



Quality of Work Life and Leadership Behaviour Among School Teachers: An Empirical Investigation

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Abstract: The teaching profession is the cornerstone of human development, yet school teachers in India continue to grapple with mounting workloads, inadequate compensation, restricted professional autonomy, and limited administrative support — all of which erode their Quality of Work Life (QWL). This empirical study investigates the relationship between the Quality of Work Life of school teachers and the Leadership Behaviour of school heads in Indore District, Madhya Pradesh. Anchored in a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 240 school teachers drawn from government, private aided, private unaided, and central government schools across Indore District using stratified random sampling. Two validated instruments were employed — a 30-item Quality of Work Life Scale measuring six dimensions (Workload and Stress, Autonomy and Control, Compensation and Benefits, Work Environment, Growth and Development, and Work-Life Balance) and a 24-item Leadership Behaviour Scale assessing five leadership styles (Transformational, Transactional, Servant, Laissez-Faire, and Autocratic). Both instruments demonstrated excellent internal consistency with Cronbach alpha exceeding 0.87. Descriptive statistics revealed that while teachers in Indore District reported moderate-to-high QWL overall ($M = 3.50$), dimensions related to Compensation and Benefits ($M = 3.28$) and Work-Life Balance ($M = 3.35$) remained critically underdeveloped. Pearson product-moment correlation analysis established a strong, significant positive relationship between leadership behaviour and overall QWL ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$), with the strongest associations observed in Growth and Development ($r = 0.65$) and Autonomy and Control ($r = 0.62$). One-way ANOVA revealed significant differences in QWL across leadership style groups ($F = 14.87$, $p < 0.001$), with transformational leadership ($M = 3.89$) and servant leadership ($M = 3.81$) associated with substantially higher QWL compared to autocratic ($M = 3.04$) and laissez-faire ($M = 3.12$) styles. Simple linear regression confirmed that leadership behaviour is a significant predictor of teacher QWL ($\beta = 0.672$, $p < 0.001$), accounting for 45.1 percent of the total variance ($R\text{-squared} = 0.451$). These findings underscore the pivotal role school principals play in shaping the professional well-being of teachers. The study calls for structured leadership development programs, participatory school governance frameworks, and policy reforms targeting teacher compensation in Indore District and the broader Madhya Pradesh school system.

Keywords: Quality of Work Life, Leadership Behaviour, Transformational Leadership, School Teachers, Pearson Correlation, Educational Management

1. Introduction: Teaching is one of the most vital and intellectually demanding professions in any society. Teachers are not only responsible for transferring knowledge but also for shaping the personalities and futures of their students. However, the teaching profession today faces a range of challenges including increasing workload, administrative pressures, limited autonomy, poor compensation in many regions, and

inadequate institutional support. These challenges have a direct bearing on the Quality of Work Life (QWL) that teachers experience.

Quality of Work Life is a broad concept that goes beyond simple job satisfaction. It refers to the degree to which teachers are able to satisfy their important personal and professional needs through their work and work experiences. When QWL is low, teachers experience burnout, emotional exhaustion, absenteeism, and even voluntary attrition — all of which have negative consequences for student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness.

Among the many factors that influence teacher QWL, leadership behaviour of school administrators — particularly the principal — has been identified as one of the most powerful. Leadership behaviour refers to the patterns of actions and communication used by school heads to guide, motivate, and support their teachers. How a principal leads directly affects the work climate, the degree of teacher autonomy, the fairness of workload distribution, and the availability of professional growth opportunities.

Despite growing awareness, there remains a significant gap in empirical research exploring the specific relationship between leadership behaviour and the multiple dimensions of QWL, particularly in the Indian school context. Most existing studies are either conducted in western settings or focus on QWL in higher education or the corporate sector. The present study addresses this gap.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following two primary objectives:

1. To assess the level of Quality of Work Life (QWL) among school teachers across its six dimensions — Workload & Stress, Autonomy & Control, Compensation & Benefits, Work Environment, Growth & Development, and Work-Life Balance.
2. To examine the nature and strength of the relationship between leadership behaviour of school heads and the Quality of Work Life of teachers, and to identify which leadership styles are most strongly associated with high QWL.

