

How Perceived Organizational Support Impact Teacher Engagement: The Key Role of Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the role of perceived organizational support, on the dependent variable, work engagement, mediated by job satisfaction among teacher. The research design employed is characterized as explanatory quantitative research. A cluster random sampling technique was utilized for the selection of participants. The sample size for this investigation comprised 300 teachers. Data analysis was conducted using Smart-PLS in conjunction with the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) methodology. The findings of this research reveal a significant relationship between perceived organizational support and work engagement among teacher, as well as a notable impact of perceived organizational support on the job satisfaction of these educators; additionally, a significant effect of job satisfaction on work engagement was identified, alongside the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between perceived organizational support and work engagement among teachers.

Keywords: perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, work engagement.

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Introduction

Teacher engagement is an essential component of an effective educational system, influencing both teacher performance and student achievement (Xing, 2022). Highly engaged teachers demonstrate increased enthusiasm, proactivity, and dedication to their profession, while disengagement often leads to burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and higher turnover rates (Sudibjo & Sutarji, 2020). Perceived organizational support (POS) is a critical factor in shaping job satisfaction and engagement levels among teachers (Park & Johnson, 2019). Study by Attridge (2009) show that Asia has the lowest engagement compared to European and American countries. Schaufeli (2012) reported that only 20% of teachers can be categorized as teachers who have high engagement. Meanwhile, 80% of other teachers still do not give their best effort when working. This paper explores the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between POS and teacher engagement, integrating social exchange theory as a conceptual framework.

Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Work Engagement

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) refers to employees' belief that their organization values their contributions and well-being (Sun, 2019). Research has consistently shown that POS enhances work engagement, which is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Employees who feel supported by their organization tend to be more engaged, leading to higher performance and job satisfaction (Murthy, 2017).

The relationship between POS and work engagement is influenced by various mediating factors. For instance, work engagement has been found to mediate the link between POS and employee well-being (Mangku et al., 2023). Additionally, constructs such as flourishing and thriving at work strengthen this relationship by fostering a positive work environment (Imran et al., 2020). Studies also suggest that POS moderates the connection between work engagement and job performance, meaning employees with strong perceived support are more likely to excel in their roles (Yongxing et al., 2017).

Several factors contribute to the level of POS employees experience, including fair treatment, resource allocation, professional development opportunities, and supportive leadership (Ahakwa et al., 2021). Research has shown a strong correlation between POS and job satisfaction, emphasizing its role in fostering a supportive educational environment (Oubibi et al., 2022). However, not all organizations provide adequate support, leading to disengagement among employees.

While POS generally enhances work engagement, cultural and organizational contexts can alter its strength. For example, a study in Mexico found weak correlations between POS and engagement, suggesting that other workplace dynamics might play a greater role (Isabeles & Avitia, 2020). Furthermore, self-efficacy—an individual's confidence in their ability to succeed—can sometimes have a greater impact on engagement than organizational support (Imran et al., 2020).

Extensive research supports the positive impact of POS on work engagement. Studies by Fairnandha (2021), Mufarrikah (2020), Rahmi (2021), Utari (2021), and Dwitasari (2015) highlight the significant role of organizational support in enhancing employee motivation, commitment, and overall engagement. These findings underscore the necessity of fostering a work environment that prioritizes employee well-being.

Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction reflects teachers' overall emotional response to their work conditions, encompassing factors such as salary, work environment, professional relationships, and intrinsic rewards of teaching (Pan et al., 2015). It has been associated with reduced turnover intentions, lower stress levels, and enhanced engagement (Donald et al., 2016). Given its mediating role between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and engagement, job satisfaction is a key factor in understanding how organizational support translates into higher teacher engagement (Ahakwa et al., 2021).

