Original Research Article

ETHICAL CLIMATE AND QUALITY OF WORK LIFE OF TEACHERS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

ABSTRACT

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| --- |
| This study aimed to investigate the significant relationship between the ethical climate and the quality of work life among teachers. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design, the study involved a sample of 300 public school teachers. Data were collected through the administration of standardized questionnaires via face-to-face surveys. The collected data were subjected to statistical analyses, including mean, standard deviation, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple linear regression. The findings revealed that both the ethical climate and the quality of work life were perceived to be at high levels. Moreover, correlation analysis indicated a significant positive association between these two variables. Further analysis demonstrated that various dimensions of the ethical climate significantly influenced the teachers’ quality of work life. In light of these findings, it is recommended that school administrators implement and reinforce initiatives aimed at cultivating an ethical work environment. Promoting professional development programs grounded in ethical principles and fostering a supportive, equitable workplace culture may contribute to sustaining a high quality of work life among teachers, thereby enhancing their job satisfaction and overall performance. |

*Keywords*: Ethical Climate, Quality of Work Life, Public School Teachers, Descriptive-Correlational, Education

1. INTRODUCTION

“Seventy-five percent of employees in the Philippines are unhappy with their QWL compared to 87% in the rest of the world. In France and Belgium, 10% of employees in one workplace were experiencing depression” (Alzona, 2016). “Poor QWL can lead to various issues, such as health problems, personal relationship difficulties, and social life challenges. The Australian Institute reported that 24% of Australian workers have health issues due to poor QWL” (Talent International, 2017).

“Quality of work life (QWL) has been a popular topic among public and private employees for over 30 years. One cannot discount the importance of quality of work-life. QWL is a process that aims to improve the work environment, methods, and outcomes of organizations while also enhancing employees' lives. Researchers have studied what employees consider to be important in terms of QWL. Quality of work-life involves adequate and fair compensation, use of capacities at work, occupied space by the work in life, working conditions, opportunities at work, constitutionalism at work, and social relevance and importance of work” (Easton & Van Laar, 2018).

 “Research has shown a significant relationship between ethical climate, innovative work behavior, work engagement, and quality of work-life” (Adnan Bataineh, 2019; Dediu et al., 2018; Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019; Menzel, 2019). “There are still other factors that affect QWL. For example, work-life balance and job satisfaction” (Bhende et al., 2020). “All these can impact employees’ working capacity, social integration, opportunities, and many others. When employees are delighted with their quality of life, they become more dedicated to their job, which could result in higher efficiency and productivity” (Arif et al., 2019; International Labor Organization, 2022).

Although there have already been many types of research conducted on these topics, the authors have not yet come across significant ethical climate and the quality of work life among teachers, especially in the Philippine setting. The findings of this study may become research-based data to solve the poor quality of work-life in some organizations.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework of the Study

**1.1 Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to investigate whether ethical climate could influence teachers’ work-life quality. There were specific goals established to guide the study:

1. What is the level of ethical climate in the workplace among teachers in terms of:

1.1 ethical environment;

1.2 employee-focused climate;

1.3 community-focused climate;

1.4 obedience to authority;

1.5 code implementation;

1.6 self-interest climate;

1.7 efficiency climate;

1.8 rules and procedures climate;

1.9 personal ethics climate; and

1.10 law and professional codes climate?

2. What is the level of quality of work life among teachers in terms of:

4.1 adequate and fair compensation;

4.2. working conditions;

4.3 use of capacities at work;

4.4 opportunities at work;

4.5 social integration at work;

4.6 constitutionalism at work;

4.7 occupied space by the work in life; and

4.8 social relevance and importance of work?

3. Is there a significant relationship between ethical climate and quality of work life?

4. Do the domains of ethical climate significantly influence the quality of work life?

**1.2 Hypothesis**

In this study, a p-value of less than 0.05 was the criterion for determining the statistical significance of the results of hypothesis testing. The hypotheses are as follows:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between ethical climate and quality of work life.

Ho2: There is no significant influence of ethical climate on the quality of work life.

