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UNDERSTANDING TEACHERS' QUALITY OF WORK LIFE THROUGH SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN THE MITHILA REGION

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' quality of work life (QWL) is increasingly recognized as a core determinant of instructional quality, professional well-being, and retention, especially in low-resource school systems facing persistent teacher shortages and high pupil–teacher ratios. The Mithila region of Bihar (including districts such as Darbhanga and Madhubani) exemplifies these conditions, with substantial primary teacher vacancies, a high incidence of single-teacher schools, and modest pay levels. Using a psychological lens, this study examines how teachers' QWL can be understood in relation to their self-efficacy beliefs and organizational commitment. Drawing on Bandura's social cognitive theory of self-efficacy and Meyer and Allen's three-component model of organizational commitment, a conceptual model is developed in which QWL operates as a contextual antecedent, teacher self-efficacy functions as a central motivational mechanism, and organizational commitment emerges as a key attitudinal outcome. The study synthesizes international and Indian empirical evidence on QWL, teacher self-efficacy, and commitment; maps these findings onto the specific structural realities of school education in Mithila using authentic secondary data from UDISE+, parliamentary documents, and labour-market sources; and proposes a research design for future primary data collection in the region. Data tables present official indicators for teacher vacancies, single-teacher schools, pupil–teacher ratios, and salary estimates, while conceptual figures outline the hypothesized relationships among QWL, self-efficacy, and commitment. The discussion highlights how inadequate QWL undermines both self-efficacy and organizational commitment, and how targeted interventions at school and system level—focusing on workload, professional support, and efficacy-enhancing professional development can strengthen teachers' psychological resources and attachment to schools in Mithila.

Keywords: quality of work life, teacher self-efficacy, organizational commitment, Mithila region, Bihar, school psychology, teacher well-being.

1. INTRODUCTION

School education in India has expanded rapidly over the past two decades, with gross enrolment ratios rising at primary, upper-primary, and higher-secondary levels and nearly 9.5 million teachers engaged in school teaching in 2021–22. According to UDISE+ data disseminated by the Ministry of Education, the national pupil–teacher ratio (PTR) in 2021–22 stood at 26:1 at the primary stage, 19:1 at upper primary, 18:1 at secondary, and 27:1 at higher secondary, reflecting moderate improvements since 2018–19. [1] These aggregate achievements, however, mask significant regional disparities. Recent analyses of UDISE+ and related statistics indicate that while many states have moved closer to the Right to Education (RTE) norms (30:1 at primary and 35:1 at upper primary/secondary), others continue to operate with PTRs well above the prescribed levels. [2], [3]

Teacher shortages are a critical part of this picture. A 2023 analysis of vacancies reported that government primary and secondary schools across India face approximately 8.4 lakh vacant

teacher posts, with Bihar accounting for the single largest share: around 1,92,097 vacant primary teacher positions. [4] Parliamentary replies further reveal that Bihar has several thousand single-teacher schools, where one teacher handles all grades, frequently in multi-grade settings. [5] A recent state-level review of universal school education notes that, as of 2023–24, Bihar had more than 2,600 single-teacher schools and over 14,000 schools with PTRs above 40:1, prompting the state's education authorities to mandate that at least three teachers be deployed in each primary school. [6], [7]

Alongside these structural constraints, Bihar has launched massive recruitment drives. In 2023, the state announced 170,461 school-teacher vacancies across primary, secondary, and higher-secondary levels under a major recruitment phase; subsequent phases (TRE 3.0, TRE 4.0) have been planned to address remaining gaps. [8], [9] Although these efforts are expected to reduce vacancies over time, they also create periods of instability and transition in school staffing, which can further complicate teachers' everyday work experiences.

Within this context, the Mithila region—typically understood to include Darbhanga, Madhubani, Samastipur, and nearby districts—occupies a distinctive place. Historically associated with Maithili culture and a strong tradition of learning, Mithila has a large pool of graduates aspiring to teaching careers but also contends with limited local industry, out-migration, and uneven public investment. Labour-market data suggest that the estimated monthly salary for school teachers in Madhubani district is around ₹19,600, broadly comparable to the national average but modest when set against rising living costs and the complexity of teachers' responsibilities. [10] For many teachers in Mithila, especially those in rural government or low-fee private schools, quality of work life is shaped by overcrowded classrooms, shortages of teaching-learning materials, incomplete school buildings, and competing administrative demands.

