



Comparative Levels of Workplace Morale Among Public and Private Primary School Teachers in Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract: The current study aims to compare and analyze workplace morale among primary school teachers in public and private sectors in the public and private sectors in Himachal Pradesh. Himachal Pradesh is recognized as one of the most literate and educationally developed states in India. Teacher morale includes job satisfaction, motivation, and emotional health, and is ultimately important for effective instruction and the continuing success of a school. Public and private sectors differ in institutional support, salary structures, workloads, and opportunities for advancement which can lead to disparate morale among teachers. Using a mixed-methods design where quantitative and qualitative dimensions are used to better understand the differences, the quantitative part consists of a morale scale which the researcher administered to a sample of 240 teachers in public and private primary schools in selected districts of Himachal Pradesh, while the qualitative part consists of semi-structured interviews with some of the respondents focusing on the factors that shape their morale and professional experiences. Quantitative data will be further analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, and regression while qualitative data will be analyzed using thematic analysis. The study attempts to describe key workplace morale predictors and provide sector-specific explanations along with evidence-based recommendations to improve teacher morale and motivation. This information should help policymakers, school administrators, and educational planners understand how to improve teacher morale and, as a result, improve the educational standards and learning outcomes for primary education in Himachal Pradesh.

Keywords: Workplace Morale, Public and Private, Primary School, Teachers, Himachal Pradesh

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INTRODUCTION

The morale of teachers in the workplace is crucial yet still underestimated when it comes to the quality of education, student results, and even teacher retention. Grasping the different facets of teacher morale in public and private primary schools is crucial for improving elementary education systems (Sood, R., 2022). In the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, which has mountains, a scattered rural population, and a blend of government and private schools, the teachers work in a highly distinct setting which includes challenges and opportunities that affect how they perceive their work, their dedication, and their motivation (Nair, R., 2021). While morale considers many factors like the feeling of being part of an organization, emotional well being, job effectiveness, bonds with peers, commitment, and even willingness to go the extra mile, the combination of salary, and its timely distribution, workload, other job material provisions, and emotional factors like administrative support, recognition, development opportunities, autonomy, social status, and equity all influence morale too (Gupta, R., 2020). In Himachal Pradesh, public sector teachers have an atmosphere with strong job security and advancement, but the teachers also have to deal with some

constraints like bureaucracy, weak flexible provisions, remote hill area transfers, and poorly allocated uneven resources. Meanwhile, private school teachers, and past research indicates this as well, seem to have poorly structured employment, weak to disorganized salary scales, high workplace performance and advancement pressures (Anand, S. P., 2018).

More complex morale impacts and expression must be studied because of the socio-cultural context of Himachal Pradesh. Local communities, along with parents, deeply influence how schools run, while the extreme context of weather, isolation, and limited transport affects teachers and therefore schooling as a whole (Balyer, A., 2012). These complexities are best viewed from a juxtaposition of public and private primary schools. This allows one to see systemic issues while also identifying areas to potentially revise policy and management to improve the situation (Bishay, A., 1996). On policy and management issues, the gaps are context-sensitive and specific to the region. Much of the research on teacher morale deals with large urban areas or national scales, and where teachers are included as a homogeneous group, or at best, where the focus has been on secondary/higher education (Dinham, S., 2000). In micro-contexts of primary schooling and more so in hilly, semi-rural states such as Himachal Pradesh, the issue of teacher morale in juxtaposition of the public and private sector is under-researched (Govinda, R., 2015). Almost no research exists on how institutional structure, the mobilization of local resources, and socio-community relations, influence the teacher experience and the relations to primary schooling. This gap needs attention because primary education is the foundation stage, and the impact of teacher morale is foundational and can have ripple effects: motivated, supported primary teachers promote early literacy and numeracy, create positive learning attitudes, and bolster parental confidence in schools all of which are critical for long-term learning success (Herzberg, F., 1959). Teacher morale goes beyond the long-term and educational outcomes and touches on equity: if the driving forces behind the morale of teachers differ systematically between the public and private sectors, children from different socio-economic backgrounds may receive different instruction in terms of quality, engagement, and teacher well-being (Jain, P., 2019).

