

Impact of Work Autonomy on Self-efficacy and, Consequently, Job Satisfaction among Teaching staff of Arts colleges in Kerala

Athira Kishan R^{1*}, A. A Ananth²

^{1*} Research Scholar, Department of Management, Annamalai University, Chidambaram, India

²Professor, Department of Management, Annamalai University, Chidambaram, India

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ABSTRACT

Job Satisfaction is the most crucial factor for employees who work hard in an organization like the educational sector due to their pervasive workload and time constraints. The work autonomy practices provided by organizations can make employees more adaptive, determined about their performance, and efficient. This study measures the impact of Work Autonomy (WA) on Self-efficacy (SE) and, thereby, the job satisfaction (JS) of teaching staff. Data from 348 teaching staff was utilized in SPSS and AMOS software for analysis. Results show the effect of WA on SE and, thereby, the JS of teachers. The direct impact of work autonomy on job satisfaction is found to be greater than the mediation effect of SE between WA and JS. The analytical results indicate the significance of work autonomy in teaching staff.

Keywords: Demographic variable, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and work autonomy



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1. INTRODUCTION

Education transforms people into a better way of living. Students' academic excellence and careers depend upon teachers' intellectual and teaching skills. To transform the students, teachers should be satisfied with their jobs. The outermost feeling employees should feel in an organization is job satisfaction. Teaching is a service more than a job to educate students. The work autonomy practices provided by the institutions for teachers will help in choosing the way of teaching, scheduling the work, and decision-making in task completion. Deci & Ryan (2000) explained Self-determination theory based on work autonomy by way of psychological necessity. It highlights the significance of autonomy in enhancing intrinsic motivation, emotional happiness, and progressive performance in the place of work. The effectiveness of autonomy in employee manners, commitment, and job satisfaction is explained by Deci & Ryan (1985) in the conceptual framework of Self-determination theory. Teachers who experience autonomy in work will feel effective in scheduling, teaching, deciding, and completing academic and extracurricular work.

A consistent relationship is seen between work autonomy and self-efficacy in this research. Self-efficacy is a person's conviction about his potential to attain performance goals (Bandura, 1977, 1988, 1997). Self-efficacy is the self-assurance needed to accomplish an achievement. Freedom at work (work autonomy) causes a feeling of belongingness for their work, decisions, and creativities (Susanti Saragih, 2011).

Employees may become more self-efficacious as a result of feeling competent and effective (Wang & Netemeyer, 2002). Self-efficient employees work more effectively even if the situation or target is combatting (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004). Low, self-efficient employees easily give up before completing tasks (Susanti Saragih, 2011). Autonomous employees will have self-esteem and self-efficacy in attaining their goals, leading to job satisfaction. Self-efficacy has a considerable relationship with job satisfaction. Efficient work autonomy practices improve the performance of employees and creativity, and they help employees become self-efficient in facing challenges and achieving job satisfaction (Susanti Saragih, 2011). Employees who feel free in their jobs to an extent will perform the tasks in a way suitable for them and become adaptive, creative, and self-efficient in nature, doing things in a better way with job satisfaction.

Albert Bandura (1977) introduced the term Self-efficacy as one's confidence in one's talent to do the work and meet the preferred results. Self-efficacy has a dominant place in Social Cognitive theory, in which people's insight about their abilities affects their conduct, movements, and expressions. Self-efficacy is perceptions of one's capacities to perform tasks better (Bandura, 1986). People with higher self-efficacy will put in more hard work, determination, and bounciness while facing troubles, causing better accomplishment and fulfilment (Bandura, 1997). Bong and Skaalvik (2003) explained that self-efficacy is judgments about a

person's abilities and skills and what he can accomplish with those traits. So, self-efficacy is perceptions of what one can do with all one's abilities and skills. Teachers' self-efficacy is self-assurance in their skills and abilities to schedule, establish, and perform the tasks for educational purposes (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

Job satisfaction is a widely used term in Organizational Behavior, yet the exact factors that contribute to it remain unknown (Taylor & Westover, 2010). Without job satisfaction, employees are unlikely to work with full commitment. An organization's productivity is heavily dependent on employee satisfaction (Elton Mayo, 1930). Job satisfaction is a significant factor that influences employees' work in all dimensions, including psychological, emotional, and behavioral norms, and it affects the well-being of both employees and the organization (Judge & Klinger, 2008). Satisfied employees are more likely to work hard for the organization's success (Berry, 1997). An organization is likely to be more efficient if its employees are satisfied (Robbins & Judge, 2007). This underscores the crucial role that job satisfaction plays in organizational productivity and success.