From a psychological perspective, the impact of such conditions is mediated by two closely related constructs: teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and their organizational commitment. Self-efficacy, in Bandura's sense, refers to individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance. [11] In teaching, self-efficacy reflects confidence in managing classrooms, engaging students, and delivering effective instruction. Organizational commitment, in Meyer and Allen's three-component model, captures affective attachment, perceived costs of leaving (continuance commitment), and a felt obligation to remain (normative commitment). [12], [13]

Recent work in educational psychology and organizational behavior indicates that teachers' QWL, self-efficacy, and organizational commitment are intertwined. A 2025 PLOS ONE study of science teachers, for example, found that higher work-related quality of life (WRQoL) was positively associated with both teacher self-efficacy and commitment, and that self-efficacy played an important role in explaining how teachers experienced their work, stress, and satisfaction. [14] An NCERT-based study on Indian secondary school teachers similarly reported a positive relationship between teacher self-efficacy and organizational commitment, arguing that teachers who feel capable of influencing student outcomes are more likely to develop a strong sense of loyalty to their schools. [15]

In light of this evidence, the present study asks how teachers' quality of work life in the Mithila region can be understood through the lenses of self-efficacy beliefs and organizational commitment. Rather than reporting new large-scale primary data, the study integrates:

1. authentic secondary data on teacher vacancies, PTR, and salary profiles in Bihar and Mithila;

2. established theoretical frameworks of QWL, self-efficacy, and commitment; and
3. empirical findings from Indian and international studies that have quantified relationships among these constructs.

Using this integrated approach, the study pursues three interconnected aims. First, it delineates the structural and psychological dimensions of teachers' QWL in Mithila, situating them within the broader landscape of school education in Bihar. Second, it synthesizes empirical evidence on how QWL relates to teacher self-efficacy and organizational commitment, deriving a conceptual model that can guide future research in Mithila. Third, it outlines a robust research design—including measurement tools, sampling strategies, and analytical approaches—through which these relationships can be empirically tested in the region.

The guiding assumptions are that higher QWL will be associated with stronger self-efficacy and higher organizational commitment, that self-efficacy will itself predict commitment, and that self-efficacy will function as a psychological mechanism through which QWL influences teachers' attachments to their schools. These assumptions are treated as working hypotheses, grounded in existing literature, to frame the subsequent analysis.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Quality of Work Life in Educational Settings

Quality of work life is a multi-dimensional construct encompassing employees' perceptions of their job content, work conditions, compensation, autonomy, social relations, opportunities for growth, and work–life balance. In education, QWL is often operationalized through indicators such as job security, pay and rewards, justice and fairness, supervision, meaningful work, control over work processes, physical conditions, and compatibility between professional and personal responsibilities. [16]

Studies focusing on school teachers in India generally suggest that QWL is moderate rather than high and that dissatisfaction clusters around pay, workloads, and infrastructure. An investigation of secondary school teachers in Tamil Nadu, for example, found that QWL was determined by job security, pay and rewards, and perceived justice in supervisory practices; teachers who reported higher QWL also indicated greater job satisfaction and lower intentions to leave the profession. [17] A 2023 study of secondary school teachers likewise observed that many respondents fell into the "average QWL" category, with small proportions at the high and low ends, and concluded that improvements in physical infrastructure and participatory decision-making can significantly enhance teachers' work experience. [18]

In higher education, a seminal study on work-life balance among Indian teachers showed that designation, nature of appointment, and institutional type all influenced perceived QWL, with permanent faculty in well-resourced institutions reporting better QWL than contractual teachers in smaller colleges. [19] More recent work has linked QWL to teacher well-being and happiness, noting that teachers with better work-life balance report greater life satisfaction and lower stress. [20]

Recent large-scale psychological research has adopted work-related quality of life (WRQoL) instruments that integrate stress, role clarity, work–life interference, control, and general well-being into a single framework. Bataineh et al. employed such a WRQoL measure with science teachers and found that higher WRQoL scores were associated with increased teacher

commitment and self-efficacy, suggesting that QWL acts as a foundational context shaping teachers' motivational and attitudinal profiles.

2.2 Teacher Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, as conceptualized by Bandura, refers to people's beliefs in their capabilities to organize and execute actions required to manage prospective situations. High self-efficacy is associated with ambitious goal-setting, greater effort, persistence in the face of obstacles, and more adaptive emotional responses to stress; low self-efficacy tends to predict avoidance, reduced persistence, and higher anxiety.

