

Shared Values in the Teaching Profession: A Study of Relations with Perceived Social Support, Job Satisfaction, Engagement, and Sense of Belonging

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Abstract

This study explored how teachers' perceptions of sharing the prevailing goals and values at school (shared values) and their experiences of working in a positive and supportive social environment (social support from colleagues and the school leadership) were related to their motivation (job satisfaction and engagement) and their sense of institutional belonging. We were particularly interested in examining potential mediation processes. The participants in the study were 1145 Norwegian teachers. The data were analyzed using correlation and structural equation modeling (SEM). Two SEM models were tested: one with supportive colleagues and supportive school leadership as exogenous variables, and one with shared values as a single exogenous variable. The zero-order correlations showed that shared values, supportive colleagues, and supportive school leadership were positively and moderately intercorrelated ($r = .49$ to $r = .53$) and that all these variables were positively associated with teacher job satisfaction, engagement, and sense of belonging. The results of the SEM analysis indicate complex mediation processes, suggesting that shared values and social support influence each other reciprocally.

Keywords

Teacher Motivation, Supportive School Environment, Shared Values, Belonging, Engagement, Job Satisfaction

1. Introduction

Educational research in recent decades, drawing partly on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001), underscores the demanding nature

of the teaching profession. Studies from various countries consistently report high levels of stress and burnout among teachers (e.g., [Dehne et al., 2025](#); [Kyriacou, 2001](#); [Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012](#); [Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017](#)). Empirical research further suggests that teacher stress and burnout may result in depression, diminished motivation for teaching, and an increased likelihood of leaving the profession ([Collie et al., 2012](#); [Den Brok et al., 2017](#); [Desrumaux et al., 2015](#)).

According to the JD-R model, all occupations involve both job demands and job resources. Job demands refer to aspects of work that require sustained physical or psychological effort and may contribute to a health impairment process. In contrast, job resources encompass physical, psychological, social, or organizational factors that can facilitate goal achievement, reduce job demands, and foster personal and professional growth ([Demerouti et al., 2001](#); [Bakker & Demerouti, 2006](#)).

Whereas much of the teacher research has examined job demands and teacher stress, an increasing number of studies have also identified several internal (school-related) resources that may contribute to teacher motivation and well-being, for instance autonomy, supportive relationships with students, colleagues and the school leadership, shared goals and values, and opportunities for professional growth and development (e.g., [Guglielmi et al., 2016](#); [Simbula et al., 2011](#); [Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021](#)). As pointed out by [Dehne et al. \(2025\)](#), there is a need to further explore resources within the school environment that foster teacher motivation and well-being and prevent teacher stress and the impact of stress. This study focuses on three key job resources: a) positive and supportive relations with colleagues, b) positive and supportive relations with the school leadership, and c) teachers' feeling that their goals and values are in congruence with the goals and values that are emphasized at the school and by their colleagues (shared values). We tested two models examining the relations between these three job resources and teachers' motivation (measured through job satisfaction and engagement) as well as their sense of institutional belonging.

1.1. Supportive Relations with Colleagues and the School Leadership

Positive social relationships in the workplace, including support from colleagues and supervisors, play a crucial role in individuals' well-being and professional engagement ([Geisler et al., 2019](#)). The significance of social relations has been explained through the fundamental human need to belong ([Baumeister & Leary, 1995](#)). [Baumeister and Leary \(1995\)](#) conceptualize this need as a deeply rooted psychological motivation, where fulfilling it is closely linked to both motivation and overall well-being. Similarly, [Allen et al. \(2022\)](#) describe the need to belong as a desire for positive interpersonal connections—being accepted, respected, and valued. This need can be satisfied both through close one-to-one relationships and through a sense of inclusion within larger groups or organizations ([Baumeister & Leary, 1995](#)). Furthermore, Baumeister highlights two key dimensions of belongingness: frequent positive interactions and mutual care and concern (see [Allen et](#)

al., 2022). In line with this perspective, Dehne et al. (2025) suggest that a close relationship with the school principal, characterized by positivity, warmth, and open communication, may enhance teacher motivation and well-being.