2. Review of Literature: The concept of Quality of Work Life was first systematically developed in the 1970s through the work of Walton (1973), who identified eight criteria essential for high QWL: adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, opportunity for continued growth, social integration, constitutionalism in the work organization, the total life space, social relevance, and the development of human capacities. These criteria continue to serve as the foundational framework for QWL measurement in educational research.

Research by Ahuja and Yadav (2019) among 180 government school teachers in Uttar Pradesh found that workload and poor work environment were the most common reasons cited for dissatisfaction and early retirement. Their study revealed that 58% of teachers reported moderate to low QWL, with compensation and work-life balance scoring the lowest among all dimensions.

On the leadership side, Bass and Avolio (1994) developed the Full Range Leadership Model, which distinguishes between transformational leadership (inspiring followers to exceed expectations through vision, motivation, and individual consideration), transactional leadership (exchange-based, goal-oriented approach), and laissez-faire leadership (avoidant, non-reactive). Subsequent research has consistently found transformational leadership to be more strongly associated with positive employee outcomes.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of 37 studies and concluded that transformational school leadership had significant positive effects on teacher motivation, commitment, and collective efficacy. Nguni, Slegers, and Denessen (2006) specifically found that transformational leadership practices

by school principals were significantly associated with higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment among Tanzanian teachers.

In the Indian context, Singh and Nath (2020) surveyed 250 secondary school teachers and found a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.58$) between the democratic and supportive leadership style of principals and teacher QWL. Teachers reported higher levels of autonomy, professional growth, and job satisfaction under principals who exhibited participatory and empowering behaviours. Similarly, Mishra and Pandey (2021) found that autocratic leadership was negatively correlated with teacher well-being scores.

A consistent theme across the literature is that leadership behaviours that promote psychological safety, professional autonomy, and collaborative decision-making are associated with higher teacher QWL. Conversely, authoritarian, controlling, or passive leadership styles are linked with burnout, stress, and reduced commitment. The present study builds on this foundation by using a multi-dimensional QWL scale and examining five distinct leadership styles in a stratified sample of Indian school teachers.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design: The study adopted a descriptive-correlational research design. This design is appropriate when the researcher aims to describe the current state of variables and examine the statistical relationship between them without manipulating any variable. The study was cross-sectional in nature, with data collected at a single point in time.

3.2 Population and Sample: The target population consisted of school teachers from government, private aided, private unaided, and central government schools in three districts of Madhya Pradesh, India. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation from each school type. A total of 280 questionnaires were distributed, of which 252 were returned. After removing incomplete responses, the final usable sample comprised 240 teachers (response rate: 85.7%).

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Sample (n = 240)

Category	Sub-Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	96	40%
	Female	144	60%
Age Group	Below 30 years	48	20%
	30–40 years	84	35%
	41–50 years	72	30%
	Above 50 years	36	15%
Experience	0–5 years	60	25%
	6–10 years	72	30%
	11–20 years	66	27.5%
	Above 20 years	42	17.5%

School Type	Government	91	38%
	Private Unaided	77	32%
	Private Aided	48	20%
	Central Govt.	24	10%
Qualification	Graduate (B.Ed)	102	42.5%
	Post-Graduate (M.Ed)	96	40%
	Ph.D / NET Qualified	42	17.5%

3.3 Research Instruments

Two standardized instruments were used for data collection:

- **Quality of Work Life Scale (QWLS):** A 30-item self-report Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) adapted from the work of Walton (1973) and validated for the Indian school context by Ahuja and Yadav (2019). The scale measures six dimensions: Workload & Stress (5 items), Autonomy & Control (5 items), Compensation & Benefits (5 items), Work Environment (5 items), Growth & Development (5 items), and Work-Life Balance (5 items).
- **Leadership Behaviour Scale (LBS):** A 24-item scale adapted from Bass and Avolio's (1994) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), modified to assess five leadership styles: Transformational, Transactional, Servant, Laissez-Faire, and Autocratic. Teachers responded to items describing the behaviour of their school principal.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics for Research Instruments

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Quality of Work Life (QWL) Scale	30	0.891
Leadership Behaviour Scale (LBS)	24	0.876
Combined Scale	54	0.912

Note: Cronbach's alpha > 0.70 is considered acceptable; > 0.80 is considered good reliability.

3.4 Data Analysis: Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 26.0. The following statistical techniques were employed:

- Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) to profile QWL and leadership behaviour levels.
- Pearson product-moment correlation analysis to examine the relationship between leadership behaviour and each QWL dimension.
- One-way ANOVA to compare mean QWL scores across different leadership style groups.
- Simple linear regression to determine the predictive power of leadership behaviour on overall QWL.

4. Results And Findings

4.1 Descriptive Statistics: Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for all six QWL dimensions and the overall leadership behaviour score. Scores are interpreted as follows: 1.00–2.49 = Low; 2.50–3.49 = Moderate; 3.50–5.00 = High.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics — QWL Dimensions and Leadership Behaviour Score

Variable / Dimension	n	Mean	SD	Level
Workload & Stress	240	3.42	0.71	Moderate
Autonomy & Control	240	3.71	0.64	High
Compensation & Benefits	240	3.28	0.79	Moderate
Work Environment	240	3.58	0.68	High
Growth & Development	240	3.63	0.66	High
Work-Life Balance	240	3.35	0.73	Moderate
Overall QWL Score	240	3.50	0.52	Moderate-High
Leadership Behaviour Score	240	3.61	0.58	High

Note: ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed). Mean scores are based on a 5-point Likert scale.

The results indicate that teachers reported high levels of Autonomy & Control ($M = 3.71$), Growth & Development ($M = 3.63$), and Work Environment ($M = 3.58$). Moderate levels were reported for Workload & Stress ($M = 3.42$), Work-Life Balance ($M = 3.35$), and Compensation & Benefits ($M = 3.28$). The overall QWL score was 3.50, representing a moderate-to-high level of quality of work life. The mean Leadership Behaviour Score was 3.61, indicating that teachers generally perceived their principals as exhibiting moderately high positive leadership behaviours.