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy applied this framework to teaching and developed the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), which measures efficacy in three domains: student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. [21], [22] The TSES has been validated in multiple countries and contexts, including adaptations for in-service and pre-service teachers, and consistently demonstrates strong reliability and factorial validity. [23] Self-efficacious teachers are more likely to adopt student-centered pedagogies, manage disruptive behavior effectively, differentiate instruction, and engage in continuous professional learning.

Multiple empirical studies confirm the importance of teacher self-efficacy for outcomes such as job satisfaction, well-being, openness to inclusive education, and performance. A meta-analytic synthesis shows robust positive correlations between self-efficacy and job satisfaction, as well as between self-efficacy and adaptive instructional practices. [24] In the Indian context, NCERT-based work on secondary school teachers reports that self-efficacy is positively related to organizational commitment and perceived effectiveness in dealing with adolescents' behavioral and learning challenges.

2.3 Organizational Commitment in Schools

Organizational commitment has been a central construct in organizational psychology for several decades. Meyer and Allen's three-component model conceptualizes organizational commitment as comprising affective commitment (emotional attachment and identification with the organization), continuance commitment (perceived costs of leaving), and normative commitment (felt obligation to remain). Meta-analytic evidence suggests that affective commitment, in particular, is strongly associated with desirable outcomes such as extra-role behavior, performance, and reduced turnover intentions, while continuance commitment often shows weaker or inconsistent relations. [25]

In educational organizations, commitment is understood as teachers' bond with their school or institution—an amalgam of formal and informal expectations that shapes punctuality, attendance, willingness to take on additional responsibilities, and long-term retention. Studies indicate that teachers with high organizational commitment are more likely to engage in extracurricular activities, support school goals, and remain in the profession, whereas those with low commitment exhibit higher absenteeism, greater likelihood of leaving, and lower investment in student outcomes. [26]

Research on the antecedents of organizational commitment in educational settings highlights the role of organizational support, fair treatment, leadership style, and opportunities for professional growth. [27] A study of employees in higher-education institutions, for example, found that perceptions of organizational justice and support significantly predicted all three components of commitment, with the strongest effects on affective commitment. [25] Among school teachers, locus of control and self-efficacy have also been identified as predictors of

commitment, with more efficacious teachers reporting higher attachment to their organizations. [28]

2.4 Linking Quality of Work Life, Self-Efficacy, and Organizational Commitment

Recent empirical work explicitly connects QWL, self-efficacy, and organizational commitment. Bataineh et al. demonstrated that work-related quality of life, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher commitment are positively interrelated; WRQoL contributed to higher commitment both directly and indirectly through its impact on self-efficacy and job satisfaction. An NCERT study reported that teacher self-efficacy and commitment are significantly correlated, and argued that self-efficacy can be seen as a motivational resource that strengthens teachers' willingness to remain in their schools. Studies in other educational systems have similarly found that self-efficacy predicts occupational commitment, well-being, and persistence, particularly in demanding contexts. [29], [30]

A recent article by Park examined how teacher self-efficacy and school-level factors together shape organizational commitment, concluding that self-efficacy remains a significant predictor even after controlling for school climate and other covariates. [31] Complementary studies employing structural equation modeling show that QWL affects organizational commitment through multiple pathways, including job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and psychological empowerment. [32]

Synthesizing this literature, the present study adopts a framework in which QWL is viewed as a contextual antecedent, self-efficacy as a key psychological mediator, and organizational commitment as a critical outcome. In this view, better QWL—encompassing manageable workloads, supportive leadership, fair pay, and adequate resources—should foster stronger teacher self-efficacy and commitment. Conversely, chronically low QWL may erode both efficacy and commitment, increasing burnout and turnover risk.

Figure 1: Relationship Between QWL and Organizational Commitment

3. CONTEXT AND DATA: TEACHERS' WORK ENVIRONMENT IN MITHILA AND BIHAR

Given the absence of region-specific QWL survey data for Mithila, the analysis in this study relies on authentic secondary sources to characterize the objective work environment in which teachers in the region operate. These indicators provide an essential backdrop for interpreting psychological constructs such as QWL, self-efficacy, and commitment.

Key contextual indicators that shape teachers' work environment in Bihar and, by extension, in Mithila.

