

# **Public and Private Schools: A Study of Teacher Job Satisfaction**

**Christopher Small**

*Douglas County (Georgia) School System*

**David G. Buckman**

*Kennesaw State University*

*This study aimed to contribute to the empirical literature concerning the factors that contribute to the job satisfaction levels of public and private school teachers. Furthermore, an emphasis was placed on how governmental accountability, school procedures, and workplace characteristics affected levels of job satisfaction. This study focused on other contributing factors of job satisfaction: personal attributes, human capital, occupational characteristics, and school characteristics. Inferential statistics concluded that there was a statistically significant difference between public and private school teachers' job satisfaction levels. Specifically, private school teachers had higher levels of job satisfaction than public school teachers.*

Education stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, administrators) are dependent on teachers to provide quality instruction and produce student learning (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino et al., 2006). However, teachers are changing jobs each year or moving to a different school at an alarming rate (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). For instance, in 2011-2012, the U.S. Department of Education reported that approximately 270,000 public school teachers turned over via school change or chose a different career (Goldring et al., 2014). More pointedly, Georgia reported a teacher attrition rate of roughly 10% (Aleshina, 2019) and indicated that 44% of public school teachers left the teaching profession within the first five years of teaching (Owens & GADOE, 2015).

The Georgia Department of Education specified that public school teachers identified mandated high stakes assessment as a significant contributor to their decision to leave the profession (Owens & GADOE, 2015). Public school teachers also indicated their propensity to leave the profession corresponded with the public education evaluation system being too reliant on test scores and not subject to other job factors. In addition to the accountability measures such as testing, Georgia public school teachers who left the profession also noted their negative perceptions of the profession were due to a lack of teacher input in educational policy (Owens & GADOE, 2015). From the public school teacher turnover data above and the attributed causes of teacher turnover, maintaining a high-quality teaching workforce is not an easy task for education agencies as long as public school teachers are at the mercy of political influences that control curriculum and assessment (Jennings & Rentner, 2006; Murnane & Papay, 2010).

Although national reports heavily document public school teacher attrition, very few studies have analyzed the attrition rates of educational agencies that do not receive heavy state and national educational oversight and accountability, such as private schools. Data provided by the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) identified in their 2008-2009 data that private school teachers reported a teacher attrition rate of 15.9%. In the same data set, the public school teacher attrition rate was 8%, indicating a considerable difference in the rate at which teachers of public and private schools turned over. In short, teachers at private schools turned over more than teachers in public schools. Schmitz (2017) highlighted that early-career teachers in private schools had seen dramatic increases in turnover, while early-career teachers in public schools had shown to be more likely to stay. The report also illustrated how private school turnover rates had increased faster than public school rates in each age group except those with 20 or more years of experience despite the implementation of federal school accountability initiatives (e.g., No Child Left Behind; Race to the Top) (Schmitz, 2017).

The academic culture of public schools has focused chiefly on accountability measures (i.e., school improvement plans and standardized tests) for decades ("Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) | U.S. Department of Education," 2018; "Helping America Reach High Standards," 1997; No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002). Due to the increased accountability measures, school leaders (i.e., principals) have experienced pressures that influence the management of teachers. Berryhill et al. (2009) indicated that educators are overly concerned with getting inadequate evaluations because principals heavily emphasize test results, and therefore, only focus on achievement and not other job components when evaluating.

Likewise, Crum and Sherman (2008) posited that the post-NCLB era led to school principals' accountability changes. For example, politicians have added increased pressure on principals to construct school improvement plans that increase student achievement to meet the state's prescribed achievement metrics (Crum & Sherman, 2008; Gonzalez & Firestone, 2013). Therefore, the responsibilities of leading change to increase academic achievement have increased

the work-related stressors associated with being an administrator (i.e., instructional leader) and have resulted in changes in principal behaviors that affect teachers job satisfaction (Balyer, 2012; Gonzalez & Firestone, 2013; Malloy & Allen, 2007). For example, researchers have indicated a principal's attitude when providing teacher feedback, support, and management can significantly impact a teacher's perception of their job or job satisfaction (Aydin et al., 2013; Balyer, 2012; Malloy & Allen, 2007).

