

## Article

# Perceived Organizational Support and Career Satisfaction among Chinese Teachers: The Mediation Effects of Job Crafting and Work Engagement during COVID-19

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**Abstract:** Recently, scientific theories on career satisfaction (CS) have been promoted worldwide. Research on the subject has become more and more popular, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study adds to the existing literature by investigating the impact of organizational support on career satisfaction through the mediation role of job crafting and work engagement among Chinese teachers. A diverse sample of teachers ( $n = 3147$ ) was drawn from various schools in Zhejiang province (P.R. China), from June to September 2021. SPSS 26 software with PROCESS macro and JASP was used to analyze the data. The findings demonstrate that perceived organizational support (POS), job crafting (JC), and work engagement (WE) have a significant and positive relation with teachers' career satisfaction. POS was serially associated with JC ( $b = 0.34, p = 0.001$ ), CS ( $b = 0.40, p = 0.001$ ), and WE ( $b = 0.49, p = 0.001$ ). The residual direct pathways for JC  $\rightarrow$  CS ( $b = 0.55, p = 0.001, 95\% \text{ CI} = [0.51, 0.60]$ ) and for WE  $\rightarrow$  CS ( $b = 0.47, p = 0.001, 95\% \text{ CI} = [0.44, 0.50]$ ) were significant. Sequentially, JC and WE mediated the relation between POS and CS. The multiple mediation model supported our general hypothesis that JC and WE mediate the relationship between POS and CS.

**Keywords:** perceived organizational support; job crafting; work engagement; career satisfaction; COVID-19



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## 1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a paradigm shift in education all over the world [1]. In educational organizations today, the nature of the work environment is changing due to both local and global needs and transformation, leading to an increased workload, emotional demands, and time pressure that may further result in employees' burnout [2]. To cope with the constantly changing working environment, employees have been engaging with job crafting [3], the action that is taken for molding, shaping, and redefining the job that further motivates them, fostering job meaningfulness and helping them to experience the tasks more favorably as they actively engage in job-designing [4]. Job crafting is carried out by physically and/or cognitively changing the boundaries of a job and aligning it with one's needs and self-image while at the same time achieving the organizational goal [5]. Aspects of changes in job crafting may involve the task given, employees' cognition, and the relationships, altogether aiming to cultivate optimal working experiences and improve their well-being [2].

Task crafting refers to the changes related to either the amount or type of work [6], as employees can change the task they are doing (do an alternative task), the way of working (working process), and time of working to minimize negative feelings toward the task, improve their overall well-being, and finally, perform better [2]. On the other hand, cognitive crafting changes employees' perception and attitude regarding the job by attaching more meaning and constantly examining how connected they are to their

work [7]. The third aspect of job crafting is relational crafting, which refers to the employees' control over the people they interact with within the working environment. It involves the choice of extent and approach of working with colleagues (i.e., difficult and supportive colleagues) to satisfy the employees' needs of connecting and building relationships [8].

In relation to the Great Resignation of 2021, numerous reports in the U.K. and the United States have indicated the number of employees who have been harmed by COVID-19, especially doctors and other healthcare workers [9]. Employees in various sectors are planning to leave their job [10]. A report of healthcare workers in the U.S., which was conducted early in September, indicated that one in five workers had quit their job, one in five are considering quitting, and many others are planning to take their retirement early [11]. Our focus on the impact of perceived organizational support, job crafting, and work engagement on teachers' career satisfaction in China will help school organizations retain their employees by ensuring their satisfaction.

However, employees' engagement in job crafting may be determined by different factors, including the amount of support they receive from the organization or their immediate/top supervisor. Employees may also engage in job crafting, either physically or cognitively, by changing the boundaries of their job and aligning it with their satisfaction, needs, and self-image, but without these processes necessarily furthering organizational goals. Studies have demonstrated the possibility of job crafting to create an unsupportive environment for the organization, especially when the organization and the employees' goals are different [12]. Employees may become more interested in achieving their satisfaction and happiness without considering the organization's goals, which affects the organizational outcomes. The same can be experienced in relation and cognitive job crafting, where employees try to craft their job without considering the benefits of other employees, the organization, and the outcome of the task itself [13]. However, in this study, we focused much on the positive contributions of job crafting to employees' career satisfaction.

This study examines the relationship between organizational support and career satisfaction among Chinese teachers through the mediation role of job crafting and work engagement.

## 2. Theoretical Background

This study is supported by the Job Crafting Theory (JCT), which postulates that employees who engage in job crafting activities increase the meaningfulness of their work, maintain a positive self-image, and connect with others [7]. The theory explains that job crafting helps employees experience the tasks more favorably and satisfy their physical and psychological needs while simultaneously achieving organizational goals [14]. During crafting, job re-designing allows the crafter to physically or psychologically re-arrange the tasks to overcome disagreement or dissatisfaction [15]. Since the seminal article by [16] postulated the theory, job crafting has become a prominent topic, and the research has increased [2]. We add to the existing theory by postulating that teachers [17] who think their organization highly support them in the workplace will also engage in job crafting for better organizational outcomes.

### 2.1. Job Crafting and Career Satisfaction

Job crafting gives employees a sense of fulfillment, resulting in career satisfaction [18]. Studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between job crafting and career satisfaction [19]. Job crafting individuals reported greater job satisfaction [20]. In a longitudinal and quasi-experimental study conducted in 2019 by [8], two conclusions were drawn—the first and foremost is that job crafting is trainable, and second, the physical or psychological changes made by employees have positive impacts on employees' career satisfaction [8].

Job crafting effectively promotes meaningful work that satisfies both the employer or organization and the employees [21]. Different studies on career satisfaction have suggested the importance of crafting to make the work more meaningful, achieve the desired results, and motivate the workers [16]. Employees craft their tasks, their cognition, and social

relation boundaries in their working environment into what may bring motivation and foster meaningfulness to them [2]. According to [16], meaningfulness refers to the degree of purpose and significance the employees believe their job has. Once such meaningfulness is attached to the task and results; it satisfies those who work for it [14]. The way a job is designed or crafted allows it to be re-arranged and overcome any disengagement or job dissatisfaction among workers because the job boundaries are changed to align with employees' needs and self-image, while at the same time achieving the organizational goals [2].

