

The impact of social support giving on teachers' well-being: sharing of research findings

教師支援學生對教師幸福感的影響：研究成果分享

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Dissemination of project findings: 'The Predictor and Outcome of Social Support Giving – a Self-Determination Theory Perspective', GRF project funded by Research Grant Council of Hong Kong SAR
'Supporting Schools and Universities for 21st Century Learning: Partnerships for the Future'

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'The Predictor and Outcome of Social Support Giving – a Self-Determination Theory Perspective'

「提供社會支持的成因與後效 – 以自我決定理論探討的研究」

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Teaching Profession Around the World

Teachers' **career development and job satisfaction** have become an **increasingly notable problem** in many regions around the world.

In **Australia**, teaching is perceived as a **highly demanding career** that comes with **heavy workload** and **emotional strains** (Richardson & Watt, 2006).

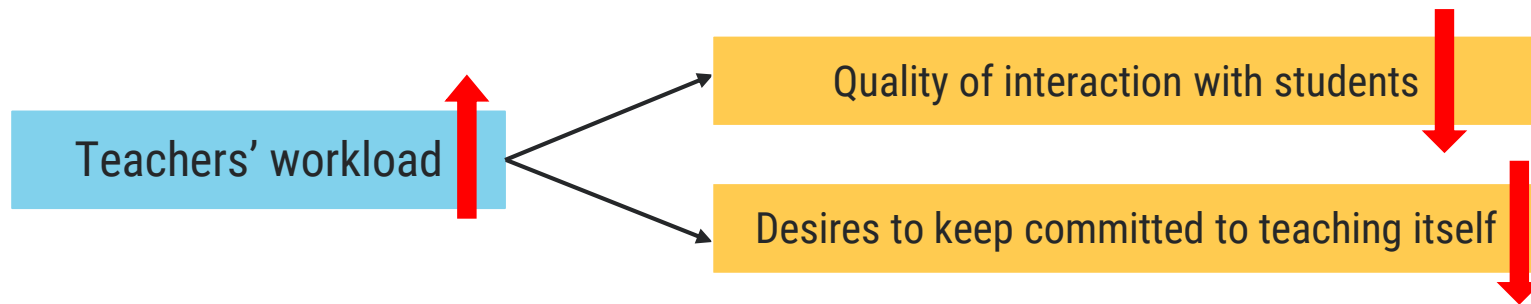


In **US**, teachers accounted for a **much higher percentage** in relation to **job-related stress** than other occupations (Steiner & Woo, 2021).



Teachers in Hong Kong

- » School teachers' **increasing mental health problems** have been a persistent issue.



- » In order to promoting teachers' career development,
- » **teachers' well being** becomes a topic of interest



Self-determination Theory (SDT)

Every individual is endowed with an **innate striving to actualize**. We are

eager to learn

willing to cultivate interest

seek challenge

explore the world

(Ryan et al., 2019)

These behaviors have to be facilitated by an **enabling working environment** by **fulfilling their basic psychological need**

School environment

Basic Psychological Need

Teachers' well being



Basic Psychological Need (SDT)

These behaviors have to be facilitated by an enabling working environment by fulfilling their basic psychological need with **three** nutrients:

Autonomy



- » Desire to experience **choice and freedom**
- » **Take control** of life decision

Competence



- » Need to experience oneself as **effective in dealing problems and challenges**

Relatedness

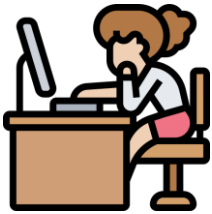


- » Need to be **cared of, connected to, provide support** to others



Well Being

» **Three** outcomes to measure teachers' wellness



1. Work Engagement

» Whether teachers are **involved with, committed to, enthusiastic** and **passionate** about their work



