

# The Role of Recognition and Career Development Rewards in Fostering Teacher Engagement: A Systematic Review

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the relationship between recognition and career development rewards and their impact on teacher engagement through a systematic review of 15 selected peer-reviewed articles published between 2019 and 2025. The review examined diverse educational contexts, including early-career teachers, private and public schools, and various subject areas, to identify how recognition and career development initiatives influence teacher motivation, satisfaction, and retention. Findings reveal that recognition of achievements, appreciation, and supportive organizational environments significantly enhance intrinsic motivation and emotional engagement, particularly among early-career teachers. Career development rewards, including mentoring, training, coaching, and structured reward systems, were found to contribute to long-term motivation, job satisfaction, and retention, especially in private school settings. Several studies highlight gaps in the implementation of effective recognition systems, showing that teachers often perceive insufficient acknowledgment of their performance, which can reduce engagement and increase turnover intentions. Moreover, the synergistic integration of recognition and career

development rewards produces the most substantial improvements in teacher engagement, suggesting that organizations should address both psychological and professional growth needs. This systematic review underscores the importance of combining recognition programs with career development strategies to foster sustainable teacher engagement and improve overall educational outcomes. In conclusion, integrating recognition and career development rewards is a practical and effective approach to enhancing teacher engagement across diverse educational contexts.

**Keywords:** Career Development, Engagement, Motivation, Recognition, Teacher Retention

## Introduction

Teachers are the frontline of education and play a central role in shaping learning quality and student outcomes. Teacher engagement has therefore attracted global attention because higher teacher engagement reliably predicts better student motivation, positive academic emotions, and improved achievement (Wang et al., 2022). Engagement is also closely tied to teachers' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and risks of burnout or leaving the profession, making it a key factor for teacher retention and sustainable schooling systems (Madigan & Kim, 2021). Consequently, strengthening teacher engagement is a priority for policy and practice worldwide to secure both immediate learning gains and the long-term stability of the teaching workforce.

Many teachers report low engagement driven by excessive workload, insufficient recognition, and limited opportunities for career development (Khan, 2021). Low engagement has been shown to undermine teaching quality, increase turnover intentions, and reduce loyalty to educational institutions (Zhang, 2021; Khan, 2021). This pattern creates systemic risks for school performance and student outcomes, making teacher engagement a strategic concern for policymakers and administrators (Zhang, 2021). Addressing these issues requires targeted strategies that strengthen teachers' motivation, recognition, and professional growth pathways (Khan, 2021).

Recognition functions as a non-financial reward that reinforces feelings of being valued, acknowledged, and important within educational organizations (Ogada et al., 2020). Empirical evidence indicates that expressions of appreciation significantly enhance teachers' morale, job satisfaction, and loyalty to their institutions (Saiteu, 2024). Conversely, the absence of institutional or leadership recognition is frequently identified as a primary factor contributing to reduced teaching motivation and lower engagement. Therefore, integrating structured *pengakuan/apresiasi* practices into school management is essential for sustaining teacher commitment and improving educational outcomes (Ogada et al., 2020).

Opportunities for training, promotion, certification, and structured career-development programs termed *Career Development Rewards* (*Penghargaan Pengembangan Karier*) act as institutional rewards that can produce sustained increases in teacher engagement. (Tantawy, 2020). Empirical evidence shows that access to professional development and clear advancement pathways strengthens teachers' professional identity and psychological empowerment, which in turn increases work engagement and career satisfaction (Sun et al., 2022). A clearly advancing career also conveys perceived fairness and clearer future prospects, reinforcing teachers' commitment to their instructional role. (Sun et al., 2022). Conversely, limited access to career-development opportunities fosters feelings of stagnation and reduced motivation, raising turnover risk (Tantawy, 2020).

Recognition and career development rewards, as complementary forms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, are critical for enhancing teacher engagement. For example, Ji & Cui (2021) found that kindergarten teachers' *total rewards perceptions* including recognition and opportunities for career development were positively correlated with work engagement; organizational identification partly mediated this relationship. Similarly, a study of Chinese teachers showed that satisfaction of teachers' needs for competence (which is fostered by recognition of ability) and possibilities for growth significantly raised their work engagement. Therefore, a balanced rewards system that integrates both recognition and career advancement is believed to increase the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural components of teacher engagement (Zhang et al., 2021).

Although numerous studies have explored teacher motivation and job satisfaction, systematic investigations specifically examining the relationship between recognition, career development rewards, and teacher engagement remain limited. To date, no comprehensive *systematic review* has synthesized empirical evidence across diverse educational contexts worldwide. Conducting such a review is essential to integrate previous findings and develop a holistic understanding of how recognition and career development rewards foster teacher engagement. The outcomes of this review are expected to provide practical recommendations for policymakers, schools, and other stakeholders in designing effective recognition and career development strategies for teachers.

