

The Influence of Kiasu Attitude among Secondary School Teachers' Motivation and Career Progression of Gen. Tomas Mascardo National High School (GTMNHS)

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Abstract

This study examined how the Kiasu attitude influences secondary public school teachers' motivation and career advancement in response to the growing presence of Kiasu attitude driven by increasing professional demands and competition. The purpose of the study is to identify the relationship between kiasu attitude of teacher motivation and career progression and determine the predictive influence of kiasu attitude of teacher professional motivation and perceived career advancement. A total of 52 secondary school teachers from Gen. Tomas Mascardo National High School were given a survey using a quantitative study approach. According to descriptive statistics, teachers reported comparatively high levels of motivation (Mean = 3.23) and moderate career growth (Mean = 2.83), despite having a moderate presence of kiasu (Mean = 2.29). However, Person correlation analysis revealed that Kiasu attitude and motivation showed a strong positive connection ($r = .870$, $p < .01$) and a very strong positive correlation between Kiasu Attitude and Career Progression ($r = .937$, $p < .01$). Regression analysis results showed a strong positive influence between kiasu attitude on teachers' motivation and career progression which showed the large t-value (12.453) and the small significance p-value (.000), and t-value of 18.890 and p-value of .000. According to the data, there is still a noticeable disparity in the perceived prospects for professional progression among teachers, even though they remain motivated despite Kiasu competitive nature. In addition to providing suggestions for enhancing teacher motivation and professional development in the setting of a competitive educational environment, this research advances our understanding of how kiasu impacts teachers' well-being.

Keywords: Kiasu Attitude; Teachers' motivation; Career progression; Secondary School Teachers; Professional development

1. Introduction

Teachers play a crucial role in the education sphere of molding the minds of future generations, and the cornerstone of quality education is an army of motivated, well-aided teachers. Quality education, the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), gives significant importance to inclusive, equitable, and high-quality learning opportunities, all of which are

highly contingent on educators' welfare and professional growth. However, some educational mindsets, like kiasuism (fear of losing out) Cheng & Hong, 2017, may influence teachers' motivation and career progression in highly competitive context, which could have an impact on the caliber of education they deliver.

Such mindset Kiasuism which promotes individual dominance through intense competition while fearing failure affect teachers positively and negatively at work. While it may stimulate teachers to pursue professional development and keep improving their teaching methods, they strive for perfection. However, when individuals adopt a fear-driven

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competitive nature it leads to job dissatisfaction and toxic work environments together with stress and burnout effects which prove detrimental to both student learning and teacher retention. Kiasu is commonly defined as “the fear of losing,” that represents an intense desire to always be ahead, secure the best position, and avoid failure or underachievement (Chong Y. L., 2004)

In the study conducted in Singaporean Schools in 2013, the impact of kiasuism among the practitioner research was profoundly notable. Teachers exhibited competitive behaviors because of kiasuism, which is typified by a fear of losing out and a desire to surpass others. In consequence, this competitive mindset made it more difficult to work together and share knowledge freely. Because teachers were more concerned with individual achievement than with group development or shared learning, the caliber and efficacy of practitioner research suffered (Ellis, 2014).

In the Philippine context, Kiasuism manifests in teachers’ pursuit of career progression through promotions, recognition, and professional development. Teachers driven by Kiasuism may focus intensely on outperforming their peers to secure higher positions, additional certifications, or even public recognition, sometimes at the cost of collaboration or work-life balance (Tan, 2018). Similar study on Metro Manila 2023, electronics industries looked at the connection between promotions and job attitudes. As stated in this study, career progress was positively connected with both job efficiency and organizational commitment, but job involvement was negatively associated with promotion. This implies that workers are more likely to advance if they exhibit effectiveness and a strong dedication to their company (Rodriguez, 2023).

Teachers that adopt a Kiasu viewpoint could be more driven to meet or beyond performance goals, actively seek promotions, and pursue lifelong learning. However, it can also result in fatigue, tension, and an overly competitive workplace that hinders teamwork and job satisfaction. Understanding Kiasuism’s advantages and disadvantages can help build professional development initiatives and policies that strike a balance between aspiration and well-being.