Factors that influence job satisfaction are the same in both public and private school settings. However, public and private school teachers perceive the factors that lead to job satisfaction differently. Kennedy (2004) explains that private schools can be more attractive to teachers or aspiring teachers because of the freedom in decision-making in the classroom and the administration's support. McGrath and Princiotta (2005) highlight that teachers refrained from quitting in the private school setting because of their positive working environment and shared values and beliefs. Despite the NCES data indicating that teachers of private schools turnover more than public school teachers, with the academic controls and freedoms possessed by private schools, one would expect private school teachers to display higher job satisfaction levels than their public school teacher counterparts.

## **Review of Literature**

This literature review provides context to the study's variables to better understand whether or not being employed in private or public school settings influences teachers' job satisfaction. The literature review begins by providing briefs on the fundamental differences between public schools and private schools and culminates with how public and private schools potentially influence teacher job satisfaction.

### **Private Schools and Public Schools**

There is a paucity of empirical research on private school teachers and private school education systems. Nevertheless, just as in public schools, private school settings serve as significant sources of educational opportunity ("CAPE | Private School Facts," 2018). Researchers identify private schools as non-public (i.e., receives no governmental funding) educational agencies governed by a single entity or board (Balossi & Hernandez, 2016). The literature also indicates that private schools can fall into three categories: 1) religious schools, 2) schools for certain populations, and 3) schools for specific pedagogy and curriculum experiences ("CAPE | Private School Facts," 2018). In terms of the percentage of Americans who attend private or public schools, attendance numbers have remained consistent over several decades. Ninety percent of school-aged students attend public schools, while the remaining 10 percent attend private schools ("CAPE | Private School Facts," 2018; Jones, 2008; Murphy et al., 1999).

### ***Private School Overview***

Private education is rooted in parents' autonomy and rights to exercise the freedom to choose the type of schooling they want for their child. The federal courts established this right in 1925 with the federal court case *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*. In *Pierce v. Society of Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary*, the Supreme Court ruled that all children of the state attend school according to the compulsory school attendance law; nonetheless, the choice lies in the decision of the parents

in determining whom they want to teach their child and where they want their child educated (Abrams, 2009).

Like parents when deciding the type of schooling to which they would like their child to attend, teachers make employment choices each year concerning their employment options and evaluate a host of job factors, core values, and personal beliefs when considering the type of school they would like to work (Gamoran, 1996). For instance, Gamoran (1996) explains that one considerable area that separates the public school setting from a private school setting is an overarching theme or belief system. Private schools, specifically religious-based schools, provide a culture of shared beliefs among administration, teachers, students, and parents, motivating teachers to pursue careers in private schools. Gamoran (1996) also indicated that through the shared belief system associated with private schools, social capital (e.g., network of people and relationships) among personnel and students increases, promoting a positive academic environment.

A fundamental difference between public and private school operations is that private schools exercise autonomy in many of their policies and procedures; however, like public schools, there are specific guidelines and information private schools must document and share with their particular state ("Home | U.S. Department of Education," 2018). For example, states may require private schools to report the following: a) accreditation, b) licensing, c) teacher certification, d) length of the school day, e) length of the school year, f) curriculum, g) health and safety requirements, H) tax exemption, I) public aid for private education ("Home | U.S. Department of Education," 2018). It is important to note that private schools report information to their respective state to ensure the school adheres to constitutional law or parameters set by any federal or state grant it receives. In contrast, public schools report information to the state for regular evaluation, oversight, and adherence to state and national education policy (Sun et al., 2020).

### ***Public School Overview***

Several factors contribute to private school employment preferences (e.g., autonomy, administrative support, student population, mission/beliefs, workplace environment, and the number of students in a class; Akhtar et al., 2010; Kennedy, 2004). These factors are more controllable in the private school setting due to the small hierarchical structure and minimal bureaucratic layers than public schools (Kennedy, 2004; Shakeel & DeAngelis, 2016).

Unlike private schools, public schools are provided funds from the state and the federal government to increase student achievement; however, by receiving the funds, public schools are obligated to adhere to mandated standards (Diamond, 2007; Heck & Chang, 2017; Jennings & Rentner, 2006). Through standards-based reform, the government has raised expectations for public education, but at the expense of increased stress levels for teachers (von der Embse et al., 2019). Although the federal and state governments often divert public monies (i.e., tax deductions/credits, vouchers; Fiddiman & Yin, 2019) to private schools, states do not obligate private schools to adhere to the state curriculum standards enforced on public schools.