## Methodology

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) to investigate the role of recognition and career development rewards in fostering teacher engagement. The research questions were designed to explore how recognition and career development rewards are conceptualized, the extent to which they influence teacher engagement, and the trends, patterns, and gaps within existing studies in the field of education.

A comprehensive literature search was systematically conducted using keywords such as “*teacher engagement*”, “*recognition*”, “*career development rewards*”, “*teacher motivation*”, and “*reward systems in education*”. The search was performed across reputable databases including Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), ERIC, and Google Scholar, as well as nationally accredited Indonesian journals indexed in Sinta 3 and Sinta 4 relevant to the field of education. The search covered publications from 2010 to 2025, and included both English and Bahasa Indonesia sources.

The inclusion criteria for this review were:

1. Peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, dissertations, or book chapters published between 2010 and 2025.
2. Studies explicitly addressing recognition, career development rewards, and/or teacher engagement.
3. Publications within the scope of education, teacher professional development, or organizational behavior in educational settings.
4. Articles published in journals indexed in Scopus, WoS, or at least nationally accredited in Sinta 3–4.

Exclusion criteria included:

1. Non-scientific publications (e.g., magazines, blogs, or news reports).
2. Studies without full-text availability.
3. Research focusing solely on reward mechanisms outside the educational sector without direct relevance to teacher engagement.

The study selection process followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework. The process consisted of four stages: (1) identification of records through database searching, (2) screening based on titles and abstracts, (3) eligibility assessment through full-text reading, and (4) final inclusion of studies meeting all criteria.

Data extraction was performed by recording key study characteristics including author, year, research design, educational context, sample population, type of recognition or career development reward studied, teacher engagement indicators, measurement instruments, and key findings. Each study was also appraised for quality and potential bias using appropriate critical appraisal tools relevant to its research design.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively, and findings were synthesized to identify conceptual trends, theoretical linkages, and gaps in the literature. The review adhered strictly to PRISMA guidelines to ensure methodological rigor, transparency, and accuracy in reporting. The results are presented narratively, covering search strategies, study quality assessment, characteristics of included studies, risk of bias, and synthesis of main findings.

## **Results and Discussion**

The study identification and selection process for this review is illustrated. A total of 400 records were identified from database searches (and 0 from registries), with 80 records removed before screening (50 duplicates, 20 automatically ineligible, and 10 for other reasons). Of the 320 records screened, 200 were excluded. Next, 120 reports were searched for retrieval, with 10 not retrieved. A total of 110 reports were assessed for eligibility, and 83 were excluded due to irrelevance (40), lack of accreditation (25), or inaccessibility (18). This process resulted in 15 studies being included in the review, which also represents the total number of new reports included, as shown in Figure 1.

