

Tensions in Teaching: Examining Job Satisfaction and Perceptions of the Education System

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Abstract

Education is a fundamental pillar of society, yet research shows that low job satisfaction amongst teachers is prevalent. This research examines potential contributing factors, comparing education workers’ perceptions of the education system to those in other fields. Bivariate and multivariate analyses were utilized to examine these relationships using data from the 2022 General Social Survey. Results found that education workers did not experience higher levels of job dissatisfaction, but did hold more critical opinions of the education system. A correlation was found between job dissatisfaction and low confidence in the education system amongst education workers.

Hypotheses

H1: Education workers will have lower job satisfaction compared to respondents in other industries, such as the healthcare industry and restaurant industry.
H2: Education workers will have more critical perceptions of the education system compared to respondents from other industries.
H3: Critical perceptions of the education system are correlated with lower job satisfaction amongst education workers.

Methods

- Data analyzed from the 2022 wave of the General Social Survey fielded by the National Opinion Research Center
- Random National Sample

Independent Variables

- Respondent Occupation
- Perceptions of the Education System
 - Nation’s Spending on Education
 - “Too little” = 1
 - “About right”/”Too much” = 0
 - Confidence in People Running the Education System
 - “Great deal” = 3
 - “Only some” = 2
 - “Hardly any” = 1

