

A Study on Parents' Attitude Towards Current Practices of Primary Schools in Manipur

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Abstract

The study investigates parents' attitude towards specific aspects of primary schools like the school policies, curriculum and teachers, etc. Testing the significant difference in attitudes of parents towards the practices of primary schools was the major aim of the study. The study consists of 341 parents selected in multistage random sampling. 37-item attitude instruments were used to collect responses. The overall parents' attitude towards the current practices of primary schools in Manipur, in both private and government schools, are perceived as highly favourable. Parents in both government and private schools report not practicing hands-on activities at school. They express a desire of being informed by schools about daily affairs and development. The study highlights the insignificant difference in the parents' attitude towards practices of primary schools, from which it can be inferred that there is no actual support for the assertion that private schools are always better than government schools. In certain aspects, private school parents have comparatively higher positive attitude than parents of Government schools to some extent.

Keywords: Parents' attitudes, practices of primary schools, primary schools, private schools, Government schools.

Introduction

Manipur is one of the north eastern states of India where general appreciation of education is high. Unfortunately, there are many factors that parents don't understand what characterises an effective school.

Bukhari & Randall, (2009) cited in Mathew, Leonard Lim, & Teng Lee (2017) have identified that parents become more influential stakeholders within the education system, the recognition of parental attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and the influences will become increasingly important to the educational community. Therefore, in regards to the current study, the term "parents' attitude" refers to the

way parents feel or think about the current practices of their child's school. Parents are of the opinion that it is the responsibility of the school to bring about an all-round development in the child so that the child can adjust in the later part of his life. Because of these elevated expectations of the parents, the responsibility of the schools has become more pronounced. It is the responsibility of the schools to enable parents to provide the skills and knowledge needed to help their children at all age groups.

Rationale of the Study

The only gift that parents can give to their children is education. Parents of both

government and private schools think equally for their children, for the benefit of their children. Economic factors make a difference in the attitudes of parents of these two categories of schools. However, it is also expected that lack of skill and knowledge for parental involvement activities at home and school hinders the academic success of their children. They train their children from earlier years by motivating and helping them at every step of education. Thus, the question arises what is really going on inside the schools? What are school policies? What kind of school is this? What kind of classrooms are available? What kind of teachers and teaching styles enable students to improve learning outcomes? Moreover, majority of the research studies have been conducted on primary education and the different aspects of its administration. But, in the context of Manipur, not much research has been done on parents' attitude in the practices of primary schools. Therefore, all these factors lead to the emergence of the study.

Review of literature

The recent research (Lechner et al., 2008; Menheere & Hooze, 2010) cited in Edukans (2018) says that parents' attitudes are expected to be chiefly influenced by their appreciation of education, their own learning experiences, and information about and invitations to parental involvement possibilities. In Russell and Granville (2005), value of communication between school and home tend to work most effectively at the pre-school and primary stages, when parents have more opportunities to communicate informally with the school and teachers. Empirical studies done by Biglin and Wilson (1972) indicate that parents wanted their decision to be included, consulted and respected as equals in the educational process, but parents feel welcomed when they enter school. As Griffith's (1998) empirical analysis, based on a survey of 122 public elementary schools in the United States, illustrates positive perceptions of a school among parents are associated with higher

levels of parent involvement in the education process. This has important consequences, given that family engagement with their child's learning is strongly associated with students' academic outcomes and well-being (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2005).

Objectives of the Study

1. To compare the parents' attitude in private and government schools towards school policies and general expectation of school.
2. To compare the parents attitude in private and government schools towards curriculum— materials and methods of instruction.
3. To compare the parents' attitude in private and government schools towards teachers and their interaction with students.

Hypotheses

In light of the above objectives, the following null hypotheses are formulated.

1. There is no significant difference between the parents of private and government school in their attitude towards school policies and general expectation of schools.
2. There is no significant difference between the parents of private and government school about their attitude towards school curriculum — materials and method of instruction.
3. There is no significant difference between the parents of private and government school about their attitude towards teachers and their interaction with students.

Methodology

The nature of research problem leads to the use of descriptive survey approach. The population of the study covers all the parents with government and private school children in selected primary schools in four districts of Manipur. In the process, multistage random sampling method has been used to select subjects from entire population. On the basis

of the school record, students were selected making use of random sampling method from selected 11 government schools and 11 private schools of four districts. In this

way, a total of 341 samples were collected from parents who enrolled their children in either government or private school. Unequal number distributions of samples by four districts are given below.