A teacher's job satisfaction is strongly influenced by the level of organizational support they receive. When institutions provide adequate support—both in terms of working conditions and emotional well-being—teachers are more likely to feel valued and satisfied in their roles. Conversely, a lack of organizational support can lead to dissatisfaction, making educators feel unappreciated and disengaged from their work. An organization that fails to effectively fulfill its role as a facilitator creates challenges for teachers, making it difficult for them to perform their duties efficiently. The absence of meaningful efforts to enhance teacher satisfaction may result in educators feeling unsupported and undervalued.

Research supports the critical role of organizational support in shaping job satisfaction. Kurniawan (2021) found that Perceived Organizational Support significantly influences job satisfaction, with higher levels of support leading to greater job fulfillment among teachers. Similarly, Christiono (2014) identified a positive

correlation between Perceived Organizational Support and job satisfaction, highlighting the importance of a supportive work environment in enhancing teachers' overall well-being and motivation.

Effect of Job Satisfaction on Work Engagement

Teacher engagement consists of three key dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption (Xing, 2022). Vigor refers to sustained energy and mental resilience, dedication reflects a strong commitment to the profession, and absorption denotes deep focus on teaching tasks (Sudibjo & Sutarji, 2020). Engaged teachers are more likely to implement effective teaching strategies, leading to improved student outcomes. However, achieving and maintaining high levels of engagement is influenced by several factors, with job satisfaction being one of the most significant.

Job satisfaction plays a crucial role in shaping teacher engagement, as it reflects employees' emotional and psychological investment in their work. When teachers are satisfied with their jobs, they are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and committed to their profession. Research consistently demonstrates a strong positive relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement. Thamrin and Sari (2020) found that job satisfaction, alongside job crafting, significantly enhances employee engagement, leading to improved job performance.

Beyond its direct impact on engagement, job satisfaction also contributes to employees' psychological well-being, further reinforcing their level of engagement. According to Liona and Yurniardi (2020), job satisfaction and work engagement collectively enhance overall well-being, enabling employees to optimize their potential and work more productively. Similarly, Arifin et al. (2019) found that job satisfaction positively influences job performance through work engagement, highlighting that engaged employees tend to be more efficient and productive.

Moreover, job satisfaction serves as a mediating factor in fostering organizational commitment. Research by Monga (2019) suggests that satisfied and engaged employees demonstrate higher levels of loyalty and dedication to their organizations. Likewise, Djoemadi et al., (2019) emphasizes that job satisfaction—particularly in terms of work conditions, interpersonal relationships, and promotional opportunities—is a key driver of work engagement in Indonesia's telecommunication sector.

Theoretical Framework of Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory posits that employee-employer relationships are built on reciprocal exchanges of resources and obligations (Demir, 2015). Teachers who perceive strong organizational support feel an obligation to reciprocate through heightened engagement and commitment (Eldor & Shoshani, 2017). POS enhances job satisfaction, which in turn strengthens teacher engagement, demonstrating the interconnectedness of these constructs (Donald et al., 2016). Social exchange theory suggests that relationships are based on a reciprocal exchange of resources (ulea, 2012; Zong, 2016). In the workplace, this means that employees provide effort, loyalty, and commitment in exchange for fair treatment, support, and opportunities from the organization. POS represents the organization's contribution to this exchange, while work engagement reflects the employee's reciprocation (ulea, 2012; Zong, 2016). When employees perceive high POS, they feel a sense of obligation to reciprocate by exhibiting greater work engagement (ulea, 2012). This exchange is built upon trust and a belief in the fairness of the relationship (ulea, 2012). The perception of support fosters a sense of obligation to contribute more than the minimum required, leading to increased effort and dedication.

Empirical studies indicate that POS positively influences teacher job satisfaction, which subsequently enhances engagement (Claudia, 2018). Research conducted among Chinese teachers found that POS was a significant predictor of job satisfaction and engagement, reinforcing the mediating role of job satisfaction in this relationship (Fute et al., 2022). Similar findings have been reported in other educational settings, suggesting that fostering POS can enhance teacher well-being and performance (Ahakwa et al., 2021).

