

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER AUTONOMY AND STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE AT HIGHER EDUCATION

Alishba Shafique*¹, Uzma Munawar², Hina Munir³

*¹MPhil Scholar, Department of Education, Women University Multan, Pakistan;

²Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Women University Multan, Pakistan;

³Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Women University Multan, Pakistan

Corresponding Author: *alishbashafique91@gmail.com

Received: 15 November, 2023

Revised: 23 January, 2024

Accepted: 27 January, 2024

Published: 31 January, 2024

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationship between teacher autonomy and students' performance at higher education. The sample size of 200 students was chosen at random by the researcher using a basic random sampling approach to collect data from students via questionnaires. A researcher-made authority and learning questionnaire has been utilized to gather data and information for analysis. In order to guarantee that the questionnaires are characterized with the needed features, adviser academics, consultants, and specialists were contacted throughout this step of the design process. The reliability of the test was assessed in this study using the Cronbach's alpha technique. The Pearson test findings indicate that all sources of instructor authority have a substantial relationship with students' learning, depending on the significance level. It suggests that student learning in the examined society rises in proportion to the degree of teacher autonomy.

Keywords: Autonomy, Teacher's autonomy, Students learning

INTRODUCTION

As education settings change, the needs of teachers and students are also changing. This is happening because of progress in education and science worldwide. New institutions system are therefore required, and as we live in a time of rapid change, universities and educational institutions cannot continue to operate as they currently do. Learning environments have had to evolve as a result of the changing methodologies that have relied on instructor authority for information acquisition for millennia. Greater emphasis is being placed on the foundation of student-centered learning environments in this process of transition to improve learner achievement. The teacher plays an essential role in a student-centered learning environment, thus teachers should put students at the centre of their instruction in tandem with this transition (Horstman & White, 2002, as referenced in Balm, Keserciolu, Nel, & Evrekli, 2009). Teachers who guide their students in the development of knowledge are necessary for student-centered education. They also need to prepare a classroom atmosphere with the help

of their students that is conducive to learning and inspire them.

Teacher independence refers toward a teacher's liberty and authority to decide on their expert actions (Feldmann, 2011). To guarantee that they carry out their responsibilities and complete their assignments, instructors must be acknowledged by university administration (Ozturk, 2012).

According to Pearson & Moomaw (2005), a teacher is autonomous when they plan, carry out their professional duties within certain parameters, choose how they want their workspace to be set up, and engage in administrative procedures. Giving teachers unrestricted discretion in learning environments is improper. However, freedom can be granted to teachers when it comes to selecting choices pertaining to instruction (Colak, 2016).

For instance, according to Kaur, Hashium, and Noman's (2015) research, teacher autonomy gives educators independence in lesson preparation, instruction, and evaluation. According to Ingersoll and Merrill (2011), teachers who like their work and have a lot of autonomy in making decisions are more

likely to continue in the field than those who have no say in decisions made at their institutions. According to several studies (Berry, Daughtrey, & Wieder, 2010; Hulpia, Devos, & Van Keer, 2010), educators that have autonomy over decisions may feel more empowered and may be more effective educators. This could have an impact on students' academic performance.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this study aims to identify the relationship between teacher autonomy and students performance at higher education are following written in bellow:

- To identify the impact of teachers autonomy on students academic performance at university level.
- Assess the impact of teacher autonomy on students engagement and motivation.
- Evaluate the influence of teacher autonomy on students satisfaction and overall learning experience.

Research Questions:

- Is there relationship between teacher's autonomy and student performance?
- To what extent does teachers' autonomy in designing curriculum and activities influence the motivation and engagement of students in their learning?
- What is the value of teacher's autonomy?
- What is the effect of teacher's autonomy?