For the past three decades, public schools have predominately focused on strong accountability measures (i.e., standardized tests, school improvement plans) ("Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) | U.S. Department of Education," 2018; "Helping America Reach High Standards," 1997 "; No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002). Teachers have demonstrated concern for the overemphasis on student test results instead of other important teacher job performance metrics (i.e., teacher supervision, pedagogical practices, student engagement)

(Berryhill et al., 2009). In brief, teachers feel confined by the limitations of their ability to utilize what they have learned through their own experiences, training, and educational achievements (i.e., education degrees) (Murnane & Papay, 2010) because of the restrictions associated with state standardized curriculum and high-stakes accountability metrics.

### **Job Satisfaction in Public and Private Education**

As the student population continues to increase in the United States, the demand for quality teachers in public and private schools will also increase. Unfortunately, many schools and school districts struggle with supplying and maintaining a quality teacher force (García & Weiss, 2019). Some assign teacher job satisfaction and the overall perception of the teaching profession (Toropova et al., 2021) as the culprit of the national teacher shortage crisis. Therefore, it is imperative that researchers better understand the job satisfaction construct to inform school leaders in public and private school settings.

Strategies employed to manage and improve schools can positively or negatively affect the teacher workforce's job satisfaction levels (Grissom et al., 2014). Education policy (i.e., NDEA, 1958; ESEA, 1965; ECIA, 1981; IASA, 1994; NCLB, 2001; and ESSA, 2015) sought to create opportunities for teachers to better prepare students for post-high school graduation opportunities (Jennings & Rentner, 2006; Pepper, 2010). Like public schools, private schools create policies and procedures for similar purposes (i.e., quality education for students) (Labaree, 1997). In both school types, teachers are the primary contributor to a school's day-to-day operations (Berryhill et al., 2009).

Teacher attributes or characteristics, school demographics, and human capital have served as standard variables (i.e., ethnicity, gender, age, years of experience, education, region, and student enrollment) in research used to analyze job satisfaction levels (Buckman, 2017; Crossman & Harris, 2006; Perie & Baker, 1997). However, the variables found to be the most significant predictors of job satisfaction were administrative support and teacher autonomy in decision making (Kim & Loadman, 1994; Moore, 2012; Perie & Baker, 1997).

Master et al. (2016) studied the teaching profession, specifically in overall job satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and job security. The study utilized data collected by the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data from 1994 to 2008. This period is significant because of the economic change in the U.S. (i.e., the great recession) and the substantial advances in education policy (i.e., NCLB).

The study concluded that overall job satisfaction in the year 2000 decreased for teachers and non-teaching occupations (i.e., private industry, non-profit organizations). Explicitly, private school teachers had a slight decrease in their job and pay satisfaction levels (Master et al., 2016). The study also indicated that teachers in public schools had less job security satisfaction than teachers working in private schools. Master et al. (2016) highlight that public school teachers during the NCLB era showed concern about job security because of the increased emphasis on school and student accountability.

However, in 2008, the teacher workforce showed a slight increase in job satisfaction (87.4%) than non-teacher occupations (71%). Master et al. (2016) assert that the slight increase was associated with the economy's changes. During this period, private industries were reducing jobs and cutting pay because of the 2008 economic recession, while many schools and school districts were able to keep teachers employed and maintain paying teachers their current salaries.

In public and private teaching settings, teachers are the bedrock of student achievement, and a teacher's impact on student learning is substantive (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Historical literature dating back to 1966 concluded that teachers' quality accounted for more student achievement variance than any other school factor (Coleman, 1968). For these reasons, teachers' satisfaction is of great importance, and schools and districts should invest in their teaching force in the form of leadership actions, policies, and compensation that encourage teachers to enter the profession and remain in the profession.