Self-determination theory provides a complementary framework, proposing that individuals have three fundamental psychological needs: relatedness, autonomy, and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). The extent to which these needs are supported or undermined in a given environment significantly influences motivation and well-being. Research consistently demonstrates that fulfilling the need to belong is associated with lower levels of depression and greater emotional well-being (Allen et al., 2018; Arslan, 2021; Arslan & Allen, 2021). In a study of teachers, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018) found that positive relationships with colleagues were linked to higher levels of teacher well-being and professional engagement. Additionally, studies suggest that strong social relationships in the workplace may reduce the likelihood of employees considering leaving their profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018; Fiegener & Adams, 2022; Merida-Lopez et al., 2020).

Positive and supportive relations among teachers and between teachers and the school leadership may also foster professional development by facilitating access to information that improves teaching practices (Siciliano, 2016). Siciliano (2016) defines social resources as the knowledge, skills, advice, innovations, and encouragement that flow between teachers. Social cognitive theory further underscores the importance of communication and collaboration, particularly for addressing complex professional challenges and exercising collective agency (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1997) argues that even highly skilled individuals may struggle to perform effectively as a team if they lack the ability or willingness to collaborate. This is particularly relevant in educational settings, where teamwork is integral to instructional planning. Effective collaboration is more likely to develop in environments characterized by positive and supportive social relationships, as such conditions enhance both the motivation to work together and the capacity to develop shared solutions to challenges.

Previous research on teachers has consistently shown that positive and supportive social relationships—with both colleagues and the school leadership—are associated with job satisfaction, engagement, and a sense of belonging while being negatively associated with burnout (e.g., Avanzi et al., 2015; Dehne et al., 2025; Hakanen et al., 2006; Leung & Lee, 2006; Merida-Lopez et al., 2020; Pines & Aronson, 1988; Simbula et al., 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011, 2017, 2019).

1.2. Shared Values

Teaching in school is deeply rooted in goals and values. According to Sahlberg (2010), the teaching profession is typically driven by values, ethical motives, and intrinsic motivation. Explicitly or implicitly, teachers set goals for their teaching (Chang, 2009) and through their teaching, they communicate and represent values (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Also, from the perspective of social cognitive the-

ory (Bandura, 1997), teaching is an agentic act characterized by intentionality and based on goals and values. Empirical studies strongly support this conceptualization. Although studies of reasons for seeking teacher training show a variety of motives (Berg, et al., 2023; Watt & Richardson, 2008), many studies conclude that prominent motives for teaching are the desire to work with children, help children learn and develop, and make a difference in their lives (e.g., Berg et al., 2023; Moran, et al., 2001). Berg et al. (2023) characterized these motives or values as “altruistic”. Studies of schoolteachers also confirm that altruistic motives for teaching are strong among practicing teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2012). Two typical statements that Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2012) reported from an interview study of teachers are “It is exciting to be able to help convey knowledge and values to the students” (p. 70) and “I love my job and it is wonderful to see children learn ... the greatest thing about this job is seeing the development that happens” (p. 71). As noted by Mvana “... making a positive impact on students can provide profound personal satisfaction ...” (Mvana, 2024: p. 254).

Even though the teaching profession is rooted in goals and values, teachers may endorse different values. For instance, they may hold differing views on which goals to prioritize, which content to emphasize, and which teaching methods to adopt (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). However, effective collaboration between teachers requires that they work towards the same goals and values (Hoy & Miskel, 2008), as teachers’ practices and preferences are strongly shaped by their personal values (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023a). In accordance with Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2023b), we define shared goals and values as teachers’ perceptions of sharing educational goals and values that are emphasized by the school administration and by their colleagues. Shared values may therefore be expected to facilitate collaboration both between teachers and between teachers and school administration, thereby leading to the development of positive and supportive social relationships. Moreover, according to Hoy and Miskel (2008), shared values bind teachers together and help give the school a distinct identity (Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

These expectations are supported by survey studies showing that teachers’ perception of sharing goals and values with their colleagues are positively associated with their experience of working in a supportive environment (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021, 2023a). However, these findings purely show that shared values and social support are correlated. We suggest that shared values and social support among teachers may influence each other reciprocally. As noted, common values facilitate collaboration and may therefore contribute to the development of a supportive work environment. In turn, a positive and supportive environment provides good conditions for fruitful collaboration, which is likely to increase the development of common goals and values.

