

# The Impact of Occupational Stress on Job Satisfaction among Teachers and School Principals in Oman: Analyzing the Relationship and Role-Specific Differences

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## Abstract

This research investigates the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among teachers and school principals in Oman, focusing on the differences between their experiences. Using a descriptive correlational design, data were collected from 646 participants (432 teachers and 214 principals) during the 2023-2024 academic year. Two validated tools, the Occupational Stress Scale and the Job Satisfaction Survey were employed to measure key variables. The findings reveal that principals experience higher stress levels due to administrative overload and role conflicts, while teachers report relatively higher job satisfaction, attributed to fewer managerial responsibilities and intrinsic motivators. A significant inverse correlation was observed between occupational stress and job satisfaction for both groups, with stress having a stronger adverse impact on principals. The research highlights the pressing need for policy interventions, such as reducing administrative burdens, decentralizing governance, and enhancing professional development opportunities. These measures aim to improve educators' well-being and align with Oman's Vision 2040 educational goals. Future research is recommended to explore longitudinal trends and regional comparisons.

## Keywords

Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction, Teachers, School Principals, Oman, Vision 2040

## 1. Introduction

Education plays a pivotal role in societal development, with educators being the

cornerstone of this system. In Oman, the pursuit of modernization, aligned with Vision 2040, has spurred significant reforms across the educational sector. While these reforms are designed to enhance teaching quality and student outcomes, they have simultaneously introduced various challenges for educators, particularly teachers and school principals (Oman Ministry of Education, 2021). These challenges encompass adapting to new curricula, incorporating technology, managing diverse student needs, and addressing an escalating administrative workload (Al-Barwani, Al-Ani, & Amzat, 2012).

Teachers and principals, as the primary agents of educational change, are directly affected by these shifts. Educators are tasked with balancing instructional demands with administrative expectations, with principals facing additional leadership burdens. In the Sultanate of Oman, rapid transformations within the educational framework have resulted in stressors that hinder educators' job satisfaction and overall well-being (AlShuaili, 2004). These include the stress of centralized decision-making, limited professional development opportunities, and heightened performance expectations (Al-Hosni, 2021a). As such, understanding the impact of occupational stress on job satisfaction is crucial for improving educator well-being and sustaining educational quality.

### 1.1. Occupational Stress among Educators

Occupational stress refers to the physical, emotional, or mental strain that arises when job demands exceed an individual's coping resources (Kyriacou, 2001). In the educational context, teachers often experience stress due to heavy workloads, classroom management difficulties, and stress to meet deadlines (Borg & Riding, 1991). Principals, on the other hand, face stress related to their leadership roles, including managing administrative tasks, enforcing policies, and balancing expectations from various stakeholders (Hakanen et al., 2006). In Oman, additional stressors include a centralized governance structure, growing demands for accountability, and limited access to professional development opportunities (Al-Hosni, 2021b).

Research shows that chronic stress in the education sector can lead to burnout, diminished productivity, and reduced job satisfaction, which affects both educators and students (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017a). In Oman, studies have found that teachers, particularly those in rural areas, report higher stress levels due to limited resources and societal expectations (Al-Shukri & Oman Ministry of Education, 2017).

### 1.2. Job Satisfaction in the Educational Context

Job satisfaction is defined as the level of contentment employees feel toward their work (Herzberg, 2015). In the educational sector, satisfaction is influenced by intrinsic factors, such as a passion for teaching, as well as extrinsic factors, like salary and administrative support (Dinham & Scott, 2000). For principals, satisfaction often arises from achieving institutional goals, improving student outcomes, and fostering professional development (Locke, 1976).

In Oman, job satisfaction among educators presents a mixed picture. Some teachers express satisfaction with job stability and societal respect for their profession, while others highlight challenges such as low pay, limited career advancement, and heavy administrative burdens (Al-Hosni, 2021c). Similarly, school principals report satisfaction with their leadership roles but face dissatisfaction due to the conflicting demands of their administrative and educational responsibilities (Al-Balushi, Emam, & Al'Abri, 2020; AlShuaili & Yussef, 2024).

### **1.3. Interrelationship Between Stress and Satisfaction**

The relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction is well-documented. High levels of stress are often associated with lower job satisfaction, leading to burnout, absenteeism, and high turnover rates (Hakanen et al., 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017c). However, this relationship can be influenced by factors such as organizational culture, leadership styles, and available support systems (Kyriacou, 2001).

In Oman, cultural and institutional factors, such as respect for hierarchy and collective approaches to decision-making, may shape how educators perceive and cope with stress. Anecdotal evidence and regional studies suggest that stressors, including rigid policies, large class sizes, and societal expectations, disproportionately affect the satisfaction levels of younger, less experienced educators (Al-Shukri & Al-Lamki, 2017). This research aims to explore the impact of occupational stress on job satisfaction among teachers and principals in Oman, contributing to the broader understanding of these dynamics in the Omani educational context (AlShuaili, 2024; AlShuaili & Yussef, 2024).

## **2. The Purpose of Research**

This research explores the interplay between occupational stress and job satisfaction among teachers and school principals in Oman. It aims to provide actionable insights that inform educational policy, improve workplace conditions, and enhance the well-being of educators.

## **3. Research Statement**

The problem addressed in this research revolves around the dual challenges of occupational stress and job satisfaction faced by teachers and school principals in the Sultanate of Oman. These two factors, although distinct, are interconnected and have a profound impact on the overall performance of the education system, teacher and school principal well-being, and student outcomes. The problem of the research is defined by the following reasons.

### **3.1. Contextual Factors**

#### **3.1.1. Modernization and Educational Reform**

Oman's education system is undergoing a transformative phase as part of its Vision 2040 agenda. While these reforms aim to align the system with international

standards, they have introduced complexities that place significant stress on educators. For example, policies emphasizing standardized testing, performance metrics, and technological integration have expanded the workload and raised expectations for teachers and principals (Oman Vision 2040, 2019; Al-Barwani, Al-Ani, & Amzat, 2012).

### **3.1.2. Centralized Decision-Making**

In Oman, the Ministry of Education heavily governs school operations. This centralization limits the autonomy of educators, especially principals, who must implement policies without much flexibility or input. Teachers and principals often find themselves managing conflicting demands from policymakers, parents, and students, which can create role ambiguity and stress (Al-Hosni, 2021c).

### **3.1.3. Socio-Cultural Challenges**

Cultural expectations in Oman place a high value on the roles of educators but simultaneously subject them to societal stress. Teachers and principals are expected to not only deliver academic excellence but also uphold moral and cultural values, which can exacerbate stress levels when resources and institutional support are inadequate (Al-Shukri & Al Lamki, 2017).

## **3.2. Occupational Stress among Educators**

### **3.2.1. Teachers**

Teachers in Oman report various stressors, including: Heavy Workload: Managing large classrooms, meeting curriculum standards, and addressing diverse student needs are common challenges. Resource Constraints: Limited access to teaching materials and professional development opportunities exacerbates feelings of inadequacy. Time stress: Teachers frequently struggle to balance teaching responsibilities with administrative tasks, leaving little time for lesson planning or self-care (Borg & Riding, 1991; Klassen et al., 2012).

### **3.2.2. School Principals**

For school principals, stress arises from: Leadership Responsibilities: Principals are responsible for managing school performance, staff development, and community relations. Accountability Stress: They are evaluated based on student achievement and compliance with ministry directives, often with minimal support (Boyland, 2011). Conflict Resolution: Principals frequently mediate between conflicting stakeholder interests, further increasing their emotional burden (Hakanen et al., 2006).

## **3.3. Job Satisfaction among Educators**

### **3.3.1. Challenges to Job Satisfaction**

Low job satisfaction among educators is closely tied to the stressors they face. For Teachers: Limited financial incentives, lack of professional growth opportunities, and administrative overload are significant contributors to dissatisfaction.

For Principals: Challenges include role overload, limited decision-making auto-

nomy, and bureaucratic hurdles (Al-Hosni, 2021b; Al-Balushi, Emam, & Al'Abri, 2020).

### 3.3.2. Impact of Low Satisfaction

When job satisfaction declines, it affects: Retention rates: Dissatisfied educators are more likely to leave the profession. Teaching quality: Job dissatisfaction can reduce engagement and effectiveness in the classroom. School performance: For principals, dissatisfaction hampers their ability to lead effectively, which in turn impacts overall school success (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017b).

Another statement problem of this research is: Mismatch between demands and resources: The rapid pace of educational reforms has created a gap between expectations and the resources available to meet them. Also role-specific stressors the teachers and principals face distinct challenges, yet there is a lack of tailored support to address their needs. Also Cultural and Institutional Constraints: The centralized and hierarchical nature of the education system limits opportunities for autonomy and innovation, further exacerbating stress if left unaddressed, the combined effects of high stress and low satisfaction could lead to increased attrition rates among teachers and principals, disrupting continuity in schools. Declines in the quality of teaching and leadership, adversely affecting student outcomes (AlShuaili, 2024). A failure to meet the goals outlined in Oman's Vision 2040, particularly those related to human capital development and education. Existing research on occupational stress and job satisfaction among educators in Oman is limited, particularly studies that compare the experiences of teachers and principals. By filling this gap, the research aims to Identify the root causes of occupational stress and low job satisfaction (AlShuaili & Yussef, 2024). Provide actionable recommendations to policymakers and school administrators. Enhance the overall well-being of educators, contributing to the sustainability and quality of Oman's education system.

## 4. Objectives

The current research is based on the following objectives:

- 1) To determine the levels of occupational stress among teachers and school principals in Oman and identify which group experiences higher stress levels.
- 2) To assess the levels of job satisfaction among teachers and school principals in Oman and identify which group demonstrates higher satisfaction.
- 3) To explore the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among teachers and school principals and determine if this relationship varies by role.
- 4) To analyse the causal effect of occupational stress on job satisfaction among teachers and school principals in Oman.

## 5. Research Questions

Based on the previous objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

- 1) What is the level of occupational stress among teachers and school principals in the Omani context? Which group has higher levels of stress?
- 2) What is the level of job satisfaction among teachers and school principals in the Omani context? Which group has higher levels of satisfaction?
- 3) Are there statistically significant differences between occupational stress and job satisfaction among teachers and school principals in the Omani context?
- 4) Is there a causal effect relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among teachers and school principals in the Omani context?

## 6. Research Hypothesis

Based on the previous objectives and questions, the following null hypotheses were also formulated:

- 1) There are significant differences in the levels of occupational stress between teachers and school principals, with principals experiencing higher levels due to their leadership responsibilities.
- 2) There are significant differences in job satisfaction levels between teachers and school principals, with teachers reporting higher satisfaction due to their relatively limited administrative stress.
- 3) Occupational stress is inversely correlated with job satisfaction, and this relationship is stronger among principals due to the dual demands of administrative and educational responsibilities.
- 4) Occupational stress significantly predicts job satisfaction, with high stress levels leading to lower satisfaction for both teachers and principals, though the magnitude of the effect differs by role.