In the present day, teachers prefer to craft their jobs (physically and/or cognitively). Job crafting in schools has positively impacted students' educational outcomes, teachers' well-being, and organizational goals [22]. Studies have demonstrated the relationship between job crafting and job performance [23], which might as well, though not necessarily, result in satisfaction among workers [24]. However, there is little attention on job crafting and career satisfaction among teachers, specifically in the Chinese context. Educational organizations and goals constantly change, especially teaching tools, technology, students, and organizational leadership [2]. Changes in the educational organization may result in an increased workload, emotional demands, and time pressure, resulting in employees' burnout. Teachers' job crafting behavior (i.e., proactively or reactively responding to the changes) may allow them to physically or psychologically re-arrange the tasks and quickly adapt to the changes. These adaptations may help teachers overcome disagreement or dissatisfaction by increasing their fit into the novel job context.

**Hypothesis 1 (H1).** *Job crafting significantly and positively predicts teachers' career satisfaction.*

## 2.2. Perceived Organizational Support and Career Satisfaction

Perceived organizational support (POS) is the degree to which employees believe that their organization cares about their well-being, values their contribution, and supports them in terms of socio-emotional needs [25]. POS is the application of Social Exchange Theory (SET) which studies workplace behavior [26] by examining the social behavior of two parties' interaction. SET implements a cost-benefit analysis to determine the risks and benefits by covering the areas of nature, development, and the outcome of perceived organizational support [27]. Perceived organizational support is vividly explained in the Organizational Support Theory (OST), which postulates that based on the norm of reciprocity, employees trade their efforts and dedication to their organization for tangible (i.e., pay and fringe benefits) and non-tangible incentives such as socio-emotional benefits (i.e., esteem, caring, and approval) [28].

Literature has supported that POS influences job performance and satisfaction by contributing to a positive reciprocity dynamic with the employees [15,29]. Because of perceived organizational support, employees become satisfied and perform better to reciprocate the organization's favorable environment, rewards, and treatments. Scholars [30] have proposed several elements that contribute to employees' perceived organizational support: fairness, supervisor support, favorableness of organizational rewards, and job conditions (i.e., autonomy, role stressors, and training) [31]. Their study found that demographics had a minimal relationship with POS [32]. Supervisor support is related to POS because employees consider the supervisor an agent or representative who acts on behalf of the organization [33]. This kind of perceived support (supervisor's support) has also been shown empirically to increase employees' career satisfaction [31].

Performance, commitment, withdrawal behavior, citizenship behavior, and employees' satisfaction are the main consequences of POS through different processes. First, an employee who receives organizational assistance will feel obligated to return the favor (reciprocity) to the organization via the reciprocity norm toward the organization [34]. Secondly, POS helps employees satisfy socio-emotional needs such as acceptance, connection, and esteem, minimizing occupational stress and boosting employee well-being and career satisfaction [35]. Empirical research and studies have provided evidence that per-

ceived supervisor support leads to positive POS changes over time, influencing employees' satisfaction [36].

Antecedents of career satisfaction is one of the current most researched areas in organizational behavior [37]. Organizational attention toward developing career skills increases employees' sense of feeling effective in their working environment [38]. Perceived organizational support is one of the critical antecedents of career satisfaction. It prompts the socialization process within the institution, which in turn promotes the internalization of pro-social values and the institutionalized public service [39]. When the institution's perceived organizational support and internal sustainability allow the employees to satisfy their competence and autonomy needs, beneficial organizational attitudes will be generated [40].

Perceived organizational support is one of the contextual variables that support or thwart job crafting among employees. A previous survey demonstrated that perceived organizational support predicts job crafting, which in turn predicts satisfaction among employees in the workplace [41]. Empirical findings from Dutch employees have indicated that individuals who experience a high organizational or autonomy support report higher job crafting behavior. In turn, perceived organizational support and job crafting behavior positively correlate with higher work engagement, subsequent performance, and employees' satisfaction [2].

Wrzesniewski and Dutton further discussed perceived organizational support as a variable that may hinder or promote job crafting at different levels [16], which further prohibits or promotes job re-designing, employees' well-being, and career satisfaction [32]. Scholars have argued that perceived organizational support influences employee satisfaction in the working environment by either giving room for or closing the door to job crafting. An organizational environment where perceived organizational support is low inhibits an employee-favorable environment by inhibiting job crafting behavior [42]. Most recent studies related to organizational support are from medicine and public administration [43]. This study aims to extend the current literature knowledge by examining the relationship between POS and Chinese teachers' career satisfaction.

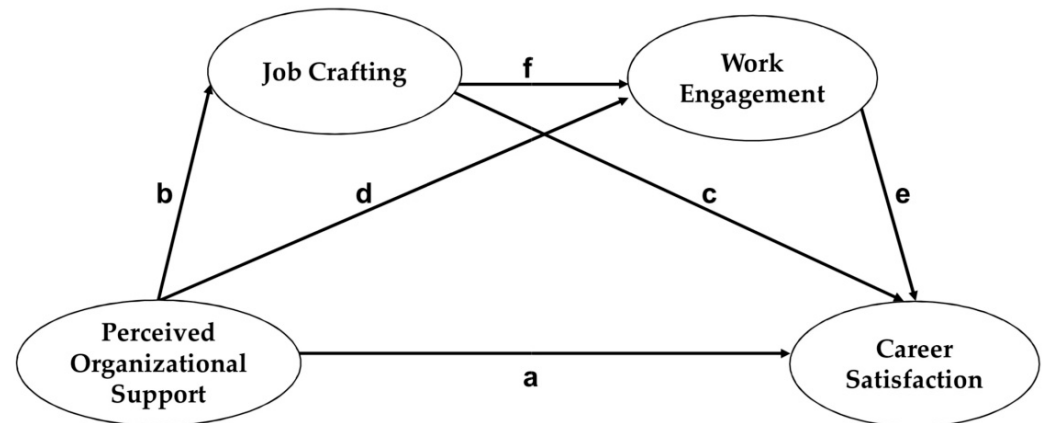
**Hypothesis 2 (H2).** *Perceived organizational support is a significant predictor of teachers' career satisfaction.*