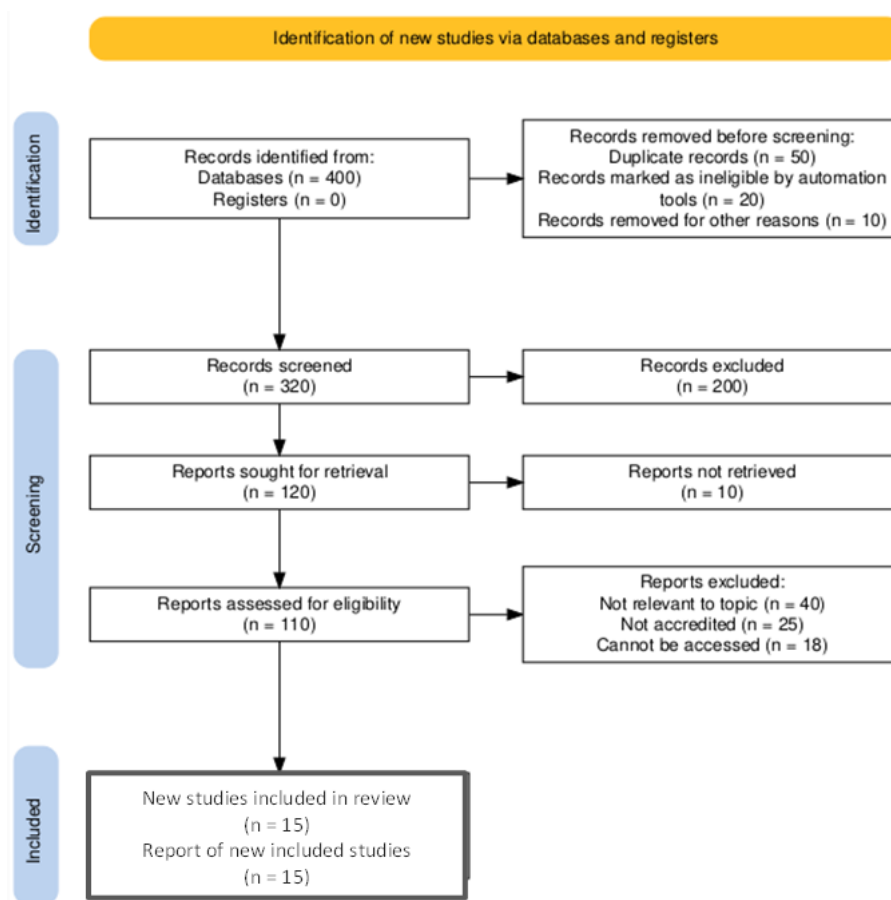


Figure 1. PRISMA Review Diagram

Table 1. Characteristics of the Reviewed Articles

No	Reference	Role of Recognition in Teacher Engagement	Impact of Career Development Rewards
1	LingYan Meng, Bárbara Briscioli (2024)	Recognition of achievements significantly predicts career adaptability and indirectly affects work performance, especially for early-career teachers. Career adaptability has a positive effect on work performance for teachers with less than five years of experience, but a negative effect for those with over 21 years of experience.	Not explicitly discussed.
2	Un Dini Imran, Muhammad Faathir Ghazwan, Firmansyah (2025)	Synergistic integration of recognition and appreciation optimizes employee performance, increases engagement, and reduces turnover. Appreciation strengthens intrinsic motivation and emotional engagement. This study focuses more on recognition and appreciation than career development rewards.	Focus is on recognition rather than career development rewards.

No	Reference	Role of Recognition in Teacher Engagement	Impact of Career Development Rewards
3	Hyeon Jo, Donghyuk Shin (2025)	Recognition significantly enhances employee engagement. The study compares recognition with other factors such as fairness and involvement, providing a comprehensive understanding of its relative importance in influencing engagement.	Not explicitly discussed.
4	Adesina, Idris Adetayo, Olive Ugadiya Ph.D. (2025)	Strategic reward and recognition systems drive employee engagement. Non-monetary rewards, such as recognition programs, are increasingly adopted to foster long-term motivation.	Organizations adopt non-monetary rewards such as career development opportunities to cultivate long-term motivation and loyalty. Structured reward systems enhance job satisfaction and retention.
5	Dongying Ji, Li Cui (2021)	Total reward perception positively correlates with kindergarten teachers' work engagement. Such perception can foster engagement when intrinsic and extrinsic needs are met.	Examines total reward perception, including various forms of rewards (including career development), and their effect on work engagement.
6	Rommel DG. Aquino, Shiela C. Castillo, Marvin P. Honrado (2024)	Focuses on work values as key to enhancing work engagement, though recognition is not specifically mentioned in the abstract.	No information on career development rewards.
7	Lumin Liu, Tianpei Li, Duo Zhang, Hwang Jin (2025)	The study examines how social support affects work engagement among physical education teachers; social support positively influences engagement.	No information on career development rewards.
8	Hardianto Hardianto, Hidayat Hidayat, Muhammad Nurhisyam Ali Setiawan (2025)	Reward systems and leadership styles play an important role in enhancing job satisfaction by boosting motivation, creating a more supportive work environment, and increasing teacher engagement.	Focus is on general reward effects on satisfaction and motivation, not specifically on career development.
9	Muhamad Aisa, Frank-Pio Kiyingi, Esther Namugumya (2024)	Examines the impact of monetary rewards on teacher performance; recognition or engagement is not explicitly discussed.	No information on career development rewards.
10	Hadijah Tukahirwa, Prof. Gershom Atukunda, PhD & Dr. Johnson Atwiine, PhD (2025)	Career development opportunities are increasingly recognized as key determinants of teacher commitment and retention.	Focuses on the relationship between teacher career development initiatives (training, mentoring, coaching, job rotation) and teacher retention; considered a key determinant in private schools.

