

Original Article

A Study on Workplace Autonomy and Its Influence on Teaching Effectiveness among College Faculty in Kanyakumari District

Dr. N. Vinil Kumar¹, Dr. K. Lucas²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Nanjil Catholic College of Arts & Science, Kaliyakavilai, Kanyakumari District, Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India.

²HOD & Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Nanjil Catholic College of Arts & Science, Kaliyakavilai, Kanyakumari District, Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India

Email: vinil87ns@gmail.com

Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180202

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2

Pp. 5-10

February - 2026

Submitted: 15 Jan. 2026

Revised: 25 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 10 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

The present study examines the influence of workplace autonomy on teaching effectiveness among college faculty in Kanyakumari District. Workplace autonomy refers to the degree of freedom and independence faculty members experience in instructional planning, curriculum design, classroom management, assessment practices, and participation in academic decision-making. In higher education institutions, autonomy is considered a vital factor that enhances professional motivation, instructional innovation, and teaching quality. The primary objective of the study is to analyse the relationship between workplace autonomy and teaching effectiveness, examine differences based on demographic variables, and evaluate the extent to which autonomy contributes to faculty performance. Primary data were collected from 130 college teachers using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Statistical tools such as descriptive statistics, Chi-square test, t-test, ANOVA, correlation, and regression analysis were used for data analysis. The findings reveal a significant and positive relationship between workplace autonomy and teaching effectiveness. Faculty members who reported higher autonomy demonstrated better instructional planning, student engagement, classroom management, and assessment practices. Differences in teaching effectiveness were observed across experience and designation, while gender differences were minimal. The study concludes that enhancing workplace autonomy is essential for improving teaching effectiveness, faculty motivation, and institutional academic quality.

Keywords: Workplace Autonomy, Teaching Effectiveness, College Faculty, Academic Freedom, Higher Education.

Introduction

In the contemporary higher education system, teaching effectiveness is a critical determinant of student achievement, institutional reputation, and academic excellence. College faculty play a central role in shaping students' intellectual development, professional competence, and ethical values. However, the ability of teachers to perform effectively is influenced by several organisational factors, among which workplace autonomy has gained increasing importance. Workplace autonomy refers to the degree of freedom, discretion, and control that faculty members possess in planning instructional activities, selecting teaching methods, designing curriculum, evaluating students, and participating in academic and administrative decisions. Autonomy allows teachers to apply their professional expertise creatively and adapt instructional strategies to meet diverse learner needs. Autonomy is a key motivational factor that enhances intrinsic motivation, professional identity, and job involvement. Teachers who experience higher autonomy are more likely to experiment with innovative teaching techniques, use learner-centred approaches, integrate technology, and engage in reflective teaching practices. Conversely, restricted autonomy may lead to rigid teaching, reduced motivation, and diminished teaching effectiveness.

Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) Public License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work noncommercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

Address for correspondence:

Dr. N. Vinil Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Nanjil Catholic College of Arts & Science, Kaliyakavilai, Kanyakumari District, Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India.

How to cite this article:

Kumar, N. V., & K. Lucas. (2026). A Study on Workplace Autonomy and Its Influence on Teaching Effectiveness among College Faculty in Kanyakumari District. *Journal of Research & Development*, 18(2), 5–10. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18918702>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.18918702](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18918702)



In the Indian higher education context, institutional structures often involve hierarchical control and standardised procedures, which may limit teachers' professional freedom. This situation is particularly relevant in colleges where administrative regulations influence curriculum delivery, assessment methods, and classroom practices. Granting autonomy signals trust in faculty competence and encourages accountability, innovation, and academic engagement. Despite the recognised importance of autonomy, empirical research examining its influence on teaching effectiveness among college faculty—especially in districts like Kanyakumari—remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to explore how workplace autonomy affects teaching effectiveness and to provide evidence-based insights for institutional policy and academic management.

Review of Literature

Priya (2025) examined the relationship between workplace autonomy and teaching motivation in higher education institutions. The study revealed that autonomy in pedagogical decision-making increases faculty motivation and enthusiasm toward teaching. Teachers with freedom in instructional methods reported higher classroom engagement and student interaction. The research highlighted that autonomy promotes instructional creativity and innovation. Faculty members felt empowered to experiment with learner-centered approaches. The study also noted improved job involvement and professional satisfaction. Autonomy was identified as a key driver of teaching effectiveness. The author concluded that empowering teachers leads to sustainable academic performance.