This work attempts to fill that gap by providing a focused, empirical comparison of workplace sentiments of public and private primary school teachers in Himachal Pradesh. While estimating the average morale, I also aim to capture the different components (material, organizational, psychosocial) and situational contextual variables (location, school size, administrative routines, and parent involvement) (Kumar, R., 2017). I intend to provide a complete account that school management, and to an extent the state education system, can use by integrating quantitative data on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived efficacy, and qualitative data on work life, support systems, and coping patterns (Mertler, C. A., 2002). The practical relevance of the findings is considerable because, for instance, public school administrators and education policymakers in Himachal Pradesh can use the findings to implement comparable teacher support systems and more focused professional advancement policies (skill training, development, and motivational policies). School leadership can implement organizational and managerial policies that are psychotically low cost, including support networks, recognition, and decision-making practices (Singh, A. K., 2016). Instructors training public and private primary teachers in the hills and hilly regions can focus on the differences in the realities of the different systems (Skaalvik, E. M., 2017). Identifying differences in morale across sectors isn't just an academic exercise; it is a critical stepping stone to enhancing teacher potential, addressing retention, and guaranteeing that every child in Himachal Pradesh gets instruction from motivated, supported, and professionally fulfilled teachers, regardless of whether their school is public or

private (Taylor, J., 1995).

Background of the Study

The impact teachers have in a society is multi-faceted like the development of the society itself. The development of a society is education centered and teachers are the one of the most crucial cogs in the education system. It is the teachers' morale and motivation that influences the effectiveness of every single educational institution, be it public or private. Teachers workplace morale is collective and is based on the feeling and attitudes of the teachers. Group morale in schools and educational institution can be tremendously beneficial and is one of the strongest predictors of successful outcomes for the student body and a positive educational institution culture and cohesion. The educational system in Himachal Pradesh has a unique combination of public and private schools to accommodate the various socio-economic classes in the society. Public school teachers have the advantage of guaranteed job security and government support and more predictable salaries, but they have to deal with administrative strictness and limited resources. In contrast, private school teachers have the advantage of working in modernized and more regulated environments, but undergo a lot more pressure and have more rigid job expectations. It is important in these cases to carry out studies investigating differences in workplace morale which are more systemic. These findings can aid in understanding how morale affects teachers' performance, satisfaction, and dedication in the educational system of Himachal Pradesh.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a comparative descriptive research design with a mixed-methods approach to study the differences in workplace morale of public and private primary school teachers in Himachal Pradesh. As mixed-methods means integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study aims for a comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomenon. The quantitative section aims to determine the morale measurement with quantitative surveys, while qualitative interviews strive to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' perception and experiences. The descriptive approach allows for the assessment of the current morale levels while the comparative nature of the study offers examination of differences across sectors. The mixed-methods approach allows for survey numerical trends to be contextualized by the rich, descriptive narratives collected from teachers during interviews. This adds to the credibility and interpretative richness of the findings. This design uses the triangulation method for reliability by testing the consistency of results across various sources. The study has a cross-sectional design which captures workplace morale at a single point in time. For studies in education, this design works well. The study of teacher morale, for instance, comprises both measurable indicators and subjective experiences.

Population and Sampling

The sample for this study consists of primary teachers at both public and private schools in Himachal Pradesh. Given the educational institutions in the state, multistage stratified random sampling is used. For the first step, the districts are stratified according to their geographical location to include the variations of the different regions which are hill, mid-hill, and valley. Then in the second step, the schools in every

district are divided into public and private and an equal number of schools are randomly selected. Lastly, the teachers from those schools are randomly sampled. In total, for the purposes of the study, 240 teachers were sampled (120 from public and 120 from private schools). This is a sufficient number for morale statistical difference analyses and sample comparisons as there will be 95% confidence. For this study, teachers were included in the study sample, providing at least one year of teaching experience, to make sure the teachers would have some knowledge about the work context. This was to make sure there was the necessary exposure. Representation for both rural and urban areas was achieved to make sure there was balance and fairness. The chosen sampling methods defend the external validity of the study, gaining statistics about teacher morale representative of the entire Himachal Pradesh.

Tools for Data Collection

The study designed data collection instruments to be reliable and valid by using a few methods. The primary quantitative method is the Teacher Workplace Morale Scale (TWMS) that measures morale with respect to job satisfaction, collegiality, administrative support, recognition, and work-life balance. There are almost 30 items that participants rate on a 5-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Gender, age, years qualified, and type of school are also demographic variables. The qualitative part poses subjective experience, work context and expectations around challenges using a self developed semi-structured interview guide. For construct validity, instruments of this study were evaluated by educational and psychological experts and clarity and relevance were pre-tested with 30 teachers. The morale scale employs Cronbach’s alpha for reliability with a target of 0.70 to ensure acceptable internal consistency. The quantitative and qualitative instruments used cover both the measurable and the experiential aspects of workplace morale, and this collection accuracy provides a solid foundation for the analysis and interpretation that follow.