1.3. Job Satisfaction, Engagement, and Sense of Belonging

As noted above, much teacher research has focused on teacher stress and teacher attrition, whereas recent research also shows that a supportive social environment

at school, including positive social relations between the teachers and between teachers and the school administration are associated with teacher motivation and job satisfaction. Previous research indicates that teachers' perceptions of social support—from colleagues, friends, and family members—are associated with job satisfaction (Hatlevik & Hatlevik, 2024; Yuh & Choi, 2017), work engagement (Fu et al., 2020; Minghui et al., 2018), and commitment (Chung, 2019; Tuna & Aslan, 2018). Studies of teachers' perception of sharing educational goals and values with colleagues and the school administration show a similar pattern—shared goals and values are positively associated with job satisfaction, engagement, commitment, and belonging (Li et al., 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018, 2021, 2023a). These findings are further supported by a recent study on early-career teachers, showing that a supportive social atmosphere at school and a sense of belonging are positively linked to teachers' intentions to remain in the profession (Göregen et al., 2024).

According to Weiss (1999), *job satisfaction* is often defined as the positive or negative assessments individuals make about their work. Aligned with this perspective, we conceptualized teacher job satisfaction as teachers' emotional responses to their work (see Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Several studies indicate that teacher job satisfaction is closely linked to teacher attrition, absenteeism, and intentions to leave either the school or the profession (Sargent & Hannum, 2005; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011, 2023b; Wriqi, 2008; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2006).

Building on the work of Schaufeli and Bakker (2010), this study defines *work engagement* as a positive, motivational state defined by high energy, strong dedication, and a deep focus on the tasks. It is often described as a fulfilling work-related mindset, characterized by vigor, commitment, and absorption in one's work (e.g., Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Empirical research reveals that engagement is predictive of positive outcomes, for instance lower intentions of leaving the teaching profession (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016) and commitment to the school (Pourtousi & Ghanizadeh, 2020).

Belongingness refers to a sense of being connected and accepted by others (Ryan & Deci, 2017). It is conceptualized as a fundamental psychological need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2017) or a desire to be accepted and valued (Allen et al., 2022). Satisfaction of the need to belong (or a sense of belonging) has been shown to be positively associated with emotional well-being (Allen et al., 2018; Arslan & Allen, 2021). As already noted, belonging has been shown to be positively predicted by both social support and shared values.

1.4. The Present Study

One purpose of the present study was to explore associations (correlations) between schoolteachers' perceptions of social support (termed “social support”) from their colleagues and the school administration, shared values, job satisfaction, engagement, and sense of belonging (termed “belonging”). Another purpose was to test two theoretical models of associations using structural equation mod-

elling (SEM). In these models, job satisfaction and engagement were used as indicators of a latent motivational variable. Model A was designed to test whether the associations between a) social support and b) teacher motivation and belonging were mediated by shared values, whereas Model B was designed to test whether the associations between a) shared values and b) both teacher motivation and belonging were mediated by social support (see section 1.1.).

2. Method

2.1. Participants and Procedure

This study utilized a cross-sectional survey design. The participants were Norwegian teachers from 34 randomly selected schools across three counties in central Norway. All teachers at these schools were invited to participate and informed that the participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous. They were told that participation required only the completion of a questionnaire, which did not include names or any personally identifiable information.

A total of 1145 teachers, accounting for 81% of those invited, chose to take part in the study. Their ages ranged from 23 to 68 years, with an average age of 45. To facilitate data collection, a designated time during working hours was set aside for all teachers to complete the questionnaire simultaneously. Upon completion, the questionnaires were placed in envelopes, sealed immediately, and collected to ensure confidentiality.

Prior to the data collection, the teachers were informed that the study aimed to explore their perceptions of working conditions and experiences in the teaching profession. They were also reminded that participation was both voluntary and anonymous. In accordance with recommendations from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data, participants were informed that consent was considered given upon completion and submission of the questionnaire.

