Work Autonomy and Teachers' Performances at Secondary Schools of Mirpur City

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Abstract

This correlational study aimed to draw a relationship between work autonomy of teachers and its relationship with their performances at secondary schools in Mirpur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The investigation involved 160 secondary school teachers. The Work Autonomy Questionnaire (Breaugh, 1985) was used to collect the data. The performances of teachers were based on the average annual results of teachers. The research findings provide a tempered view on the extent of teacher autonomy in the workplace. In terms of the relationship between work autonomy and teacher performance, a strong positive relationship is established, implying that as autonomy in the workplace increases, so does the teachers' performance. The study demonstrated the importance of creating autonomy as one of the major components in teacher education, which, when implemented, leads to enhanced teacher performance and, therefore, learning outcomes. Authorities may devote resources to build support structures and training programs to assist teachers in effectively exercising their autonomy.

Keywords:　　　Work Autonomy, Teachers Performances, Mirpur, Secondary Schools, Teacher Education

Introduction

Work autonomy refers to the degree of control and discretion employees have over how they execute their tasks. In general employment contexts, autonomy is linked to higher levels of job satisfaction and motivation. It empowers individuals to utilize their skills and judgment in ways that can enhance productivity and personal fulfillment. Specifically for teachers, work autonomy can encompass control over choices related to curriculum, teaching methods, classroom management, and involvement in decision-making processes within the school. Studies such as Pearson and Moomaw (2005) emphasize that autonomy not only supports teacher empowerment but also promotes a professional environment conducive to personal and career growth.

The performance of teachers is a critical determinant of educational outcomes. Effective teaching is reflected in improved student learning, engagement, and success. Johari, Tan, and Zulkarnain (2018) suggest that factors like autonomy and workload balance significantly influence teachers' job performance, impacting both the quality of teaching and overall school performance.

The relationship between teachers' autonomy and their job performance has been the subject of various studies. Research by Worth and Van den Brande (2020) found that higher autonomy in work leads to better job satisfaction and retention among teachers, which indirectly contributes to enhanced job

performance. Conversely, limited autonomy can stifle creativity and commitment, leading to decreased performance and higher turnover rates.

This study aims to explore the relationship between work autonomy and job performance among secondary school teachers in Mirpur City. By examining this relationship, the research intends to provide actionable insights that could help educational leaders and policymakers create more effective and empowering work environments for teachers.

Research Objectives

Objective of the study was:

1. To determine the relationship between the level of work autonomy granted to male and female teachers and their performances at secondary schools in Mirpur City.

Hypotheses

H_0:   There is no significant relationship between the work autonomy and the performances of teachers.

H_1:   There is a significant relationship between the work autonomy and the performances of teachers.

Significance of the Study

These findings have significance for all stakeholders in the educational system. Study demonstrates how work autonomy may help instructors improve their job satisfaction and professional growth. Students will most likely see an improvement in the learning process at school because teachers productivity tends to rise with increased autonomy. Policymakers, in particular, are provided practical data for developing policies that are consistent with teachers' performance and retention rates. Finally, the findings serve as a foundation for future study into more complex educational strategy optimization.

Literature Review

Work autonomy, representing the freedom and independence in executing job roles, is crucial in sectors like education, where flexibility and creativity are paramount. Autonomy not only enhances professional satisfaction but also influences job performance positively (Parker, 2015). Teachers with autonomy can tailor their approaches to meet the diverse needs of students, fostering engagement and personalized learning (Cheon et al., 2018).

Work autonomy serves as a powerful antidote to occupational burnout, promoting teacher well-being and job satisfaction (Fernet et al., 2014). It enhances intrinsic motivation, leading to innovative teaching practices and better educational outcomes. However, finding the right balance is key, as too much autonomy can lead to inconsistencies in teaching quality, while too little can stifle creativity and motivation (Bakker & Bal, 2010).