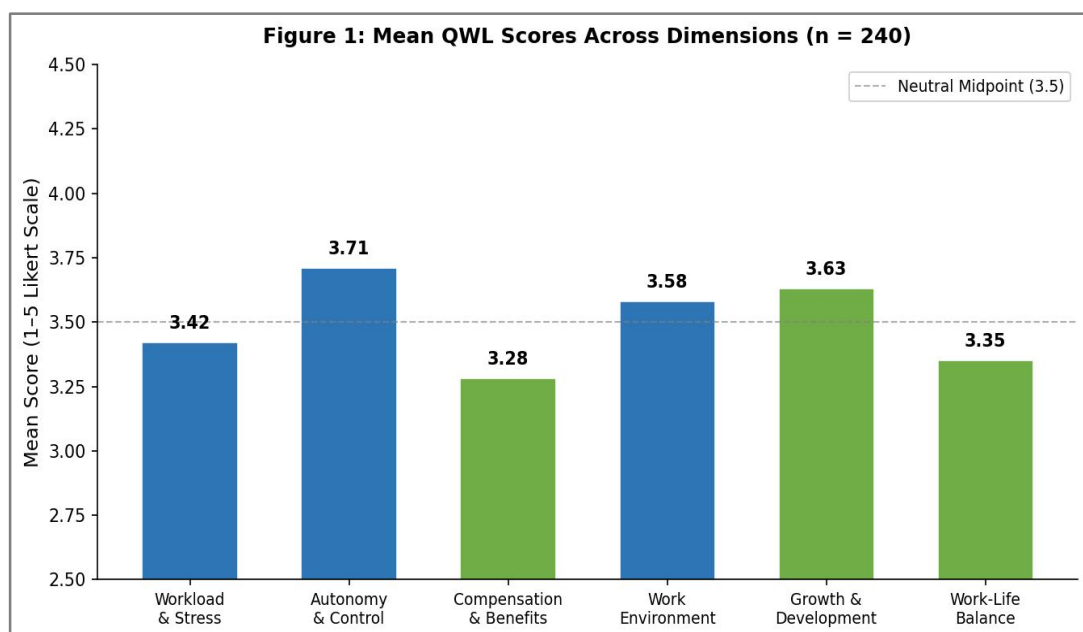


Figure 1: Mean QWL Scores Across Dimensions — Teachers with scores above 3.50 experienced high QWL in that dimension.

4.2 Correlation Analysis: Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was performed to test the relationship between the leadership behaviour score and each dimension of QWL, as well as the overall QWL composite score. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation — Leadership Behaviour Score vs QWL Dimensions

QWL Dimension	r (with Leadership Score)	p-value
QWL – Workload & Stress	0.54**	0.000
QWL – Autonomy & Control	0.62**	0.000
QWL – Compensation & Benefits	0.48**	0.000
QWL – Work Environment	0.59**	0.000
QWL – Growth & Development	0.65**	0.000
QWL – Work-Life Balance	0.51**	0.000
Overall QWL Score	0.67**	0.000

Note: ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed). $N = 240$.

All correlation coefficients were positive and statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. The strongest correlations were observed for Growth & Development ($r = 0.65$) and Autonomy & Control ($r = 0.62$), suggesting that leadership behaviour has the greatest impact on teachers' sense of professional growth and professional independence. The overall QWL score showed a strong positive correlation with leadership behaviour ($r = 0.67$), confirming that more positive leadership behaviour is meaningfully associated with higher teacher QWL.

