



## Examining the Impact of Self-Actualization on Quality of Work Life: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction among Primary School Teachers

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<b>Article type:</b> Research Article	<p>The present study aimed to examine the effect of self-actualization on quality of work life with the mediating role of job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Zabol County. This study was applied in terms of purpose and descriptive–correlational in nature, using a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach. The statistical population consisted of all primary school teachers in Zabol County during the 2024–2025 academic year, totaling 288 individuals, from whom 165 participants were selected using Cochran’s formula through simple random sampling. Data were collected using Walton’s Quality of Work Life Questionnaire (1973), the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, and the Ahvaz Self-Actualization Inventory (ASAI). The data were analyzed at descriptive and inferential levels, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and structural equation modeling, using SPSS version 28. The results indicated that self-actualization had a direct and significant relationship with teachers’ quality of work life and job satisfaction. In addition, quality of work life showed a direct and significant relationship with job satisfaction. The results of structural equation modeling also revealed the direct effect of self-actualization and quality of work life on job satisfaction. Furthermore, the analysis of indirect effects showed that self-actualization significantly influences teachers’ quality of work life through the mediating role of job satisfaction. Therefore, it can be concluded that strengthening self-actualization and improving quality of work life can play an important role in enhancing job satisfaction and improving the professional outcomes of primary school teachers.</p>
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## Introduction

Self-actualization refers to the process of becoming oneself and cultivating an individual's unique characteristics and talents. According to Carl Rogers, human beings possess an innate tendency toward creativity, and the most significant creation of each person is the self. In modern psychology, the concept of self-actualization denotes the realization of an individual's inherent potentials and capacities (Shariatmadari et al., 2017). Psychological inquiry has long sought to explore self-awareness, growth and perfection, self-actualization, creativity, and both latent and manifest human capabilities ([Mahdavi Damghani & Sadeghi, 2018](#)). Among the most important and widely discussed topics in organizational management and human resource studies is job satisfaction, as it plays a crucial role in organizational development and the well-being of the workforce. In some literature, quality of work life (QWL) and job satisfaction have been treated as synonymous concepts; however, many scholars in management and psychology argue that these constructs are conceptually distinct. Quality of life is considered an analytical and policy-oriented construct, as well as a key element in evaluating public policy, and is often regarded as an indicator of social development. Its dynamic, multidimensional nature and the diversity of interpretations surrounding it have led to its expansion from health-related fields into broader areas of study ([Ghaffari et al., 2012](#)).

Quality of work life is a major topic within human resource management that has attracted considerable scholarly attention, particularly due to its employee-centered perspective. It contributes to increased job satisfaction, enhanced productivity, and improvements in performance, efficiency, effectiveness, and organizational development (Azizi et al., 2018). The distinction between QWL and job satisfaction lies in the fact that job satisfaction is considered one of the outcomes of QWL ([Swathi & Reddy, 2016](#)). Accordingly, examining the role of self-actualization in relation to quality of work life and job satisfaction can play a fundamental role in identifying factors that influence the improvement of service delivery by primary school teachers. One of the most critical issues in any organization is the job satisfaction of teachers. Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which individuals are interested in their job and perceive it as valuable ([Taghipour Zahir, 2019](#)). According to Robert Hoppock, job satisfaction is a complex and multidimensional concept associated with psychological, physical, and social factors. Moreover, no single factor determines job satisfaction; rather, it is the result of a specific combination of various factors that lead an individual to feel satisfied with and enjoy their job at a given point in time ([Hatamian et al., 2018](#)). Job satisfaction enhances individual productivity, strengthens organizational commitment, ensures mental and physical well-being, boosts morale, increases life satisfaction, and facilitates the rapid acquisition of new job-related skills. When employees are satisfied with their jobs, the organization also benefits, becoming more effective and productive ([Mohammad Mokhtari & Mehrdad, 2016](#)). It is also important to note that quality of work life is not solely influenced by job satisfaction; rather, it is affected by satisfaction in other life domains, such as family life, leisure time, social relationships, and financial conditions. Therefore, QWL extends beyond job satisfaction to encompass the impact of the work environment on both job-related satisfaction and satisfaction in non-work domains, as well as overall mental well-being ([Rahbar Karbasdehi et al., 2016](#)). Economic security for teachers increases their interest in their profession and encourages them to engage in further study and better organization of their work ([Ghasemizadeh & Heydari Panah, 2017](#)). While many organizations aim to enhance employee satisfaction at all levels, implementing this objective is a complex task, as identifying and isolating the specific factors associated with quality of work life remains challenging ([Azadizadeh, 2016](#)).