No	Reference	Role of Recognition in Teacher Engagement	Impact of Career Development Rewards
11	Ruah, E. M; Kimeu, R & Nyabwari, B. (2025)	Findings indicate significant deficits in effective recognition systems; most teachers feel their schools do not sufficiently acknowledge outstanding performance. Lack of fair and transparent recognition correlates with lower motivation and higher turnover intentions. Recognition and appreciation are strong yet underutilized catalysts for improving teacher performance and retention.	Fair reward policies are closely related to teachers' intentions to remain at their schools.
12	Baluyos, G. R., Rivera, H. L., & Baluyos, E. L. (2019)	Job satisfaction is a prerequisite for teacher performance. Teachers' satisfaction with principal supervision and job security inversely affects work performance.	HR departments need to include teacher welfare packages in their retention strategies.
13	Anh Ngoc Quynh Phan & Tho Xuan Pham (2025)	English Language Teachers (ELT) view research as integral to their work, which can enhance teaching performance. Barriers include lack of academic resources, research community, and heavy workload.	Research outcomes are used as measures for annual professional performance, sometimes the sole criterion for hiring, tenure, and academic promotion. Lack of adequate financial rewards hinders research engagement.
14	Katrin Heim, Kurtis Marshall (2022)	Teacher engagement is enhanced through workplace improvement policies. Key conditions are supportive organization, active leadership, and healthy interpersonal relationships.	Focuses on workplace conditions and policies to promote engagement, not on specific rewards.
15	Niko Sudibjo & Maria Goreti Dwiatmi Riantini (2023)	Meaningful work is the strongest predictor of teacher engagement. Schools should provide maximum support and ensure teachers understand the positive impact of their work.	Does not specifically address career development rewards; focuses on perceived organizational support and leadership.

## Discussion

### 1. Current Research Trends on the Role of Recognition and Career Development Awards in Fostering Teacher Engagement

Recent research emphasizes that recognition plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher engagement across various educational contexts. LingYan Meng and Bárbara Briscioli (2024) found that recognition of achievements significantly predicts career adaptability and indirectly improves work performance, particularly among early-career teachers. Similarly, Hyeon Jo and Donghyuk Shin (2025) highlighted that recognition substantially enhances employee engagement and, when compared with factors such as fairness and involvement, emerges as a relatively stronger predictor. Ruah, Kimeu, and Nyabwari (2025) further observed that deficits in effective recognition systems correlate with lower motivation and

higher turnover intentions, indicating that recognition remains an underutilized yet powerful tool in educational institutions. Moreover, studies by Un Dini Imran, Muhammad Faathir Ghazwan, and Firmansyah (2025) suggest that the synergistic integration of recognition and appreciation optimizes performance and strengthens intrinsic motivation and emotional engagement. Collectively, these studies indicate that recognition not only boosts engagement but also indirectly supports teacher retention and overall school performance.

Regarding career development rewards, current literature underscores their potential to foster long-term motivation and teacher commitment. Adesina, Idris Adetayo, and Egbuta (2025) argue that structured non-monetary rewards, such as career development opportunities, enhance job satisfaction and loyalty among teachers. Hadijah Tukahirwa, Gershom Atukunda, and Johnson Atwiine (2025) further demonstrated that career development initiatives including training, mentoring, coaching, and job rotation are key determinants of teacher retention, particularly in private schools. Dongying Ji and Li Cui (2021) highlighted that total reward perception, which includes career development components, positively correlates with work engagement when both intrinsic and extrinsic needs are met. These findings collectively suggest that career development rewards complement recognition by addressing teachers' long-term professional growth and commitment.

Some studies integrate both recognition and career development rewards, emphasizing their joint impact on engagement. For instance, Hardianto Hardianto, Hidayat Hidayat, and Muhammad Nurhisyam Ali Setiawan (2025) argue that reward systems and leadership styles create supportive work environments that enhance teacher motivation, satisfaction, and engagement. While much of the research still isolates recognition from career development rewards, a few studies, such as Adesina et al. (2025), suggest that strategic reward systems combining both recognition and career development opportunities can yield more sustainable engagement outcomes. This trend signals a growing acknowledgment that holistic reward systems, rather than single interventions, are more effective in fostering teacher engagement across diverse contexts.

Other studies highlight contextual and organizational factors that moderate the effectiveness of recognition and rewards. Baluyos, Rivera, and Baluyos (2019) found that job satisfaction, principal supervision, and job security influence teacher performance and engagement, implying that recognition or rewards alone may not suffice without supportive institutional policies. Similarly, Katrin Heim and Kurtis Marshall (2022) noted that workplace improvement policies, active leadership, and healthy interpersonal relationships are crucial in promoting engagement. Phan and Pham (2025) observed that research engagement and professional advancement for English Language Teachers are

influenced by both recognition and adequate financial or career development incentives. These findings indicate that the success of recognition and career development rewards depends on the broader organizational environment and systemic support.