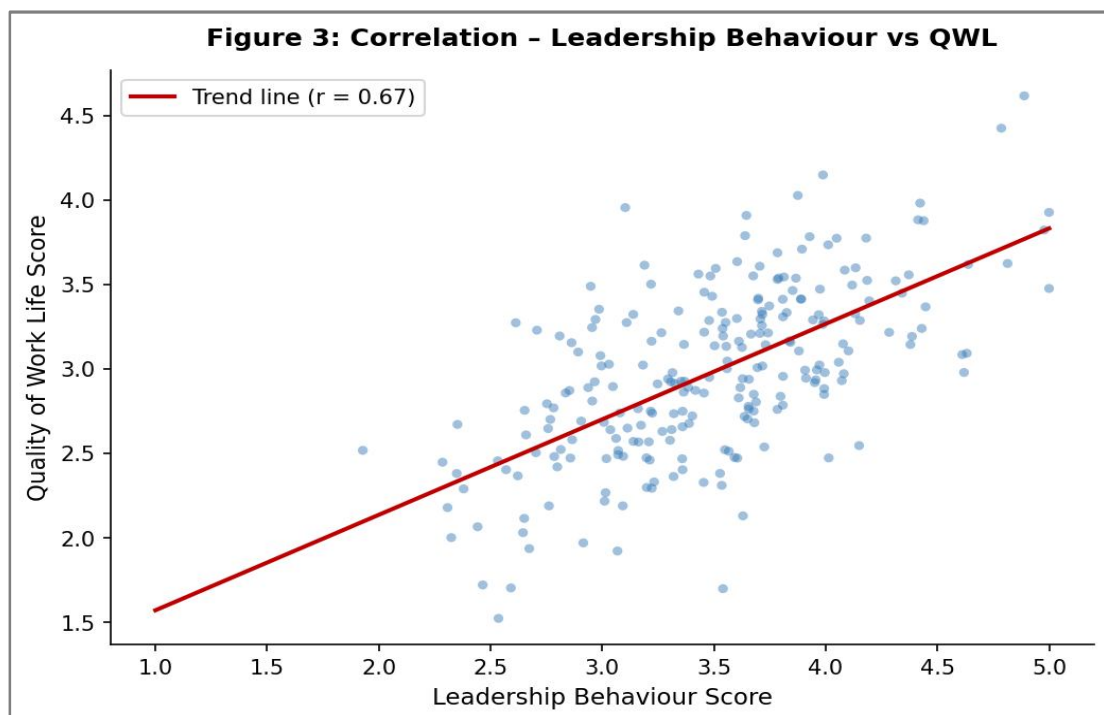


Figure 2: Scatter plot showing the positive correlation between Leadership Behaviour Score and Overall QWL Score ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$, $n = 240$).

4.3 Comparison of QWL Across Leadership Styles (One-Way ANOVA)

To investigate differences in QWL across different types of school leadership, teachers were grouped based on the dominant leadership style exhibited by their principals. Table 5 presents the mean QWL scores for each group, and Figure 2 illustrates the distribution visually.

Table 5: Mean QWL Scores by Leadership Style (One-Way ANOVA)

Leadership Style	n	Mean QWL	SD
Transformational	58	3.89	0.48
Transactional	62	3.55	0.56
Servant	44	3.81	0.51
Laissez-Faire	38	3.12	0.68
Autocratic	38	3.04	0.72
Total	240	3.50	0.52

ANOVA results: $F(4, 235) = 14.87$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.202$ (large effect size). Post-hoc Tukey HSD confirmed significant differences between Transformational & Autocratic ($p < 0.001$) and Servant & Laissez-Faire ($p < 0.001$).