Job satisfaction is essential for every organization's well-being and growth. Job satisfaction is unavoidable for employees who work hard in an organization. Organizations can implement some work autonomy practices to make the employees more satisfied. This may make the employees more satisfied and self-efficient. This study deals with the direct effect of work autonomy on the JS of teaching staff and the intervening effect of SE between WA and JS

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis

Work autonomy is the level at which a job grants liberty, individuality, option for task scheduling, and deciding steps for task completion. Work autonomy causes employees to feel responsible for their performance, leading to intrinsic motivation and effective performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Work autonomy perception leads to recognizable achievements (Gellatly & Irving, 2001). Work autonomy practices improve job performance and satisfaction (Claessens et al., 2004). Work autonomy causes enhanced performance, and employees may feel capable and self-efficacious (Moye, 2004). Meaningfully, employees get motivated to fulfill their tasks. There exists a significant relationship between work autonomy and self-efficacy (Wang & Netemeyer, 2002). A positive association exists between work autonomy and creativity (Kauffeld et al., 2006). Self-efficacy acts as a motivational factor (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). According to Jiang et al. (2023), two types of work autonomy exist: goal autonomy and execution autonomy. Self-efficacy is a state of adaptiveness and perseverance to achieve goals. Self-efficacy is learning from experience. When autonomy experienced by the employee is high, the employee has to depend on their creativity, decisions, and efforts. These efforts make them more efficient at doing things in their manner and become self-efficient (Wang dan Netemeyer, 2002). Self-efficient employees

will put more effort into overcoming challenges (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004). From the studies the following hypotheses is formed

H1: Work autonomy has a significant relationship with Self-efficacy

Job satisfaction is an essential paradigm in an organization's culture that leads to organizational success connected to individual, organizational, and ethical results (Balzer et al., 1997). JS refers to the employees' overall attitude toward the job (Porter et al., 1975). JS shows individuals' commitment toward a job role (Lease, 1998). Brief (1998) explains JS as an internal stage expressed by collective favour/disfavour by employees. JS is a state of feeling and expression from employees' evaluation of their jobs. Oshagbemi (2003) explained job satisfaction as an assessment of actual and desired outcomes from the job.

Job Characteristics Theory by Hackman and Oldham (1976) explained that JS raises employees' intrinsic motivation towards their jobs. The job features that intrinsically encourage employees to have better job outcomes are satisfaction, absenteeism, motivation, performance, and turnover, with three stages of mentality: knowledge of results, experiencing responsibility, and meaningfulness. According to this theory, a job acts as a motivating factor. Intrinsic factors inside the employees include freedom to choose the work speed (autonomy), their performance, etc. Extrinsic factors are factors external to the employee, such as working conditions, job security, and other fringe benefits. Rose (2001) identified that extrinsic and intrinsic factors are essential for satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction is the level of willingness or gladness experienced by employees. The freedom given by work autonomy enhances job satisfaction. Work autonomy plays a role in intrinsic motivation and task satisfaction (Morrison et al., 2005). A study by Finn (2001) found that work autonomy is essential for the job satisfaction of nurses. The convenience of work autonomy is practical for job satisfaction among temporary and permanent workers (Cuyper & Witte, 2005). According to DeCarlo and Agarwal (1999), work autonomy affects the job satisfaction of salespersons. WA is essential for development at the professional level (Gray & Pratt, 1989; Hart & Rotem, 1995) and significantly affects JS (Weismann et al., 1980; Blegen, 1993). WA is essential for the well-being of employees as it can reduce work stress (Karasek, 1998). WA leads enhanced performance (Sarigih, 2011) and leads JA (Spector, 1997; Judge et al., 2001). As per the studies, employees with a high degree of autonomy cause higher JS. According to these studies, a hypothesis is generated as follows

H2: Work autonomy has a significant direct impact on Job Satisfaction.

Self-efficacy positively influences job satisfaction (Susanti Saragih, 2011). Self-efficacy made the employees more able, confident, competitive, and satisfied in their jobs. Work autonomy among employees will enhance self-efficacy as a sense of

belongingness in their work and decisions. They can explore their ideas at the work level without much control and guidance, leading to a high work autonomy and self-efficacy bond. Work autonomy practices put forward a feeling of outcomes of the job prior to the result of their hard work (Wang & Netemeyer, 2002; DeCarlo & Agarwal, 1999). The obligation to their job causes an adequate response, favourable approaches, and enhanced JS (Susanti Saragih, 2011). A positive relationship exists between SE and JS (Cohrs et al., 2006). Employees with enhanced self-efficacy will attain job satisfaction as self-confidence and proficiency

made by self-efficacy give pleasure to the job (Purwanto, 2002). In a study of corporate employees in India by Mohite and James (2024), a significant relationship exists between SE, WA, and JS. These statements will generate the following hypothesis

H3: Work autonomy significantly affects JS and SE as a mediating variable.

