported by evidence from teaching practices. Based on a sample of U.S. K-12 teachers, a further study found that increasing opportunities for teacher decision-making contributed to higher job satisfaction (Ingersoll, 2003). Additionally, teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation are positively correlated with engagement in PD activities. For example, employing U.S. data from TALIS 2018 and a series of advanced statistical methods (e.g., machine learning techniques), one study found that when teachers perceived their views were valued by policymakers and the media, they had a more positive attitude toward PD experiences (Yoon & Kim, 2023).

Mediating effect of professional engagement

Teacher PD activity engagement refers to teachers' participation in activities designed to enhance their professional skills and competencies (Kennedy, 2016). However, not all teachers hold positive attitudes toward teacher PD due to various reasons (Geldenhuis & Oosthuizen, 2015). Some teachers regarded participating in PD activities merely as an obligatory training that wasted time or a task aimed at achieving career promotion, rather than an opportunity to improve skills (Damianidou, 2024). These teachers usually show strong reluctance to engage in PD activities. In theory, these teachers are much more likely to be extrinsically motivated or altruistically motivated.

Teacher extrinsic motivation to teach refers to a psychological state driven by the pursuit of job-related external rewards (Tang et al., 2015), including favorable working conditions, competitive salaries, and career advancement opportunities (Fray & Gore, 2018). Some studies have found that teacher extrinsic motivation is



positively correlated with job satisfaction. For example, one study found that teacher extrinsic motivation was positively related to job satisfaction in Pakistan (Nadim et al., 2012). Using a sample of over 700 Albanian secondary teachers, another study found that external motivation was positively correlated with job satisfaction (Tirana et al., 2023). Drawing upon a sample of 133 K-12 teachers in Lebanon, a further study found that extrinsic factors were correlated with teacher job satisfaction (Baroudi et al., 2022).

Teacher altruistic motivation (or social utility motivation) to teach is connected with altruistic fulfillment and altruistic reasons for teaching (Fray & Gore, 2018), including helping students, serving others, and contributing to society (Tang et al., 2015). Many studies have found that teacher altruistic motivation is positively correlated with job satisfaction. For instance, one study found that teacher altruistic motivation was more associated with job satisfaction than extrinsic motivation was (Nadim et al., 2012). A separate piece of research revealed that job satisfaction among teachers is more strongly linked to altruistic motivation than to external motivation (Tirana et al., 2023). Based on a sample of 300 teachers in Pakistan, another study confirmed a positive correlation between altruistic motivation and job satisfaction (Shah et al., 2012). A substantial body of research indicates a positive relationship between teachers' altruistic motivation and their engagement in PD. For example, using a sample of grades 5–9 math teachers in the US, one study found that teachers who aimed to help students improve test scores, master math content, or understand student thinking, were more likely to engage in PD (Caddle et al., 2016). Another study, applying advanced statistical methods (e.g., LASSO) to the U.S. TALIS 2018 data, found that teachers with altruistic teaching motivation held more positive attitudes toward PD activities (Yoon & Kim, 2023).

Numerous studies have found that teacher PD is positively associated with job satisfaction. For instance, using HLM with a sample from 24 European countries in TALIS 2018, one study revealed that teacher PD had a strong positive correlation with job satisfaction (Smet, 2022). Based on a US sample, another study found that PD quality was positively associated with teacher job satisfaction (Kang & Mavrogordato, 2023). Regarding PD engagement, a further study found that highly participatory teachers showed higher job satisfaction than their less participatory teachers (Yoon & Kim, 2022).

Theoretical foundations

This study was guided by Schwartz's human values framework (Schwartz, 1992). Human values mainly include self-transcendence values and self-enhancement values (Cable & Edwards, 2004). Self-transcendence values emphasize contributing to society and maintaining close relationships with others. Self-enhancement values emphasize achieving high salary, job security, and prestige. Individuals with self-transcendence values typically make decisions driven by altruistic motivation. Individuals with self-enhancement values typically make decisions driven by extrinsic motivation. This conceptual framework applies not only to decision-making, including teacher

PD engagement (Bigsby & Firestone, 2017) and factors influencing the choice of teaching (Giersch, 2016; Wang & Klassen, 2023), but also to the determinants of job satisfaction (Chang & Sung, 2024; Ma & Marion, 2025). Additionally, teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation stem from teachers' desire and expectation to make contributions to the society. Thus, teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation can reflect their underlying self-transcendence values. Schwartz's human values framework provides a conceptual grounding for our study.