Table 1. Distribution of the sample by districts

District	School Type				Total	%
	Private	%	Government	%		
Imphal West	40	36.04	71	63.96	111	32.55
Imphal East	36	56.25	28	43.75	64	18.77
Bishnupur	35	52.24	32	47.76	67	19.65
Thoubal	59	59.60	40	40.40	99	29.03
Total	170	49.85	171	50.15	341	100.00

Data analysis

School policies and general expectation of schools

Objective 1: To compare the parents' attitude in private and government schools towards

school policies and general expectation of schools.

There were total 10 statements of problems of school policies and general expectation of school in the questionnaire and each statement was perceived by different number of parents.

Table-2: Items Score and rank order of the Attitude of parents towards School Policies and General Expectation of Schools

Item	Private			Government		
	Score	Percent	Rank	Score	Percent	Rank
A1	690	81.18	5	695	81.29	4
A2	736	86.59	2	730	85.38	2
A3	744	87.53	1	710	83.04	3
A4	686	80.71	6	686	80.23	6
A5	626	73.65	7	612	71.58	8
A6	703	82.71	4	676	79.06	7
A7	736	86.59	2	743	86.9	1
A8	617	72.59	8	689	80.58	5
A9	715	84.12	3	698	81.64	4
A10	584	68.71	9	595	69.59	9

Notes:

- A1- There is urgent need to restructure our primary education system.
- A2- Availability of minimum physical space should be made mandatory to run primary schools.
- A3- Parents and school should maintain regular contact.
- A4- My child's school is able to develop students' patriotism and affection for their local areas.
- A5- My child's school often offers hands on activities and events for children after school and on school holidays.
- A6- My child's school is able to teach ethics and consideration for others.
- A7- Competition is the best way to ameliorate/make better achievements.
- A8- Comparison of poorly performing child against better ones enhances their levels of performance.
- A9- Prefer use of play way/activity based methods for teaching primary school children.
- A10- Exclusive focus on outcomes distorts educational practice.

ITEM SCORE COMPARISON BETWEEN PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT SCHOOL PARENTS TOWARDS SCHOOL POLICIES AND GENERAL EXPECTATION OF SCHOOL