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. Positive and Supportive Relations with Colleagues

Positive and supportive relationships among colleagues were assessed using a brief, two-item version of a previously validated scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The items were: “The relationships among colleagues at this school are characterized by friendliness and mutual care” and “Teachers at this school help and support one another.” Responses were recorded on a six-point scale, ranging from “Completely disagree” (1) to “Completely agree” (6). Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was .86.

2.2.2. Supportive Relations with the School Leadership

Supportive relationships with the school leadership were assessed using a previously validated three-item scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020). The items were: “In educational matters, I can always receive helpful support and advice from the school leadership,” “My relationship with the school leadership is based on mutual trust and respect,” and “The school leadership is supportive and recognizes

good work.” Responses were recorded on a six-point scale, ranging from “Completely disagree” (1) to “Completely agree” (6). In this study, Cronbach’s alpha was .89.

2.2.3. Shared Values

Shared values were defined as the degree to which teachers felt that they personally shared the prevailing educational goals and values at the school where they were teaching, and were measured by means of a previously tested three-item value consonance scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The items were: “My educational values are in accordance with the values which are emphasized at this school”, “My colleagues and I have the same opinion about what is important in education”, and “I feel that this school shares my view of what constitutes good teaching”. Responses were given on a 6-point scale from “Completely disagree” (1) to “Completely agree” (6). Cronbach’s alpha in this study was .82.

2.2.4. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured by means of a previously tested four-item scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The items were: “I enjoy working as a teacher”, “I look forward to going to school every day”, “Working as a teacher is extremely rewarding,” and “When I get up in the morning, I cannot wait to go to school”. Responses were given on a 6-point scale from “Completely disagree” (1) to “Completely agree” (6). Cronbach’s alpha in this study was .90.

2.2.5. Engagement

Teachers’ work engagement was assessed using a short, seven-item version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The scale measures three dimensions of engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. An example item is: “At my work, I feel bursting with energy.” Responses were recorded on a seven-point scale ranging from “Never” (1) to “Every day” (7). In this study, Cronbach’s alpha was .89.

2.2.6. Belonging

Teachers’ sense of belonging was measured by means of a two-item scale. The items were: “I feel that I belong at this school” and “It is at this school that I want to teach”. Responses were given on a 6-point scale from “Completely disagree” (1) to “Completely agree” (6). Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was .86.

2.3. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by means of descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling (SEM analysis) using the AMOS 25 program. As noted, to explore possible mediation processes, we tested two SEM models. Model A was designed to let shared values partly mediate the impact of social support on teacher motivation and belonging. In contrast, Model B was designed to let social support mediate the impact of shared values. We used well-established indices of model fit: CFI, IFI, TLI, and RMSEA. For the CFI, IFI, and TLI indices, values greater than .90

are considered acceptable, and values greater than .95 indicate a good fit to the data (Bollen, 1989; Byrne, 2001; Hu & Bentler, 1999). For well-specified models, an RMSEA of .06 or less reflects a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Missing values were treated based on maximum likelihood (ML) estimation in the AMOS program (Byrne, 2001). Compared to both listwise and pairwise deletion of missing data and to mean imputation, ML estimation will exhibit the least bias (Little & Rubin, 1989; Muthén et al., 1987; Schafer, 1997).

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows zero-order correlations between the study variables as well as statistical means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alphas. As expected, supportive colleagues, supportive leadership, and shared values were all positively inter-correlated (correlations varying between .49 and .53). Both social support¹ and shared values were also positively associated with job satisfaction, engagement, and institutional belonging. The strongest association with supportive colleagues, supportive leadership, and shared values were found for institutional belonging ($r = .42, .42, \text{ and } .50$, respectively).

Table 1. Zero-order correlations and descriptive statistics.

