



TEACHERS' AUTONOMY IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION

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Abstract

Carl Rogers, 1969 Williams, and Burden, 1997: 35 in teachers' autonomy a popular research topic advised "The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has realized that no knowledge is secure; that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security." in the field of teachers' education. An autonomous teacher can produce autonomous learners yet be an independent implementer, especially in education and government policies. Teachers' autonomy is becoming a popular subject of inquiry in today's era. Teachers are considered professionals and should be empowered and given the freedom or autonomy to determine the best treatment for their student's learning problems. Teachers are said to have the efficacy of teaching students in multicultural classrooms. Professional Development in Multicultural Education (PDME) has been implemented around the world to equip teachers with efficacy that meets the educational needs of different students. Autonomy in education is often associated with independence and there are some philosophical and psychological concepts of positive freedom (or "freedom from") including the idea of autonomy. Teachers' autonomy has become an important aspect of teachers' professionalism. An autonomous teacher is capable of producing autonomous learners. Therefore, teachers' autonomy can be considered as the freedom of teachers to make decisions about the best way of learning for their students and to ensure high achievement. Teachers play a major role in preparing students to excel in their studies. The present paper deals with the theoretical aspects of teachers' autonomy in the teaching profession.

Keywords: Teachers' Autonomy, Autonomy, Professional Independence, NPE 1986, NCF 2005

Introduction

Over the past few decades, teachers' autonomy has been a hotly debated subject of inquiry. High degrees of teachers' autonomy have been associated with positive influence, as autonomous teachers have been proven to be efficient and satisfied with their work, with positive perceptions about their working environment in which they feel empowered (Parker, 2015; Wilches, 2007). Teachers' autonomy is related to better standards of learning, a more stress-free and healthier work environment for teachers, bringing their motivation and helping them achieve the learning goals for the learners faster and more easily. Autonomy refers to the right of an individual to be free from any outside control or interference and to take decisions relating to one's interests. It has been interpreted differently by different academics, while psychologists such as Piaget and Erikson associate it with the freedom enjoyed by the child physically, psychologically, and morally, some also call it perceived autonomy, where the individual is free to make choices and act responsibly on those choices. (Gonzalez, 1989) (Frinkin, Post & Robert (2009). The stakeholders related to academic autonomy mainly include teachers, researchers, administrators, learners, writers, poets, etc. In short, all those who have participated and who play an important role in academics on an ongoing basis. Autonomy is a means to encourage and strengthen the power of teachers in a personal or professional sense, not just pressure on the teachers. Teachers' autonomy is related to many aspects of school functioning, such as teaching, managing classrooms, evaluating students, developing curriculum, etc. It has four elements: areas of teachers' autonomy, decision making, Freedom, and Control (strong, 2012). All these areas of teachers' autonomy relate to and support each. Teachers have to control the curriculum, Teaching, and Evaluation of their everyday activities as no one has a better understanding than the teachers. Autonomous teachers are capable of bringing about desired changes in the teaching and learning environment of the students. It also helps in producing autonomous learners who will benefit the learning process of the students, especially in decision making. Current job satisfaction among new teachers and indicating positive responsiveness to teaching, and teachers with higher autonomy scores expressed a desire to re-enter teaching when faced with that decision (Pearson & Hall, 1993). Teachers' autonomy is driven by a need for personal and professional improvement, so that an autonomous teacher may seek out opportunities throughout his or her career to developing further constructed processes, where teachers support & develop groups that can act as teachers'-learner pools of diverse knowledge, experience, equal power & autonomous learning.

The concept of Teachers' Autonomy

Analyzing the word itself, the initial 'autos' refers to 'self', while 'nomos' is the second component, relating to a law governing an individual (Siebert and Mills, 2007 as cited by Gemma Parker, 2015). Towards Definition of Autonomy In the last two decades, there has been an increased interest in promoting autonomous behavior in education.

The following definitions represent these latest ideas of autonomy:

Allwright (1990:12) saw autonomy as "an ever-changing but optimal state of balance between maximum self-development and human interdependence at any given time"; This definition emphasizes key concepts of self-development as well as change, which represents our efforts in the process.

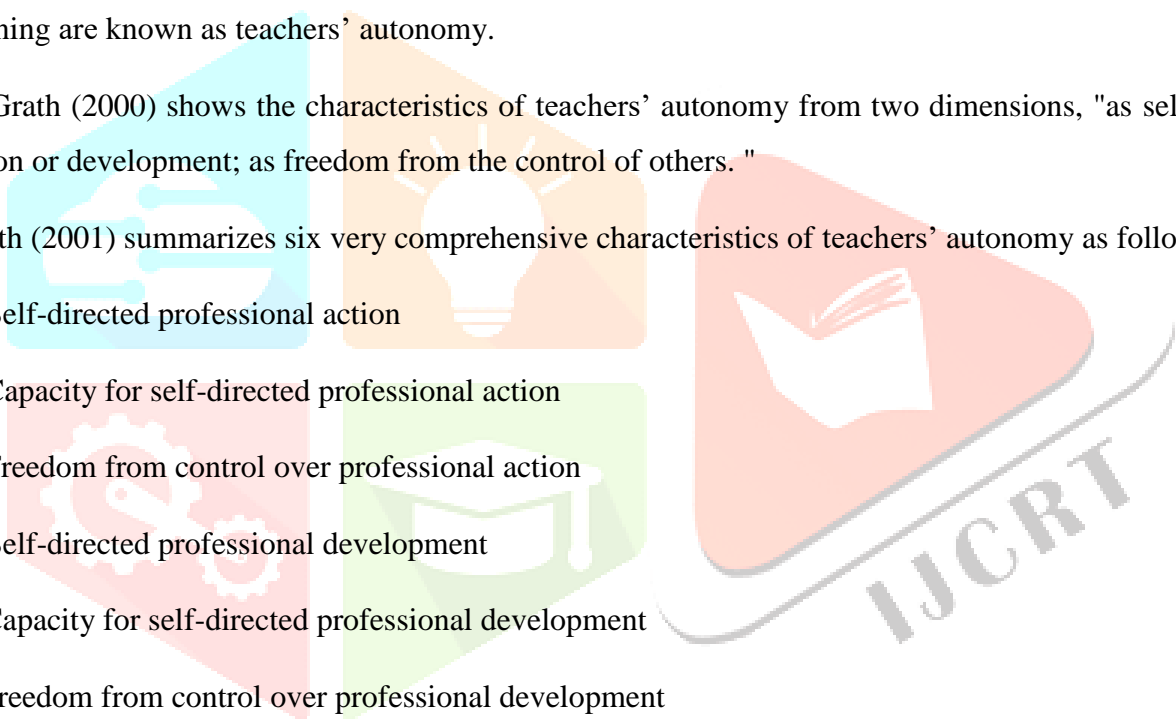
Littlewood's Definition (1997:428) We can define an autonomous individual as someone who has the independent ability to make and make choices that govern their actions. This ability depends on two main components: ability and desire.