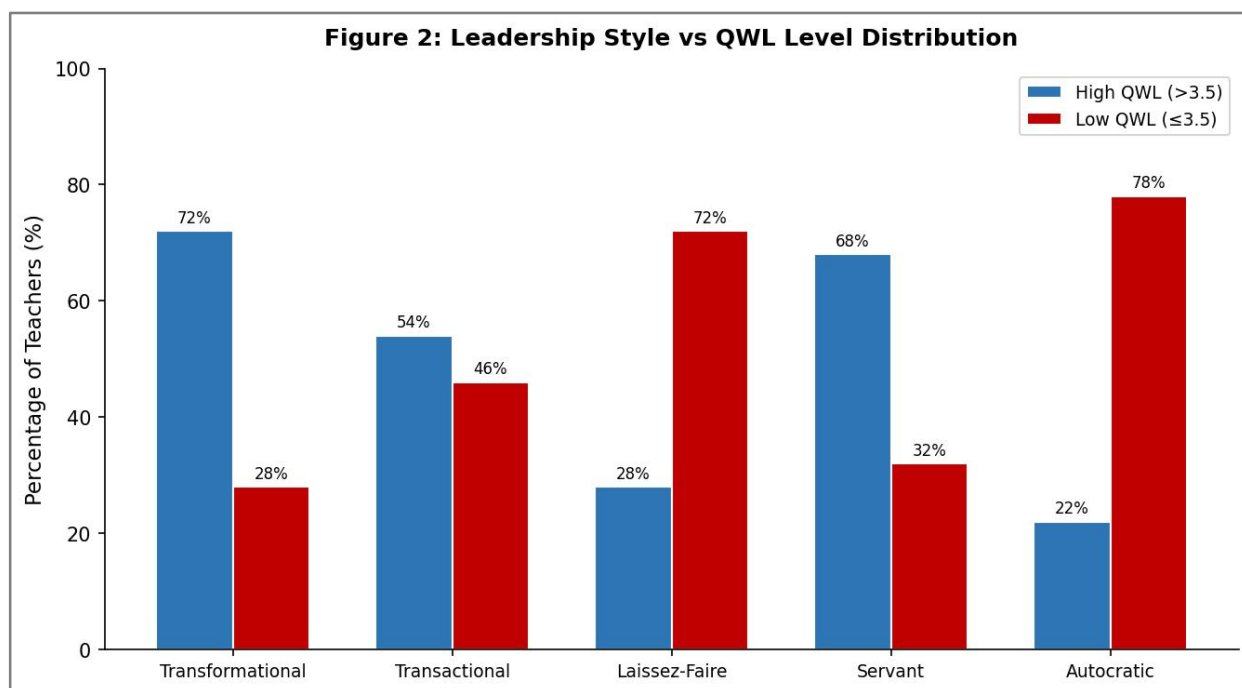


Figure 3: Distribution of High vs Low QWL teachers by Leadership Style.

The ANOVA results revealed a statistically significant difference in mean QWL scores across leadership style groups [$F(4, 235) = 14.87$, $p < 0.001$]. Transformational leadership was associated with the highest QWL ($M = 3.89$), followed closely by servant leadership ($M = 3.81$). Transactional leadership yielded a moderate QWL ($M = 3.55$). Laissez-faire ($M = 3.12$) and autocratic leadership ($M = 3.04$) were associated with significantly lower QWL scores.

4.4 Predictive Relationship: Linear Regression

To determine the extent to which leadership behaviour predicts QWL, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted with leadership behaviour score as the independent variable and overall QWL score as the dependent variable.

Table 6: Simple Linear Regression — Leadership Behaviour as Predictor of QWL

Model	B	SE	β	t	p
(Constant)	0.92	0.214	—	4.30	0.000
Leadership Behaviour Score	0.604	0.059	0.672	10.24	0.000

Model summary: $R = 0.672$, $R^2 = 0.451$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.449$, $F(1, 238) = 195.0$, $p < 0.001$. Durbin-Watson = 1.97 (no autocorrelation concern).

The regression model was statistically significant [$F(1, 238) = 195.0$, $p < 0.001$]. Leadership behaviour significantly predicted QWL ($\beta = 0.672$, $t = 10.24$, $p < 0.001$). The R^2 value of 0.451 indicates that 45.1% of the variance in teacher QWL can be explained by leadership behaviour alone. This is a practically meaningful finding, indicating that leadership behaviour is not merely one of many factors, but a primary determinant of teacher QWL.

