

Personality, Work Motivation and Soft Skills in Service Quality: A Comparative Study of Government and Private Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract:

Secondary schools function as service organizations in which teachers play a central role in delivering educational and interpersonal services to students and parents. However, limited empirical research has examined how teachers' personality traits and work motivation are associated with the soft skills that contribute to service quality in the school context. The present study examines the relationship between Big Five personality traits, work motivation, soft skill deployment, and service quality orientation among secondary school teachers, with particular attention to differences between government and private schools. A quantitative, cross-sectional, comparative correlational design was adopted with a sample of 150 secondary school teachers from government and private schools in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. Data were collected using the Five Personality Trait Inventory (FPTI), Work Motivation Questionnaire (WMQ-A), a four-dimension Soft Skills Inventory, and a SERVQUAL-adapted measure of service quality orientation. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, independent-samples t-test, and hierarchical multiple regression were used to examine the proposed relationships. School ownership type was considered as a key comparative variable, while gender and teaching experience were examined as additional explanatory variables. The study contributes to the growing literature connecting teacher psychology, soft skills, and education service quality and provides practical implications for teacher development and institutional improvement.

Keywords: teacher soft skills, personality traits, work motivation, service quality, secondary school teachers, government schools, private schools

1. Introduction

Schools are increasingly understood not only as educational institutions but also as service organizations in which interactions among teachers, students, parents, and institutions contribute to the overall educational experience. As frontline participants in this service environment, teachers play an important role in shaping the quality of educational interactions. Although subject knowledge and pedagogical competence remain fundamental to effective teaching, competencies such as communication, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and critical thinking are also important for effective professional functioning. The growing emphasis on holistic education and 21st-century competencies has further highlighted the importance of teachers' soft skills. These skills enable teachers to communicate effectively, manage interpersonal situations, respond to changing classroom demands, understand learners' emotional needs, and make appropriate decisions in complex educational contexts. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 similarly emphasizes holistic development, communication, critical thinking, social-emotional competencies, and preparation for changing social and professional environments. Teachers' soft skills may also be influenced by their psychological characteristics. Personality represents relatively stable individual differences that shape how individuals perceive situations, regulate their behaviour, interact with others, and respond to work demands. Research based on the Five-Factor Model has linked personality characteristics, particularly conscientiousness and emotional stability, with work-related attitudes and performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge et al., 2013). In teaching, these characteristics may influence interpersonal behaviour, emotional regulation, adaptability, and professional engagement, thereby contributing to the effective deployment of soft skills. Indian research has begun touching adjacent ground: Jain and Sharma (2024) examined B.Ed. trainees' views on theater-based teaching, which draws on communication,

creativity, and adaptability, and, in a related study, preschool teachers' attitudes toward music as a pedagogical tool, again resting on interpersonal engagement and creative thinking.

Work motivation provides another important perspective for understanding teachers' professional behaviour. Teachers who experience stronger internalized and self-endorsed motivation may be more engaged in professional activities and more willing to apply interpersonal and adaptive competencies in their work. From a service-quality perspective, teachers' communication, responsiveness, empathy, reliability, and adaptability may also contribute to their orientation towards providing quality educational services.

Against this background, the present study examines personality and work motivation as factors associated with teachers' soft skill deployment and investigates the relationship between soft skill deployment and teacher-perceived service quality orientation. The study also compares teachers from government and private schools. Since these sectors operate within different institutional, administrative, and organizational environments, such a comparison provides a useful context for examining differences in teachers' soft skill deployment and service quality orientation.

1.1 Contribution of the Study

The study contributes to teacher education and education-service research by connecting three areas that are often examined separately: teacher personality, work motivation, and soft skills. It further extends this discussion to service quality orientation in the school context. Rather than treating soft skills only as a training outcome, the study examines them as behavioural competencies associated with teachers' psychological characteristics and work motivation. The comparative focus on government and private schools provides an additional institutional perspective.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Education as a Service

Education involves continuous interactions among teachers, students, parents, administrators, and institutions. These interactions make educational delivery partly experiential and relational, with the quality of interactions contributing to users' perceptions of the educational experience. In service research, employees who interact directly with service users play an important role in shaping service encounters (Bitner et al., 1990; Parasuraman et al., 1988). In schools, teachers occupy this frontline position because students and parents experience the institution partly through their interactions with teachers.

