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Vocational Interest Congruence and Teachers' Career Development: A Moderated Mediation Model Based on Holland's RIASEC Theory

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ABSTRACT
Grounded in Holland's RIASEC theory and person–environment fit perspectives, this study examined the association between vocational interest congruence and teachers' career development, with job satisfaction as a mediator and perceived organizational support as a moderator. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among 412 public and private secondary school teachers. Data were collected using self-report questionnaires and analyzed through structural equation modeling and PROCESS Macro Model 14, with 5,000 bootstrap resamples. Vocational interest congruence was positively associated with job satisfaction ($\beta = .56$, $p < .001$) and career development ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$). Job satisfaction was positively associated with career development ($\beta = .51$, $p < .001$) and showed a significant indirect effect linking vocational interest congruence to career development ($\beta = .29$, 95% CI [.21, .38]). Organizational support significantly moderated the association between job satisfaction and career development ($\beta = .17$, $p < .001$). The index of moderated mediation was significant (.09, 95% CI [.04, .16]), with a stronger conditional indirect effect at higher organizational support ($\beta = .38$) than at lower support ($\beta = .19$). These findings suggest that vocational alignment, job satisfaction, and institutional support are jointly associated with teachers' perceived career development. The study contributes to vocational and educational psychology by integrating individual and organizational factors within a conditional process framework. Given its cross-sectional design, the findings should be interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.

Keywords: Vocational Interest Congruence, Career Development, Job Satisfaction, Perceived Organizational Support, Teachers.

I. Introduction

Teachers' career development represents an important dimension of educational quality, professional sustainability, and institutional effectiveness. Contemporary educational systems require teachers to respond to curriculum reforms, technological developments, changing instructional practices, and increasing expectations concerning professional competence. These demands make continuous professional learning and career advancement increasingly relevant to the teaching profession. However, professional development does not occur uniformly across teachers, as opportunities for growth may differ according to individual vocational characteristics, occupational experiences, and institutional conditions. Research has demonstrated that teachers' job satisfaction is associated with school working conditions and individual

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characteristics, highlighting the importance of understanding professional experiences within their organizational contexts (Toropova et al., 2021). Nevertheless, explaining teachers' career development requires consideration of factors beyond general working conditions and occupational satisfaction, particularly the compatibility between individual vocational interests and professional responsibilities. Holland's RIASEC theory offers a theoretical foundation for understanding how vocational characteristics correspond with occupational environments. The theory identifies six vocational interest orientations Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional and emphasizes the relevance of person environment congruence to occupational adjustment. Vocational interest congruence generally refers to the compatibility between individuals' vocational preferences and the characteristics of their occupational environments. A meta-analysis by Nye et al. (2012) demonstrated that vocational interests were associated with performance and persistence in occupational and educational contexts, with congruence indices showing stronger associations with performance than vocational interest scores alone. This evidence supports the relevance of vocational alignment to occupational functioning. However, performance, persistence, and career development represent distinct outcomes. Consequently, evidence that vocational congruence is associated with occupational performance does not necessarily establish that it is similarly associated with teachers' perceived career development.

The teaching profession provides a particularly relevant context for examining vocational congruence because it combines interpersonal responsibilities, instructional competencies, emotional engagement, and continuous professional learning. Teachers who perceive their vocational interests as compatible with their professional roles may experience greater occupational meaning and more favorable evaluations of their work. Such experiences may also correspond with stronger perceptions of professional growth and career opportunities. Nevertheless, vocational alignment alone may not be sufficient to explain perceived career development. Teachers operate within institutional environments in which professional advancement depends partly on organizational policies, access to developmental resources, and recognition of professional contributions. Accordingly, an important theoretical distinction exists between perceiving compatibility with one's occupation and perceiving opportunities for advancement within that occupation. Examining these constructs together may clarify whether vocational congruence is associated with career development independently of, or in conjunction with, teachers' psychological and organizational experiences. Job satisfaction provides a plausible psychological explanation for the relationship between vocational interest congruence and career development. From a person–environment fit perspective, compatibility between individual characteristics and occupational demands is expected to correspond with more favorable work-related evaluations. Teachers who perceive alignment between their interests and professional responsibilities may report greater satisfaction because their occupational experiences are more consistent with their vocational preferences. Empirical evidence also indicates that teachers' job satisfaction is meaningfully associated with working conditions and professional experiences. Toropova et al. (2021), for example, examined the relationship between teacher job satisfaction, school working conditions, and teacher characteristics using data from Swedish mathematics teachers. Although their findings emphasize the relevance of occupational and institutional conditions, they do not directly establish whether job satisfaction accounts for the relationship between vocational interest congruence and perceived career development. This distinction suggests the importance of examining job satisfaction as a potential mediating variable rather than assuming that vocational congruence is directly associated with all dimensions of professional growth.

Nevertheless, teachers' career development cannot be understood solely through individual vocational characteristics and psychological evaluations. Organizational environments may provide different opportunities for professional learning, recognition, mentoring, and advancement. Organizational support theory offers a relevant framework for understanding these contextual differences. Perceived organizational support refers to employees' beliefs that their organizations value their contributions and care about their well-being. In a comprehensive meta-analysis, Kurtessis et al. (2017) found that perceived organizational support was associated with employees' work-related orientations, performance, and well-being. Their findings establish the broader relevance of organizational support to occupational experiences, although they

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do not specifically demonstrate its moderating role in teachers' career development. Within educational institutions, organizational support may be particularly relevant because teachers' professional growth often depends on access to institutional resources and developmental opportunities. The relationship between job satisfaction and perceived career development may therefore vary according to the level of organizational support experienced by teachers.