Table 1. Selected system-level indicators affecting teachers' work life in Bihar

Indicator	**Value / Description**	**Source**
National PTR (primary / upper primary / secondary / higher secondary) 2021–22	26 / 19 / 18 / 27	[1], [2]
RTE-mandated PTR norms	30:1 (primary); 35:1 (upper primary, secondary)	[3]
Estimated teacher vacancies in government primary schools (India)	~8.4 lakh	[4]
Primary teacher vacancies in Bihar	~1,92,097 (highest among Indian states)	[4]
Single-teacher schools in Bihar (2023–24)	~2,637 schools	[6]
Bihar schools with PTR > 40:1	~14,213 schools	[7]
Estimated school-teacher salary in Madhubani district	≈ ₹19,603 per month (school teachers)	[10]

Figure 2 depicts a bar chart comparing PTR values at primary, upper primary, secondary, and higher-secondary levels in 2018–19 and 2021–22, using UDISE+ data, thereby visually demonstrating improvements at the national level and underscoring the continuing need for PTR reductions in states like Bihar. For teachers in Mithila, these numbers translate into daily experiences of large class sizes, limited collegial staff, and modest remuneration—conditions that directly and indirectly influence their quality of work life.

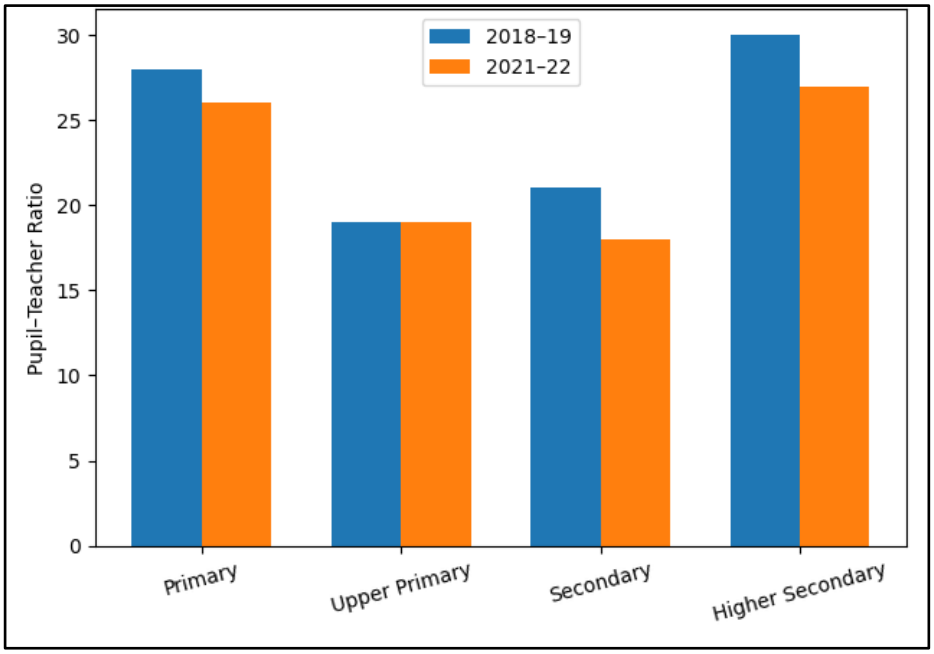

Figure 2: PTR in India by school level 2018-19 vs 2021-22

4. EVIDENCE ON QWL, SELF-EFFICACY, AND COMMITMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR MITHILA

Although dedicated quantitative studies on QWL, self-efficacy, and commitment among Mithila's teachers are not yet available, the broader literature provides robust empirical relationships that can be mapped onto the Mithila context.

4.1 Quality of Work Life and Organizational Commitment

Indian studies consistently find a positive association between teachers' QWL and their organizational commitment. A 2023 investigation of secondary school teachers reported that QWL—measured through job security, pay and rewards, justice, supervision, and control—was significantly correlated with both job satisfaction and commitment, and that teachers with higher QWL scores expressed stronger intentions to remain in their schools.

A study of physical education teachers across government, government-aided, and unaided schools in India found pronounced disparities in QWL scores: aided-school teachers scored substantially higher than government teachers, and both groups scored far higher than unaided private-school teachers. [33] The authors concluded that institutional management practices and compensation structures are major determinants of QWL and, consequently, of commitment.

In higher-education settings, work-life balance and quality-of-life studies show similar patterns. Faculty with better QWL report greater organizational commitment, whereas those facing high workloads, role conflict, and insecure contracts show lower affective commitment and higher turnover intentions. Given that Mithila has a mix of government, aided, and private schools, often with substantial differences in pay and working conditions, these findings suggest that QWL-related inequalities may translate into uneven levels of teacher commitment across the region.