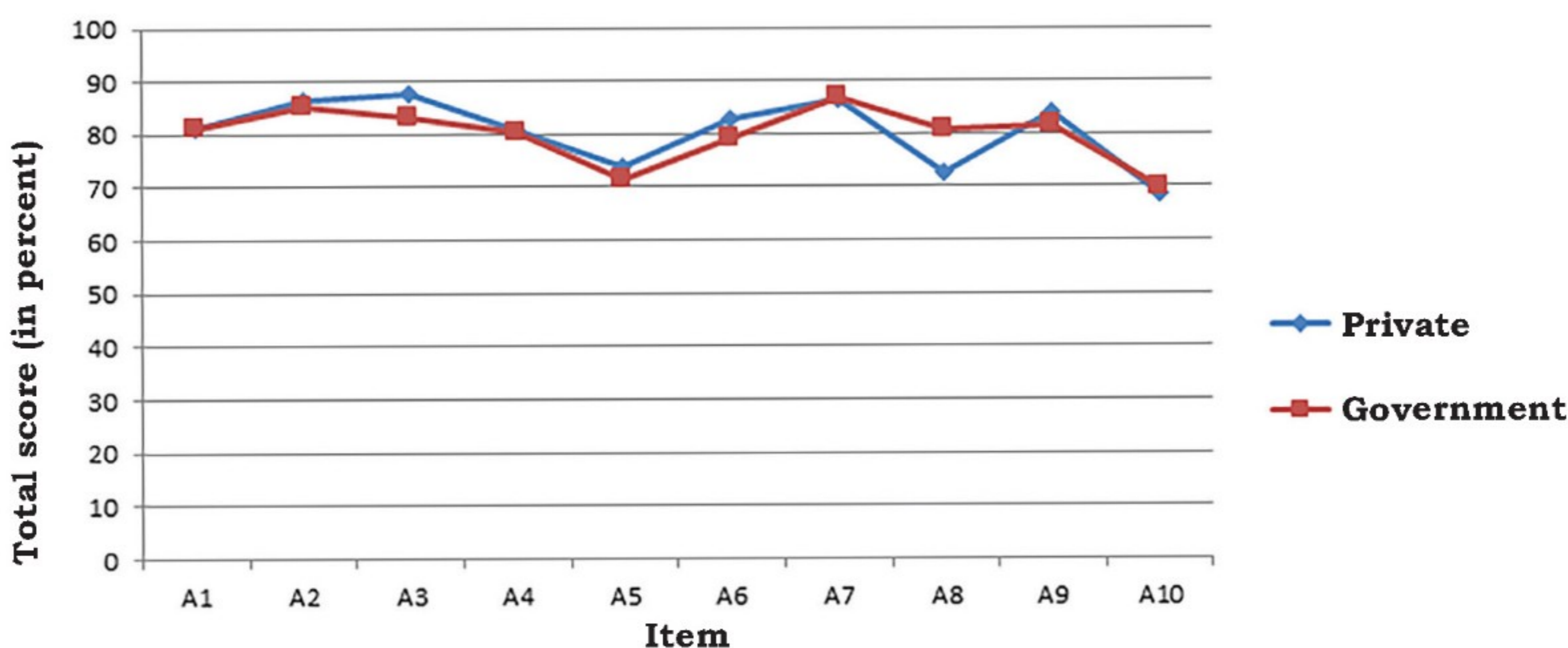


Figure 1: Item score comparison between private and government school parents towards school policies and general expectation of schools.

Table 2 and its corresponding figure represent overall item-wise score given by the respondents. In terms of parents attitude towards school policies and general expectation of schools, the score and rank order of parents indicate that the attitudes of parents is highly favourable. Among the parents who enrol their children in the private schools, the highest score, in terms of rank order is item no A3: parents and school should maintain regular contact, whereas among the parents who enrol their children in the Government schools, item A7:

competition is the best way to make better achievements, scores the highest. In both the groups, i.e., item no A10 (exclusive focus on outcomes distorts educational practices) scores the minimum.

Hypotheses testing

Null hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the private and government school parents about their attitude towards school policies and general expectation of schools.

Table-3: Overall comparison of parents' attitudes towards school policies and general expectation of schools

Whether your children have studied at private/government school	No. of respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	P-value
Private	170	40.22	4.28	0.508	0.612
Government	171	39.96	4.88		

Table 3 shows the t-test with respect to school policies from schools. The findings revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in the level, at, 0.05, in

parents' attitude towards school policies in government and private schools. Therefore, the null hypothesis in Table 3 fails to reject.

Curriculum: Materials and methods of Instruction.

Objective 2: To compare the parents' attitude in private and government schools towards curriculum: materials and methods of instruction.

Items	Private			Government		
	Score	%	Rank	Score	%	Rank
C1	645	75.88	12	707	82.69	7
C2	700	82.35	4	753	88.07	3
C3	665	78.24	11	678	79.30	12
C4	716	84.24	3	781	91.35	1
C5	733	86.24	1	764	89.36	2
C6	634	74.59	13	575	67.25	14
C7	719	84.59	2	744	87.02	4
C8	668	78.59	10	665	77.78	13
C9	696	81.88	5	692	80.94	8
C10	674	79.29	9	689	80.58	10
C11	693	81.53	6	726	84.91	5
C12	684	80.47	8	722	84.44	6
C13	633	74.47	14	688	80.47	11
C14	687	80.82	7	692	80.94	9

Note:

- C1- Too much of play in primary school age will later affect their academic achievement.
- C2- Strict regime of time table should be followed in primary school classes.
- C3- Students are satisfied with timetable and subject choice arrangement.
- C4- Regular and compulsory homework required for drilling in academic skills
- C5- Class examinations/tests ought to be conducted periodically
- C6- Audio Visual aids like TV, Radio, and Tapes etc are used in the teaching process.

- C7- The text books are easily available to the students round the year.
- C8- There are printing errors in the textbooks.
- C9- The curriculum is heavy.
- C10- Teaching methods are traditional.
- C11- My child has sufficient time to complete his or her homework each night.
- C12- The amount of homework my child receives is appropriate for his or her grade level.
- C13- My child learns important life skills at school.
- C14- Most of the things my child learns at school are not relevant to real life.