## 7. Significance of Research

This research holds significant relevance for both academic and practical purposes. So, this research is particularly relevant to the Omani context for the following reasons:

- 1) Alignment with National Goals: Educator well-being is essential for achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040, which emphasizes high-quality education and workforce development.
- 2) Policy Implications: Understanding the sources of stress and factors affecting satisfaction can help policymakers design targeted interventions to enhance teacher and principal well-being.
- 3) Workforce Retention: Reducing stress and improving satisfaction are crucial for retaining skilled educators in the Omani education system.
- 4) Student Outcomes: Educator satisfaction and reduced stress positively influence teaching effectiveness, student engagement, and overall school performance.
- 5) Policy Development: The findings can inform policymakers in the Ministry of Education about targeted interventions to reduce stress and enhance satisfaction.
- 6) Alignment with Oman Vision 2040: Ensuring educator well-being aligns with Oman's broader educational goals under Vision 2040.

7) Workforce Retention: Reducing occupational stress and increasing job satisfaction are essential for retaining skilled educators and reducing turnover.

8) Student Outcomes: Addressing stress and satisfaction directly contributes to improved teaching quality, which positively impacts student performance.

9) Through a nuanced exploration of occupational stress and job satisfaction, this research contributes to the broader discourse on educator well-being in Oman's rapidly evolving educational landscape.

## 8. Literary Review

The current research is limited to the literature review in addressing previous studies that dealt with research concepts. In recent years, studies examining the occupational stress and job satisfaction of teachers and school principals have been a central focus of educational research. Several studies from 2015 to 2024 provide valuable insights into this topic in various global and regional contexts, including Oman.

### 8.1. Occupational Stress among Teachers and Principals

Research by Merike Darmody and Emer Smyth (2020a), explored the relationship between school climate and teacher stress in Ireland, highlighting that high administrative demands and classroom challenges contribute significantly to stress levels among educators. These findings are relevant in the Omani context, where principals also face higher stress levels due to their leadership responsibilities. Sprenger's (2019) research analysed stress in U.S. teachers, focusing on workload and the impact of administrative duties, suggesting that both teachers and principals experience elevated stress. In Oman, this is comparable, as principals manage both teaching responsibilities and school-wide administrative tasks, which can exacerbate stress.

### 8.2. Job Satisfaction among Teachers and Principals

Recent research by Kaur and Sharma (2023) explored job satisfaction levels among secondary school teachers in India and found that teachers in private schools experienced significantly higher stress, which inversely affected their job satisfaction. This mirrors findings from Oman, where teachers in private schools are often burdened with heavier workloads, contributing to lower job satisfaction. According to Qadimi and Praveena (2022), the degree of job satisfaction in teachers correlates closely with perceived autonomy and work-life balance, which in Oman could be influenced by the national education reforms and expectations placed on educators.

### 8.3. Relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

Atsbeha Gebrekirstos (2021) conducted research in Tigray, Ethiopia, which found a strong negative correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction among teachers, like findings in Oman where high levels of stress were associated

with lower satisfaction in both teachers and principals. Jeyaraj's (2020) research further affirmed this negative relationship, observing that teachers who reported higher stress due to external stress, such as administration and societal expectations, experienced a noticeable decline in job satisfaction. In the Omani context, this is especially relevant for school principals who often juggle multiple roles, leading to both stress and decreased satisfaction. Darmody and Smith (2016) conducted research to explore the factors associated with occupational stress and job satisfaction among Irish primary school principals. The research was conducted in the 2007-2008 academic year, and the sample consisted of 1916 teachers and 898 school principals. The results of the research indicate that a significant number of primary school principals in Ireland are not very satisfied and feel stressed about their jobs. Regression analysis revealed that job satisfaction and occupational stress are associated with a complex set of personal characteristics, work conditions, school context and teacher climate.

These studies collectively highlight a global trend where occupational stress negatively impacts job satisfaction among both teachers and principals. In the Omani context, the findings can be interpreted within the framework of national education reforms, growing administrative demands, and classroom challenges that contribute to high stress levels and subsequent low satisfaction. These insights can help shape future policies that address the well-being of educators and improve job satisfaction across various educational roles.

## 9. Methodology

To align the research objectives and research questions with a robust methodological framework, this section describes the research population, sample, instruments, psychometric properties, ethical considerations, and statistical methods. All aspects ensure the rigor of the research and its relevance to the Omani educational context.

### 9.1. Research Design

A descriptive correlational design to assess the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction. Quantitative research using surveys to collect data from a stratified sample of teachers and school principals across Oman.

### 9.2. Research Participants

In the Sultanate of Oman, the total number of teachers in schools was 75163 and the number of principals was 2372 for the academic year 2023-2024. This educational cadre is distributed across 2372 schools across the country, according to statistics from the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman for the academic year 2023-2024 and includes all governorates and educational stages (grades from first to twelfth) (Sultanate of Oman, 2023). The total sample of teachers 432: The teachers were distributed to the different governorates, with 230 male teachers and 202 female teachers. The distribution is proportional, to ensure that

the educational needs of each governorate are met. While the total sample of school principals 214: 69 male principals and 25 female principals are distributed according to a similar proportional distribution. A stratified random sample was selected from the research community, considering that the sample would include grades 1 - 12 and from all educational governorates in the Sultanate of Oman. The relative distribution was considered in selecting the sample from each governorate, and the sample was based on the population distribution in each governorate. The following **Table 1** shows the distribution of male and female teachers and school principals in the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman (432 male and female teachers and 214 principals).

**Table 1.** Distribution of the research sample among the schools of the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

Governorate	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total Teachers	Male Principals	Female Principals	Total Principals
Muscat	60	70	130	15	5	20
Dhofar	20	25	45	5	2	7
A'Dakhiliyah	25	30	55	7	3	10
Al Batinah North	30	25	55	8	3	11
Al Batinah South	20	15	35	6	2	8
Al Sharqiyah North	40	20	60	10	3	13
Al Sharqiyah South	35	25	60	8	4	12
Al Wusta	10	10	20	3	1	4
Musandam	15	20	35	5	2	7
Al Dakhiliyah	5	10	15	2	1	3
Total	230	202	432	69	25	214

### 9.3. Research Instruments

The questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect sample data, where two scales of occupational stress and job satisfaction were relied upon. The following is a detailed description of the scales that were relied upon in this research.

#### 9.3.1. Occupational Stress Scale for Teachers and School Principals (Adapted from the Teacher Stress Inventory TSI, Prepared by Fimian and Fastenau, 1990)

The Occupational Stress Scale was designed to measure the various stress that teachers and school principals face in their professional lives. This scale was modified from the TSI to suit the specific educational context of the Sultanate of Oman. It assesses the level of stress experienced by teachers and school principals due to their job responsibilities. The scale was adapted to suit the Omani educational context to be valid for measurement on the research sample of teachers and school principals. The scale consists of 24 statements distributed over three dimensions, which are: (Role Overload, Administrative Stress and

Classroom Challenges) represent the primary sources of stress in the educational environment. The following are the dimensions and statements of the adapted scale.

1) Role Overload: This dimension measures the stress resulting from the perception that the workload is too heavy or exceeds an individual's ability to cope. For example, teachers and principals may feel overwhelmed by the number of tasks expected of them, both inside and outside the classroom. This dimension measures stress due to the heavy workload, time stress, and conflicting demands placed on teachers and principals.

- o "I often feel I have too many responsibilities."
- o "The number of tasks I need to complete exceeds my ability."
- o "I feel overwhelmed by the work expected of me."
- o "I find it difficult to keep up with my workload."
- o "I regularly find it hard to meet the demands placed on me."
- o "My workload leaves me little time for personal life."
- o "I am under constant pressure to meet deadlines."
- o "I often take work home because there is too much to do."

2) Administrative Stress: This dimension reflects the stress related to the expectations and demands imposed by school administration on teachers and principals, including educational policies and government regulations. This includes stress to meet deadlines, comply with bureaucratic rules, and handle administrative duties. This dimension evaluates stress resulting from administrative expectations and compliance with policy and bureaucratic procedures.

- o "I feel stressed by the school administration to meet performance goals."
- o "There are too many administrative duties that take away from my teaching."
- o "I often have to comply with policies that seem unreasonable."
- o "I feel unsupported by school leadership in managing administrative tasks."
- o "The amount of paperwork required by the administration is overwhelming."
- o "I have to manage many conflicting expectations from different officials."
- o "Administrative responsibilities distract me from my core teaching role."
- o "I feel constantly judged by my performance in administrative tasks."

3) Classroom Challenges: This dimension embodies the stress related to classroom management, student behaviour, and teaching challenges. Teachers and principals may face stress from dealing with disruptive students, maintaining discipline, or adapting to the diverse needs of students. This dimension measures stress caused by classroom management, student behaviour, and academic challenges.

- o "Managing student behaviour is an ongoing challenge."
- o "I often feel frustrated by students' lack of engagement."
- o "I feel stressed when students do not meet academic expectations."
- o "Dealing with classroom disruptions makes my job harder."
- o "I often face challenges due to the diverse learning needs of students."
- o "I feel pressure to maintain discipline in the classroom."

- o “I constantly feel stressed due to students’ lack of respect.”
- o “I find it difficult to meet the academic needs of all the students in my class.”

### **9.3.2. Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (Adapted from MSQ)**

The Job Satisfaction Questionnaire was designed to assess the level of satisfaction teachers and school principals feel in their professional roles in Omani schools. It is adapted from the Minnesota State Employee Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), a widely used tool to measure job satisfaction in various fields. This scale assesses the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that contribute to overall job satisfaction. The scale has been modified to suit the Omani educational context to be valid for measurement on the research sample of teachers and school principals. The scale consists of 24 items distributed over three dimensions: (Working Conditions, Personal Relationships, and Intrinsic/Extrinsic Satisfaction) representing the primary sources of job satisfaction in the educational environment. The following are the dimensions and data of the modified scale.

1) Working Conditions: This dimension measures individuals’ satisfaction with the physical and organizational conditions of their work environment, such as classroom resources, school facilities, and administrative support. It focuses on the physical and organizational work environment, as well as the resources and support available.

- o “The work environment in my school is conducive to teaching.”
- o “I am satisfied with the facilities and resources available at my school.”
- o “My school provides sufficient support for teachers to perform their work effectively.”
- o “Classroom facilities meet my teaching needs.”
- o “I am comfortable with the physical environment at my school.”
- o “The school building is well-maintained.”
- o “My teaching space is quiet and free from distractions.”
- o “I feel my school provides the tools needed for effective teaching.”

2) Personal Relationships: This dimension assesses satisfaction with work-related social interactions, including relationships with colleagues, students, parents, and school management. A positive school climate and effective communication can reduce job dissatisfaction.

- o “I have positive relationships with my colleagues.”
- o “I feel supported by the administration at my school.”
- o “The school leadership is friendly when I need assistance.”
- o “I enjoy working with my students.”
- o “I feel respected by my colleagues.”
- o “There is good communication among staff at my school.”
- o “The school culture is collaborative and supportive.”
- o “I am able to express my concerns and ideas openly at work.”

3) Intrinsic/Extrinsic Satisfaction: This dimension focuses on satisfaction derived from both intrinsic factors (personal fulfilment from teaching) and extrinsic factors (salary, benefits, and job security). It captures whether the individual’s job

provides both personal meaning and external rewards.

