

Unpacking the Impacts of Accountability on Teachers' Emotions in Hong Kong

The literature has showed that the implementation of accountability mechanisms tend to place teachers at risk of negative emotions, although the mechanisms aims to be developed in school systems to ensure quality of education (Santoro, 2018). For example, 90% of teachers in Hong Kong have reported negative emotions, namely dissatisfaction, frustration, and anxiety, toward their work since accountability mechanisms were introduced into the school systems (HKFEW, 2022). Although studies have examined the relationship between accountability and teachers' emotions (Chen, 2019), several research gaps are identified in the literature as follows: (1) external accountability is highlighted while internal accountability is overlooked; (2) the effects of accountability on discrete emotions of teachers are not differentiated; (3) the institutional impacts of accountability on teachers' emotions are identified but the roles of psychological factors to institutional impacts are insufficiently investigated; and (4) the relationship between accountability as an institutional-level construct and teachers' emotions as an individual-level construct is not examined by a multilevel analysis.

The study will fill the research gaps by (1) investigating the effects of both external and internal forms of accountability on (2) discrete emotions (i.e., love, joy, anger, sadness, and fear) and (3) examining the roles of teacher autonomy and a sense of calling in the relationships between external and internal forms of accountability and emotions among teachers working in aided schools in Hong Kong (4) through advanced statistical analysis (e.g., multilevel structural equation modeling) of survey data and qualitative analysis of teacher interviews.

Mixed methods will be used. For survey study, data will be collected by surveying at least 600 teachers selected from 30 primary and secondary aided schools by stratified random sampling. For the interview study, approximately 15-20 participants who take part in the survey study and agree to participate in the follow-up study will be invited for interviews to deepen the understanding of the relationship between constructs.

The study will provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between accountability mechanisms and teachers' emotions. It will contribute to knowledge on this topic by (1) producing empirical evidence on the relationships between external and internal forms of accountability and discrete emotions of teaching while also exploring how these relationships are influenced by teacher autonomy; (2) shedding light on the role of a sense of calling in the institutional process of accountability underlying teachers' emotions; and (3) providing insights to develop enabling accountability systems to support teachers' emotions.