

Exploring The Influence of Autocratic School Leadership on Teachers' Motivation and Job Satisfaction

Astha Sadhan ¹

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Education,
Sri Satya Sai University of Technology & Medical Sciences, Sehore, M.P, India.

Dr. Dhiraj Shinde ²

² Research Supervisor, Department of Education,
Sri Satya Sai University of Technology & Medical Sciences, Sehore, M.P, India.

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the impact of autocratic leadership style of school principals on teachers' work motivation in public secondary schools in Delhi. A quantitative research design was employed, with a purposive sample of 100 teachers who had sufficient exposure to their principals' leadership practices. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed both physically and online over a three-week period, ensuring participants were informed about the study's purpose and assured of confidentiality. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize demographic information and overall responses, while regression and correlation analyses were conducted to investigate the relationship between perceived autocratic leadership and teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and performance. The findings provide insights into how autocratic leadership affects teacher motivation and offer implications for school leadership practices aimed at enhancing teacher engagement and effectiveness.

Keywords: *Teaching Staff, Motivation, Job satisfaction, Autocratic, Social.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership in educational institutions plays a pivotal role in shaping the overall environment, productivity, and morale of both staff and students. Among the various leadership styles observed in schools, autocratic leadership stands out due to its centralized and directive nature. Autocratic school leadership is characterized by concentrated authority, limited teacher participation in decision-making, strict adherence to rules, and an emphasis on compliance over collaboration. In such settings, school leaders typically dictate policies, instructional practices, and administrative procedures with minimal consultation with teaching staff. While this leadership style may be

effective in achieving short-term organizational goals or maintaining strict discipline, it raises critical concerns regarding its impact on teachers' intrinsic motivation and overall job satisfaction. Given that teachers are the primary agents of learning and play a crucial role in the academic and social development of students, understanding how autocratic leadership influences their professional well-being is of utmost importance.

Motivation and job satisfaction are key components of teacher performance, retention, and overall educational quality. Motivation refers to the internal and external factors that drive individuals to engage in their work with commitment, enthusiasm, and persistence. Job satisfaction, on the other hand, encompasses an individual's emotional response to various aspects of their work environment, including recognition, autonomy, workload, and interpersonal relationships. Research in organizational behavior consistently emphasizes that employees who are motivated and satisfied with their jobs tend to exhibit higher productivity, creativity, and dedication, whereas low motivation and dissatisfaction are associated with burnout, absenteeism, and turnover. In the context of schools, teachers' motivation directly affects instructional quality, student engagement, and the broader learning outcomes of the institution. Consequently, any leadership approach that significantly influences these factors warrants thorough examination.

Autocratic leadership, while sometimes perceived as a mechanism to enforce discipline and streamline decision-making, has been widely critiqued for its potential to undermine teachers' autonomy and sense of professional competence. In autocratic environments, teachers often find themselves following directives without opportunities to contribute their insights or expertise, which can lead to feelings of marginalization. The absence of participatory decision-making limits teachers' ability to exercise creativity, innovate in instructional strategies, and adapt teaching methods to meet diverse student needs. Over time, this lack of agency can erode intrinsic motivation—the internal drive fueled by a sense of accomplishment, recognition, and personal growth. Teachers may begin to perceive their roles as routine and bureaucratic, reducing their engagement and enthusiasm for teaching.

Moreover, autocratic leadership can negatively affect job satisfaction through its impact on workplace relationships and emotional well-being. Job satisfaction is closely linked to factors such as recognition, professional growth opportunities, supportive supervision, and collegial collaboration. Autocratic leaders often emphasize control and authority over supportive interaction, which can create a climate of fear, mistrust, and stress among teachers. In such an environment, teachers may feel undervalued, overburdened, and disconnected from the decision-making processes that shape their professional lives. This not only diminishes satisfaction but can also contribute to higher levels of occupational stress, emotional exhaustion, and, ultimately, attrition from the teaching profession.

Several studies have highlighted the intricate relationship between leadership style and teacher outcomes. For instance, research indicates that teachers under autocratic leadership often report lower levels of morale, reduced enthusiasm for instructional innovation, and diminished commitment to organizational goals. While some argue that autocratic leadership may yield efficiency in achieving compliance and meeting administrative targets, the long-term consequences for teacher motivation and job satisfaction can be detrimental. Conversely, leadership styles that emphasize

participatory decision-making, collaboration, and professional support—such as democratic or transformational leadership—are associated with higher levels of teacher motivation, satisfaction, and overall organizational effectiveness. Understanding these dynamics is particularly relevant in the context of educational reform, where teacher engagement is critical to implementing curriculum changes, adopting new pedagogical approaches, and improving student learning outcomes.