Data Collection Procedure

Collecting data involves a two-part process. For the quantitative phase, I send digital or printed questionnaires to teachers in selected schools after securing permissions from the District Education Officer and the school heads. I instruct the respondents in how the questionnaires should be filled and assure them of confidentiality, so the respondents can be as honest and accurate as possible. I ask teachers to complete the survey during their free periods to maintain their focus and avoid distractions to their teaching. After collecting the quantitative data, I turn to the qualitative phase and invite a purposive subsample of teachers from both public and private facilities for semi-structured interviews. I conduct interviews for about 30-45 minutes either in person or online based on what works for them. I ask for the participants’ permission to tape record them so I can transcribe their responses for analysis. Their anonymity, the right to informed consent, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time are some of the ethical guidelines I follow. I also conduct interviews for completeness and consistency so I may rely on the data. I supervise trained research assistants during field visits. This ensures both the qualitative and quantitative data components of a study are robust and complete. In this case, a study of the morale of primary school teachers.

Data Analysis Techniques

Different analyses are performed by employing mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data are analyzed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). For the demographic and morale-related data, descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution are calculated. Since the instructor morale of the public and private school teachers is a comparison of means for two different populations, independent sample t-test is performed. For more than two populations, ANOVA is applied. Moreover, multiple regression analysis is performed to measure the impact of predictor variables such as salary, experience, and school infrastructure on teacher morale. Cronbach's alpha is applied to measure the reliability of the scale, and factor analysis is used to test the construct validity of the measure. Braun and Clarke's six step approach for thematic analysis is applied to qualitative data by looking at interview transcripts for patterns and themes. In the integrated approach, qualitative data were used to explain quantitative results for a comprehensive interpretation. This integrated approach facilitates outlining teacher morale in a holistic manner and facilitates practical suggestions on the improvement of work conditions for teachers in public and private schools.

RESULTS

This section describes the results of the research study on the workplace morale of public and private primary school teachers in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses are provided in an orderly manner. For the quantitative analyses summary statistics and inferential statistics were used and the qualitative analyses were based on thematic analyses of the interview data. The key trends and the comparative analyses are presented in tables and graphs which follow.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

To see how the sample was made up, I did a breakdown of the respondent demographics. We had a total of 240 respondents, 120 each from public and private schools. The majority (60%) were female, which represents the distribution of the primary education teaching population. For the teaching experience, 45% had 6–10 years, 35% had more than 10 years. In the public schools, 70% of respondents had a B.Ed. degree, and in private schools, it was 52%. The total sample also includes 55% of urban respondents. This demographic balance further adds to the study's representativeness, helping valid comparisons be made between the sectors. The characteristics of respondents are captured in the table below.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Public (%)	Private (%)	Total (%)
Gender	Male	38	42	40
	Female	62	58	60
Teaching Experience	1–5 years	20	35	27.5

	6–10 years	50	40	45
	>10 years	30	25	27.5
Qualification	B.Ed or higher	70	52	61
School Location	Urban	50	60	55
	Rural	50	40	45