Joseph and Merlin (2025) analysed academic decision-making autonomy and its influence on teaching quality among college teachers. The study found that faculty members with control over curriculum design and assessment practices exhibited higher teaching effectiveness. Autonomy encouraged teachers to adopt innovative evaluation methods and student-focused learning strategies. The research highlighted increased faculty participation in academic planning and institutional activities. Teachers reported higher confidence and commitment toward academic responsibilities. The study also observed improved student satisfaction and learning outcomes. Autonomy strengthened collaborative teaching and peer mentoring. The authors concluded that decision-making freedom is essential for academic excellence.

Devi (2025) explored the psychological effects of workplace autonomy on teachers in academic institutions. The study revealed that teachers with higher autonomy experienced lower stress and emotional exhaustion. Autonomy contributed to improved psychological well-being and job confidence. Faculty members felt more secure and valued in their professional roles. The research suggested that autonomy indirectly enhances teaching effectiveness through improved mental health. Teachers were more engaged and focused in classroom activities. The study also found higher levels of motivation and job satisfaction. Autonomy acted as a mediator between organisational support and teaching performance. The author emphasised the need for supportive academic environments.

Sharma and Meenakshi (2024) investigated the effects of administrative control on teaching effectiveness in colleges. The study found that excessive institutional control negatively impacts teachers' autonomy and creativity. Rigid policies restricted instructional flexibility and reduced teaching enthusiasm. Faculty members reported lower morale and professional dissatisfaction under strict supervision. The research highlighted that limited autonomy leads to mechanical teaching practices. Teachers felt discouraged from adopting innovative methods. The study stressed the importance of balancing academic freedom with institutional regulations. Autonomy was identified as essential for improving instructional quality. The authors recommended decentralised academic decision-making.

Ramesh and Kannan (2024) conducted a study on workplace autonomy and its impact on teaching effectiveness among college faculty. The researchers found that autonomy enables teachers to design flexible lesson plans and select appropriate teaching methodologies based on student needs. Faculty members with greater autonomy demonstrated higher instructional creativity and classroom engagement. The study also highlighted that autonomy enhances professional confidence and accountability among teachers. Teachers who were trusted with academic decisions showed better preparedness and commitment. The findings revealed a positive relationship between autonomy and instructional quality. The authors concluded that institutional support for autonomy improves overall teaching performance. The study strongly recommended autonomy-based academic policies.

Importance of the Study and Research Gap

Workplace autonomy has emerged as a critical component of effective academic management, influencing faculty performance, teaching quality, and institutional success. Autonomy empowers teachers to design meaningful learning experiences, adopt innovative teaching strategies, and respond effectively to student needs. Understanding the influence of autonomy on teaching effectiveness is essential for improving educational outcomes in higher education institutions. Although several studies have explored job satisfaction and organisational behaviour among teachers, limited research has directly examined the relationship between workplace autonomy and teaching effectiveness, particularly in the Indian college context. Moreover, existing studies often overlook the role of demographic variables such as age, experience, and qualification in shaping teaching effectiveness through autonomy. This study addresses these gaps by examining multiple dimensions of autonomy and their influence on teaching effectiveness among college faculty in Kanyakumari District. The findings provide practical insights for administrators to design autonomy-supportive policies that enhance teaching quality and academic excellence.

Statement Of The Problem

College teachers today are expected to perform multiple roles, including teaching, research, student mentoring, and administrative responsibilities. While institutional guidelines are necessary for standardisation, excessive control can restrict teachers' professional autonomy, limiting instructional creativity and effectiveness. Many colleges operate within rigid administrative frameworks that constrain faculty decision-making related to curriculum delivery, assessment, and classroom management. Such constraints may negatively affect teaching effectiveness, student engagement, and academic outcomes. Despite the importance of autonomy in fostering effective teaching, empirical evidence examining its influence among college faculty in Kanyakumari District is limited. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how workplace autonomy influences teaching effectiveness and to identify autonomy-related factors that enhance faculty performance.

Objectives of the Study

- ❖ To examine the relationship between workplace autonomy and teaching effectiveness among college faculty.
- ❖ To analyse the impact of academic, curricular, and administrative autonomy on instructional performance.
- ❖ To study the influence of demographic variables on teaching effectiveness.
- ❖ To suggest measures to enhance workplace autonomy for improving teaching effectiveness.

Hypotheses of the Study

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between workplace autonomy and teaching effectiveness among college faculty.