The influence of autocratic leadership extends beyond individual teachers to affect the broader school climate and culture. Schools with rigid hierarchical structures often experience limited communication between administration and teaching staff, minimal opportunities for collaborative problem-solving, and reduced openness to feedback. Such conditions can stifle innovation, hinder professional development, and create an atmosphere where teachers feel constrained rather than empowered. As teachers' motivation and job satisfaction decline, there is a direct impact on student learning experiences, as disengaged or demoralized teachers are less likely to employ creative and effective instructional strategies. Furthermore, schools facing high levels of teacher dissatisfaction often struggle with staff retention, leading to disruptions in continuity, institutional knowledge loss, and increased recruitment and training costs.

It is also important to consider the psychological mechanisms through which autocratic leadership affects motivation and job satisfaction. Motivation is closely tied to the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness—core components of self-determination theory. Autocratic leadership, by limiting teachers' decision-making power and professional autonomy, directly undermines these needs. Similarly, job satisfaction is influenced by the extent to which individuals feel recognized, supported, and fairly treated within their work environment. The rigid, top-down nature of autocratic leadership can compromise these factors, creating conditions where teachers feel undervalued and emotionally drained. By examining these psychological processes, educators and policymakers can better understand the nuanced effects of leadership styles and design interventions to support teacher well-being.

In light of the above, exploring the influence of autocratic school leadership on teachers' motivation and job satisfaction is not only a matter of academic interest but also a practical necessity. Effective leadership is critical for creating an environment where teachers are motivated, satisfied, and committed to their roles, which in turn impacts student learning, school performance, and educational equity. By investigating the specific ways in which autocratic leadership shapes teachers' professional experiences, educational researchers can provide evidence-based recommendations for leadership practices that balance authority with support, discipline with collaboration, and control with empowerment. Such insights are essential for fostering a school culture that promotes teacher engagement, professional growth, and overall organizational effectiveness.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Firman, Firman et al., (2021) the goals of this research were threefold: first, to determine how a principal's leadership style affected outcomes; second, to determine how inspiring instructors affected student achievement; and third, to determine how inspiring teachers and the principal's leadership style interacted to affect student achievement. Quantitative methods form the basis of this study. A total of all instructors at SMAN 1 and SMKN 1 Rambutan in Banyuasin Regency, South

Sumatra Province, were selected for the demographic study. This is due to the fact that there are a total of seventy-seven populations that make up the study population. Both multiple linear regressions and a basic linear regression algorithm were used to evaluate the data. Based on the study's findings, we can deduce that (1) the principal's leadership style affects the performance of SMA-SMK Negeri in the Rambutan Banyuasin district; (2) teacher motivation affects the performance of SMA-SMK Negeri in the Rambutan Banyuasin district; and (3) joint influence of principal leadership style and teacher motivation.

Bikimane, Gaopalelwe & Makambe, Ushe (2020) an organization may be transformed and employee work satisfaction can be enhanced with the help of a suitable leadership style. This study aimed to analyze the effects of autocratic and authentic leadership styles on teacher motivation in selected primary schools in the South Eastern region of Botswana. It was based on the Autocratic and Democratic Decision-Making Model and the Conceptual Model of Authentic Leadership Style. Eighty educators were selected at random from a total of one hundred who were part of the research population. Using the Pearson correlation, we were able to determine which schools' leadership styles were associated with the most highly motivated teachers. The study's results showed that among the primary school teachers surveyed, an authoritarian leadership style was associated with lower levels of motivation, but this relationship was not statistically significant. Conversely, among the instructors surveyed those who demonstrated genuine leadership were more likely to report high levels of intrinsic drive. Consequently, it can be inferred that the teachers may have tolerated autocratic leadership since it failed to inspire or demotivate them, whereas genuine leadership could have fostered productive relationships between superiors and subordinates, ultimately leading to higher levels of teacher motivation.

Marques, Ezequiel et al., (2020) The study's overarching goal is to examine the relationship between teachers' levels of work satisfaction and their productivity in the classroom at Catholic Secondary School of Municipal Dili in Timor-Leste. This study used the analytical tool Smart-PLS 3.0 to test its hypotheses. With T-statistic values of 5.993 and P-values of 0,00, the results demonstrated that job motivation significantly and positively affects instructors' performance. The test result indicated that job contentment did not have a beneficial impact on teachers' performance, as shown by the relationship between job happiness and the instructors' performance (t-statistics values (0.153) and p-values (0.879)). The school director's leadership style had a favorable but insignificant effect on teachers' performance, according to the relationship between leadership style and teachers' performance, T-statistics values (3.098) and P-values (0.002). A high-quality education policy for Timor-Leste may be shaped by the findings of this research, which can also inform the ministry's program planning in the areas of curriculum and regulations. Consequently, it may aid both the school director in better understanding their role as director and the instructors in better understanding their role as educators.

