

Job Satisfaction and Occupational Stress between Private and Public-School Teachers in the Context of Adjustment

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ABSTRACT

Teachers play a vital role in the educational system, yet their job satisfaction and mental well-being are strongly influenced by the administrative and structural conditions of their institutions. This study compares job satisfaction and occupational stress among public and private secondary school teachers in Deoghar, Jharkhand, while examining the mediating role of psychological, social, and professional adjustment. Using a quantitative design, standardized psychometric scales were administered to 100 teachers, comprising 50 public and 50 private school educators. The study explores how sector-specific factors including job security, workload, salary, institutional support, and accountability affect teachers' career satisfaction. Findings suggest that private school teachers experience greater stress due to performance demands and job insecurity, whereas public school teachers face challenges related to administrative workload, large class sizes, and limited resources despite greater job security. The results also indicate that stronger adjustment abilities help reduce the negative effects of occupational stress and improve job satisfaction. These findings highlight the need for sector-specific policies, psychological support, and administrative reforms to reduce teacher burnout and improve the quality of secondary education.

Introduction

The educational landscape of any nation relies fundamentally on the physical, cognitive, and emotional well-being of its teachers. Teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge; they are facilitators of psychosocial development, character building, and national progress. However, the teaching profession has increasingly become recognized as a high-stress occupation. The demanding nature of modern education, characterized by evolving curricula, diverse student needs, administrative pressures, and societal expectations, places an immense burden on educators. To function effectively, a teacher must navigate these demands, making the study of occupational stress, job satisfaction, and professional adjustment vital to educational research.

The Concept of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the cognitive, affective, and evaluative reactions an individual has towards their work. According to Locke (1976), job satisfaction is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. In the context of teaching, it encompasses satisfaction with salary, working conditions, relationships with colleagues and administration, and the intrinsic reward of facilitating student growth. When teachers are highly satisfied, they exhibit higher levels of commitment, lower absenteeism, and greater pedagogical innovation. Conversely, dissatisfaction breeds burnout, high turnover rates, and a decline in instructional quality.

Occupational stress occurs when there is a significant discrepancy between the demands of a workplace and an individual's ability to cope with or adjust to those demands. In the educational sector, Kyriacou (2001) defines teacher stress as the experience of negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression, resulting from aspects of their work. Stressors in teaching include role ambiguity, student indiscipline, poor physical working conditions, lack of administrative support, and excessive workload. Prolonged exposure to such occupational stress severely compromises an educator's mental health and instructional efficacy.

Adjustment is the continuous process by which an individual alters their behavior to achieve a harmonious relationship with their environment. For teachers, professional adjustment involves adapting to the school climate, establishing positive relationships with students and peers, managing classroom dynamics, and reconciling personal expectations with institutional realities. A well-adjusted teacher possesses the resilience to buffer against occupational stress, thereby sustaining higher levels of job satisfaction. Adjustment acts as a vital psychological mediator; poor adjustment exacerbates the perception of stress, whereas high adjustment mitigates it.

The Context of Deoghar, Jharkhand

The Deoghar district in Jharkhand presents a unique socio-educational environment. The rapid proliferation of private schools alongside traditional government institutions has created a dualistic educational framework. Public (government) schoolteachers in Jharkhand often enjoy high job security, structured pension schemes, and standardized pay scales. However, they frequently contend with overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, and high non-teaching burdens (such as election duties and census data collection).

In contrast, private school teachers in Deoghar frequently operate under intense scrutiny from management, face precarious job security, and often receive compensation significantly lower than their public-sector counterparts. The commercialization of private education places immense pressure on these teachers to produce high academic results to satisfy parents and management, leading to distinct stress profiles. This dichotomy makes Deoghar a highly relevant locus for investigating the comparative dynamics of stress, satisfaction, and adjustment among secondary educators.

Review of Related Literature

A review of existing literature highlights the complex interplay between the variables under study. Several researchers have sought to map the differences between public and private educational sectors regarding teacher well-being.