The variables and factors discussed above are examined within the framework of the education system, specifically among teachers. In human societies, the institution of education holds a distinctive and vital position. It is considered one of the most important drivers of social, economic, and educational development, as well as a key mechanism for raising awareness and organizing human resources for societal growth and advancement ([Heidarzadeh & Abdollahi, 2019](#)). The education system comprises various components, each of which contributes to the achievement of its objectives. Schools, in particular, must pay attention to the quality of work life and the achievement motivation of both students and teachers in order to improve learning outcomes ([Khakzadian, 2020](#)). Education has long played a fundamental role in the continuity and survival of human societies ([Zare et al., 2016](#)). Therefore, teachers, as the primary human resources and implementers of educational programs, constitute a central pillar of the education system, and their performance significantly influences its success. In this regard, the quality of work life and job

satisfaction of teachers are of considerable importance for the effective fulfillment of educational and developmental responsibilities (Kamali et al., 2020).

Teachers are among the most influential groups in any society, and their attitudes toward their profession, as well as their level of job satisfaction, have a substantial impact on their professional performance. In the present study, self-actualization is considered the independent (exogenous) variable, quality of work life as the dependent (endogenous) variable, and job satisfaction as the mediating variable. One of the key variables influencing quality of work life is the degree of an individual's satisfaction with their job. However, based on previous studies and a review of trends within the education system, it appears that the level of job satisfaction among in-service teachers may not be at an desirable level. Accordingly, the researcher aimed to investigate the role of self-actualization and its impact on quality of work life, with the mediating role of job satisfaction, by examining these two fundamental constructs within the education system. Given the importance of the topic, more comprehensive studies on quality of work life are warranted. In this study, understanding the relationship between self-actualization and quality of work life required examining the association between the dimensions of self-actualization and both quality of work life and job satisfaction among teachers. This investigation was conducted within the education system of Zabol County, focusing on primary school teachers.

Therefore, the main research problem of the present study is to examine the impact of self-actualization on quality of work life, with the mediating role of job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Zabol County.

## Method

### Sample and Sampling Method

The statistical population of this study consisted of all primary school teachers in Zabol County during the 2024–2025 academic year (N=288). Using Cochran's formula, a sample size of 165 participants was determined and selected through simple random sampling to ensure the representativeness of the population.

### Tools Used

**Quality of Work Life Questionnaire (Walton, 1973):** Quality of work life was measured using the Quality of Work Life (QWL) questionnaire developed by Walton (1973). This instrument consists of 32 items assessing eight dimensions: Adequate and fair compensation (items 1–5), Safe and healthy working conditions (items 6–8), Opportunities for growth and continuous security (items 9–11), Constitutionalism in the organization (items 12–17), Social relevance of work life (items 18–20), Total life space (items 21–25), Social integration and cohesion (items 26–29), Development of human capabilities (items 30–32). Content validity was confirmed by academic experts. Walton (1973) reported a reliability coefficient of 0.88. Later studies, such as Wyrn (2001) and Rahimi (2006), also reported acceptable reliability values around 0.85.

**Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire – MSQ):** Job satisfaction was assessed using the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ; Weiss et al., 1967). This widely applied instrument measures satisfaction across both intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions. The version used in this study includes 19 items covering six subscales: Pay system (3 items), Job nature (4 items), Advancement opportunities (3 items), Organizational climate (2 items), Leadership style (4 items), Physical conditions (3 items). The MSQ has strong empirical support, with its validity confirmed in numerous studies. Reliability coefficients reported in previous research typically exceed 0.80, indicating good internal consistency.

**Self-Actualization Questionnaire:** Self-actualization was measured using the Ahvaz Self-Actualization Inventory (ASAI), developed by Aghayousefi and colleagues. This instrument consists of 25 items rated on a four-point Likert scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often). It evaluates the degree to which individuals realize their potential across dimensions such as autonomy, self-acceptance, purposefulness, creativity, and personal development.

The ASAI has demonstrated strong validity through expert review and factor-analytic evidence. Previous studies have also reported satisfactory reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values generally above 0.80.

### Procedure

In the first step of the study, the statistical population consisting of all primary school teachers in Zabol County during the 2024–2025 academic year was identified. After determining the total population (288 teachers), the sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula, and 165 teachers were selected through simple random sampling to ensure equal probability of selection for all members of the population.