Overall, current research trends reveal that recognition consistently enhances teacher engagement, particularly when aligned with intrinsic motivation and emotional support (LingYan Meng & Briscioli, 2024; Ruah et al., 2025; Hyeon Jo & Shin, 2025). Career development rewards, including training, mentoring, and structured advancement opportunities, contribute to long-term motivation, satisfaction, and retention (Adesina et al., 2025; Tukahirwa et al., 2025; Dongying Ji & Cui, 2021). A growing number of studies advocate for integrating recognition and career development rewards into holistic reward systems to maximize engagement outcomes (Hardianto et al., 2025). However, organizational factors such as leadership, workplace policies, and institutional support moderate their effectiveness (Heim & Marshall, 2022; Baluyos et al., 2019). Research also suggests that recognition and career development rewards are underutilized in many contexts, leaving potential for further enhancement of teacher engagement (Ruah et al., 2025; Imran et al., 2025). Therefore, systematic approaches combining recognition, career development opportunities, and supportive organizational environments are critical for fostering sustained teacher engagement.

## **2. Role of Recognition in Teacher Engagement**

Recognition has been consistently identified as a crucial driver of teacher engagement. LingYan Meng and Bárbara Briscioli (2024) highlight that recognition of achievements significantly predicts career adaptability and indirectly enhances work performance, particularly among early-career teachers. Similarly, Un Dini Imran, Muhammad Faathir Ghazwan, and Firmansyah (2025) argue that integrating recognition with appreciation optimizes employee performance, increases engagement, and reduces turnover. Their findings emphasize that appreciation strengthens intrinsic motivation and emotional engagement, suggesting that recognition alone is insufficient without complementary supportive measures. Hyeon Jo and Donghyuk Shin (2025) further demonstrate that recognition outperforms other organizational factors, such as fairness and involvement, in enhancing employee engagement. These studies collectively indicate that recognition is not merely a reward but a critical mechanism for fostering teachers' emotional and professional commitment.

Beyond individual motivation, strategic recognition systems can shape organizational culture and long-term engagement. Adesina, Idris Adetayo, and Egbuta (2025) note that non-monetary recognition programs are increasingly adopted to drive sustained employee motivation. Ruah, Kimeu, and Nyabwari (2025) identify deficits in recognition systems

across schools, with teachers reporting insufficient acknowledgment of outstanding performance; such gaps correlate with lower motivation and higher turnover intentions. These findings underscore that recognition is not only a personal motivator but also a structural factor influencing teacher retention. When recognition systems are fair, transparent, and consistent, they serve as catalysts for both performance enhancement and long-term engagement.

Recognition also interacts with broader work conditions to enhance engagement. Katrin Heim and Kurtis Marshall (2022) demonstrate that supportive organizational environments, active leadership, and healthy interpersonal relationships amplify the effects of recognition on teacher engagement. Lumin Liu, Tianpei Li, Duo Zhang, and Hwang Jin (2025) similarly show that social support positively influences engagement, indicating that recognition is most effective when embedded in a socially supportive context. These findings suggest that recognition alone is insufficient; its impact is magnified by a work environment that promotes collaboration, trust, and professional growth. Recognition, therefore, must be aligned with broader organizational strategies to maximize its effectiveness.

Recognition also reinforces meaningful work and professional purpose. Niko Sudibjo and Maria Goreti Dwiatmi Riantini (2023) argue that meaningful work is the strongest predictor of teacher engagement, and that recognition helps teachers understand the positive impact of their contributions. Anh Ngoc Quynh Phan and Tho Xuan Pham (2025) indicate that teachers' research engagement and teaching performance are enhanced when their academic contributions are recognized, although barriers such as inadequate resources can limit these effects. Dongying Ji and Li Cui (2021) extend this argument by showing that total reward perception, which includes recognition, positively correlates with work engagement when both intrinsic and extrinsic needs are met. These studies collectively illustrate that recognition reinforces teachers' sense of professional value and achievement, which directly translates into higher engagement.

Overall, the reviewed studies underscore that recognition is a multi-dimensional driver of teacher engagement, influencing individual motivation, organizational culture, and perceptions of meaningful work. Recognition enhances intrinsic motivation, emotional commitment, and career adaptability, particularly for early-career teachers (Meng & Briscioli, 2024; Imran et al., 2025). Effective recognition systems, especially those that are fair and transparent, contribute to higher retention rates and sustained engagement (Adesina et al., 2025; Ruah et al., 2025). Its impact is further strengthened in supportive work environments and social networks, highlighting the interplay between individual acknowledgment and organizational context (Heim & Marshall, 2022; Liu et al., 2025). Recognition also reinforces teachers' perception of meaningful work and professional

purpose, fostering both performance and engagement (Sudibjo & Riantini, 2023; Phan & Pham, 2025). Despite its importance, gaps remain in many schools, where recognition is underutilized or inconsistently applied. Addressing these gaps can create a more motivated, committed, and high-performing teaching workforce.