A combination of extrinsic and intrinsic factors motivates teachers. They are inherently driven by the fulfilment that comes from having a significant influence on pupils and encouraging a love of learning. Their professional behavior and pleasure are significantly influenced by extrinsic factors, such as pay, job security, recognition, and career progression. According to Herpen et al. (2004), promotions have an impact on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Expected promotions raise extrinsic motivation, whereas realized promotions raise intrinsic motivation. Yet, kiasuism—a competitive and fear-of-missing-out (FoMo) mindset—may influence their drive.

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Raising teacher motivation is, predictably, one of the most crucial elements in attaining high-quality education. The benefits and drawbacks of teachers embracing a Kiasu-like perspective, however, are unknown. While some instructors may find increased productivity because of their competitive drive, others may face job unhappiness or burnout. However, concluding whether Kiasuism promotes professional development or impedes career advancement among secondary school teachers is still insufficient.

Thus, the goal of this research is to examine how the Kiasu attitude affects teachers’ professional well-being, work satisfaction, and career advancement, as well as the relationship between teacher motivation and this attitude. It seeks to address the following research questions.

- What is the relationship between the Kiasu concept to teachers’ motivation and career progression?
- What are the positive and negative consequences associated with the Kiasu concept on teachers’ professional well-being?
- To what extent does the Kiasu idea predict secondary school teachers perceive career advancement and professional motivation?

Teachers, school officials, and legislators will have a greater understanding of how Kiasuism impacts teacher motivation and career pathways according to the study’s findings. Ultimately, by guiding policies to help teachers balance their competitiveness and well-being, this research may contribute to the development of a more effective and healthier learning environment.

Based on the research objectives, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- Null Hypothesis (H_0)

There is no significant relationship between the Kiasu concept and teachers' motivation and career progression.

- Alternative Hypothesis (H_a)

There is a significant relationship between Kiasu attitude, motivation, and progression

- Null Hypothesis (H_0)

The Kiasu concept does not significantly predict teachers' motivation and career progression.

- Alternative Hypothesis (H_a)

The Kiasu concept does significantly predict teachers' motivation and career progression.

2. Literature review

2.1. The Concept of Kiasuism

The term Kiasu comes from the Hokkien (a Chinese dialect) words "kia," meaning "fear," and "su" meaning "to lose" (Cheng & Hong, 2017). The word has been part of the Singlish (formally known as Colloquial Singaporean English) lexicon spoken in Singapore since the 1980s. The word 'Kiasu' refers to a trait, value, or mindset in Singapore. It is a mentality that is frequently linked to people who have a strong drive to perform better than others and to succeed at all costs (Ng, 2001). Likewise, Bedford & Chua, 2017, describe it as a prominent cultural trait in Singapore that encompasses greed, selfishness, and inconsiderate behavior. In other words, kiasuism refers to the fear of losing out or being left behind.

In competitive societies like Singapore, where people are motivated by high standards and the pressure to succeed, this behavior is especially common (Chua, 1989). Kiasuism has a significant effect on Singaporean educators. In the study of Ellis (2013) found that kiasuism fosters a competitive atmosphere among educators, which can impact practitioner research in both positive and negative ways. Teachers frequently put exam scores ahead of creativity, which irritates students and discourages them from participating in practitioner research because of pressure from parents. On one hand, the desire to succeed might encourage educators to go further into study projects. However, risk-averse behaviors brought on by a fear of losing out can stifle creativity and sincere inquiry in teaching methods.

Meanwhile in the Philippine, through high-stakes tests like the National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) and college admission exams, which motivate students and instructors to use competitive tactics, the Philippine educational system fosters academic success (Santos, 2019). Teachers face pressure to maintain good student achievement, obtain tenure, and fulfill Department of Education (DepEd)-mandated professional development requirements. In order to keep ahead of their careers, educators prioritize personal growth, ongoing education, and strategic networking, which has led to the increase of kiasu-like behaviors (Reyes & Aquino, 2021).

Despite not being a native Filipino idea, competitive attitudes that resemble kiasuism have proliferated in academic and professional settings throughout the nation. Filipino educators strive for professional advancement while upholding the cultural values of respect and cooperation, striking a balance between ambition and social harmony. In the educational setting, kiasuism can show up as a strong desire for teachers to succeed, frequently at the price of their health.

2.2. Kiasuism and Teacher Motivation

Kiasuism may flourish in the teaching profession because of its high standards, demanding workload, and pressure to reach performance goals. To stay competitive, instructors with kiasu inclinations frequently practice perfectionism, thorough planning, and ongoing professional development (Ng, 2020). But too much Kiasuism can also result in teacher fatigue, a fear of taking creative risks, and an unwillingness to work with colleagues (Wong & Goh, 2016). These patterns of behavior imply that kiasuism can influence teachers' motivation and work output in a variety of intricate ways.