The internal marketing perspective emphasizes the importance of employees in service organizations and highlights the role of employee capabilities and organizational support in delivering quality services (Gummesson, 1991; Grönroos, 1981). Although the present study does not directly measure internal customer satisfaction, this perspective provides a useful basis for examining why teacher characteristics and behaviour may be relevant to educational service quality.

2.2 Personality and Teacher Behaviour

Personality provides a relatively stable framework for understanding individual differences in behaviour. The Five-Factor Model identifies Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness as major dimensions of personality. Research has consistently identified conscientiousness as an important correlate of work performance, while other personality traits may become particularly relevant depending on the nature of the occupational role (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge et al., 2013).

In teaching, personality characteristics may influence communication, classroom interaction, emotional regulation, persistence, flexibility, and responsiveness. Conscientiousness may support organized and dependable professional behaviour, while extraversion and agreeableness may facilitate interpersonal engagement and cooperation. Openness may be associated with receptiveness to new ideas and flexibility, whereas neuroticism may be related to emotional instability and difficulties in managing stressful situations (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge et al., 2013). These characteristics are therefore relevant to teachers' deployment of communication, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and adaptability.

2.3 Work Motivation

Self-Determination Theory distinguishes between autonomous and controlled forms of motivation. Autonomous motivation refers to engaging in work because it is personally meaningful, interesting, or consistent with one's values, whereas controlled motivation involves external pressures, rewards, obligations, or avoidance of negative consequences (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). These motivational orientations can influence the quality and persistence of work-related behaviour. In teaching, motivation may affect teachers' willingness to communicate, engage with learners, adapt to changing requirements, and invest effort in professional responsibilities. Teachers experiencing stronger autonomous motivation may demonstrate more sustained and self-directed engagement with their work, whereas controlled motivation reflects engagement that is more strongly influenced by external or internal pressures (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005).

2.4 Teacher Soft Skills

Soft skills refer to interpersonal, intrapersonal, emotional, and cognitive competencies that support effective professional behaviour across different situations. In the present study, four dimensions are emphasized: communication, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and adaptability. These competencies are particularly relevant to teaching because classroom and institutional environments require continuous interaction, emotional awareness, decision-making, and adjustment to changing learner and organizational needs. Research on teacher competencies has highlighted the importance of communication, emotional and interpersonal capabilities, adaptability, and related professional skills in effective educational practice (Manchini et al., 2023). Thus, teacher soft skills may complement subject knowledge and pedagogical competence by supporting effective interpersonal and professional functioning.

2.5 Service Quality Orientation in Education

SERVQUAL provides an established framework for examining service quality through dimensions including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Parasuraman et al., 1988). In an educational context, these dimensions require contextual interpretation because educational services involve continuing interactions among teachers, students, parents, and institutions.

The present study uses a SERVQUAL-adapted measure to assess teachers' perceived service quality orientation rather than direct consumer-perceived service quality. This distinction is important because the study does not directly measure parents' or students' perceptions. Consequently, the findings are interpreted in terms of teachers' service quality orientation and do not constitute direct evidence of consumer trust, loyalty, satisfaction, or willingness to pay (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Zeithaml et al., 1990).

2.6 Government and Private School Context

Government and private schools may differ in organizational structure, accountability mechanisms, workload patterns, institutional expectations, resources, and perceived job demands. Such contextual differences may be associated with teachers' motivation, behavioural competencies, and service orientation. Organizational conditions can influence employee attitudes and behaviour, making institutional context relevant when examining professional functioning (Grönroos, 1981; Gummesson, 1991).

Accordingly, comparison between government and private schools provides an institutional context for examining whether differences exist in teachers' soft skill deployment and service quality orientation. However, school ownership is treated in the present study as a comparative variable rather than a causal determinant.

2.7 Policy Context

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes holistic development, experiential learning, critical thinking, communication, social-emotional competencies, and teacher development (Ministry of Education, 2020). These priorities increase the relevance of teacher competencies that extend beyond subject knowledge and pedagogical skills.

The development of communication, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and adaptability among teachers is therefore relevant to broader educational reform objectives and to the preparation of teachers for changing

classroom and professional environments. The present study contributes to this context by examining how teachers' personality and work motivation are associated with their deployment of soft skills and how these skills relate to teacher-perceived service quality orientation.