H4: SE has a direct effect on JS.

The relationship between the constructs WA, SE, and JS with hypotheses is illustrated in Figure 1

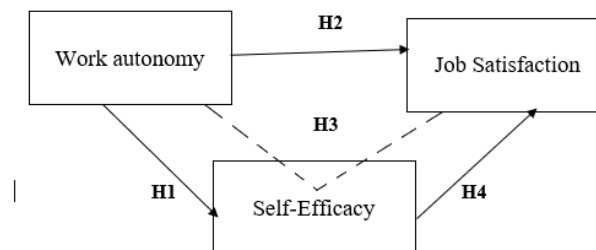


Figure 1 Research Frame Model

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected from teaching staff in Arts colleges in Kerala using a convenient sampling method. 348 samples were taken for analysis purposes. The questionnaire consists of two parts: questions related to demographic variables and work autonomy, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction variables. Structural equation Modelling in AMOS software and SPSS are used for data analysis. Work autonomy is measured using the scale of James A. Breugh (1985), which has 8 items. The variables are work schedule autonomy, work method autonomy, and work criteria autonomy for teachers.

Self-efficacy of teachers means teachers' confidence in their skills in teaching and controlling students, managing the classroom, and creating a positive

environment for learning and student engagement. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2001) Teacher Self-Efficacy Model is meant to measure the self-efficacy of teaching staff.

It consists of three items: strategies for giving instructions, engagement of students, and management in the classroom.

JS is measured using a scale from Spector's (1985) model of the Job Satisfaction Survey. It includes nine dimensions: pay, opportunities for growth, supervision, fringe benefits, recognition based on performance, working environment, coworkers, organisation culture, and communication between colleagues. A 5-point Likert scale is used for data collection and analysis.

Table 1 Descriptive Analysis of the Samples

SI. No	Particulars	Classification of Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
			N=348	
1.	Categories of Age (Years)	Less than 30	113	32.5
		31 to 35	102	29.3
		36 to 40	67	19.3
		41 to 45	38	10.9
		Above 45	28	8.0
2.	Gender	Male	207	59.5
		Female	141	40.5
		Other	0	0
3	Qualification	PG	270	78
		PhD	78	22
4.	Marital Status	Married	165	47.4
		Unmarried	180	51.7
		Separated	3	.9
4.	Experience in teaching	0-5 years	205	58.9
		6-10 years	74	21.3
		11-15 years	42	12.1

		Above 15 years	27	7.8
5.	Income per month	Below 30000	198	57
		30001-60000	119	34
		60001-90000	31	9

Table 1 displays the descriptive analysis of the samples. Teachers in arts colleges in Kerala are taken as the population. Data was collected from teaching staff using a structured questionnaire. 348 samples were taken using the convenience sampling method. The sample size is adequate for analysing statistical data (Farr & Timm, 2004; Crimp & Wright, 1995; Kumar, 2009; Field, 2009). Most of the teachers who responded are in the age group below 30 (32.5%), gender group of male (59.5%), qualification with PG level (78%), marital status of unmarried (51.7%), experience below 5 years (58.9%) and income per month below in the range of

30,000(57%). Structural equation Modeling is adopted for multivariate data analysis (Hair et al., 2017).

Data Analysis

The reliability of the constructs WA, SE, and JS is assessed through Cronbach's alpha. The obtained alpha values for WA, SE, and JS are 0.926, 0.890, and 0.935, respectively. The values are more significant than 0.7, showing high reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

The validity of the constructs is assessed by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) values

Constructs	Factors	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	Composite Reliability
Work Autonomy (WA)	Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation (WA1)	.796	0.926	0.729	0.928
	Authority (WA2)	.756			
	Convenience (WA3)	.748			
	Performance (WA4)	.778			
	Freedom (WA5)	.820			
	Adaptable (WA6)	.789			
	Able (WA7)	.785			
	Low turnover intentions (WA8)	.774			
Self-Efficacy (SE)	Instructional (SE1)	.828	0.890	0.609	0.9
	Classroom management (SE2)	.866			
	Student Engagement (SE3)	.867			
Job-Satisfaction (JS)	Pay (JS1)	.825	.935	0.666	0.933
	opportunities for growth (JS2)	.794			
	Supervision (JS3)	.867			
	Fringe benefits (JS4)	.808			
	Recognition (JS5)	.859			
	Working environment (JS6)	.793			
	Coworkers (JS7)	.762			