Numerous studies have examined intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in relation to teacher motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to international research, the effect of kiasuism on teacher motivation differs depending on the institutional and cultural setting. Zhang et al. (2022) conducted a comparative study that looked at the motivation levels of teachers in East Asia, Europe, and North America. They found that while teachers in more collaborative settings tend to emphasize intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and well-being, those in high-stakes assessment cultures frequently display Kiasu-like behaviors. Extrinsic drive frequently originates from outside incentives like recognition, promotions, or avoiding failure but intrinsic motivation is derived from personal fulfillment, and professional development. Extrinsic motivators, like the fear of failing or losing out to peers, are frequently associated with kiasuism. Similarly, educators in Northern European nations—known for their equitable educational policies report reduced levels of stress brought on by competition (Andersen & Jensen, 2020). Hence, there's a need to explore methods for striking a balance between wellbeing and competition to make sure teachers continue to perform well and be happy in their jobs.

In the Philippine setting, teachers' strong sense of vocation and commitment to public service are frequently associated with their intrinsic drive. Teaching is seen by many Filipino educators as a vocation rather than merely a job (Bernardo, 2018). High intrinsic motivation teachers are frequently enthusiastic about their work, dedicated to the achievement of their pupils, and prepared to devote time to ongoing professional development (Richardson et al., 2014). Furthermore, teachers' intrinsic motivation is greatly influenced by their religious and cultural beliefs, which promote perseverance and dedication in the face of obstacles like poor pay and scarce resources (David & Calma, 2020). On the other hand, extrinsic motivation has a big impact on extrinsic motivation like government laws, pay rates, and incentives offered by the Department of Education (DepEd). Teacher motivation has been impacted by the implementation of the Salary Standardization Law (SSL) and Performance-Based Bonus (PBB), which provide financial incentives and chances for career advancement (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2019). Calls for more fair reward systems, however, are frequently sparked by teacher unhappiness due to differences in incentive distribution and administrative difficulties (Navarro & Sarmiento, 2021). Hence, the present study would be significant to assess the effect of kiasu attitude of teachers to a more sustainable and satisfying teaching career.

2.3. Kiasuism and Career Progression

Career advancement is strongly linked to merit-based evaluation and continuous professional development (CPD) in nations like Finland, Singapore, and Japan (OECD, 2021). For example, Finland promotes lifelong learning and research among educators, increasing their career mobility (Sahlberg, 2020). To accommodate various professional goals, Singapore offers a clearly defined career path that divides instructors into leadership, specialized, and teaching tracks (Goh & Lee, 2019). Meanwhile, certification programs, school-based performance reviews, and standardized teacher evaluation systems frequently impact career advancement in the US and the UK (Berry et al., 2020). Despite these well-defined professional pathways, issues like teacher burnout, bureaucratic obstacles, and limited promotion continue to be commonplace globally. Workload demands, and competitive settings can influence teachers' career choices (Schleicher, 2021). However, besides having a good standard of career progression there's a need to assess the kiasu-like attitude of a teacher to drive them to strive for excellence and career advancement.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Education (DepEd) have established criteria for career advancement in teaching in the Philippines. The Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (Republic Act No. 4670), which specifies career benefits, pay grades, and promotion requirements, is followed by public school teachers (DepEd, 2022). With career advancement based on competence levels—Beginning, Proficient, Highly Proficient, and Distinguished—the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) function as a competency framework for teacher development (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2018).

A systematic promotion system based on seniority, performance reviews, and merit governs the career advancement of teachers in the Philippines (DepEd, 2022). Teachers striving for few career development possibilities may engage in Kiasu behaviors because of the fiercely competitive promotion process at the Department of Education (DepEd) (Ocampo & David, 2020). According to some research, to advance in their careers, Filipino teachers with Kiasu tendencies are more likely to obtain master's or doctoral degrees and participate in professional development (Mendoza, 2021). But the pressure to perform better than peers can also lead to a stressful workplace, which can impact teacher retention and well-being (Salazar, 2023). Thus, this study is crucial to guarantee teachers' long-term professional development, educational institutions must find a balance between encouraging healthy competition and work atmosphere.

