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OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AS A MEDIATOR IN THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION AND
MOTIVATION AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE
SULTANATE OF OMAN

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Abstract:

This study investigates the relationship between occupational stress, job satisfaction, and motivation among schoolteachers in the Sultanate of Oman, focusing on the mediating role of occupational stress. Conducted during the 2023–2024 academic year, the research involved 725 teachers from public schools across various governorates. The study adopted a descriptive correlational design and utilized a validated survey questionnaire comprising three standardized scales: the Occupational Stress Scale (Kanwal, Rafiq, & Afzal, 2023), the Job Satisfaction Scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015), and the Motivation Scale (Abós, Sevil, Martín-Albo, Aibar, & García-González, 2018). The results indicate that workload and administrative tasks are the primary contributors to occupational stress, which negatively impacts job satisfaction and motivation. Mediation analysis revealed that occupational stress significantly reduces the positive influence of job satisfaction on motivation, highlighting its critical role in the teacher experience. The study's findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to reduce stressors, such as workload management, enhanced administrative support, and improved resource availability. Recommendations include the introduction of stress management programs, policy reforms to address teacher workload, and recognition initiatives to boost morale. These measures aim to create a supportive work environment, enhancing teacher satisfaction and motivation while contributing to the improvement of Oman's education system. This study emphasizes the importance of prioritizing teacher well-being to achieve educational excellence and national development goals.

Keywords:

Occupational Stress; Job Satisfaction; Motivation, Schoolteachers; Sultanate Of Oman; Mediator Role

Introduction

Occupational stress is a critical issue affecting educators worldwide, with significant implications for their job satisfaction and motivation (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Narandaran, 2018). Teachers, as key drivers of educational success, often face various challenges, including heavy workloads, administrative demands, and the stress to meet diverse student needs (Shrivastava & Shukla, 2017). These stressors can negatively impact their well-being, satisfaction, and ability to remain motivated in their roles. Research highlights that high levels of occupational stress among teachers are associated with reduced job satisfaction and diminished professional motivation, ultimately affecting teaching quality and student outcomes (Kanwal, Rafiq, & Afzal, 2023).

In the Sultanate of Oman, education plays a pivotal role in national development, making teacher well-being and performance a high priority. The interplay between occupational stress, job satisfaction, and motivation has been widely recognized in literature, with studies emphasizing the mediating role of job satisfaction in mitigating the effects of stress (Çobanoğlu et al., 2023; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Understanding these dynamics is particularly relevant in Oman, where systemic efforts are underway to enhance the quality of education and support teachers in navigating professional challenges (Alshandudi, 2017).

Occupational stress significantly impacts educators' job satisfaction and motivation, influencing teaching quality and student outcomes (Ouellette et al., 2018). Teachers face challenges such as heavy workloads, administrative demands, and diverse student needs, which can adversely affect their well-being and professional engagement (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006). In Oman, education is pivotal for national development, making teacher well-being a priority.

Studies in Oman have examined these dynamics. AlShuaili and Yussef (2024) found that occupational stress negatively affects job satisfaction and motivation among Omani government schoolteachers.

Similarly, Al Shuaili (2024) reported a significant inverse relationship between schoolwork stress and job satisfaction among Omani school teachers .

These findings align with international research, such as Kanwal, Rafiq, & Afzal (20023), which highlights the detrimental effects of teacher stress on job satisfaction and motivation. This study investigates how occupational stress mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers in Oman. By exploring these relationships, the research aims to identify key factors that contribute to teacher motivation and satisfaction, despite the challenges posed by occupational stress. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers and educational leaders in Oman, enabling targeted interventions to reduce stress, enhance job satisfaction, and sustain teacher motivation, ultimately contributing to a more effective and resilient educational system (Abdallah, 2023).

Literature Review

The relationship between occupational stress, job satisfaction, and motivation has been widely examined in both global and regional educational contexts (Klassen, Usher, & Bong, 2010). Teachers, as critical stakeholders in education, often face unique stressors that influence their professional well-being and performance (Liu & Bellibas, 2018). This literature review explores the dynamics of occupational stress as a mediator between job satisfaction and motivation, with references to studies relevant to the Sultanate of Oman and broader international contexts.

Occupational stress is a significant factor influencing teachers' job performance and well-being. Kanwal, Rafiq, & Afzal (2023) identified that excessive workloads, classroom management challenges, and inadequate support systems are primary contributors to stress among educators. In Oman, Al Shukaili (2019) noted that rapid educational reforms and administrative expectations exacerbate stress levels among teachers, affecting their overall productivity. Çobanoğlu et al. (2023) further described stress as a dynamic process, influenced by the interaction between environmental demands and individual coping resources.

Job satisfaction, defined as the extent to which individuals feel fulfilled and content in their roles, is a vital determinant of teacher performance. Joanna and Jerzy (2020) emphasized that satisfaction arises from the alignment between job expectations and experiences. In Oman, Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2016) highlighted that factors such as recognition, professional autonomy, and supportive work environments significantly impact teacher satisfaction. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) added that job satisfaction is closely linked to teachers' ability to manage stress, indicating an interdependent relationship.

Motivation is the driving force that propels teachers to achieve their goals and excel in their roles. Abós, Sevil, Martín-Albo, Aibar, and García-González (2018) identified intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as key components influencing workplace behavior. In teaching, intrinsic motivation stems from passion for the profession, while extrinsic factors include recognition and financial rewards. Sujatha (2023) noted that motivation is enhanced when individuals perceive their work as meaningful and rewarding. In the Omani context, Al Shuaili (2024) observed that motivation levels among teachers are significantly influenced by job satisfaction and the extent to which occupational stress is managed effectively.