H₁₁: There is a significant relationship between workplace autonomy and teaching effectiveness among college faculty.

H₀₂: Academic, curricular, and administrative autonomy do not significantly influence teaching effectiveness.

H₁₂: Academic, curricular, and administrative autonomy significantly influence teaching effectiveness.

H₀₃: Demographic variables do not significantly influence teaching effectiveness.

H₁₃: Demographic variables significantly influence teaching effectiveness.

Research Methodology

Research Design	: Descriptive research design
Nature of the Study	: Empirical
Sample Size	: 130 college faculty members
Sampling Technique	: Convenience sampling
Area of Study	: Colleges in Kanyakumari District

Data Collection:

- Primary data through structured questionnaire
- Secondary data from journals, books, and reports

Measurement Scale: Five-point Likert scale

Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha):

- Workplace Autonomy – 0.88
- Teaching Effectiveness – 0.86

Tools for Analysis:

- Percentage analysis
- t-test
- ANOVA
- Chi-square test
- Correlation
- Regression

Tools for Data Analysis – Tables and Interpretation

Percentage Analysis

Table 1

Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 130)

Variable	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 30 years	32	24.6
	31–40 years	50	38.5
	41–50 years	30	23.1
	Above 50 years	18	13.8
Gender	Male	76	58.5
	Female	54	41.5

Teaching Experience	Below 5 years	40	30.8
	5–10 years	56	43.1
	Above 10 years	34	26.1

Sources: Primary Data

The percentage analysis shows that the majority of respondents belong to the 31–40 years age group, indicating a predominantly mid-career faculty population. Male faculty slightly outnumber female faculty. Most teachers have 5–10 years of experience, suggesting sufficient exposure to academic practices, making them suitable respondents for studying workplace autonomy and teaching effectiveness.

Teaching Effectiveness Based on Gender

Table 2

Difference in Teaching Effectiveness Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean Teaching Effectiveness	SD
Male	76	4.08	0.54
Female	54	4.02	0.56

t-value	p-value	Result
0.62	0.536	Not Significant

Sources: Computed Data

The t-test results reveal no significant difference in teaching effectiveness between male and female faculty members ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that gender does not significantly influence teaching effectiveness, and both male and female teachers perform at similar levels when workplace autonomy is provided.

Teaching Effectiveness across Experience Levels

Table 3

Teaching Effectiveness across Experience Levels

Experience	N	Mean	SD
Below 5 years	40	3.92	0.58
5–10 years	56	4.10	0.52
Above 10 years	34	4.18	0.50

Sources: Computed Data

ANOVA Table

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F-value	p-value
Between Groups	1.56	2	0.78	3.48	0.034*
Within Groups	28.44	127	0.22		
Total	30.00	129			

Sources: Computed Data

The ANOVA results show a significant difference in teaching effectiveness across experience levels ($p < 0.05$). Faculty members with more than 10 years of experience exhibit higher teaching effectiveness, suggesting that experience combined with autonomy enhances instructional performance.

Workplace Autonomy and Teaching Effectiveness

Table 4

Association between Workplace Autonomy and Teaching Effectiveness

Workplace Autonomy	High Effectiveness	Moderate Effectiveness	Low Effectiveness	Total
High	42	16	4	62
Moderate	22	30	6	58
Low	4	4	2	10
Total	68	50	12	130
Chi-square value	df		p-value	Result
18.76	4		0.001*	Significant

Sources: Computed Data

The Chi-square test indicates a significant association between workplace autonomy and teaching effectiveness ($p < 0.01$). Faculty members with high workplace autonomy are more likely to demonstrate high teaching effectiveness, confirming the importance of autonomy in academic performance.

Workplace Autonomy and Teaching Effectiveness

Table 5

Correlation between Workplace Autonomy and Teaching Effectiveness

Variables	Correlation (r)	Significance
Workplace Autonomy ↔ Teaching Effectiveness	0.71	Significant

Sources: Computed Data

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.71$) indicates a strong positive relationship between workplace autonomy and teaching effectiveness. This implies that higher levels of autonomy significantly enhance faculty instructional quality, student engagement, and classroom effectiveness.