Next, the research instruments, including Walton's Quality of Work Life Questionnaire (1973), the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), and the Ahvaz Self-Actualization Inventory (ASAI), were prepared and distributed among the selected teachers in coordination with school administrators. Before the main administration, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, confidentiality of their responses, and the procedure for completing the questionnaires. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

After data collection, the completed questionnaires were coded and entered into SPSS version 28. In the initial stage of analysis, descriptive statistics—including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and demographic indicators—were calculated. Pearson correlation analysis was then used to examine the relationships among the research variables. Subsequently, the proposed model of the study was evaluated using structural equation modeling (SEM) to assess the direct and indirect effects of self-actualization, quality of work life, and job satisfaction.

In the final stage, the results of the analyses were interpreted, and the roles of the variables particularly the mediating effect of job satisfaction in explaining teachers' quality of work life were discussed based on the findings.

### Result

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis for the research variables are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

**Table 1. Correlation Matrix of Self-Actualization and Quality of Work Life and Its Dimensions**

Components	Self-Actualization
Pay system	0/746**
Job type	0/741**
Advancement opportunities	0/799**
Organizational climate	0/730**
Leadership style	0/752**
Physical conditions	0/653**
Job satisfaction	0/875**

With a sample size of  $N = 165$  and a significance level of 0.01, the results presented in Table 1 indicated that self-actualization has a positive and significant relationship with all dimensions of job satisfaction at the 99% confidence level ( $p < 0.01$ ). Specifically, the correlation between self-actualization and the pay system was  $r = 0.764$ , with job nature  $r = 0.741$ , with advancement opportunities  $r = 0.799$ , with organizational climate  $r = 0.730$ , with leadership style  $r = 0.752$ , and with physical conditions  $r = 0.653$ . Overall, a strong positive and significant correlation was found between self-actualization and job satisfaction ( $r = 0.875$ ).

**Table 2. Correlation Coefficients of Self-Actualization with Quality of Work Life and Its Dimensions**

Components	Self-Actualization
Fair and adequate compensation	0/754**
Healthy and safe working conditions	0/677**
Providing opportunities for continuous growth and security	0/705**
Legal orientation in the organization	0/783**
Social interdependence of work life	0/750**
Overall living environment	0/698**
Social cohesion in the organization	0/743**
Development of human capabilities	0/429**
Quality of work life	0/846**

Similarly, the results presented in Table 2 showed that self-actualization has a positive and significant relationship with all dimensions of quality of work life at the 99% confidence level ( $p < 0.01$ ). The correlation coefficients were as follows: fair and adequate compensation ( $r = 0.754$ ), safe and healthy working conditions ( $r = 0.677$ ), opportunities for growth and continuous security ( $r = 0.705$ ), constitutionalism in the organization ( $r = 0.783$ ), social relevance of work life ( $r = 0.750$ ), total life space ( $r = 0.698$ ), social integration and cohesion in the organization ( $r = 0.743$ ), and development of human capabilities ( $r = 0.429$ ). Overall, a strong positive and significant relationship was found between self-actualization and quality of work life ( $r = 0.846$ ).

**Table 3. Correlation Coefficients of Job Satisfaction with Quality of Work Life and Its Dimensions**

Components	Job Satisfaction
Fair and adequate compensation	0/807**
Healthy and safe working conditions	0/559**
Providing opportunities for continuous growth and security	0/750**
Legal orientation in the organization	0/982**
Social interdependence of work life	0/780**
Overall living environment	0/696**
Social cohesion in the organization	0/790**
Development of human capabilities	0/539**
Quality of work life	0/902**

With a sample size of  $N = 165$  and a significance level of 0.01, the results presented in Table 3 indicated that job satisfaction has a positive and significant relationship with all dimensions of quality of work life at the 99% confidence level ( $p < 0.01$ ). Specifically, the correlation coefficients were as follows: fair and adequate compensation ( $r = 0.807$ ), safe and healthy working conditions ( $r = 0.559$ ), opportunities for growth and continuous security ( $r = 0.750$ ), constitutionalism in the organization ( $r = 0.892$ ), social relevance of work life ( $r = 0.780$ ), total life space ( $r = 0.696$ ), social integration and cohesion in the organization ( $r = 0.790$ ), and development of human capabilities ( $r = 0.539$ ). Overall, a strong positive and significant relationship was found between job satisfaction and quality of work life ( $r = 0.902$ ). To examine

Research Questions 1 to 4, path analysis was employed. The results of the t-values (t-statistics) and standardized estimates for the variables are presented in Figures 1 and 2.