Bogler, Ronit. (2001) this paper looks at how occupation perceptions, principals' decision-making styles (autocratic vs. participatory), and leadership styles (transformational vs. transactional) affect teachers' work satisfaction. Specifically, it seeks to determine the extent to which teachers' judgments of their work contribute to their overall job satisfaction, as contrasted with their views of the leadership style and decision-making approach used by their superiors. Of the 930 Israeli school



teachers who were given a quantitative questionnaire with Likert-type scales, 745 actually filled it out. The exogenous factors were analyzed using path analysis to explain teacher job satisfaction. The most important takeaway was that teachers' views of their work had a significant impact on their level of contentment. Indirectly, via their views of their work, principals' transformational leadership impacted teachers' levels of job satisfaction. We address the study's implications for principals and supervisors as well as for government policymakers.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the impact of autocratic leadership style of school principals on teachers' work motivation.

Sample Population

A sample size of 100 teachers was selected using purposive sampling, which allowed the researchers to specifically target teachers who have sufficient exposure to their principals' leadership style.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected from 100 teachers in public secondary schools in Delhi using a structured questionnaire designed to assess principals' autocratic leadership and its impact on teachers' motivation. Participants were informed about the study's purpose and assured of confidentiality. The questionnaire was distributed physically and online over a three-week period, and responses were compiled for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using statistical methods to examine the relationship between autocratic leadership and teachers' work motivation. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic information and overall responses, while regression and correlation analyses were employed to determine the effect of perceived autocratic leadership on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and performance.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Gender

Table 1: Gender of The Respondents

Particular	Frequency	Percentage
Male	45	45%
Female	55	55%
Total	100	100%

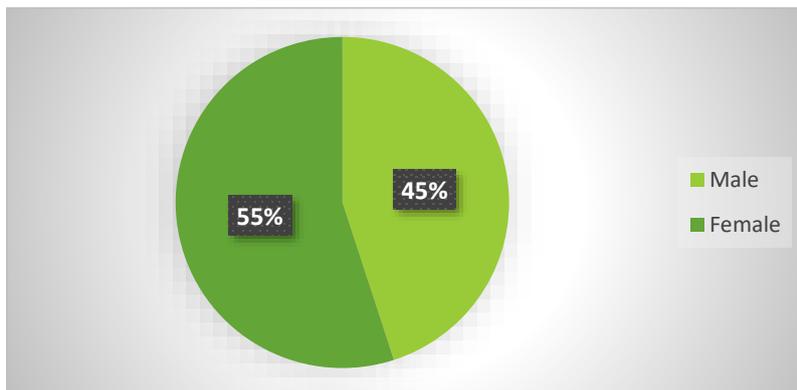


Figure 1: Gender of The Respondents

Out of the 100 respondents, 55% were female and 45% were male, indicating that the majority of the teachers in the study were female. The gender distribution is relatively balanced, with a slight predominance of females.

Teaching Experience

Table 2: Teaching Experience of The Respondents

Particular	Frequency	Percentage
1–5 years	25	25
6–10 years	35	35
11–20 years	30	30
>20 years	10	10
Total	100	100%