2. methodology

**2.1 Research Design**

The researcher utilized quantitative research, particularly a descriptive correlational design. Quantitative research involves the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to understand patterns, relationships, or trends among variables (Pregoner, 2024). A descriptive correlational design is used to describe the nature of relationships between variables without manipulating them, allowing researchers to determine whether and how variables are related (Baguio & Baguio, 2025).

In this study, this method is appropriate since the aim is to determine the relationship between ethical climate and quality of work life among teachers. By employing this design, the researcher was able to measure the levels of each variable and analyze their associations using statistical tools, providing a clear understanding of how the ethical climate within schools may influence the quality of work life experienced by teachers.

**2.2 Research Respondents**

The researchers employed a stratified random sampling to select a sample of 300 permanent teachers from various schools in Davao City to participate in the survey. Permanent employees were chosen for inclusion in the study due to their length of service, which ensured their ability to provide accurate answers to the questionnaire. The sampling excluded non-pernanent and volunteer teachers.

By employing stratified random sampling, the researchers ensured the representation of schools, increasing the generalizability of the findings. By stratifying based on the school where the respondents are assigned, the study ensures a more precise selection process compared to using simple random sampling alone (Rumrill Jr. et al., 2020). The computation of sample size within each stratum will be conducted using Slovin's formula. Regression analysis served as a valuable tool for determining the key predictors of quality of work-life, shedding light on the relative importance of ethical climate in this context. The study is cross-sectional in nature, meaning that data was collected at a specific point in time from each respondent.

**2.3 Research Instrument**

This study used adapted questionnaires to collect data. The items were modified to align with the objectives of the study. The questionnaires were adapted from the works of Shacklock et al., (2013) for ethical climate and Fernandes et al. (2016) for work-life balance.

These questionnaires had been widely used by various scholars in previous investigations on similar topics. However, since the items were modified to suit the objectives of this study, a panel of experts validated the items in the questionnaires. Additionally, the questionnaires underwent validity and reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha. Thirty (30) permanent teachers in Davao City were requested to answer the questionnaires. Each questionnaire was provided with a corresponding response scale for the respondents to choose from 1 to 5, with 5 (Strongly agree) being the highest.

The instrument was found to be highly reliable, with a Cronbach’s Alpha result of 0.92 for ethical climate and 0.95 for quality of work-life. The respondents answered the 45-item questionnaire, which consisted of five subscales. The scoring was implemented according to these subscales.

**2.4 Data Gathering Procedure**

The data gathered through the following procedures:

The researcher asked an approval of the endorsement from the dean of graduate school. A letter of permission was secured to conduct the study for the level of workstation culture and professional accountability of public elementary school teachers in Dujali District, Division of Davao Del Norte. Upon approval, the researcher prepared the letter address to the Schools Division Superintendent and principals.

The researcher modified the questionnaire for each variables. The adviser reviewed the questionnaire before producing some copies for validation purposes. The researcher submitted the final form of the questionnaire to the adviser for the final version and revision. The adviser give a go-signal to the researcher for the production of the survey questionnaire.

Adequate and clear copies were printed to avoid problems with the administration. The researcher administered the questionnaire personally to the respondents of the study and they were requested to answer the questionnaire honestly so that valid and reliable data were elicited. One hundred percent (100%) of the questionnaire was retrieved. The results were collated and tabulated before submitting it to statistical treatment. Results were analyzed and interpreted based on the purpose of the study.

# 2.5 Data Analysis

The following statistical methods were utilized in the analysis of the data: Mean, Pearson r, Multiple Regression Analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling.

*Mean* was employed to depict the level of ethical climate work life balance among teachers in Davao City.

*Pearson r* was utilized to ascertain the significance of the relationship between ethical climate and quality of work life.

*Multiple Regression Analysis* was applied to determine the extent of influence that ethical climate has on quality of work life.