### **Theoretical Framework**

For readers to interpret public and private school's potential relationship with job satisfaction, this study utilized Locke's (1976) Value Percept Theory for its theoretical framing. Locke (1976) theorized that an individual is satisfied with a job when the job meets their personal values, and conversely, an individual is dissatisfied when the job does not fulfill their personal values. Researchers use this theory to quantify satisfaction through the formula  $[S = (V^e - P) \times V_i]$  explained as [satisfaction = (want – have) x importance] (Judge et al., 2001). This theory supports the idea that intrinsic needs aid in one's satisfaction. A job fulfilling or exceeding one's needs determines the directionality (i.e., positive or negative) of satisfaction; however, the importance of the intrinsic need determines the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

### **Purpose and Significance**

This study aimed to analyze the effects of the public and private school setting on teacher job satisfaction. Job satisfaction literature has supported that satisfied employees have more significant performance outputs and are less like to turnover (Hackman & Oldman, 1975; Locke, 1976). To better understand the nuances of the different schooling systems and their impact on teachers, this study seeks to shed light on factors that influence teacher job satisfaction, such as school type vis-à-vis public and private schools. The literature on private school operations, better yet, private school job satisfaction, is scant. As such, this study is significant because it will provide valuable, current insight into an area seldomly studied in the educational community. This study differs from past research because it provides a comparative analysis using teacher survey data to determine job satisfaction on both private and public school samples. Ultimately, teacher job satisfaction and the contribution of this study can help public school districts and private schools identify strategies to maintain a quality teaching force and aid in decision-making. The following research question guided this study:

Is there a statistically significant difference between public school and private school teacher job satisfaction when controlling for potential covariates?

### **Methodology**

The researchers selected Georgia as the sample state to analyze public and private school teachers' job satisfaction because of its growing need to recruit and retain teachers and the state's teacher turnover rate (44%; Owens & GADOE, 2015). To underscore the population size of the Georgia public and private school workforce, the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) indicates there are over 550 private schools and 2,263 public schools in Georgia ("FY2016 Private School Data Collection," 2018). GADOE disaggregates public school data into four

different school types (e.g., elementary schools - 1,319; middle schools - 481; high schools - 448; and kindergarten thru twelfth-grade schools - 15) ("GADOE – school count type," 2018).

## **Procedure**

To acquire the sample of Georgia public and private school teachers, the researcher used MCH Strategic Data (i.e., a data retrieval company) for teacher contact information. The data retrieval company randomly selected the teachers from the state's total population and stratified them into two groups (public and private schools). The researchers then provided the sample with electronic surveys to acquire information pertaining to 1) personal information, 2) curriculum oversight perceptions via the curriculum control and professional discretion questionnaire, and 3) job satisfaction data acquired from the Job Descriptive Index.

To avoid statistical type-1 and type-2 errors, the researchers utilized Cohen's (1988) power analysis to identify the sample size necessary to have adequate statistical power to detect the statistical significance of variables within the regression analysis. A power analysis considers the number of independent variables, covariates, level of significance, the effect size, and the specific power to determine the required sample size for the study. Eleven covariates, one independent variable, a medium effect size ( $f^2 = .15$ ), a defined level of significance set at ( $\alpha = .05$ ), and a specific power level ( $\beta = .80$ ) determined the recommended sample size was 127 participants ( $n = 127$ ).

On the initial delivery, 282 teachers opened the survey, 230 started the survey, and 160 completed the survey. To achieve data normality, the researchers removed extreme outliers and randomly removed participants to balance both strata. After removing participants, the final sample maintained the necessary statistical power to avoid statistical error and improve the likelihood of accurate findings. The final sample groups consisted of 64 public school teachers and 64 private school teachers ( $n = 128$ ).

## **Variables**

To determine statistical relationships between the independent variable school type (i.e., public school teacher and private school teacher) and the dependent variable (i.e., job satisfaction), the researchers used control variables to account for the variance of factors that affect teacher job satisfaction outside of the dependent variable.

### ***Covariates***

Personal attributes (i.e., age, gender, and race), human capital (education level, years of experience), and work characteristics (workdays, salary, curriculum control, student enrollment, school location) served as covariates because of the large amount of research documented in empirical literature supporting their relationships with job satisfaction (Buckman, 2017; Crossman & Harris, 2006; Perie & Baker, 1997).

Perie and Baker (1997) specify that younger and less experienced teachers in public schools were more satisfied with the profession when compared to teachers in the later stages of their careers. Comparatively, young private school teachers indicate low job satisfaction levels compared to more experienced private school teachers. Because of Perie and Baker's (1997)

findings, the researchers included age in their analysis. The average age of the sample was 46.5 years (See Table 1).