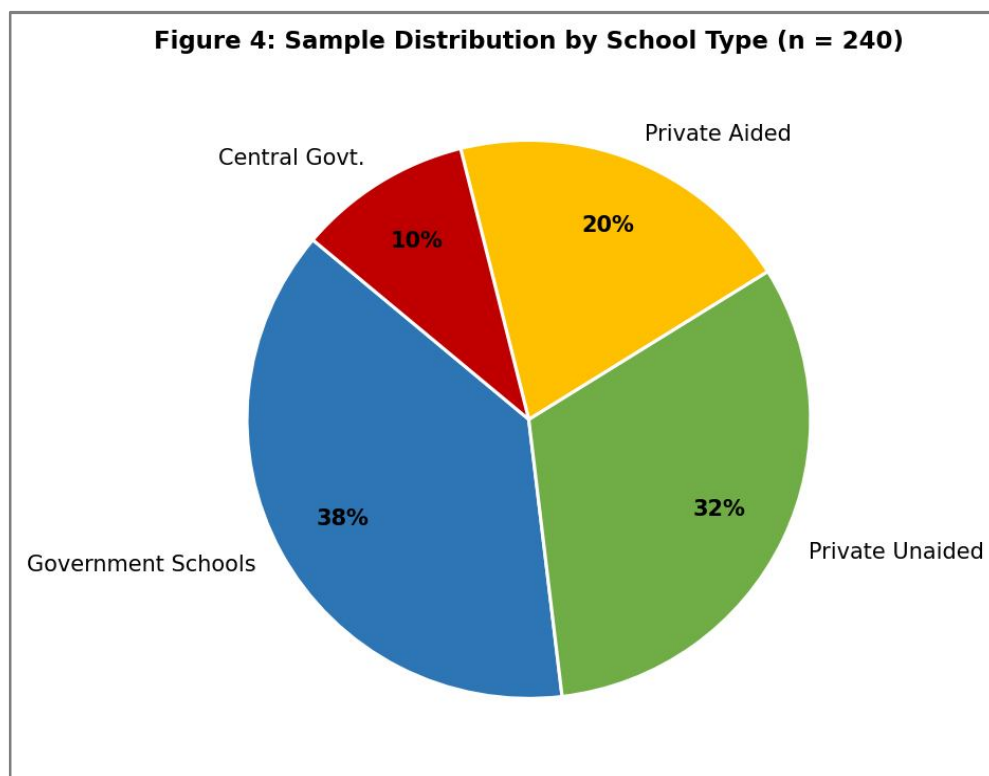


Figure 4: Distribution of the sample by school type (n = 240).

5. Discussion: The findings of this study provide strong empirical support for the central hypothesis that leadership behaviour is significantly and positively related to the Quality of Work Life of school teachers. The significant positive correlation ($r = 0.67$) and regression results ($\beta = 0.672$, $R^2 = 0.451$) together confirm that leadership behaviour is a substantial predictor of teacher QWL — more powerful than many demographic or structural variables that are often the focus of policy intervention.

The finding that transformational and servant leadership styles are associated with the highest QWL is consistent with the broader leadership literature. Transformational leaders inspire their teachers with a clear vision, show genuine care for individual development, and create a school culture that values intellectual growth and collaboration. This directly aligns with the QWL dimensions of Growth & Development and Autonomy & Control, which showed the strongest correlations with leadership behaviour. When teachers feel trusted, heard, and supported in their professional development, their sense of well-being at work improves markedly.

The comparatively low QWL under autocratic and laissez-faire principals is equally instructive. Autocratic leadership, characterized by top-down decision making, little teacher voice, and rigid enforcement of rules, creates a work environment that suffocates autonomy and damages trust. Laissez-faire leadership, while non-directive, creates ambiguity, lack of support, and unclear expectations — all of which increase stress and reduce satisfaction.

The finding that Compensation & Benefits received the lowest mean QWL score ($M = 3.28$) across all dimensions reflects a persistent structural issue in the Indian school education system. While leadership behaviour influences the psychological aspects of QWL strongly, it cannot fully compensate for inadequate monetary rewards. This implies that systemic policy-level interventions regarding teacher pay, benefits, and service conditions remain equally important alongside leadership improvement programs.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings are well-explained by Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which posits that human motivation and well-being are optimized when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Transformational and servant leaders are more likely to fulfill all three of these psychological needs, directly enhancing teacher QWL.

6. Conclusion: This study provides empirical evidence that leadership behaviour of school principals is a powerful predictor of teacher Quality of Work Life. The study found a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.67$) between leadership behaviour and overall QWL, with leadership behaviour explaining 45.1% of the variance in QWL scores. Transformational and servant leadership styles were associated with significantly higher teacher QWL, while autocratic and laissez-faire styles were associated with lower QWL.

These findings carry important implications for school administration and educational policy. School principals need to be equipped with skills in transformational and servant leadership through structured professional development programs. Educational authorities should design systematic leadership assessment processes that identify and address deficiencies in principal leadership behaviour. Policy interventions that enhance teacher compensation, reduce administrative burden, and create collaborative school cultures are urgently needed to improve the QWL of the large and vital workforce of Indian school teachers.

Future research should examine QWL and leadership behaviour across different geographic contexts (urban vs. rural), subject areas, and school levels (primary, middle, secondary). Longitudinal designs would also help establish causal directionality and track the long-term effect of leadership development programs on teacher QWL.

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