### 2.3. Work Engagement and Career Satisfaction

Work engagement is a concept that has often been analyzed in the literature as having an important role in maintaining employee health and organizational performance [44]. Work engagement can be referred to as the level of physical and mental energy toward work, willingness to invest one's efforts, perseverance, involvement, one's sense of significance, enthusiasm, and the pride that an employee may have in a workplace [45]. The concept was first pioneered by Kahn [46], who proposed that engaged employees are more productive in the workplace, as they are physically, emotionally, and cognitively involved in the tasks [47]. It is further explained that employees' higher engagement in tasks helps them experience psychological safety (trust and security at work), a sense of meaning, well-being, and satisfaction [48].

Different studies have demonstrated the role of work engagement in employees' positive well-being and career satisfaction [49]. Work engagement is one of the antecedents of career satisfaction among employees, while organization support, job crafting, and working conditions are antecedents of work engagement [48]. Work engagement may also play a mediating role in the relationship between perceived organizational support and career satisfaction [50]. Low work engagement among employees may contribute to decreased career satisfaction and performance. In this case, sustaining employee work engagement is of interest to many organizations, including schools, for teachers' career satisfaction [48]. This study contributes to the existing literature by examining the mediation role of work engagement in the relationship between perceived organizational support

and career satisfaction among Chinese teachers. As shown in Figure 1, work engagement has partnered with job crafting to mediate the relationship between two variables of our primary concern perceived organizational support and career satisfaction.



**Figure 1.** The multiple regression model for the effect of perceived organizational support on career satisfaction as our primary concern and the influence of job crafting and work engagement.

**Hypothesis 3 (H3).** *Work engagement plays a significant and positive mediation role in the relationship between perceived organizational support and career satisfaction among Chinese teachers.*

**Hypothesis 4 (H4).** *Job crafting and work engagement positively and sequentially affect the relationship between perceived organizational support and career satisfaction.*

This study is based on our general hypothesis that a solid and positive relationship exists between organizational support and teachers' career satisfaction. However, based on the norm of reciprocity, teachers who perceive that their organization cares about their well-being, values their contribution, and supports them in terms of socio-emotional needs will trade their efforts by engaging more in job crafting behavior for students' better outcomes, achieving organizational goals, and improving their well-being. Finally, these teachers will be more satisfied with their job. On the other hand, we hypothesize that teachers' work engagement also has a significant and positive influence on the relationship between job crafting and job satisfaction and perceived organizational support and teachers' career satisfaction.

#### 2.4. Research Model

The model shown in Figure 1 is based on the hypotheses expressed in this study and the effect of the variables, which are hypothesized to influence the linkage of two essential variables of our concern. The model describes the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS), job crafting (JC), work engagement (WE), and career satisfaction (CS). It is a multiple regression model that embraces a three-path regression effect through JC and WE, and the direct path from POS and CS is the study's primary concern. From our Hypothesis 1, JC has positively influenced CS through path *c*, POS positively influences CS through path *a* (Hypothesis 2), WE mediates the relationship between POS and CS through path *d* and *e* (Hypothesis 3), and JC and WE sequentially mediate the relationship between POS and CS through path *b*, *f*, and *e* (Hypothesis 4). Generally, from this model, JC works with WE to sequentially affect the relationship of POS and CS, but the two mediators also individually play a mediation role.



### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Procedure

The participants took part in an online survey platform similar to Qualtrics Online Sample using a trustworthy Chinese data-collection platform (Credamo). The survey process started in June 2021 and was finished in September 2021. We gathered a large sample because most teachers were on vacation (especially in June) before schools resumed in July 2021. Most of the schools had already resumed offline classes after a long period of total lockdown. Before providing their comments, all participants were guaranteed anonymity and assured that researchers would adhere to the confidentiality principle of their responses during the analysis and reporting. The researchers informed them that the information gathered would be used for a specific academic study. The participants completed all of the surveys in about 10 to 15 min. The participants were not given any incentives. The Ethics Committee of the local university's College of Teacher Education approved the study, and it followed the Declaration of Helsinki.

#### 3.2. Participants

We collected the data from full-time teachers. The final sample consisted of 3147 kindergarten, primary school, middle school, and high school teachers in Zhejiang province, China (valid response rate: 97.32%). The final sample consisted of 927 male teachers (29.50%) and 2220 female teachers (70.50%), with an average age of 39.42 years (SD = 8.73) and an average teaching experience of 17.90 years (SD = 9.61). Teachers of kindergarten totaled 350 (11.10%); of primary school, 1690 (53.7%); of middle school, 720 (22.90%); and of high school, 387 (12.30%). A total of 2856 teachers (90.75%) majored in a teaching program and 291 teachers (9.25%) majored in non-teaching programs. Regarding the teachers' level of education, 12 graduated from middle school (0.40%), 6 from high school (0.20%), 282 had a professional degree (9.00%), 2759 had a bachelor's degree (87.70%), and 88 had a master's or Ph.D. degree (2.80%). The descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics ( $n = 3147$ ).