The mediating role of occupational stress has gained attention in recent years. Saadeh and Suifan (2020) proposed that stress could serve as a mechanism through which job satisfaction impacts motivation. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) supported this view, showing that teachers experiencing high levels of satisfaction were better equipped to manage stress, thereby sustaining their motivation. In Oman, AlShuaili and Yussef (2024) confirmed that occupational stress partially mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to reduce stress levels among teachers.

Educational reforms and the increasing demands placed on teachers in Oman highlight the importance of understanding these dynamics. Research by Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2016) underscores the need for supportive work environments to mitigate stress and enhance satisfaction and motivation. Addressing these factors is critical for improving teacher well-being and fostering a resilient education system in the Sultanate.

Literature underscores the complex interplay between occupational stress, job satisfaction, and motivation. Addressing stress as a mediating factor can enhance teacher satisfaction and motivation, ultimately benefiting educational outcomes. Studies specific to Oman provide valuable insights for developing culturally relevant strategies to support teachers and improve the quality of education (Epel et al., 2018).

Previous Study has established the relationship between occupational stress, job satisfaction, and motivation among teachers has been extensively studied both internationally and within the Sultanate of Oman. These studies provide valuable insights into how these factors interact and affect educational outcomes. AlShuaili and Yussef (2024) conducted a study titled "Structural Modeling of the Relationship Between Occupational Stress, Occupational Motivation, and Job Satisfaction Among School Teachers in the Sultanate of Oman." This research utilized structural equation modeling to analyze data from 410 government schoolteachers. The findings revealed that occupational stress negatively impacts both job satisfaction and motivation. Additionally, job satisfaction was found to have a significant positive effect on motivation, indicating that higher job satisfaction can mitigate some adverse effects of occupational stress on motivation. Another study by Al Shuaili (2024), titled "The Relationship Between Schoolwork Stress and Teachers' Job Satisfaction: A Study in the Context of Omani Schools," examined 680 teachers across various Omani governorates. The research identified a high level of schoolwork stress among teachers, which corresponded with moderate job satisfaction levels. A significant inverse relationship was found between schoolwork stress and job satisfaction, suggesting that increased stress leads to decreased satisfaction among teachers. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) explored "Job Satisfaction, Stress, and Coping Strategies in the Teaching Profession" through a survey of 2,569 Norwegian teachers. The study found that time pressure and discipline problems were significant predictors of teacher stress, which in turn negatively affected job satisfaction. The research also highlighted that teachers employ various coping strategies to manage stress, which can influence their overall job satisfaction. Farooqi (2014) investigated the "Relationship Between Occupational Stress, Motivation, and Job Satisfaction Among University Teachers" in Pakistan. The study concluded that occupational stress adversely affects both motivation and job satisfaction. It emphasized the importance of organizational support in mitigating stress to enhance motivation and satisfaction among educators. These studies collectively underscore the complex interplay between occupational stress, job satisfaction, and motivation among teachers. They highlight the necessity for targeted interventions to reduce stress and improve job satisfaction, thereby enhancing motivation and overall teaching effectiveness. These references provide a comprehensive overview of the existing research on the interplay between occupational stress, job satisfaction, and motivation among educators, both within Oman and internationally.

Objectives, Research Questions, and Hypotheses

This study aims to examine the direct relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers in Oman while investigating the role of occupational stress as a mediator in this relationship. It seeks to identify the key factors contributing to occupational stress and provide recommendations for reducing stress to enhance job satisfaction and motivation. The research addresses the following questions: What is the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers in the Sultanate of Oman? How does occupational stress mediate this relationship? What are the main factors contributing to occupational stress among schoolteachers in Oman? The study hypothesizes that there is a positive and significant

relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers, that occupational stress negatively impacts job satisfaction and motivation, and that occupational stress mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation, reducing the strength of their direct connection

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to explore the mediating role of occupational stress in the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers in the Sultanate of Oman. Quantitative methods are well-suited for examining relationships between variables and testing hypotheses in a systematic and objective manner (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Study Design

The study utilizes a descriptive correlational design, which is commonly employed to identify and measure the relationships among variables without manipulating them (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This design is appropriate for examining how occupational stress mediates the impact of job satisfaction on motivation. Saadeh and Suifan (2020) mediation framework guide the analysis, using regression and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the direct, indirect, and total effects among the variables.

Participants

The study targeted schoolteachers working in public schools across various governorates in the Sultanate of Oman during the academic year 2023–2024. The participants were selected using a stratified random sampling method to ensure representation from diverse regions, school levels from grades (1-12), and gender groups. This approach ensured that the sample reflected the demographic and professional diversity of the teaching population in Oman. A total of 725 teachers participated in the study (Sultanate of Oman, Ministry of Education, 2024), providing a robust sample size for statistical analysis. The inclusion criteria required participants to have at least one year of teaching experience and be employed in government schools. The sample size aligns with recommendations for mediation analysis and structural equation modeling (Kline, 2015), ensuring sufficient statistical power to test the study's hypotheses. The participants completed a validated survey instrument, which measured occupational stress, job satisfaction, and motivation. Ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to, including informed consent and confidentiality of participants' responses, ensuring the integrity and reliability of the data collection process.