2. Psychological Meaningfulness

» Teachers' experiences of **meaning** and **feeling of worthiness** in work

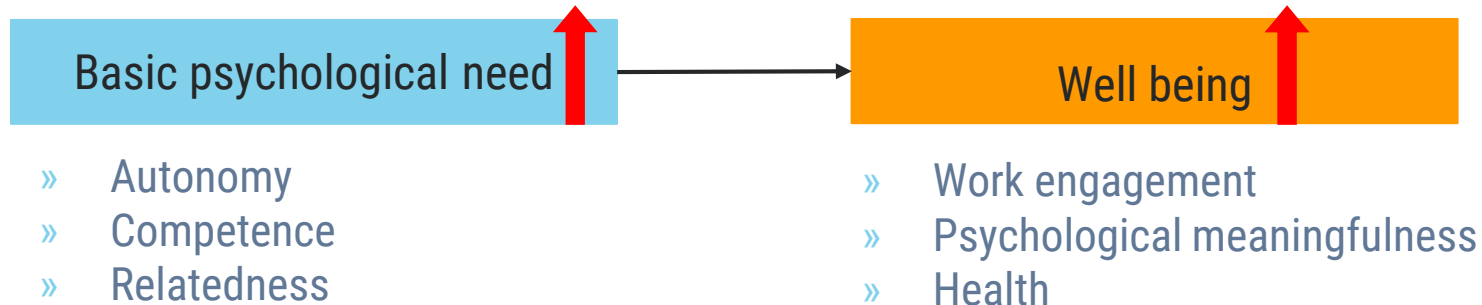


3. Health

» **Mental** (emotional states) and **physical** health (absence of minor psychiatric disorders)

Basic Psychological Need and Well Being

- » According to SDT, the role of great autonomy and self-regulation foster positive human development (Ryan et al., 2019)



- » **Basic psychological need** facilitate important psychological functioning and enable **positive well-being**

Social Support

- » Teachers **pursue meaningful intrinsic goals** include **assisting students by offering social support**

Social Support

‘verbal and non-verbal communication between recipients and providers that **reduces uncertainty** about the situation, the self, the other, or the relationship, and functions to **enhance a perception of personal control** in one’s life experience.’ (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987, p.19)

Health Psychology

- » Receiving different forms of social support from others → **feels loved, cared of, esteemed and valued, feeling competent** (Lam, 2019)





Social Support in Education context

Education

Care, empathy and virtuous personality traits of teachers
→ essential for earning trust from students and enhancing students' motivation (Lam, 2019)

Social support

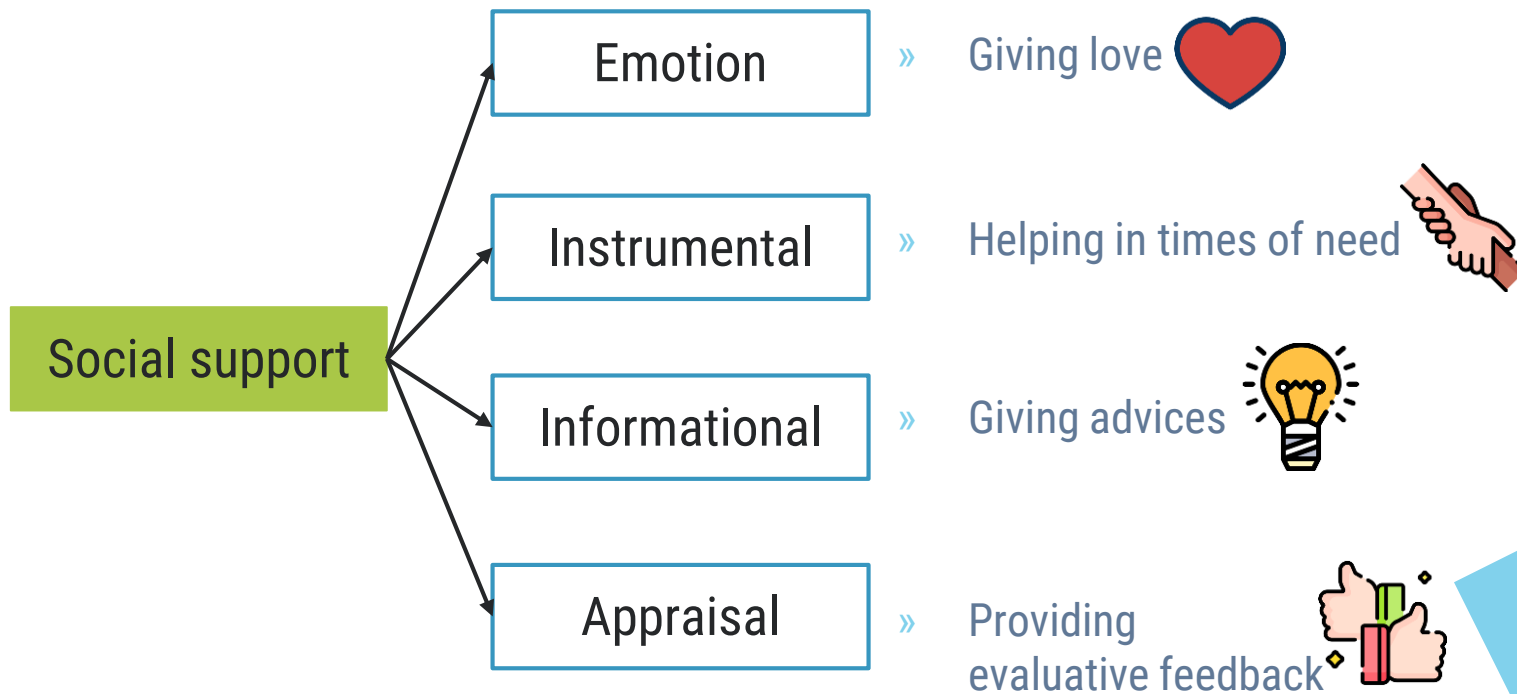
measured by teachers' willingness to provide students with