Teachers who report favorable occupational experiences may also perceive greater career development when their institutions provide recognition, professional learning opportunities, and supportive career structures. Conversely, positive evaluations of teaching may be less strongly associated with perceived advancement when institutional resources or opportunities are limited. This reasoning suggests that organizational support should not be considered exclusively as an independent predictor of career outcomes. It may also function as a contextual condition associated with differences in the strength of the relationship between job satisfaction and career development. Such a proposition requires direct examination of an interaction effect rather than relying solely on evidence of separate associations among organizational support, satisfaction, and professional outcomes. Taken together, these theoretical perspectives reveal an important gap in understanding teachers' perceived career development. Research on vocational interests has established the relevance of person–environment congruence to occupational performance and persistence (Nye et al., 2012), while research on teachers has demonstrated associations between job satisfaction and school working conditions (Toropova et al., 2021). Organizational support research has further documented the relevance of institutional support to employee attitudes and occupational outcomes (Kurtessis et al., 2017). However, these bodies of evidence address different aspects of occupational functioning and do not directly establish how vocational interest congruence, job satisfaction, and perceived organizational support are jointly associated with teachers' career development. Specifically, the extent to which job satisfaction statistically accounts for the association between vocational congruence and career development, and whether this indirect association differs across levels of organizational support, remains an empirical question addressed by the present study.

The proposed research contributes to the literature by integrating vocational congruence, psychological work evaluations, and organizational support within a theoretically specified conditional process framework. Rather than treating vocational alignment as sufficient to explain professional advancement, the model considers job satisfaction as a potential mediating variable and organizational support as a moderator of the job satisfaction–career development relationship. This second-stage moderated mediation structure enables examination of whether the indirect association between vocational interest congruence and career development varies according to organizational support conditions. The analytical framework is consistent with conditional process analysis, which provides procedures for estimating indirect associations and evaluating their variation across moderator levels (Hayes, 2022). Importantly, because the present study employs a cross-sectional design, the proposed mediation and moderation relationships are interpreted as statistical associations consistent with theoretical expectations rather than evidence of causal or temporal processes. Accordingly, the present study aims to examine the association between vocational interest congruence and teachers' perceived career development, investigate the mediating role of job satisfaction, and determine whether perceived organizational support moderates the association between job satisfaction and career development. The central research question is whether the indirect association between vocational interest congruence and teachers' perceived career development through job satisfaction differs according to perceived organizational support. By integrating Holland's RIASEC framework, person–environment fit perspectives, and organizational support theory, the study seeks to advance understanding of the individual and contextual factors associated with teachers' professional growth. The findings may provide a conceptual foundation for future research and inform educational institutions seeking to align teachers' vocational characteristics with supportive professional development environments.

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II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Vocational Interest Congruence and Teachers' Career Development

Holland's RIASEC theory provides a conceptual foundation for understanding the correspondence between individuals' vocational interests and occupational environments. The theory identifies six vocational orientations: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Its central proposition emphasizes the relevance of compatibility between personal vocational characteristics and occupational environments to occupational adjustment and related work outcomes. Within this framework, vocational interest congruence refers to the degree of correspondence between individuals' vocational preferences and the characteristics of their occupational roles. Vocational congruence is conceptually related to person–environment fit, which emphasizes compatibility between individual attributes and environmental characteristics. However, these perspectives should not be treated as entirely interchangeable. Holland's framework specifically emphasizes vocational interest patterns and occupational environments, whereas broader person–environment fit perspectives incorporate additional forms of compatibility, including personal values, organizational characteristics, and work-related needs. This distinction is important because the operationalization of vocational congruence determines the extent to which findings can be interpreted within Holland's theoretical framework.

Empirical evidence supports the relevance of vocational interests to occupational outcomes. Nye et al. (2012), in a quantitative synthesis of research on vocational interests and performance, identified meaningful relationships between vocational interests, occupational performance, and persistence. Their findings suggest that vocational characteristics have implications for occupational functioning. Nevertheless, performance and persistence differ conceptually from career development. Occupational performance concerns the fulfillment of work responsibilities, whereas career development encompasses professional growth, competency improvement, and perceived opportunities for advancement. Consequently, evidence concerning vocational interests and occupational performance cannot automatically be generalized to teachers' career development. The teaching profession provides a relevant setting for examining this relationship because teachers undertake responsibilities that require interpersonal engagement, instructional adaptability, and continuous professional learning. Teachers who perceive compatibility between their vocational interests and professional roles may also perceive stronger opportunities for professional growth. Vocational alignment may correspond with a greater willingness to participate in professional development activities and pursue career-related opportunities. However, teachers' professional advancement also depends on institutional policies, career structures, and access to organizational resources. Therefore, vocational congruence may be positively associated with career development without being sufficient to explain all variation in professional outcomes. Based on Holland's theoretical propositions and the broader person environment fit perspective, vocational interest congruence is expected to demonstrate a positive association with teachers' perceived career development.

H1: Vocational interest congruence is positively associated with teachers' perceived career development.

2.2. Job Satisfaction as a Mediating Variable

Job satisfaction represents an individual's evaluative response to work and its associated experiences. It encompasses perceptions of occupational responsibilities, working conditions, interpersonal relationships, recognition, and professional opportunities. From a person–environment fit perspective, compatibility between personal characteristics and occupational environments may correspond with more favorable evaluations of work. Teachers who perceive their vocational interests as consistent with their professional responsibilities may therefore report greater satisfaction with their occupations. Research on teachers'

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occupational experiences supports the relevance of job satisfaction to educational working conditions. Toropova et al. (2021) examined teacher job satisfaction in relation to school working conditions and individual characteristics, demonstrating the importance of considering both occupational and institutional factors. Their study contributes to understanding teachers' work evaluations, although it does not directly examine vocational congruence as an antecedent of career development through job satisfaction.