Job Satisfaction: Studies by Sharma and Jyoti (2006) revealed that government schoolteachers generally report higher job satisfaction related to job security and financial stability compared to private school teachers. However, private school teachers occasionally report higher satisfaction regarding institutional discipline and physical infrastructure.

Occupational Stress: Research by Reddy and Anuradha (2013) found that private school teachers experience significantly higher levels of occupational stress. The primary stressors identified were uncooperative management, low salary, and heavy workloads. Conversely, public school teachers reported stress arising from large class sizes and political interference in school administration.

Adjustment: A study by Kaur (2015) emphasized that teacher adjustment is positively correlated with job satisfaction and negatively correlated with occupational stress. Teachers who demonstrated high emotional and social adjustment were better equipped to handle classroom disruptions and administrative demands without experiencing burnout.

The Nexus of Variables: Current literature suggests a triangular relationship where adjustment serves as the fulcrum. While the sources of stress differ fundamentally between public and private schools, the individual teacher's capacity to adjust dictates the ultimate impact on their job satisfaction.

Despite these insights, there is a distinct gap in localized literature focusing on the semi-urban and transitioning demographic of the Santhal Pargana division, specifically Deoghar. This research addresses that gap.

Rationale of the Study

While global and national studies exist regarding teacher stress and satisfaction, educational ecosystems are deeply influenced by regional socio-cultural and economic realities. Deoghar, a prominent cultural and religious hub in Jharkhand, has witnessed a boom in private secondary education over the last decade. Anecdotal evidence suggests a growing mental health crisis among educators in the region, characterized by high attrition rates in private schools and absenteeism in public schools.

Understanding the precise nature of occupational stress and the level of job satisfaction among these teachers is not merely an academic exercise; it is an urgent administrative necessity. Furthermore, analyzing these variables through the lens of *adjustment* provides a psychological pathway for intervention. If adjustment mechanisms differ between public and private sector teachers, localized training programs and policy reforms can be tailored to address the specific deficits in each sector. Sido Kanhu Murmu University's emphasis on regional educational development mandates a critical investigation into the well-being of the educators shaping the district's future.

Statement of the Problem

The research problem is formally stated as: "A Comparative Study of Job Satisfaction and Occupational Stress between Private and Public-School Teachers in the Context of Adjustment in Deoghar, District, Jharkhand. The present investigation is designed to achieve the following specific objectives:

- a. To assess and compare the level of Job Satisfaction between secondary school teachers working in public and private schools in Deoghar.
- b. To assess and compare the level of Occupational Stress between secondary school teachers working in public and private schools in Deoghar.
- c. To evaluate and compare the level of overall Adjustment (professional, social, and emotional) among public and private secondary school teachers.
- d. To determine the relationship between Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Adjustment among the selected sample of teachers.

To empirically test the variables, the following null hypotheses (H₀) were formulated:

H (01): There is no significant difference in the level of Job Satisfaction between public and private secondary school teachers in Deoghar.

H (02): There is no significant difference in the level of Occupational Stress between public and private secondary school teachers in Deoghar.

H (03): There is no significant difference in the level of Adjustment between public and private secondary school teachers in Deoghar.

H (04): There is no significant relationship between Teacher Adjustment and Job Satisfaction.

H (05): There is no significant relationship between Teacher Adjustment and Occupational Stress.

Method

Research Design

The study employs a descriptive, comparative, and correlational survey research design. This quantitative approach is deemed most suitable for assessing the status of the variables, comparing different demographic groups (school types), and exploring the interrelationships among the variables without manipulating the research environment.

Population and Sample

The target population comprises all secondary school teachers teaching in government (public) and unaided (private) secondary schools affiliated with recognized boards (JAC, CBSE, ICSE) within the geographic boundaries of Deoghar district, Jharkhand. Sample Size: The study utilizes a sample of exactly 100 secondary school teachers. Sample Distribution: The sample is equally stratified into two groups: 50 teachers from Public Schools and 50 teachers from Private Schools. Sampling Technique: A stratified random sampling technique was utilized to ensure equal representation from both institutional sectors, drawing participants from diverse zones within Deoghar to maintain geographical representativeness.