LITERATURE REVIEW

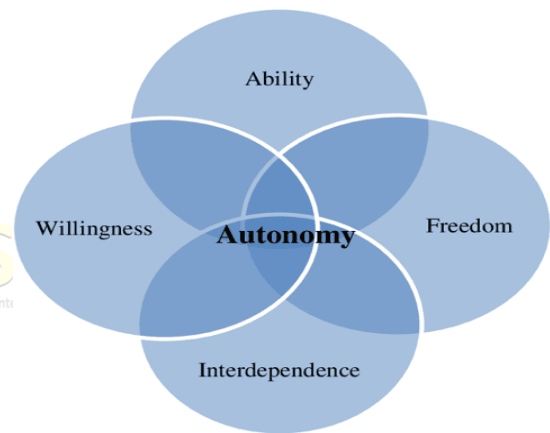
The literature review emphasizes the significance of teacher autonomy, defined as the freedom to learn and teach, in fostering intrinsic motivation and positive learning outcomes. Rooted in self-determination theory, autonomy-supportive teaching is highlighted for its impact on student engagement across cultural contexts. Strategies for increasing teacher autonomy are explored, underscoring the importance of self-awareness, collaboration, and evolving instructional roles. The need for teacher autonomy is underscored for its contributions to professional development, reflective teaching practices, and the creation of a dynamic learning environment tailored to diverse student needs.

Autonomy

According to Collier (2002) and Ryan & Deci (2006), the term "autonomy" directly translates to "self-management," "independence," or "self-direction." According to Yolcu and Akar-Vural (2020), autonomy refers to a person's capacity to make decisions and take independent action.

Teacher Autonomy

The definition of teacher autonomy is "the freedom to learn and teach" (Sehrawat, 2014). According to Öztürk (2011), the notion also conveys how the teacher's judgements and choices influence the learning processes that take place in the classroom. The ability of instructors to manage their own teaching procedures is another definition of teacher autonomy (Sehrawat, 2014). Teacher autonomy is



defined by Canbolat (2020) as "the freedom of the teacher to make decisions regarding the development and implementation of the education and training curriculum, materials, and university management and other professional activities" in light of the professional circumstances.

The Significance of Autonomy-Supportive Teaching: Impact on Students Motivation, Learning Outcomes, and Cross-cultural Universality
Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) posits that intrinsic motivation, the most autonomous form, is linked to personal satisfaction and independence, influencing the need for autonomy in learning. Teachers adopt motivational styles—autonomy-supportive or controlling—impacting student engagement and outcomes. Autonomy support involves identifying, vitalizing, and nurturing students' inner motivational resources

(Reeve, 2016). Autonomy-supportive teachers foster intrinsic motivation and positive outcomes, while controlling styles lead to lower motivation and achievement (Gunnell et al., 2013; Jang et al., 2016; Hein et al., 2015). Teacher behaviors promoting student autonomy, allowing independence and active participation, enhance interest and internal motivation. Cross-cultural studies (Nalipay et al., 2020) show autonomy, competence, and relatedness positively correlate with achievement. In Western schools, teacher support for competence is crucial, while in both Western and Eastern cultures, meeting autonomy and relatedness needs is vital for higher student achievement. Teacher autonomy-supportive behavior interacts with classroom social processes and student perceptions of equity, shaping the learning environment.

Strategies for Increasing Teacher Autonomy

Teacher autonomy, essential for empowerment and fulfillment, necessitates behavioral adjustments toward independence. Key components encompass self-awareness, accountability, and collaborative engagement for autonomy development, as underscored by Ramos (2006). Educators, recognizing strengths and weaknesses through introspection, must also be aware of their surroundings, fostering autonomy by identifying needs, desires, talents, and changes. Challenges drive advancement and decision-making, while collaboration extends beyond solitude, emphasizing cooperation, sharing, and respecting others for professional development. The evolving roles of teachers, from controllers to advisors, underscore the transformation in instructional methods. Cultivating autonomous practice demands educators embrace consciousness, risk-taking, creativity, and active collaboration, making autonomy a conscious and multifaceted effort in teaching and learning.

Need of Teacher Autonomy:

Teachers have come to value teacher autonomy more than institutional and learner autonomy, despite socio-political constraints that promote standardization and hierarchy (Veugelers, 2004 as referenced in Prichard & Moore, 2016). According to Al-Mansoori (2008), an autonomous teacher is one who is self-directed, reflective, and collaborative in both the community and the workplace, using a "life

plan" or "strategy for life" to emphasize the role that autonomy plays in teachers' lives and to emphasize how it shapes both professional and social lives. When teachers have autonomy, they are able to reflect critically on their own teaching methods and evaluate their own work. Teachers who practice autonomy don't operate in a soloist or isolated manner; instead, they collaborate with one another more. Instructor networking is facilitated by the inspiration teachers have to share their knowledge, skills, and experiences with one another. The ability of an empowered teacher to modify the curriculum in accordance with the demands and learning preferences of each student may also aid in the learning of the students (Prichard & Moore, 2016). Thus, granting teachers autonomy could benefit them in a number of areas related to teaching and learning, such as teacher professional development.