2.4. Kiasuism and Career Progression in Public Schools: The Philippine Context

For career growth in the Philippine public school system, the Department of Education (DepEd) created the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (Republic Act No. 4670)

(DepEd, 2022). According to their credentials, experience, and performance evaluations, teachers advance through the ranks of the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2018).

Filipino public-school teachers with Kiasu attitudes may engage in competitive behaviors to get professional advancement possibilities due to the limited number of promotions accessible (Ocampo & David, 2020). Although this motivation can result in exceptional teaching and leadership, it can also fuel conflict, stress, and moral quandaries at work (Mendoza, 2021). Hence, public school teachers' Kiasu attitudes can have both beneficial and detrimental implications on their ability to advance in their careers, the present study is crucial to educators to sustain career progression. Public school administrators should put in place regulations that strike a balance between competitive motivation and a collaborative, encouraging work atmosphere.

Several studies have identified various positive and negative sides of having kiasu attitude that may affect their teaching motivation and career progressions. These challenges can hinder collaboration and overall job satisfaction (Tan, 2018). Finding a balance is crucial; creating a positive school climate that encourages healthy competition while reducing stress can help teachers stay motivated and grow in their careers. Educational institutions can create a work climate that improves student performance and teacher well-being by comprehending and resolving the difficulties of Kiasuism.

Furthermore, nothing is known about school culture mitigates the negative impacts of kiasuism, such as whether it intensifies stress and fatigue or encourages healthy competitiveness. It is still unclear how Kiasuism affects teachers psychologically and emotionally, especially in the Philippine educational system where few research has looked at how this way of thinking fits in with regional norms and beliefs.

This study will improve our understanding of how Kiasuism influences teacher behaviors, school dynamics, and career paths by filling in these knowledge gaps. Teachers, school administrators, and legislators will find the data useful in formulating plans that capitalize on Kiasuism's best features while minimizing any potential negative effects.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design that involved the use of surveys. The research population comprised 52 junior high school faculty of Gen. Tomas Mascardo National High School in Imus City. The primary respondents were selected to represent different areas of discipline, teaching experiences, and career stages. The researcher sent a consent letter to the school principal on March 6, 2025 and was approved on the same day.

3.2. Research Instrument

The research instrument used in the study was a researcher-made survey questionnaire that was sent to the respondents via google link. The data analysis method for the study was descriptive statistics and regression statistics. SPSS software was used in the reliability and validity of constructs and to estimate the relationship between variables.

Persons' correlation coefficient was used to check if there is a relationship between Kiasu-like attitude and teacher motivation and career progression. A regression analysis was also employed in the study to determine if a kiasu-like attitude predicts teacher motivation and career progression.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Relationship between Kiasuism on teachers' motivation and career progression

4.1.1. Kiasu-Related Behavior of Teachers'

Table 1 depicts the kiasu-related behavior of the teachers. It revealed that although teachers exhibit some aspects of kiasuism, their effect varies. That statement indicator "I always feel the urge to enhance my performance so as not to be left behind in my profession", which has the highest mean score ($M=2.79$), shows that fear of professional stagnation is significant driver. This is related to the argument by Tan and Chee (2005) kiasuism, where lose is feared, can prompt individuals to pursue self-improvement continuously substantiated by this.

However, the statement about comparing achievements with colleagues had the lowest score ($M = 1.83$), indicating that teachers may not consider direct social comparisons to be a reliable indicator of success. In addition to supporting

Festinger's Social Comparison Theory (1954), this illustrates educators' inclination to put their own goals ahead of external approbation, as Lim (2009) pointed out.

Overall, the items' intermediate ratings demonstrate Kiasuism's dual nature. According to Chua and Koay (2012), extreme competitiveness can result in stress and burnout, but moderate Kiasu traits can improve performance by encouraging diligence and readiness. These results imply that Kiasu-driven motivation is present among the teachers polled, but it is restrained by an emphasis on individual development rather than competition.

Table 1 Kiasu-Related Behavior of Teachers'

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Competition among teachers drives me to improve my performance.	52	1	4	2.42	1.161
I often compare my achievements with other teachers to see if I am more successful.	52	1	4	1.83	1.098
The fear of being less successful than my colleagues motivates me to work harder.	52	1	4	2.10	1.107
I constantly feel the need to improve my performance to avoid being left behind in my career.	52	1	4	2.79	1.016
I feel pressure to perform well in my job to ensure I do not miss out on career opportunities.	52	1	4	2.33	1.098

4.1.2. Kiasu on Teachers' Motivation

The most highly ranked item ("I find fulfillment in mentoring and helping students succeed " $M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.536$) student-centered activities offer teachers a strong source of intrinsic motivation. This is supported by Deci and Ryan's (2000) findings, which identify intrinsic motivation of the type that arises from helping others and seeing them develop as critical in sustaining teachers' professional commitment and job satisfaction.