1. Personal **support**
2. **Patience** and **help** regarding **content learning** and **appreciation/ personal interest** on students

(Baumert et al., 2010)



Social Support in Education context



(Malecki & Demaray, 2002)



Basic Psychological Need and Social Support

Basic Psychological Need Theory (BPNT)

Lack of Basic need

1. Work on things that **ran contradictory** to their **personal value**
2. Feeling **unsupported** in doing what they **aspired to do**
3. Feel **ineffective** instead of competent

Act in **non-self-determined** way

Acts that **are not** intrinsically driven and done by enjoyment and interest

Cannot integrate meaningfully in the social environment

Less likely to offer support



Basic Psychological Need and Social Support

School/ Working environment

1. nurture professional **autonomy**
2. give **freedom** to teachers
3. Offer **support**

Teachers more **engaged in prosocial behaviour** and **teaching**
le. providing **social support** to students

(Lam & Yan, 2011; Slemp et al., 2015)



Basic psychological need

Social Support

Social Support and Well Being

Goal content theory in SDT

Activities embedded with **intrinsic life goal** foster **wellness**

- ✓ Forming close relationships 
- ✓ Experiencing personal growth 

Among teachers

Offering social support to students has an intrinsic goal behind it

- » One of the factor that may determine a **sense of purposes for teachers**





The Study

identify if **Social support** mediates the relationships between **basic psychological need** and **well-being**

Research Methodology

Target participants:

Hong Kong **junior secondary** school level **teachers**

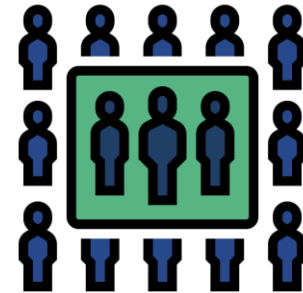
Sample size:

309 (teachers from 10 schools)

Represent a **wide spectrum** of secondary schools

- » Stratified in terms of **academic standards, geographic locations** and **funding types**
 - ◇ 7 Aided; 2 DSS; 1 Govt.
 - ◇ 6 band 2 schools; 4 band 3 schools

- » Requested to complete a **survey** to assess the factors





Results

Meditation effect of **social support** on the relationships of **basic psychological need** on