3. Theoretical Framework

The present study draws primarily on the Five-Factor Model of Personality and Self-Determination Theory, while the service-quality perspective provides the contextual basis for examining teachers' orientation towards educational service quality. The Five-Factor Model identifies neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness as broad personality dimensions that are relevant to individual differences in workplace behaviour and performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge et al., 2013).

Self-Determination Theory distinguishes autonomous motivation from controlled motivation. Autonomous motivation reflects engagement based on personal endorsement and internalized reasons, whereas controlled motivation involves external pressures or internally imposed demands (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). These motivational orientations provide a useful basis for examining why teachers may differ in their deployment of soft skills.

The soft-skills perspective links these psychological characteristics to teachers' professional functioning. Communication, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and adaptability represent skills that support effective interaction and response to changing educational demands (Manchini et al., 2023). The service-quality perspective further suggests that the quality of professional interactions can contribute to perceptions of service quality in service encounters (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Bitner et al., 1990).

Accordingly, the present study examines personality and work motivation as psychological factors associated with soft skill deployment and examines whether soft skill deployment is related to teacher-perceived service quality orientation. School ownership is treated as a comparative institutional variable, while gender and teaching experience are included as control variables in the regression analysis.

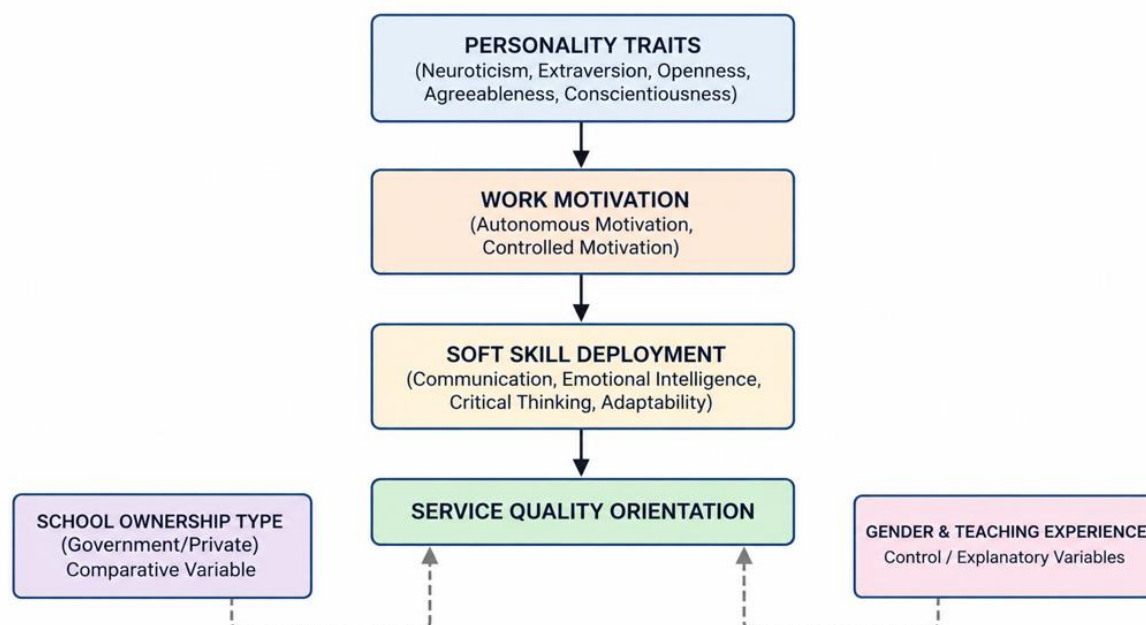


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Personality traits and work motivation are examined as psychological predictors of soft skill deployment. Soft skill deployment is examined in relation to teacher-perceived service quality orientation. Gender and teaching experience are included as control variables, while school ownership type is examined as a comparative institutional variable.

4. Research Gap

Existing literature has separately examined teacher personality, work motivation, soft skills, and educational service quality. However, comparatively limited empirical work has integrated these constructs within a single teacher-focused framework. Much of the literature on teacher soft skills emphasizes pedagogical effectiveness, professional development, or classroom outcomes, while services-oriented research generally focuses on students' or customers' perceptions of educational quality. This creates a gap between research on teacher psychology and research on education as a service.