Several contextual factors play a crucial role in determining the strength and nature of the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS), job satisfaction, and teacher engagement. One of these factors is school culture, which significantly influences how teachers perceive organizational support. A positive, collaborative, and supportive school culture fosters a sense of belonging, trust, and shared goals among teachers. When teachers work in an environment where cooperation and mutual support are prioritized, the benefits of POS are amplified, leading to higher job satisfaction and engagement (Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019). Conversely, a toxic or unsupportive school culture can diminish the positive effects of POS, making teachers feel undervalued and less committed to their roles.

Another influential factor is leadership style, particularly transformational leadership, which has been shown to enhance teacher engagement. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate teachers by creating a shared vision, offering professional development opportunities, and fostering an environment of trust and empowerment. These leaders actively recognize teachers' contributions, encourage their professional growth, and involve them in decision-making processes. Such leadership practices not only reinforce the effects of POS but also cultivate a work environment where teachers feel supported, valued, and motivated to excel in their roles (Aria et al., 2019).

Additionally, job characteristics such as autonomy, workload, and access to resources play a pivotal role in shaping the POS-job satisfaction-engagement relationship. Teachers who have greater autonomy in their teaching methods and curriculum design tend to experience higher job satisfaction, as they feel a greater sense of control and responsibility over their work. On the other hand, excessive workload and a lack of essential teaching resources can hinder job satisfaction and engagement, regardless of the level of organizational support provided. Ensuring that teachers have manageable workloads and sufficient resources is therefore essential to maximizing the positive impact of POS on engagement levels (Ahakwa et al., 2021).

Finally, individual teacher characteristics such as self-efficacy, coping mechanisms, and personality traits moderate the impact of POS on engagement. Teachers with high self-efficacy—those who believe in their ability to manage classroom challenges effectively—are more likely to remain engaged even in the face of adversity. Additionally, teachers with strong coping skills are better equipped to navigate workplace stressors and derive greater satisfaction from their roles. In contrast, those with lower self-efficacy or poor coping mechanisms may struggle to sustain engagement, even when they perceive strong organizational support (McIlveen & Perera, 2015). Recognizing these individual differences is essential when designing policies and interventions to enhance teacher engagement.

Gap of Knowledge Statement

Despite the extensive research highlighting the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS), job satisfaction, and work engagement, a significant knowledge gap remains in understanding how these factors interact within the educational sector, particularly among teachers. Previous studies have established that POS enhances job satisfaction and work engagement (Murthy, 2017; Oubibi et al., 2022),

and that job satisfaction plays a mediating role in fostering engagement (Liona & Yurniardi, 2020). However, most research has been conducted in corporate settings, overlooking the unique challenges and contextual factors affecting teachers, such as school culture, leadership styles, and job autonomy.

Additionally, while teacher engagement is crucial for educational effectiveness and student achievement (Xing, 2022), existing studies suggest that engagement levels among teachers remain alarmingly low, with only 20% categorized as highly engaged (Schaufeli, 2012). Furthermore, studies indicate that teacher engagement varies significantly across regions, with Asian countries showing lower engagement levels compared to their Western counterparts (Attridge, 2009). This raises questions about whether POS and job satisfaction function similarly across different educational and cultural contexts.

Another overlooked aspect is the role of social exchange theory in explaining how POS influences job satisfaction and engagement among teachers. While social exchange theory posits that employees reciprocate organizational support with higher engagement (Eldor & Shoshani, 2017), there is limited empirical evidence validating this framework in the education sector. Additionally, prior research has primarily examined direct relationships between these variables, but little is known about potential moderating factors such as leadership styles, workload, and individual teacher characteristics.

This study aims to bridge these gaps by examining the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between POS and teacher engagement, using social exchange theory as a conceptual framework. By focusing on the education sector, this research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how organizational support translates into teacher engagement and identify context-specific interventions to enhance engagement in educational settings.