1. **Work engagement**
 2. Psychological Meaningfulness
 3. Health
- 



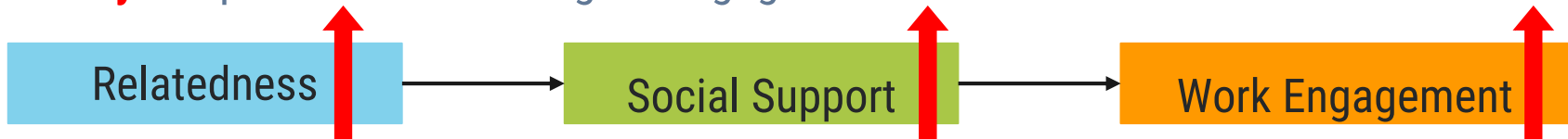
Results - 1. Work engagement

	Interpretation
Autonomy and work engagement	Partially mediated by social support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Autonomy ↑ Work Engagement ↑ » Autonomy ↑ Social Support ↑ » Social Support ↑ Work Engagement ↑
Competence and work engagement <small>.25**</small>	Partially mediated by social support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Competence ↑ Work Engagement ↑ » Competence ↑ Social Support ↑ » Social Support ↑ Work Engagement ↑
Relatedness and work engagement	Fully mediated by social support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Relatedness did not predict Work Engagement » Relatedness ↑ Social Support ↑ » Social Support ↑ Work Engagement ↑

Results - 1. Work engagement (highlight)

Relatedness and work engagement	Fully mediated by social support <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Relatedness did not predict Work Engagement» Relatedness ↑ Social Support ↑» Social Support ↑ Work Engagement ↑
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- » Gaining support from colleagues and school leaders (ie. fulfilling teachers' relatedness) **may not** predict teachers' higher engagement in work



- » Highlight the importance of intrinsic goals of teachers (helping and assisting students) and desire to keep committed to teaching itself



Results

Meditation effect of **social support** on the relationships of **basic psychological need** on

1. Work engagement
2. **Psychological Meaningfulness**
3. Health



Results - 2. Psychological Meaningfulness

	Interpretation
Autonomy and psychological meaningfulness	Partially mediated by social support <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Autonomy ↑ Psychological Meaningfulness ↑» Autonomy ↑ Social Support ↑» Social Support ↑ Psychological Meaningfulness ↑
Competence and psychological meaningfulness	Partially mediated by social support <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Competence ↑ Psychological Meaningfulness ↑» Competence ↑ Social Support ↑» Social Support ↑ Psychological Meaningfulness ↑
Relatedness and psychological meaningfulness	Partially mediated by social support <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Competence ↑ Psychological Meaningfulness ↑» Competence ↑ Social Support ↑» Social Support ↑ Psychological Meaningfulness ↑



Results

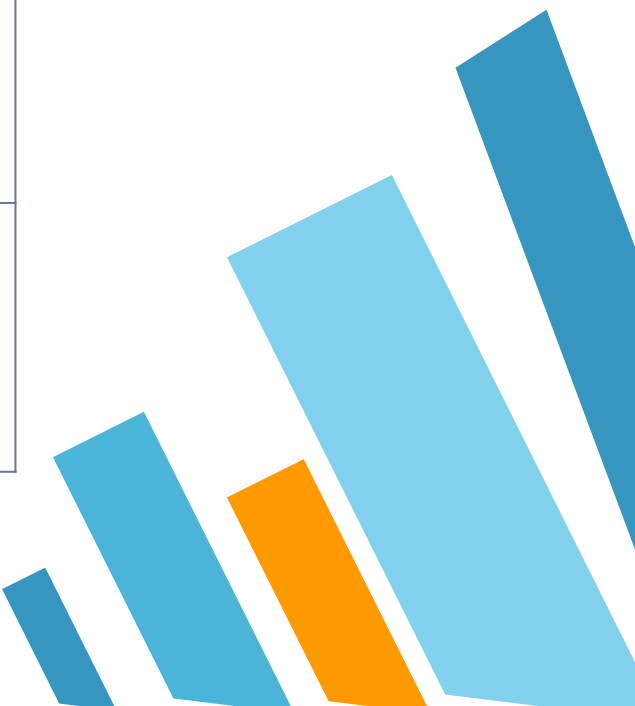
Meditation effect of **social support** on the relationships of **basic psychological need** on

1. Work engagement
 2. Psychological Meaningfulness
 3. **Health**
- 



Results - 3. Health

	Interpretation
Autonomy and health	» Autonomy did not predict health
Competence and health	Direct effect of competence and health » Competence ↑ Health ↑
Relatedness and health	Direct effect of relatedness and health » Relatedness ↑ Health ↑