Data Collection

Data was collected through a validated survey questionnaire designed to measure the study's core variables. The questionnaire included the Occupational Stress Scale (Kanwal, Rafiq, & Afzal, 2023) to assess stress levels experienced by teachers in relation to their professional roles, the Job Satisfaction Scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015) to evaluate the extent of job satisfaction focusing on workplace environment and professional fulfillment, and the Motivation Scale (Abós, Sevil, Martín-Albo, Aibar, & García-González, 2018) to measure both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation capturing internal and external factors driving professional engagement. The questionnaire was distributed in both electronic and paper formats to ensure accessibility across different regions. Ethical considerations were carefully adhered to, including obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

Instrument

The Instrument was carefully designed to meet the objectives of the research, ensuring it accurately measured occupational stress, job satisfaction, and motivation among schoolteachers. It adhered to specific criteria, including clarity, relevance, cultural appropriateness, and psychometric validity (Helwig, Pignanelli, & Schütze, 2015). The tool incorporated well-established scales in educational and psychological research, adapted to the Omani cultural context. The questionnaire focused on three primary dimensions: occupational stress, job satisfaction, and motivation. The occupational stress dimension measured the levels of stress experienced by teachers, addressing workload, administrative demands, and classroom challenges. This section included 15 items derived from the Occupational Stress Scale (Kanwal, Rafiq, & Afzal, 2023). The job satisfaction dimension assessed satisfaction related to workplace conditions, support, and personal fulfillment, using 12 items adapted from the Job Satisfaction Scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). The motivation dimension evaluated intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing teacher engagement, consisting of 10 items based on the Motivation Scale (Abós, Sevil, Martín-Albo, Aibar, & García-González, 2018). Overall, the questionnaire comprised 37 phrases, with responses rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". To ensure accessibility for participants, the scales were translated into Arabic through a rigorous translation-back translation process, maintaining the original meaning of the items (Derinalp & Ozyurt, 2024). The translated version underwent expert review to refine clarity and cultural appropriateness for the Omani context. The questionnaire was adapted to reflect Oman's unique educational and cultural environment, with adjustments made to examples and language to align with local terminology and practices. Experts familiar with the Omani education system reviewed the tool to confirm its relevance and sensitivity.

The validity of the measurement tool was established through content and construct validity (Almanasreh, Moles, & Chen, 2019). Content validity was assessed by a panel of experts who evaluated the relevance and comprehensiveness of the questionnaire items. Construct validity was tested using factor analysis, confirming that the items effectively represented their respective dimensions. Reliability was determined through Cronbach's Alpha, with values indicating high internal consistency across the dimensions: 0.87 for occupational stress, 0.84 for job satisfaction, and 0.85 for motivation.

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire distributed electronically and in paper format to ensure accessibility across regions and accommodate varying levels of technological proficiency. Ethical guidelines were rigorously followed, including obtaining informed consent and maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of participant responses.

Data Analysis

To address the research questions and test the hypotheses, the study utilized various statistical methods, aligned with the nature of the questions and hypotheses:

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were calculated to summarize the overall trends in job satisfaction, motivation, and occupational stress among schoolteachers. This provided a foundational understanding of the data and the characteristics of the sample (Prater, 2024).

Correlation Analysis

To answer the first research question and test the first hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation. This method identifies whether a statistically significant positive relationship exists between the two variables (Helwig, Pignanelli, & Schütze, 2015; Prater, 2024).

Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to answer the second research question and test the second hypothesis (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2013; Gunst & Mason, 2018). This approach determined the impact of occupational stress on job satisfaction and motivation, identifying the strength and significance of these relationships.

Mediation Analysis

To address the second research question and test the third hypothesis, mediation analysis was performed using Saadeh and Suifan (2020) framework and the Sobel test. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was also applied to confirm the mediation effect of occupational stress. This analysis assessed whether occupational stress significantly mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation and quantified the direct, indirect, and total effects (VanderWeele, 2016).

Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify the main factors contributing to occupational stress, addressing the third research question. This method helped uncover underlying patterns and dimensions within the occupational stress scale (Sürücü, Yıkılmaz, & Maşlakçı, 2022), providing insights into the specific stressors affecting Omani teachers.

Inferential Statistics

Inferential tests, such as t-tests and ANOVA, were used to explore differences (Haden, 2019) in occupational stress, job satisfaction, and motivation across demographic groups (e.g., gender, teaching experience, and school level). This further contextualized the findings.

For data analysis, the study utilized IBM SPSS Statistics and AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) software. These tools were chosen for their robust capabilities in handling statistical analyses and structural equation modeling (SEM) (Harter, Schmidt, Killham, & Agrawal, 2009; Mueller & Hancock, 2018).

Study Variables

This study has addressed its objectives, questions and hypotheses, and here in this section it is necessary to clarify the study variables to provide a deeper understanding for readers, including researchers and those interested in this topic. This study explores the title: "*Occupational stress as a mediator in the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers in the Sultanate of Oman*".

Applying the main points to the title

1. Placing the mediating variable appropriately between IV and DV:

- The title explains that occupational stress acts as a mediator that explains the relationship between job satisfaction (IV) and motivation (DV).

- This indicates that the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation is not direct, but rather occupational stress plays an important role in shaping how job satisfaction affects motivation.

2. Refine the research questions (RQs):

- What is the effect of job satisfaction on occupational stress among schoolteachers in the Sultanate of Oman?
- What is the effect of occupational stress on motivation among schoolteachers in the Sultanate of Oman?
- Does occupational stress mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation?