Method

This research uses an explanatory quantitative research method, namely to see the effect of perceived organizational support on work engagement.

Participants

The total sample for this study consisted of 300 teachers, drawn from a total population of 2,786 teachers in Bener Meriah. The average age of respondents ranged from 31 to 36 years, with the largest group belonging to category 3B. The majority of participants in this study held undergraduate degrees. A simple random sampling method was used to ensure that every teacher in the population had an equal chance of selection, reducing potential sampling bias and increasing the representativeness of the findings.

Before participation, all respondents were provided with a detailed informed consent form, outlining the purpose of the study, potential risks, benefits, and confidentiality measures. Participants were assured that their involvement was voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw at any time without consequences. The consent process also included an explanation of how data would be used, emphasizing anonymity and data protection in compliance with ethical research standards. Only those who read, understood, and signed the consent form were included in the study, ensuring adherence to ethical guidelines and the principles of autonomy and voluntary participation.

Measurement

Before data collection, we obtained informed consent from all respondents. We utilized three validated and reliable scales: perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and work engagement.

The Perceived Organizational Support (POS) Scale. The POS scale developed by Eisenberger (1986), assesses employees' trust in their organization by measuring the extent to which they feel valued and supported. The scale consists of a single dimension with six items designed to capture employees' perceptions of organizational care and recognition. For example, statements such as "My organization values my contributions and cares about my well-being," "My organization strongly considers my goals and values," and "My organization provides me with help when I have a problem" reflect key aspects of perceived organizational support. Respondents rate their agreement with each statement using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Tested on a sample of 325 participants, the scale demonstrated strong reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.86, and a validity value of 0.3, indicating its effectiveness in assessing employees' trust and perceived support within their organization.

Work engagement. In this study, researchers used the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) from Schaufeli's theory, which has been adapted by Aulia (2018). The scale has been tested on 126 employees, demonstrating strong psychometric properties. The item validity values in this study indicate that the vigor dimension ranges from 0.722 to 0.833, the dedication dimension ranges from 0.611 to 0.833, and the absorption dimension ranges from 0.722 to 0.778. Additionally, the modified Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which consists of 18 items, showed a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.862 (Aulia, 2018), confirming its reliability. This scale includes items that measure different dimensions of engagement, such as vigor ("At my work, I feel bursting with energy."), dedication ("I am enthusiastic about my job."), and absorption ("I am immersed in my work so much that time flies."). Respondents rate each item on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from (0) Never to (6) Always, providing a comprehensive assessment of work engagement levels.

Job Satisfaction. This scale, developed by Sukoco (2019), consists of 21 items, including both favorable and unfavorable statements. It has been tested on a sample of 75 participants, yielding a high reliability score with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.915, confirming its validity for further research. The scale assesses various job satisfaction aspects, including the nature of the job itself, payment, promotion, working conditions, supervision, coworkers, and management. Sample items from this scale include: (1) "I feel satisfied with my current salary and benefits," (2) "My workplace provides a comfortable and supportive environment," and (3) "I believe there are fair opportunities for career advancement in my organization." Respondents rate their agreement on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Data Analysis

This study utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the data, using the Perceived Organizational Support (POS) scale, which assesses a worker's trust in the organization regarding appreciation, welfare, views, and assistance. Work engagement was measured based on three aspects: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Job satisfaction was evaluated across seven dimensions: the nature of the work itself, compensation, promotion opportunities, working conditions, supervision, coworker relationships, and management. The data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.

Results

Based on testing the validity of outer loading in Table 1 and Figure 1, it is known that all outer loading values are > 0.7 , which means that they have met the validity requirements based on the loading value. Furthermore, validity testing is carried out based on the average variance extracted (AVE) value.