A further gap concerns comparative evidence across government and private schools. Institutional differences may influence teacher motivation and behavioural functioning, yet the relationships among personality, work motivation, soft skills, and service quality orientation have received limited attention within the same comparative framework. The present study addresses this gap by examining these relationships among secondary school teachers in Ghaziabad.

5. Research Objectives

O1: To examine the relationship between Big Five personality traits, work motivation (autonomous and controlled), and soft skill deployment (communication skills, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and adaptability) among secondary school teachers.

O2: To examine the relationship between teacher soft skill deployment and perceived service quality orientation.

O3: To examine the role of gender, teaching experience, and school ownership type in relation to teachers' soft skill deployment and teacher-perceived service quality orientation.

O4: To develop an integrated framework linking personality, work motivation, soft skills, and service quality orientation among government and private secondary school teachers.

6. Hypotheses

H01: Big Five personality traits have no significant relationship with soft skill deployment among secondary school teachers.

H02: Work motivation (autonomous and controlled motivation) has no significant incremental contribution to soft skill deployment beyond personality traits and control variables.

H03: Teacher soft skill deployment has no significant relationship with teacher-perceived service quality orientation.

H04: There is no significant difference between government and private secondary school teachers in soft skill deployment and teacher-perceived service quality orientation.

7. Methodology

The present section describes the methodological procedures adopted to examine the relationships among personality traits, work motivation, soft skill deployment, and teacher-perceived service quality orientation among secondary school teachers. It outlines the research design, population and setting, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedures, operational definitions of variables, statistical techniques, and ethical considerations. The methodological approach was structured to address the research objectives and test the proposed hypotheses through appropriate quantitative analyses.

7.1 Research Design and Approach

The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, comparative correlational research design. The design was descriptive-cum-explanatory: it described the levels of personality traits, work motivation, soft skill deployment, and service quality orientation and examined the relationships among these variables. The study was comparative because teachers were grouped according to school ownership type (government and private). The

unit of analysis was the individual secondary school teacher. Data were collected through a self-administered structured survey at a single point in time.

7.2 Population and Setting

The target population for this study comprised secondary school teachers (Classes IX–X) employed in recognized government and private secondary schools in Ghaziabad district, Uttar Pradesh, India. Restricting the population to a single district increases internal validity by holding the regional labor market and socio-economic catchment area relatively constant across the government and private sub-samples, isolating school ownership type as the primary comparison of interest. Teachers of any subject, gender, and experience level currently employed in a recognized secondary school within this population were eligible for inclusion. The study focused on teachers because the principal variables- personality, work motivation, soft skill deployment, and service quality orientation- were assessed at the teacher level.

7.3 Sample Size and Stratified Allocation

A total sample of 150 secondary school teachers was included in the study. The sample comprised 78 teachers from government schools and 72 teachers from private schools. Gender representation was balanced, with 75 male and 75 female teachers.

School Type	Male	Female	Subtotal	Percentage
Government	39	39	78	52.0
Private	36	36	72	48.0
Total	75	75	150	100.0

7.4 Sampling Procedure

A stratified sampling approach was used to obtain representation from government and private secondary schools. Teachers were included from the identified school groups and participated voluntarily. The school ownership category was retained as an important comparative variable in the analysis.

7.5 Research Instruments

Four major instruments were used, along with a demographic information sheet covering variables such as gender, age, teaching experience, subject taught, and school type.

7.5.1 Five Personality Trait Inventory (FPTI)

The Five Personality Trait Inventory was used to assess the Big Five personality dimensions: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. The instrument was used in accordance with its established scoring procedure.

7.5.2 Work Motivation Questionnaire (WMQ-A)

The Work Motivation Questionnaire was used to assess autonomous and controlled motivation. These dimensions were examined as indicators of the quality and orientation of teachers' work motivation.

7.5.3 Soft Skills Inventory (SSI)

The Soft Skills Inventory was used to assess four dimensions of teacher soft skills: communication, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and adaptability. Both dimension-level and overall soft-skill scores were considered where appropriate.