Extrinsic motivators like promotion and professional development are important but not as effective as intrinsic forces, consistent with the high item rating "I am motivated by possibilities of career growth" ($M=3.35$, $SD=0.789$). Consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), this postulates that extrinsic motivators such as job development are most effective at preventing misery whereas intrinsic motivators yield improved pleasure levels.

It is also interesting to note that those scales under competitive working conditions and outside acknowledgment scored on the moderate to low end. More answered are "I am motivated by my efforts being acknowledged publicly" ($M=2.92$, $SD=0.987$) and "Competitive work environment makes me better at my work" ($M=2.90$, $SD=0.995$). These findings suggest that although some educator's value competition and recognition, these factors are not the main source of motivation. This could imply a differentiation between healthy competitiveness and anxiety-driven competitiveness that can result in burnout or unproductive actions in the setting if kiasu as stated in the study of Chua, 1989.

Lastly, Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) highlighted that leadership support and recognition can have a positive impact on teacher morale and engagement, particularly when it is in line with professional purpose and development goals. This is supported by the moderately high mean score for "Recognition from school leaders boosts my motivation" ($M = 3.19$).

Table 2 Kiasu on Teachers' Motivation

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
I find fulfillment in mentoring and helping students succeed.	52	1	4	3.79	.536
I am motivated by opportunities for career advancement.	52	1	4	3.35	.789
Competitive work environments encourage me to improve my performance.	52	1	4	2.90	.995

I feel motivated when my efforts are publicly acknowledged.	52	1	4	2.92	.987
Recognition from school leaders boosts my motivation.	52	1	4	3.19	.951

4.1.3. Kiasu on Teachers' Career Progression

The study revealed ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.947$), teachers had a modest level of agreement with the claim that having a competitive attitude promotes professional advancement. This bolsters the idea put forth by Chua (2019), who contended that kiasuism—the fear of losing out—can motivate people to work harder for career success. This kind of thinking could create a culture in schools where instructors strive for excellence to surpass their peers and gain real career advantages.

However, even if competitiveness is valued, not all teachers experience the direct academic pressure frequently linked to career mobility, as seen by the comparatively lower mean for feeling pressured to pursue higher education for promotion ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 0.999$). This is consistent with Tan (2020), who pointed out that although educational achievement has a role, instructors are frequently motivated by the perceived value of lifelong learning rather than credentialism alone.

Teachers have a strong propensity to actively pursue chances for professional development ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.734$), indicating an innate drive for career advancement. According to Day and Gu (2010), professional development is a vital pathway for both professional and personal advancement and is strongly correlated with teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

The results do, however, also show differing opinions regarding the value of praise and acknowledgment in advancing one's career. The variability indicates a nuanced perception, even while teachers somewhat agree that acknowledgment affects career progression ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.041$) and is essential for promotion ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 0.923$). The Self-Determination Theory of Ryan and Deci (2000) states that while external acknowledgment can help motivate people, it works best when it is in line with their own beliefs and objectives.

Table 3 Kiasu on Teacher Career Progression

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
I believe that teachers with a competitive mindset advance faster in their careers.	52	1	4	3.08	.947
I feel pressure to excel academically (e.g., pursue higher education) to secure promotions.	52	1	4	2.46	.999
I actively seek professional development opportunities for career growth.	52	1	4	3.17	.734
I feel that career progression in my field is strongly influenced by the recognition and praise I receive for my teaching.	52	1	4	2.77	1.041
I believe that recognition from colleagues and superiors is crucial to securing promotions and advancing in my career.	52	1	4	2.67	.923

4.1.4. Correlational Analysis

Table 4 depicts the relationship of every variable. Kiasu attitude and teacher motivation ($r = 0.870$), kiasu attitude and career advancement ($r = 0.937$), and motivation and career advancement ($r = 0.970$) were shown to have strong, positive, and significant correlations, according to the results of the Pearson correlation analysis. According to these findings, teachers' who display kiasu traits—like a strong drive to succeed or a fear of losing out—are more likely to be highly motivated and actively seek career progression.