The China context

From a global perspective, teaching is a public service calling that requires dedication and a deep concern for students. However, the choice to enter the teaching profession is not solely motivated by a love for it. Common motivations for entering the teaching profession include extrinsic motivation, a love of teaching (intrinsic motivation), and a belief in contributing to society (altruistic motivation). Additionally, teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation could be another reason to choose to become a teacher. Intrinsic and altruistic motivations are among the most common reasons for entering the teaching profession in countries and regions outside China (Fray & Gore, 2018). In China, there are more than 15.8 million basic education teachers (MOE, 2024), and 93.1% of in-service teachers are those for whom teaching was their first job (OECD, 2025). However, the proportion of teachers who have intrinsic and altruistic motivation for teaching remains relatively low. This is corroborated by the fact that since the 2000s, the Chinese government has issued a series of policies, such as the Targeted Teacher Training Plan, National Program to Cultivate Excellent Primary and Secondary School Teachers, and the Free Education for Future program to attract college graduates to the teaching profession by providing extrinsic incentives (Guo, 2024).

Goals of the study

This study investigated the mediating role of teachers' PD activities in the relationship between teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation and their motivation and job satisfaction. Specifically, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation were positively associated with job satisfaction.

H2: Teachers with higher PD engagement and work motivation were associated with higher job satisfaction.

Method

Participants and setting

The study sample comprised 2269 females (74.47%) and 778 males (25.53%) (see Table 1). The sample included 796 rural junior school teachers (26.12%) and 2251 urban junior school teachers (73.88%). More than 98% of teachers have a bachelor's degree. The teaching experience of the participants was categorized into four groups: 5 years or less (17.13%), 6–10 years (15.65%), 11–20 years (32.42%), and more than 20 years (34.78%). The total sample consisted of 2560 public school teachers (84.02%), and 487 private school teachers (15.98%).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample

	N	%
Gender		
Male	778	25.53
Female	2269	74.47
Education background		
College	23	0.75
Bachelor	2613	85.76
Master	410	13.46
Ph.D.	1	0.03
Teaching experience		
Less than or equal to 5 years	522	17.13
6–10 years	477	15.65
11–20 years	988	32.42
Above 20 years	1060	34.78
School location		
Rural	796	26.12
Urban	2251	73.88
School type		
Public	2560	84.02
Private	487	15.98

Measures

Teacher job satisfaction

The Teacher Job Satisfaction Scale (OECD, 2018) consists of 10 items organized into three subscales. The first subscale, job satisfaction with work environment, contains four items (e.g., “I would like to change to another school if that was possible”). The second, professional fulfillment, includes three items (e.g., “the advantages of being a teacher clearly outweigh the disadvantages”). The third, class autonomy, comprises three items (e.g., “determining course content”). The reliability of the full scale, as measured by Cronbach’s alpha, was 0.860.

Teacher motivation to teach

The Teacher Motivation to Teach Scale (OECD, 2018) comprises seven items, which are divided into two subscales. The first is extrinsic motivation, measured by four items (e.g., “teaching offered a steady career path”). The second is altruistic motivation, assessed with three items (e.g., “teaching allowed me to influence the development of children and young people”). Internal consistency reliability for the two subscales was 0.847 and 0.838, as measured by Cronbach’s alpha.

Teachers’ perceptions of value and policy orientation

Comprising three items, the Teachers’ Perceptions of Value and Policy Orientation Scale (OECD, 2018) employs a four-point Likert response format, where 1 indicates “not important at all” and 4 indicates “of high importance” (OECD, 2018). The scale contains items such as “Teachers’ views are valued by policymakers in this country/region.” The reliability of these three items, indicated by a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, was 0.882.

Teachers engagement in PD activities

The scale used to measure teachers’ engagement in PD activities contains 5 items (OECD, 2018). Respondents indicated whether they had engaged in various professional development activities, including attending in-person courses or seminars, participating in education conferences, conducting observation visits to other schools, engaging in formal peer or self-observation and coaching, and joining teacher networks focused on PD. The reliability of these five items, indicated by a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, was 0.709.