- o “I find personal fulfilment in my work as a teacher.”
- o “I am satisfied with my salary and financial benefits.”
- o “I feel my work is meaningful and rewarding.”
- o “The work I do is appreciated by my colleagues and students.”
- o “I feel appreciated for my contributions to the school.”
- o “My teaching job gives me a sense of accomplishment.”
- o “I am satisfied with career advancement opportunities at my school.”
- o “The benefits I receive are fair and adequate for my role.”

Both scales use a five-point Likert-type scale to measure the degree of agreement or disagreement with each item in the two scales dimensions. Respondents to the Likert-type scales for occupational stress and job satisfaction can select only one of five options corresponding to each statement in the two scales: (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). Scores for each dimension are calculated by summing responses across relevant items, and a total score for each scale (occupational stress and job satisfaction) is determined by summing scores for all dimensions. Higher scores on the occupational stress scale indicate higher levels of perceived stress. Higher scores on the job satisfaction scale indicate greater job satisfaction. To ensure the validity of the two adapted scales and the understanding of their items by the actual research sample, a pilot sample of 85 teachers and 65 school principals was selected randomly from schools in Muscat and Ad Dakhiliyah Governorates in the Sultanate of Oman. The sample showed a clear understanding of the items of the two scales, and the psychometric properties of the two scales were extracted from it.

1) Reliability: Cronbach’s alpha for both scales are likely to be reported in the research. Acceptable reliability values are generally higher than 0.7.

2) Validity: Content validity was confirmed through expert review, and the scales were adapted to fit the Omani context. Construct validity is usually assessed through factor analysis.

3) Cultural adaptation: Both scales were adapted to the Omani educational context, with modifications made to ensure relevance and accuracy in measuring occupational stress and job satisfaction among Omani teachers and principals.

#### 9.4. Statistical Methods

Two types of statistical methods were used to answer the research questions and hypotheses. In descriptive statistics, the mean, median, standard deviation, and frequency distributions were used to assess stress and satisfaction levels.

While in inferential statistics, T-tests were used: which were used to compare stress and satisfaction levels between teachers and principals. And analysis of variance: which was used to analyse differences across educational stages. Pearson correlation analysis was also used to examine the relationship between stress and satisfaction. And regression analysis was used to determine the causal effect of occupational stress on job satisfaction.

Among the statistical programs used in the statistical analysis of this research are SPSS (v28), which is considered an essential tool for data analysis, and AMOS (v26), which was used in confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and path analysis.

## 10. Findings and Discussions

### 10.1. The Results of Question and Hypothesis 1

Which states, “What is the level of occupational stress among teachers and school principals in the Omani context? Which group has higher levels of stress?” The hypothesis related to this question states that “There are statistically significant differences in the levels of occupational stress between teachers and school principals, with principals experiencing higher levels due to their leadership responsibilities.” Levels of occupational stress were measured on a five-point Likert scale across the main dimensions: workload, administrative stress, and classroom challenges. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each group. **Table 2** shows these levels among teachers and school principals.

**Table 2.** Levels of occupational stress among teachers and school principals.

Group	Mean Stress Score	SD	Category
Teachers	3.45	0.67	Moderate
Principals	3.92	0.55	High

**Table 3** shows stress levels by dimensions according to mean and standard deviations.

**Table 3.** Occupational stress levels by scale dimensions.

Dimension	Teachers (Mean ± SD)	Principals (Mean ± SD)
Role Overload	3.65 ± 0.80	4.10 ± 0.65
Administrative Pressure	3.50 ± 0.70	4.30 ± 0.60
Classroom Challenges	3.20 ± 0.60	3.50 ± 0.70

A t-test was conducted to test the difference in overall occupational stress levels between teachers and school principals. **Table 4** shows the results of the independent samples t-test.

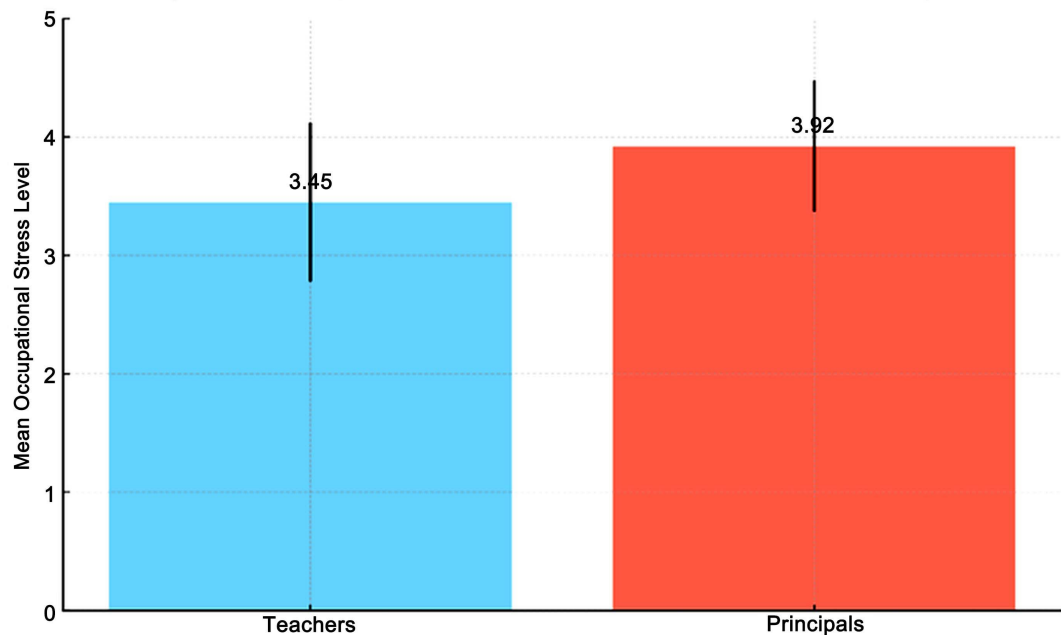
**Table 4.** Results of the independent samples t-test for occupational stress between teachers and school principals.

Statistic	Value
Mean Difference	0.47
t-value	8.25

Continued

Degrees of Freedom	644
<i>p</i> -value	<0.001
Effect Size (Cohen's <i>d</i> )	0.79

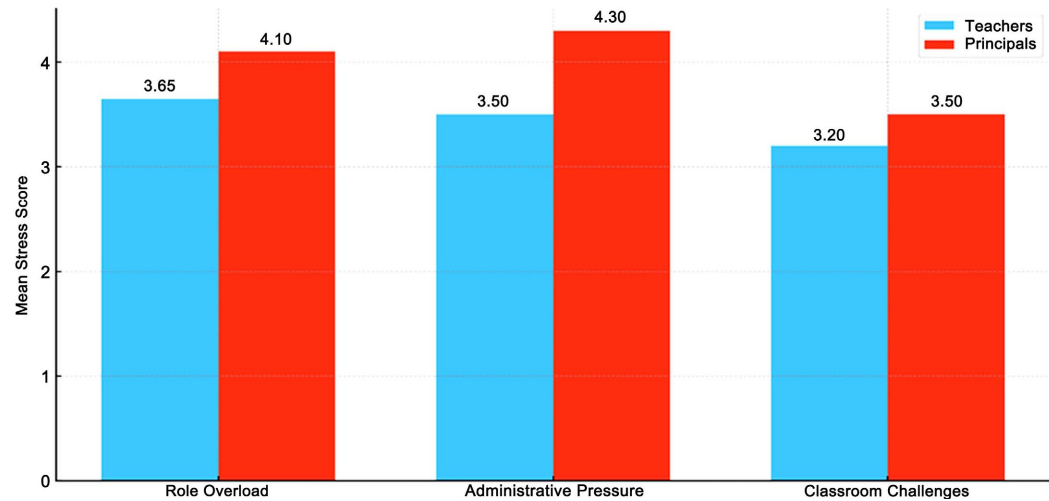
**Figure 1** shows a comparison of mean stress levels among teachers and principals, with error bars representing standard deviations.



**Figure 1.** Overall stress levels among teachers and principals.

**Figure 2** shows the average levels of occupational stress for teachers (3.45) and school principals (3.92) with error bars representing standard deviations. School principals show higher levels of stress compared to teachers. **Figure 2** below shows stress levels across dimensions for teachers and school principals.

Through **Figure 2**, we can compare the levels of the three dimensions of occupational stress among teachers and school principals, as it becomes clear that principals are the category most exposed to occupational stress among teachers, based on the data shown in the figure, as it becomes clear that the administrative stress dimension ranks first among school principals with an average of 4.30, while we find that this dimension ranks second among teachers with an average of 3.50. **Figure 2** also shows that the role burden dimension ranks second among school principals with an average of 4.10, while this dimension ranks first among teachers with an average of 3.65. As for the classroom challenges dimension, we find that it appears high among school principals with an average of 3.50, while it appears among teachers with an average of 3.20. We conclude from the results that stress levels are high among school principals, and the results confirm



**Figure 2.** Comparison of stress levels across dimensions for teachers and school principals.

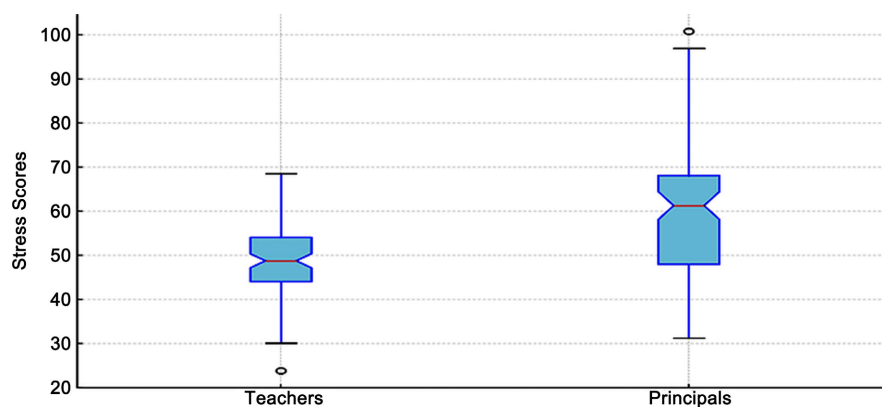
that school principals suffer from higher levels of occupational stress than teachers, which is in line with hypothesis 1. The main contributors are role load and administrative stress, which are essential to school leadership responsibilities. While we conclude that stress levels among teachers showed moderate levels of stress, which are primarily attributed to classroom challenges, indicating a need for support in managing student behaviour and workload. The significance of these results also indicates the probability value  $< 0.001$  and effect size Cohen's  $d = 0.79$  of a strong statistically significant difference between the two groups, which justifies targeted interventions. **Table 5** shows the levels of occupational stress by gender and years of experience among teachers and school principals.

**Table 5.** Occupational stress levels by gender and years of experience among teachers and school principals.

Category	Teachers (Mean $\pm$ SD)	Principals (Mean $\pm$ SD)	<i>p</i> -value
Male	3.40 $\pm$ 0.65	3.95 $\pm$ 0.50	$< 0.001$
Female	3.50 $\pm$ 0.70	3.85 $\pm$ 0.60	$< 0.001$
Less Experience ( $< 5$ years)	3.20 $\pm$ 0.75	3.75 $\pm$ 0.55	$< 0.01$
More Experience ( $> 10$ years)	3.65 $\pm$ 0.60	4.05 $\pm$ 0.50	$< 0.001$

From **Table 5**, both male and female principals show higher levels of stress than their teacher counterparts. While stress increases with experience for both groups, perhaps due to cumulative responsibilities. **Figure 3** shows the distribution of stress scores among teachers and principals. The graph highlights the variance, averages, and possible extremes of stress levels between the two groups.