This distinction is theoretically important. Job satisfaction represents an evaluation of present occupational experiences, whereas career development concerns perceived professional growth and advancement. Although these constructs may be positively associated, they are not equivalent. A teacher may experience satisfaction with instructional responsibilities while perceiving limited opportunities for career advancement. Conversely, a teacher may recognize professional growth opportunities while experiencing dissatisfaction with certain working conditions. Consequently, the relationship between job satisfaction and career development requires empirical examination rather than being assumed from their conceptual proximity. Job satisfaction may represent a psychological mechanism linking vocational interest congruence with career development. When teachers perceive greater compatibility between their interests and occupational roles, they may also evaluate their work more favorably. Such evaluations may be associated with stronger perceptions of professional progress and developmental opportunities. This reasoning supports a theoretically specified indirect pathway in which vocational congruence is associated with career development through job satisfaction. Nevertheless, mediation estimated using cross-sectional observations cannot establish that vocational congruence temporally precedes job satisfaction or that job satisfaction subsequently produces career development. The proposed mediation should therefore be understood as a statistical indirect association consistent with the theoretical model.

H2: Job satisfaction mediates the positive association between vocational interest congruence and teachers' perceived career development.

2.3. Perceived Organizational Support as a Moderating Variable

Perceived organizational support refers to employees' beliefs that their organizations value their contributions and care about their well-being. Organizational support theory emphasizes the role of institutional recognition, favorable treatment, and organizational concern in shaping employees' occupational experiences. Kurtessis et al. (2017), through a meta-analytic evaluation of organizational support theory, demonstrated the relevance of perceived organizational support to employee attitudes, performance, and well-being. Within educational institutions, organizational support may be expressed through administrative recognition, mentoring, professional development opportunities, access to learning resources, and transparent career advancement procedures. These organizational conditions are particularly relevant to teachers because professional development is shaped not only by individual motivation but also by institutional opportunities and support systems. Although organizational support is associated with favorable occupational outcomes, its role as a moderator requires a more specific theoretical explanation. A direct association between organizational support and career development would indicate that teachers perceiving greater support also tend to report more favorable career outcomes. Moderation, by contrast, concerns whether the association between job satisfaction and career development differs according to organizational support levels. Teachers who report high job satisfaction may perceive stronger career development when their institutions provide opportunities for professional learning, recognition, and advancement. Under such conditions, positive occupational evaluations may correspond more closely with perceived professional growth. Conversely, teachers who experience limited institutional support may perceive fewer developmental opportunities, even when they are satisfied with their professional roles. This argument suggests that organizational support represents a contextual boundary condition for the association between job satisfaction and career development. The theoretical expectation is not merely that organizational support

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independently relates to career development, but that the strength of the job satisfaction–career development association differs according to the support teachers perceive.

H3: Perceived organizational support positively moderates the association between job satisfaction and teachers' perceived career development, such that the association is stronger at higher levels of organizational support.

2.4. The Moderated Mediation Model

The proposed moderated mediation model integrates vocational interest congruence, job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, and career development within a unified theoretical framework. Holland's RIASEC theory provides the vocational foundation, person–environment fit perspectives explain the relevance of occupational compatibility to work evaluations, and organizational support theory identifies the contextual significance of institutional resources. The model proposes two interconnected relationships. First, vocational interest congruence is expected to be indirectly associated with career development through job satisfaction. Second, perceived organizational support is expected to moderate the association between job satisfaction and career development. Together, these propositions imply that the indirect association between vocational congruence and career development may differ across organizational support levels. This framework corresponds to second-stage moderated mediation, as represented by PROCESS Macro Model 14 (Hayes, 2022). In this model, the moderator operates on the relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable. Consequently, the conditional indirect association is determined by the relationship between vocational congruence and job satisfaction together with the organizational support-dependent association between job satisfaction and career development. The proposed framework differs from a conventional mediation model by explicitly examining contextual variation in the indirect pathway. It also differs from a simple moderation model because the central theoretical proposition concerns the conditional indirect association rather than an interaction effect alone. The conceptual contribution of this model is its integration of individual vocational alignment, psychological work evaluations, and organizational conditions. Instead of assuming that vocational congruence independently explains professional growth, the framework examines whether the association is statistically accounted for by job satisfaction and whether that indirect association varies according to perceived organizational support. Although the proposed framework specifies directional hypotheses based on theory, its empirical evaluation using cross-sectional data cannot establish temporal ordering or causal mediation. The estimated indirect and interaction effects should therefore be interpreted as conditional statistical associations.

H4: The indirect association between vocational interest congruence and teachers' perceived career development through job satisfaction is stronger at higher levels of perceived organizational support.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework comprises four constructs: vocational interest congruence as the independent variable, job satisfaction as the mediating variable, perceived organizational support as the moderating variable, and perceived career development as the dependent variable. The framework specifies a direct association between vocational interest congruence and career development, an indirect association through job satisfaction, and an interaction between job satisfaction and perceived organizational support in relation to career development.