Control variables

The covariates considered in this paper were teachers’ gender (1 = female, 0 = male), years of schooling (1 = college, 2 = bachelor’s, 3 = master’s, 4 = Ph.D.), teaching experience, school location (1 = rural, 0 = urban), and school type (1 = public, 0 = non-public).

Procedure

As the data utilized in this research are openly accessible via the OECD survey website (<https://survey.oecd.org/index.php?r=survey/index&sid=581415&lang=en>), an ethical review was not required.

Data analysis

SEM analysis was conducted to shed light on the complex links between teachers’ perceived value and policy orientation, their motivation, engagement in PD, and overall job satisfaction. Given the dichotomous nature of the mediating variables, this study employed a structural equation model (SEM) based on a Probit framework. The model parameters were estimated using the Weighted Least Squares Mean and Variance adjusted (WLSMV) estimator. We performed a path analysis and generated 5000 bootstrap samples to derive the 95% confidence intervals for the parameter estimates. Stata 17.0 was employed for data cleaning, while Mplus 8.3 was used for the main data analysis in this study (Muthén & Muthén, 2017).

Results

Testing for common methods bias

This paper used the Unmeasured Latent Method Construct (ULMC) approach to test for common method bias. A significant common method bias was considered present if the model fit improved substantially after adding a common method factor, specifically if there was an increase in CFI and TLI of more than 0.1 and a decrease in RMSEA of more than 0.05 (Chin et al., 2012). The results of the common method bias were presented in Table 2. Results suggested that RMSEA decreased by 0.003, CFI increased by 0.012, TLI increased by 0.011. The increase in fit indices did not exceed 0.1, and the decrease in fit indices did not exceed 0.05. Thus, common method bias was not found in this study.

Reliability and validity

Drawing on Schwartz’s human values framework, this study employed SEMs to test the hypothesized relationships between teachers’ perceptions of value and policy

Table 2. Testing for common method bias

	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Models without common method bias	0.036	0.940	0.931	0.035
Models with common method bias	0.033	0.952	0.942	0.030
Bias	0.003	-0.012	-0.011	0.005

Table 3. Goodness-of-fit statistics of the proposed structural model

Fit indices	Recommended criterion	Model	Goodness of fit
χ^2	Relatively small	1634.384	-
df	Relatively large	382	-
χ^2/df	$1 < \chi^2/df < 10$	4.278	Passed
CFI	>0.9	0.934	Passed
TLI	>0.9	0.926	Passed
RMSEA	<0.08	0.033	Passed
SRMR	<0.08	0.048	Passed

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Teacher extrinsic motivation (1 = not important at all, 4 = of high importance)	-				
2. Teacher altruistic motivation (1 = not important at all, 4 = of high importance)	0.464***	-			
3. Teachers perceptions (1 = not important at all, 4 = of high importance)	0.148***	0.260***	-		
4. Teacher PD (1 = yes, 0 = no)	0.094***	0.162***	0.116***	-	
5. Teacher job satisfaction (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree)	0.249***	0.319***	0.436***	0.203***	-
Mean	3.438	3.405	2.449	0.749	3.075
SD	0.553	0.602	0.694	0.248	0.396

Notes. *** $p < 0.001$. Teachers perceptions refers to teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation.

orientation, motivation, PD engagement, and job satisfaction. The fit statistics for the model, reported in Table 3, all fell within acceptable ranges: $\chi^2/df = 4.278$, CFI = 0.934, TLI = 0.926, RMSEA = 0.033, and SRMR = 0.048. The model yielded satisfactory fit indices across all measures examined (Muthén & Muthén, 2017).

Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

The descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among the main variables are presented in Table 4. Teacher job satisfaction exhibited significant positive correlations with all key variables: extrinsic motivation ($r = 0.249, p < 0.001$), altruistic motivation ($r = 0.319, p < 0.001$), teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation ($r = 0.436, p < 0.001$), and professional development ($r = 0.203, p < 0.001$). Teacher PD demonstrated significant positive correlations with altruistic motivation ($r = 0.162, p < 0.001$) and teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation ($r = 0.116, p < 0.001$).