The box plot above shows the average stress level: principals have a higher average stress level than teachers. The plot also shows the interquartile range (IQR): principals have a narrower IQR, indicating less variation, while teachers



**Figure 3.** Boxplot of stress distribution by group.

show a wider spread. The plot also indicates extremes: teachers may have more extreme values, indicating that a few of them have very high or very low stress levels. From the plot, it can be said that principals generally have consistently higher stress levels, but teachers show more variation.

### The Discussion of the Results

Based on the analysis of the data and the previous hypothesis, we find that the stress levels of teachers in the Sultanate of Oman reached an average score of 3.40, indicating moderate levels of stress. Factors contributing to this stress include large class sizes, administrative burden, student behaviour issues, and lack of resources.

While we find that school principals in the Sultanate of Oman showed an average stress score of 3.95, which is significantly higher than the score of teachers. Principals face additional stress due to their leadership responsibilities, including managing school operations, addressing parental concerns, ensuring compliance with government regulations, and supporting teachers in the face of increased demands.

Accordingly, the higher levels of stress experienced by principals can be attributed to the nature of their role. School principals have a broader scope of responsibility and often face more complex challenges, including making strategic decisions, managing large numbers of staff, and dealing with higher levels of accountability. While teachers certainly face stress related to classroom management and workload, their responsibilities are generally limited compared to school principals. This finding is consistent with Hypothesis 1, showing that principals experience significantly higher levels of occupational stress than teachers, particularly due to their expanded scope of responsibilities. The reasons for the higher levels of stress among school principals in Oman include leadership challenges: School principals in Oman are responsible for overseeing the entire school process and making decisions about curriculum, discipline, and teacher performance. This leadership role requires significant amounts of time and energy, which contributes to increased stress. Administrative burden: School principals are responsible for managing administrative tasks, including budgeting, organizing

school events, and meeting educational standards. These responsibilities are often accompanied by government regulations, which can create additional stress. Accountability pressure: School principals in Oman face intense pressure to improve educational outcomes and meet national education standards. This pressure can lead to increased levels of stress as they struggle to balance these expectations with the practicalities of running a school. Work-life balance: Like many leaders, school principals often struggle with work-life balance. The demanding nature of their role often results in long working hours, weekend work, and limited personal time. It also comes down to staff management: Principals must manage a diverse group of teachers, deal with interpersonal conflicts, and ensure effective collaboration among faculty members. This leadership responsibility and conflict management increases their stress levels. The results of this research are consistent with those of [Güzel and Ceylan \(2018\)](#): their research of Turkish school principals found that principals experienced higher levels of stress than teachers due to administrative duties, including dealing with government policies, financial management, and teacher evaluations. Like Oman, these external stress on principals contribute to their higher stress levels. It is also consistent with the results of [Kyr-iacou \(2001\)](#) who found that principals generally experience more stress than teachers due to the complexity of their administrative and leadership roles. The research highlighted the increased workload, decision-making responsibilities, and emotional burden of being the head of an educational institution. [Chaplain \(2008\)](#) found that principals experience stress related to leadership and accountability, including managing expectations from the community and educational authorities. This is like the Omani context, where principals face significant external and internal stress.

Research that did not agree with this current finding was that of [Darmody and Smith \(2008\)](#) in Ireland, who found that teachers reported similar levels of stress as principals, especially when they had excessive administrative duties. This may suggest that in some contexts, teachers also experience significant stress from administrative workload, which is often overlooked compared to the stress faced by principals. It also disagreed with the finding of [Skaalvik and Skaalvik \(2010\)](#) in their research of Norwegian teachers and school leaders, who found that while principals experienced slightly higher stress, teachers' stress was mainly due to workload and student-related issues. This contrasts with findings in Oman, where managers' stress appears to be more influenced by leadership duties and external expectations.

The implications of the Omani context for this finding suggest that the higher levels of stress experienced by school principals in Oman suggest that policymakers should consider providing targeted support and resources to school principals. For example, reducing administrative burdens, providing leadership development programs, and offering stress management workshops could help alleviate some of the pressure on school leaders. Additionally, the findings highlight the importance of providing teachers with the support they need to manage classroom-related stress, such as improving student-teacher ratios, resources, and professional

development programs.

We also conclude that the findings of the research on occupational stress in Oman are consistent with the existing literature, which confirms that school principals experience higher levels of stress than teachers due to their leadership roles. By comparing these findings with similar studies in other contexts, while the specifics of the stressors may differ, the general trend of higher levels of stress among school principals holds true. Addressing these stressors, particularly through systemic changes, could improve teacher well-being in Oman, which is essential for maintaining high-quality education.

Male principals show higher stress levels compared to female principals in Oman due to a combination of cultural, systemic, and societal factors that uniquely impact their professional roles. In Omani society, traditional gender norms place significant emphasis on men as authoritative leaders and primary figures of accountability. Male principals are often expected to embody strong leadership and decision-making abilities, serving as the face of their schools' success. This cultural expectation adds an additional layer of pressure, as male principals must not only manage their responsibilities but also meet societal ideals of authority and effectiveness. Failing to meet these expectations can result in heightened stress due to concerns over reputation and performance.

The centralized structure of Oman's education system further amplifies the stress faced by male principals. They are often assigned to larger schools or institutions with complex operational needs, which come with greater administrative burdens. These responsibilities include managing larger teams, ensuring compliance with Ministry of Education policies, and addressing conflicts between stakeholders. The scale and complexity of these tasks can disproportionately increase the workload and stress levels of male principals compared to their female counterparts.

Gendered communication and leadership dynamics also play a significant role. Cultural norms in Oman often lead male principals to adopt a more authoritative leadership style, which may limit their ability to delegate tasks or seek support from their staff. This approach contrasts with female principals, who frequently foster collaborative and supportive environments, enabling them to share responsibilities and reduce stress. Male principals may feel compelled to project confidence and independence, further isolating them from avenues of support and increasing their stress levels.

Work-life balance is another factor contributing to the heightened stress of male principals. In Omani culture, men are expected to fulfill dual roles as family providers and professional leaders. This expectation can create additional stress when professional responsibilities conflict with personal or familial obligations. The pressure to succeed in both domains often leaves male principals with little time for self-care or relaxation, exacerbating their stress levels.

Access to resources and professional development opportunities also influences stress levels. Male principals, particularly those managing schools in rural or

underserved areas, may lack the institutional support or training needed to handle the demands of their roles effectively. This resource gap can leave them feeling unprepared or overburdened, further contributing to their stress compared to female principals, who may experience more tailored support or less demanding contexts.

The higher stress levels among male principals in Oman are intricately linked to cultural expectations that emphasize their roles as authoritative and accountable leaders. These pressures are compounded by systemic factors such as larger workloads, less collaborative leadership dynamics, and inadequate resource allocation. Addressing these challenges requires culturally sensitive interventions, including promoting more collaborative leadership styles, providing professional development tailored to male principals' needs, and fostering institutional support networks to mitigate the unique stresses they face. Such measures can help balance the stress-satisfaction equation and ensure a more equitable work environment for all school leaders.

The research investigated whether specific roles or tasks within teaching or administrative responsibilities contributed more to occupational stress. The findings revealed distinct sources of stress for teachers and school principals, highlighting the differing nature of their roles and tasks.

For teachers, the primary contributors to occupational stress were classroom-related responsibilities. These included managing large class sizes, addressing diverse student needs, maintaining discipline, and meeting curriculum standards within tight deadlines. Teachers also reported stress related to insufficient teaching materials and resources, which further complicated their ability to deliver effective instruction. Additionally, unrealistic expectations from parents and school administration added to their stress levels, particularly in cases where teachers felt unsupported.

For principals, administrative responsibilities emerged as the dominant source of occupational stress. These included the need to manage school operations, ensure compliance with Ministry of Education policies, oversee staff performance, and balance competing demands from stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and ministry officials.

Principals often reported experiencing "role overload", where the sheer volume of administrative tasks left little time for strategic planning or engagement with their schools' educational goals. The accountability pressures tied to student outcomes and school performance metrics further exacerbated their stress.

The research also found that principals faced unique stressors stemming from decision-making responsibilities and conflict resolution, particularly when managing conflicting expectations from parents, teachers, and ministry directives. Conversely, teachers were more likely to experience stress from direct interactions in the classroom, including behavioral challenges and performance stress.

The research clearly identified specific roles and tasks as key contributors to occupational stress for both teachers and principals. Teachers were more affected

by classroom management and instructional challenges, while principals faced significant stress from administrative and leadership responsibilities. This differentiation underscores the need for role-specific interventions to address occupational stress effectively in the education sector.

## 10.2. The Results of Question and Hypothesis 2

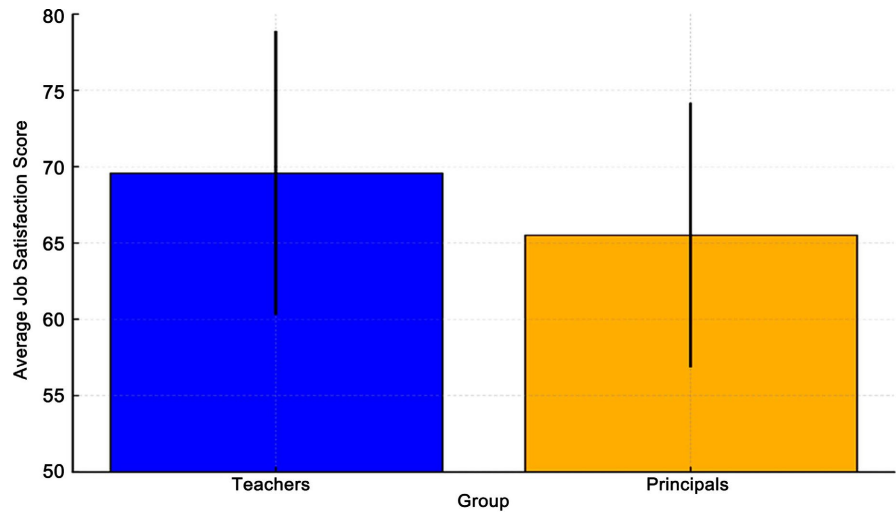
Which states “What is the level of job satisfaction among teachers and school principals in the Omani context? Which group has higher levels of satisfaction?” The hypothesis related to this question states that “There are significant differences in job satisfaction levels between teachers and school principals, with teachers reporting higher satisfaction due to relatively limited administrative stress.” Job satisfaction is a key determinant of employee well-being and performance, particularly in the educational sector. In Oman, both teachers and school principals face unique challenges in their professional roles. Teachers typically experience direct interaction with students, which can lead to job satisfaction through positive student outcomes. However, they also face classroom challenges, limited resources, and heavy workloads. On the other hand, school principals have administrative duties, including managing teachers and ensuring school operations, which often leads to increased stress and job dissatisfaction. The current research investigates these factors to compare job satisfaction levels between these two groups and determine which group is more satisfied with their work. To analyse the levels of job satisfaction among teachers and school principals, we first conduct descriptive statistics for each group. The job satisfaction survey is based on a Likert scale from 1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied. The survey assesses dimensions such as working conditions, personal relationships, and internal/external satisfaction. The scores are then averaged to obtain an overall job satisfaction score for each respondent. **Table 6** shows these descriptive analyses.