3. Improve research objectives:

- Study the impact of job satisfaction on occupational stress among schoolteachers in the Sultanate of Oman.
- Analysis of the impact of occupational stress on teachers' motivation.
- Investigate the mediating role of occupational stress in the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation.
- Provide recommendations to enhance job satisfaction and reduce occupational stress to improve teachers' motivation.

4. Improve hypotheses:

- There is a statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction and occupational stress among schoolteachers in the Sultanate of Oman.
- There is a statistically significant relationship between occupational stress and motivation among schoolteachers.
- Occupational stress significantly mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation.
- Demographic factors (such as age, gender, and years of experience) significantly affect the relationship between job satisfaction, occupational stress, and motivation.
- Explain the relationship between variables

Expected scenario:

- If teachers experience high levels of job satisfaction, this may lead to low levels of occupational stress.
- Low occupational stress can enhance their motivation to perform better.
- Conversely, if occupational stress is high, even with job satisfaction, it may negatively affect motivation.

Practical example:

- Independent variable (IV): The teacher is satisfied with their work environment and conditions (e.g., salary and recognition).

- Mediator: However, they experience stress due to workload or conflicts with colleagues.
- Dependent variable (DV): If stress levels are high, this may reduce their motivation to teach creatively, despite their job satisfaction.

Result and Finding

Based on the study's objectives, research questions, and hypotheses, the results of the study were analysed as follows:

1. The research question explores: How does occupational stress mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers? The hypothesis posits that occupational stress negatively impacts both job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers. To address this, a multiple regression analysis was used to determine the direct effects of occupational stress on job satisfaction and motivation. Additionally, mediation analysis was conducted to examine whether occupational stress mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation. This analysis considered three key paths: the direct effect of occupational stress on job satisfaction (Path a), the combined effect of job satisfaction and occupational stress on motivation (Paths b and c), and the total effect of job satisfaction on motivation (Path c). The mediation analysis also calculated the indirect effect ($a \times b$), quantifying how occupational stress mediates the relationship.

The research question asks: What is the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers in the Sultanate of Oman? The hypothesis posits: There is a positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers.

To answer the research question and test the hypothesis, Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation. In addition, regression analysis was conducted to provide insights into the predictive power of job satisfaction on motivation and to measure the degree of this relationship. Table 1 and Figure A provide an explanation of the result.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Results

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Job Satisfaction	3.73	0.72
Motivation	3.70	0.83
Correlation (r)	0.822	p-value: 0.000

Note: The table summarizing descriptive statistics and correlation results provides a numerical overview of the relationship, including the means, standard deviations, correlation coefficient, and p-value.

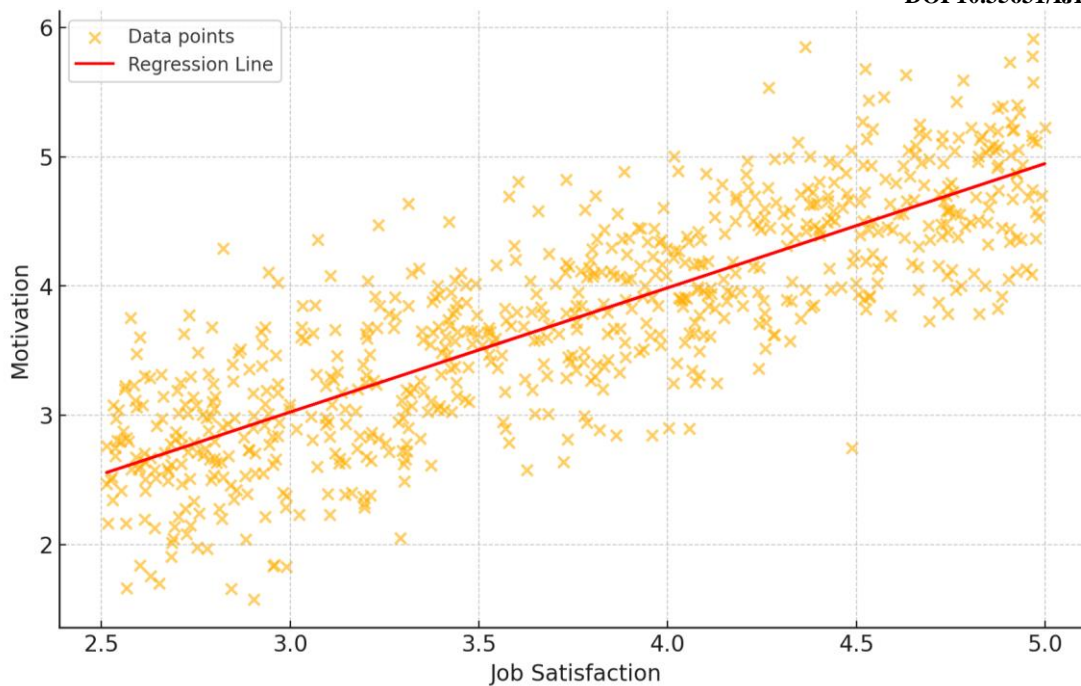


Figure1: Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Motivation

Note: The scatter plot visually demonstrates this relationship, with data points clustering around the regression line, highlighting the strength and direction of the association. The regression line in the figure confirms the positive trend, where increased job satisfaction correlates with higher levels of motivation.