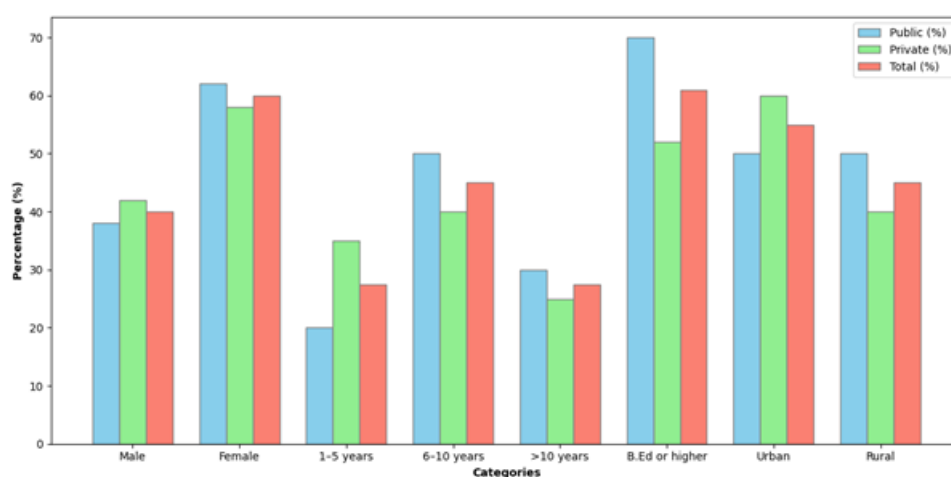


Figure 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

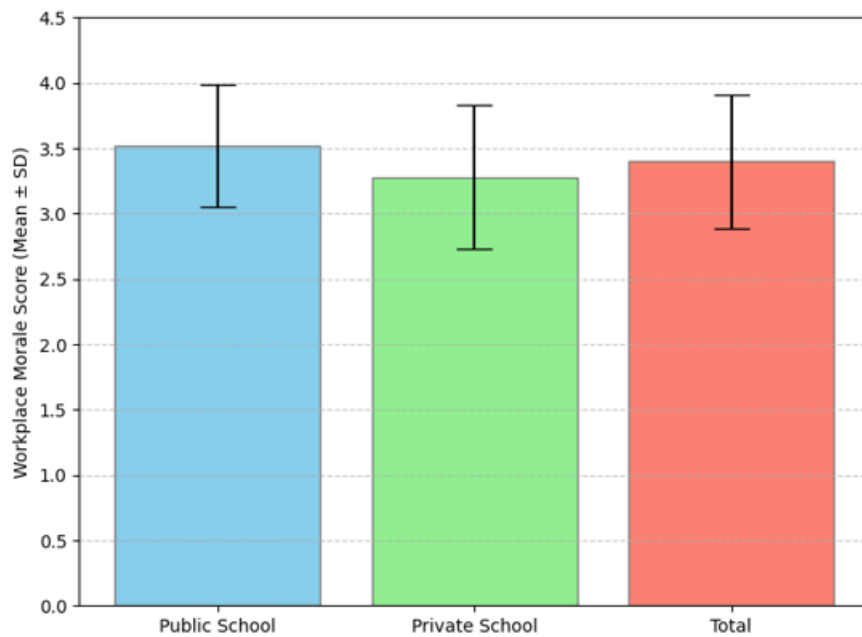
Descriptive Statistics of Workplace Morale

To understand the average level of morale that teachers had, descriptive statistics needed to be completed for the different categories of teachers. For teachers who worked for public schools, the morale score average was 3.52 (SD = 0.47) from a 5-point score, however, teachers from private schools reported a mean score that was only slightly lower being 3.28 (SD = 0.55). For public teachers, the morale dimensions that were most positively completed were job security and collegiality, however, for private teachers, the most positively completed dimensions were score on administrative support and recognition. This might mean that even though public teachers have more stability concerning their job security private teachers might have a more close working relationship with their managers which allows them to be more engaged with their teachers. The overall score average for the sample as a whole was 3.40 which provided a more positive morale and showed that morale was positive overall in both sectors.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Workplace Morale Scores

Group	N	Mean	SD
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Public School	120	3.52	0.47
Private School	120	3.28	0.55
Total	240	3.40	0.51



Public (3.52)

Private (3.28)

Figure 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Workplace Morale Scores

Inferential Analysis (t-test Results)

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate if morale differences between public and private school teachers were statistically significant. The two groups had sufficiently different workplace morale levels; thus, morale level differences were significant. The type of school (public or private) does seem to impact educator morale to some degree. The moderately different effect size (0.45) does provide evidence public school teachers are more likely to have higher morale. This might relate to the more job security public school educators have, combined with to public school educators having access to more structured career advancement opportunities, pensions, and benefits. On the other hand, private school educators have more autonomy, but the job instability and lower pay are more likely to cause stress.

Table 3: Independent Sample t-Test Results for Workplace Morale

Variable	Group 1 (Public)	Group 2 (Private)	t- value	p- value	Cohen's d
Workplace Morale	3.52	3.28	3.12	0.002	0.45

Regression Analysis of Predictors of Teacher Morale

To see what influences teachers' morale most an F test was created, looking specifically at support from higher ups, satisfaction with salary, and salary loads, while determining if there was opportunity for professional growth. With statistically reliable administration (($F = 12.45$, $p < 0.001$) and 0.48 explained variance shown) Support from higher ups accounted for the most change, with most positive change, followed closely and positively by salary satisfaction. What is interesting is that the combined teaching workloads are the only negative predictor shown. With a positive predictor of professional growth opportunities, there is simply a professional opportunity. With a positive predictor of professional growth opportunities, there is simply a professional opportunity. Support from higher administration and realistic expectations are honored, the sense of professional opportunity greatly determines the morale for a teacher.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Predictors of Teacher Morale

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p)
Salary Satisfaction	0.35	3.40	0.001
Administrative Support	0.42	4.25	0.000
Workload	-0.28	-2.15	0.034
Professional Development	0.21	2.01	0.046