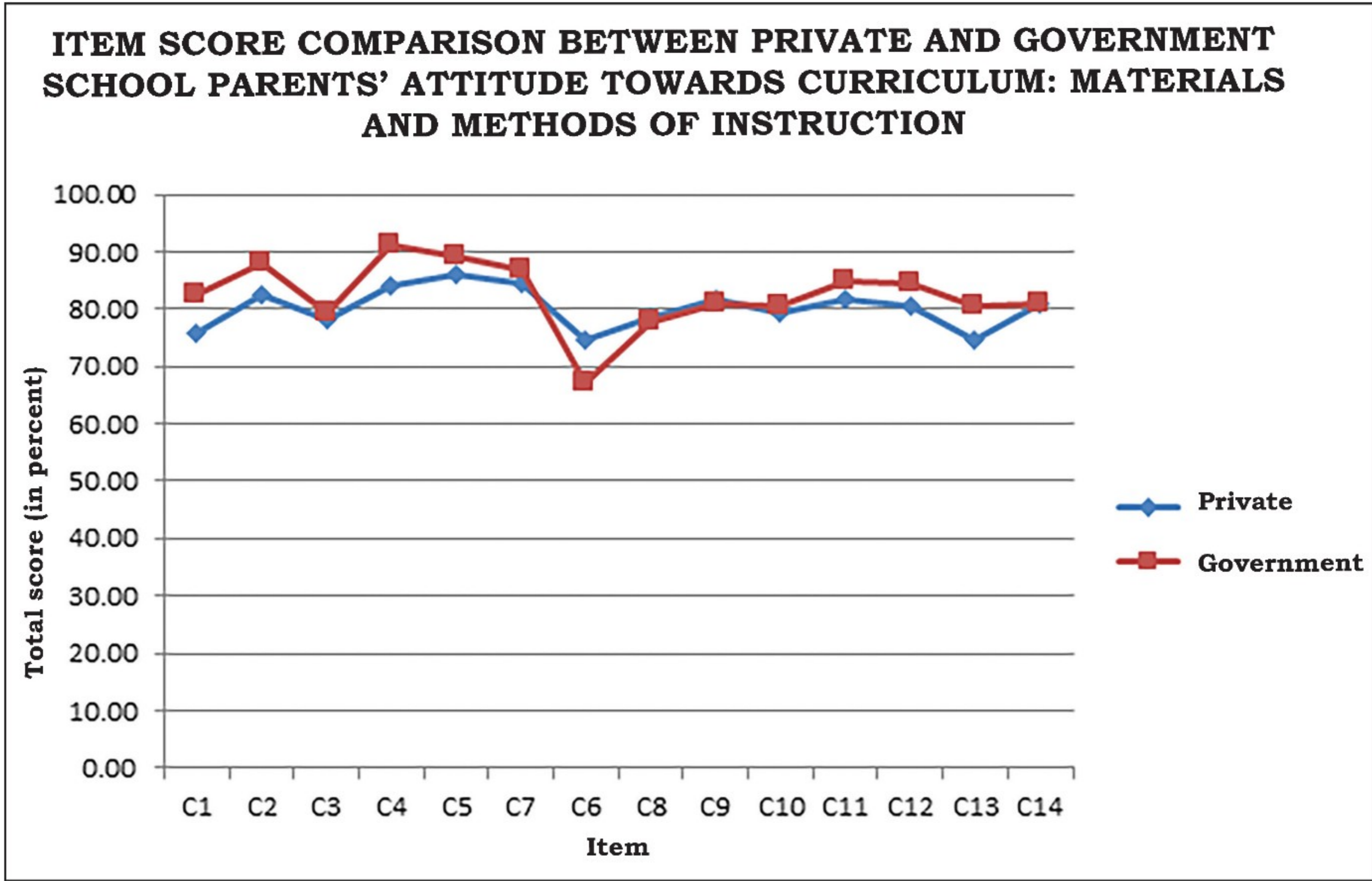


Figure 2: Item score comparison between private and government school parents' attitude towards curriculum: materials and methods of instruction

Table 4 and Figure 2 show that parents generally shows positive attitude towards curriculum except some items. Among parents who send their children to private schools, item no. C5: Class examinations/ tests ought to be conducted periodically was ranked first whereas among the parents who send their children to Government school, item no. C4: Regular and compulsory homework required for drilling in academic skills, was ranked first. Item no. C6: Audio Visual aids like TV, Radio, and Tapes etc.

are used in the teaching process, scored thirteenth rank in case of private schools, while the same item scored fourteenth rank in case of Government schools. In case of private school, item C13 got minimum score 74.47 per cent (rank 14) which indicates that most life skills are not taught at school.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the private and government school parents about their attitude towards school Curriculum: Materials and Methods of Instruction of School.