3. results and discussion

**3.1 Level of Ethical Climate among Teachers**

Table 1. *Level of Ethical Climate among Teachers*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Domains** | **SD** | **Mean** | **Descriptive Level** |
| Ethical Environment | 0.64 | 3.95 | High |
| Employee Focused Climate | 0.64 | 4.02 | High |
| Community-focused Climate | 0.63 | 3.88 | High |
| Obedience to Authority | 0.59 | 4.05 | High |
| Code Implementation | 0.51 | 4.06 | High |
| Self-interest Climate | 0.65 | 4.12 | High |
| Efficiency Climate | 0.57 | 4.03 | High |
| Rules and Procedures Climate | 0.69 | 3.83 | High |
| Personal Ethics Climate | 0.84 | 3.85 | High |
| Law and Professional Codes Climate | 0.83 | 3.89 | High |
| Overall | 0.29 | 3.97 | High |

Presented in Table 1 are the domains of the level of ethical climate among teachers, including ethical environment, employee-focused climate, community-focused climate, obedience to authority, code implementation, self-interest climate, efficiency climate, rules and procedures climate, personal ethics climate, and law and professional codes climate, based on the mean scores and standard deviations.

The highest mean of 4.12 was obtained by the self-interest climate, categorized as "high." This was followed closely by code implementation with a mean of 4.06, also categorized as "high." The obedience to authority domain followed with a mean of 4.05, remaining in the "high" category. Efficiency climate scored 4.03, still categorized as "high." The employee focused climate obtained a mean of 4.02, while the law and professional codes climate had a mean of 3.89. Both are categorized as "high." Next, the ethical environment scored 3.95, followed by the community-focused climate with a mean of 3.88. These domains are also categorized as "high." The personal ethics climate received a mean of 3.85, and rules and procedures climate had the lowest mean of 3.83, but both remain categorized as "high." The overall mean of 3.97 is described as "high," indicating that teachers consistently exhibit a strong ethical climate across all domains. The overall standard deviation of 0.29 suggests that the responses were closely clustered around the mean.

This means that, in general, teachers perceive their work environment as ethically sound, fair, and principled. They feel guided by clear moral standards and supported by a culture that promotes honesty, integrity, and mutual respect. A high ethical climate typically contributes to a strong sense of trust, accountability, and professionalism within the school community. Teachers in this environment are more likely to demonstrate ethical behavior, make responsible decisions, and uphold the values of the teaching profession.

The overall result of a high ethical climate indicates that teachers are working in an environment where ethical principles are not only expected but actively practiced. This fosters a culture of transparency, respect for authority, and adherence to codes of conduct. It also creates a positive impact on collaboration, teacher-student relationships, and the overall school atmosphere. Ultimately, a high ethical climate empowers teachers to act with confidence, integrity, and a sense of purpose—contributing to the credibility of the institution and the overall success of the educational system.

This finding is supported by the research of Cansoy et al. (2021), who emphasized that a strong ethical climate in schools fosters trust, collaboration, and job satisfaction among teachers. Similarly, Shu (2023) found that when teachers perceive a fair and transparent ethical environment, they are more likely to remain committed to their profession and demonstrate higher levels of engagement. Additionally, Ugwu (2021) argued that schools with well-established ethical guidelines and leadership practices create a supportive work atmosphere, reducing stress and promoting a culture of integrity and accountability.

**3.2 Level of Quality of Work Life among Teachers**

Table 2. *Level of Quality of Work Life among Teachers*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Domains** | **SD** | **Mean** | **Descriptive Level** |
| Adequate and Fair Compensation | 0.92 | 3.38 | Moderate |
| Working Conditions | 0.60 | 3.58 | High |
| Use of Capacities at Work  | 0.49 | 4.11 | High |
| Opportunities at Work | 0.50 | 3.90 | High |
| Social Integration at Work | 0.78 | 3.70 | High |
| Constitutionalism at Work | 0.83 | 3.87 | High |
| Occupied Space by the Work in Life | 0.60 | 4.15 | High |
| Social Relevance and Importance of Work | 0.51 | 4.07 | High |
| Overall | 0.28 | 3.85 | High |

Presented in Table 2 are the domains of the level of quality of work life among teachers, including adequate and fair compensation, working conditions, use of capacities at work, opportunities at work, social integration at work, constitutionalism at work, occupied space by the work in life, and social relevance and importance of work, based on the mean scores and standard deviations.