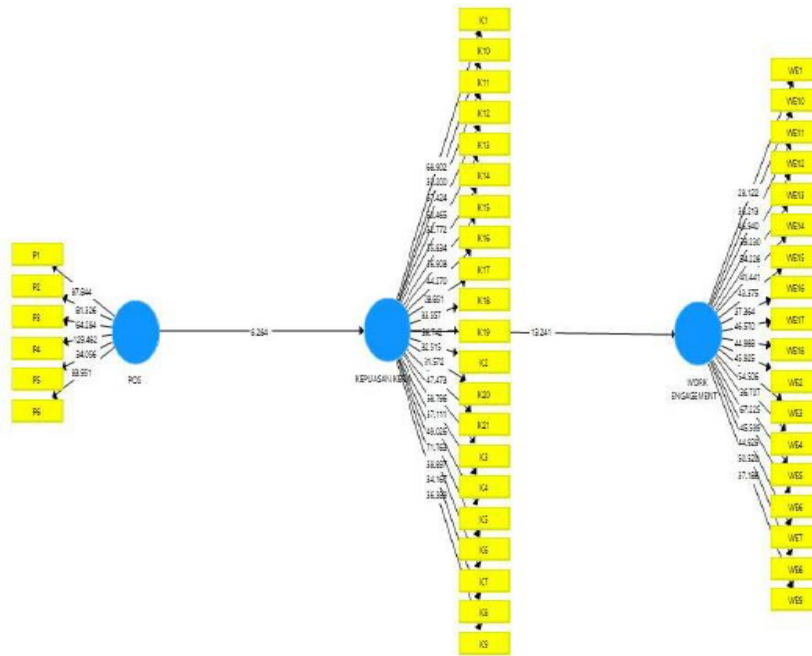


Figure 1. Theoretical model of POS, Job satisfaction and Work engagement

The results in Table 1 demonstrate strong convergent validity for all three constructs based on the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. Job satisfaction has an AVE of .710, indicating that its measurement items effectively capture the underlying construct. Similarly, work engagement has an AVE of .728, confirming that the observed indicators strongly reflect the concept. The highest AVE value, .848, is for perceived organizational support, suggesting that its measurement model is particularly robust. Since all AVE values exceed the recommended threshold of .50, this indicates that the constructs are well-represented by their respective indicators, ensuring strong validity within the study.

Table 1

Validity Testing based on Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Job satisfaction	.710
Work engagement	.728
Perceived organizational support	.848

The reliability testing results, as shown in Table 2, indicate that all constructs in the study demonstrate excellent internal consistency based on Composite Reliability (CR) values. The job satisfaction construct

has a CR of .980, suggesting a very high level of reliability. Similarly, perceived organizational support exhibits a CR of .966, reflecting strong internal consistency. Additionally, work engagement achieves a CR of .977, further confirming the reliability of the scale. Since all CR values exceed the commonly accepted threshold of .70, the measurement instruments used in this study are considered highly reliable for assessing the respective constructs.

Table 2
Reliability Testing based on Composite Reliability (CR)

	Composite Reliability
Job satisfaction	.980
Perceived organizational support	.966
Work engagement	.977

The goodness-of-fit model test aims to assess the feasibility and accuracy of the overall model, serving as a validation measure in PLS-SEM. Based on the results of the SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) goodness-of-fit test, the obtained SRMR value is .049, which is below the .08 threshold. This indicates that the model demonstrates a good fit. Additionally, the path test is used to determine the strength of the influence or impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination (R-square) measures the extent to which the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables in the model.

Table 3
Results of Direct Effect Model Analysis

Effect	t-statistic	p
Perceived Organizational support -> Work Engagement	7.097	.000
Perceived Organizational support -> Job satisfaction	8.013	.000
Job satisfaction -> Work Engagement	10.745	.000

The results of the direct effect model analysis, as presented in Table 3, indicate significant relationships between perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and work engagement. Perceived organizational support (POS) was found to have a positive and significant effect on work engagement ($t=7.09$; $p=.000$), suggesting that employees who perceive higher support from their organization tend to be more engaged in their work. Additionally, POS demonstrated a stronger direct effect on job satisfaction ($t=8.013$; $p=.000$), indicating that organizational support plays a crucial role in enhancing employees' job satisfaction. Furthermore, job satisfaction significantly influenced work engagement ($t=10.745$; $p=.000$), implying that employees who experience higher job satisfaction are more likely to be engaged in their work. These findings highlight the critical role of organizational support in fostering both job satisfaction and work engagement, with job satisfaction serving as a key mediator in the relationship between POS and work engagement.