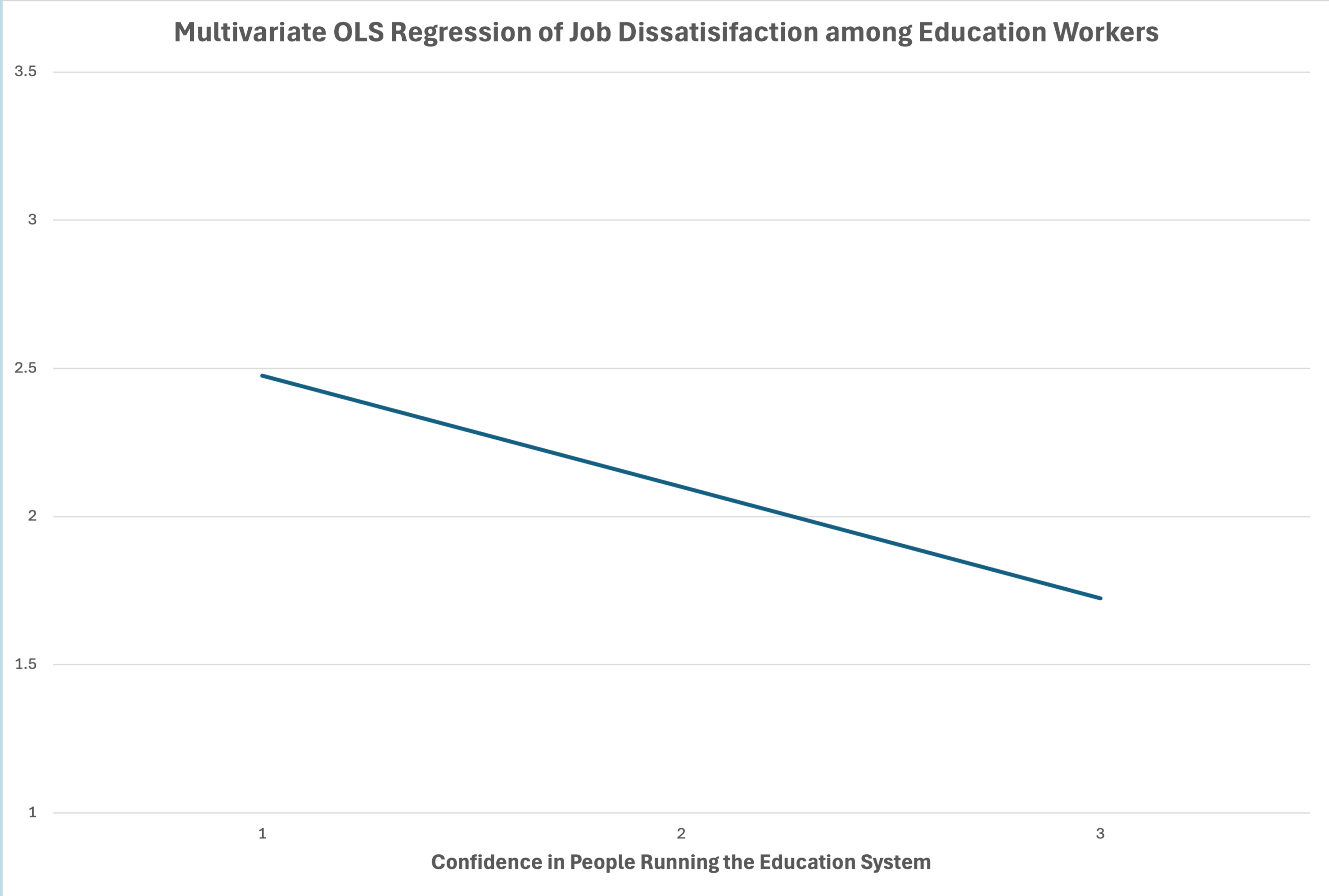
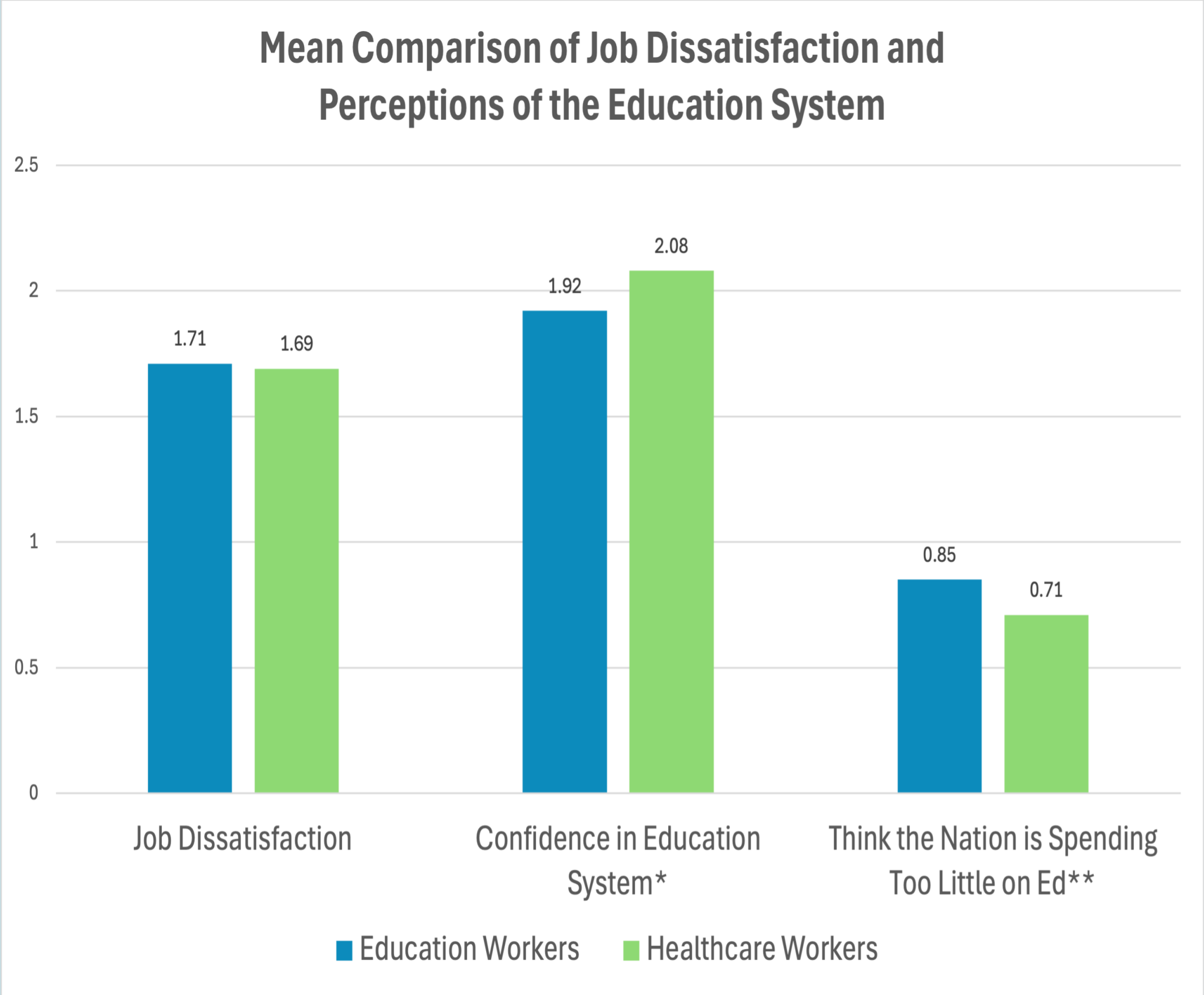
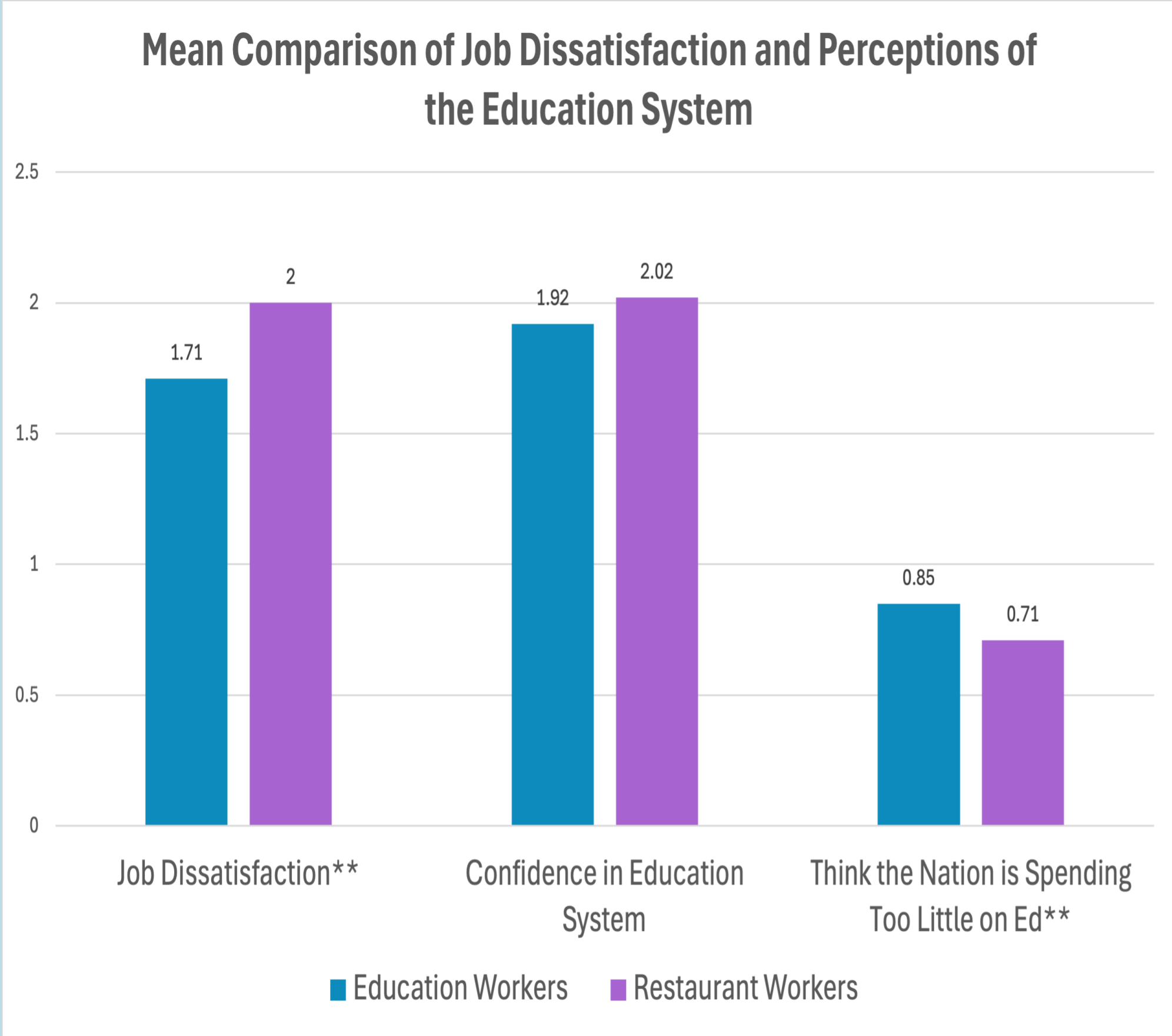
Dependent Variables