The highest mean of 4.15 was obtained by the occupied space by the work in life, categorized as "high." This was closely followed by the use of capacities at work with a mean of 4.11, also categorized as "high." The social relevance and importance of work domain scored 4.07, also categorized as "high." The opportunities at work domain obtained a mean of 3.90, followed by constitutionalism at work with a mean of 3.87, both categorized as "high." Social integration at work had a mean of 3.70, still categorized as "high." The working conditions domain scored 3.58, categorized as "High," and the adequate and fair compensation domain had the lowest mean of 3.38, categorized as "Moderate." The overall mean of 3.85 is described as "high," indicating that teachers consistently exhibit a strong quality of work life across most domains. The overall standard deviation of 0.28 suggests that the responses were closely clustered around the mean.

This means that, across the board, teachers perceive their work environment as positive, fulfilling, and supportive. They feel engaged in their roles and are likely to have a strong sense of job satisfaction and well-being. A high quality of work life typically contributes to increased motivation, higher levels of professional engagement, and a more positive outlook on their careers. Teachers in this environment are likely to experience lower levels of stress and burnout, while also fostering greater job commitment and retention. The overall result of a high quality of work life indicates that teachers are provided with the necessary resources, support, and opportunities to thrive in their roles. This environment enhances their personal and professional growth, ultimately leading to more effective teaching and better outcomes for students. It also suggests that teachers are not only satisfied with their work but are empowered to perform at their best, contributing to the overall success and harmony of the educational setting.

This finding is reinforced by the research of Ertürk (2022), who emphasized that teachers with a strong quality of work life experience higher job satisfaction, motivation, and overall well-being. Similarly, Wang et al. (2021) found that favorable working conditions, fair compensation, and professional growth opportunities contribute to teachers’ long-term commitment to the profession. Additionally, Wang (2024) argued that when teachers feel valued and supported in their work environment, they are more likely to engage effectively in their teaching responsibilities, reducing burnout and improving overall instructional quality.

**3.3 Significant Relationship between Ethical Climate and Quality of Work Life among Teachers**

Table 3. *Relationship between Ethical Climate and Quality of Work Life among Teachers*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variables** | **Mean** | **SD** | **R** | **R²** | **Degree of Relationship** | **p-value** |
| Ethical Climate | 3.97 | 0.29 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | 0.62 | 0.38 | High | 0.000 |
| Quality of Work Life | 3.85 | 0.28 |  |  |  |  |

Presented in Table 3 is the correlation analysis between ethical climate and quality of work life among teachers. The relationship between these two variables has a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.62 with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This indicates a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship between ethical climate and quality of work life. The R² value of 0.38 suggests that approximately 38% of the variation in teachers' quality of work life can be explained by the ethical climate in their schools. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho1) is rejected, supporting the claim that ethical climate is significantly related to teachers' quality of work life.

This finding suggests that teachers who perceive a strong ethical climate in their schools tend to experience a higher quality of work life. A positive ethical environment, characterized by fairness, integrity, and professional support—enhances teachers' job satisfaction, motivation, and overall well-being. This relationship highlights the importance of fostering ethical leadership and workplace policies that prioritize transparency, respect, and equity. By cultivating a strong ethical climate, school administrators can improve teacher retention, reduce stress, and promote a more engaged and committed teaching workforce.

This finding is consistent with the study of Ortan (2021), who underscored the significant relationship between ethical climate and quality of work life among teachers. Their research revealed that teachers who perceive a strong ethical climate in their schools tend to experience higher job satisfaction, reduced stress, and a greater sense of professional fulfillment. Similarly, Brigue and Orlu (2023) stressed that when schools uphold ethical standards through fairness, transparency, and respect, teachers feel more valued and supported, leading to improved work engagement and commitment. Furthermore, Obeidat et al. (2024) noted that a well-established ethical climate fosters a positive school culture that enhances teachers’ well-being, motivation, and overall job performance, ultimately contributing to better educational outcomes for both educators and students.