The R-square (R^2) values indicate the proportion of variance explained by the predictor variables in the model. The R^2 value for job satisfaction is .180, meaning that the independent variables in the study explain 18% of the variance in job satisfaction, while the remaining 82% is influenced by other factors not included in the model. Similarly, the R^2 value for work engagement is .396, indicating that the predictors account for 39.6% of the variance in work engagement, with the remaining 60.4% explained by external

factors. These results suggest that the model has a moderate explanatory power for work engagement and a relatively lower explanatory power for job satisfaction.

Meanwhile, the Q-Square (Q^2) values indicate the predictive relevance of the model for the endogenous variables, job satisfaction and work engagement. A Q^2 value greater than zero suggests that the model has predictive relevance, with higher values indicating stronger predictive power. In this study, the Q^2 value for job satisfaction is .125, suggesting that the model has moderate predictive relevance for this variable. Furthermore, the Q^2 value for work engagement is .285, indicating a relatively stronger predictive capability. These results imply that the independent variables in the model contribute meaningfully to explaining variations in job satisfaction and work engagement, with a greater impact observed on work engagement.

Table 4

Mediation Test Using Bootstrapping Method

	<i>Original Sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Perceived Organizational support -> Job satisfaction -> Work Engagement	0.219	0.218	0.033	6.638	.000

The mediation test using the bootstrapping method examined whether job satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and work engagement. The results indicate that the indirect effect of POS on work engagement through job satisfaction is statistically significant. The original sample value (.219) suggests a weak negative effect, while the p-value= .000. Additionally, the t-statistic 6.638 is far below the critical value of 1.96, reinforcing the conclusion that the indirect effect is not meaningful. These findings suggest that job satisfaction does play a significant mediating role in the relationship between perceived organizational support and work engagement in this study.

Discussion

The findings of this study can be interpreted through the lens of Social Exchange Theory (SET), which posits that relationships between employees and organizations are based on reciprocal exchanges of resources, support, and obligations (Ahakwa et al., 2021). According to SET, when employees perceive strong organizational support (POS), they develop a sense of obligation and willingness to reciprocate by demonstrating higher engagement, motivation, and commitment to their work (Eisenberger, 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2023). Furthermore, the results of this study reveal that while POS has a significant and positive direct effect on work engagement, job satisfaction does mediate this relationship.

From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964), the relationship between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and work engagement can be explained as a reciprocal exchange between employees and their organization. SET posits that individuals engage in social relationships based on the expectation of mutual benefit. In an organizational context, when employees perceive strong support from their employer—such as recognition, fair treatment, and resources—they feel a sense of obligation to reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviors, including higher work engagement. However, this relationship is not always direct; rather, job satisfaction acts as a mediator in this exchange. When employees feel valued and supported, they experience greater job satisfaction, which in turn fosters a

deeper emotional and cognitive connection to their work. This suggests that employees do not automatically translate POS into engagement, but first evaluate their level of job satisfaction, which then strengthens their willingness to exert effort and commitment in their roles. Thus, SET helps explain why POS enhances work engagement both directly (through reciprocal obligation) and indirectly (by first influencing job satisfaction, which then increases engagement).

The study found that POS positively influences work engagement, indicating that organizational support directly impacts teacher engagement. This result is consistent with previous research, which suggests that employees who perceive strong organizational support feel valued and are more likely to engage in their work (Mufarrikhah, 2020; Rahmi, 2021). In the context of Social Exchange Theory, this implies that teachers who receive recognition, resources, and developmental opportunities from their institutions reciprocate this support with increased engagement, irrespective of their job satisfaction levels (Ahakwa et al., 2021).