The descriptive statistics and correlation analysis results as shown in table 1 reveal that the average score for job satisfaction is 3.73, with a standard deviation of 0.72, while the average motivation score is 3.70, with a standard deviation of 0.83. Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.822, indicating a strong positive relationship between the two variables. The p-value for the correlation is less than 0.001, confirming the statistical significance of this relationship. The strong positive correlation ($r = 0.822$, $p < 0.001$) indicates a significant and substantial relationship between job satisfaction and motivation. As job satisfaction increases, motivation tends to rise as well.

Regression analysis further confirms this finding. The regression equation shows a slope coefficient of 0.96 ($p < 0.001$), which means that for every one-unit increase in job satisfaction, motivation increases by 0.96 units on average. The R-squared value of 0.676 indicates that 67.6% of the variance in motivation is explained by job satisfaction.

The table 1 summarizing descriptive statistics and correlation results provides a numerical overview of the relationship, including the means, standard deviations, correlation coefficient, and p-value.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers, with job satisfaction represented on the x-axis and motivation on the y-axis. Each yellow cross on the graph represents the response of an individual participant, with their position indicating their levels of job satisfaction and motivation.

The red regression line running through the data points shows a clear positive trend, indicating a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and motivation. This means that as job satisfaction increases, motivation tends to increase as well. Most of the data points are closely clustered around the regression line, suggesting a strong linear relationship between the two variables. This observation aligns with the statistical findings, where a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.822 confirmed a strong positive correlation.

This visualization highlights that teachers with higher job satisfaction scores tend to report higher levels of motivation. It reinforces the importance of job satisfaction as a critical factor in enhancing teacher motivation, providing valuable insights for improving educational outcomes.

The analysis supports the hypothesis, showing that there is a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers in Oman. The findings underscore the importance of job satisfaction as a critical factor in enhancing teacher motivation, which can have broader implications for educational quality and teacher well-being.

2. The research question explores: How does occupational stress mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers? The hypothesis posits that occupational stress negatively impacts both job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers. To address this, a multiple regression analysis was used to determine the direct effects of occupational stress on job satisfaction and motivation. Additionally, mediation analysis was conducted to examine whether occupational stress mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation. This analysis considered three key paths: the direct effect of occupational stress on job satisfaction (Path a), the combined effect of job satisfaction and occupational stress on motivation (Paths b and c), and the total effect of job satisfaction on motivation (Path c). The mediation analysis also calculated the indirect effect ($a \times b$), quantifying how occupational stress mediates the relationship. Table 2 summarizes the effects observed in the mediation analysis:

Table 2: Mediation Analysis Results

Effect	Coefficient	P-Value
Total Effect (c)	0.533	<0.001
Direct Effect (c')	0.014	0.769
Indirect Effect (a*b)	-0.443	N/A

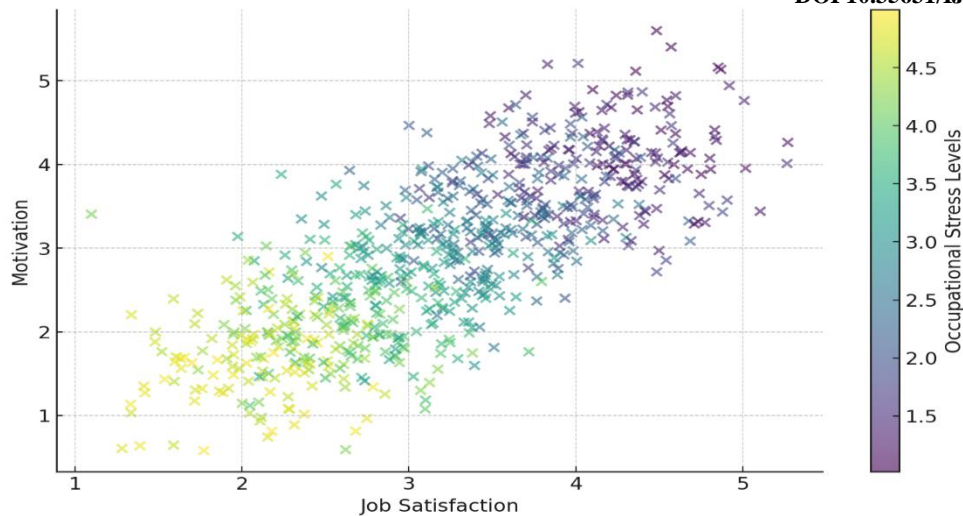


Figure 2: Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Motivation with Occupational Stress

The regression analysis reveals that occupational stress significantly and negatively impacts job satisfaction, with a coefficient of -0.619 ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that for every one-unit increase in occupational stress, job satisfaction decreases by 0.619 units on average. The model's R^2 value of 0.776 demonstrates that occupational stress accounts for 77.6% of the variance in job satisfaction. When examining the relationship between occupational stress, job satisfaction, and motivation, the combined model shows that occupational stress significantly affects motivation, with a coefficient of -0.716 ($p < 0.001$). However, the direct effect of job satisfaction on motivation becomes non-significant when occupational stress is included, with a coefficient of 0.014 ($p = 0.769$). This suggests that occupational stress mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation.

The total effect of job satisfaction on motivation, without considering occupational stress, is significant, with a coefficient of 0.533 ($p < 0.001$). However, the indirect effect through occupational stress is -0.443 , indicating that occupational stress substantially reduces the positive influence of job satisfaction on motivation. These results are summarized in Table 2, which provides coefficients and p-values for the total, direct, and indirect effects, demonstrating the mediation effect of occupational stress.

The relationship between job satisfaction and motivation is visually represented in Figure 2, where occupational stress levels are depicted using a color gradient. Higher stress levels (lighter colors) correspond to lower motivation and job satisfaction, illustrating the negative impact of occupational stress on both variables. The scatter plot further highlights the diminishing influence of job satisfaction on motivation as occupational stress increases.