**Table 4. Goodness-of-Fit Indices of the Model of Self-Actualization, Quality of Work Life, and Job Satisfaction**

AGFI	GFI	RFI	IFI	CFI	NNFI	NFI	RMSEA	X <sup>2</sup> /df	Model fit indices
0/91	0/94	0/97	0/99	0/99	0/99	0/98	0/086	261/50	Obtained values

As shown in Table 4, the overall goodness-of-fit indices in the path analysis indicate an acceptable fit for the proposed model. Specifically, a  $\chi^2/df$  (Chi-square/degree of freedom) value lower than 3 is considered desirable. Additionally, when the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is less than 0.10, the model demonstrates an acceptable level of fit. Furthermore, as the fit indices GFI, AGFI, NFI, CFI, and NNFI approach 1, the model fit improves. Based on the obtained results, the  $\chi^2/df$  value was 2.61, and the values of the fit indices (GFI, AGFI, NFI, CFI, and NNFI) were all close to 1, indicating that the model meets the required standards. Therefore, it can be concluded that the proposed model demonstrates a good fit and is confirmed.

**Research Question 1:** Does self-actualization have a direct and significant effect on the quality of work life of primary school teachers in Zabol County?

**Table 5. Estimation of the Direct Effect of Self-Actualization on Quality of Work Life among Teachers**

Result	(t) Significance Coefficient		Path Coefficient		Dependent Variable	Independent Variable
	P	Value	P	Value		
Confirmation	0/001	12/59**	0/001	0/56**	Quality of Work Life	Self-Actualization

The results presented in Table 5 regarding the path coefficient between self-actualization and quality of work life indicate that the standardized path coefficient for self-actualization on quality of work life is  $\beta = 0.56$ , with a corresponding t-value of 12.59. This relationship is statistically significant at the 99% confidence level ( $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that self-actualization has a direct and significant effect on the quality of work life of primary school teachers in Zabol County.

**Research Question 2:** Does self-actualization have a direct and significant effect on job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Zabol County?

To examine this research question, path analysis was conducted, and the results are presented in the following table.

**Table 6. Estimation of the Direct Effect of Self-Actualization on Job Satisfaction among Teachers**

Result	(t) Significance Coefficient		Path Coefficient		Dependent Variable	Independent Variable
	P	Value	P	Value		
Confirmation	0/001	23/25**	0/001	0/88**	Job Satisfaction	Self-Actualization

The results presented in Table 6 regarding the path coefficient between self-actualization and job satisfaction indicate that the standardized path coefficient is  $\beta = 0.88$ , with a corresponding t-value of 23.25. This relationship is statistically significant at the 99% confidence level ( $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that self-actualization has a direct and significant effect on job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Zabol County.

**Research Question 3:** Does quality of work life have a direct and significant effect on job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Zabol County?

**Table 7. Estimation of the Direct Effect of Quality of Work Life on Job Satisfaction among Teachers**

Result	(t) Significance Coefficient		Path Coefficient		Dependent Variable	Independent Variable
	P	Value	P	Value		
Confirmation	0/001	9/83**	0/001	0/44**	Job Satisfaction	Quality of Work Life

The results presented in Table 7 regarding the path coefficient between quality of work life and job satisfaction indicate that the standardized path coefficient is  $\beta = 0.44$ , with a corresponding t-value of 9.83. This relationship is statistically significant at the 99% confidence level ( $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that quality of work life has a direct and significant effect on job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Zabol County.

**Research Question 4:** Does self-actualization have a significant indirect effect on the quality of work life through the mediating role of job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Zabol County?

**Table 8. Estimation of the Indirect and Total Effects of Self-Actualization on Quality of Work Life through Job Satisfaction**

Result	Total effect		Indirect effect		Dependent Variable	Mediating variable	Independent Variable
	P	Value	P	Value			
Confirmation	0/001	1/26**	0/001	0/38**	Job Satisfaction	Job Satisfaction	Quality of Work Life

As shown in Table 8, the indirect effect of self-actualization on teachers' quality of work life through job satisfaction is calculated as the product of the direct effect of self-actualization on job satisfaction and the direct effect of quality of work life on job satisfaction, as follows:

$$(0.38) = (0.44) \times (0.88)$$

The estimation of structural path effects indicates that self-actualization has a direct effect on job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.88$ ), and quality of work life also has a direct effect on job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.44$ ). Based on these estimates, the indirect effect of self-actualization on quality of work life through job satisfaction was calculated as 0.38. Considering the obtained t-values and the significance level ( $p < 0.05$ ), the indirect effect is statistically significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that self-actualization has a significant indirect effect on the quality of work life through the mediating role of job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Zabol County.