Table-5: Overall comparison of parent's attitudes towards School Curriculum: Materials and Methods of Instruction

Whether Your children has been studied at Private/government school	No. of respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	P-value
Private	170	55.73	4.716	3.875	<0.001
Government	171	57.63	4.543		

Table 5 shows that there is highly significant difference in the mean score of parents' attitude level towards School Curriculum in Private schools and Government schools. Thus, the null hypothesis in Table 5 is rejected.

Teacher's instruction and their interaction with students

Objective 3: To compare the parents' attitude

in the private schools and government schools towards Teachers instruction and their interaction with students

Table 6 presents a rank order record of parents' attitudes towards Teachers instruction and their interaction with students in the private and government schools.

Table-6: Score and rank order of the attitude of parents towards teacher's instruction and their interaction with students

Item	Private			Government		
	Score	%	Rank	Score	%	Rank
D1	769	90.47	1	764	89.36	1
D2	751	88.35	2	758	88.65	2
D3	747	87.88	3	744	87.02	3
D4	723	85.06	4	742	86.78	4
D5	715	84.12	5	727	85.03	5
D6	692	81.41	6	698	81.64	7
D7	682	80.24	7	724	84.68	6
D8	680	80.00	8	662	77.43	8
D9	669	78.71	9	658	76.96	9
D10	648	76.24	10	631	73.80	11
D11	621	73.06	11	656	76.73	10
D12	584	68.71	12	519	60.70	13
D13	576	67.76	13	617	72.16	12

Note:

- D1- Teachers should undergo periodic in-service training to sharpen their skills.
D2- A teacher should have good relations with pupils, colleagues and parents.

- D3- Teachers should use a range of teaching approaches and change these if needed.
 D4- Teachers are not expected to experiment with new ideas.
 D5- Teachers should attend professional development courses.
 D6- Teachers should encourage male and female students to carry out the same activities.
 D7- Teachers should use gender equitable language in the classroom.
 D8- Teachers communicate with me as frequently as needed.
 D9- Teachers is able to adapt lessons to individual students' abilities and interests.
 D10- The teacher stimulates my/our child to learn and work hard.
 D11- Teachers communicate grades and performance to their students in a timely manner.
 D12- I feel that teachers have great enthusiasm towards their work.
 D13- Overall, I am satisfied with my child's education at this school.