Similarly, the study found that POS significantly affects job satisfaction. This aligns with SET, which suggests that when employees perceive fairness, respect, and support from their organizations, they feel more satisfied with their work (Eldor & Shoshani, 2017). However, despite this significant relationship between POS and job satisfaction, job satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between POS and work engagement. This supports some previous research (Kurniawan, 2021; Oubibi et al., 2022), which found that job satisfaction serves as a bridge between organizational support and engagement.

From a Social Exchange Theory (SET) perspective, the finding that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and work engagement suggests that employees do not engage in their work solely due to direct benefits from organizational support. Instead, they first experience higher job satisfaction, which in turn enhances their engagement levels. According to SET (Blau, 1964), employees form reciprocal relationships with their organizations—when they perceive strong support, they feel valued and develop positive attitudes toward their work, including job satisfaction. This satisfaction then becomes a motivating force that drives deeper commitment and engagement, rather than engagement being an immediate response to POS alone. This aligns with research indicating that job satisfaction serves as a psychological state that fosters engagement, as employees who are satisfied with their work environment are more likely to exert effort, remain motivated, and be absorbed in their tasks (Schaufeli, 2013).

Moreover, the mediating role of job satisfaction highlights that POS alone may not be sufficient to directly enhance engagement, particularly in work environments with high job demands or limited career growth opportunities. In such settings, job satisfaction functions as an essential emotional buffer, allowing employees to process organizational support positively before translating it into engagement (Ahakwa et al., 2021). This finding contrasts with perspectives suggesting that engagement stems directly from support and instead emphasizes that employees need to first experience contentment and fulfillment in their jobs before becoming fully engaged (Al-Dalalmeh et al., 2018).

Additionally, while other factors such as intrinsic motivation, autonomy, or professional identity may still play roles in engagement, this study underscores the critical role of job satisfaction as an intermediary mechanism in the POS-engagement link. Employees who perceive strong organizational support are likely to experience higher job satisfaction, which in turn activates their engagement in a sustainable manner (Donald et al., 2016). Thus, SET supports the idea that organizational support fosters engagement

indirectly—not just through direct reciprocity but by first enhancing job satisfaction, which then strengthens employees' willingness to reciprocate through higher engagement.

In conclusion, these findings suggest that job satisfaction is not merely a byproduct of support but an essential mediator that translates POS into engagement. Organizations aiming to boost engagement should focus not only on providing direct support but also on enhancing employees' job satisfaction through fair policies, career development opportunities, and a positive work environment. Future research should explore how specific job satisfaction components—such as recognition, autonomy, or work-life balance—contribute to strengthening the POS-engagement pathway in different professional settings (Albalawi et al., 2019; Ahakwa et al., 2021).

This study has several limitations. First, the teacher population in this study consisted solely public teachers' school in Bener Meriah, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other regions or educational contexts. The results may differ if the study were conducted in a different setting with varying institutional, cultural, or socio-economic conditions. Second, data collection was conducted using self-reported scales, which presents the possibility of social desirability bias or faking good—where participants may respond in a way that portrays them more favorably rather than providing entirely accurate responses. Future research should consider incorporating multiple data sources, such as interviews or observational methods, to enhance data validity and reduce potential biases.

Implications for Educational Practice and Policy

Given the importance of these contextual factors, educational institutions must adopt targeted strategies to enhance teacher engagement by recognizing the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and work engagement. When institutions foster a supportive work environment, this support first enhances job satisfaction, which then translates into greater teacher engagement.

First, improving communication and feedback mechanisms is crucial. Transparent, open communication channels allow teachers to voice their concerns and receive constructive feedback, fostering a sense of inclusion and support within the institution. Regular feedback not only helps teachers improve their performance but also reinforces their perception of organizational support, leading to higher job satisfaction, which in turn enhances engagement (Nguyen & Ha, 2023).