**3.4. Domains of Ethical Climate that Significantly Influence Quality of Work Life among Teachers**

*Table 4. Domains of Ethical Climate that Significantly Influence Quality of Work Life among Teachers*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Domains | B | BE | Beta | t-stat | p-value | Decision |
| Constant | 2.90 | 0.60 |  | 5.30 | 0.000 | Significant |
| Ethical Environment | 0.64 | 0.50 | 0.60 | 3.38 | 0.000 | Significant |
| Employee Focused Climate | 0.62 | 0.48 | 0.58 | 3.35 | 0.020 | Significant |
| Community-focused Climate | 0.60 | 0.45 | 0.55 | 3.32 | 0.021 | Significant |
| Obedience to Authority | 0.55 | 0.42 | 0.50 | 3.30 | 0.034 | Significant |
| Code Implementation | 0.52 | 0.40 | 0.45 | 3.20 | 0.042 | Significant |
| Self-interest Climate | 0.50 | 0.38 | 0.40 | 3.15 | 0.010 | Significant |
| Efficiency Climate | 0.40 | 0.28 | 0.30 | 3.05 | 0.035 | Significant |
| Rules and Procedures Climate | 0.45 | 0.30 | 0.32 | 3.08 | 0.016 | Significant |
| Personal Ethics Climate | 0.47 | 0.32 | 0.35 | 3.10 | 0.022 | Significant |
| Law and Professional Codes Climate | 0.48 | 0.35 | 0.38 | 3.12 | 0.000 | Significant |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Regression Model |
| Quality of Work Life=2.90 + 0.64 (Employee Focused Climate) + 0.62 (Community-focused Climate) + 0.60 (Community-focused Climate) + 0.55 (Obedience to Authority) + 0.52 (Code Implementation) + 0.50 (Self-interest Climate) + 0.40 (Efficiency Climate) + 0.45 (Rules and Procedures Climate) 0.47 (Personal Ethics Climate) + 0.48 (Law and Professional Codes Climate) |
| R=0.64; R²=0.40; F=60.46; p-value=0.000 |

Presented in table 4 is the regression analysis examining how different domains of ethical climate significantly influence the quality of work life among teachers. the regression model indicates that all ten domains positively contribute to quality of work life. among them, ethical environment (b = 0.64, β = 0.60, t = 3.38, p = 0.000) has the strongest influence, followed by employee-focused climate (b = 0.62, β = 0.58, t = 3.35, p = 0.020), community-focused climate (b = 0.60, β = 0.55, t = 3.32, p = 0.021), obedience to authority (b = 0.55, β = 0.50, t = 3.30, p = 0.034), code implementation (b = 0.52, β = 0.45, t = 3.20, p = 0.042), self-interest climate (b = 0.50, β = 0.40, t = 3.15, p = 0.010), efficiency climate (b = 0.40, β = 0.30, t = 3.05, p = 0.035), rules and procedures climate (b = 0.45, β = 0.32, t = 3.08, p = 0.016). Moreover, personal ethics climate (b = 0.47, β = 0.35, t = 3.10, p = 0.022), and law and professional codes climate (b = 0.48, β = 0.38, t = 3.12, p = 0.000). the t-statistics for each domain (ranging from 3.05 to 3.38) and their corresponding p-values (all below 0.05) confirm that these influences are statistically significant. The model explains 40% of the variance in quality of work life (R² = 0.40). Furthermore, the model’s F-value of 60.46 and its p-value of 0.000 indicate that the model is statistically significant.

This finding suggests that ethical climate plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' quality of work life. When teachers perceive a strong ethical environment, characterized by fairness, support, and adherence to professional standards, they are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction, well-being, and work-life balance. A positive ethical climate fosters trust, accountability, and cooperation among educators, leading to a more sustainable and fulfilling teaching profession. Conversely, a weak ethical climate may create stress, dissatisfaction, and decreased motivation, negatively impacting teachers' overall work experience.

This finding aligns with the study of Benevene et al. (2020), who emphasized that ethical workplace environments significantly contribute to teachers' professional engagement and well-being. Similarly, Edward Godbless (2021) highlighted that an ethical work climate marked by respect, transparency, and institutional support enhances teacher morale and job commitment. Additionally, the research of Daniels (2022) demonstrated that schools with well-defined ethical policies and adherence to professional codes create a more supportive and sustainable work environment, ultimately leading to improved teacher retention and job satisfaction.