Attribute		Frequency	Proportion %	Attribute		Frequency	Proportion %				
Gender	Male	927	29.50%	Teaching Grade	Kindergarten	350	11.10%				
	Female	2220	70.50%								
Age	All	Mean	SD	Primary school	1690	53.70%					
	3147	39.42	8.73								
Working years	All	Mean	SD	Middle school	720	22.90%					
	3147	17.90	9.61								
Education	Below undergraduate	300	9.53%	High school	387	12.30%					
	Undergraduate and above	2847	90.47%					Major	Teaching program	2651	84.23%
									Non-teaching program	496	15.16%

#### 3.3. Measurement Tools

##### 3.3.1. Job Crafting

The job crafting scale, developed by [51], was used to assess teachers' job crafting. Twenty-one items were divided into four dimensions (i.e., increasing social job resources, increasing structural job resources, increasing challenging job demands, and decreasing hindering job demands). This study used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (rarely) to 5 (always) (Appendix A, Figure A1). The higher the respondents' scores on the scale, the more engaged they are with job crafting (i.e., effectively changing their job designs).

This scale has been utilized in a variety of investigations and studies and has consistently demonstrated strong reliability and validity, mainly when instruments are used with Chinese samples [52]. In this study, the Cronbach coefficient for this scale was 0.92, and the four dimensions of Cronbach's coefficient used in this study were increasing structural job resources  $\alpha = 0.89$ ; increasing social job resources  $\alpha = 0.85$ ; increasing challenging job demands  $\alpha = 0.87$ ; and decreasing hindering job demands  $\alpha = 0.87$ .

### 3.3.2. Work Engagement

Teachers' work engagement is measured here by the one-factor (9-item) Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which has already been developed by [53]. The items in this scale were answered using a 5-point Likert scoring system, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) (Appendix B, Figure A2). The higher scores of the respondents in the UWES indicate the higher work engagement of the responder. The UWES has been used in several other studies and has proven to be a reliable and valid instrument in Chinese samples [54]. The current study used Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient of the UWES of 0.93.

### 3.3.3. Perceived Organizational Support

To measure perceived organizational support from the teachers' schools, we selected 8 of the 36 questions that were found to focus heavily on this factor and applied them to a wide range of organizations because of the suitable internal reliability reported for the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support [55]. On a 5-point Likert-type scale, respondents indicated how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each topic (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree) (Appendix C, Figure A3). The principal component analysis of responses from 361 respondents in nine organizations indicated a single factor accounting for 48% of the overall variance in the scale's source publication [55]. In our investigation, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.90.

### 3.3.4. Career Satisfaction

To quantify teachers' career satisfaction, we used a five-item scale with a Likert 5-point scoring system [56] (Appendix D, Figure A4) (e.g., "I am content with the success I have achieved in my career"). This scale was chosen since it effectively captures essential aspects of career satisfaction and has proven trustworthy in various settings [57]. This scale has been used in different studies and successfully proved high reliability and validity, especially when the instruments were used with Chinese samples [18]. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient was 0.92 for this scale in this study.

## 3.4. Statistical Analysis Strategy

All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 26.0 software and JASP0.16. The correlations among the main variables were obtained with Pearson's correlation. We tested the multiple mediating roles of perceived organizational support and work engagement between job crafting and teachers' career satisfaction with Model 6 of the PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 3.5 [58].

## 4. Result

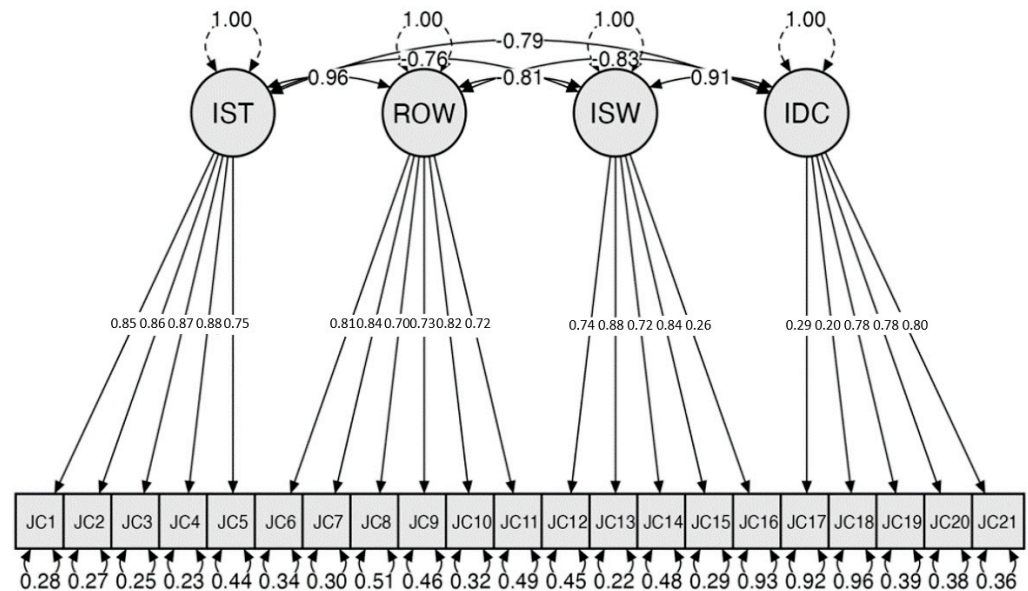
### 4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Before testing our hypotheses, we assessed the discriminant validity of our measurement model for JC, using a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs), TLI, SRMR, GFI, ECVI, RMSEA, and the estimated composite reliability with the statistical analysis program JASP for JC, CS, WE, and POS.

The result of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed that comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.97, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.96, standardized root mean square error of approximation (SRMR) = 0.03, goodness of fit index (GFI) = 0.98, expected cross validation index (ECVI) = 0.94, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.05.

The reliability of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.92 in the present study for job crafting, and the estimated composite reliability based on standardized factor loading and error variances (CR) = 0.96.

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for increasing structural job resources was 0.87; for increasing social job resources,  $\alpha$  was 0.89; for increasing challenging job demands, 0.87; and for decreasing job demands, 0.84. More details are shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** The model plot of confirmatory factor analysis for the standardized parameter JC.