Hypothesis testing

Figure 1 illustrates the standardized path coefficients of the SEM analysis. Except for the path from teacher extrinsic

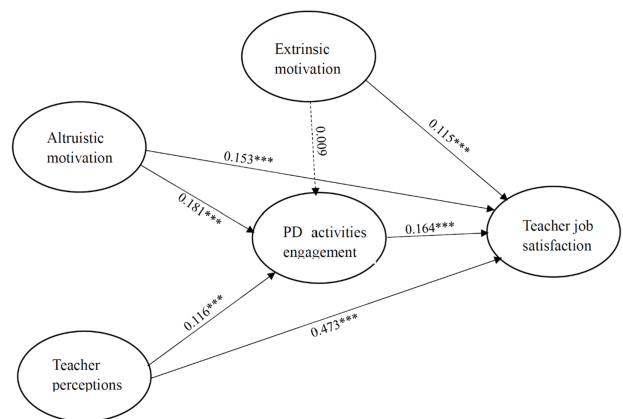


Figure 1. SEM path results. Notes. *** $p < 0.001$. All path coefficients are standardized. Covariates are controlled for.

motivation to teacher PD activities, which was not significant ($p > 0.05$), all other paths were significant at the 99% confidence level.

First, according to the structural model, teacher altruistic motivation and teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation were positively and significantly associated with teacher engagement in PD activities. The

Table 5. Bootstrap analysis of the hypothesis model

Mediation effects	Effect size	S.E.	95% CI	<i>p</i>
Ext-Sat	0.116	0.023	(0.066, 0.167)	0.000***
Direct effect	0.115	0.023	(0.065, 0.167)	0.000***
Indirect effect (Ext-PD-Sat)	0.001	0.006	(−0.010, 0.013)	0.789
Alt-Sat	0.182	0.023	(0.132, 0.234)	0.000***
Direct effect	0.153	0.023	(0.102, 0.204)	0.000***
Indirect effect (Alt-PD-Sat)	0.030	0.007	(0.017, 0.045)	0.000***
Per-Sat	0.492	0.015	(0.450, 0.532)	0.000***
Direct effect	0.473	0.016	(0.431, 0.514)	0.000***
Indirect effect (TP-PD-Sat)	0.019	0.005	(0.009, 0.031)	0.000***

Notes. Ext = teacher extrinsic motivation. Alt = teacher altruistic motivation. PD = teacher PD activities engagement. TP = teachers' perception of value and policy orientation. Sat = teacher job satisfaction. *** $p < 0.001$. All parameters are standardized.

path coefficient for teacher altruistic motivation on PD engagement was 0.181 ($p < 0.001$), and that for teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation on PD engagement was 0.116 ($p < 0.001$). Obviously, teacher extrinsic motivation showed a stronger correlation with PD engagement than did teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation. Second, engagement in PD activities was positively correlated with teacher job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.164$, $p < 0.001$).

Third, teacher extrinsic motivation demonstrated no significant association with PD engagement, with a non-significant path coefficient of 0.009 ($p > 0.05$). Overall, the results indicate that the H1 was supported, while H2 was partially supported. These questions remain to be examined: whether the mediating effects of teacher PD activities exist, and if so, to what extent.

Teachers' perception of values and policy orientation and job satisfaction

The outcomes of the bootstrap method for mediation effects are summarized in Table 5. The path coefficient from teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation to job satisfaction was 0.492 (95% CI = [0.450, 0.532], $p < 0.001$), indicating a significant total effect. Of this total effect, the direct pathway accounted for 0.473 (95% CI = [0.431, 0.514], $p < 0.001$), and the indirect effect via mediators was 0.019 (95% CI = [0.009, 0.031], $p < 0.001$). The significance of both effects was confirmed by their 95% confidence intervals, which did not contain zero. Therefore, the relationship between teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation and job satisfaction was transmitted via teachers' participation in PD activities. These findings provide support for H1.

PD engagement mediation

The total effect of teacher extrinsic motivation on job satisfaction was statistically significant, with an estimate of 0.116 (95% CI = [0.066, 0.167], $p < 0.001$).

The direct effect was 0.115 (95% CI = [0.065, 0.167], $p < 0.001$), while the indirect effect was 0.001 (95% CI = [−0.010, 0.013], $p > 0.05$), indicating that the indirect effect was not statistically significant. These

results imply that the relationship between extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction was not transmitted through PD engagement.