In terms of gender and its relationship with job satisfaction, research has reported mixed results. Some researchers have indicated that there is no relationship between gender and job satisfaction (Klecker, 1997; Nestor & Leary, 2000), while other researchers have purported that female teachers were more satisfied with the teaching profession than male teachers (Bogler, 2002; Perie & Baker, 1997). Table 1 indicates the sample consisted of roughly 22% males and 77% females (see Table 1). Considering the disproportionate number of females to males in the profession whereby females significantly outnumber males, this finding is not abnormal.

Race is also a factor that contributes to the prediction of job satisfaction. Recent research concluded that non-white teachers were less satisfied with teaching as a profession (Master et al., 2016). Other research on race and its association with job satisfaction indicated that when school staff and student population align racially, teachers report being more satisfied with their work (Fairchild et al., 2012). Because of the low participation of races other than white, the researchers categorized the race variable into two groups (i.e., white and non-white). White participants accounted for 82.0% of the total sample, while non-white participants accounted for 18.0% (see Table 1).

In K-12 education, a teacher's level of education may affect their salary, influencing their level of satisfaction with pay and inadvertently influencing their overall job satisfaction. Traditionally, a teacher's salary will increase when they earn an advanced degree (e.g., Master's Degree, Educational Specialist Degree, Doctoral Degree) (GADOE, 2019). The data indicated that 31.3% of the participants had at least a Bachelor's Degree, 45.3% of the teachers earned a Master's Degree, 18.8% of participants earned a Specialist Degree or credits above a Master's Degree, and 4.7% earned a Doctorate Degree (see Table 1). In addition, years of experience can also serve as a factor that allows a teacher to earn an additional step increase on a traditional fixed-rate salary schedule. The average years of experience for the sample was 17.18 years.

In Georgia, according to the public school teacher salary schedule, pay is increased by two factors: 1) educational level and 2) years of experience defined by each service year completed (GADOE, 2019); however, private schools have more autonomy in determining how they pay teachers (e.g., fixed-rate salary schedule, merit pay) (Ballou, 2001). Researchers have determined that pay affects one's financial needs, and it influences the perception of satisfaction with work (Milkovich & Newman, 2008). Pay satisfaction has been such a potent factor of job satisfaction that it has served as a standalone dependent variable in past research (Buckman et al., 2016; Currall et al., 2005; Vandenberghe & Tremblay, 2008). Table 1 indicates the average salary of the sample was \$50,632.

Research also indicates that workload is a significant factor when considering job satisfaction (Spector, 1997). The annual contracts for both settings are typically 180 to 190 workdays and are directly associated with teacher pay. Therefore, as defined by annual contracts, workload is a necessary covariate that can influence teacher job satisfaction. The average number of contractual workdays for the sample was roughly 185 days (see Table 1).

School characteristics are also a consistent variable used in empirical educational research (Goldring et al., 2014; Moore, 2012). The school environment has shown to have significant effects on teachers deciding to stay in the profession or migrate to a different school or different career. Therefore, average student enrollment ( $\bar{x} = 765.94$ ) and location of the school (i.e., rural, urban, suburban; 21.9%, 21.8%, 56.3%, respectively) provided data used to assist in determining the relationship between the job satisfaction level of public and private school teachers.

The researchers utilized a curriculum control and professional discretion survey to capture the perception of control of curriculum and teacher autonomy. The survey provided to participants measured two categories associated with control of curriculum (i.e., external and internal) and teacher's professional discretion in the classroom. The two portions of the survey required participants to evaluate their perspectives of the previous topic using a 6-point Likert scale. The researchers converted the data from the curriculum control and teacher's perception of professional discretion to composite scores.

Teachers in public and private schools experience curriculum control from external governmental and administrative sources. In the public school setting, policy and procedures are mandated by federal, state, and local school boards (Bozeman et al., 2013; Kauffman et al., 2002). Private schools, while independent, also have external factors of control from school leaders and local governing boards (Coleman et al., 1982; Shakeel & DeAngelis, 2016).

Teachers value school leaders that provide opportunities for shared educational decisions (i.e., policy development) (McGrath & Princiotta, 2005; Murnane & Papay, 2010). Additionally, teachers value discretion in the planning and implementation of the instructional process. When provided with empowerment, teachers will perceive the working environment as satisfying (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). Therefore, the two covariates, curriculum control and professional discretion in the classroom, supported the examination of public and private school teachers' job satisfaction. For the sample populations, the curriculum control survey provided an average composite score of 2.44, while the teacher's perception of professional discretion provided an average composite score of 3.59 (see Table 1).