The result of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed that comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.96, Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.92, standardized root mean square error of approximation (SRMR) = 0.02, goodness of fit index (GFI) = 0.91, expected cross validation index (ECVI) = 0.23, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.02.

The reliability of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.92 in the present study for career satisfaction, and the estimated composite reliability based on standardized factor loading and error variances (CR) = 0.96. More details are shown in Figure 3.

The result of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed that comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.99, Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.99, standardized root-mean-square error of approximation (SRMR) = 0.04, goodness of fit index (GFI) = 0.99, expected cross validation index (ECVI) = 0.06, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.04.

The reliability of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.93 in the present study for work engagement, and the estimated composite reliability based on standardized factor loading and error variances (CR) = 0.97. More details are shown in Figure 4.

The result of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed that comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.93, Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.91, standardized root mean square error of approximation (SRMR) = 0.04, goodness of fit index (GFI) = 0.82, expected cross validation index (ECVI) = 0.78, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.01

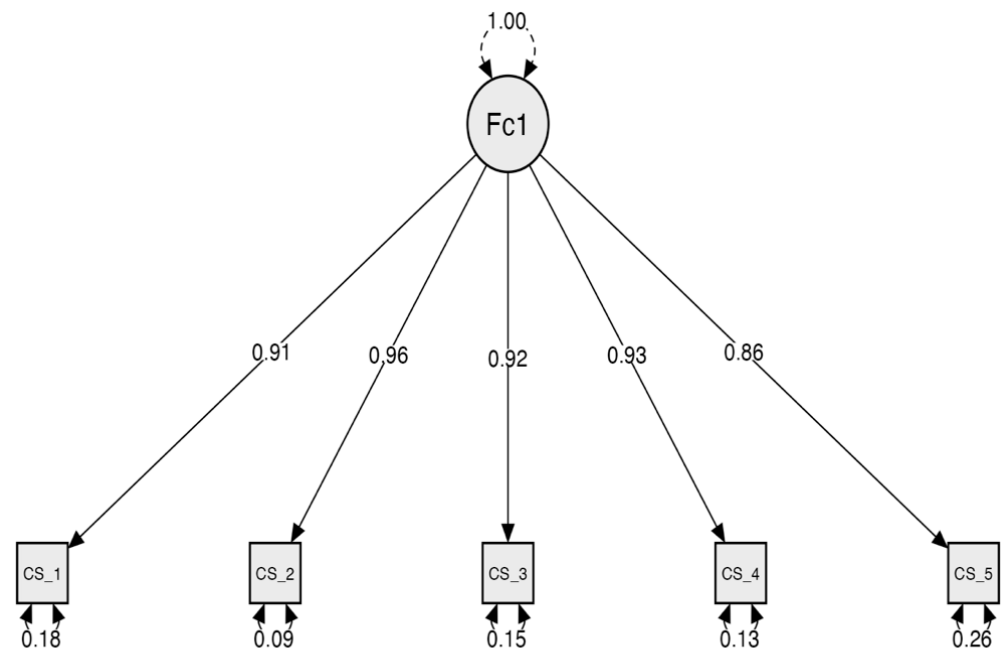
The reliability of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.90 in the present study for perceived organizational support, and the estimated composite reliability based on standardized factor loading and error variances (CR) = 0.95. More details are shown in Figure 5.

An RMSEA value <0.05 indicates a close model fit, while that of <0.08 suggests a reasonable model-data fit [59]. The range  $\leq 0.06$ – $0.07$  is the upper limit for the acceptable model fit [60]. For CFI and TLI,  $>0.90$  is an acceptable fit [61]. The values for TLI and CFI close to 1.00 and values for RMSEA at 0.08 or below indicate an adequate fit.

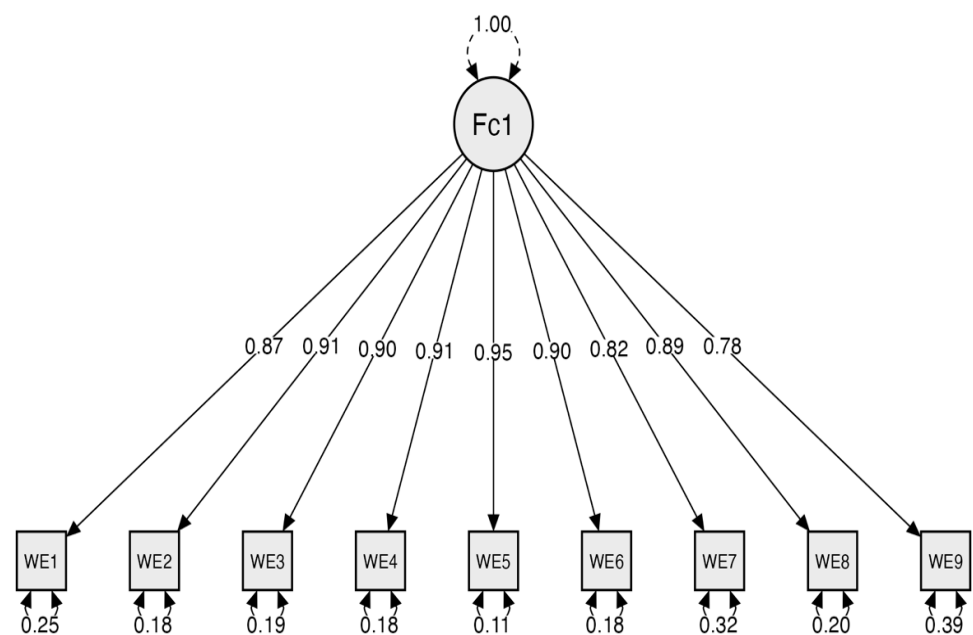
ECVI less than 6.703 is an indication of the fitness of the model [62]. A lower value of ECVI indicates a better fit [63]. GFI close to 1 and SRMR close to 0 indicate an acceptable fit



level [61]. However, researchers usually assume a cut-off of 0.08 and 0.90 for SRMR and GFI, respectively [64], and a composite reliability of 0.9 [59].