- Perceptions of the Education System
- Job Prestige
 - 0-100 scale
- Job Dissatisfaction
 - “Very satisfied” = 1
 - “Very dissatisfied” = 4

Controls

- Race
- Age
- Socioeconomic status/family income
- Gender
- Region
- Degree of education
- Political party affiliation

Results



Discussion

- Education workers do not report significantly higher job dissatisfaction than workers in other industries.
- However, they have somewhat more negative perceptions of the education system.
 - They demonstrate a stronger belief that the nation spends too little on education compared to restaurant workers.
 - They report lower confidence in the education system and a stronger belief that the nation spends too little on education when compared to healthcare workers.
- These results highlight discrepancies between how education workers and non-education workers view the education system.

Opportunities for Further Research

- Investigation as to why education workers hold more negative perceptions of their field compared to workers in other industries should be conducted.
- Limitations of the current study should be addressed:
 - The study combined teachers and administrators under the category of "education workers," which may have skewed results. Future research should separate these groups for more precise insights.
- Internal factors influencing teacher job satisfaction and external factors beyond education system perceptions should also be investigated.

Conclusions

- Education workers are not more dissatisfied than those in other industries, but they hold more negative perceptions of their field.
- These negative perceptions are correlated with job dissatisfaction.
- Understanding these perceptions is crucial for improving teacher job satisfaction and fostering a healthy and effective education system that benefits both teachers and students.

Sources

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