**Table 1**  
*Descriptive Statistics: Central Tendency and Frequency Metrics*

Variable	Mean	Range	SD	n	Frequency	Percent
<i>Continuous Variables</i>						
Enrollment <sup>d</sup>	765.94	3659	543.71	128	—	—
Experience <sup>a</sup>	17.18	51	10.45	128	—	—
Work Days <sup>b</sup>	185.03	280	23.26	128	—	—
Salary <sup>c</sup>	50,632	102000	19392	128	—	—
Age <sup>a</sup>	46.55	51	10.68	128	—	—
Curriculum Control <sup>e</sup>	2.44	3.93	.841	128	—	—
Teachers Prof. Discr. <sup>e</sup>	3.59	4.50	1.15	128	—	—
Job Satisfaction <sup>f</sup>	199.83	162	39.80	128	—	—
<i>Categorical Variables</i>						
Bachelors	—	—	—	128	40	31.3
Masters	—	—	—	128	58	45.3
Specialist	—	—	—	128	24	18.8
Doctorate	—	—	—	128	6	4.7
Male	—	—	—	128	29	22.7
Female	—	—	—	128	99	77.3
White	—	—	—	128	105	82.0
Non-White	—	—	—	128	23	18.0
Urban	—	—	—	128	28	21.8

Suburban	—	—	—	128	72	56.3
Rural	—	—	—	128	28	21.9
Public School	—	—	—	128	64	50
Private School	—	—	—	128	64	50

Note. <sup>a</sup>Years. <sup>b</sup>Days. <sup>c</sup>U.S. Dollars. <sup>d</sup>Students. <sup>e</sup>Likert Scale. <sup>f</sup>JDI Scale.

### ***Independent Variable***

The independent variable for this study was Georgia public and private school teachers. Using a dummy coding system, the researchers coded Georgia public school teachers as (1) and private school teachers (0). To address the assumption of normality, the researchers identified extreme values and removed outliers. The researchers removed three outliers for public schools and three outliers for private schools (i.e., public schools, n = 64; private schools, n = 64) and conducted data transformation procedures. After the adjustments, the dependent variable rendered a Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test that was not significant (Kolmogorov-Smirnov = .200,  $p > .05$ ; Shapiro-Wilk = .130,  $p > .05$ ), indicating the data met the assumptions for normality.

### ***Dependent Variable***

Teacher job satisfaction served as the dependent variable for the study, and the researchers quantified the variable using the Job Descriptive Index. The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) is a 72-item survey that measures five facets of job satisfaction and provides a cumulative job satisfaction score (Smith et al., 1969). The instrument captures five facets of job satisfaction: 1) work itself, 2) pay, 3) promotion, 4) supervision, and 5) co-workers.

Tasios and Giannouli (2017) describe that researchers measure each of the five facet areas using participants' responses to a list of words (i.e., adjectives or adjective phrases). Participants answer each word or phrase with: (Y) for yes, (N) for no, and a (?) question mark for cannot decide. To score responses, worded items are scored 3, 1, and 0 (e.g., Y = 3, ? = 1, N = 0).

This study utilized the JDI because it is one of the most globally used surveys to measure job satisfaction. Moreover, researchers have translated the JDI into several different languages to measure job satisfaction in countries outside of the United States (i.e., Spanish, Hebrew, French) (Hulin et al., 1982; Hulin & Mayer, 1986; McCabe et al., 1980).

Because of its consistent reliability and validity, the researchers chose the JDI as the source of measuring overall job satisfaction (i.e., summative score) (Ironson et al., 1989). In terms of measuring the JDI for reliability, the facets of the JDI have the following measures when psychometrically analyzed for internal consistency: work .90, pay .88, promotion .91, supervision .92, co-workers .92, and JIG .92 (Brodke et al., 2009).

Researchers used Pearson's correlations to validate the instrument by correlating it with other scaled instruments (i.e., intent to quit scale, feelings of stress scale, and single-item measures of overall job satisfaction). When researchers tested the JIG against the intent to quit scale, feelings of stress scale, and single-item measure of overall job satisfaction, the scores were as follows - 0.61, -0.30, and 0.79, respectively. For the population in this study, this particular instrument aligns with school characteristic constructs and provides the needed reliability and validity across different populations (Gillet & Schwab, 1975; Johnson et al., 1982; Kinicki et al., 2002). For this particular study, that average JDI score was 199.83 (see Table 1 above).