7.5.4 SERVQUAL-Adapted Service Quality Orientation Scale

A SERVQUAL-adapted scale was used to assess teachers' perceived service quality orientation. The adaptation contextualized service-quality dimensions for the educational setting. The measure represents teacher-reported service quality orientation and should not be interpreted as a direct measure of parent- or student-perceived service quality.

7.6 Data Collection

Data were collected through a structured self-administered questionnaire. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the voluntary nature of participation. Responses were treated confidentially and were used only for research purposes.

7.7 Variables and Operational Definitions

Variable	Operational Definition	Model Role
Personality traits	Five continuous scores: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness	Independent variable
Work motivation	Autonomous and controlled motivation scores	Independent variable
Soft skill deployment	Communication, emotional intelligence, critical thinking and adaptability	Dependent variable / predictor
Service quality orientation	SERVQUAL-adapted composite score	Outcome variable
School ownership type	Government vs. private	Comparative variable
Gender	Male vs. female	Control/explanatory variable
Teaching experience	Years of teaching experience	Control/explanatory variable

7.8 Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques in jamovi. Data screening, reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, independent-samples t-test, and hierarchical multiple regression were used. These procedures were selected to examine relationships among personality, work motivation, soft skills, and service quality orientation and to compare teachers from government and private schools.

7.8.1 Data Screening and Preliminary Analysis

The dataset was examined for completeness, coding errors, missing values, outliers, and distributional characteristics. Descriptive statistics and normality checks were used to assess the suitability of the data for subsequent parametric analyses.

7.8.2 Reliability Analysis

The internal consistency of the instruments used in the study was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Reliability coefficients were examined for the personality, work motivation, soft skill, and service quality measures before proceeding to the main analyses.

The study employed established instruments with documented psychometric properties. The Five Personality Trait Inventory (FPTI–MKS) contains 50 items distributed across five personality dimensions, with reported alpha coefficients ranging from .580 to .773 across the five dimensions. The Work Motivation Questionnaire (WMQ–A) consists of 26 items and has reported split-half reliability of .994. The psychometric properties of the Soft Skill Inventory and Service Quality Orientation Scale were examined for the present study before conducting the main analyses, and Cronbach's alpha was 0.79 and 0.80, respectively.

7.8.3 Descriptive and Correlational Analysis

Means and standard deviations were calculated for the major variables. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients were used to examine the direction and strength of relationships among personality traits, work motivation, soft skill deployment, and service quality orientation.

7.8.4 Group Comparison

Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare government and private school teachers. Private-school teachers reported significantly higher soft skill deployment and service quality orientation scores than government-school teachers.

7.8.5 Hierarchical Multiple Regression

Hierarchical multiple regression was employed to examine the incremental contribution of personality traits and work motivation to soft skill deployment. In the first step, gender, teaching experience, and school ownership type were entered as control variables. In the second step, the five personality traits—neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness—were entered as a block. In the third step, autonomous motivation and controlled motivation were entered to determine their additional contribution to the prediction of soft skill deployment. Changes in R^2 and the statistical significance of the F-change were examined at each step. Standardized beta coefficients (β) from the final model were used to interpret the relative contribution of individual predictors.

7.8.6 Moderation and Comparative Analysis

Independent-samples t-tests were used to examine differences between government and private secondary school teachers in soft skill deployment and teacher-perceived service quality orientation. Gender, teaching experience, and school ownership type were included as control variables in the hierarchical regression analysis. No interaction or moderation analysis was conducted in the present study.

7.8.7 Effect Size

Effect sizes were considered alongside statistical significance. Cohen's d was used for group comparisons, while R^2 and ΔR^2 were reported for regression analyses. The magnitude of effects was interpreted in conjunction with statistical significance and practical relevance.

7.9 Software and Statistical Tools

All quantitative analyses were conducted using jamovi, an open-source statistical platform based on the R computing environment. Microsoft Excel was used for data entry and preliminary data organization before importing the dataset into jamovi.

7.10 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity of responses, and institutional approval from participating schools and, where applicable, the researcher's institutional ethics committee were secured prior to data collection. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could decline to participate without penalty.