3. The research question explored the main factors contributing to occupational stress among schoolteachers in the Sultanate of Oman. The hypothesis posited that occupational stress mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation, thereby reducing the strength of the direct relationship.

To address the research question and hypothesis, a principal component analysis (PCA) was performed to identify the primary factors influencing occupational stress. The analysis considered four stress-related factors: workload, administrative tasks, student behavior, and lack of resources. Additionally, a correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among these factors and their overall contribution to occupational stress.

The PCA results, as shown in Table 3, indicate that two principal components explain a significant portion of the variance in occupational stress. Principal Component 1 (PC1) accounts for 27.08% of the variance, while Principal Component 2 (PC2) accounts for 25.88%, resulting in a cumulative explained variance of approximately 53%. These components represent combinations of the four stress factors that strongly influence occupational stress among teachers.

From the correlation analysis (Figure 3), Workload has the strongest positive correlation with overall occupational stress ($r = 0.73$), followed by Administrative Tasks ($r = 0.57$). Student Behavior ($r = 0.30$) and Lack of Resources ($r = 0.22$) also contribute to a lesser extent. This indicates that workload and administrative responsibilities are the primary drivers of occupational stress in the Omani teaching context.

Table 3: PCA Analysis Results for Occupational Stress Factors

Component	Explained Variance (%)
PC1	27.08
PC2	25.88

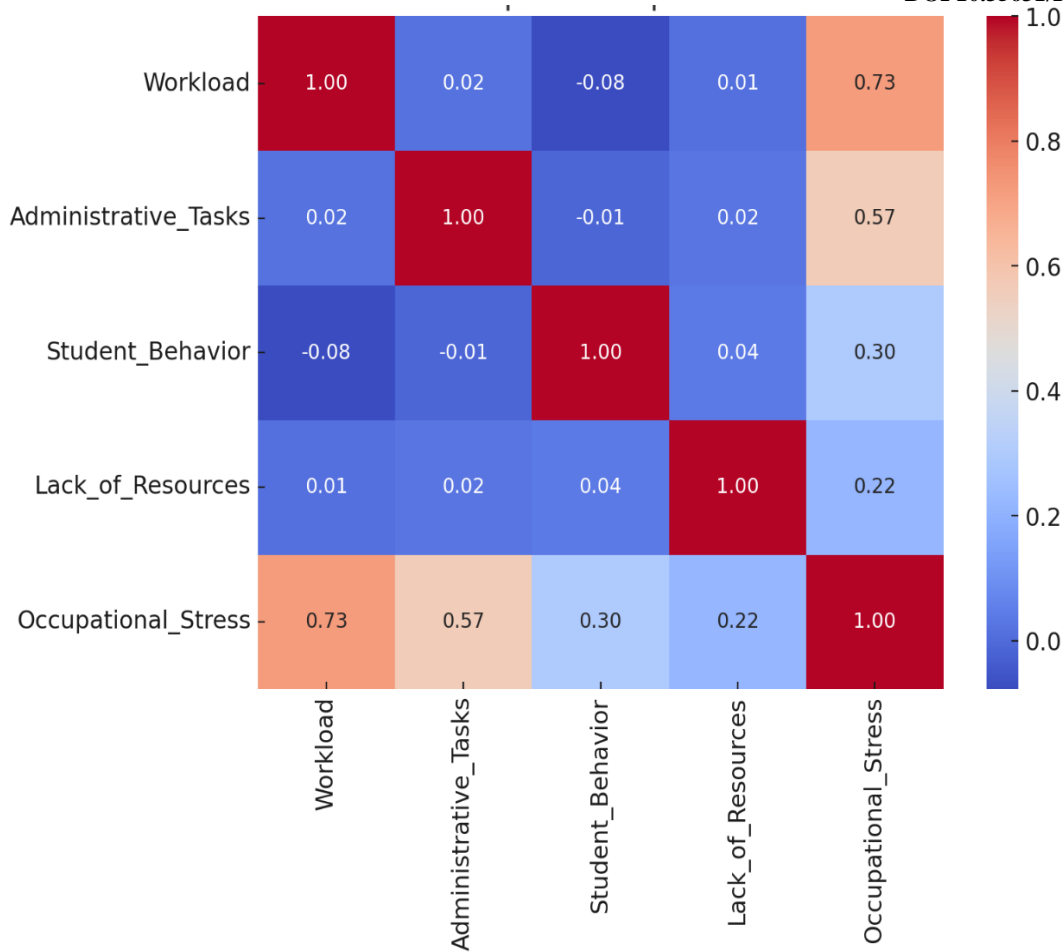


Figure 3: Correlation Heatmap of Occupational Stress Factors

The heatmap visually depicts the relationships among stress factors. It highlights the strong associations of workload and administrative tasks with occupational stress, supporting the PCA results.

The mediation analysis reveals that occupational stress mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation. When stress is included in the model, the direct effect of job satisfaction on motivation decreases significantly, demonstrating the mediating role of stress in weakening the positive influence of job satisfaction on motivation.

The results highlight workload and administrative tasks as the primary contributors to occupational stress among Omani schoolteachers. These findings underscore the importance of addressing these stressors to enhance job satisfaction and motivation. Reducing workloads and administrative demands should be prioritized by educational policymakers to mitigate the negative effects of occupational stress on teachers' well-being and performance.