### 3. Impact of Career Development Rewards

Career development rewards have emerged as a critical factor in fostering teacher engagement and retention. Adesina, Egbuta, and Ugadiya (2025) highlight that structured reward systems, particularly non-monetary opportunities such as professional training, mentoring, and career advancement programs, enhance long-term motivation and loyalty among teachers. Similarly, Dongying Ji and Li Cui (2021) show that teachers' perception of total rewards, which encompasses career development opportunities, positively influences work engagement when both intrinsic and extrinsic needs are addressed. These findings suggest that beyond immediate recognition, providing pathways for skill growth and career progression is a significant determinant of teacher performance. Tukahirwa, Atukunda, and Atwiine (2025) reinforce this view by demonstrating that career development initiatives, including job rotation and coaching, are key drivers of teacher commitment and retention in private school settings. Collectively, these studies indicate that career development rewards function not only as motivational tools but also as strategic mechanisms for sustaining engagement.

In addition to promoting engagement, career development rewards also enhance job satisfaction and organizational loyalty. Adesina et al. (2025) emphasize that non-monetary rewards, including structured opportunities for professional growth, improve teachers' overall satisfaction and retention rates. Baluyos, Rivera, and Baluyos (2019) argue that comprehensive welfare packages, encompassing career development components, are essential HR strategies for maintaining teacher retention. Ruah, Kimeu, and Nyabwari (2025) further highlight that fair and transparent reward policies, including career advancement pathways, are strongly correlated with teachers' intentions to remain in their institutions. These studies collectively underline that career development rewards are not only motivational but also critical for shaping teachers' long-term engagement and organizational commitment.

Career development rewards also influence teachers' performance evaluation and professional recognition. Phan and Pham (2025) note that research outputs often serve as criteria for promotion and professional assessment, linking career progression directly with measurable performance outcomes. However, the absence of adequate financial or developmental incentives can hinder research engagement and reduce overall motivation. This demonstrates that career development rewards serve as tangible markers of

professional acknowledgment, reinforcing teachers' commitment to continuous improvement. The alignment of reward systems with performance metrics further strengthens teachers' perception of fairness and organizational support, contributing to higher engagement levels.

Despite these positive impacts, not all studies explicitly address career development rewards, highlighting gaps in the current literature. Several studies, including those by LingYan Meng and Briscioli (2024) and Hyeon Jo and Shin (2025), focus primarily on recognition and intrinsic motivation without examining structured career development programs. Similarly, Hardianto et al. (2025) and Sudibjo and Riantini (2023) discuss general reward effects or perceived organizational support, but the role of specific career development initiatives is not emphasized. These omissions indicate a need for further research that isolates career development rewards as a distinct variable influencing teacher engagement, particularly across diverse educational contexts and career stages.

Overall, the reviewed literature consistently indicates that career development rewards play a pivotal role in enhancing teacher engagement, job satisfaction, and retention. Structured opportunities such as training, mentoring, and job rotation not only motivate teachers but also provide tangible pathways for professional growth (Adesina et al., 2025; Tukahirwa et al., 2025). Total reward perception, including career development, positively affects work engagement when intrinsic and extrinsic needs are fulfilled (Dongying Ji & Cui, 2021). Transparent and fair reward policies strengthen teachers' commitment and intentions to remain within institutions (Ruah et al., 2025; Baluyos et al., 2019). Moreover, linking career development to performance metrics, such as research outcomes, reinforces motivation and professional acknowledgment (Phan & Pham, 2025). Despite some gaps in explicit discussion across studies, the evidence suggests that prioritizing career development rewards is essential for fostering a highly engaged and committed teaching workforce.

#### **4. The Gaps And Opportunities**

Several studies underscore the significant role of recognition in fostering teacher engagement, yet gaps remain in understanding its nuanced impacts. Recognition of achievements has been shown to enhance career adaptability and indirectly improve work performance, particularly among early-career teachers (LingYan Meng & Briscioli, 2024). Other studies demonstrate that recognition synergized with appreciation optimizes engagement and reduces turnover (Un Dini Imran, Ghazwan, & Firmansyah, 2025). Comparative analyses highlight recognition's relative importance compared with fairness and involvement (Hyeon Jo & Shin, 2025). Despite these findings, research often overlooks deficits in effective recognition systems, leaving many teachers feeling undervalued, which

correlates with lower motivation and higher turnover intentions (Ruah, Kimeu, & Nyabwari, 2025). Furthermore, several studies focus on general work values or social support rather than explicitly examining recognition, indicating a gap in targeted empirical evidence (Rommel DG. Aquino, Castillo, & Honrado, 2024; Lumin Liu et al., 2025).