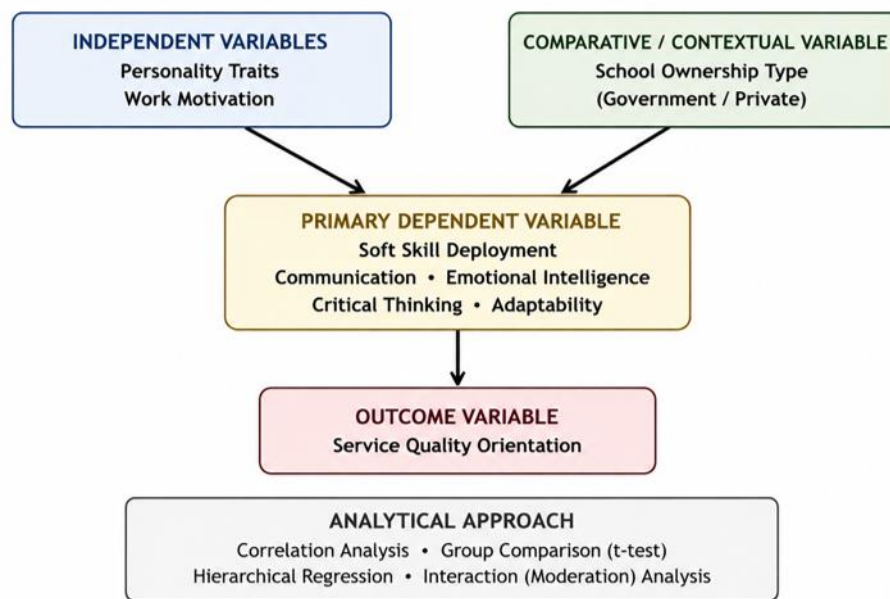


Figure 2. Research Analysis Framework

8. Results

8.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to examine the central tendency and variability of the major study variables. The mean and standard deviation provide an overall picture of the reported levels of personality traits, work motivation, soft skill deployment, and service quality orientation among the participants. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Major Study Variables

Variable	N	M	SD
Neuroticism	150	2.98	0.61
Extraversion	150	3.38	0.54
Openness	150	3.47	0.59
Agreeableness	150	3.67	0.49
Conscientiousness	150	3.69	0.52
Autonomous motivation	150	3.52	0.6
Controlled motivation	150	3.28	0.57
Soft skill deployment	150	3.63	0.5
Service quality orientation	150	3.69	0.48

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

8.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to examine the direction and strength of the relationships among personality traits, work motivation, soft skill deployment, and service quality orientation. The correlation

coefficients provide an initial assessment of the associations among the study variables and help establish the basis for subsequent regression analysis. The results are presented in Table 5

Table 5. Pearson Correlations among Major Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Neuroticism	—	-.28	-.12	-.20	-.32	-.25	.22	-.35	-.30
2. Extraversion	-.28	—	.25	.19	.35	.30	-.10	.42	.38
3. Openness	-.12	.25	—	.18	.20	.28	-.08	.33	.29
4. Agreeableness	-.20	.19	.18	—	.30	.27	-.12	.45	.41
5. Conscientiousness	-.32	.35	.20	.30	—	.40	-.15	.48	.44
6. Autonomous Motivation	-.25	.30	.28	.27	.40	—	-.20	.52	.46
7. Controlled Motivation	.22	-.10	-.08	-.12	-.15	-.20	—	-.18	-.16
8. Soft Skill Deployment	-.35	.42	.33	.45	.48	.52	-.18	—	.61
9. Service Quality Orientation	-.30	.38	.29	.41	.44	.46	-.16	.61	—

8.3 Government–Private Comparison

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to examine whether government and private secondary school teachers differed in their reported soft skill deployment and service quality orientation. The comparison provides an understanding of whether school ownership type is associated with differences in the selected study variables. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Government–Private Comparison on Soft Skills and Service Quality Orientation

Variable	Government M (SD)	Private M (SD)	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Soft skill deployment (composite)	3.48 (0.51)	3.80 (0.47)	-6.02	148	< .001	-0.65
Communication skills	3.55 (0.58)	3.90 (0.52)	-5.75	148	< .001	-0.62
Emotional intelligence	3.40 (0.60)	3.78 (0.54)	-6.10	148	< .001	-0.66
Critical thinking	3.45 (0.55)	3.70 (0.50)	-4.35	148	< .001	-0.47
Adaptability	3.50 (0.57)	3.82 (0.53)	-5.35	148	< .001	-0.58
Service quality orientation (composite)	3.52 (0.49)	3.88 (0.45)	-7.05	148	< .001	-0.76

8.4 Hierarchical Regression

Hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to examine the incremental contribution of personality traits and work motivation to soft skill deployment. Gender, teaching experience, and school ownership type were entered as control variables in Step 1, followed by the five personality traits in Step 2 and the two dimensions of work motivation in Step 3.