The following points, which are written below, also address the necessity of teacher autonomy:

In order to provide a learning environment that meets the different requirements of students, teacher autonomy is crucial.

Teacher autonomy stems from the desire for both professional and personal growth. As a result, an independent teacher will actively look for opportunities to advance throughout their career.

Self-reliant educators take personal responsibility, participate in workshops, and generate innovative teaching concepts.

In collaboration with others, the ability to acquire the right information, abilities, and attitude for oneself as a teacher is referred to as teacher autonomy.

The flexibility to develop, to design activities that are pertinent to the needs and capabilities of community problems, and to create acceptable communication means should be granted to the teacher.

Teacher autonomy is essential to be able to adapt to student needs, interests, and motivation and individualize our approach.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aimed to explore the relationship between teacher autonomy and student performance at the higher education, utilizing a descriptive study design and survey technique. The statistical population comprised male and female students in BS, B.ED, and M.Phil disciplines of social sciences from three universities in Multan: Women University

(WUM), Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU), and Education University (EU). The targeted population included 100 WUM students, 100 BZU students, and 50 EU students, totaling 250 university students. Simple random sampling was employed to select universities and students, focusing on mature individuals with heightened awareness of teacher autonomy.

The final sample consisted of 250 social sciences students, including 190 BS students, 39 M.Phil students, and 21 others. Data collection utilized a survey with 30 statements, categorized into teaching strategies, curriculum development, professional behavior/development, and teacher autonomy. Respondents used a five-point Likert scale to express their views on the impact of teacher autonomy on academic achievements, with the scoring procedure ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

In summary, the study employed a quantitative approach to investigate the relationship between

teacher autonomy and student performance. The research design, population selection, and data collection method were systematically outlined, emphasizing the comprehensive nature of the survey in capturing students' perceptions of teacher autonomy and its implications for academic success.

RESULTS OF STUDY

This study focuses on the “Relationship between Teacher’s Autonomy and Student’s Performance at Higher Education”. Considering the objectives of study instrument was developed and data was collected. The data was analyzed through the SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences) and then interpreted. Researcher applied descriptive statistic to discover the demographic information of respondents. It include the detailed description of tables with frequency and percentages.