The strong relationship between teachers' motivation and kiasu attitude supports earlier research that powerful extrinsic motivation is frequently fueled by fear of falling behind or losing out (Ng, 2020; Zhang et al., 2022). Teachers that adopt kiasu tendencies frequently pursue ongoing professional development, careful planning, and performance improvement to stay ahead in competitive educational systems, such as those in Singapore and, increasingly, the Philippines (Wong & Goh, 2016). This is consistent with the findings of Reyes and Aquino (2021), who pointed out that

despite their traditional vocation-driven motivation, Filipino educators have recently embraced performance-centered behaviors because of institutional constraints such as the NCAE, DepEd standards, and promotion requirements.

The strongest correlation observed in this study was between motivation and career advancement ($r = 0.970$), this is also affirmed by the study of Ryan & Deci (2000) highlighting the critical role that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation play in influencing professional development. According to Bernardo (2018) and David & Calma (2020), Filipino instructors frequently display intrinsic motivation stemming from their dedication to student achievement and cultural traits like tenacity. But because of changes like the Salary Standardization Law (SSL) and the Performance-Based Bonus (PBB), these incentives are becoming more and more entangled with external pressures (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2019).

To manage the effects of kiasuism on Filipino educators, this study emphasized the significance of culturally sensitive leadership and structural support. Educational leaders must therefore reconsider the ways in which competitive ideals are ingrained in school culture. Reforms to strategic policies should promote healthy competition without jeopardizing the mental and emotional health of educators. Initiatives like as collaborative evaluation tools, mentorship programs, and acknowledging both the process and the results can help minimize the negative effects of kiasuism while maintaining its capacity to motivate.

Table 4 Correlational Analysis

		Kiasu Attitude of Teachers'	Kiasu on Teachers's Motivation	Kiasu on Teachers' Career Progression
Kiasu Attitude of Teachers'	Pearson Correlation	1	0.870**	0.937**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000
	N	52	52	52
Kiasu on Teachers's Motivation	Pearson Correlation	0.870**	1	0.970**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000
	N	52	52	52
Kiasu on Teachers' Career Progression	Pearson Correlation	0.937**	0.970**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	
	N	52	52	52

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.2. Positive consequences of Kiasu attitude on Teachers'

According to the results, secondary school instructors have a somewhat favorable attitude toward the Kiasu-like mindset, particularly when it comes to goal-setting and motivation. Table 4.0, the indicator indicates that teachers who have a positive mentality are more likely to set high personal and professional objectives and have the highest mean score ($M = 3.40$, $SD = .799$). This supports Yeo and Liu's (2007) argument that, when interpreted positively, the kiasu attitude could foster high achievement motivation and goal orientation. This line of thinking encourages individuals to maximize success and minimize failure, which is in line with the psychological construct of achievement motivation at work.

Furthermore, the adoption of novel teaching practices received the second-highest rating ($M = 3.21$, $SD = .936$), suggesting that the competitive drive associated with Kiasuism may encourage teachers to enhance their teaching strategies. Chua (2010) contended that Kiasuism could motivate teachers to improve performance by investigating innovative and successful teaching techniques to keep ahead of their colleagues.

The lower mean score ($M = 2.85$, $SD = .872$) on the item about Kiasuism as a driving force behind teaching quality, however, points to conflicting opinions. Echoing Ho et al. (2012), who cautioned of the potential negative effects of Kiasuism, such as anxiety and fatigue, some educators may see this mindset as empowering, while others may equate it with pressure or stress.

Similarly, a moderate belief in Kiasuism's effectiveness under pressure is implied by the indicator on handling work challenges ($M = 2.96$, $SD = .949$). Different personal interpretations of Kiasuism—either as a source of needless stress or as a tool for resilience—may be the cause of this ambiguity.

These findings imply that although the Kiasu-like mentality can be used to achieve positive motivational results, how educators frame and internalize it will determine how it affects their effectiveness as teachers and their own well-being.