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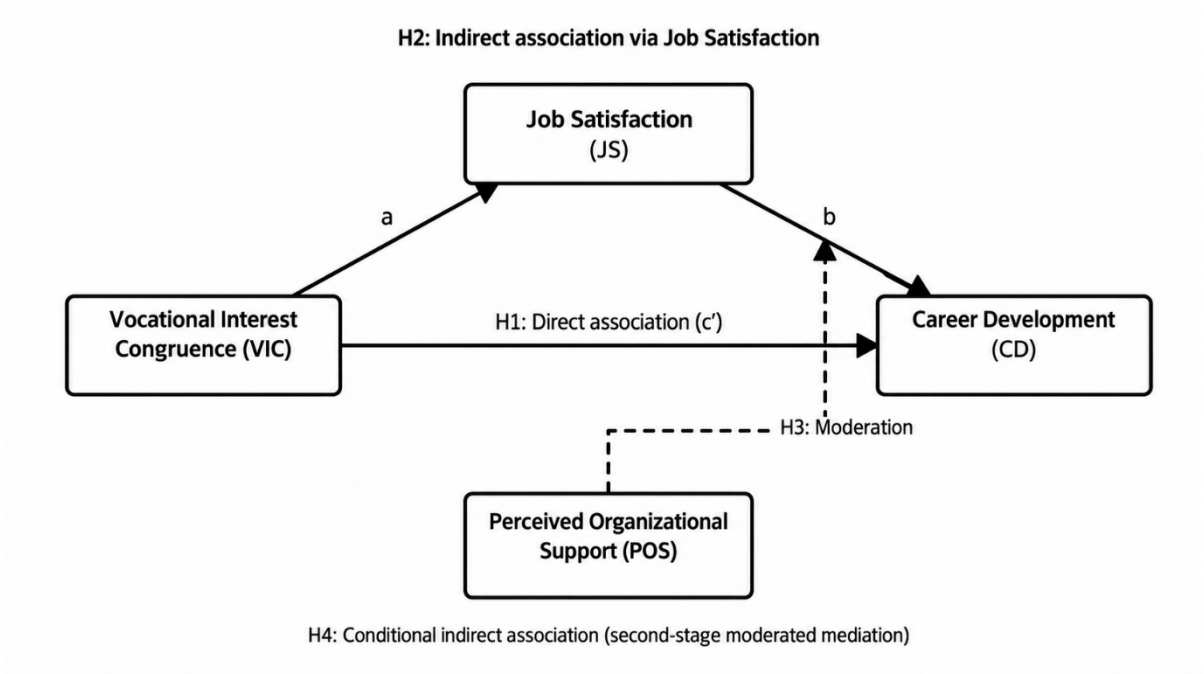


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

H1 represents the direct relationship between vocational interest congruence and career development, whereas H2 indicates the indirect relationship through job satisfaction. H3 examines the moderating role of perceived organizational support in the relationship between job satisfaction and career development, while H4 represents the conditional indirect relationship. The proposed framework reflects a second-stage moderated mediation model. Overall, the theoretical framework conceptualizes teachers' perceived career development as an outcome associated with both individual vocational characteristics and organizational conditions. By incorporating job satisfaction as a mediating mechanism and perceived organizational support as a moderating condition, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the conditional relationships between vocational interest congruence and professional development in educational settings.

III. Research Method

3.1. Research Design and Analytical Framework

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among vocational interest congruence, job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, and teachers' perceived career development. The research framework integrated Holland's RIASEC theory, person–environment fit perspectives, and organizational support theory to investigate how perceived vocational alignment was associated with career development through job satisfaction and how this indirect association varied across levels of organizational support. The study specified vocational interest congruence as the independent variable (X), job satisfaction as the mediator (M), perceived organizational support as the moderator (W), and perceived career development as the dependent variable (Y). The proposed framework corresponded to a second-stage moderated mediation model, in which organizational support moderated the association between job satisfaction and career development. This specification was consistent with PROCESS Model 14 (Hayes, 2022). The cross-sectional design enabled the simultaneous examination of psychological and organizational constructs in naturally occurring educational settings without experimental

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manipulation. Because all variables were assessed at a single time point, the estimated relationships were interpreted as statistical associations rather than evidence of causal mechanisms or temporal sequences. The mediation terminology reflected the theoretical specification of the model and did not imply that the temporal ordering of variables had been empirically established.

3.2. Participants and Sampling

The study involved 412 teachers employed in public and private secondary schools. Participants were eligible if they were full-time teachers with at least one year of teaching experience. These eligibility criteria were intended to ensure that respondents had sufficient occupational exposure to evaluate their vocational alignment, job satisfaction, organizational support, and perceived career development. The original study description identified proportional stratified random sampling as the sampling strategy, with school type, teaching tenure, and educational background considered relevant characteristics. Under a proportional stratified sampling approach, the population is divided into predefined, mutually exclusive strata, and respondents are randomly selected from each stratum in proportion to its population size. However, the sampling frame, stratum population counts, and individual random-selection procedures were not specified in the available study description. Consequently, the sampling classification should be confirmed against the original recruitment documentation before the manuscript is finalized. The final analytical sample comprised 412 teachers. Participants ranged in age from 24 to 58 years (M = 39.47, SD = 8.62), with teaching experience ranging from 2 to 31 years. Female respondents represented 61.4% of the sample, whereas male respondents accounted for 38.6%. The sample size was evaluated in relation to the proposed measurement and structural models rather than through reliance on a universal minimum sample-size rule. In structural equation modeling, sample adequacy depends on model complexity, the number of estimated parameters, measurement characteristics, and estimation procedures (Kline, 2023). Although a sample of 412 provides a substantial number of observations, its adequacy for the reported CFA model and conditional process analysis must ultimately be assessed using the actual model specification and statistical diagnostics.

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using structured self-report questionnaires administered to teachers from participating public and private secondary schools. The original methodological description indicated that questionnaires were distributed through online and paper-based formats according to school accessibility and participant preference. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents received information about the study objectives, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the intended use of the research data. Informed consent was obtained before questionnaire administration. The original study description also reported that institutional permission was obtained from participating schools. The questionnaire consisted of demographic questions and four substantive measures assessing vocational interest congruence, job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, and career development. The individual teacher served as the unit of analysis. The use of self-report measures was appropriate for assessing subjective experiences, including perceived vocational alignment, occupational satisfaction, organizational support, and perceived career development. Nevertheless, reliance on a single respondent source introduced the possibility of shared measurement variance and response-related biases. The final methodological record should specify the actual data collection period, geographical setting, participating schools, recruitment procedures, questionnaire distribution and return counts, and response screening criteria. These details are necessary for assessing selection bias, data quality, and study reproducibility.