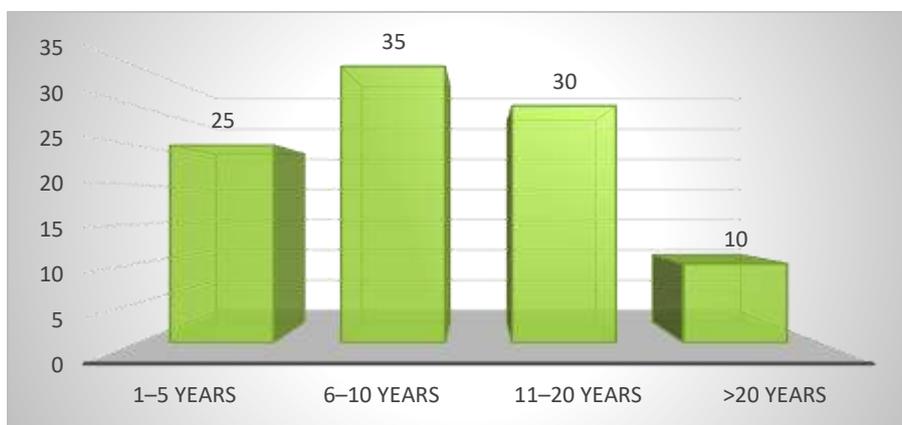


Figure 2: Teaching Experience of The Respondents

Among the 100 respondents, 35% of teachers had 6–10 years of teaching experience, making it the largest group. Teachers with 11–20 years of experience accounted for 30%, while those with 1–5 years were 25%, and only 10% had more than 20 years of experience. This indicates that the majority of teachers in the study have moderate teaching experience.



Table 3: Mean Scores of Work Motivation Dimensions Under Autocratic Leadership

Motivation Dimension	Number of Items	Mean Score (1–5)	Std. Deviation
Intrinsic Motivation	5	3.2	0.8
Extrinsic Motivation	5	3.8	0.7
Achievement Motivation	4	3.5	0.9
Recognition & Reward	4	3.1	0.8
Job Satisfaction	6	3.3	0.7

The table presents the mean scores of various work motivation dimensions of teachers under autocratic leadership. Among the dimensions, extrinsic motivation scored the highest (3.8), indicating that teachers are more influenced by external rewards such as salary, benefits, and promotions in this leadership context. Achievement motivation (3.5) and job satisfaction (3.3) show moderate levels, suggesting that while teachers still strive to achieve their professional goals and feel somewhat satisfied with their work, the impact is not very strong. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation (3.2) and recognition and reward (3.1) are relatively lower, reflecting that personal fulfillment, creative engagement, and acknowledgment from the principal are less positively affected under an autocratic style of leadership. Overall, these results imply that autocratic leadership tends to emphasize external incentives over internal satisfaction, potentially limiting teachers’ intrinsic drive and sense of recognition.

Table 4: Correlation Between Autocratic Leadership and Teacher Motivation Dimensions

Motivation Dimension	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value
Intrinsic Motivation	-0.32	0.001*
Extrinsic Motivation	0.15	0.12
Achievement Motivation	-0.28	0.005*
Recognition & Reward	-0.40	<0.001*
Job Satisfaction	-0.35	0.002*

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The table shows the relationship between autocratic leadership and different dimensions of teacher motivation. Intrinsic motivation ($r = -0.32$, $p = 0.001$), achievement motivation ($r = -0.28$, $p = 0.005$), recognition & reward ($r = -0.40$, $p < 0.001$), and job satisfaction ($r = -0.35$, $p = 0.002$) all have significant negative correlations with autocratic leadership, indicating that as autocratic behavior increases, these aspects of motivation tend to decrease. In contrast, extrinsic motivation ($r = 0.15$, $p = 0.12$) shows a weak positive but non-significant correlation, suggesting that autocratic leadership does not meaningfully affect external motivators like salary or promotions. Overall, the results suggest that autocratic leadership negatively impacts teachers’ intrinsic drive, sense of achievement, recognition, and overall job satisfaction, while having little effect on extrinsic motivation.

Table 5: Regression Analysis – Effect of Autocratic Leadership on Work Motivation

Motivation Dimension	β (Beta Coefficient)	t-value	p-value
Intrinsic Motivation	-0.30	-3.2	0.002*
Extrinsic Motivation	0.12	1.2	0.23
Achievement Motivation	-0.25	-2.7	0.008*
Recognition & Reward	-0.35	-3.8	<0.001*
Job Satisfaction	-0.28	-2.9	0.005*

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The regression analysis examines the effect of autocratic leadership on various dimensions of teacher motivation. The results show that autocratic leadership has a significant negative effect on intrinsic motivation ($\beta = -0.30$, $p = 0.002$), achievement motivation ($\beta = -0.25$, $p = 0.008$), recognition & reward ($\beta = -0.35$, $p < 0.001$), and job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.28$, $p = 0.005$). This indicates that higher levels of autocratic behavior by principals reduce teachers' internal drive, sense of accomplishment, feeling of recognition, and overall satisfaction with their job. Conversely, the effect on extrinsic motivation ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = 0.23$) is positive but not statistically significant, suggesting that autocratic leadership does not meaningfully influence external motivators like pay or promotions. Overall, these findings confirm that autocratic leadership primarily undermines intrinsic aspects of teacher motivation while leaving extrinsic motivation largely unaffected.

