



## **THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN ACADEMIC AUTONOMY: A STUDY ON ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Academic autonomy refers to the freedom and self-governance of educational institutions, faculty, and students in making decisions related to curriculum, teaching methods, research, and academic affairs without external interference. The purpose of this study was to examine the connection between teacher role in academic autonomy and their burnout. There are multiple merit and demerits in academic autonomy due to this it's necessary to understand the role of teacher for successful implantation of academic autonomy. In academic autonomy A teacher work to develop students' self-confidence, provoke students' interest, keep students' enthusiasm in autonomous learning. Also teach students different methods of learner autonomy and guide them to do successful learning. This study followed correlational research design. The required data were collected through the surveys from 35 senior college teachers and the relationship between the surveys was analyzed A questionnaire is designed and circulate among the teachers which are working as mentor in Academic autonomy to understand there active role.

**Keywords:** Artificial intelligence, Higher education, Machine learning, natural language processing

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is generally Henri Holec (1979, 1981) who is credited with first applying the term autonomy to language learning, defining it as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec, 1981, p.3). According to Bond (1988, p.23)[Griffiths, C. & Soruç, A. (2020). *Individual Differences in Language Learning*. London: Palgrave. ]

Academic Autonomy means liberty to a College in all aspects of conducting its academic programs, granted by the University for promoting excellence.[1]

It is an big concept, denoting the autonomy or self-governance of a university by virtue of its academic role and status. Sometimes academic autonomy is taken in a narrower sense. It then refers to the specific freedom to design and define academic programmes and curricula, and to select (categories of) students.[2]



Teachers play a critical role in fostering academic autonomy among students

- 1. Guidance and Mentorship: The main and important role of** teachers like guides, providing backing and mentorship to students in their educational journey. They support through advice, help, and direction, allowing students to take right path during learning time
- 2. Forming a Helpful Environment:** Teachers promote a classroom environment that boosts exploration, critical thinking, and independent learning. They create a safe space for students to ask questions, express ideas
- 3. Developing Critical Thinking Skills:** Teachers facilitate the development of critical thinking skills by asking thought-provoking questions, motivate, and guiding students to evaluate information independently. This helps students to develop critical thinking skills
- 4. Building Confidence:** Through praising and proper feedback, teachers help students build confidence in their abilities. This confidence enables students to take risks, learn from mistakes, and develop in their studies
- 5. Promoting Self-Directed Learning:** Teachers provide resources, study material to help them to find pathway and how to explore topics of interest beyond the standard curriculum. Which promotes self-directed learning

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Academic autonomy is crucial for adopting creativity, innovation, and critical thinking within the academic community. However, it also comes with the bond to maintain academic standards, ethical practices, and responsibility to the public and relevant bodies.

Which gives freedom to academic institutions

- **Curriculum Design**
- **Research Focus**
- **Faculty Recruitment and Tenure**
- **Admission Criteria**
- **Governance**

Autonomy is a crucial issue for higher education and for higher education institutions in particular (European Commission, 2003 and 2005, Gibbons et al., 1994, Goddard, 2005, Henkel, 2005, Moses, 2007, Tirranen, 2005, Trow, 1996).

In this context, Harman (2001, cited by Okwar) stresses that autonomy is very important for higher education institutions.



He also adds that autonomy is a necessity for universities to reduce interference with outside agents or by politicians in academic affairs.

To succeed, Rosovsky (2001) observed that academic staff must be involved in university decision-making. Universities need the full participation of academic staff in the decisionmaking process, and better guarantees of academic autonomy (Altbach, 2011).

Academic autonomy plays a very important role in students' learning and development in many ways like

- **Encouraging Critical Thinking:**
- **Diverse Learning Opportunities**
- **Quality Education**
- **Personalized Learning Experiences:**
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:**

Students' engagement in learning, and their behavior of engaging in tasks in a timely manner with approach motivation like gaining an advantage in completing the task which is known as a 'timely engagement' in the present study, which is the most desirable autonomously self-regulated behavior for university students to be supported and nurtured (Strunk et al., Citation2013).

The teachers fear that the management would have more control and would be subjected to higher work load and also they may not rise to the expectations of the management. The teachers fear that the management would have more control and would be subjected to higher work load and also they may not rise to the expectations of the management. The teachers fear that the management would have more control and would be subjected to higher work load and also they may not rise to the expectations of the management. The teachers fear that the management would have more control and would be subjected to higher work load and also they may not rise to the expectations of the management. The teachers fear that the management would have more control and would be subjected to higher work load and also they may not rise to the expectations of the management. The teachers fear that the management would have more control and would be subjected to higher work load and also they may not rise to the expectations of the management. The teachers fear that the management would have more control and would be subjected to higher work load and also they may not rise to the expectations of the management. (y KizhekepatSankaran on 19 November 2018.)