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3.4. Measurement Instruments

Four adapted self-report instruments were used to operationalize the study constructs. According to the original manuscript, all instruments employed five-point Likert-type response categories ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicated higher levels of the respective constructs after application of the appropriate scoring procedures. The internal consistency coefficients reported for the four instruments ranged from .90 to .93. Although these coefficients indicate high internal consistency, reliability alone does not establish content validity, dimensionality, or equivalence between an adapted instrument and its original version. Accordingly, interpretation of the measures should consider both their theoretical definitions and their actual operationalization.

3.4.1. Vocational Interest Congruence

Vocational interest congruence was measured using an 18-item adapted scale informed by Holland's RIASEC framework. The instrument assessed teachers' perceived compatibility between personal vocational interests, occupational preferences, and professional teaching responsibilities. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale, with higher scores reflecting stronger perceived vocational alignment. The scale demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$). A distinction was maintained between perceived vocational alignment and profile-based RIASEC congruence. Conventional RIASEC congruence assessment involves comparing an individual's vocational interest profile with a corresponding occupational environment profile. In contrast, the instrument described in this study primarily assessed teachers' self-reported perceptions of compatibility with their occupational roles. Therefore, the measured construct was interpreted as perceived vocational interest congruence. This interpretation preserves the relevance of Holland's theoretical framework while avoiding an unsupported claim that a formal RIASEC profile-matching index was calculated. The instrument's original source, adaptation procedures, and dimensional structure should be reported from the actual measurement documentation.

3.4.2. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was assessed using a 20-item adaptation of the Job Satisfaction Survey developed by Spector (1985). The measure evaluated teachers' subjective satisfaction with their occupational experiences, including professional responsibilities, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relationships, and opportunities for professional growth. Participants responded using a five-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicated greater job satisfaction. The adapted measure demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$). The original Job Satisfaction Survey consists of 36 items and uses a different response format. Consequently, the 20-item, five-point version employed in the present study was treated as an adapted measure rather than the original instrument in its complete form. Its adaptation and scoring procedures should be documented to clarify how the retained items represent the intended construct.

3.4.3. Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support was measured using a 16-item adaptation of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986). The instrument assessed teachers' beliefs regarding institutional appreciation, recognition of professional contributions, and organizational concern for employee well-being. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicated greater perceived organizational support. The instrument demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$). The construct was interpreted in accordance with organizational support theory, which emphasizes employees' general beliefs regarding organizational valuation and concern (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

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The adapted instrument's item selection, response format, and scoring procedures should be reported consistently with the original questionnaire records.

3.4.4. Perceived Career Development

Perceived career development was assessed using a 15-item adapted measure addressing professional advancement, competency development, perceived career progress, and opportunities for continued occupational growth. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating more favorable perceptions of career development. The measure demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's α = .90). The construct was operationalized as perceived rather than objectively documented career development. Therefore, the results concerned teachers' evaluations of their professional growth and advancement opportunities, not independently verified promotions, salary progression, or formal career transitions. The original source of the 15-item measure, its conceptual dimensions, and the adaptation procedures should be identified from the instrument documentation before submission.

3.5. Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis in AMOS 24. CFA was employed to examine whether the observed indicators adequately represented their theoretically specified latent constructs. The original manuscript reported the following overall measurement model fit indices: χ^2 (344) = 721.48, CFI = .94, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .052, and SRMR = .047. These indices suggested an acceptable level of model fit under commonly applied evaluation conventions. However, model fit indices were considered collectively rather than interpreted as definitive evidence of construct validity. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The original manuscript also reported composite reliability values ranging from .90 to .94 and average variance extracted values ranging from .56 to .69. These results were consistent with satisfactory reliability and convergent validity under commonly used criteria. Nevertheless, the reported CFA degrees of freedom require reconciliation with the measurement model specification. The four instruments comprised 69 questionnaire items in total. Therefore, the final methodological report should clarify whether the CFA was estimated using individual items, selected indicators, item parcels, or another measurement specification. If item parceling or indicator reduction was applied, its rationale and procedures should be reported. The measurement model should also be evaluated for construct distinctiveness. Evidence concerning discriminant validity should be reported from the actual statistical outputs rather than inferred from internal consistency coefficients or overall model fit alone.

3.6. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Structural equation modeling was used to estimate the hypothesized relationships among vocational interest congruence, job satisfaction, and perceived career development. This stage provided estimates of the direct and indirect associations specified in the theoretical model. The original manuscript reported standardized path coefficients for the principal structural relationships. These coefficients were interpreted as standardized SEM estimates and distinguished from the regression coefficients obtained through PROCESS analysis. To evaluate the conditional process model, PROCESS Macro version 4.2 was employed using Model 14 (Hayes, 2022). This procedure was used to estimate the indirect association between vocational interest congruence and career development through job satisfaction and determine whether the job satisfaction–career development association differed according to perceived organizational support. The statistical specification comprised two regression equations:

- Mediator equation:

$$JS = i_1 + a(VIC) + e_1$$

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- Outcome equation:

$$CD = i_2 + c'(VIC) + b_1(JS) + b_2(POS) + b_3(JS \times POS) + e_2$$

In these equations, VIC denotes vocational interest congruence, JS denotes job satisfaction, POS denotes perceived organizational support, and CD denotes perceived career development. The coefficient a represents the association between vocational congruence and job satisfaction, while b_3 represents the interaction between job satisfaction and perceived organizational support in predicting career development. The conditional indirect association was specified as:

$$\text{Conditional indirect effect} = a(b_1 + b_3 POS)$$

The index of moderated mediation was defined as:

$$\text{Index of moderated mediation} = ab_3$$

The indirect effects and moderated mediation index were evaluated using 5,000 bootstrap resamples and 95% bootstrap confidence intervals. An estimated effect was considered statistically distinguishable from zero when its confidence interval did not contain zero. The interaction effect was interpreted by examining the association between job satisfaction and career development at different levels of perceived organizational support. The conditional indirect effects were then evaluated to determine whether the association between vocational congruence and career development through job satisfaction varied across moderator levels. This analytical approach distinguished three related but different quantities: the direct association between vocational congruence and career development, the indirect association through job satisfaction, and the variation in that indirect association across levels of organizational support. Because AMOS and PROCESS employ different estimation frameworks and may produce coefficients on different scales, their outputs were not treated as numerically interchangeable. The final results should explicitly identify standardized and unstandardized estimates, corresponding standard errors, confidence intervals, and the statistical procedure from which each estimate was obtained.