Table 7. Hierarchical Regression Block Structure

Step	Variables Entered	Purpose
1	Gender, teaching experience, school type	Control demographic and institutional variance
2	Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness	Examine contribution of personality
3	Autonomous motivation, Controlled motivation	Examine incremental contribution of work motivation

Hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to examine the contribution of personality traits and work motivation to soft skill deployment after controlling for gender, teaching experience, and school ownership type. As presented in Table 8, the control variables entered at Step 1 explained 6% of the variance in soft skill deployment ($R^2 = .06$, $\Delta R^2 = .06$, $F\text{-change} = 7.32$, $p < .001$).

At Step 2, the five personality traits, conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and neuroticism, were entered simultaneously. The explained variance increased from .06 to .28, representing an additional 22% of explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = .22$, $F\text{-change} = 34.85$, $p < .001$). In the final model, conscientiousness showed a positive association with soft skill deployment ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$), followed by extraversion ($\beta = .21$, $p < .001$), agreeableness ($\beta = .18$, $p < .01$), and openness ($\beta = .14$, $p < .05$). Neuroticism showed a negative association with soft skill deployment ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .01$).

At Step 3, autonomous and controlled motivation were added to the model. The explained variance increased to 41% ($R^2 = .41$), representing an additional 13% of explained variance beyond personality and control variables ($\Delta R^2 = .13$, $F\text{-change} = 25.60$, $p < .001$). Autonomous motivation showed a positive association with soft skill deployment ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$), whereas controlled motivation showed a small negative association ($\beta = -.09$). Overall, the hierarchical regression indicates that personality traits and work motivation make significant contributions to explaining variation in teachers' soft skill deployment.

Table 8. Hierarchical Regression Results, Dependent Variable: Soft Skill Deployment

Step	Predictor	β (Final Model)	R^2	ΔR^2	F-change (p)
1	Controls (Gender, Experience, School Type)	—	0.06	0.06	7.32 (< .001)
2	Conscientiousness	.26***	0.28	0.22	34.85 (< .001)
	Extraversion	.21***			
	Openness	.14*			
	Agreeableness	.18**			
	Neuroticism	-.19**			

3	Autonomous Motivation	.31***	0.41	0.13	25.60 (< .001)
	Controlled Motivation	-.09			

β = standardized regression coefficient; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = change in R^2 . $p < .05$, $p < .01$, $p < .001$

8.5 Hypothesis-to-Statistical-Test Mapping

H01: The null hypothesis stating that Big Five personality traits have no significant relationship with soft skill deployment was rejected. The personality block produced a significant increase in explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = .22$, $p < .001$), with significant contributions from conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

H02: The null hypothesis stating that work motivation has no significant relationship with soft skill deployment over and above personality traits was rejected. The addition of work motivation produced a significant increase in explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = .13$, $p < .001$). Autonomous motivation showed a positive association with soft skill deployment.

H03: The null hypothesis stating that soft skill deployment has no significant relationship with service quality orientation was rejected because the two variables demonstrated a significant positive correlation ($r = .61$, $p < .001$).

H04: The null hypothesis stating that government and private secondary school teachers do not differ significantly in soft skill deployment and service quality orientation was rejected. Significant differences were observed between the two groups on both measures.

9. Discussion

The findings indicate that personality traits and work motivation significantly contribute to teachers' soft skill deployment, while soft skill deployment is positively associated with teacher-perceived service quality orientation.

9.1 Personality Traits and Soft Skill Deployment

Personality traits contributed an additional 22% of explained variance in soft skill deployment. Conscientiousness showed the strongest positive association ($\beta = .26$), followed by extraversion ($\beta = .21$), agreeableness ($\beta = .18$), and openness ($\beta = .14$), whereas neuroticism showed a negative association ($\beta = -.19$). These findings are broadly consistent with research linking conscientiousness and emotional stability with work-related behaviour and performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge et al., 2013). The findings suggest that responsibility, social engagement, cooperativeness, openness, and emotional stability may be relevant to teachers' deployment of communication, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and adaptability.