Tools Used for Data Collection

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, the following standardized psychometric instruments were utilized:

a. Job Satisfaction Questionnaire: Adapted from the Singh and Sharma Job Satisfaction Scale for Teachers. This tool measures satisfaction across dimensions such as salary, administrative policies, working conditions, and social status.

b. Occupational Stress Index (OSI): Adapted from Srivastava and Singh's OSI. It measures stress arising from role overload, role ambiguity, unprofitability, peer group dynamics, and unreasonable group/political pressures.

c. Teacher Adjustment Inventory (TAI): Adapted from the Mangal Teacher Adjustment Inventory. It assesses adjustment across five areas: Academic and Professional, Emotional, Social, Institutional, and financial adjustment.

Statistical Techniques

The raw data collected via the questionnaires were tabulated and subjected to rigorous statistical analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The following descriptive and inferential statistics were applied: Mean and Standard Deviation (SD): To understand the central tendency and dispersion of the data. Independent Samples t-test: To test the significance of the difference between the mean scores of public and private school teachers [H (01), H (02), H (03)]. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation (r): To ascertain the relationship between Adjustment, Job Satisfaction, and Occupational Stress [H (04), H (05)].

Results and Discussion

Results

The gathered data was analyzed systematically in accordance with the stated hypotheses.

Table 1. Comparison of Job Satisfaction between Public and Private School Teachers

Type of School	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
Public	50	142.60	14.85	4.82	Significant at 0.01 level
Private	50	128.40	14.70	-	-

Table 1 reveals that the mean Job Satisfaction score of public-school teachers (142.60) is distinctly higher than that of private school teachers (128.40). The calculated t-value is 4.82, which exceeds the critical value at the 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis [H (01)] is rejected. This indicates that public school teachers in Deoghar experience a significantly higher level of job satisfaction compared to their private counterparts.

Table 2. Comparison of Occupational Stress between Public and Private School Teachers

Type of School	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
Public	50	115.30	16.20	5.15	Significant at 0.01 level
Private	50	132.80	17.50	-	-

Table 2 demonstrates that the mean Occupational Stress score for private school teachers (132.80) is notably higher than that of public-school teachers (115.30). The

t-value of 5.15 is significant at the 0.01 level. Hence, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. This conclusively shows that private school teachers in Deoghar are exposed to significantly higher occupational stress.

Table 3. Comparison of Adjustment Levels between Public and Private School Teachers

Type of School	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
Public	50	165.40	12.30	2.14	Significant at 0.05 level
Private	50	159.80	13.80	-	-

Table 3 shows the mean Adjustment score of public-school teachers (165.40) is marginally higher than that of private school teachers (159.80). The t-value is 2.14, significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. Public school teachers exhibit slightly better overall adjustment to their professional environment.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix of Adjustment, Job Satisfaction, and Occupational Stress
(N=100)

Variables	Job Satisfaction	Occupational Stress
Adjustment	0.68	-0.55
Occupational Stress	-0.72	

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level) Interpretation: Table 4 displays the correlation coefficients. The correlation between Adjustment and Job Satisfaction is $r = 0.68$, indicating a strong positive relationship. Therefore, H_0 is rejected. Higher adjustment leads to higher job satisfaction. The correlation between Adjustment and Occupational Stress is $r = -0.55$, indicating a significant negative relationship. Thus, H_0 is rejected. Better adjusted teachers experience less stress. The correlation between Job Satisfaction and Occupational Stress is $r = -0.72$, a strong inverse relationship, confirming that higher stress severely diminishes satisfaction.

Based on the empirical analysis, the major findings of the study are summarized as follows: Disparity in Satisfaction: There is a significant difference in job satisfaction levels based on institutional affiliation. Government (public) schoolteachers in Deoghar report significantly higher job satisfaction.

Elevated Stress in Private Sectors: Private school teachers experience vastly higher levels of occupational stress. Their occupational environment presents psychosocial demands that outpace available professional resources and support.

Adjustment Variance: Public school teachers demonstrated better overall adjustment. It is postulated that the security of tenure and structured administrative hierarchies in government schools facilitate a more stable psychological adaptation process over time.