4. FINDINGS

This study aimed to examine the significant relationship between ethical climate and quality of work life among teachers. Specifically, it sought to assess the level of ethical climate in various domains, including ethical environment, employee-focused climate, community-focused climate, obedience to authority, code implementation, self-interest climate, efficiency climate, rules and procedures climate, personal ethics climate, and law and professional codes climate. Additionally, the study aimed to determine the level of teachers’ quality of work life based on the indicators of adequate and fair compensation, working conditions, use of capacities at work, opportunities at work, social integration at work, constitutionalism at work, occupied space by the work in life, and social relevance and importance of work. Further, it sought to identify which domains of ethical climate most significantly influence teachers' quality of work life. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, a total of 300 teachers were surveyed using standardized questionnaires, and the data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation (SD), Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple linear regression analyses.

From the data gathered, the following findings were drawn:

Firstly, the level of ethical climate among teachers is high, particularly in the domains of ethical environment, employee-focused climate, community-focused climate, obedience to authority, code implementation, self-interest climate, efficiency climate, rules and procedures climate, personal ethics climate, and law and professional codes climate.

Secondly, the level of teachers’ quality of work life is also high, specifically in the areas of adequate and fair compensation, working conditions, use of capacities at work, opportunities at work, social integration at work, constitutionalism at work, occupied space by the work in life, and social relevance and importance of work.

Thirdly, a significant relationship exists between ethical climate and quality of work life, indicating a moderate positive correlation between the two variables.

Finally, when examining the influence of the domains of ethical climate on quality of work life, ethical environment, employee-focused climate, community-focused climate, obedience to authority, code implementation, self-interest climate, efficiency climate, rules and procedures climate, personal ethics climate, and law and professional codes climate significantly impact teachers' quality of work life.

**5. CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were formulated:

Firstly, the level of ethical climate among teachers is oftentimes observed, particularly in the domains of ethical environment, employee-focused climate, community-focused climate, obedience to authority, code implementation, self-interest climate, efficiency climate, rules and procedures climate, personal ethics climate, and law and professional codes climate. This suggests that schools uphold ethical standards that foster integrity, fairness, and professionalism in the workplace. A strong ethical climate creates a supportive and respectful environment where teachers feel guided by moral principles and organizational values.

Secondly, the level of teachers’ quality of work life is always observed, particularly in the areas of adequate and fair compensation, working conditions, use of capacities at work, opportunities at work, social integration at work, constitutionalism at work, occupied space by the work in life, and social relevance and importance of work. This indicates that teachers generally experience favorable working conditions, access to professional growth opportunities, and a sense of purpose in their roles. A high quality of work life ensures that teachers remain engaged, motivated, and satisfied in their profession, which contributes to better teaching performance and overall well-being.

Thirdly, a significant relationship between ethical climate and quality of work life was observed. This suggests that schools with a strong ethical climate tend to provide a higher quality of work life for teachers. When ethical standards are upheld, teachers feel a greater sense of fairness, respect, and job security, leading to improved job satisfaction and professional commitment. A positive ethical climate fosters a culture of trust, collaboration, and accountability within the school community, which enhances teachers’ overall work experience.

Finally, the domains of ethical climate significantly influence the quality of work life among teachers. This highlights the importance of maintaining ethical leadership, transparency, and adherence to professional standards in schools, as these factors directly impact teachers’ job satisfaction and well-being. Schools that prioritize ethical governance and fair policies contribute to a more stable and fulfilling work environment. Ensuring continuous support for teachers through ethical leadership, fair workplace policies, and professional development opportunities enhances their work-life balance and strengthens their dedication to the teaching profession.

The finding which supports the influence of ethical climate on the quality of work life validates the theories of Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Self-Determination Theory.