Table 3. Inter-correlation of Constructs with Square Roots of AVE

Constructs	SE	WA	JS
SE	(0.854)		
WA	0.510	(0.781)	
JS	0.724	0.772	(0.816)

Note: The values in brackets are the square root of the AVE value
Primary Data

Table 3 shows the intercorrelation of all constructs WA, SE, and JS with square roots of AVE values. The average of item-to-total correlation coefficients (>0.622) of each construct shows the validity of the scales. This indicates an acceptable range of validity of the constructs (Kerlinger, 1999). The Convergent and Discriminant validity of the constructs WA, SE, and JS are obtained from Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

The factor loading values are greater than the value of 0.5, which shows an acceptable range of convergent validity for all constructs (Hair et al., 2017). Table 2 demonstrates the CFA values, Cronbach's alpha, AVE, and composite reliability (CR value). The intercorrelation constructs with the square roots of AVE values are represented in Table 3. The square root of AVE values is greater than the values of intercorrelation

of constructs, showing the constructs' discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker,1981).

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is displayed in Figure 2 which is applied to the structural path model and the testing of hypotheses. AMOS 22 is used for SEM

analysis. The exogenous construct WA influences the endogenous constructs SE and JS. The model shows the intervening effect of SE on WA & JS and the direct impact of WA on JS. All the effects are seen to be statistically significant.

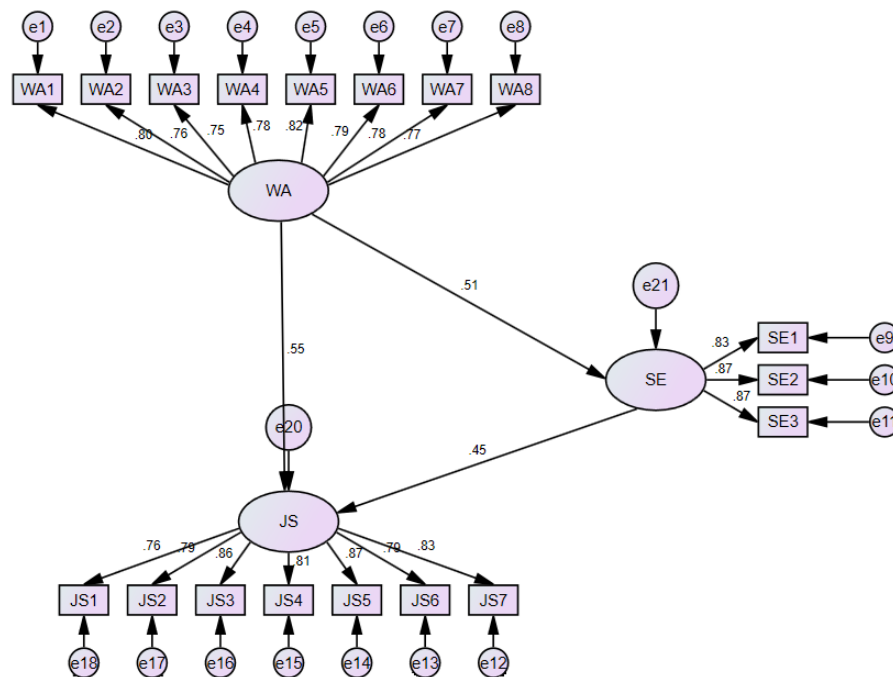


Figure 2. Structural Equation Model Results

The model's overall fitness is determined from parsimonious, incremental, and absolute fit indices.

Parsimonious Fit Indices

According to Mulaik et al. (1989), the Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI)= 0.697(>0.5) and Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) =0.802(>0.5) of the model.

Incremental Fit Indices

Bagozzi and Yi (1988) suggested Comparative Fit Index (CFI) =0.969(>0.9), Normal Fit Index (NFI)

=0.944(>0.9), Relative Fit Index (RFI)=0.934(>0.9), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) =0.970(>0.9) .

Absolute Fit Indices

According to Hair et al. (1998), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) are used to measure the accuracy of the model. The AGFI and RMSEA values obtained are 0.890(close to 0.9) and 0.057(<0.08), respectively.

Table 4 represents the measured model fit values.