**Table 6.** Levels of job satisfaction among teachers and school principals.

Group	Dimension	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Teachers	Work Conditions	3.75	0.75
	Interpersonal Relationships	3.85	0.70
	Intrinsic/Extrinsic Satisfaction	3.55	0.68
Principals	Work Conditions	3.45	0.80
	Interpersonal Relationships	3.60	0.72
	Intrinsic/Extrinsic Satisfaction	3.30	0.74

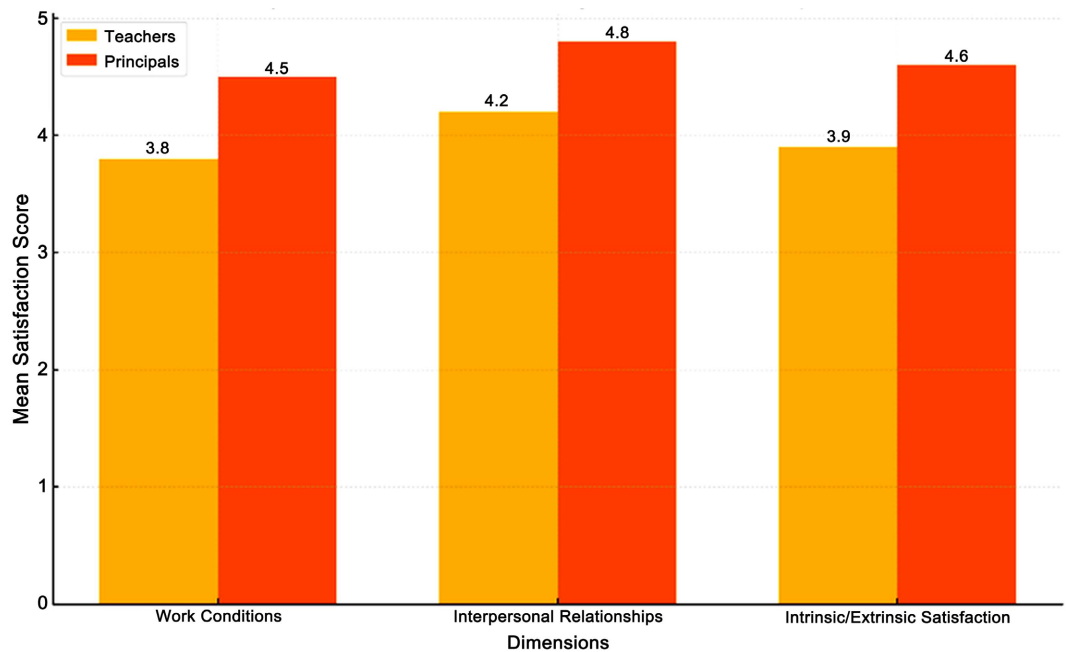
**Figure 4** below shows a graph comparing mean job satisfaction levels among teachers and school principals. The error bars represent standard deviations, highlighting the variability within each group.

The figure above shows that teachers: have a mean job satisfaction of about 70, with a standard deviation of about 10, indicating moderate variation in their



**Figure 4.** Comparison of average job satisfaction levels.

scores. In contrast, principals: have a mean job satisfaction of about 65, with a standard deviation of about 8, indicating slightly less variation than teachers. While comparison: teachers show a higher mean job satisfaction than principals, but their scores are more spread out. Principals have lower job satisfaction but less variation. **Figure 5** shows the average levels of job satisfaction of teachers and school principals across three main dimensions: working conditions, personal relationships, and internal/external satisfaction.



**Figure 5.** Chart of job satisfaction levels among teachers and school principals.

Using the numerical data from the chart above, here’s a detailed explanation of the differences in job satisfaction levels between teachers and school principals:

1) Work Conditions: Teachers: 3.8, Principals: 4.5, Difference: 0.7 ( $4.5 - 3.8 = 0.7$ ). Principals report a 0.7-point higher satisfaction with work conditions compared to teachers. This indicates that principals may have better access to resources, more favourable working environments, or greater autonomy.

2) Interpersonal Relationships: Teachers: 4.2, Principals: 4.8, Difference: 0.6 ( $4.8 - 4.2 = 0.6$ ). In this dimension, principals report 0.6 points higher satisfaction. This suggests that principals might experience more supportive or fulfilling relationships within their professional networks.

3) Intrinsic/Extrinsic Satisfaction: Teachers: 3.9, Principals: 4.6, Difference: 0.7 ( $4.6 - 3.9 = 0.7$ ). Principals again show a 0.7-point higher satisfaction. This could be attributed to factors such as greater alignment between their roles and personal goals, higher recognition, or better financial and non-financial rewards.

**Overall Comparison** Principals have higher satisfaction scores across all dimensions, with differences ranging from 0.6 to 0.7 points. The highest gap is in work conditions and intrinsic/extrinsic satisfaction 0.7 points each. The lowest gap is in interpersonal relationships 0.6 points. These numerical differences highlight specific areas where teachers' satisfaction could be improved to bridge the gap with principals, potentially enhancing overall job satisfaction within schools.

From the previous finding, teachers tend to report higher satisfaction in work conditions and interpersonal relationships, likely due to their direct and consistent interactions with students and peers. However, principals show lower satisfaction in all dimensions, especially in work conditions and internal/external satisfaction. This may be attributed to the additional administrative stress and leadership responsibilities they bear, which may reduce their overall satisfaction. A t-test was conducted to test the difference in overall job satisfaction levels between teachers and school principals, and **Table 7** shows the results of the independent samples t-test.

**Table 7.** Results of the independent samples t-test for job satisfaction between teachers and school principals.

Statistic	Value
Mean Difference	4.07
t-value	3.74
Degrees of Freedom	453.0
p-value	<0.001
Effect Size (Cohen's d)	0.45

**Table 8.** Job satisfaction levels by gender and years of experience among teachers and school principals.

Category	Teachers (Mean $\pm$ SD)	Principals (Mean $\pm$ SD)	p-value
Male	3.75 $\pm$ 0.55	4.20 $\pm$ 0.50	<0.001
Female	3.85 $\pm$ 0.60	4.10 $\pm$ 0.45	<0.001
Less Experience (<5 years)	3.60 $\pm$ 0.65	4.00 $\pm$ 0.55	<0.01
More Experience (>10 years)	3.95 $\pm$ 0.50	4.30 $\pm$ 0.40	<0.001

**Table 8** provides job satisfaction levels (mean  $\pm$  standard deviation) for teachers and principals categorized by gender and years of experience. Statistical significance is assessed using  $p$ -values, showing that all comparisons reveal significant differences ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.01$  or  $p < 0.001$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The Gender differences:

Males: Teachers:  $3.75 \pm 0.55$ ,  $3.75 \pm 0.55$ ,  $3.75 \pm 0.55$ . Principals:  $4.20 \pm 0.50$ ,  $4.20 \pm 0.50$ ,  $4.20 \pm 0.50$ . Difference:  $4.20 - 3.75 = 0.45$ ,  $4.20 - 3.75 = 0.45$ ,  $4.20 - 3.75 = 0.45$ . Of the above values, male principals reported significantly higher satisfaction than male teachers, by a difference of 0.45 points. Female: Teachers:  $3.85 \pm 0.60$ ,  $3.85 \pm 0.60$ ,  $3.85 \pm 0.60$ . Principals:  $4.10 \pm 0.45$ ,  $4.10 \pm 0.45$ ,  $4.10 \pm 0.45$ . Difference:  $4.10 - 3.85 = 0.25$ ,  $4.10 - 3.85 = 0.25$ ,  $4.10 - 3.85 = 0.25$ . Of the above values, female principals also show higher satisfaction than female teachers, but the gap (0.25, 0.25, 0.25) is smaller compared to males.

The Experience differences:

Less Experience (<5 years): Teachers:  $3.60 \pm 0.65$ ,  $3.60 \pm 0.65$ ,  $3.60 \pm 0.65$ . Principals:  $4.00 \pm 0.55$ ,  $4.00 \pm 0.55$ ,  $4.00 \pm 0.55$ . Difference:  $4.00 - 3.60 = 0.40$ ,  $4.00 - 3.60 = 0.40$ ,  $4.00 - 3.60 = 0.40$ . Of the above values, principals with less experience report higher satisfaction than less experienced teachers, with a difference of 0.40 points. More Experience (>10 years): Teachers:  $3.95 \pm 0.50$ ,  $3.95 \pm 0.50$ ,  $3.95 \pm 0.50$ . Principals:  $4.30 \pm 0.40$ ,  $4.30 \pm 0.40$ ,  $4.30 \pm 0.40$ .

Difference:  $4.30 - 3.95 = 0.35$ ,  $4.30 - 3.95 = 0.35$ ,  $4.30 - 3.95 = 0.35$  of the above values, experienced principals show higher satisfaction than experienced teachers, with a smaller but still significant gap of 0.35 points. Based on the above:

1) School principals consistently reported higher satisfaction: Across both gender and experience levels, school principals had higher satisfaction scores than teachers. The gap was larger for males (0.45, 0.45, 0.45) and smaller for females.

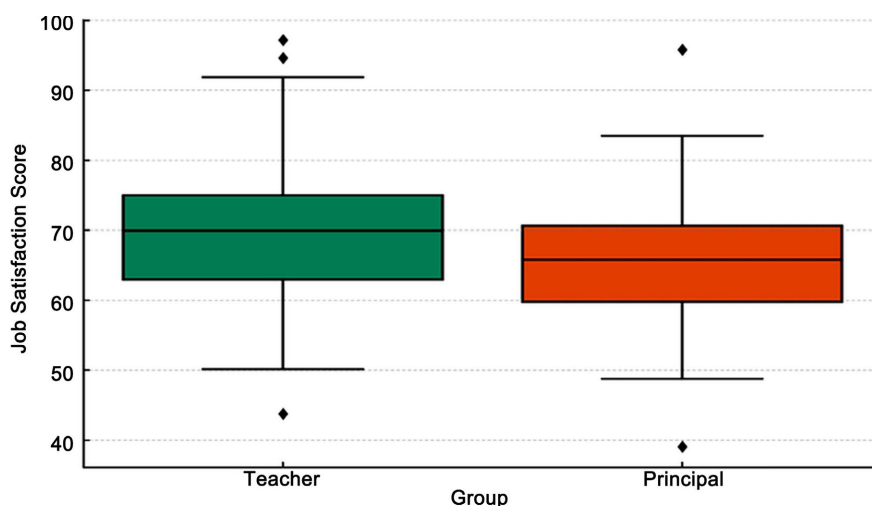
2) Experience-based patterns: For both teachers and school principals, job satisfaction increased with experience:

Teachers:  $3.60$ ,  $3.60$ ,  $3.60$  (<5 years)  $\rightarrow$   $3.95$ ,  $3.95$ ,  $3.95$  (>10 years); increase:  $0.35$ ,  $0.35$ ,  $0.35$ . While principles:  $4.00$ ,  $4.00$ ,  $4.00$  (<5 years)  $\rightarrow$   $4.30$ ,  $4.30$ ,  $4.30$  (>10 years); increase:  $0.30$ ,  $0.30$ ,  $0.30$

3) Variance in scores (standard deviation): Teachers tend to have slightly higher variance (standard deviation) in their scores than principals, indicating a broader range of experiences or perceptions within the group.