The path coefficient from altruistic motivation to job satisfaction was 0.182 (95% CI = [0.132, 0.234], $p < 0.001$), indicating a significant total effect. The analysis yielded a significant direct effect of 0.153 (95% CI = [0.102, 0.204], $p < 0.001$) and a significant indirect effect of 0.030 (95% CI = [0.017, 0.045], $p < 0.001$). The 95% confidence intervals for both effects were entirely above zero, indicating that the direct and indirect effects were both significant. These findings support the mediating role of teacher PD activities in the altruistic motivation-job satisfaction relationship. H2 was therefore partially upheld by the findings.

Discussion

Teachers' perception of values and policy orientation and job satisfaction

Teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation were positively related to job satisfaction. This was consistent with existing studies (Akiba et al., 2023; Oduro et al., 2024) and supported H1. One possible explanation is as follows: when teachers' perspectives are emphasized by policymakers and media, their professional needs are much more likely to be addressed by school leadership. This undoubtedly increases their job satisfaction (Akiba et al., 2023; Oduro et al., 2024). With the improvement in teachers' status in China, their opinions or views are increasingly valued by policymakers and school stakeholders (VarkeyFoundation, 2019). Then, education policy that incorporates teachers' views is more likely to gain their support. Meanwhile, teachers develop feelings of fulfillment and accomplishment through engagement in education policy-making. When the valuing of teachers' views become a widely recognized societal norm, they perceive their voices as receiving media and policy attention. These teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation were related to job satisfaction.

PD engagement mediation

Engagement in PD activities mediated the relationship between teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation and job satisfaction. This finding supported H2. One possible explanation is as follows: By participating in PD activities, teachers can network with more experts and teachers. This undoubtedly broadens participants' horizons and helps them understand trends and changes in education policy (Postholm, 2012). This new knowledge can help teachers provide more effective and widely-accepted suggestions to policymakers. Accordingly, these suggestions—based on policy requirements and teachers' actual needs—are much more likely to be adopted by decision-makers. Once the suggestions are adopted, teachers' sense of fulfillment naturally leads to greater job satisfaction. In this regard, PD activities partially mediate the relationship between teachers' perception of value and policy orientation and job satisfaction.

Engagement in PD activities mediated the relationship between altruistic motivation and job satisfaction. Moreover, the indirect effect of altruistic motivation on job satisfaction was larger than that of teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation. This finding not only supported H2 but also aligned with Schwartz's human values framework. The theory posits that individuals with self-transcendence values emphasize their societal value and contributions, which demonstrates a strong altruistic incentive. Contributing to society and helping others benefit from their actions are among the main sources of job satisfaction. Participating in PD activities helps teachers improve their teaching skills and classroom management, deepen their knowledge, and broaden their theoretical perspectives (Postholm, 2012). The new skills acquired from PD activities will enrich and enhance the schools' educational and teaching practices. Therefore, teachers with altruistic motivation to teach are likely to experience high job satisfaction, as their work is perceived to significantly benefit both students and schools. Additionally, teacher altruistic motivation was positively related to job satisfaction, supporting prior studies (Nadim et al., 2012; Shah et al., 2012; Tirana et al., 2023). This finding supported H2 and aligned with Schwartz's human values framework. One possible explanation is that individuals with self-transcendence values derive satisfaction from contributing to society and assisting others. They contribute to society not for external recognition or rewards, but for reasons beyond personal preference. They are generally unconcerned with personal costs and benefits (Elster, 2006). The teaching profession is built on dedication and love. It calls on teachers to commit to supporting students' holistic development, thereby cultivating well-rounded graduates for society (Mart, 2013). If individuals with strong altruistic motivation enter the teaching profession, it demonstrates a strong alignment between their personal values and occupational demands. Therefore, teacher altruistic motivation can be a significant factor in enhancing their job satisfaction.

Engagement in PD activities did not mediate the relationship between teacher extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. This finding provided partial support for H2 and was consistent with Schwartz's human