**Figure 3.** The model plot of confirmatory factor analysis for the standardized parameter CS.



**Figure 4.** The model plot of confirmatory factor analysis for the standardized parameter WE.

#### 4.2. Preliminary Analysis

The Pearson correlation analyses showed that the four main variables (i.e., perceived organizational support, job crafting, work engagement, and career satisfaction) were positively associated with each other. More details about the results of Pearson correlation analyses are shown in Table 2.

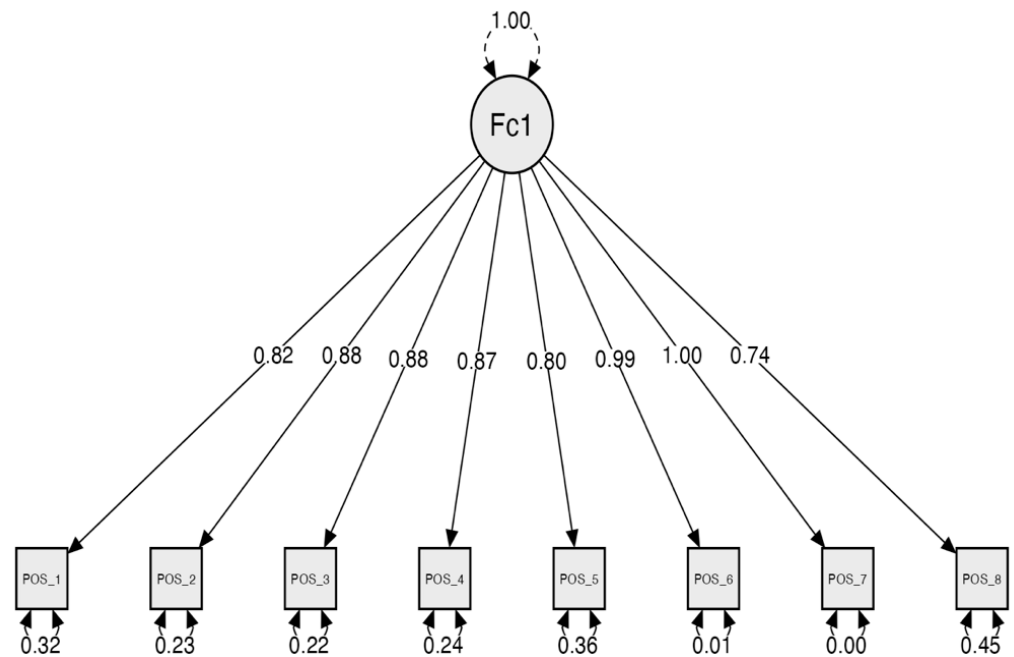


Figure 5. The model plot of confirmatory factor analysis for the standardized parameter POS.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations between the main variables (n = 3147).

	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Job Crafting	4.10	0.57	1	–	–	–
2. POS	3.81	0.83	0.51 *	1	–	–
3. Career Satisfaction	3.83	0.70	0.46 **	0.49 **	1	–
4. Work Engagement	3.89	0.77	0.64 *	0.53 **	0.53 **	1

Note: M, mean; SD, standard deviation. \* p < 0.05; \*\* p < 0.01.

#### 4.3. The Multiple Mediation Model

Model 6 of the PROCESS macro [58] was used to test the multiple mediation model. All pathway coefficients were significant after controlling for the teachers’ teaching time. More detail about the results of the multiple mediation model with work value and work engagement can be shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Testing the pathways of the multiple mediation model (n = 3147).

Effect	B	SE	95%Boot LLCI	95%Boot ULCI
<b>Direct Effects</b>				
POS → JC	0.34 **	0.01	0.32	0.37
JC → CS	0.55 **	0.02	0.51	0.60
POS → CS	0.40 **	0.01	0.37	0.44
POS → WE	0.49 *	0.01	0.46	0.52
WE → CS	0.47 **	0.01	0.44	0.50
JC → WE	0.88 *	0.02	0.84	0.92
<b>Indirect Effects</b>				
POS → JC → CS	0.19	0.01	0.17	0.22
POS → WE → CS	0.23	0.01	0.21	0.25
POS → JC → WE → CS	0.14	0.01	0.11	0.16

Note: POS, perceived organizational support; JC, job crafting; CS, career satisfaction; WE, work engagement; LL, low limit; UL, upper limit; CI, confidence interval. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. Bootstrap sample size = 5000. \* p < 0.05; \*\* p < 0.01;

The pathways (*b* and *c*) for perceived organizational support → job crafting → career satisfaction (indirect effect = 0.19, 95% CI = [0.17, 0.22]) and (*d* and *e*) Perceived organizational support → work engagement → career satisfaction (indirect effect = 0.23, 95% CI = [0.21, 0.25]) were both significant, indicating that job crafting and work engagement mediated the link between perceived organizational support and career satisfaction simultaneously. Furthermore, the sequential pathway (*b*, *f*, and *e*) for perceived organizational support → job crafting → work engagement → career satisfaction was significant (indirect effect = 0.14, 95% CI = [0.11, 0.16]), indicating that more perceived organizational support was serially associated with job crafting ( $b = 0.34, p < 0.001$ ), career satisfaction ( $b = 0.40, p < 0.001$ ), and work engagement ( $b = 0.49, p < 0.001$ ). Furthermore, the residual direct pathway for job crafting → career satisfaction was significant ( $b = 0.55, p < 0.001, 95\% \text{ CI} = [0.51, 0.60]$ ). Thus, not only simultaneously but also sequentially, job crafting and work engagement mediated the connection between perceived organizational support and career satisfaction. Overall, this multiple mediation model explained a substantial portion of the variation in teacher career satisfaction.