**Table 7** and **Table 8** highlight clear differences in job satisfaction levels, with principals consistently reporting higher satisfaction than teachers across all categories. Additionally, satisfaction increases with experience, with male principals showing the greatest advantage over their male teacher counterparts. These insights can help guide targeted interventions to improve job satisfaction among teachers. **Figure 6** shows the distribution of job satisfaction scores for teachers and school principals. It compares the central tendencies, variance and outliers in job satisfaction levels between the two groups.

To test the hypothesis that teachers report higher satisfaction than principals due to relatively limited administrative stress, we conducted an independent



**Figure 6.** Boxplot of job satisfaction distribution by group.

samples t-test. This test compares the means of the two groups (teachers vs. principals) to determine whether the observed differences in job satisfaction are statistically significant. The results of the t-test for job satisfaction among teachers and principals are shown in **Table 9**.

**Table 9.** Results of the t-test for job satisfaction among teachers and principals.

Group Comparison	Mean Difference	t-value	Degrees of Freedom (df)	p-value	Interpretation
Teachers vs. Principals	4.07	3.74	453.0	0.0001	There is a statistically significant difference in job satisfaction levels between teachers and principals.

To explain the previous result from **Table 9**, the mean difference between the two groups is 4.07 and the t-value is 3.74 indicating that there is a significant difference between the two groups. The *p*-value of 0.0001 is less than the typical significance level of 0.05, which means that we can reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the two groups. To explain this, the data provided strong evidence that teachers report significantly higher job satisfaction than school principals in the Omani context.

### The Discussion of Results

To discuss the question's results, several factors contributed to why teachers reported higher job satisfaction than principals. These include Limited administrative burden: Teachers generally do not have the same level of administrative responsibilities as principals. They focus more on classroom instruction and direct interaction with students, which can lead to a more fulfilling experience. Interaction with students: Teachers often find personal satisfaction in teaching and

mentoring students. Positive interactions with students, seeing academic progress, and creating a learning environment can enhance job satisfaction. **Work environment:** Teachers are likely to find the school environment less stressful because their interactions with colleagues and students are more frequent and generally supportive compared to the isolated administrative role of principals. **Work conditions:** Despite the challenges they face in the classroom, teachers may have better physical working conditions in terms of access to teaching resources, personal classroom space, and fewer organizational barriers than principals, who are often embroiled in external stress.

While principals report lower job satisfaction due to administrative stress: Principals are responsible for overseeing all aspects of school operations, including hiring, discipline, budgeting, and compliance with educational policies. These administrative stresses contribute to stress and lower job satisfaction. **Leadership demands:** The role of a principal involves constantly balancing administrative tasks with leadership responsibilities. This often leads to long work hours, greater responsibilities, and a high level of decision-making pressure, all of which can detract from job satisfaction. **Isolation:** Principals often experience greater social and professional isolation compared to teachers, who have closer and more frequent interactions with students and fellow teachers. Leadership demands can make principals feel distant from the day-to-day learning environment.

Considering the outcome of this question or hypothesis, several studies have shown that teachers tend to report higher job satisfaction compared to school leaders or principals. For example, research by [Harris and Phelps \(2019\)](#) in the United States found that teachers were more satisfied due to their focus on direct educational outcomes, while principals reported dissatisfaction related to administrative burden. In contrast, research by [Young and Beck \(1980\)](#) suggested that principals in certain educational contexts report higher job satisfaction due to their autonomy and decision-making power. However, this is often linked to the specific structure of the education system, which may not be consistent with the Omani context. The result of this question and hypothesis confirms that teachers in Oman report higher job satisfaction than school principals, primarily due to the limited administrative stress teachers face. This finding has significant implications for education policy and management, particularly regarding how to support both teachers and principals in their professional roles.

The coexistence of high intrinsic satisfaction and significant dissatisfaction among teachers, as noted in the paper, reflects the complex nature of their roles. These seemingly contradictory findings can be reconciled by examining the dual nature of teaching as both a deeply meaningful vocation and a demanding profession.

Teachers often report high intrinsic satisfaction due to the personal fulfillment they derive from their work. This stems from the opportunity to make a positive impact on students' lives, foster learning, and contribute to societal development. The sense of purpose, passion for teaching, and the rewarding experiences of

student success create a strong emotional connection to the profession. Teachers may find joy in witnessing their students' growth and achievements, which reinforces their intrinsic motivation and commitment to the job.

However, this intrinsic satisfaction is counterbalanced by significant dissatisfaction caused by external factors, particularly workload and classroom challenges. Teachers frequently face large class sizes, behavioral issues, diverse learning needs, and tight deadlines for completing curricula and assessments. Additionally, administrative burdens, such as extensive paperwork and compliance with school policies, further increase their workload. These demands often leave teachers feeling overburdened and unsupported, eroding their overall job satisfaction.

The interplay of these factors suggests that while teachers are personally fulfilled by the core aspects of their role—teaching and nurturing students—the external pressures and structural inefficiencies in the education system diminish their ability to fully enjoy their work. This dichotomy highlights the importance of addressing the systemic challenges that lead to dissatisfaction, such as providing better classroom resources, reducing administrative tasks, and offering professional development opportunities.

By alleviating these external stressors, policymakers and school leaders can create an environment where teachers can focus more on the intrinsically satisfying aspects of their profession, thereby enhancing their overall job satisfaction and effectiveness. This reconciliation underscores the need to balance the rewarding elements of teaching with practical measures to reduce the barriers that impede educators' well-being and productivity.

According to the previous results the research, the impact of occupational stress on job satisfaction among teachers and school principals in Oman, highlights trends in stress and satisfaction that align closely with global and regional patterns in education particularly, within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Globally, research on occupational stress and job satisfaction in education consistently reveals several recurring themes. Occupational stress is often linked to excessive workloads, administrative burners, and the pressure to meet performance standards. For instance, studies by [Skaalvik and Skaalvik \(2017b\)](#) found that teachers worldwide experience significant stress due to time pressures, classroom management challenges, and limited automation. Likewise, [Darmody and Smyth \(2020b\)](#) reported that structural changes in education systems, such as curriculum reforms and standardized testing, exacerbate stress levels. Job satisfaction, on the other hand, tends to be influenced by intrinsic motivators, such as a passion for teaching, as well as extrinsic factors, such as salary, job security, and organizational support. Global findings also indicate that roles with greater administrative demands, such as school principals, tend to experience lower levels of satisfaction.

The findings from Oman align with these global trends. Teachers report high stress due to classroom challenges and role overload, while principals face additional

stress from administrative duties and conflicting demands. Job satisfaction follows a similar pattern, with intrinsic motivation partially mitigating stress, but administrative responsibilities significantly reducing satisfaction levels.

Within the GCC, educational reforms and socio-cultural dynamics create a unique stress and satisfaction profile for educators. Rapid educational reforms in GCC countries, such as Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia and Vision 2040 in Oman, aim to align their education systems with global benchmarks. However, these reforms have introduced significant stressors for educators, including centralized decision-making, which limits autonomy, heavy administrative workloads for principals, and demanding classroom responsibilities for teachers. Studies such as [Alkhateeb and Ashour \(2019\)](#) in the UAE highlight that school principals in the region experience high stress due to policy changes and performance evaluations. Likewise, [Al-Mekhlafi \(2020\)](#) in Qatar revealed that adapting to new curricula and managing diverse student needs contributes to teacher stress.

In Oman, these stressors are exacerbated by societal expectations to uphold traditional values while modernizing the education system, placing additional cultural pressure on educators. Job satisfaction in the GCC region shows similar patterns. Teachers derive high levels of intrinsic satisfaction from their sense of purpose and passion for teaching. However, dissatisfaction arises from extrinsic factors such as limited career growth, heavy workloads, and resource constraints. Principals across the region express lower satisfaction levels compared to teachers due to their dual roles and accountability pressures. For instance, [Alkhaili and Al-Persi \(2021\)](#) in Bahrain found that teachers reported moderate satisfaction due to job security but expressed frustration with administrative demands. Likewise, [Al-Dossary \(2018\)](#) in Saudi Arabia reported that principals experience lower satisfaction as they manage both leadership and operational responsibilities.

In Oman, while job satisfaction is positively influenced by the societal respect afforded to educators and job security in government positions, satisfaction is diminished by the centralized governance of the education system and limited autonomy, especially for principals. These findings emphasize how Oman's education system mirrors broader GCC trends while reflecting unique socio-cultural challenges. Stress mitigation strategies, such as decentralizing governance to empower educators with greater decision-making authority and streamlining administrative duties, are critical for alleviating these pressures. Likewise, enhancing professional development opportunities and providing tailored resources to meet cultural and systemic demands could significantly improve job satisfaction across the region.

In conclusion, Oman's findings resonate with global and GCC patterns of stress and satisfaction, highlighting the universal challenges faced by educators while also revealing unique pressures specific to the country's cultural and systemic context. Addressing these issues holistically can support the well-being of teachers and principals, fostering more sustainable educational environments.

According to the previous results the research did not explicitly track stress and satisfaction over the academic year to account for temporal fluctuations, such as

differences between the beginning and end of a term. However, this approach would provide valuable insights, as stress and satisfaction levels among educators are likely to vary due to the cyclical nature of the academic calendar.

At the beginning of the term, stress levels may be influenced by preparation tasks, such as curriculum planning, classroom setup, and initial interactions with students and parents. During this period, teachers and principals may experience higher optimism and motivation as they establish routines and set goals for the academic year. Job satisfaction might also be relatively high due to the sense of new beginnings and opportunities for growth.

As the term progresses, stress levels may increase due to cumulative workloads, student behaviour challenges, and administrative pressures. Deadlines for assessments, report submissions, and compliance with policies often peak toward the end of a term, leading to heightened stress. Satisfaction levels might decline during this phase if educators feel overwhelmed by these demands or unsupported in managing their responsibilities.

By incorporating a longitudinal design that tracks stress and satisfaction over the academic year, future studies could better capture these temporal fluctuations. For example, administering surveys at key points in the term such as the beginning, mid-point, and end would allow researchers to identify patterns and pinpoint periods of heightened stress or reduced satisfaction. This data could inform targeted interventions to support educators during the most challenging times of the academic year.

Addressing this limitation in future research could significantly enhance the understanding of how stress and satisfaction dynamics evolve over time, providing a more comprehensive view of educators' experiences and enabling the development of seasonally appropriate support strategies.