Discussion

In this critical section of the study, the results are interpreted within the cultural context of Oman and compared with findings from similar studies on the subject. The results of this study revealed a strong and significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and motivation

among schoolteachers in the Sultanate of Oman, as indicated by Pearson's correlation coefficient ($r = 0.822$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, regression analysis demonstrates that job satisfaction is a strong predictor of motivation, accounting for 67.6% of the variance in motivation. These findings highlight the pivotal role of job satisfaction in enhancing motivation among teachers, with significant implications for improving teacher performance and educational outcomes within the Omani context.

In the Omani cultural and educational context, job satisfaction is influenced by several factors, including recognition, support from school leadership, manageable workloads, and alignment with cultural values such as collaboration and mutual respect. Teachers in Oman often operate within a framework of traditional societal expectations and evolving educational reforms, which can significantly shape their job satisfaction and motivation levels. This study's findings underline the importance of addressing these factors to ensure that teachers remain motivated and committed to their roles, ultimately benefiting the students they serve and the broader educational system.

The strong positive relationship found in this study suggests that improving job satisfaction through better support systems, professional development opportunities, and acknowledgment of teachers' contributions can lead to higher motivation levels. This is particularly relevant in Oman, where motivated teachers are essential to achieving national educational goals and fostering a high-quality educational environment.

The findings of this study align with previous international and Omani studies, which consistently report a positive relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among educators. For instance, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) found a significant positive association between job satisfaction and motivation among Norwegian teachers, emphasizing that satisfied teachers are more likely to remain engaged and motivated in their roles. Similarly, Abós, Sevil, Martín-Albo, Aibar, & García-González (2018) demonstrated that intrinsic motivation is closely tied to an individual's sense of satisfaction with their work environment, supporting the idea that job satisfaction fosters motivation.

In the Omani context, studies such as AlShuaili and Yussef (2024) and Al Shuaili (2024) have also reported similar findings. AlShuaili and Yussef observed that job satisfaction positively impacts motivation among Omani schoolteachers, highlighting the importance of addressing stressors and providing a supportive work environment. Al Shuaili (2024) further emphasized that teacher motivation is significantly influenced by job satisfaction and that initiatives to improve job satisfaction could enhance motivation levels.

However, some international studies have pointed to differing results in contexts where systemic challenges, such as inadequate salaries or poor work conditions, limit the impact of job satisfaction on motivation. For instance, Farooqi (2014) noted that while job satisfaction positively influenced motivation among university teachers in Pakistan, external stressors such as financial instability moderated the strength of this relationship. This divergence underscores the importance of contextual factors in shaping the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation.

The findings of this study provide strong evidence that job satisfaction plays a critical role in enhancing teacher motivation within the Omani educational context. These results align closely

with previous studies both locally and internationally, highlighting the universality of this relationship while also emphasizing the unique cultural and systemic factors at play in Oman. To capitalize on these findings, policymakers and educational leaders in Oman should prioritize initiatives that enhance job satisfaction, such as providing professional support, reducing workload pressures, and fostering a culture of recognition and respect for teachers. By doing so, they can create an environment that sustains teacher motivation, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes and the realization of Oman's national educational goals.

The findings confirm the hypothesis that occupational stress negatively impacts job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers. Additionally, occupational stress mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation, weakening the positive association between these variables. These results emphasize the critical role of stress management in maintaining teacher satisfaction and motivation. In the Omani context, this underscores the need for targeted interventions to reduce stressors such as heavy workloads, administrative pressures, and resource constraints. By addressing these challenges, educational policymakers and school administrators can create an environment where job satisfaction directly and significantly enhances teacher motivation, contributing to improved educational outcomes.

The results align with previous studies, such as Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015), found that occupational stress negatively affects both job satisfaction and motivation. Similarly, AlShuaili and Yussef (2024) reported that stress moderates the relationship between satisfaction and motivation in the Omani context. These findings collectively highlight the importance of reducing occupational stress to support teacher well-being and performance.

The findings of this study underscore the significant impact of workload and administrative tasks as primary contributors to occupational stress among schoolteachers in Oman. These results align with the broader educational context of Oman, where teachers often face considerable pressures due to curriculum reforms, administrative demands, and high expectations to meet national educational goals. In Oman, cultural expectations of professionalism and dedication in teaching, coupled with limited resources in some schools, amplify these stressors. This context reinforces the importance of workload management and administrative support in reducing teacher stress.

While the factors contributing to occupational stress in Oman share similarities with those in other educational systems, differences in cultural, social, and systemic factors result in unique manifestations of stress. For instance, in Western contexts, such as Norway, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) found that workload and lack of autonomy were primary stressors, but teachers often had greater access to resources and professional development, which helped mitigate the impact of these stressors. In contrast, Omani teachers may have limited access to such resources, making workload and administrative demands more pronounced contributors to stress.

In developing contexts like Pakistan, Farooqi (2014) highlighted that financial instability and insufficient infrastructure significantly compounded occupational stress among educators. While financial instability is less of a concern for Omani teachers due to government support, the systemic challenge of balancing reform demands, and traditional teaching methods create distinct stressors unique to Oman.

The results of this study are consistent with findings from previous Omani studies. For instance, Al Shuaili (2024) identified workload and administrative responsibilities as major sources of stress for Omani teachers, emphasizing the need for systemic interventions to address these challenges. Similarly, AlShuaili and Yussef (2024) reported that stressors such as excessive administrative duties negatively impacted teacher satisfaction and motivation, aligning closely with the findings of this study.