3.7. Statistical Assumptions and Common Method Bias

Preliminary analyses were reported to include descriptive statistics, distributional assessment, reliability evaluation, and examination of correlations among study variables. Skewness and kurtosis were considered in evaluating distributional characteristics, while multicollinearity assessment was relevant to the regression models used in conditional process analysis. The study relied on self-report measures administered within a single survey, introducing the possibility of common method bias. The original manuscript reported the use of Harman's single-factor test as an initial diagnostic procedure.However, Harman's single-factor test has limited sensitivity and cannot independently establish that common method bias is absent. Consequently, the use of this procedure was interpreted as a preliminary assessment rather than conclusive evidence against common method variance. Potential common method effects remained a methodological limitation because the predictor, mediator, moderator, and outcome were measured using the same respondent source at one time point. Future research could address this limitation through longitudinal designs, multiple information sources, or alternative measurement procedures.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

The original study description indicated that institutional permission was obtained from participating schools and that informed consent was obtained from respondents before questionnaire completion. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the study objectives, confidentiality, and intended use of their responses. The research procedures were described as protecting participant privacy

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during data collection and analysis. The available documentation did not establish whether formal ethics committee approval had been obtained. Accordingly, no ethics committee name, approval number, or approval date was asserted without supporting documentation. If a formal ethics approval was issued, the corresponding information should be incorporated into the final manuscript. The study's ethical reporting should accurately distinguish institutional research permission, participant informed consent, and independent research ethics approval, as these represent different procedural requirements.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Analysis Result

4.1.1. Preliminary Analysis

Preliminary analyses were conducted to examine the distributional characteristics of the data, internal consistency of the measurement instruments, multicollinearity, and potential common method variance. The reported skewness values ranged from –0.71 to 0.54, while kurtosis values ranged from –0.83 to 0.69, suggesting no substantial departures from univariate normality. These results, however, do not independently establish multivariate normality. Variance inflation factor (VIF) values ranged from 1.42 to 2.31, indicating no substantial multicollinearity concerns according to commonly applied diagnostic criteria. Internal consistency estimates were satisfactory across the four constructs. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .91 for vocational interest congruence, .93 for job satisfaction, .92 for perceived organizational support, and .90 for perceived career development. These coefficients indicated high internal consistency, although reliability alone was not considered sufficient evidence of construct validity. Given that all principal variables were measured using self-report questionnaires, potential common method variance was examined using Harman's single-factor test. The first extracted factor accounted for 32.84% of the total variance. Although this result did not indicate dominance by a single factor, Harman's test has limited diagnostic sensitivity and cannot establish the absence of common method bias. Accordingly, common method variance remained a consideration when interpreting the findings.

4.1.2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics, internal consistency coefficients, and Pearson correlation coefficients for the four variables examined in this study.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics, Reliability, and Correlations Among the Study Variables (N = 412)

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4
Vocational Interest Congruence	3.87	0.61	(.91)			
Job Satisfaction	3.79	0.66	.58**	(.93)		
Perceived Organizational Support	3.71	0.69	.49**	.63**	(.92)	
Perceived Career Development	3.74	0.64	.52**	.67**	.59**	(.90)

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. Cronbach's alpha coefficients are reported in parentheses along the diagonal. $p < .01$.

Vocational interest congruence was positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction ($r = .58$, $p < .01$), perceived organizational support ($r = .49$, $p < .01$), and perceived career development ($r = .52$, $p < .01$). Job satisfaction also demonstrated a positive correlation with perceived career development ($r = .67$, $p < .01$). Similarly, perceived organizational support was positively associated with job satisfaction ($r = .63$, $p < .01$) and perceived career development ($r = .59$, $p < .01$). All correlations were positive and statistically significant, with the strongest bivariate relationship observed between job satisfaction and perceived career development. These findings provide preliminary evidence of meaningful associations among the study

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constructs. However, the correlational results do not establish the directionality or causal nature of these relationships.

4.1.3. Measurement Model Evaluation

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the measurement structure of vocational interest congruence, job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, and perceived career development. The hypothesized four-factor model produced the following goodness-of-fit indices: χ^2 (344) = 721.48, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 2.10$; CFI = .94; TLI = .93; RMSEA = .052; and SRMR = .047. Taken together, these indices indicated an acceptable fit between the proposed measurement model and the observed data. The standardized factor loadings ranged from .63 to .88. Composite reliability (CR) values ranged from .90 to .94, while average variance extracted (AVE) values ranged from .56 to .69. These results indicated satisfactory levels of internal consistency and convergent validity. Furthermore, the original analysis indicated that the square roots of the AVE values exceeded the corresponding interconstruct correlations, providing additional evidence consistent with discriminant validity. To further assess the adequacy of the proposed measurement structure, the four-factor model was compared with alternative three-factor, two-factor, and single-factor models. The comparative results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Measurement Models

Measurement Model	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Four-factor model	721.48	344	.94	.93	.052
Three-factor model	1,184.72	347	.85	.83	.077
Two-factor model	1,639.25	349	.76	.73	.095
Single-factor model	2,418.83	350	.61	.57	.124

Note. CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; df = degrees of freedom.

The four-factor model demonstrated more favorable goodness-of-fit indices than the alternative specifications, supporting the proposed conceptual distinction among the four constructs. However, the degrees of freedom and indicator structure should be verified against the original AMOS specification, particularly because the measurement instruments reportedly comprised 69 items in total. Consequently, the measurement model results should be interpreted with caution until the indicator configuration and alternative-model specifications have been independently confirmed.