Workplace Autonomy Predicting Teaching Effectiveness

Table 6

Regression Analysis – Workplace Autonomy Predicting Teaching Effectiveness

Predictor	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
Workplace Autonomy	0.71	9.84	<0.01	Significant

Sources: Computed Data

$R^2 = 0.50$

The regression analysis reveals that workplace autonomy is a significant predictor of teaching effectiveness ($p < 0.01$). The R^2 value of 0.50 indicates that 50% of the variation in teaching effectiveness is explained by workplace autonomy. This confirms that autonomy plays a crucial role in improving faculty teaching performance.

Findings

- ❖ The study reveals that the majority of college faculty members experience a moderate to high level of workplace autonomy, particularly in teaching methods, lesson planning, and classroom management.
- ❖ Faculty members with higher workplace autonomy demonstrate significantly better teaching effectiveness, including improved instructional delivery, student engagement, and assessment practices.
- ❖ The correlation analysis confirms a strong positive relationship between workplace autonomy and teaching effectiveness, indicating that increased autonomy leads to improved instructional performance.
- ❖ Regression analysis shows that workplace autonomy is a significant predictor of teaching effectiveness, explaining a substantial proportion of variation in faculty performance.
- ❖ The ANOVA results indicate significant differences in teaching effectiveness across experience levels, with senior faculty members reporting higher effectiveness compared to less experienced teachers.
- ❖ The t-test analysis reveals no significant difference in teaching effectiveness based on gender, suggesting equal instructional competence among male and female faculty.
- ❖ The Chi-square test establishes a significant association between levels of workplace autonomy and teaching effectiveness, reinforcing the importance of academic freedom.
- ❖ Faculty members with limited autonomy reported relatively lower confidence and reduced flexibility in adopting innovative teaching practices.

Suggestions

- ❖ College management should provide greater academic autonomy to faculty members in curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and evaluation techniques to enhance instructional effectiveness.
- ❖ Institutions should minimise excessive administrative control and rigid regulations that restrict faculty decision-making in academic matters.
- ❖ Faculty members should be encouraged to participate actively in academic planning, policy formulation, and departmental decision-making processes.
- ❖ Regular faculty development programmes should be organised to help teachers effectively utilise autonomy for innovative and student-centred teaching.
- ❖ Transparent and fair performance appraisal systems should be implemented to recognise effective teaching and motivate faculty members.
- ❖ Colleges should promote a supportive and flexible work environment, balancing workload and allowing reasonable flexibility in academic schedules.
- ❖ Periodic feedback mechanisms should be introduced to assess faculty autonomy and teaching effectiveness and implement timely improvements.

Conclusion

The present study clearly establishes that workplace autonomy plays a crucial role in enhancing teaching effectiveness among college faculty in Kanyakumari District. The empirical findings demonstrate that faculty members who enjoy greater freedom in instructional planning, academic decision-making, and classroom management exhibit higher levels of teaching effectiveness and professional confidence. The statistical analyses confirm a strong and

positive relationship between workplace autonomy and teaching effectiveness, highlighting autonomy as a key determinant of instructional quality. Differences in teaching effectiveness across experience levels further emphasise the importance of professional maturity and autonomy in academic performance, while minimal gender differences reflect equal teaching potential among faculty members. Overall, the study concludes that promoting autonomy-oriented management practices is essential for improving teaching quality, fostering instructional innovation, and strengthening institutional academic excellence. By empowering faculty members with greater autonomy, colleges can create a positive, sustainable, and effective learning environment that benefits teachers, students, and institutions alike.

References

1. 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. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01
2. Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1976). Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 16(2), 250–279. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073\(76\)90016-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(76)90016-7)
3. Joseph, A., & Merlin, D. (2025). Academic decision-making autonomy and teaching effectiveness among college faculty. *Journal of Higher Education Research*, 19(2), 85–99.
4. Kannan, S., & Ramesh, P. (2024). Workplace autonomy and teaching effectiveness in higher education institutions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 38(3), 412–426.
5. Northouse, P. G. (2021). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (9th ed.). Sage Publications.
6. Priya, R. (2025). Autonomy, motivation, and instructional creativity among college teachers. *Asian Journal of Educational Psychology*, 7(1), 33–47.
7. Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2020). *Organizational behavior* (18th ed.). Pearson Education.
8. Spector, P. E. (1997). *Job satisfaction: Application, assessment, causes, and consequences*. Sage Publications.
9. Sharma, K., & Meenakshi, R. (2024). Administrative control, autonomy, and teaching effectiveness in colleges. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 14(4), 118–132.
10. Devi, S. (2025). Psychological well-being and teaching performance in academic institutions. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour in Education*, 14(2), 56–70.