Work autonomy is not just about instructional methods; it extends to pivotal decisions that shape professional trajectories and student outcomes. Teachers empowered with autonomy develop critical thinking skills and adapt teaching practices to meet diverse learning needs, fostering a conducive learning environment (Dou et al., 2017). Effective teacher performance, evaluated through various metrics, is directly influenced by the degree of autonomy they experience (Johari et al., 2018).

Contextual factors, including school leadership, organizational culture, and educational policies, significantly shape teacher autonomy. Supportive leadership, collaborative cultures, and flexible policies promote autonomy, while the 'autonomy gap' between desired and experienced autonomy must be addressed to enhance teacher

satisfaction and performance (Runhaar et al., 2013).

Despite its benefits, autonomy poses challenges. Inconsistencies in teaching quality, teacher isolation, accountability issues, and burnout risks require careful management (Mojsa-Kaja et al., 2015). Integrating theoretical frameworks like Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R) offers insights into autonomy's impact on motivation, well-being, and performance (Nie et al., 2015).

Empirical evidence supports the positive effects of autonomy on teacher engagement, satisfaction, and effectiveness (Saragih, 2015). Future interventions should focus on enhancing autonomy while considering contextual factors to maximize educational outcomes (Tehseen & Hadi, 2015). Overall, autonomy plays a pivotal role in shaping teacher performance and requires thoughtful implementation within the educational framework.

Methods

The research conducted in Mirpur city focused on the relationship between work autonomy and teachers' performances in secondary schools. Utilizing a quantitative approach and a correlational research design, the study encompassed secondary-level teachers in public schools. Through a systematic process, a representative sample of 160 teachers was selected using a simple random sampling technique. Data was collected using Work Autonomy Questionnaire (Breaugh, 1985) with nine items, employing a 5-point scale, and encompassing both male and female teachers. The questionnaire was administered in English, with explanations provided in the local language during data collection to ensure clarity for participants. Following data collection, Pearson Correlation Test was performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25, to examine the relationship between work autonomy and teachers' performances. The study aimed to contribute to a deeper understanding of factors influencing teacher performance within the context of secondary education in Mirpur city.

Results

The results of the study discussed the relationship between work autonomy and teachers' performances via Pearson Correlation analysis.

Relationship between Work Autonomy and Performances of Teachers

Table 01

Relationship between Work Autonomy and Teachers' Performances

		Work Autonomy	Teachers' Performances
Work Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	1	.656
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010
	N	160	160
Teachers' Performances	Pearson Correlation	.656	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	
	N	160	160

The correlation analysis reveals a notable positive association between work autonomy and teachers' performances, characterized by a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.656 (p = .010, two-tailed). This indicates that an increase in work autonomy corresponds to improved teacher performance. This indicates that the null hypothesis of the study is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis of the study is accepted.

Conclusion

This correlational study was conducted to explore the relationship between work autonomy and teachers' performances at secondary level in Mirpur city of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The findings suggest a moderate level of work autonomy among teachers, with respondents generally expressing a degree of freedom in selecting work methods and procedures, though with variations across different aspects of their job tasks. Additionally, teachers perceive significant control over the scheduling and sequencing of their work activities, indicating their ability to determine when and how tasks are carried out. Furthermore, there is a moderate level of autonomy in selecting work methods, with varying degrees of freedom reported by respondents. A significant positive correlation is observed between work autonomy and teachers' performances, indicating a direct relationship between work autonomy and teacher performance. This relationship highlights the critical role of autonomy in enhancing teacher effectiveness. The findings emphasize the importance of fostering autonomy in educational environments to improve teacher performance and ultimately enhance educational outcomes.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. School Administrators may implement professional development

programs to empower teachers with autonomy, ensuring alignment with institutional goals.

2. Teacher associations may advocate for collaborative initiatives that support teachers in exercising autonomy and decision-making within classrooms.

3. Educational authorities may allocate resources for providing necessary support systems and training to facilitate teachers' effective use of autonomy.

4. The educational administration may promote a culture of trust and communication between teachers and parents to support autonomy in educational practices.

5. Policy makers may develop and revise policies that promote teacher autonomy while maintaining educational standards, addressing the needs of diverse learners.

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