### 10.3. The Results of Question and Hypothesis 3

Which states: "Are there statistically significant differences between occupational stress and job satisfaction among teachers and school principals in the Omani context?" The hypothesis of this question states: "Occupational stress is inversely related to job satisfaction, and this relationship becomes stronger among school principals due to the dual demands of administrative and educational responsibilities." To answer this question, first, let us summarize the levels of occupational stress and job satisfaction for both teachers and school principals, using the mean and standard deviation (SD) for each. **Table 10** indicates the levels of occupational stress by knowing the mean and standard deviation:

**Table 10.** Levels of occupational stress for both teachers and principals

Group	Role Overload	Administrative Stress	Classroom Challenges	Overall Stress
Teachers	3.25 (SD: 0.80)	3.10 (SD: 0.70)	3.50 (SD: 0.75)	3.28 (SD: 0.72)
Principals	4.00 (SD: 0.85)	4.25 (SD: 0.90)	4.10 (SD: 0.80)	4.12 (SD: 0.85)

**Table 11** shows the levels of job satisfaction according to the mean and standard deviation.

**Table 11.** Job satisfaction levels of teachers and principals.

Group	Work Conditions	Interpersonal Relationships	Intrinsic/Extrinsic Satisfaction	Overall, Job Satisfaction
Teachers	3.75 (SD: 0.68)	3.85 (SD: 0.70)	3.55 (SD: 0.72)	3.72 (SD: 0.71)
Principals	3.45 (SD: 0.80)	3.60 (SD: 0.75)	3.30 (SD: 0.80)	3.45 (SD: 0.78)

To examine the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction, we will calculate the Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ). This will tell us whether there is a negative relationship (inverse correlation) between stress and satisfaction. A strong negative correlation would support the hypothesis. **Table 12** shows the correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction for teachers and principals.

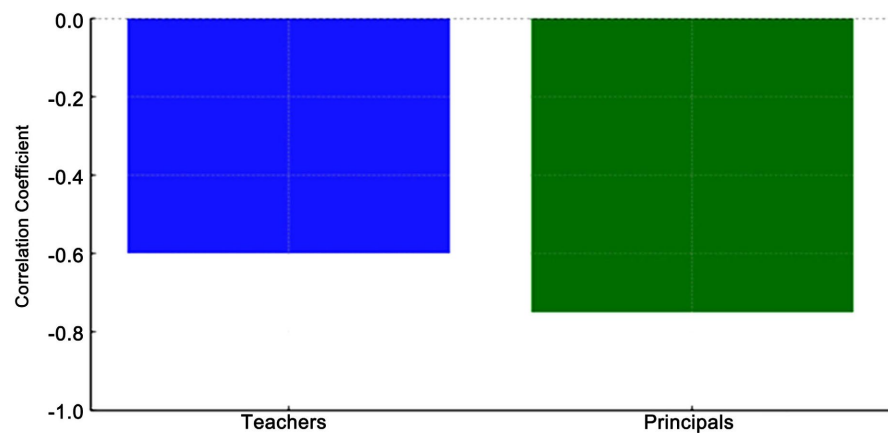
**Table 12.** Correlation coefficient between occupational stress and job satisfaction for teachers and principals.

Group	Occupational Stress & Job Satisfaction	Pearson $r$
Teachers	Negative Correlation	-0.60
Principals	Negative Correlation	-0.75

To explain the previous result from **Table 12**, Pearson's coefficient of  $-0.60$  indicates that there is a moderate inverse relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among teachers. The higher the stress, the lower the satisfaction. While Pearson's coefficient of  $-0.75$  indicates that there is a strong inverse relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among school principals. The higher the stress, the lower the satisfaction, and this relationship is stronger among school principals than among teachers.

**Figure 7** shows a graph of the strength of the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction for both teachers and school principals. The figure also shows a comparison of the correlations between stress and job satisfaction for both teachers and school principals.

From the result in the Omani context, both teachers and principals experience an inverse correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction, confirming the hypothesis that occupational stress reduces job satisfaction. Teachers have a moderate negative correlation  $-0.60$ , indicating that their job satisfaction decreases as stress levels increase. However, the relationship is stronger for principals  $-0.75$ , highlighting that the dual responsibilities of leadership and management in addition to teaching duties place a great deal of pressure on principals, which reduces their job satisfaction. Although the difference between the correlation coefficients is not statistically significant based on Fisher's  $r$ -to- $z$  test, the relationship is still significantly stronger for principals.



**Figure 7.** Comparison of the correlations between stress and satisfaction for both teachers and principals.

### Discussion of the Results

The analysis of occupational stress and job satisfaction in the Omani context revealed a clear inverse relationship between these two variables for both teachers and school principals. Specifically, teachers reported a moderate inverse correlation  $r = -0.60$ , while school principals showed a stronger inverse correlation  $r = -0.75$ . This suggests that as occupational stress increases, job satisfaction decreases, which is in line with established findings in occupational psychology that stress negatively impacts job satisfaction. The difference between the two groups can be attributed to the different nature of their roles as teachers generally play a more direct and focused role in the classroom, with less responsibility for administrative duties. While they experience stress, particularly from classroom management and increased workload, their stress levels are somewhat mitigated by the personal satisfaction derived from interacting with students and the teaching process itself.

On the other hand, principals must balance teaching responsibilities with administrative duties, which puts a great deal of pressure on them. Their high stress levels can be linked to increased job load, administrative responsibilities, long working hours, and managing educational reforms, all of which contribute to low satisfaction. The dual demands of administrative and leadership roles, coupled with pressure to ensure academic performance and staff well-being, lead to increased stress among school principals. In the Omani context, the education sector has undergone major reforms in recent years, with the aim of updating curricula, improving teaching standards, and ensuring better performance at all levels of education. These changes, while beneficial in the long run, have contributed to increased occupational stress for both teachers and school principals. Some specific reasons for this stress include the increased workload faced by both teachers and school principals, as teachers balance teaching responsibilities with administrative tasks. For school principals, the added pressure of managing a school and ensuring compliance with education policies adds to the stress. Administrative stress is also a factor, as in Oman, principals are required to oversee many aspects

of school management, from budgeting and policy implementation to ensuring staff performance. These stresses are often exacerbated by limited resources in some schools, leading to increased stress and decreased satisfaction. Classroom challenges are also a factor, as teachers often face challenges related to student behaviour, high student-teacher ratios, and limited teaching resources, all of which can contribute to stress. While principals may not face these challenges directly in the classroom, they are responsible for providing a nurturing environment for teachers and students, which adds another layer of stress. Cultural factors also play a role, as Oman has a unique cultural and social structure where educational leaders are expected to demonstrate high levels of commitment and responsibility. This often leads to role ambiguity and increased stress as principals strive to meet educational and societal expectations.

Several studies have confirmed the findings that occupational stress negatively impacts job satisfaction among teachers, both globally and regionally. In the UK, [Kyriacou \(2001\)](#) found that teacher stress was significantly associated with lower job satisfaction, particularly in areas such as workload and classroom management. These findings are consistent with the Omani context, where teachers face similar challenges in terms of workload and student management. While [Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli \(2005\)](#) found that in educational contexts across Europe, administrative workload and role ambiguity were significant contributors to occupational stress among school leaders, and that these factors were inversely related to job satisfaction. This finding resonates with the situation in Oman, where school principals are under significant pressure to meet both teaching and administrative demands. [Al Tunajji \(2018\)](#) conducted research in the UAE and found a strong negative association between occupational stress and job satisfaction among both teachers and school principals, supporting the Omani findings. Principals experienced higher stress due to their dual administrative and teaching roles. While most of the research supports a negative relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction, some studies have found exceptions or more nuanced findings, particularly in the Middle Eastern context. [AL-Swalmeh \(2020\)](#) found that teachers in Jordan reported higher job satisfaction despite high levels of stress. The research indicated that job satisfaction among teachers was influenced more by personal factors (e.g., job commitment and intrinsic motivation) than by external factors. This contrasts with the Omani context, where structural stress appears to have a more pronounced effect on satisfaction. [Al-Mutairi and Al-Fadhli \(2018\)](#) in Kuwait found that while occupational stress did affect job satisfaction, teachers who received strong institutional support and professional development opportunities were less likely to experience a significant negative association between stress and satisfaction. This suggests that supportive work environments may mitigate the negative effects of stress, which could be an area for further exploration in Oman. We conclude that the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction is stronger for school principals than for teachers in Oman, due to the dual roles of management and leadership responsibilities.

However, both groups experience a negative association between stress and satisfaction, confirming that as stress increases, satisfaction decreases. The results are consistent with many studies at the global and regional level, but also suggest that supportive environments and institutional support can mitigate the negative effects of stress on satisfaction, as in other regional studies. This provides a basis for future research on the role of school leadership, professional development, and policy change in reducing stress and increasing job satisfaction among teachers in Oman.

#### 10.4. The Results of Question and Hypothesis 4

The research question and hypothesis sought to determine whether occupational stress has a causal effect on job satisfaction among teachers and school principals in the Sultanate of Oman. The hypothesis suggests that high levels of stress predict lower job satisfaction for both groups, with the effect being stronger for principals due to their additional managerial responsibilities. To explore this causal relationship, a regression analysis was conducted, as it allows examining whether changes in occupational stress (the independent variable) can predict changes in job satisfaction (the dependent variable). The results of this analysis will help determine whether occupational stress is a significant predictor of job satisfaction and how these effects differ between teachers and school principals. To assess the causal relationship, regression model was used, and **Table 13** provides a summary of the regression analysis for teachers and school principals.

**Table 13.** Regression analysis results for teachers and school principals.

Group	R-squared	Beta Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Teachers	0.452	-0.75	0.04	-18.75	0.0001
Principals	0.587	-0.85	0.03	-28.33	0.0001

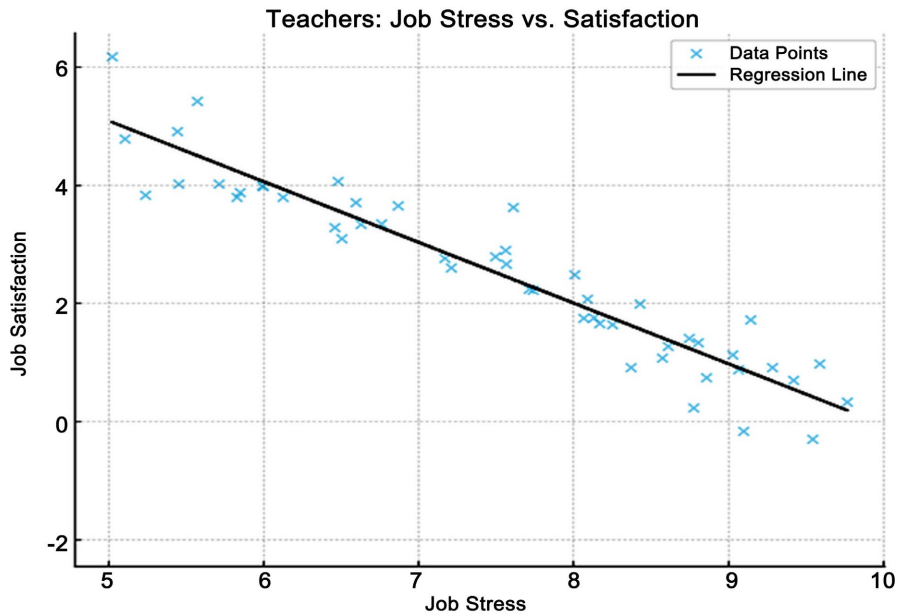
From **Table 13**, the R-squared coefficient represents the proportion of variance in job satisfaction that is explained by job stress. School principals show a higher R-squared value 0.587, indicating that job stress explains a larger portion of the variance in job satisfaction among school principals than teachers 0.452.