Study variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Supportive leadership	---	.49*	.51*	.28*	.26*	.42*
2. Supportive colleagues		---	.53*	.32*	.31*	.42*
3. Shared values			---	.38*	.35*	.50*
4. Job satisfaction				---	.69*	.43*
5. Engagement					---	.41*
6. Commitment						---
Scale	1 - 6	1 - 6	1 - 6	1 - 6	1 - 7	1 - 6
M	4.95	5.26	4.78	5.04	5.71	5.19
SD	1.02	.89	.82	.90	.89	.86
Alpha	.86	.89	.82	.90	.89	.86

Note: * = $p < .01$

3.2. SEM Analyses

We tested two models (A and B) of the relationships between the study variables using SEM analyses. In both models, teacher motivation was indicated by two motivational constructs: job satisfaction and engagement.

Model A was designed to examine whether the associations between a) social

¹Social support from both colleagues and the school leadership.

support from colleagues and the school leadership and b) teacher motivation and belonging were partly mediated through shared values (Figure 1). The model showed a good fit to the data (χ^2 (44, N = 1145) = 216.539, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .59, CFI = .977, IFI = .977, TLI = .960). Strong factor loadings and acceptable values for average variance extracted (AVE) indicated high convergent validity (Table 2). Figure 1 shows that in Model A, shared values were positively predicted by social support from both colleagues ($\beta = .41$) and the school leadership ($\beta = .38$). In turn, shared values predicted teacher motivation ($\beta = .32$). Shared values also predicted teachers' sense of institutional belonging, both directly ($\beta = .30$) and indirectly through teacher motivation (indirect effect = .11). In the SEM model, the direct effects of social support were small and inconsistent. The direct effect of support from the school leadership on institutional belonging was significant but small ($\beta = .13$), whereas the direct effect on teacher motivation was nonsignificant. The direct effect of support from colleagues on institutional belonging was significant but weak ($\beta = .10$), while the direct effect on teacher motivation was moderate ($\beta = .19$). These findings indicate that the association between social support and both teacher motivation and sense of belonging is partly indirect, mediated through shared values.

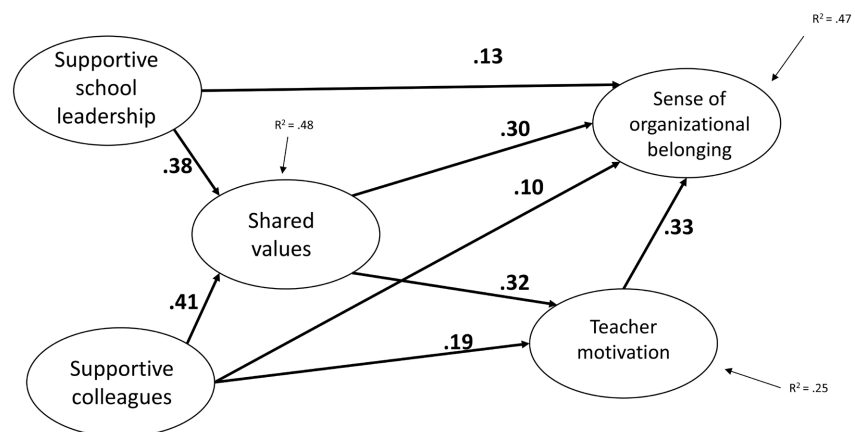


Figure 1. Structural Model A of relations between supportive school leadership, supportive colleagues, shared values, teacher motivation, and sense of institutional belonging. The figure shows standardized regression coefficients. Non-significant paths are not included in the figure.

Table 2. Factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE).

Study variables	Supportive leadership	Supportive colleagues	Shared values	Motivation	Sense of belonging
Factor loadings	.86	.92	.86	.85	.90
	.86	.83	.77	.82	.85
	.85	.83	.71		
AVE	.73	.77	.61	.70	.77

Note: Factors loadings represent standardized regression coefficients. AVE = the mean of the squared factor loadings.

Model B was designed to examine whether the associations between a) shared values and b) both teacher motivation and sense of belonging were partly mediated through social support from colleagues and the school leadership (**Figure 2**). This model also showed good fit to the data ($\chi^2 (45, N = 1145) = 269.310, p < .001$, RMSEA = .66, CFI = .971, IFI = .977, TLI = .949). The difference between the two models in terms of CFI was less than .01, indicating no significant difference in model fit.