Research on career development rewards also shows uneven coverage, with only a few studies directly addressing their impact on teacher engagement. Career development opportunities, such as training, mentoring, and job rotation, have been identified as crucial for teacher retention and commitment, particularly in private schools (Hadijah Tukahirwa, Atukunda, & Atwiine, 2025). Some studies examine total reward perceptions, including career development, and their positive correlation with work engagement (Dongying Ji & Li Cui, 2021). Other research addresses general reward systems and leadership styles but does not disaggregate the specific effects of career development rewards (Hardianto Hardianto, Hidayat, & Setiawan, 2025). A few studies emphasize financial incentives and performance metrics but fail to explore long-term professional growth or intrinsic engagement (Muhamad Aisa, Kiyangi, & Namugumya, 2024; Anh Ngoc Quynh Phan & Tho Xuan Pham, 2025). These gaps suggest that while rewards are acknowledged as influential, systematic investigation of structured career development programs remains limited.

The evidence indicates an opportunity to integrate recognition and career development rewards in a more comprehensive framework. Studies show that recognition, when combined with appreciation, enhances intrinsic motivation and emotional engagement, implying that multidimensional interventions could maximize teacher engagement (Un Dini Imran, Ghazwan, & Firmansyah, 2025). Strategic reward systems incorporating both non-monetary recognition and career development opportunities improve job satisfaction and retention (Adesina, Egbuta, & Ph.D., 2025). Furthermore, workplace improvement policies, active leadership, and supportive organizational structures provide additional context for how recognition and rewards can be operationalized effectively (Katrin Heim & Marshall, 2022). The limited focus on early-career versus experienced teachers (LingYan Meng & Briscioli, 2024) highlights the need to tailor recognition and development strategies across career stages. Integrative research can bridge these gaps, producing actionable insights for both policy and practice.

Current studies largely derive from single contexts or specific educational levels, limiting the generalizability of findings across global education systems. Most research emphasizes either recognition or career development rewards but rarely explores their combined effect within a systemic model of teacher engagement (LingYan Meng & Briscioli, 2024; Hadijah Tukahirwa, Atukunda, & Atwiine, 2025). Methodologically, there is a scarcity of longitudinal and multi-site studies, constraining understanding of long-term impacts. Additionally, some research neglects critical mediating factors, such as job satisfaction,

intrinsic motivation, and organizational support, which can influence the effectiveness of recognition and reward interventions (Niko Sudibjo & Riantini, 2023; Baluyos, Rivera, & Baluyos, 2019). Barriers such as lack of academic resources, workload, and financial incentives further complicate the landscape for engagement-driven interventions (Anh Ngoc Quynh Phan & Tho Xuan Pham, 2025). Addressing these gaps can inform more nuanced, evidence-based strategies for enhancing teacher engagement globally.

In summary, the reviewed literature reveals substantial evidence for the positive influence of recognition and career development rewards on teacher engagement, yet significant gaps remain in scope, context, and methodological rigor. Recognition enhances intrinsic motivation, emotional engagement, and performance, particularly when integrated with appreciation and supportive organizational policies (LingYan Meng & Briscioli, 2024; Un Dini Imran, Ghazwan, & Firmansyah, 2025). Career development rewards contribute to commitment and retention but are often underexplored compared with general reward systems (Hadijah Tukahirwa, Atukunda, & Atwiine, 2025; Dongying Ji & Li Cui, 2021). Opportunities exist to develop integrated frameworks combining recognition, career development, and supportive workplace conditions to optimize engagement (Adesina, Egbuta, & Ph.D., 2025; Katrin Heim & Marshall, 2022). Methodological expansion through longitudinal, multi-context studies would improve understanding of long-term and cross-cultural effects. Therefore, systematic, comprehensive approaches are needed to guide both policy and practice in enhancing teacher engagement through recognition and career development rewards.

## 5. Main Findings

**Table 2.** Summary of Key Research Findings

No	Category of Findings		Key Research Outcomes	References
1	Recognition & Engagement		Recognition of achievements predicts career adaptability; early-career teachers benefit most.	LingYan Meng & Bárbara Briscioli, 2024
2	Recognition & Appreciation		Integration of recognition and appreciation optimizes performance, engagement, and reduces turnover.	Un Dini Imran, Muhammad Faathir Ghazwan, Firmansyah, 2025
3	Recognition vs Other Factors		Recognition significantly enhances engagement, compared with fairness and involvement.	Hyeon Jo & Donghyuk Shin, 2025
4	Strategic Reward Systems		Non-monetary recognition drives engagement; career development rewards foster long-term motivation.	Adesina, Idris Adetayo & Egbuta, Olive Ugadiya, 2025
5	Total Reward Perception		Positive correlation between total reward perception (intrinsic & extrinsic) and engagement.	Dongying Ji & Li Cui, 2021