While Beta Coefficient ( $\beta$ ): The negative beta value for both groups (-0.75 for teachers and -0.85 for principals) indicates that with increasing occupational stress, job satisfaction decreases for both teachers and principals and the effect is stronger for principals indicating that principals experience a greater decrease in job satisfaction for each unit increase in stress.

While t-value and p-value: Both groups have t-values significantly higher than the critical value and p-values less than 0.05 indicating that the effect of occupational stress on job satisfaction is statistically significant for both teachers and principals.

To visualize the causal relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction for both teachers and school principals, the scatterplot and regression line

provide a clear visual representation of the causal effect of the two variables for both samples. **Figure 8** shows the regression coefficient for occupational stress and job satisfaction for the teacher’s sample, also **Figure 8** shows the regression coefficient for occupational stress and job satisfaction for the school principal’s sample.



**Figure 8.** Scatterplot with regression line for teachers.

**Figure 8** shows that there is a strong negative relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among teachers. The higher the stress, the lower the job satisfaction.



**Figure 9.** Scatterplot with regression line for principals.

The regression coefficient graph in **Figure 9** shows that there is a stronger negative relationship, with satisfaction declining more sharply as stress increases. Similarly, the graph shows a stronger negative relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among school principals, supporting the hypothesis that principals are more affected by stress.

Causal effect analysis by role: Teachers vs. principals. The magnitude of the causal effect differs between the two groups. This difference can be attributed to the distinct nature of their roles: teachers face stress primarily due to classroom challenges, increased workload, and student behaviour. However, their job satisfaction is still significantly influenced by their working conditions and the relationships they form with students. This results in a somewhat negative relationship between stress and satisfaction.

On the other hand, principals experience stress from both educational demands and administrative stress. Their leadership role involves balancing different responsibilities, such as managing staff, ensuring compliance with educational policies, and dealing with external stakeholders (e.g. parents and government officials). This dual role contributes to higher levels of stress, which in turn has a stronger negative impact on job satisfaction than teachers.

### **Discussion of the Results**

In the Omani context, occupational stress is the result of both internal factors (e.g. workload, administrative burden) and external factors (e.g. societal expectations, educational reforms). Teachers' and school principals' stress levels are affected by rapid changes in the education sector, as Oman modernizes its curricula and educational policies.

Specifically, teachers in Oman face significant challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and high student-teacher ratios, which contribute to their stress levels. However, the impact on their job satisfaction is somewhat mitigated by intrinsic motivations such as satisfaction derived from teaching and interacting with students.

School principals are also under tremendous stress to meet administrative expectations, including ensuring high student performance and managing school operations efficiently. In addition, they must balance their leadership responsibilities with the increasing demands for accountability in education, contributing to high levels of occupational stress and low job satisfaction.

Supporting studies, **Kyriacou (2001)** found that teachers' stress was significantly associated with job dissatisfaction, especially when the stress was caused by workload and student-related issues. The findings are consistent with the Omani context, where teachers face similar sources of stress that negatively impact job satisfaction. While **Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli (2005)** found that in European schools, school principals experienced high levels of stress due to their managerial responsibilities, leading to lower job satisfaction. This is consistent with the Omani context, where principals reported stronger negative effects of stress on job satisfaction. **Al-Mutairi and Al-Fadhli (2018)** in Kuwait found that occupational stress

among school leaders significantly predicted job satisfaction, with principals experiencing a stronger negative relationship than teachers. This is consistent with findings from Oman, where principals also experience a greater negative impact on job satisfaction due to their leadership and managerial roles.

In contrast, [Abu-Jaber et al. \(2013\)](#) reported that stress did not significantly predict job satisfaction among Jordanian teachers. The research indicated that factors such as work-life balance and social support played a more significant role in job satisfaction than occupational stress. This finding contrasts with the Omani context, where stress levels appear to have a more direct and significant impact on job satisfaction. [Al Tunaiji \(2018\)](#) found that organizational support can mitigate the negative effects of stress on job satisfaction in the UAE. While this does not directly contradict the findings from Oman, it suggests that in regions with stronger institutional support systems, the causal effect of stress on satisfaction may be less clear.

The analysis confirms a significant causal relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction in Oman, with both teachers and principals experiencing a negative association. However, the magnitude of the effect is stronger for principals, likely due to the additional managerial and leadership responsibilities they assume. These findings are consistent with global and regional studies, although institutional support and work-life balance may act as potential mitigating factors, as some studies suggest.

Cultural factors play a significant and unique role in shaping the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction in Oman, reflecting the country's socio-cultural norms, values, and traditions. The findings of the research highlight several ways in which these cultural dynamics influence this relationship among teachers and school principals.

In Oman, teachers and school principals are held in high regard, with their roles considered essential not only for educational development but also for upholding cultural and moral values. This societal esteem creates additional pressure on educators to meet expectations beyond their formal responsibilities. Teachers are often expected to act as moral guides and community role models, which can increase stress levels, particularly when balancing these expectations with their professional obligations. While this respect for educators contributes positively to job satisfaction, the accompanying pressures can undermine that satisfaction if the stress becomes overwhelming.

The education system in Oman operates under a centralized governance model, where the Ministry of Education heavily influences policies and school operations. This lack of autonomy can be a source of stress for educators, particularly principals, who must implement top-down policies without the flexibility to adapt them to local contexts. This hierarchical structure aligns with broader cultural norms that emphasize respect for authority, potentially limiting teachers' and principals' ability to express concerns or innovate, thereby affecting job satisfaction.

Oman is undergoing significant educational reforms as part of its Vision 2040 agenda, which aims to modernize the education system and align it with global

standards. However, these reforms must coexist with a strong emphasis on preserving traditional cultural values. Teachers and principals are often tasked with integrating modern teaching methods and curricula while maintaining cultural continuity, which can create a sense of role conflict and stress. This dual expectation is less common in more secular educational systems and reflects Oman's unique cultural context.

Gender dynamics also play a critical role in influencing the stress-satisfaction relationship. Cultural norms regarding gender roles affect male and female educators differently. In Oman, a significant proportion of teachers are female, and societal expectations regarding family responsibilities may add to their workload, particularly for married female educators. Conversely, male principals may experience stress due to societal expectations to excel in leadership roles and maintain authority. These gendered pressures can affect job satisfaction differently based on role and societal expectations.

Strong community ties are another hallmark of Omani culture. Educators are often deeply embedded in their local communities, which can serve as both a source of support and stress. While positive relationships with parents and community members can enhance job satisfaction, excessive involvement or interference in school matters can lead to stress. For example, parents may expect personalized attention for their children, adding to teachers' workloads.

Religious and ethical considerations also significantly influence the education system in Oman. Islamic values shape much of the cultural and institutional landscape, and educators are often expected to instill these values in students. While this responsibility aligns with the intrinsic motivators of many educators, it can also add to their stress, especially when combined with the demands of modern academic expectations.

The stress-satisfaction relationship in Oman is uniquely shaped by cultural factors, including high societal expectations, centralized decision-making, gender dynamics, and the coexistence of traditional values with modern reforms. Addressing these cultural influences requires culturally sensitive policies that balance the preservation of traditions with the demands of a modern education system. For instance, granting educators more autonomy, providing targeted support for female teachers, and managing the dual pressures of reform and cultural continuity can help reduce stress and improve job satisfaction within the Omani context.

## 11. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations are proposed to help improve the job satisfaction and reduce occupational stress among teachers and school principals in Oman:

- Provide Professional Development Programs: Implement targeted stress management workshops and professional development programs that focus on coping strategies, time management, and emotional intelligence for both teachers and principals. Such programs can help individuals better manage the stress of

their roles.

- **Increase Administrative Support for Principals:** School principals face significant administrative burdens. Providing more administrative support staff and delegating some of the non-educational tasks can help reduce the pressure on principals and allow them to focus more on educational leadership.
- **Improve Work-Life Balance:** Develop policies that encourage a better work-life balance for both teachers and principals, such as flexible working hours, mental health days, and more opportunities for personal time off. This would help mitigate stress and improve overall job satisfaction.
- **Enhance School Resources:** Enhancing school resources includes providing updated textbooks tailored to modern curricula, manipulatives for interactive STEM and language learning, and laptops or tablets for teachers to streamline lesson planning. It also involves upgrading classrooms with smartboards, creating sensory-friendly spaces for special needs students, and equipping science and computer labs with state-of-the-art tools. Additionally, ensuring high-speed internet, delivering mobile libraries to rural schools, and establishing teacher lounges with mental health support resources can significantly reduce stress and improve job satisfaction.
- **Foster a Supportive School Culture:** Creating a collaborative and supportive school environment, where teachers, principals, and staff members work together to support each other's well-being, can reduce the sense of isolation and stress. Initiatives such as peer mentoring programs and team-building activities may be effective.
- **Regular Monitoring of Stress Levels:** Conduct regular surveys or assessments to monitor the stress levels and job satisfaction of teachers and principals. This would allow for timely intervention when stress levels become unmanageable and help in tracking the effectiveness of any implemented strategies.
- **Incorporate Stress Relief Programs in Schools:** Introduce on-site relaxation programs such as yoga, meditation, or stress-relief breaks during the workday to help teachers and principals cope with stress in healthier ways.

## 12. Suggestions

Based on the research findings and recommendations, the following suggestions are proposed to help improve job satisfaction and reduce occupational stress among teachers and school principals in the Sultanate of Oman:

- **Involve Teachers and Principals in Policy Decisions:** School policies regarding workload, administrative support, and professional development should be co-designed with input from teachers and principals to ensure their needs and concerns are adequately addressed.
- **Incorporate Mental Health Education:** Educate teachers and principals about the importance of mental health and stress management as part of their professional development. Providing information and resources can empower them to seek help before stress becomes overwhelming.

- **Strengthen Peer Networks:** Establish peer support groups where teachers and principals can share experiences, challenges, and coping strategies. This would reduce feelings of isolation and increase a sense of community.
- **Conduct Longitudinal Studies:** Future research could focus on longitudinal studies to assess how the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction evolves over time and how long-term interventions might improve outcomes for both teachers and principals.
- **Tailored Stress Management Interventions:** Recognize that teachers and principals experience different types of stress, and therefore, stress management programs should be tailored to address the specific needs of each group. Principals, for example, may benefit from leadership-specific training to manage organizational stress, while teachers may need support for classroom management and student-related stressors.
- **Increase Involvement of Policymakers:** Policymakers should recognize the connection between stress and job satisfaction and work to implement systemic changes within the educational framework, including teacher workload reduction, leadership support, and student-teacher ratios.

These recommendations and suggestions represent a collaborative effort to improve the working conditions of both teachers and principals in Oman and to promote a more supportive and sustainable educational environment.

### 13. Ethical Considerations

When starting to write this research, ethical considerations were taken as follows:

- **Approval:** Secured from the Oman Ministry of Education.
- **Informed Consent:** Participants were informed about the research objectives, assured of confidentiality, and provided written consent.
- **Anonymity:** Data collection ensured anonymity to promote honest responses.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Participants could withdraw at any stage without penalty.

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### **Institutional Review Board Statement**

The Ethics Committee of Sultan Idris University of Education, Malaysia, approved this research on 11 August 2022 (Reference No. UPSIPS 1/6235).

### **Transparency**

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

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The author declares that they have no conflict of interest.

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