Figure 1: University and Institute wise Distribution

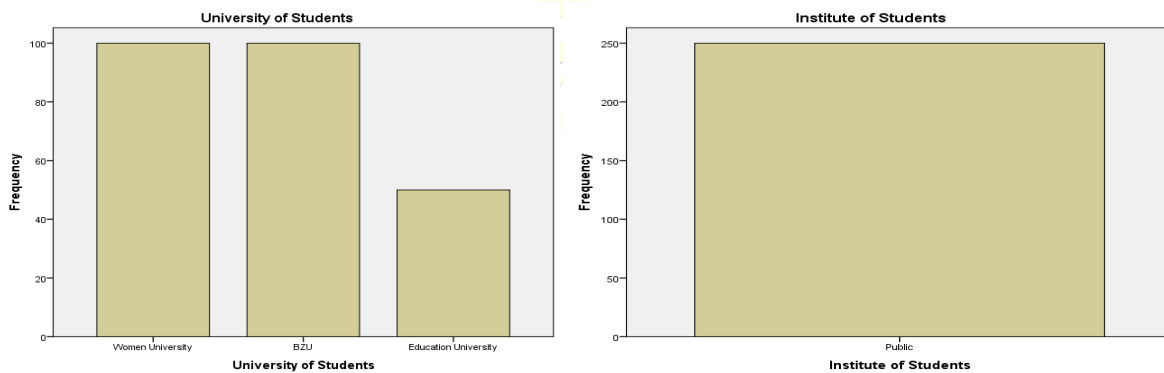


Figure 2: Gender and Class wise Distribution

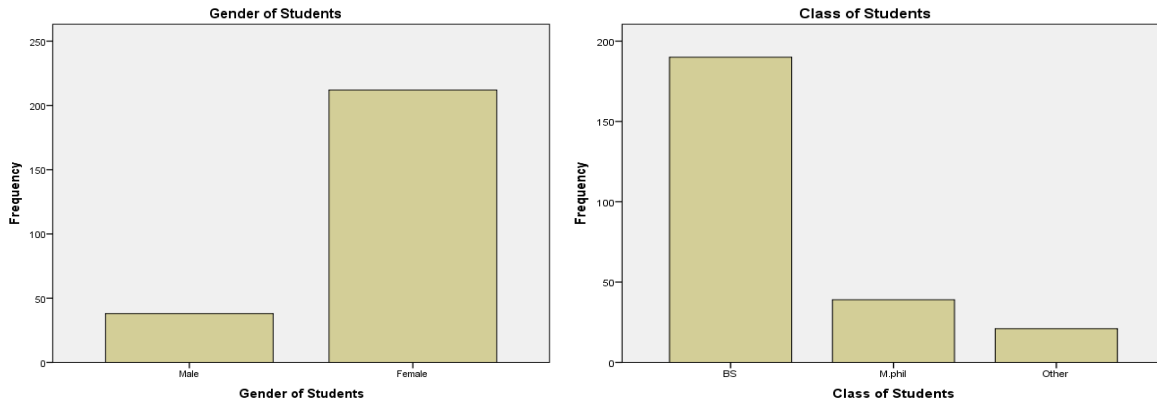
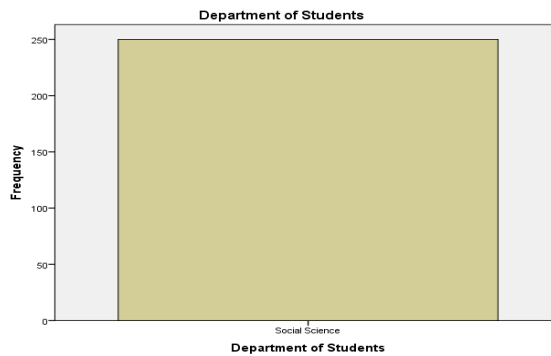


Figure 1: Department wise Distribution



The researcher utilized descriptive statistics to examine the demographic characteristics of the study's participants. The data revealed a diverse representation of students from different universities, with Women University and Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) each contributing 40.0% of the total participants, and Education University contributing 20.0%. Notably, all 250 participants were affiliated with public institutes, with no representation from private institutions. The gender distribution showed that 84.8% of the participants were female, and 15.2% were male. In terms of

academic classes, the majority (76.0%) were enrolled in Bachelor of Science (BS) programs, 15.6% were pursuing Master of Philosophy (M. Phil) degrees, and 8.4% fell into the "Other" category. All 250 participants belonged to the Department of Social Science, indicating a singular focus on this discipline in participant selection. The descriptive statistics offer a comprehensive overview of the participant demographics, encompassing university representation, institute type, gender distribution, academic classes, and departmental affiliation.

Table 1: Teacher’s autonomy is important for effective teaching and learning.

Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Frequency	79	108	34	24	5	250
Percentage	31.6	43.2	13.6	9.6	2.0	100
Mean	2.0720					
Std. Dev	1.00741					

Table 1: The majority (74.8%) agree that teacher's autonomy is important for effective teaching and learning, with a significant 13.6% undecided. A combined 11.6% disagree, resulting in a mean of 2.0720 and a standard deviation of 1.00741.

Table 2: Teacher’s autonomy in the classroom can positively impact students' engagement and motivation.

Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Frequency	72	112	38	16	12	250
Percentage	28.8	44.8	15.2	6.4	4.8	100
Mean	2.1360					
Std. Dev	1.05544					

Table 2: A combined 73.6% of respondents agree that teacher's autonomy positively impacts students' engagement and motivation, with a notable 15.2% undecided. A combined 11.2% disagree, yielding a mean of 2.1360 and a standard deviation of 1.05544.

Pearson’s Correlation Test

Table 3: Teachers establish student’s achievement criteria by themselves.

STATMENTS	P-Value
Class of Students	.000
Teachers compose new learning activities for their students.	.004
Teachers use blended learning model in classroom.	.000
Teachers make teaching interesting by demonstrating how theory is implemented in the real world.	.008
The teachers are punctual and perform their duties regularly.	.002
Teachers treat all students fairly and without discrimination.	.000
Students’ character is emphasized by class teacher.	.004
Students often develop strong emotional connections with their teachers.	.590
Teachers favor certain students and give them preferential treatment.	.001
Teachers create a conducive learning environment in the classroom.	.000
Teachers provide constructive feedback to students.	.000

In Table 3, teachers significantly influence student learning experiences by setting achievement criteria ($p < .001$), creating new activities (.004), using a blended learning approach (.000), and connecting theory to the real world (.008). Punctuality and regular duties are crucial ($p = .002$), emphasizing their significance. Fair treatment without

discrimination is highly significant ($p < .001$), reflecting a commitment to equality. Teachers also emphasize students' character ($p = .004$). However, the p-value (.590) for strong emotional connections suggests varied views. Concerns about favoritism are significant ($p = .001$), indicating a need for fairness and equal opportunities.