Typical depressive symptoms—low self-esteem, loss of interest in normally enjoyable activities, low energy, and pain without a clear cause frequently (APA, Citation2013)—are mainly caused by stressful experiences within academic and interpersonal domains, and have been identified as major influences on a students' academic performance in both Japan and

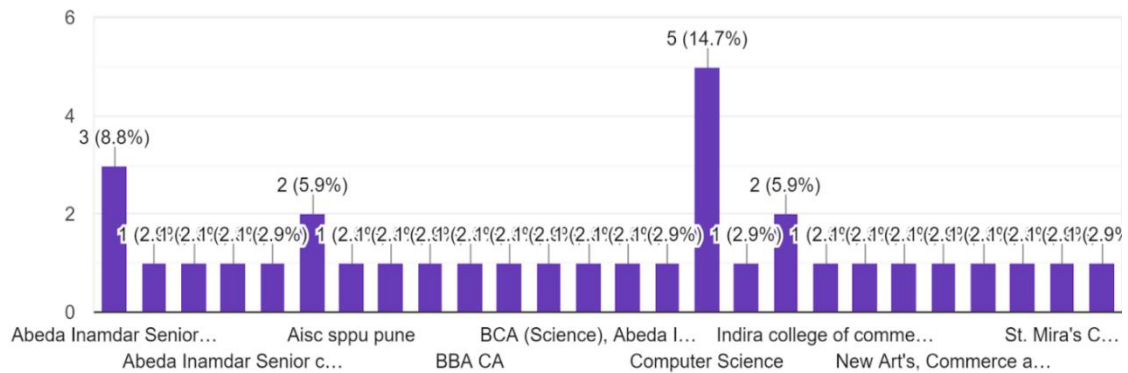
China (Li & Chen, Citation2004; Steptoe et al., Citation2007). Tsukahara (Citation2011) autonomy support from teachers has a positive impact on students' autonomous self-regulation in learning and preventing procrastination as a result (Won & Shirley, Citation2018)

### PRESENT CASE STUDY

The main purpose of this research is to study the Role of teachers in academic autonomy mainly our study focuses on issues and challenges. We focus on teachers from various senior colleges from higher education like degree colleges who were working in academic autonomy colleges. The study carried out for senior colleges from pune city and nager colleges in the Maharashtra state where autonomy has started. The survey has been carried out in these colleges which is affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University as Parent University. The survey has been conducted in online mode and the questionnaire was circulated and their responses were recorded. The respondents are all senior teachers working in senior colleges from many years. Total 34 faculties responded to the questionnaire

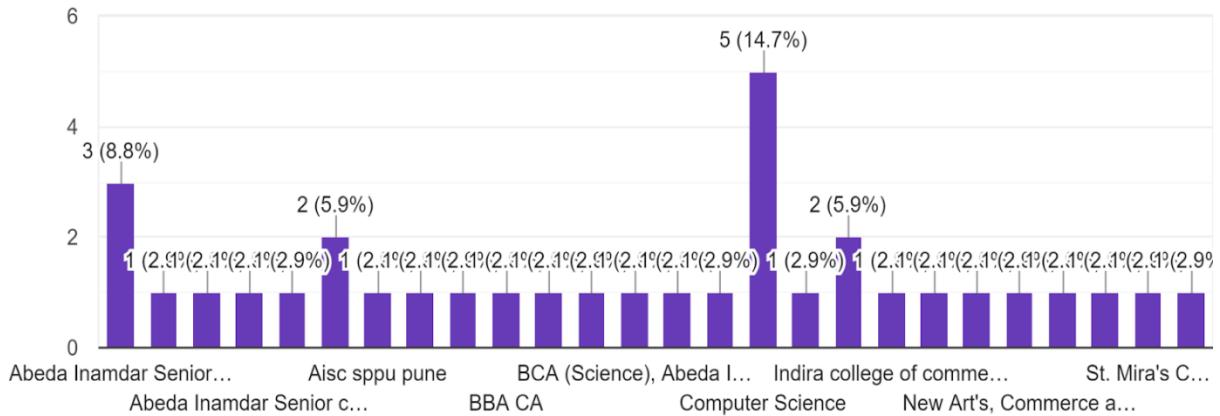
Educational Institution/Department:

34 responses



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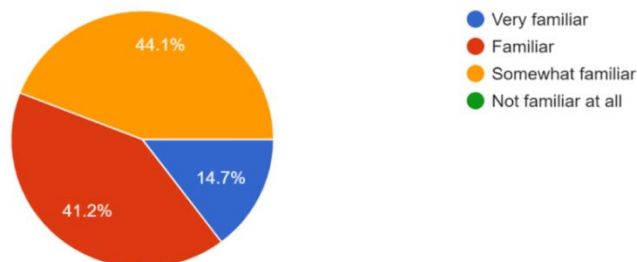


This graph show the teaching experiences of the respondent teachers if we study the respondent teaching experience it highlighted following points

Many of the teaching faculty work in newly academy autonomic pattern as they are very experienced and attached with all work-related to teaching syllabus restructuring, mentoring etc. But the difference is that they work with affiliated university pattern and work in fixed frame work so they feel different in academy freedom pattern

How familiar are you with the concept of academic autonomy?

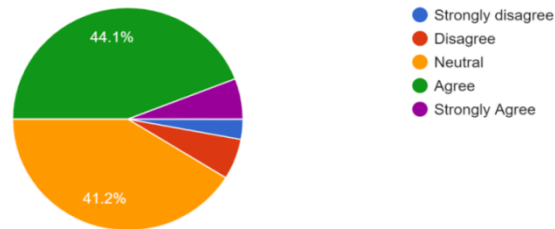
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44.1% Teachers were somewhat familiar with the concept of academic autonomy and 41.2% where familiar

I find it challenging to balance providing academic autonomy to students with maintaining educational standards.

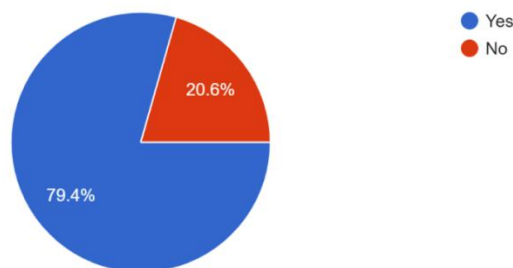
34 responses



44.1% respondent's finds challenging to balancing providing academic autonomy to students with maintaining educational standards and also 5.9 % strongly agree that it is challenging 41.2% respondents are having a neutral opinion. May be they are newly appointed.

Have you been actively involved in promoting academic autonomy among your students?

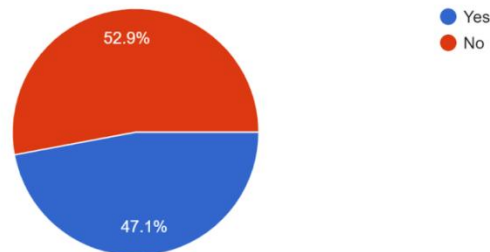
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If we observe the above chart it shows near about 80% teachers were actively involved in promoting the academic autonomy among students which shows a positive approach towards academic autonomy

Have you received training or professional development related to promoting academic autonomy?

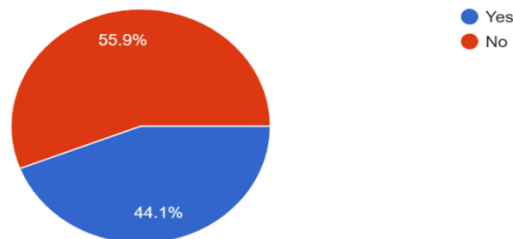
34 responses



In all 52.9 % of the respondents didn't receive any kind of professional development training for promotion of academic autonomy. 47 % of them have got the training but may be they have taken the training by their own in another way to understand the autonomy because there was no record found in all the above colleges about special training given to them

Do you feel that you have received adequate support and resources to handle the increased autonomy in your academic role?

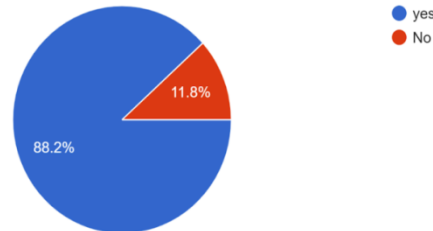
34 responses



55.9 % teachers have not received adequate support and resources. due to which their increase in the stress level of the teacher's to complete their task without any support. Rest 44 % of them have got the resources to handle the academic role may be by their personal relations from different colleges

Are there any additional resources or support you believe would be helpful in reducing your stress levels while maintaining academic autonomy?

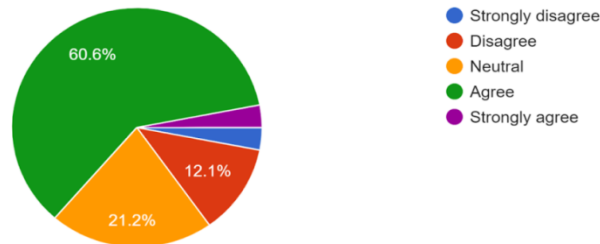
34 responses



The above graph shows the mental condition of the teachers about their problem of reducing stress during the academy autonomy 88.2% teachers needed additional resources

The transition from a more structured educational environment to one with greater academic autonomy has been stressful.