Figure 2 shows that in Model B, social support from both colleagues and the school leadership were strongly predicted by shared values ($\beta = .64$ for both). **Figure 2** also shows positive direct effects of shared values on teacher motivation and belonging ($\beta = .35$ and $.32$, respectively). Support from the school leadership was significantly but only weakly related to belonging ($\beta = .11$) and was not significantly related to teacher motivation. The measure of supportive colleagues showed significant but weak associations with teacher motivation ($\beta = .17$). In SEM model B supportive colleagues were both directly and indirectly related to belonging (total effect = $.14$). Thus, Model B also indicates a moderate mediating process, suggesting that the impact of shared educational values on teacher motivation and sense of belonging may, in part, be mediated through social support or a supportive social environment at school.

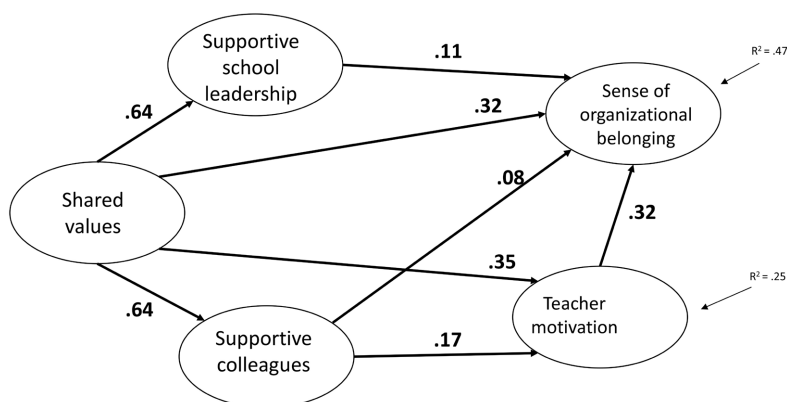


Figure 2. Structural Model B of relations between shared values, supportive school leadership, supportive colleagues, teacher motivation, and sense of institutional belonging. The figure shows standardized regression coefficients. Non-significant paths are not included in the figure.

A further analysis of the associations was conducted by examining the standardized total effects of shared values and social support on teacher motivation and sense of belonging in both Models A and B (see **Table 3**). The total effects of shared values on both teacher motivation and sense of belonging were far stronger in Model B, which captured both direct and indirect effects, than in Model A, which only captured direct effects of shared values. In comparison, the total effects of both supportive colleagues and supportive leadership on teacher motivation and sense of belonging were far stronger in Model A, which captured both direct and indirect effects of social support, than in Model B, which only captured direct ef-

fects of social support. These results further support the idea that the associations between social support and teacher motivation and sense of institutional belonging are partly mediated through shared values, and that the associations between shared values and teacher motivation and sense of institutional belonging are partly mediated through social support. This interpretation of complex mediation processes presupposes that social support and shared values influence each other in a reciprocal manner. For example, if the causal direction flows unidirectionally, say from social support to shared values, then shared values might theoretically mediate the effect of social support, but social support could not mediate the effect of values.

Table 3. Total effects of shared values and social support on teacher motivation and sense of belonging in model A and B.

Effect of	Model A		Model B	
	Motivation	Belonging	Motivation	Belonging
Shared values	.32	.41	.49	.61
Supportive colleagues	.32	.33	.17	.14
Supportive leadership	.18	.30	.04	.13

Note: Standardized total effects derived from the Amos outputs.

4. Discussion

As discussed in the introduction, this study builds on previous research indicating a) that teachers' sense of sharing educational values with their colleagues and the school leadership (shared values) is strongly correlated with their experience of positive and supportive social relations with their colleagues and the school leadership (social support), and b) that both shared values and perceived social support are predictive of teacher motivation (e.g., job satisfaction and engagement) and a sense of institutional belonging. Because shared values and perceived social support are highly correlated, it was of interest to examine possible mediating processes related to how these variables are connected to teacher motivation and sense of belonging.

This study confirms the relatively strong association between shared values and social support from both colleagues and the school leadership. The zero-order correlations also confirmed that both shared values and perceived social support from colleagues and the school leadership were positively associated with teachers' job satisfaction, engagement, and sense of belonging.