Table 5 Positive Consequences of Kiasu

Indicators	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
The Kiasu-like mindset motivates me to constantly strive for excellence in my teaching practices.	52	1	4	2.85	.872
I feel a sense of accomplishment when I surpass the expectations set for me in my role.	52	1	4	3.10	.869
Having a positive mindset pushes me to set high personal and professional goals.	52	1	4	3.40	.799
Kiasuism enhances my ability to handle work challenges effectively.	52	1	4	2.96	.949
The desire to succeed encourages me to adopt innovative teaching strategies	52	1	4	3.21	.936

4.3. Negative consequences

Table 4.1 showed that a competitive mindset causes needless stress and pressure to achieve better than others had the highest mean score ($M=2.71$, $SD=0.977$). This supports the argument made by Chua (1989) and subsequently reinforced by Tan and Cheung (2010), who described Kiasu as a cause of psychological distress and as a driving force due to its association with fear-induced behavior and over-competitiveness.

Moreover, the assertion “The kiasu mentality has caused burnout and poor work-life balance” also scored relatively high ($M=2.69$, $SD=0.981$), indicating that teachers’ overall well-being has been adversely affected. This is line with findings by Ho, Chan, and Yeao (2015), who pointed out that while kiasu tendencies may enhance performance in high-stakes contexts, if not managed, they often lead to long-term stress and emotional exhaustion.

Further supporting the notion that Kiasuism encourages an unsustainable drive for performance is the item about feeling overworked because of the pressure to succeed ($M = 2.58$). Social comparisons ($M = 2.15$) and the desire to be seen as the best ($M = 2.31$) add to this pressure, which, according to Festinger's (1954) Social Comparison Theory, can lead to feelings of inadequacy and discontent when people believe they are performing below expectations.

According to these studies, teachers may be motivated to improve by a competitive spirit, but unregulated Kiasu attitudes may undermine long-term productivity and professional development by eroding job happiness, upsetting work-life balance, and causing burnout. The negative impacts of kiasuism in educational environments may be lessened with interventions that emphasize fostering intrinsic motivation, encouraging teamwork over rivalry, and bolstering mental health.

Table 6 Negative Consequences of Kiasu

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I often feel overworked due to the pressure to succeed.	52	1	4	2.58	1.036
I find myself comparing my achievements to those of my colleagues, leading to feelings of inadequacy.	52	1	4	2.15	1.036
The pressure to be "the best" has negatively affected my job satisfaction and well-being.	52	1	4	2.31	1.001

Having competitive mindset creates unnecessary stress and pressure to constantly outperform others.	52	1	4	2.71	0.977
The Kiasu mentality (competitive) has contributed to burnout and a lack of work-life balance.	52	1	4	2.69	0.981

4.4. Influence of Kiasu Attitude on Teachers' Motivation & Career Progression

Table 4.2. depicts the influence of Kiasu attitude on teachers' motivation and career progression on secondary teachers. (a) the regression results showed a strong positive influence between kiasu and teachers' motivation. The large t-value (12.453) and the small significance p-value (.000), the effect of kiasu attitude on motivation is statistically significant.

With an unstandardized coefficient of 0.663 ($p < 0.001$), results of the regression analysis revealed that there was a very high positive correlation between motivation and kiasu attitude. This implies that there is an increase in motivation by 0.663 units for each increase in kiasu attitude. The strength of this relationship is further evidence by the standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.870), as it indicates that in the population being studied, kiasu attitude is a strong predictor of motivation.

Even as Kiasuism appears to enhance motivation, it is necessary to weigh any possible disadvantages of this mindset, Liu and Hall (2015) state that too much kiasu behavior can result in stress, burnout, and a reduced sense of wellbeing. As a result, extreme kiasu tendencies can lead to stress and anxiety in the classroom for teachers and students alike, which can undermine mental health and long-term productivity. Consequently, while being kiasu may bring temporary motivation, individuals need to balance self-nurturing and healthy competition.

Although kiasuism may enhance performance and motivation, it's essential to note any possible ill effects. Future research should explore how to encourage individuals in ways that preserve intrinsic motivation and well-being while fostering good competition.

Table 7 Influence of Kiasu Attitude on Teacher's Motivation

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	1.711	0.134		12.775	0.000
Kiasu-Attitude	0.663	0.053	0.870	12.453	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Motivation

On the other hand, (b) Kiasu attitude has a significant and strong positive influence on teacher career progression. Having t-value of 18.890 and p-value of .000 this showed that teachers who exhibit kiasu attitudes may experience more career progression.

With the standardized beta coefficient for kiasu attitude was 0.937 ($p < 0.001$), which implies that it was a significant predictor of teacher growth. This implies that kiasu and teachers' professional development are highly positively correlated.