Table 4: Teachers have the autonomy to create and implement entirely new curricula without needing approval from a higher authority.

STATEMENTS	P-Value
Class of Students	.002
Teachers compose new learning activities for their students.	.000
Teachers use blended learning model in classroom.	.001
Teachers make teaching interesting by demonstrating how theory is implemented in the real world.	.264
The teachers are punctual and perform their duties regularly.	.029
Teachers treat all students fairly and without discrimination.	.015
Students' character is emphasized by class teacher.	.000
Students often develop strong emotional connections with their teachers.	.005
Teachers favor certain students and give them preferential treatment.	.001
Teachers create a conducive learning environment in the classroom.	.000
Teachers provide constructive feedback to students.	.000

Table 4: Teachers' autonomy to create and implement curricula without higher authority approval is highly significant ($p = .002$). Positive aspects include teacher commitment to innovation, composing new activities, and using blended learning (p-values .000, .001). Fair treatment and emphasis on students' character are statistically significant (p-values .015, .000). Emotional connections are significant (.005). Concerning favoritism is evident ($p = .001$), necessitating attention for fair treatment.

Discussion of the study

Our study aligns with Ahmadi et al.'s (2022) classification system, emphasizing the impact of teachers' actions on student learning. Findings affirm the crucial role of autonomy-promoting behaviors in fostering active student engagement. Students respond more actively to learning strategies when teachers support autonomy, as suggested by Grazia et al. (2021). This is linked to increased autonomous motivation and reduced anxiety, according to Hinnersmann et al. (2020).

The dataset provides a comprehensive view of student perceptions on teacher autonomy, exploring key aspects. Female students predominate, mostly in Bachelor of Science programs at public universities. While teachers are acknowledged for their role in assessment criteria, concerns arise regarding perceived favoritism.

Statistical analysis shows positive perceptions of

teachers but highlights the need for addressing favoritism. In simpler terms, our study reveals how students and teachers view aspects of education, emphasizing the need to address teacher favoritism.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights the pivotal role of teacher autonomy in shaping positive student outcomes at higher education levels. Students overwhelmingly agree with various aspects of teacher autonomy, including the use of practical assessment techniques, adaptation of the classroom environment, and innovation in curricula. Positive sentiments extend to teachers' professionalism, punctuality, fair treatment, and their role in character development. Students appreciate the emotional connections formed with teachers, emphasizing trust and comfort in seeking guidance. Importantly, students recognize the significance of teacher autonomy in enhancing overall education quality, emphasizing its positive impact on teaching effectiveness and engagement. The majority also acknowledges the positive influence of teacher autonomy on their own engagement, motivation, and adaptability to emerging technologies, contributing to a dynamic and technologically relevant educational experience.