We tested two SEM models that showed equally good fit to the data. Model A, with measures of social support from colleagues and the school leadership as exogenous variables, indicated that the impact of perceived support on motivation and sense of belonging was substantially mediated through shared values, whereas Model B, with shared values as the exogenous variable, indicated that the impact of shared values on motivation and sense of belonging was partly mediated through

perceived support. We argue that three conditions must be met for both these findings to hold. The first condition is that social support and shared values must be positively correlated; the second is that both social support and shared values must correlate with motivation and sense of belonging. As noted, both these conditions are met (see also **Table 1**). The third condition, which requires longitudinal studies to test, is that perceived support and shared values affect each other reciprocally.

Theoretically, it is reasonable to assume that perceived support and shared values influence each other in a reciprocal manner. As argued in the introduction, teacher motivation is deeply rooted in educational goals and values. Therefore, shared values within a school are likely to be a prerequisite for effective collaboration and for fostering a positive and supportive work environment. Conversely, teachers who do not share the prevailing educational values at their school may experience being situated in a dissonant value context which, according to **Rosenberg (1979)**, may result in a feeling of not belonging (see also **Yang et al., 2022**). Likewise, a positive and supportive environment at school can contribute to effective communication among participants and, consequently, to mutual learning and the development of shared values.

A possible mechanism through which shared educational values enhance teacher motivation and sense of belonging is that they increase the perceived opportunity for teachers to conduct their teaching in alignment with their own professional values. We suggest that this alignment may strengthen teachers' experience of doing a meaningful work. In contrast, teachers who do not share the prevailing goals and values of the school—particularly in contexts involving teamwork or other forms of collaboration—may feel pressured to compromise their own values. Collaborative activities such as joint planning and co-teaching naturally involve the need for compromise and shared decision-making. When teachers hold similar underlying values, the compromises required in such collaboration are more likely to be compatible with their personal goals and beliefs.

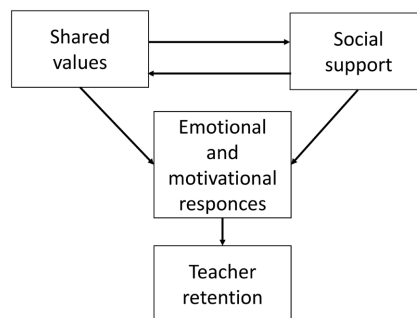


Figure 3. Theoretical model of relations between teachers' perceptions of sharing educational values with their colleagues and the school leadership, perceived social support from colleagues and the school leadership, emotional and motivational responses, and teacher retention.

Based on the findings and our interpretations, we propose a theoretical “*shared*

values—social support” model of teacher motivation and emotion (Figure 3) that should be tested in future research. The model suggests that: a) teachers’ perceptions of sharing goals and values with their colleagues and the school leadership (shared values), and b) their experiences of working in a positive and supportive environment (social support), affect each other reciprocally. It further proposes that shared values and social support represent particularly important job resources that influence teacher motivation and emotion, which in turn are predictive of teacher retention. We underscore that this model is based on our interpretation of the present findings and that it needs to be further explored in future research. We should also note that teacher retention was not included in this study.

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, they suggest that in the teaching profession, social relations (or social support) and the sharing of educational goals and values are distinct but related constructs that influence each other reciprocally. More research is needed to further explore the relationship between these constructs, and to determine whether they might be perceived as dimensions of a broader social-relational construct. Practically, it is important to note that this study indicates that both shared values and social support strongly predict teachers’ motivation and sense of belonging. To maintain and enhance teachers’ motivation and sense of belonging, it is essential to cultivate a shared understanding of educational goals and values, and to foster positive and supportive social relations—both among teachers and between teachers and the school leadership. We regard this as a major responsibility of school principals, but also as an important area for further research and development.

This study has several limitations. The analyses are built on cross-sectional data, and longitudinal studies are needed to test both our interpretations and the proposed model. Moreover, the measures of the study variables are based on short scales and although the statistical analyses show both high alpha values and high convergent validity, future research should test the findings using multiple items to indicate each variable.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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