Table 4. Measured Model Fit values

Model Fit Measures	Indicators
Parsimonious fit indices	Parsimony goodness of fit index (PGFI)=0.697
	Parsimony normed fit index (PNFI)=0.802
Incremental fit indices	Comparative fit index (CFI)=0.969
	Normed fit index (NFI)=0.944
	Incremental fit index (IFI)=0.970
Absolute fit indices	χ^2 for 130 degrees of freedom=274.869(p=0.000)
	Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)=0.890
	Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)=0.057
	Adjusted goodness of fit index(AGFI)=0.890

Table 5 represents the Fitness of the model concerning the recommended value.

Table 5 Fitness of the model

Model	CMIN/DF value	P value	RMR value	GFI value	AGFI value	CFI value	TLI value	RMSEA value
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Proposed Model	2.114	0.000	0.026	0.916	0.890	0.969	0.964	0.057
Recommended value	<5	>0.05	<0.080	>0.95	>0.90	>0.95	>0.95	<0.080

Tables 4 and 5 show the goodness of model fit. Cole (1987), Bentler (1990), and Marsh et al. (1988) reported that NFI, CFI, GFI and AGFI values are more than 0.9 show model accuracy in a good level. The AGFI value

is nearer to 0.9, GFI more than 0.9, and NFI more than 0.9, so the fitness of the model is in an accepted level. As per Kline (1998), a value of CMIN/DF less than 3 represents a sound fitness level. The obtained CMIN/DF value is 2.114, so the model fit is good.

Table 6. Test Results of Hypotheses

	Standardized Regression weights	Standard Error(SE).	Critical Ratio (t-value)	P value	Hypotheses
SE <--- WA	.527	.061	8.654	***	H1: WA→SE
JS <--- SE	.506	.054	9.369	***	H4: SE→JS
JS <--- WA	.639	.059	10.798	***	H2: WA→JS

Note: *** indicates $p < 0.001$

From Table 6, WA significantly affects SE, supporting hypothesis H1. WA possesses a direct significant effect on JS; thus, hypothesis H2 is accepted. SE significantly affects JS, so hypothesis H4 is also accepted.

Mediation effect

Cheung & Lau (2008) suggested the Bootstrapping technique for detecting mediation. The bootstrapping test determined the effect of SE (mediating construct) between WA and JS by using 5000 bootstrap samples. The mediation effect and total effects of the constructs are shown in Table 7 below. Here, the target construct is JS, and the exogeneous constructs are WA and SE

Table 7 Mediation and Total Effect

Structural Path	Effects	Standardized Effect (β)	Confidence Interval		Significance?
			2.50%	97.50%	
WA→ SE→JS	Mediation Effect	0.227	0.149	0.334	Yes
WA→ JS	Direct Effect	0.545	0.410	0.678	Yes
WA→ JS	Total Effect (Direct + Indirect)	0.772	0.687	0.841	Yes

The mediation effect is significant as the total effect of $\square=0.772$ from the construct(exogeneous) WA to the construct(endogenous) JS.

Hypothesis H3: WA→SE→JS is confirmed

CONCLUSION

This study analytically proves a correlation exists between WA, SE, and JS constructs. The SEM results show that WA significantly affects SE. Thus, hypothesis one(H1) is accepted. SE significantly affects JS. Thus, hypothesis two(H2) is valid. For every organization to sustain itself, employees' job satisfaction is essential. The mediation effect of SE between WA and JS is significant, so the results support hypothesis three(H3) and are confirmed by the Bootstrapping test. Predominantly, the direct impact of WA on JS is more effective than the mediation role of SE. Thus, hypothesis four is also supported. From the studies of Pousette and Hansen (2002), Hackman and Oldham (1980), and Fried and Ferris(1987), there exists a significant direct relationship between WA and JS. For the success of the organization, especially educational institutions, the authorities should ensure some freedom to their employees, especially the teachers, to decide their way of teaching, class handling, and student engagement

actions. This independence and liberty satisfied them and gave them better performance in their field. For every sector, employees expect some freedom at their job to work effectively and interestingly. This makes them more creative and self-efficient. Self-efficacy also makes them satisfied as they have a feeling of belongingness in their work results.

IMPLICATIONS

The research study focused on teaching staff in arts colleges in Kerala. However, some bias may exist in the sampling results. Management and institutional practices are different, so there are limitations to work autonomy practices in colleges. The study of constructs on demographic variables is not included, so there is scope for further research. For the varying learning and teaching cultures, the teachers can adopt new tools and technologies for further development.

DECLARATIONS

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

CONSENT DECLARATION

Human participation is involved because my research is associated with teaching staff in Arts colleges in Kerala.

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