REFERENCES

- Ahmadi A., Noetel M., Parker P. D., Ryan R., Ntoumanis N., Reeve J., Beauchamp M. R., Dicke T., Yeung A., Ahmadi M., Bartholomew K., Chiu T. K. F., Curran T., Erturan G., Flunger B., Froiland J. M., González-Cutre D., Haerens L., ... Lonsdale C. (2022). A classification system for teachers' motivational behaviours recommended in self-determination theory interventions. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. Advance online publication.
- Al-Mansoori, K. (2008). Symposium in learner autonomy. In Beaven, B. (Ed.), *IATEFL 2008 Exeter Conference Selections*. (pp. 34-37), Canterbury: IATEFL.
- Balım, A. G., Kesercioğlu, T., İnel, D., & Evrekli, E. (2009). Fen öğretmen adaylarının yapılandırılmaya yaklaşımının farklı değişkenlere etkisi: Bir deneysel araştırma. *Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 27, 55-74.
- Berry, B., Daughtrey, A., & Wieder, A. (2010). *A better system for schools: Developing, supporting and retaining effective teachers*. New York, NY: Center for Teaching Quality, Teachers Network.
- Canbolat, Y. (2020). Türkiye'de ortaöğretim öğretmenlerinin mesleki özerkliği: Var olan ve olası politikaların bir analizi. *Eğitim ve Bilim*, 45(202), 141-171. doi: 10.15390/EB.2020.7833.
- Çolak, İ. (2016). Okul iklimi ile öğretmenlerin özerklik davranışları arasındaki ilişki: Muğla ili örneği (Unpublished Master's Thesis). Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi, Muğla.
- Collier, J. (2002). What is autonomy? In *International Journal of Computing Anticipatory Systems: CASY 2001-Fifth International Conference*, Liege, Belgium, 13-18 August.
- Deci E. L., Ryan R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227-268.
- Feldmann, D. (2011). The maintenance of teacher autonomy in a policy-driven era. *MidWestern Educational Researcher*, 24(1), 2-4.
- Grazia V., Mameli C., Molinari L. (2021). Adolescents' profiles based on student agency and teacher autonomy support: Does interpersonal justice matter? *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 36, 1117-1134.
- Gunnell K., Crocker P. R. E., Wilson P. M., Mack D. E., Zumbo B. D. (2013). Psychological need satisfaction and thwarting: A test of basic psychological needs theory in physical activity contexts. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 14(5), 599-607.
- Hein V., Koka A., Hagger M. S. (2015). Relationships between perceived teachers' controlling behaviour, psychological need thwarting, anger and bullying behaviour in high-school students. *Journal of Adolescence*, 42, 103-114.
- Hinnersmann P., Hoier K., Dutke S. (2020). Executing learning activities and autonomy-supportive instructions enhance autonomous motivation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 2109.
- Huang, J. (2005). Teacher autonomy in language learning: A review of the research. In K.R. Katyal, H.C. Lam & X.J. Ding (eds), *Research Studies in Education 3* (203-18). The University of Hong Kong: Faculty of Education.
- Hulpia, H., Devos, G., & Van Keer, H. (2010). The influence of distributed leadership on teachers' organizational commitment: A multilevel approach. *Journal of Educational Research*, 103(1), 40-52.
- Ingersoll, R. M., & Merrill, E. (2011). The status of teaching as a profession. In J. Ballantine & J. Spade (Eds.), *Schools and society: A sociological approach to education* (4th ed., pp. 185-189). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press/Sage Publications.
- Jang H., Kim E. J., Reeve J. (2016). Why students become more engaged or more disengaged during the semester: A self-determination theory dual-process model. *Learning and Instruction*, 43, 27-38.
- Kaur, A., Hashim, R. A., & Noman, M. (2015). Teacher autonomy support intervention as a

- classroom practice in a Thai school. *Journal for Multicultural Education*, 9(1), 10-27.
- Nalipay M., King R., Cai Y. (2020). Autonomy is equally important across East and West: Testing the cross-cultural universality of self-determination theory. *Journal of Adolescence*, 78, 67–72.
- Öztürk, İ. H. (2011). Öğretmen özerkliği üzerine kuramsal bir inceleme. *Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 10(35), 82-99.
- Ozturk, I. H. (2012). Teacher's role and autonomy in instructional planning: The case of secondary school history teachers with regard to the preparation and implementation of annual instructional plans. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 12(1), 295-299.
- Pearson, L.C. & Moomaw, W. (2005). The relationship between teacher autonomy and stress, work satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 29, 37-54.
- Prichard, C. & Moore, J. (2016). The balance of teacher autonomy and top-down coordination in ESOL programs. *TESOL Quarterly*, 50(1), 190-201.
- Ramos, R.C. (2006). Considerations on the role of teacher autonomy. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 8, 184-202.
- Reeve J. (2016). Autonomy-supportive teaching: What it is, how to do it. In Wang J., Liu C. W., Ryan R. M. (Eds.), *Building autonomous learners: Research and practical perspectives using self-determination theory* (pp. 129–152). Springer.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2006). Self-regulation and the problem of human autonomy: Does psychology need choice, self-determination, and will?. *Journal of personality*, 74(6), 1557-1586. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6494.2006.00420.x
- Sehrawat, J. (2014). Teacher autonomy: Key to teaching success. *Hartiyam International Journal Of Education & Research: Quarterly Peer Reviewed International Journal of Research & Education*, 4(1), 2277-1255.
- Yolcu, O., & Akar-Vural, R. (2020). A scale development study on measuring science teachers' autonomy on curriculum. *Uluslararası Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 10(1), 29-52. doi: 10.31704/ijocis.2020.002