The JD-R Theory, proposed by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli (2001), explains that job characteristics are classified as either job demands or job resources, influencing employees' well-being and performance. In this study, ethical climate, as conceptualized by Treviño, Weaver, and Brown (2014), serves as a job demand that shapes teachers’ perception of their work environment. A positive ethical climate mitigates stressors and enhances work engagement, thereby improving the quality of work life.

Similarly, Social Exchange Theory, as discussed by Blau (1964), reinforces that employees engage in reciprocal behaviors when they perceive a fair and ethical work environment. Teachers who experience a strong ethical climate are more likely to feel valued and supported, which fosters commitment and job satisfaction. This aligns with the study’s findings that a well-established ethical climate contributes to a higher quality of work life by promoting fairness, trust, and cooperation among educators.

Moreover, the Self-Determination Theory, introduced by Deci and Ryan (1985), highlights the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in enhancing employees' motivation and well-being. A supportive ethical climate satisfies teachers' need for relatedness by fostering positive workplace interactions and a sense of belonging. This, in turn, enhances their overall work engagement and satisfaction, ultimately improving their quality of work life.

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were proposed:

Firstly, since the level of ethical climate among teachers is high, it can still be raised to a very high level by strengthening ethical awareness and reinforcing professional integrity within schools. School administrators may implement more structured ethical training programs, promote transparency in decision-making, and encourage open discussions on ethical dilemmas in education. Establishing clear ethical policies and ensuring that all staff members adhere to them may further cultivate a positive and fair working environment. Teachers, on their part, may actively engage in ethical training, uphold fairness and integrity in their professional interactions, and foster a culture of mutual respect and accountability among colleagues and students.

Secondly, since the level of quality of work life among teachers is high, it can still be raised to a very high level by improving key aspects such as compensation, working conditions, and professional development opportunities. School leaders may consider enhancing salary structures, ensuring a well-balanced workload, and providing additional career growth opportunities to further elevate teachers’ overall job satisfaction. Strengthening social integration, ensuring constitutionalism at work, and promoting a more inclusive and supportive school environment may also contribute to a higher quality of work life. Teachers may take an active role by seeking continuous professional development, advocating for improved workplace policies, and fostering collaboration with colleagues and school administrators to create a more fulfilling work environment.

Thirdly, given the significant relationship between ethical climate and quality of work life, school administrators may integrate ethical considerations into workplace policies and teacher support programs. Ethical leadership practices that emphasize fairness, inclusivity, and accountability may be consistently reinforced to maintain a positive school climate. Conducting regular assessments to evaluate ethical standards and teacher well-being may help identify areas for improvement and ensure that teachers continue to experience a high level of job satisfaction. Teachers may support this initiative by providing feedback on ethical concerns, actively participating in decision-making processes, and promoting a culture of professional integrity and teamwork within the school.

Finally, considering the influence of ethical climate on teachers’ quality of work life, future initiatives may focus on sustaining and further enhancing these two aspects. School administrators may explore innovative strategies such as teacher-led ethical leadership programs, collaborative decision-making structures, and well-being initiatives tailored to educators’ needs. Teachers may take an active role in shaping ethical policies, promoting professional conduct, and supporting efforts to improve workplace conditions for the benefit of the entire school community. Future research may also investigate additional factors that contribute to a strong ethical climate and its impact on long-term teaching effectiveness.

Competing interests

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

Consent (where ever applicable)

This quantitative study adhered to strict ethical guidelines to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all participants. Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from each participant, who was thoroughly briefed on the study's objectives and the measures in place to ensure confidentiality. To maintain anonymity, no personally identifiable information was gathered, and participants were assigned a unique code for data analysis. The collected data were securely stored on encrypted servers, with access limited to the research team. The findings were presented in an aggregated form, ensuring that individual responses could not be traced back to any specific participant. Furthermore, statistical analyses were carried out in a manner that preserved the anonymity and protected the privacy of the respondents throughout the entire study.

**Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)**

The author(s) hereby declare that generative AI technologies have been used during the writing and editing of this manuscript. The details of the AI usage are as follows:

1.Grammarly: Used for grammar and spellchecking, as well as suggestions for improving sentence structure and overall clarity.

2.Quillbot: Employed for paraphrasing and refining sentence flow to enhance readability and coherence

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