## Results

The researchers utilized an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) multiple regression to analyze the dependent variable, independent variable, and covariates. The statistical procedure regressed Job satisfaction (i.e., dependent variable) on the independent variable (i.e., school type) and all covariates. An alpha of .05 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) determined the criterion used to accept or reject the null hypothesis. Before conducting the analysis, the researchers tested the statistical assumptions for multiple regression (i.e., linear relationship, multivariate normality, homoscedasticity, no multicollinearity). As noted, when discussing the independent variable, the data did not meet the assumption of normality; however, addressing the outliers, extreme values and employing a reflection log10 data transformation normalized the data.

The researchers also set the acceptable Variance of Inflation Rate (VIF) at 3.0 or less to identify multicollinear variables. The only variable that exceeded the 3.0 threshold was years of teaching (VIF = 3.123) which correlated with teacher's age. Historically, the literature has supported years of teaching as a significant variable when considering teacher's job satisfaction, so the researchers decided to retain the variable in the multiple regression analysis (Crossman & Harris, 2006; Perie & Baker, 1997). The researchers removed age from the analysis because they found that age correlated with years of teaching ( $r = .753$ ), exceeding the recommended statistical threshold (i.e., .700). With the removal of age from the analysis, all variables meet the acceptable VIF for multiple regression (see Table 2). Normality and Multicollinearity were the only assumptions not met, and preliminary testing found that all other regression assumptions met the statistical recommendations.

**Table 2**  
*OLS Multiple Regression of Teacher Job Satisfaction and School Type*

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	VIF
Constant	1.803	.229		7.870	.000**	
Enrollment	-4.819E-6	.000	-.011	.111	-.912	1.295
Degree Level	.038	.030	.128	1.258	.211	1.447
Teaching Exp.	.000	.002	-.014	-.137	.891	1.502
Gender	.010	.055	.017	.178	.859	1.215
Race	-.015	.059	-.023	-.247	.805	1.216
Salary	8.758E-7	.000	.069	.559	.577	2.131
Work Days	.000	.001	-.016	-.180	.857	1.139
Location	-.028	.034	-.077	-.841	.402	1.167
Curriculum Cont.	-.082	.036	-.283	-2.292	.024*	2.116
Professional Discr.	.060	.023	.284	2.593	.011*	1.670
Public Schools	-.153	.068	-.314	-2.240	.027*	2.726

n= 128  
R<sup>2</sup>= .166

Note. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction.

\* $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ ,

In analyzing the data, the statistical software entered all control variables and the independent variable simultaneously into the multiple linear regression equation, which accounted for approximately 16% of the model's variance (see Table 2). The effects of the multiple linear regression on the independent variable (i.e., school type) indicate that this variable significantly correlates with teacher job satisfaction ( $b = -.314, p < 0.05$ ; see Table 2). More specifically, private school teachers in the sample displayed higher levels of job satisfaction than public school teachers. Other variables found to be statistically significant were professional discretion in the classroom ( $b = .284, p < 0.05$ ) and curriculum control ( $b = -.283, p < 0.05$ ).

## Conclusion

To further explain the findings in this study, in addition to the main finding indicating private schools had higher levels of job satisfaction than public schools ( $b = -.314, p < 0.05$ ), the analysis indicated there were two statistically significant covariates (i.e., curriculum control and teacher's professional discretion in the classroom). The covariate curriculum control ( $b = -.283, p < 0.05$ ) indicated that overall teachers' job satisfaction decreased when teachers had more control over the curriculum (e.g., content taught and assessments). Similarly, teachers' perception of professional discretion in the classroom was statistically significant ( $b = .284, p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that when teachers perceive more independence in decision-making in the classroom, their job satisfaction levels increased.

Literature highlights that private school teachers seek employment at private schools because of the independent working environment and a culture of shared beliefs among staff members, parents, and students (Gamoran, 1996; McGrath & Princiotta, 2005). Moreover, in private education, parents choose to send their children to school based on shared beliefs, which private school leaders cultivate and maintain. Contrary to public school leaders, private school leaders are allowed to strategically select who attends their school, which further controls the school's culture (Coleman et al., 1982; Shakeel & DeAngelis, 2016). As such, one may also assume that private school teachers have a higher level of job satisfaction because of the characteristics of their work environment (e.g., shared belief system, private school culture, and student dynamic).