Correlational Dynamics: Adjustment is a critical positive predictor of job satisfaction and a strong negative predictor of occupational stress. Teachers who struggle to adjust socially and professionally are highly vulnerable to occupational burnout.

Discussion

The findings of this study offer a profound reflection on the current educational administration in Jharkhand. The significantly higher job satisfaction among public school teachers aligns with the traditional Indian paradigm where government employment is synonymous with lifetime security, respectable social status, and comprehensive post-retirement benefits. Despite the challenges of large class sizes and infrastructural deficits

often associated with government schools in semi-urban areas like Deoghar, the psychological safety net provided by job security overrides these operational stressors, leading to higher baseline satisfaction.

Conversely, the elevated occupational stress and comparatively lower job satisfaction among private school teachers highlight a systemic exploitation within the unaided educational sector. Private school educators in the region often operate in a high-accountability, low-reward environment. They face constant pressure from school management to produce exceptional academic results to maintain the school's marketability. Furthermore, the lack of standardized pay commissions (such as the 7th Pay Commission implemented in government sectors) means many private educators are inadequately compensated for extended working hours, which include after-school planning, mandatory extracurricular involvement, and constant parent-teacher communications.

The variable of "Adjustment" serves as a critical lens to understand these disparities. The data indicates that public school teachers exhibit superior adjustment. This can be attributed to the predictability of their roles. Once integrated into the government system, teachers can psychologically settle, leading to better social and institutional adjustment. Private school teachers, living under the constant threat of termination or salary deductions for perceived underperformance, remain in a state of high professional anxiety, which hinders their emotional and institutional adjustment. The strong negative correlation ($r = -0.55$) between adjustment and stress confirms that when the environment prevents a teacher from feeling secure and assimilated, psychological friction (stress) is inevitable.

Educational Implications

The empirical findings of this study carry critical implications for educational planners, policymakers, school administrators, and the Department of Education in Jharkhand:

Implications for Private School Management:

Regulatory Compliance and Compensation: There is an urgent need for the state education department to rigorously monitor private schools in Deoghar to ensure they adhere to minimum wage regulations and provide structured contracts. Financial insecurity is the primary driver of low adjustment and high stress.

Supportive Leadership: Private school administrators must transition from autocratic management styles to participatory leadership. Creating open channels for teacher feedback and reducing unreasonable performance pressures can significantly improve institutional adjustment.

Professional Development: Private institutions must invest in in-service training focused not just on pedagogical skills, but on stress management, resilience building, and emotional intelligence to aid professional adjustment.

Implications for Public School Administration

Reduction of Non-Academic Duties: While public school teachers are well-

adjusted and satisfied, their potential is often diluted by excessive involvement in non-teaching governmental duties. Policymakers must shield educators from excessive clerical, census, and election tasks to allow them to focus on pedagogical excellence.

Infrastructural Upgrades: The job satisfaction of government teachers can be further elevated by improving the physical environment of state-run schools in the Santhal Pargana region, ensuring they have access to modern teaching aids, which reduces the daily operational friction of teaching.

General Psychological Interventions: Both sectors must prioritize the mental health of their educators. Establishing dedicated counseling cells for teachers, facilitating peer-support networks, and organizing regular well-being workshops should become standard institutional practices.

Conclusion

The quality of an educational system cannot exceed the quality and well-being of its teachers. This research underscores a critical dichotomy in the Deoghar district: a public sector characterized by high security and satisfaction but potential complacency, versus a private sector driven by high accountability but plagued by severe occupational stress and poor teacher adjustment. The study unequivocally demonstrates that adjustment is not a passive trait, but a dynamic process heavily influenced by institutional environments.

For secondary education in Jharkhand to thrive, structural reforms are imperative. The unregulated pressures placed upon private school teachers must be alleviated through fair compensation and secure employment terms, allowing them the psychological space to adjust and find satisfaction in their vocation. Simultaneously, the public sector must continue to support its educators by removing infrastructural and bureaucratic hurdles. By prioritizing teacher adjustment and systematically dismantling occupational stressors, educational stakeholders can foster a resilient, satisfied, and highly effective teaching force capable of nurturing the next generation.

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