Results - 3. Health (highlight)

Autonomy and health

- » Previous studies suggested that **job autonomy** is **positively** related to **mental health**

Our study finds that Social Support did not predict health



- » **giving social support** is associate with **positive health** as reported previously

We believe, in the context of Hong Kong:

- » school **administrative** work
- » **performativity** culture
- » **Promoting** school
- » Etc.,



Committed to students at the same time

→ **may not** enhance their mental and physical health




Suggestions and Implications

Suggestions for schools:

Enhancing teachers' well being by

1. **Facilitate teachers' basic psychological need** in working environment
2. Teachers self-integrate in teaching profession, **encourage social support giving** to students

HOW?

1. Policy direction
 2. Nurturing environment
- 

Suggestions and Implications - Policy

School managers should adopt **student learning** (positively related to teacher well being) as goal in policy making

1. Senior teachers and supervisors **place students' development as prime concern**

Aim: encourage **social support** giving to students

- » Recognizing student development in curriculum policy
- » Emphasize students' **all round development**



Suggestions and Implications - Policy

2. Provide a regular structure in timetable for **teacher-student interaction**

Aim: encourage **social support** giving to students

- » Eg. **Time** scheduled in weekly timetable to meet students



During the interaction:

- » Teachers could see **positive development** of students
- » Offer chances for students to **express appreciation** to teachers






Suggestions and Implications - Policy

3. Initiating alumni association

Aim: enhance teachers' **psychological meaningfulness** by facilitating **relatedness** need

- » Sustain relationships of teachers and graduates
 - » Appreciate the satisfaction teachers have in **seeing the development and growth of students**
- 




Suggestions and Implications - Policy



4. Evaluate teachers' workload and job responsibility

Aim: encourage **social support** giving to students and enhance teachers' **health**

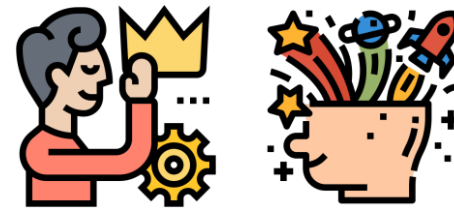
- » Eg. reallocate resources to support teachers in relieving time-consuming administrative duties
 - » At the same time, creating space for teachers to **handle students matter**
 - ◇ **Having more time** on teaching and giving support to students
 - ☑ Sustain teachers' enthusiasm in teaching
 - ☑ Feeling of satisfaction
- 

Suggestions and Implications - Nurturing environment

1. Creating autonomy-supportive environment

Aim: Enhancing **autonomy** among teachers

- » Encourage teachers' autonomy by
 - ◇ Taking **teachers' interest** as perspectives
 - ◇ providing opportunities for **choice and input**
 - ◇ encouraging **self-initiation** (e.g. teaching projects)
- » Cultivate **respect** in the school culture
 - ☑ Teachers to be productive and creative



Suggestions and Implications - Nurturing environment

2. Acknowledge teachers' thought and provide teachers with **competence feedback**

Aim: Enhancing **competence and relatedness** among teachers

- » Appreciate teachers' competence in work in giving feedback




Communication style: using **informational language/ non-controlling**

- » Using **positive and non-harmful** language
- » **Constructive feedback** with specific examples
→ maintaining a **trust and caring** teacher-administrator relationship
- ☑ Teachers are willing to share and discuss




Theoretical implication, future research

- » Understand teachers' motivational process – highlighting eudemonia satisfaction as the core of well-being
 - » BPNW supplements leadership and management styles
 - » social support as significant work engagement behaviour
 - » further research - social support giving applied in teaching and engagement behaviour specific to the teaching profession
- 




Suggestions and Implications

- teacher training/development

- » Strengthening value, goal and orientation apart from skills training and external goal content
 - » Cultivate commitment and vision for education
 - » Promote autonomous motivation to engage teachers in teaching profession
 - » Establish underpinnings to guide practice inside and outside the classroom
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The end

Thank you!