4.1.4. Direct and Indirect Associations

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to examine the principal relationships among vocational interest congruence, job satisfaction, and perceived career development. The results revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between vocational interest congruence and job satisfaction ($\beta = .56$, SE = .05, $p < .001$). Vocational interest congruence was also positively associated with perceived career development ($\beta = .24$, SE = .06, $p < .001$). In addition, job satisfaction demonstrated a positive and significant relationship with perceived career development ($\beta = .51$, SE = .05, $p < .001$). These findings are consistent with the theoretical proposition that alignment between individuals' vocational interests and their work environments is associated with more favorable occupational evaluations and perceptions of professional growth. The results further indicate that job satisfaction represents an important factor associated with teachers' perceived career development. The indirect relationship between vocational interest congruence and perceived career development through job satisfaction was also statistically significant ($\beta = .29$, SE = .04, 95% CI [.21, .38]). Because the confidence interval did not include zero, the findings provided statistical support for the proposed mediating role of job satisfaction. Furthermore, the direct relationship between

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vocational interest congruence and perceived career development remained significant after job satisfaction was incorporated into the model. This finding is consistent with partial statistical mediation, indicating that the relationship between vocational interest congruence and career development may operate both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction. Nevertheless, the cross-sectional research design does not permit conclusions regarding the temporal ordering or causal mechanisms underlying these relationships.

Table 3. Direct and Indirect Relationships Among the Study Variables

Path	Reported β	SE	95% CI
VIC → JS	.56	.05	[.46, .65]
JS → CD	.51	.05	[.41, .61]
VIC → CD	.24	.06	[.12, .36]
VIC → JS → CD	.29	.04	[.21, .38]

Note. VIC = vocational interest congruence; JS = job satisfaction; CD = perceived career development. The coefficients and confidence intervals reproduce the estimates reported in the original manuscript. Their measurement scales and correspondence with the AMOS and PROCESS outputs require verification.

The positive direct relationship between vocational interest congruence and perceived career development provides support for H1. Similarly, the significant indirect relationship through job satisfaction supports H2. These findings suggest that teachers whose vocational interests are more closely aligned with their professional roles tend to report greater job satisfaction and more favorable perceptions of their career development.

4.1.5. Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support

The moderating role of perceived organizational support was examined using PROCESS Macro Model 14. The results indicated a positive and statistically significant interaction between job satisfaction and perceived organizational support in predicting perceived career development ($\beta = .17$, SE = .04, $p < .001$). This finding suggests that the relationship between job satisfaction and perceived career development varies depending on the level of organizational support perceived by teachers. The simple slope analysis further demonstrated that the positive relationship between job satisfaction and career development was stronger at higher levels of perceived organizational support (+1 SD; $\beta = .68$, $p < .001$) than at lower levels of perceived organizational support (–1 SD; $\beta = .39$, $p < .001$). Both conditional relationships were positive and statistically significant, indicating that job satisfaction was positively associated with perceived career development regardless of the level of organizational support. However, the stronger coefficient at higher levels of support suggests that a supportive organizational environment may reinforce the relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and their perceptions of career development. These findings provide statistical support for H3 and highlight the potential importance of organizational conditions in strengthening the relationship between employees' job satisfaction and perceived professional development. Nevertheless, the simple slope estimates should be interpreted according to the coefficient scale used in the original regression analysis. Before publication, the coefficient labels and moderator values in the PROCESS output should be verified to ensure that standardized and unstandardized estimates have not been inadvertently combined.

4.1.6. Moderated Mediation Analysis

The conditional indirect relationship between vocational interest congruence and perceived career development through job satisfaction was examined at different levels of perceived organizational support. The results showed that the index of moderated mediation was positive and statistically significant (index = .09, SE = .03, 95% CI [.04, .16]). Because the confidence interval excluded zero, the findings indicate that the indirect relationship between vocational interest congruence and perceived career development through job satisfaction varied significantly according to the level of perceived organizational support. The conditional

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indirect effects further revealed that the indirect relationship was stronger at higher levels of perceived organizational support (β = .38, 95% CI [.28, .49]) than at lower levels of organizational support (β = .19, 95% CI [.11, .29]). This pattern suggests that the positive indirect relationship between vocational interest congruence and career development through job satisfaction becomes more pronounced when teachers perceive greater organizational support.

Table 4. Moderation and Conditional Indirect Effects

Effect	Estimate	SE	95% CI
JS × POS → CD	.17	.04	—
JS → CD at low POS (−1 SD)	.39	—	—
JS → CD at high POS (+1 SD)	.68	—	—
Indirect effect at low POS	.19	—	[.11, .29]
Indirect effect at high POS	.38	—	[.28, .49]
Index of moderated mediation	.09	.03	[.04, .16]

Note. JS = job satisfaction; POS = perceived organizational support; CD = perceived career development. Dashes indicate statistics that were not reported in the original manuscript. The coefficient scales should be verified against the original PROCESS output.

The findings demonstrate that the indirect relationship between vocational interest congruence and perceived career development through job satisfaction is stronger under higher levels of perceived organizational support. The confidence interval for the index of moderated mediation further confirms that this variation is statistically distinguishable from zero. Accordingly, the results provide support for H4. Taken together, the findings provide statistical support for the four proposed hypotheses. Vocational interest congruence is positively associated with teachers' perceived career development, both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction. Moreover, the strength of the indirect relationship varies according to perceived organizational support, indicating that organizational context is relevant to understanding the relationship between vocational alignment and career development. However, these findings should be interpreted as conditional statistical associations rather than evidence that vocational interest congruence or organizational support causes changes in job satisfaction or career development.