In this paper, we employed the four-dimensional classification of work remodeling proposed by Tims and Bakker in 2012. The classification divides work remodeling into four dimensions with 21 items on the scale, as shown in Tables 4 and 5. The increased structural work resources are the first dimension and were measured by five items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The second dimension is the reduced requirement of obstructive work and is measured by six items (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). The third is increased social work resources, measured by five items (12, 13, 14, 15, 16). The fourth, increased demand for challenging work, is measured by five items (17, 18, 19, 20, 21). The linear regression analysis shows that reduced obstructive work requirements was the most powerful predictor of career satisfaction ( $b = 0.297, SE = 0.023$ ) with a confidence interval of 95% (LLCI = 0.225, ULCI = 0.335). On the other hand, increased social work resources (second dimension of job crafting) was the weakest predictor of career satisfaction ( $b = 0.068, SE = 0.021$ ) with a confidence interval of 95% (LLCI = 0.025, ULCI = 0.116). More details are contained in Table 4.

**Table 4.** The effects of individual dimensions of job crafting on career satisfaction ( $n = 3147$ ).

Job Crafting Dimensions	SCs Beta	Bootstrapping			
		SE	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Increased structural work resources	0.107	0.027	0.000	0.074	0.208
Increased social work resources	0.068	0.021	0.000	0.025	0.116
Increased demand for challenging work	0.080	0.018	0.000	0.027	0.104
Reduced obstructive work requirements	0.297	0.023	0.001	0.225	0.335

Note: SCs: Standardized coefficients.

**Table 5.** The effects of individual dimensions of job crafting on work engagement ( $n = 3147$ ).

Job Crafting Dimensions	SCs Beta	Bootstrapping			
		SE	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Increased structural work resources	0.107	0.027	0.000	0.198	0.331
Increased social work resources	0.068	0.021	0.001	0.020	0.110
Increased demand for challenging work	0.088	0.018	0.000	0.043	0.120
Reduced obstructive work requirements	0.451	0.023	0.000	0.427	0.532

Different job crafting dimensions had a varied effect on teachers' work engagement. From the four dimensions described above, the linear regression analysis shows that reduced obstructive work requirements was the most powerful predictor of career satisfaction ( $b = 0.451, SE = 0.022$ ) with a confidence interval of 95% (LLCI = 0.427, ULCI = 0.532). On

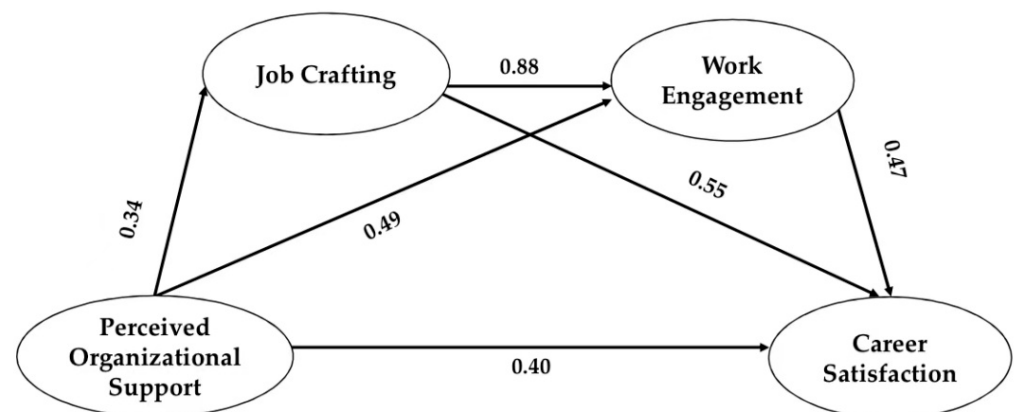
the other hand, increased social work resources (second dimension of job crafting) was the weakest predictor of career satisfaction in terms of standard error ( $b = 0.068$ ,  $SE = 0.021$ ) with a confidence interval of 95% (LLCI = 0.020, ULCI = 0.110). More details can be found in Table 5.

From the two mediators, job crafting had a strong effect ( $B = 0.55$ ;  $SE = 0.02$ ) on career satisfaction compared to work engagement ( $B = 0.47$ ;  $SE = 0.01$ ).

## 5. Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to examine the direct effect of perceived organizational support on career satisfaction among Chinese teachers and further ascertain the multiple mediating roles of job crafting and work engagement on the perceived organizational support-career satisfaction relationship. Regarding our first hypothesis (Hypothesis 1), which predicted that teachers' perceived organizational support plays a predicting role in their level of career satisfaction through the  $a$  path in the model (Figure 1), the findings were consistent with our first hypothesis. Similarly, our second, third, and fourth hypotheses are significant: job crafting and work engagement mediate the relationship between perceived organizational support and career satisfaction through the paths  $b$  and  $c$ , and  $d$  and  $e$ , and sequentially through path  $b, f$ , and  $e$  in our model. Our findings are also in agreement with the previous studies [8] perceiving that organizational support has a direct effect on career satisfaction through the  $a$  path.

Although the findings have demonstrated that teachers who perceive high organizational support are highly satisfied with their career (Table 3), those who further try to craft their job and fully engage with their work in their workplace are more satisfied than those who do not. For teachers involved in either of the two activities (job crafting or work engagement), their career satisfaction is different from those involved in both activities (job crafting and career satisfaction). From the research model each mediating variable has an indirect effect on career satisfaction ( $POS \rightarrow JC \rightarrow WE \rightarrow CS$ ). Perceived organizational support directly affects job crafting, job crafting has a direct effect on work engagement, and work engagement has a direct effect on career satisfaction (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Conceptual model: path diagram multiple mediation model for the effect of POS on JC, WE, and CS.

Teachers who think their school supports them engage more with job crafting, fully engage with their work, and are more satisfied with their career than those who do not or only engage with one of the three activities. In addition, the teachers' teaching experience was initially controlled when we ran the multiple linear regressions to examine the effect of teachers' perceived organization, job crafting, and work engagement on their career satisfaction. As shown in Table 2, teaching experience among Chinese teachers has shown a lower contribution to job crafting, perceived organizational support, work engagement, and career satisfaction. The inter-correlation analysis has shown the working experience among Chinese teachers being positively correlated with only work engagement.