## Discussion & Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the effect of self-actualization on quality of work life with the mediating role of job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Zabol County. Accordingly, both direct and indirect relationships among the research variables were investigated. The findings of this study provide significant evidence regarding the relationships among self-actualization, quality of work life, and job satisfaction among teachers.

Regarding the first research question, the results indicated that self-actualization has a direct and significant effect on quality of work life ( $\beta = 0.56$ ,  $t = 12.59$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This finding is consistent with the studies of [Samantian et al. \(2019\)](#), [Eslami Heran et al. \(2018\)](#), and [Javidzadeh and Shahri \(2016\)](#). These studies have shown that self-actualization and quality of work life have a reciprocal relationship, and interventions that improve quality of work life can also enhance personal growth and self-actualization. The emphasis by Eslami Heran and colleagues on the role of self-actualization in psychological well-being also indicates the overlap of this construct with dimensions of quality of work life, such as opportunities for growth and the development of capabilities.

In relation to the second research question, the findings showed that self-actualization has a direct and substantial effect on job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.88$ ,  $t = 23.25$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These results are consistent with the findings of [Samantian et al. \(2019\)](#), [Majidi and Hadi Chaghani \(2018\)](#), [Gopinath \(2020\)](#), and [Muskat and Weitzamer \(2020\)](#). Based on theoretical and empirical literature, self-actualization is associated with finding meaning in work, a sense of responsibility, and active participation in educational activities, which ultimately lead to increased job satisfaction. [Mousavifar et al. \(2014\)](#) also demonstrated that when teachers' professional efforts are supported, their job satisfaction and organizational commitment increase.

The third research question concerned the relationship between quality of work life and job satisfaction. The results indicated that quality of work life has a direct and significant effect on job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.44$ ,  $t = 9.83$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This finding is consistent with studies conducted by [Ilano et al. \(2020\)](#), [Kamali et al. \(2020\)](#), [Gholampour et al. \(2017\)](#), [Fatemsari et al. \(2018\)](#), and [Achampong et al. \(2016\)](#). Research shows that a supportive work environment, democratic management, effective communication, and the reduction of job conflict and stress are among the most important factors that strengthen quality of work life and improve job satisfaction. The findings of the present study also emphasize the reciprocal relationship between these two constructs.

The fourth research question examined the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between self-actualization and quality of work life. The results indicated that job satisfaction provides a significant indirect pathway for transmitting the effect of self-actualization on quality of work life ( $p < 0.05$ ). This finding is consistent with the studies of [Javidzadeh and Shahri \(2016\)](#), [Majidi and Hadi Chaghani \(2018\)](#), [Muskat and Weitzamer \(2020\)](#), and [Ilano et al. \(2020\)](#). Job satisfaction, as a key organizational variable, is associated with outcomes such as improved performance, greater commitment, reduced absenteeism, and lower turnover (Oghlu & Tansel, 2006). When organizations provide educational opportunities, professional support, and a sense of job security, the pathway to self-actualization is strengthened and the quality of work life is enhanced. Ngai et al. (2016) also emphasized that professional training and employee participation can simultaneously increase self-actualization, job satisfaction, and quality of work life.

Overall, the results of the study indicate that self-actualization, as a key component of personal growth, plays a fundamental role in improving organizational outcomes. The findings suggest that self-actualization enhances teachers' quality of work life both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction. Furthermore, quality of work life improves teachers' job satisfaction by providing opportunities for professional growth, organizational support, and job security. Therefore, attention to teachers' personal and professional development needs and the creation of empowering work environments can lead to improvements in the quality of education and the effectiveness of the educational system.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study should be interpreted in light of certain limitations, including the restriction of the statistical population to a single geographical area and the use of self-report instruments. Future studies are recommended to employ larger samples from more diverse regions and to utilize mixed research methods in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms affecting quality of work life and job satisfaction. Additionally, examining the roles of variables such as job stress, burnout, leadership style, and organizational culture may provide more precise models for explaining these relationships. Based on the findings of the present study, it is recommended that professional development programs, organizational support initiatives, and motivational interventions be designed and implemented

to strengthen teachers' self-actualization, thereby promoting their quality of work life and increasing their job satisfaction.

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