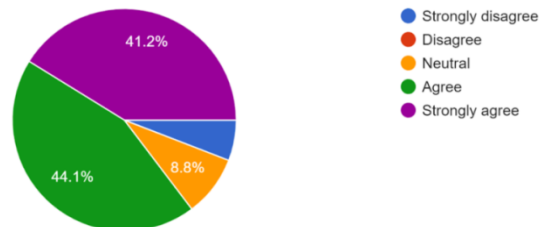
33 responses



60.6 % teachers feel stressful during transition from a more structured educational environment to one with greater academic autonomy 21.2% teachers are neutral about their opinion may be due to lack of teaching experience in any of the environment

Teachers have a more active role in shaping the curriculum and teaching methods in academic autonomy?

34 responses

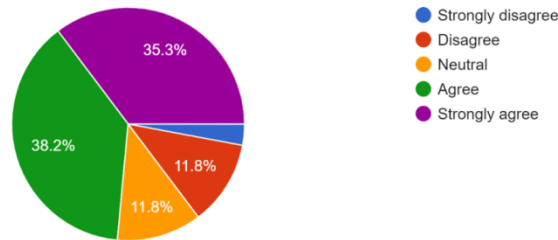




Teachers feel stress because they have active role in shaping the curriculum and teaching methods. About 41.2 % teachers strongly agree for this and 44.1% agree means it shows more than 80% have same thinking because these two things are very important in the educational system if this goes wrong then entire education journey will get hampered

There is need of immense collaboration with colleagues or administrators when making decisions related to academic autonomy?

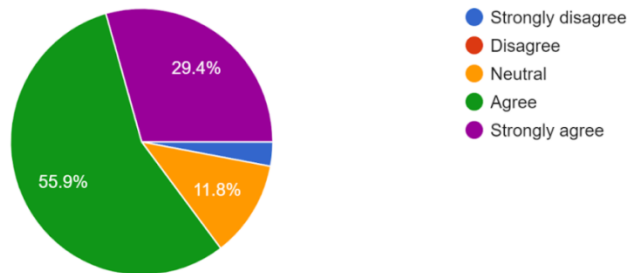
34 responses



There is need to take consideration of all when making decision related academic autonomy for the above statement 35.3% teacher strongly agree and 38.2 % agree for this and about 2.9% strongly disagrees

There is need of adequate support and resources to handle the increased autonomy in teachers academic role?

34 responses



The above graph shows that there is need of adequate support and resources to increased academic autonomy for the teachers where 55.9% of them agree for this



## CHALLENGES

**1. Developing Meaningful Curriculum:** Developing meaningful curriculum for such courses based very important which is based on the objective of communicating knowledge, skills, uses and future changes in the subjects. Which needs many resources including books, internet resources, industrial experts, and research articles to develop optimum curriculum need

**2. Effective Pedagogy:** After developing meaningful curriculum which shall focus on overall development of the students the most important stage is developing a effective pedagogy and identifying ,appointing suitable faculties as trainers, motivating and facilitating students in research to create new knowledge in the field, evaluating the competency of the students at the end of the training period,( P. S. Aithal\* &ShubhrajyotsnaAithal\*\*2019)

**3. Effective use of Technology:** it's a big challenge for the teacher's to use and learn effective technology because foreffective teaching & learning process, evaluation system using suitable technology always a powerful system,. Adopting latest technology gives many advantages to fulfil the objectives and proper impact on student.

**4. No proper mechanism :** In the context of India, institute of higher education have a certain amount of autonomy but there is no proper mechanism for ensuring accountability (Sharma and Singh 2018)

**5. Low funding :** Higher education in India suffers from several systemic deficiencies such as autonomy of academic institutions and low funding by the UGC and the Government (George 2012)

## CONCLUSION

The survey from different seniorcolleges was conducted for role of teachers in academic autonomy to study issues and challenges

- Teachers found many challenges to balance academic autonomy with students to maintain educational standards
- The above case study shows that the metal stress of the teachers is increasing due to lack of professional training, even though they have taken lots of efforts in promoting academic autonomy because academic autonomy is becoming todays need
- Teachers should be provided with counselling workshops to avoid their mental stress
- There is need to take consideration of colleagues and administer when making decision related to academic autonomy



- There should be additional resources provided to handle the increased autonomy work
- Teachers should be appreciated in term of promotions ,incentives etc.

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