No	Category of Findings	Key Research Outcomes	References
6	Work Values & Engagement	Work values enhance engagement, recognition not explicitly discussed.	Rommel DG. Aquino et al., 2024
7	Social Support & Engagement	Social support positively influences teacher engagement.	Lumin Liu et al., 2025
8	Reward Systems & Leadership	Reward systems and leadership enhance motivation, satisfaction, and engagement.	Hardianto Hardianto et al., 2025
9	Monetary Rewards	Monetary rewards impact performance; recognition not explicitly addressed.	Muhamad Aisa et al., 2024
10	Career Development Opportunities	Career development initiatives (training, mentoring, coaching) improve commitment and retention.	Hadijah Tukahirwa et al., 2025
11	Recognition Deficits	Lack of recognition leads to lower motivation and higher turnover; fair rewards improve retention.	Ruah, E. M. et al., 2025
12	Job Satisfaction	Job satisfaction, supervision, and job security influence performance and retention.	Baluyos, G. R. et al., 2019
13	Research & Rewards	Engagement in research boosts teaching performance; insufficient financial rewards hinder participation.	Anh Ngoc Quynh Phan & Tho Xuan Pham, 2025
14	Workplace Policies	Supportive policies and leadership enhance teacher engagement; specific rewards not addressed.	Katrin Heim & Kurtis Marshall, 2022
15	Meaningful Work	Perceived meaningful work strongly predicts engagement; focus on organizational support.	Niko Sudibjo & Maria Goreti Dwiatmi Riantini, 2023

The table indicates that recognition consistently emerges as a crucial factor in enhancing teacher engagement, particularly for early-career educators (LingYan Meng & Bárbara Briscioli, 2024). Studies emphasize that both intrinsic and extrinsic forms of recognition including appreciation, supportive leadership, and meaningful work strengthen motivation, emotional engagement, and retention (Un Dini Imran et al., 2025; Ruah et al., 2025). While recognition is widely discussed, career development rewards appear less frequently but are shown to play a significant role in fostering long-term motivation, commitment, and professional growth (Adesina et al., 2025; Hadijah Tukahirwa et al., 2025). Some studies focus on total reward perception or workplace conditions, highlighting that teacher engagement is multidimensional and influenced by social support, fair policies, and organizational structures (Dongying Ji & Li Cui, 2021; Katrin Heim & Kurtis Marshall, 2022). Monetary rewards alone are insufficient to sustain engagement, and deficits in recognition systems often correlate with higher turnover intentions (Muhamad Aisa et al., 2024; Ruah et al., 2025). Overall, the literature underscores the complementary

roles of recognition and career development initiatives in promoting teacher engagement across different educational contexts.

Based on the reviewed studies, recognition and career development rewards collectively enhance teacher engagement by addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational needs. Recognition of achievements, appreciation, and meaningful work consistently improve emotional and professional commitment, particularly among early-career teachers. Career development opportunities such as mentoring, coaching, and job rotation reinforce long-term motivation and retention. The evidence suggests that schools and policymakers should integrate structured recognition programs with strategic career development plans. Additionally, supportive organizational conditions and fair reward systems amplify the positive effects of recognition and career development initiatives. Therefore, fostering teacher engagement requires a holistic approach that combines both immediate recognition and long-term professional growth strategies.

## Conclusion

This systematic review highlights that recognition plays a significant role in enhancing teacher engagement across various educational contexts. Recognition of achievements, appreciation, and supportive work environments foster intrinsic motivation, emotional engagement, and career adaptability, particularly for early-career teachers. Career development rewards, such as training, mentoring, and structured reward systems, contribute to long-term motivation, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. Despite these positive effects, several studies indicate that recognition systems remain underutilized, and fair reward policies are often lacking in many schools. Overall, integrating recognition with career development strategies is crucial for sustaining teacher engagement and improving educational outcomes. Additionally, the review reveals that the impact of recognition and career development rewards varies by teacher experience, work context, and organizational culture. While non-monetary recognition consistently boosts engagement, career development opportunities are especially effective in promoting commitment and retention in private and early-career teacher settings. Several studies note that inadequate recognition and financial incentives reduce motivation and increase turnover intentions. A combination of recognition, career development rewards, and supportive leadership practices yields the highest engagement levels. These findings underscore the need for comprehensive policies addressing both psychological and professional growth needs of teachers.

The findings imply that educational policymakers and school leaders should implement structured recognition programs alongside career development initiatives to enhance teacher engagement. Emphasizing both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards can improve teacher motivation, satisfaction, and retention. Future research should examine the

differential effects of recognition and career development rewards across public versus private schools and varying teacher experience levels. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into the long-term impact of these strategies on engagement and performance. Researchers are also encouraged to explore contextual factors, such as culture and leadership style, that may moderate the effectiveness of recognition and career development rewards.

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