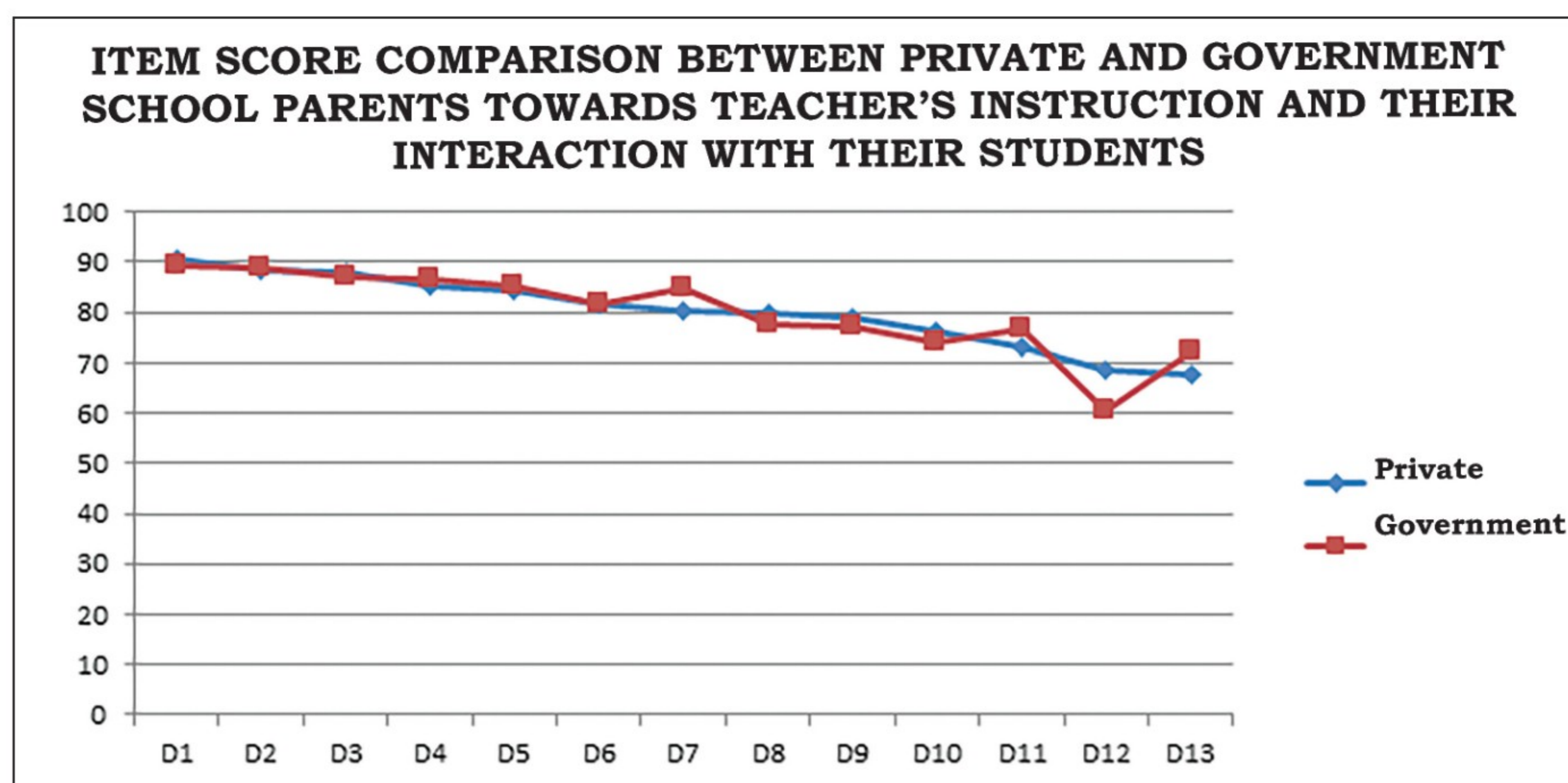


Figure 3: Item score comparison between private and government school parents towards teacher's instruction and their interaction with their students

Table 6 and its corresponding Fig. 3 represent overall item wise score responded by the respondents. In case of private schools, the said statements (item nos. D8 to D10), private school parents strongly agrees that their children's teacher communicates them as needed and believe their teaching learning process than Government schools parents do. Item no. D13: Overall, I am satisfied with my child's education at this school, got a minimum score of 67.76 per

cent (rank 13) and 72.16 per cent (rank 12) in private schools and Government schools, respectively, which indicates that, in either cases, parents are not much satisfied with their children's school.

Null hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the private and government school parents about their attitude towards teacher's instruction and their interaction with students.

Table 7: Overall comparison of parent's attitudes towards School teacher's instruction and their interaction between the parents of Private and Government schools

Parents	No. of respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	P-value
Private	170	52.10	5.37	0.084	0.933

Table 7 shows that the mean score of parents' attitude towards teachers instruction and their interaction with students in private schools and government schools were 52.10 and 52.05, respectively. From the t-test result, it can be observed that there is no significant difference in parents' attitude towards teacher's instruction and their interaction with students in private schools and government schools ($p\text{-value}=0.933$). Thus, the null hypothesis in Table 7 fails to reject.

Discussion and conclusion

The study also reveals that overall parents' attitude towards the current practices of primary schools in Manipur in both private schools and government schools are perceived as highly favourable. The t test results do not appear significant difference in terms of parent's attitude towards school policies and Teachers instruction and their interaction with students. In terms of curriculum, parents generally have positive attitude towards curriculum in Government schools as compared to curriculum in private schools. One of the major challenges that the teachers in Government school often time have to

face is the lack of a supportive environment. Over all, the teacher's performance has been found to be not quite satisfactory in both Government schools and private schools.

Despite over high positive attitude towards practices of primary schools, parents are somewhat less satisfied with the current practices of primary schools in Manipur. In order to ascertain quality in primary education, it is the need of the time to include basic life skills in the curriculum, utilise audio-visual aids in the teaching learning process in the classroom, realise the importance of home school communication to enable effective learning, etc., among others. It is recommended that schools begin to view parents' participation in school matters as a major component in their school development plans and begin to formulate action teams for planning and implementing activities to recognize parental attitudes at school level.

Further, this study highlights the need to crystallize parents' opinion more deeply towards current practices of primary schools. Lastly, our state needs to take up the challenge to allocate resources efficiently and equitably.

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