values framework. The theory argues that individuals with self-enhancement values prioritize extrinsic rewards, timely feedback, and short-term interests (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan, 1995). Generally, a primary aim of teacher PD is the enhancement of teaching skills and broader educational skills. However, participation in PD activities requires substantial time and financial investment (Damiandou, 2024). This finding contrasts with the reward preferences typical of teachers with strong extrinsic motivation. After all, these teachers typically prioritize a stable career path and a reliable income. They have little incentive to acquire new skills for the purpose of teaching improvement. They lack strong career ambition and are focused primarily on fulfilling their basic teaching tasks within a uniform teacher compensation system that provides little financial incentive for excellence (Cai et al., 2018). In this regard, they are less likely to actively participate in PD activities. Additionally, this positive relationship between extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction is in line with previous studies (Baroudi et al., 2022; Nadim et al., 2012; Tirana et al., 2023). This finding supported Schwartz's human values framework and confirmed H2. One possible explanation is as follows: individuals driven by self-enhancement values prioritize career stability, income reliability, and lighter workloads, particularly during global economic downturn with high unemployment rates (Rucinski, Melanie, 2023). Like many other education systems (VarkeyFoundation, 2019), public secondary teachers in China benefit from a steady career path, along with relatively low work pressure, stable incomes, and high social status (Zhang et al., 2019). These career characteristics attract individuals with extrinsic motivation to become teachers. In other words, the teaching profession is a desirable career choice for the extrinsically motivated. In this regard, when their extrinsic motivation is fulfilled, teachers who are primarily driven by extrinsic rewards experience high job satisfaction.

Theoretical and practical implications

This study offers several contributions to the literature. First, this research contributes to the field by uniquely focusing on the mediating role of PD engagement, an area that has been largely underexplored. Specifically, this work elucidates the mediating function of PD engagement in the relationships between job satisfaction and its two predictors—teacher motivation and perceived value and policy orientation. Existing literature has documented that teacher self-efficacy (Chang & Sung, 2024) and instructional practice (Ertaş & Pekmezci, 2025) mediate the motivation-job satisfaction relationship. Nevertheless, the extent to which PD engagement plays a mediating role in this context remains unclear. Second, this research incorporated both motivational dimensions (altruistic and extrinsic) alongside teachers' value-policy perceptions to comprehensively evaluate their effects on job satisfaction within a single analytical model. In contrast to previous studies that have examined only one or two types of teacher motivation, the present study adopts a broader perspective (Chang & Sung, 2024; Ertaş & Pekmezci, 2025). Third, a key finding is that teachers' value-policy perceptions exert greater influence on job satisfaction than their motivation

levels. Existing studies have largely failed to consider teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation as an equally important predictor alongside motivation, and there is a lack of research using consistent datasets to compare their impacts on job satisfaction (Chang & Sung, 2024; Ertas & Pekmezci, 2025).

These results inform the following policy suggestions for educational practice and administration. First, extrinsic motivation emerged as the factor most weakly linked to job satisfaction, whereas altruistic motivation and perceptions of value and policy orientation exhibited more substantial effects. Importantly, PD activities played no mediating role in this relationship. These findings suggest that policymakers should prioritize PD and policy designs that help teachers move from externally controlled motivation toward more self-determined engagement in their work. Second, PD activities served as a significant mediator in the relationship between altruistic motivation and job satisfaction. Hence, it is recommended that school management focus on developing high-quality PD opportunities to promote teacher job satisfaction.

Third, compared to motivation and PD engagement, teachers' perceptions of value and policy orientation showed the strongest association with job satisfaction. Hence, it is recommended that educational authorities facilitate teacher involvement in policy decisions, which can contribute to increased job satisfaction.

Limitations

It is important to note the following limitations of the present study. First, the self-reported nature of the main variables may have introduced systematic measurement error, particularly common method variance. Future investigations would benefit from incorporating objective data (e.g., administrative data) to validate and extend the current findings. Second, this research analyzed the intercorrelations among four key constructs: teacher motivation, perceptions of value and policy orientation, PD engagement, and job satisfaction. Future investigations could build on these findings by using panel data to explore the causal pathways between these key variables. Third, this study relied on data collected from the Shanghai respondents in the TALIS 2018 administration. Future work could leverage the TALIS 2024 dataset across additional regions to replicate and extend the current findings regarding teacher motivation, value orientation perceptions, and job satisfaction.

Conclusion

Grounded in Schwartz's human values framework, this study found that teacher altruistic motivation and perceptions of value and policy orientation were positively and indirectly related to job satisfaction, partially mediated by PD engagement. A similar mediating role was not observed in the relationship between teacher extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. These findings reveal the heterogeneous roles of two fundamental human values in engagement with PD activities. They provide new evidence that individuals with self-transcendence values show higher PD involvement, while confirming the insignificant effect of self-enhancement values.

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