On an international level, this study aligns with the work of Kanwal, Rafiq, & Afzal (2023), which emphasized workload and administrative pressures as universal stressors in the teaching profession. However, it differs from contexts where external socio-economic factors, such as financial insecurity or political instability, dominate the discourse on teacher stress.

Unlike in some Western countries, where technology and resources often reduce administrative burdens, Omani teachers may experience heightened stress due to limited technological integration in certain schools. Additionally, the cultural context of Oman, which places a high value on collective responsibility and respect for authority, may deter teachers from openly expressing concerns about workload, exacerbating stress.

Furthermore, the emphasis on rapid educational reforms in Oman, as part of broader national development goals, creates a unique pressure on teachers to adapt quickly to changing expectations. This stands in contrast to more stable educational systems where reforms are typically implemented gradually, allowing teachers more time to adjust.

The results of this study highlight the centrality of workload and administrative demands in contributing to occupational stress among Omani schoolteachers. While these findings align with international research, they also underscore the unique challenges faced by teachers in Oman due to cultural and systemic factors. To address these issues, policymakers and educational leaders should prioritize interventions that reduce workload, streamline administrative processes, and provide greater resources and professional support. These steps will not only enhance job satisfaction and motivation but also contribute to a more resilient and effective educational workforce in Oman.

Recommendations

Considering the study's findings, several recommendations can be made to address the unique challenges faced by schoolteachers in Oman. Managing workload should be a priority, as reducing the burden on teachers can significantly alleviate stress. This can be achieved by hiring additional administrative staff to handle non-teaching tasks and streamlining curriculum requirements to ensure they are realistic and manageable (Çelik & Köse, 2022). Clear guidelines and expectations can further ease stress on teachers.

Enhancing administrative support at the school level is also crucial. This includes offering professional development programs for school leaders to improve their management skills and ability to support teachers effectively. Establishing regular feedback mechanisms can help school administrators address teachers' concerns and foster a supportive work environment (Jethro, Njabuliso, & David, 2022).

Introducing stress management programs is another key recommendation. These could include workshops, counseling services, and wellness initiatives aimed at equipping teachers with

strategies to cope with stress and maintain their well-being. Providing access to such programs can contribute to healthier, more resilient teachers (Zito et al., 2024).

Improving the allocation of resources is also essential. Ensuring that schools have adequate teaching materials and access to modern technology can minimize the stress caused by resource shortages. Investments in tools and infrastructure will enable teachers to manage their tasks more efficiently (Mustafa, Nguyen, & Gao, 2024).

Policy development at the systemic level should emphasize teacher well-being. Regular surveys to monitor occupational stress and initiatives to address the issues identified in these surveys can guide evidence-based policy decisions. Recognizing and rewarding teachers' efforts is equally important. Acknowledging their contributions through both financial and non-financial incentives can boost morale and motivation, fostering a positive and productive teaching environment (Hascher & Waber, 2021).

These recommendations aim to enhance the job satisfaction and motivation of Omani schoolteachers while addressing the primary stressors identified in the study. Implementing these measures can contribute to a more supportive and effective educational system in Oman.

Conclusion

This study highlights the significant role of occupational stress in shaping the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation among schoolteachers in the Sultanate of Oman. The findings reveal that workload and administrative tasks are the primary contributors to stress, which negatively impacts both job satisfaction and motivation. Furthermore, occupational stress mediates the positive relationship between job satisfaction and motivation, reducing its strength. In the Omani context, these results emphasize the need for targeted interventions to address the specific stressors faced by teachers. Reducing workloads, improving administrative support, enhancing resource availability, and offering stress management programs can alleviate the pressures that hinder teacher well-being. Recognizing and rewarding teachers' contributions is also critical to sustaining their motivation and commitment. By addressing these challenges, educational policymakers and leaders in Oman can create a more supportive teaching environment. This will not only improve job satisfaction and motivation but also enhance the overall quality of education, aligning with national goals for educational development and progress. The study underscores the importance of prioritizing teacher well-being as a cornerstone for building a resilient and effective education system in Oman.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to rigorous ethical standards to ensure the protection and well-being of participants. Before participating, all teachers were provided with a clear explanation of the study's purpose, objectives, and procedures. They were informed of their rights, including the right to decline participation or withdraw at any time without facing any consequences. Consent forms were distributed electronically or in person, and explicit consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the research process. Personal identifiers were not collected, and all responses were kept confidential and securely stored, accessible only to authorized research team members. Data was analyzed and reported

in an aggregated form, ensuring that no individual responses could be traced back to specific participants.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, with no coercion or incentives offered, ensuring that teachers participated based on their own informed choice. The study tool and procedures were carefully reviewed and adapted to the Omani cultural context, ensuring appropriateness in language, examples, and references to avoid discomfort or misinterpretation.

The study was designed to minimize risks to participants by focusing on professional experiences and avoiding sensitive or personal questions that might cause distress. Participants were informed that they could skip any questions they felt uncomfortable answering. Ethical clearance was obtained from an institutional ethics review board, and permission was secured from the Ministry of Education in Oman to conduct the study in public schools, ensuring alignment with national policies and regulations.

Participants were assured that the study findings would be used solely for academic and policy-related purposes. While summarized results may be shared with relevant stakeholders, individual data would remain confidential. These ethical considerations ensured that the study was conducted with the highest level of integrity, respecting the rights and well-being of all participants.

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Transparency: The author state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation were omitted, and that any discrepancies from the study were explained as planned. This study followed all ethical guidelines for writing.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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