9.2 Work Motivation and Soft Skill Deployment

Work motivation provided an additional 13% of explained variance beyond personality and control variables, increasing the total explained variance from 28% to 41%. Autonomous motivation showed a positive association with soft skill deployment ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$), consistent with Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes the role of self-endorsed motivation in high-quality engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Controlled motivation showed a small negative association ($\beta = -.09$), suggesting a comparatively weaker relationship with effective soft skill deployment.

9.3 Soft Skill Deployment and Service Quality Orientation

Soft skill deployment was significantly and positively associated with teacher-perceived service quality orientation ($r = .61$, $p < .001$). This finding is consistent with the service-quality perspective, which emphasizes

the importance of interpersonal interactions in service encounters (Bitner et al., 1990; Parasuraman et al., 1988). However, because service quality was assessed from teachers' perspectives, the finding represents teacher-perceived service quality orientation rather than direct consumer-perceived service quality.

9.4 Government–Private Comparison

Significant differences were observed between government and private school teachers in soft skill deployment and service quality orientation. These findings should be interpreted as group differences rather than evidence that school ownership causes the observed differences, as organizational conditions, workload, resources, leadership, and teacher characteristics may also contribute.

9.5 Overall Interpretation

Overall, the findings suggest that both personality and motivational orientation are relevant to teachers' soft skill deployment, which is in turn associated with service quality orientation. The results support greater attention to communication, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, adaptability, and autonomous motivation in teacher education and professional development. However, the cross-sectional and self-report nature of the study limits causal interpretation and may introduce common-method bias.

10. Implications

10.1 Theoretical Implications

The study provides a parsimonious framework connecting personality, work motivation, teacher soft skills, and service quality orientation. The findings support the view that soft skill deployment is associated with both relatively stable personality characteristics and motivational processes. The positive relationship between soft skill deployment and service quality orientation further connects teacher psychology with the service-quality perspective in education.

The contribution to marketing and management literature is conceptual and applied rather than a direct test of consumer behaviour. The present study does not empirically examine consumer trust, loyalty, willingness to pay, or retention; these outcomes may be examined in future research using parent and student samples.

10.2 Practical Implications

The findings suggest that teacher education institutions and school leaders should provide professional-development opportunities focusing on communication, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, adaptability, and motivation-enhancing practices. Personality should not be used as a rigid selection criterion; rather, awareness of individual differences may help in designing supportive professional-development strategies.

At the institutional level, service quality should be viewed as a shared organizational responsibility rather than solely as an individual teacher characteristic. Leadership support, professional-development opportunities, appropriate resources, and a supportive work environment may provide conditions that enable teachers to apply their soft skills effectively. The government–private comparison may also help institutions identify areas requiring targeted professional support.

11. Limitations and Future Directions

The cross-sectional design limits causal inference; therefore, the observed relationships should be interpreted as associations rather than causal effects. Longitudinal or intervention-based research could provide stronger evidence regarding changes in soft skills and service quality orientation over time.

The use of self-report measures may introduce social-desirability and common-method bias. Future research should triangulate teacher responses with parent- or student-rated service quality and, where feasible, classroom observations or supervisor ratings.

The sample was geographically limited to Ghaziabad district, which restricts generalizability to other regions and educational contexts. Replication across other districts of Uttar Pradesh, other Indian states, and different educational settings would strengthen the external validity of the findings.

Finally, service quality orientation was assessed from the teacher perspective rather than directly from parents or students. Future studies could collect matched teacher and parent/student data to examine whether teacher soft skills are associated with externally perceived service quality, satisfaction, trust, and related outcomes.

12. Conclusion

The study concludes that personality traits and work motivation are significant correlates of soft skill deployment among secondary school teachers. The Big Five personality block contributed substantially to explained variance, while work motivation provided an additional contribution beyond personality and the control variables. Conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, and agreeableness showed positive associations with soft skill deployment, whereas neuroticism showed a negative association. Autonomous motivation emerged as a positive predictor in the final model. Soft skill deployment was also significantly associated with teacher-perceived service quality orientation, while government and private school teachers differed significantly on the selected outcomes. Given the cross-sectional and self-reported nature of the study, these findings should be interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.

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