Second, providing professional development opportunities is essential for sustaining teacher engagement. Investing in high-quality training programs that align with teachers' interests and career goals signals an institution's commitment to their professional growth. Such investment increases job satisfaction by showing teachers that they are valued, which subsequently strengthens their work engagement. Professional development enhances teachers' skills, boosts their confidence, and provides them with new strategies to improve student learning, further reinforcing their engagement (Hossen et al., 2020).

Another key strategy is promoting collaborative work environments, where teachers are encouraged to share best practices, support one another, and engage in collective problem-solving. Peer collaboration fosters a sense of community and reduces teacher isolation, enhancing job satisfaction, which then positively affects engagement. When teachers work together in a collegial and supportive environment, their satisfaction and commitment to their work increase significantly (Ortan & Simut, 2021).

Furthermore, ensuring fair compensation and benefits is a fundamental factor in maintaining teacher motivation and engagement. Competitive salaries and comprehensive benefits packages demonstrate that institutions value their teachers' hard work and dedication. Feeling financially secure and fairly compensated contributes to higher job satisfaction, which in turn fosters greater engagement. Teachers who are satisfied with their financial well-being are more likely to remain committed to their roles rather than seeking employment elsewhere due to dissatisfaction.

Lastly, empowering teachers in decision-making processes fosters a sense of ownership and agency over their work. When teachers are involved in shaping policies, curriculum development, and school-wide decisions, they feel a stronger connection to their institution. This sense of empowerment enhances job satisfaction by making teachers feel valued and heard, which subsequently leads to greater engagement (Atik & Çelik, 2020).

By implementing these strategies, educational institutions can create an environment that not only fosters teacher engagement but also enhances overall school performance. Recognizing the critical role of job satisfaction as a bridge between POS and engagement ensures that teachers remain motivated, committed, and capable of delivering high-quality education to their students.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the understanding of work engagement among teachers by examining the role of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and job satisfaction within the framework of Social Exchange Theory (SET). The findings confirm that POS has both a direct and indirect positive effect on work engagement, reinforcing the idea that when teachers perceive strong organizational support—such as recognition, resources, and professional development opportunities—they are more likely to be engaged in their work. This aligns with SET, which suggests that employees reciprocate organizational support with higher levels of dedication and commitment.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between POS and work engagement. This indicates that teachers who feel supported by their organizations experience greater job satisfaction, which, in turn, enhances their engagement at work. While POS has a direct effect on engagement, job satisfaction serves as an additional pathway, amplifying the impact of organizational support on teachers' motivation and commitment. This finding bridges prior research that debated the role of job satisfaction in engagement, emphasizing that while job satisfaction is a relatively low-activation state, it still plays a crucial role in fostering work engagement by reinforcing positive workplace experiences.

The findings suggest that in educational settings, fostering work engagement requires both direct organizational support and strategies to enhance job satisfaction. This implies that school administrations should implement policies that not only provide tangible support but also improve workplace satisfaction through fair treatment, recognition, autonomy, and meaningful professional development opportunities. Additionally, the results highlight the potential for other mediating factors, such as intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and professional identity, to further explain the relationship between POS and engagement. Future research should explore these variables to develop a more comprehensive understanding of teacher engagement.

Overall, this study underscores the critical role of organizational support in fostering teacher engagement, revealing that engagement is driven by both direct support mechanisms and the positive emotional state derived from job satisfaction. Organizations must adopt a holistic approach, ensuring that teachers feel both supported and fulfilled in their work, ultimately leading to a more engaged and committed workforce.

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Ethical statement

The study followed the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all persons involved in the study.

Conflicts of Interest

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

Author Contribution

All authors have contributed equally to the study's conceptualization, interpreting data, reviewing, and editing the manuscript.

Data availability

Data can be provided upon request to the author.

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