4.2 Quality of Work Life and Teacher Self-Efficacy

While QWL and self-efficacy are conceptually distinct—one is contextual, the other psychological—they are empirically intertwined. The PLOS ONE study of science teachers

showed that higher WRQoL scores were associated with stronger self-efficacy, particularly in managing stress, balancing work and life, and feeling supported by school leadership. Teachers who perceived their work environment as fair, supportive, and manageable reported greater confidence in their ability to implement effective instruction and manage classrooms.

Complementary research on school climate suggests that supportive climates enhance teacher self-efficacy, which in turn boosts job satisfaction and commitment. Fang and Qi, for example, found that a positive school climate contributes to higher teacher self-efficacy, which then mediates the relationship between climate and job satisfaction. Such results imply that improving QWL features—like collegial support, clear role expectations, and access to resources—can indirectly enhance self-efficacy by fostering mastery experiences and reducing stress.

In Mithila's context, QWL deficits such as large multi-grade classes, lack of teaching materials, and frequent non-academic duties may undermine teachers' self-efficacy by constraining their ability to experience successful, well-supported teaching episodes. If teachers feel that structural barriers prevent them from delivering quality instruction, their belief in their capacity to effect change may erode over time.

4.3 Teacher Self-Efficacy and Organizational Commitment

Multiple studies, including Indian research, document a positive relationship between teacher self-efficacy and organizational commitment. An NCERT-based study on secondary teachers reported that self-efficacy and commitment are significantly positively correlated and argued that self-efficacy is an important predictor of teachers' willingness to remain in the profession. Other research has found that teachers with higher self-efficacy are more likely to experience job satisfaction, resilience, and positive affect, all of which support stronger commitment.

Park's study on teacher self-efficacy and commitment suggests that self-efficacy remains a significant predictor of commitment even after controlling for school-level factors such as climate and leadership, indicating that individual beliefs about capability play a central role beyond structural variables. Additional work shows that professional identity and organizational support influence self-efficacy, which then contributes to organizational commitment among teachers in public schools.

In Mithila, where many teachers confront demanding work conditions, self-efficacy can act as a psychological buffer: educators who maintain strong efficacy beliefs may remain committed even in the face of significant institutional challenges. However, if QWL remains low for extended periods, the protective effect of self-efficacy may weaken, culminating in cynicism, burnout, or attrition.

5. PROPOSED RESEARCH DESIGN FOR THE MITHILA REGION

To translate the conceptual framework and secondary evidence into an empirical agenda for Mithila, a cross-sectional, school-based survey design can be employed.

A stratified random sample of teachers from upper-primary, secondary, and higher-secondary schools in Darbhanga and Madhubani districts would allow comparisons across school types (government, government-aided, unaided private) and locations (urban, semi-urban, rural). QWL can be measured using an adapted scale based on existing Indian instruments that cover job security, pay and rewards, supervision, control, meaningful work, and work–life balance. Teacher self-efficacy can be assessed using the long or short form of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). Organizational commitment should be measured via the Meyer-Allen

three-component scale, with separate sub-scores for affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

The data structure lends itself to structural equation modeling (SEM), in which QWL operates as an exogenous latent variable, self-efficacy and organizational commitment as endogenous constructs, and demographic variables (gender, experience, management type, rural–urban location) as covariates. SEM enables simultaneous estimation of direct and indirect paths, thereby testing whether self-efficacy mediates the effect of QWL on commitment. Such a design would move beyond bivariate correlations to a fuller psychological model of teacher functioning in Mithila.