From these findings, teachers are encouraged to craft their teaching job, either physically, cognitively, or socially, to ensure their career satisfaction. Teachers with high engagement with their job to strengthen their perceived organizational support predicts their career satisfaction. The support of school organizations by ensuring the availability of different resources and job security, reduced workload, and strengthened reward systems are some factors that show organizational support to the teachers and ensure their satisfaction. Satisfied teachers will help schools to achieve their organizational goals, and students will be taught effectively.

The findings in this study add to the existing literature on career satisfaction, but more importantly to the teaching profession, as job crafting, work engagement, and perceived organizational support research is still lacking in this field. Because most of the previous studies on job crafting and career satisfaction [22] focused more on medical workers and technology experts, this study adds to the literature that focuses on teachers.

## 6. Conclusions

In conclusion, the current study yields encouraging empirical findings that illustrate the interconnectedness of perceived organizational support and job crafting in enhancing teachers' career satisfaction and the critical mediating role of work engagement during such a critical time of COVID-19-related job crafting. Our findings contribute to the current body of knowledge by elucidating how teachers use their job resources to cope with continually shifting job demands. Our findings show that organizational support and job crafting can help teachers perform effectively in the classroom and emphasize work engagement.

### 6.1. Implication of the Study

The conclusions of this study have a significant effect on educational teacher education and policymakers and technology and career and organizational psychologists in China and other areas of the world. Policymakers in higher education should be cautious when enacting regulations that may impact successful teaching and learning at various levels. Given the current economic and political crises, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, higher education should reconsider how to establish a conducive learning environment for teachers to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently, as this will help to improve teachers' proactive behavior, work engagement, and career satisfaction. As a result, it is important to remember that a teacher dissatisfied in school will likely take their job for granted. Suppose kindergarten, primary, middle, and high school teachers' career satisfaction is not realized. In that case, there is a strong likelihood that they will not craft their professions or be engaged and devoted to generating demand-driven graduates for the labor market. Organizational support should also be provided by the school and the ministry of education. Teachers' job crafting, work engagement, and career fulfillment initiatives must be brought to teachers' doors to encourage career development and satisfaction. Teachers who are satisfied and successful in their careers are more likely to put in their best efforts to improve the educational system and benefit society.

COVID-19 has affected different sectors, and economists have referred to the coming months as "the great resignation" period. Employers are exploring the possible ways of supporting and retaining the employees who are already stretched to their limits. This study contributes to the existing discussion by suggesting the improvement of organizations and ensuring employees' satisfaction, and thus, retaining them.

### 6.2. Limitations of the Study

Our research has limitations, but it offers some relevant findings in perceived organizational support, job crafting, work engagement, and career satisfaction among Chinese teachers of various grades. Caution should be used when extrapolating the survey results to other teachers and professors at high schools and colleges/universities because the study population was unique. However, we overcame this limitation by using the 5000 re-sample bootstrapping method, which allows for relative results [58]. Moreover, this study used a



cross-sectional survey approach, making it possible to draw another study (longitudinal) study for temporal comparison. Finally, there is little doubt that people are not always the best judges of their abilities and flaws.

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**Institutional Review Board Statement:** The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Ethics Committee of the local university's College of Teacher Education (Protocol code: 20210069) approved in 2021.04.01.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study and written informed consent has been obtained from the subjects to publish this paper.

**Data Availability Statement:** Not applicable.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Appendix A

Q	Items	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Increasing structural job resources</b>						
1	I try to develop my capabilities					
2	I try to develop myself professionally					
3	I try to learn new things at work					
4	I make sure that I use my capacities to the fullest					
5	I decide on my own how I do things					
<b>Decreasing hindering job demands</b>						
6	I make sure that my work is mentally less intense					
7	I try to ensure that my work is emotionally less intense					
8	I manage my work so that I try to minimize contact with people whose problems affect me emotionally					
9	I organize my work so as to minimize contact with people whose expectations are unrealistic					
10	I try to ensure that I do not have to make many difficult decisions at work					
11	I organize my work in such a way to make sure that I do not have to concentrate for too long a period at once					
<b>Increasing social job resources</b>						
12	I ask my supervisor to coach me					
13	I ask whether my supervisor is satisfied with my work					
14	I look to my supervisor for inspiration					
15	I ask others for feedback on my job performance					
16	I ask colleagues for advice					
<b>Increasing challenging job demands</b>						
17	When an interesting project comes along, I offer myself proactively as project co-worker					
18	If there are new developments, I am one of the first to learn about them and try them out.					
19	When there is not much to do at work, I see it as a chance to start new projects.					
20	I regularly take on extra tasks even though I do not receive extra salary for them.					
21	I try to make my work more challenging by examining the underlying relationships between aspects of my job					

**Figure A1.** Job crafting items.

### Appendix B

Q	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	At my work, I feel bursting with energy					
2	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous					
3	I am enthusiastic about my job					
4	My job inspires me					
5	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work					
6	I feel happy when I am working intensely					
7	I am proud on the work that I do					
8	I am immersed in my work					
9	I get carried away when I'm working					

Figure A2. Work engagement items.

### Appendix C

Q	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	My organization cares about my opinions.					
2	My organization really cares about my well-being.					
3	My organization strongly considers my goals and value.					
4	Help is available from my organization when I have a problem.					
5	My organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part.					
6	If given the opportunity, my organization would take advantage of me.					
7	My organization shows very little concern for me.					
8	My organization is willing to help me if I need a special.					

Figure A3. Perceived organizational support items.

### Appendix D

Q	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career.					
2	I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals.					
3	I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income.					
4	I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement.					
5	I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills.					

Figure A4. Career satisfaction items.

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