V. CONCLUSION

Autocratic school leadership, while effective for maintaining control and ensuring compliance, can have a negative impact on teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. By limiting autonomy, participation in decision-making, and opportunities for professional growth, this leadership style may reduce teacher engagement, morale, and overall well-being. Understanding these effects highlights the importance of balancing authority with support, collaboration, and recognition to create a positive work environment. Promoting leadership approaches that empower teachers can enhance motivation, job satisfaction, and ultimately improve teaching quality and student outcomes.

REFERENCES

1. Alam, Jan & Ashraf, Muhammad Azeem. (2025). The impacts of school leadership styles on teacher satisfaction in vocational education. *Vocation, Technology & Education*. 2.
2. Angwaomadoko, Ejuchegahi. (2023). The Effect of Leadership Styles on Teacher Job Satisfaction in Nigerian Secondary Schools. *International Research in Education*. 11. 15.
3. Bikimane, Gaopalelwe & Makambe, Ushe. (2020). Effects of Autocratic and Authentic Leadership Styles on Teacher Motivation in Selected Primary Schools, Botswana. 190-204.
4. Bogler, Ronit. (2001). The Influence of Leadership Style on Teacher Job Satisfaction. *Educational Administration Quarterly - EDUC ADMIN QUART*. 37. 662-683.
5. Chukwusa, Joseph. (2018). Autocratic Leadership Style: Obstacle to Success in Academic Libraries.

6. Dahie, Abdulkadir. (2015). Leadership Style and Teacher Job Satisfaction: Empirical Survey from Secondary Schools in Somalia.
7. Firman, Firman & Fitria, Happy & Rohana, Rohana. (2021). The Influence of School Leadership Style and Teacher's Motivation toward Teacher's Performance. *Journal of Social Work and Science Education*. 2. 1-10. 10.52690/jswse.v2i1.134.
8. Hadijah, Nantale & University Researchcentre, Kampala International. (2024). The Impact of Leadership Styles on Teacher Performance. *RESEARCH INVENTION JOURNAL OF LAW, COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGES*. 4. 13-18.
9. Hassnain, Ammar. (2023). Impact of autocratic and democratic leadership styles on employees' performance and motivation. *Journal of Administrative and Business Studies*. 8. 10.20474/jabs-8.3.2.
10. Maqbool, Samra & Zafeer, Hafiz Muhammad Ihsan & Maqbool, Sufyan & Zeng, Pingfei & Draissi, Zineb & Javed, Saima. (2024). Stance of numerous leadership styles and their effect on teaching to sustain academic performance at the high school level. *Heliyon*. 10. e36438.
11. Marques, Ezequiel & Amaral, Alvaro & Costa, Carla. (2020). The Influence of Motivation, Satisfaction, and Leadership Style of the Teacher Performance. *Timor Leste Journal of Business and Management*. 2. 39-47.
12. Meney, Deo. (2024). Impact of Leadership Styles on Job Satisfaction among Teachers in Secondary Schools in Monduli District. *European Journal of Theoretical and Applied Sciences*. 2. 889-913.
13. Norbu, Chuzang & Ghalay, Bal. (2023). Leadership Practices, Teacher Motivation, Burnout, and Teacher Satisfaction in Tsirang Dzongkhag. *Educational Innovation and Practice*. 6.
14. Peker, Sevinç & Inandı, Yusuf & Gilic, Fahrettin. (2018). The Relationship Between Leadership Styles (Autocratic and Democratic) of School Administrators and the Mobbing Teachers Suffer. *European Journal of Contemporary Education*. 7. 150-164.
15. Phearom, Yea & Hum, Chan & Chea, Sopheaktra & Bou, Da & Chheav, Rachhan & Dul, Vanny & Sam, Rany. (2024). Autocratic Leadership Style in Higher Education Institutions: A Systematic Literature Review. *European Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*. 1. 88-96.
16. Rafiq-Uz-Zaman, Muhammad & Bano, Sumera & Naveed, Yousra. (2025). Comparative Analysis of Authoritative and Democratic Leadership Styles and Their Impact on School Management Effectiveness. *Inverge Journal of Social Sciences*. 4. 105-117. 10.63544/ijss.v4i2.132.
17. Rexha, Avni. (2024). The Impact of School Leadership Styles on Teacher's Job Satisfaction. *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences (PJLSS)*. 22.
18. Saeed, Sarkar & Omed, Soma & Rashid, Kawthar. (2023). The Effect of Different Leadership Styles on Job Satisfaction. *Organization and Human Capital Development*. 2. 1-15.