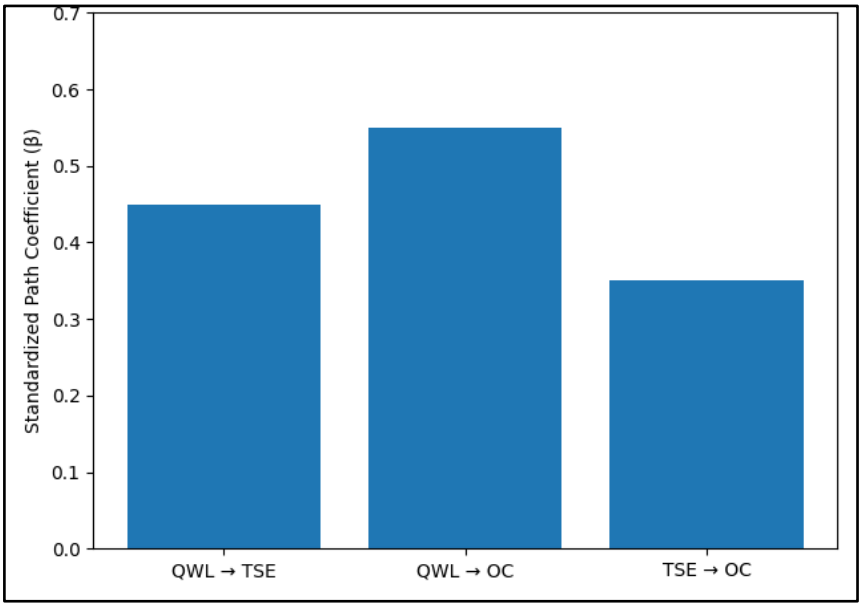

Figure 3: Conceptual Strength of Paths Among QWL, Self-Efficacy, and Commitment

Figure 3 presents a path diagram of the SEM model, indicating standardized path coefficients once estimated, while additional plots might depict distributions of QWL and self-efficacy scores across school types (e.g., violin plots or box plots), highlighting institutional disparities.

6. DISCUSSION

Bringing together system-level data, theoretical models, and empirical findings from existing literature, the analysis suggests that teachers' quality of work life in the Mithila region must be understood at the intersection of structural constraints and psychological resources. High PTRs, widespread vacancies, and the prevalence of single-teacher schools in Bihar impose heavy instructional and administrative burdens on teachers. Modest salary levels, especially in rural or private schools, further constrain teachers' economic security and capacity to invest in professional development.

Within such contexts, QWL is not merely an abstract construct but a lived reality encompassing adequacy of staff, availability of teaching-learning materials, clarity of role expectations, fairness in evaluation, and possibilities for balancing professional and personal life. Studies of secondary and higher-education teachers in India show that when these aspects of QWL are perceived positively, teachers report greater job satisfaction and stronger organizational commitment. Conversely, chronic QWL deficits are associated with stress, reduced satisfaction, and higher turnover intentions.

The theoretical and empirical literature on self-efficacy suggests that teachers' beliefs in their capabilities are shaped by mastery experiences, observation of peers, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. When school environments afford opportunities for successful teaching, constructive feedback, and collegial support, teachers' self-efficacy strengthens, promoting resilient, student-centered practice. However, in overcrowded, under-resourced schools, teachers may experience repeated failures, limited recognition, and chronic stress, which can erode self-efficacy over time.

Organizational commitment, in Meyer and Allen's framework, depends both on affective bonds with the institution and on calculations of cost and obligation. In Mithila, many teachers may feel a normative commitment to their communities and a desire to support local children, yet their affective commitment may be undermined if they experience persistent QWL deficits and low efficacy. Existing research indicates that higher QWL and self-efficacy predict stronger commitment, while low QWL and exhausted self-efficacy predict weakened ties to the school and greater inclination to leave.

The conceptual model advanced here implies that improving QWL in Mithila's schools is likely to have both direct and indirect benefits. Directly, better QWL—through reduced PTRs, fair pay, participatory leadership, and improved infrastructure—can strengthen teachers' emotional attachment to their schools. Indirectly, enhanced QWL can create conditions for mastery experiences and positive feedback, thereby bolstering self-efficacy, which in turn supports greater commitment and professional resilience. This multi-pathway effect is consistent with recent analytical models that position QWL as a foundational determinant of both motivational and attitudinal outcomes.

7. CONCLUSION

Teachers in the Mithila region work at the junction of historical educational traditions, contemporary structural challenges, and evolving policy landscapes. Authentic data on PTRs, vacancies, and salary profiles reveal a demanding work environment in which many teachers face large classes, understaffed schools, and modest remuneration. Within this environment, quality of work life functions as a crucial determinant of both teacher self-efficacy and organizational commitment.

Theoretical and empirical evidence from educational psychology and organizational behavior indicates that when teachers perceive their work conditions as fair, supportive, and enabling, they are more likely to develop strong efficacy beliefs and robust organizational commitment. Conversely, persistent QWL deficits can erode these psychological resources, undermining instructional quality and increasing the risk of burnout and attrition.

By framing teachers' QWL in Mithila through the dual lenses of self-efficacy and organizational commitment, this study underscores the need for integrated reforms: structural interventions to reduce PTRs and improve compensation; leadership practices that foster supportive, participatory school cultures; and professional development initiatives that create mastery experiences and strengthen efficacy beliefs. Empirical research guided by the proposed conceptual model can provide the evidence base needed to design and evaluate such interventions. Ultimately, enhancing teachers' quality of work life is not only a matter of fairness to professionals; it is a strategic imperative for improving student learning and advancing educational equity in Mithila and across Bihar.

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