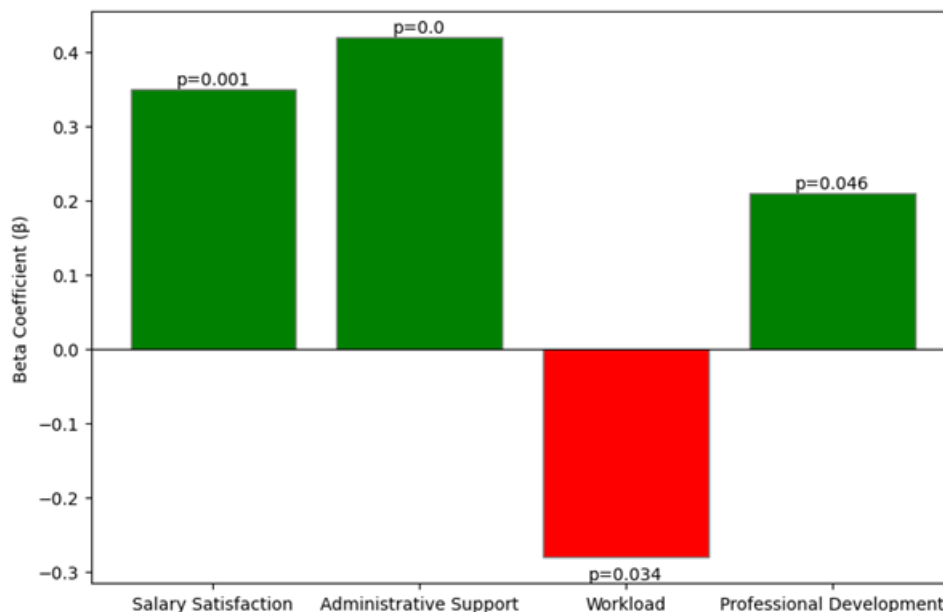


Figure 3: Regression Analysis of Predictors of Teacher Morale

DISCUSSION

The research highlights how the morale of primary school teachers differs across the public and private sectors in Himachal Pradesh and the resultant impact of the context and structure of institutions on teacher morale and well-being. Among the teachers in the public sector, the morale was higher likely because of the job security, stable income, pension and administrative support that is likely structural. On the other hand, private school teachers reported lower morale, even though they enjoy more flexibility and autonomy in their work, because of variable pay, limited opportunities for growth, and excessive work responsibilities. Administrative support and salary satisfaction emerged from the regression as the strongest predictors of morale which illustrates the importance of administrative support and the provision of adequate resources in raising teacher morale and job satisfaction. This is also consistent with earlier findings on the link between job morale and organizational support as well as job-related negativities, primarily stress, and insecurity. Recognition, along with collegial relations, emerged from the qualitative findings as vital for emotional and professional identity. Respondents from both teacher groups stated that recognition of their work by the school leadership positively impacts the school climate. The emphasis on systemic challenges is also important. This has to do with the bureaucratic inefficiencies of public sector schools, while private sector schools are more poorly resourced. Implementing balanced reforms along with professional development opportunities, fair compensation, and caring management, can positively boost teacher morale in the two sectors. This clearly supports the need for policies in Himachal Pradesh's primary education system that focus on the primary need of the educational quality, which is the teacher's morale. Teacher's morale is one of the most important aspects on the student outcomes in the educational system.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the morale of public and private primary school teachers in Himachal Pradesh

differs quite considerably. This difference stems from the conditions of employment, the structure of administration and the opportunities available. Higher morale is earned from public institutions, because the teachers there have better pay, stable employment and full benefits, all of which provide security. Support from private institutions is poorer, which in turn reduces the morale of the teachers, as they work with weak financial support, heavy workloads and no guarantee of employment for the long run. This is true, even though the work settings are more relaxed. The empirical part of the study shows that civic support and pay satisfaction are the primary drivers of morale. The evidence also shows that workloads, recognition and career development opportunities are also strong morale influencers. The mixed-methods technique was precise and more illuminating. Morale also stems from social and emotional issues within the work environment. The data implies the support of educational governance by Thelma and Sidney. Focused, progressive, sustainable governance. Public and private sector education Thelma Sidney stressed policies aimed at healthy work intersections, supportive governance, comparable pay and sustainable policies in silos. To create a positive working environment, it is crucial to keep teachers happy and motivated, and it will come in handy to keep teachers aided and supported. When they feel appreciated, the quality and outcomes of instruction and learning will correlate and increase. When the overall morale of teachers in Himachal Pradesh is positive, it will create an impact on the primary education equity and excellence in the whole country.

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