Previous study revealed that higher levels of kiasuism in teachers will see them seek more professional opportunities and attempt to improve on their instructional methods on a continuous basis. This is in line with previous findings indicating that kiasuism comes with motivation and success (Chua & Kua, 2004). Kiasu teachers may become more driven to achieve, acquire additional training and assume a higher level of responsibility, all the factors that would push them toward greater career growth.

Since it was noted in some previous study on the adverse effect of kiasuism on teachers, it is necessary to consider the potential mental health problems that might develop from a high-pressure, achievement-oriented mentality when assessing the positive correlation between kiasu attitude and teacher promotion identified in this study.

Table 8 Influence of Kiasu Attitude on Teachers' Career Progression

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
	1.021	0.105		9.710	0.000
Kiasu-Attitude	0.70	0.042	0.937	18.890	0.000

b. Dependent Variable: Career Progression

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the researcher addresses the research problem and specific research questions. The problem that was investigated in this research was: What is the relationship between the Kiasu concept on teachers' motivation and career progression?

The results of the present study indicated that Kiasu attitude and motivation showed a strong positive connection ($r = .870$, $p < .01$), indicating that teachers who exhibit achievement-driven and competitive behaviors are probably highly motivated. This supports the idea that as Kiasu tendencies increase, teacher motivation also tends to increase significantly. Similarly, Kiasu attitude and career progression showed a very strong positive relationship ($r = .937$, $p < .01$). Teachers who adopt excellence and continuous growth can possibly be more inclined to pursue leadership roles, professional enhancement opportunities, and career advancements. Teachers who are passionate, intrinsically motivated, or rewarded extrinsically tend to devote more effort to their work, resulting in higher career achievement. The desire to excel in a competitive environment can lead to heightened performance and increase goal-oriented behavior (Tan, C., & Kuek, P. 2016).

And since there was a significant relationship between kiasu attitude on teachers' motivation (t-value 12.453, p-value 0.000) the NULL hypothesis "There is NO significant relationship between the Kiasu concept and teachers' motivation, and career progression is hereby rejected. However, the alternative hypothesis is hereby accepted.

Moreover, the findings of the present study showed that kiasu attitude influences teachers' motivation and career progression. The regression results showed a strong positive influence between (a) kiasu and teachers' motivation and (b) kiasu and career progression. Having t-value of 12.453 and p-value of .000, and t-value of 18.890 and p-value of .000 showed significant effect on teachers' motivation and career progression. The fear of losing out can motivate individuals to seek continuous improvement and professional development, aligning with career advancement goals (Cheng & Wee, 2023). And since kiasu attitude there has a significant and strong positive influence on teacher career progression (t-value of 18.890 and p-value of .000), the NULL hypothesis "The Kiasu concept does not significantly predict teachers' motivation and career progression" is hereby rejected. However, the alternative hypothesis is hereby accepted.

6. Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendation are made to enhance teachers' motivation and career progression while addressing the influence of kiasuism.

- Encourage a Team-Based Environment to Reduce Kiasuism -

It's worth minimizing the negative impact of over-competition, though the information shows there is only a moderate incidence of Kiasu among teachers. By focusing on team-building exercises and peer mentorship schemes, school could foster a less competitive and supportive environment. By allowing teachers the opportunity to share strategies and learning, this competition can be reduced and shared progress emphasized.

- Enhance Programs for Professional Development to Increase Motivation -

With the relatively high motivation scores, most teachers are still motivated despite challenges. Yet by offering specialized professional development courses tailored to the unique needs of teachers, the education system can continue to promote such motivation. These might take the kind of leadership training, curriculum innovation workshops, and opportunities for specialization in their field of interest, all of which could increase their enthusiasm and interest in their work.

- Encourage Work-Life Balance to Improve Well-Being

Teachers' motivation is typically directly connected to their work-life balance and well-being. Teacher well-being must be a school priority in the way of support systems in the form of wellness programs, stress management workshops, and opportunities for flexible work arrangements. With a balanced harmony between teachers' personal and work lives, burnout can be prevented and motivation sustained in the long run.

Schools and schools of education can establish a more positive, progressive, and supportive school climate for teachers by addressing five critical areas, which will enhance their professional growth and overall job satisfaction.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Statement of Ethical Approval

This study was reviewed and approved by the School Principal of Gen. Tomas Mascardo National High School.

Statement of Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participating teachers prior to their involvement in the study.

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