The Value Percept theory supports the shared belief assumption. Locke's Value Percept Theory (1976) purports, one achieves job satisfaction when the job fulfills a personal value. Therefore, a specific school type may fulfill a teacher's values when employed at a public or private school because both settings provide a unique culture and environment.

In terms of the study's findings, research indicates private schools have increased autonomy in recruiting and hiring teachers (Balossi & Hernandez, 2016). To add, they can experience autonomy within their work because of the decreased level of bureaucracy (i.e., federal and state government) (Balossi & Hernandez 2016; Shakeel & DeAngelis, 2016). On the other hand, empirical research on the job satisfaction of public school teachers has purported that standards-based reform has contributed to less autonomy in the classroom and loss of skill variety because of prescribed instructional strategies to increase standardized test results (Crum & Sherman, 2008; Diamond, 2007; Murnane & Papay, 2010).

For example, during the time of standards-based reform, teachers experienced role conflict and lacked the autonomy to use an assortment of skills within their planning and

instruction (Farber, 1991; Friedman, 1991; McNeil, 2000; Smith 1991). In accordance, the findings of this study indicate that private school teachers perceive a higher level of job satisfaction than public school teachers. As such, one can assume, based on the literature and the distinctly different educational environments, public school teachers' lack of autonomy and skill variety in their work, associated with governmental oversight, and the working environment of public schools contributed to lower job satisfaction.

Over the past two decades, robust measures of accountability provided by federal legislation (e.g., NCLB) have influenced public school teachers (Berryhill et al., 2009; Murane & Papay, 2010; Jennings & Rentner, 2006). Additionally, these strong measures increased stress and role conflict in public school teachers. For example, Berryhill et al.'s (2009) research noted how the sample of teachers lost autonomy in their instructional practices because they were teaching only for results of standardized tests.

Considering the findings in this study, school leaders should bear in mind that teachers value the culture of their place of employment (i.e., public school or private school), and it influences their job satisfaction. Also, teachers value the opportunity to choose content, assessment, and instructional strategies in their classroom (Jennings & Rentner, 2006; Murnane & Papay, 2010). For these reasons, to potentially increase teacher job satisfaction levels, school leaders (e.g., principals) should provide an environment that promotes their teachers' values and an opportunity to collaborate with the development of policies and procedures.

As with all research, readers should interpret the findings through the study's limitations. The limitations identified in this study are the use of a summative score for the job satisfaction survey (i.e., JDI), the curriculum control and teacher's professional discretion survey as covariates, and the independent variable private and public school teachers. Identifying the limitations of this study helps to make suggestions for future research opportunities in teacher job satisfaction.

The use of the summative score for the JDI limits the generalization of job satisfaction even though it had a high Cronbach' Alpha reliability rating of .947. Facets assist in explaining individual components of the job. For example, the JDI is sub-categorized into six facets: 1) co-workers, 2) job in general, 3) work itself, 4) pay, 5) opportunities for promotion, and 6) supervision. Therefore, future researchers should consider analyzing specific facets to determine certain job-specific attributes influencing teacher job satisfaction.

Public and private school teachers were also a limitation. The researchers sampled a broad group of teachers chosen from teachers that worked at elementary, middle, and high schools. Additionally, these teachers could be teaching subjects that high stakes accountability assessment do not influence, such as elective courses (e.g., physical education, art, music), and maybe more satisfied. Future researchers could sample specific school levels (e.g., public high school teachers and private high school teachers) and subject areas. Also, future research could look at the job satisfaction levels of teachers that teach only the core subject areas of math, science, social studies, and reading/language arts.

A focus of this study was the effects of policy and procedures on teacher's perception of curriculum control and instructional decisions in the classroom. To assist in operationalizing these two covariates, the researchers used a two-part survey (Archbald & Porter, 1994; May, 2010). Within the analysis, the results determined that curriculum control and teacher's professional discretion in the classroom were statistically significant; however, these significant findings in the regression did not make a distinction between public and private schools. As such, a recommendation for future research could be using the curriculum control and teacher's professional discretion survey as the dependent variable.

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