4.2. Discussion

The discussion section interprets the principal findings in relation to the theoretical framework and previous empirical studies. Rather than merely restating the statistical results, this section examines their theoretical significance, considers their implications for educational institutions, and identifies how they contribute to the existing literature. A comprehensive discussion also requires comparing the findings with relevant previous research to identify areas of consistency, divergence, and potential theoretical advancement (Ghasemi et al., 2019). Furthermore, the implications of the findings should be considered in terms of their potential contributions to research and educational practice. The discussion should also acknowledge methodological limitations and identify unresolved issues that warrant further investigation. Addressing these aspects enables the study to establish its contribution to the field while providing directions for subsequent research (Busse & August, 2020; Şanlı et al., 2014; Ghasemi et al., 2019).

V. Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between vocational interest congruence and teachers' perceived career development by examining the mediating role of job satisfaction and the moderating role of perceived organizational support. Drawing on Holland's RIASEC theory, the person–environment fit perspective, and organizational support theory, the study tested a second-stage moderated mediation model involving 412 secondary school teachers. The findings provided statistical support for all four proposed hypotheses. Vocational interest congruence was positively associated with perceived career development,

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both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction. Furthermore, perceived organizational support strengthened the positive relationship between job satisfaction and career development, resulting in a stronger conditional indirect relationship at higher levels of organizational support. These findings underscore the importance of considering vocational alignment, psychological work experiences, and organizational conditions collectively when examining teachers' perceived professional development. Teachers who perceive greater compatibility between their vocational interests and occupational responsibilities tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction and more favorable perceptions of career growth. However, the strength of these relationships varies across organizational contexts, suggesting that institutional support represents an important contextual factor in understanding teachers' career development. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to vocational and educational psychology by integrating Holland's RIASEC theory, person–environment fit perspectives, and organizational support theory into a unified conditional process framework.

The findings extend the application of vocational congruence beyond conventional occupational adjustment outcomes by demonstrating its positive association with teachers' perceived career development. They also highlight job satisfaction as an important mediating mechanism linking vocational alignment with career development, while the persistence of the direct relationship indicates that additional psychological and organizational factors may contribute to this association. Moreover, the moderating role of perceived organizational support demonstrates that the relationship between job satisfaction and career development differs according to the organizational context in which teachers work. Nevertheless, vocational congruence in this study was operationalized through teachers' perceived compatibility with their occupational roles rather than through a formal comparison of individual vocational interests and occupational RIASEC profiles. Therefore, the theoretical contribution should be understood within the context of a RIASEC-informed measure of perceived vocational congruence. Further research using independently assessed vocational interest and occupational environment profiles is necessary to determine whether similar conditional relationships emerge when formal RIASEC congruence indices are employed. From a practical perspective, the findings offer several considerations for school administrators, educational institutions, and policymakers responsible for teacher development. Educational institutions should consider teachers' vocational interests and professional aspirations when designing development programs, assigning responsibilities, and establishing career planning initiatives. Providing opportunities for instructional specialization, continuous professional learning, and the pursuit of relevant career objectives may help strengthen teachers' perceived alignment with their occupational roles. In addition, maintaining teachers' job satisfaction should be an integral component of institutional professional development strategies. Supportive supervision, constructive feedback, recognition of professional contributions, and equitable access to professional learning opportunities may contribute to more favorable working experiences and career development perceptions.

The moderating role of perceived organizational support further emphasizes the importance of establishing institutional environments that facilitate professional growth. Schools may strengthen mentoring programs, implement transparent promotion procedures, ensure fair access to training, and communicate career advancement opportunities more effectively. Such initiatives may help create organizational conditions in which teachers' positive work experiences are accompanied by more favorable perceptions of professional development. However, these practical recommendations should be interpreted as implications derived from observed statistical associations rather than as interventions whose effectiveness has been empirically established by this study. Decisions concerning teacher recruitment, placement, promotion, and professional development should also account for teaching competence, professional qualifications, individual performance, institutional requirements, and principles of fairness. Finally, the findings should be interpreted in light of the study's methodological limitations, particularly its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data. Although the proposed framework specifies theoretically directional relationships, the findings do not establish causal effects or temporal sequences among the examined variables. Future research should therefore employ longitudinal designs and multiple data sources,

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incorporate formal assessments of individual vocational interests and occupational environments based on Holland's RIASEC framework, and examine objective indicators of professional advancement. Such approaches would provide a stronger basis for evaluating the proposed relationships and extending the understanding of how vocational alignment, job satisfaction, and organizational support relate to teachers' career development.

AI Disclosure

The authors used OpenAI's ChatGPT to assist with manuscript preparation, including the organization of academic arguments, drafting and restructuring sections, language refinement, and improvement of clarity and consistency. The AI tool was not used as a substitute for original data collection, statistical analysis, or independent scholarly judgment. The authors are responsible for critically reviewing, verifying, and revising all AI-assisted content, including theoretical interpretations, methodological descriptions, statistical reporting, citations, and conclusions, before submission. AI tools are not listed as authors. The authors retain full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and validity of the final manuscript.

Authorship Contribution

Conceptualization: Shirley Melita Sembiring Meliala and Cut Sarah; Methodology: Shirley Melita Sembiring Meliala, Cut Sarah, and Doli Maulana Gama Samudera Lubis; Investigation and Data Collection: Shirley Melita Sembiring Meliala; Formal Analysis: Shirley Melita Sembiring Meliala and Doli Maulana Gama Samudera Lubis; Validation: Cut Sarah and Doli Maulana Gama Samudera Lubis; Writing – Original Draft Preparation: Shirley Melita Sembiring Meliala; Writing – Review and Editing: Shirley Melita Sembiring Meliala, Cut Sarah, and Doli Maulana Gama Samudera Lubis; Supervision: Cut Sarah; Project Administration: Shirley Melita Sembiring Meliala. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agree to be accountable for their respective contributions to the research.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no competing interests related to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to applicable ethical, legal, and privacy restrictions.

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