According to Friedman, (1999). Teachers' autonomy is a means of encouraging and strengthening the power of teachers in a personal or a professional arena, not just as a buffer against pressures exerted on teachers.

(According to Huang (2005), "the teachers' will, ability and freedom, to take control" Their teaching and learning are known as teachers' autonomy.

McGrath (2000) shows the characteristics of teachers' autonomy from two dimensions, "as self-directed action or development; as freedom from the control of others. "

Smith (2001) summarizes six very comprehensive characteristics of teachers' autonomy as follows:

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- A. Self-directed professional action
 - B. Capacity for self-directed professional action
 - C. Freedom from control over professional action
 - D. Self-directed professional development
 - E. Capacity for self-directed professional development
 - F. Freedom from control over professional development

Willner (1990) identified an old concept of teachers' autonomy based on independence through isolation and A new concept of isolation, and teachers' autonomy based on the freedom of collaborative decision making and before making Screenplay professional options related to the services provided for students.

According to Richard Smith (2000), teachers' autonomy refers to "the ability to develop " Appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitudes for oneself as a teacher in collaboration with others."

According to Huang (2005), "teachers' willingness, capacity, and freedom to take control of their teaching and learning are known as teachers' autonomy.

Autonomy as defined by Pearson and Hall (1993) is a sense of control of teachers' desire for themselves and their working environment.

Teachers' autonomy is defined as the teachers' "self-rule and independence in conducting their tasks in terms of process, decision making, and time management" (Song, Uhm, & Kim,)

The theories suggest that an administrator of an organization should share and transfer the autonomy to their staff members. Teachers' autonomy brings several advantages for teachers and schools when it is applied to practice in daily activity. Several theories related to teachers' autonomy claim that teachers' autonomy is one of the desired powers in work activity teachers. The other theories said that any organization without autonomy will fail to perform well. Several researchers have made their contributions to understanding the make-up of autonomy covering the following aspects:

- Autonomous teachers should have the good institutional knowledge to start to address effectively constraints on teaching and learning; they should also be willing to confront institutional barriers socially, However, they should be aware that neither teachers' nor student autonomy means freedom from all constraints.
- Autonomy does not mean that teachers completely transfer all control and decisions to learners. Learners need teachers' collaboration to gain some levels of autonomy.
- Autonomy is not an "all-or-nothing" concept; it can be developed and may be present in some aspects of a person's life and absent from others. Individuals may be autonomous to different degrees, and age and maturity seem to influence it.
- In language learning, the level of language proficiency seems to be linked to the presence and degree of achievable autonomy; likewise, the use of learning strategies that are effective for a given individual is also important.
- Learner autonomy is concomitant to teachers' autonomy.

Teachers' autonomy is also known as academic freedom. Autonomy is also described as a capacity to take charge of, take responsibility for, or control learning. of all these definitions and ideas of autonomy, I identify autonomous teachers' as one who have the potential for self-directed teachers' learning or professional development, as it focuses on our development as human and sustainable learners. which is one of the main requirements. It is one of the main sources of personal and professional satisfaction in today's society.

Need and importance of Teachers' Autonomy

The value of teachers' autonomy towards education is evident in many ways. Teachers need a great deal of autonomy if they want to be lifelong learners, decision-makers, and leaders, and provide effective instruction for all students to be effective in the classroom. Teachers' autonomy is also a prominent workplace condition associated with teaching self-efficacy (Hodge, 2002) and positive teachers' attitudes and performance (Blase & Kirb), NCF (2005) states "Teachers' autonomy is essential to ensuring a learning environment that meets the diverse needs of children. As much space, independence, flexibility, and respect are needed by the learner, so do the teachers."

Thus, teachers' autonomy is a panacea for the teaching profession, so that the teachers' can creatively do their teaching work. The importance of teachers' autonomy can be clarified in some points which are written below.

- An autonomous teacher feels personal responsibilities, attends workshops & comes up with new classroom ideas.
- Teachers' autonomy refers to the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge & attitude for oneself as a teacher, in cooperation with others.
- Autonomous teachers feel more confident in the virtual learning environment.
- Teachers' autonomy is driven by a need for personal and professional improvement, so that an autonomous teacher may seek out opportunities throughout his/her career to develop further.
- Teachers' autonomy is necessary to be able to respond to student needs, interests & motivation and individualize our approach.
- Teachers' autonomy is essential for ensuring a learning environment that addresses children's diverse needs. Etc.

What Teachers' Autonomy does not include

Finally, the above discussion serves to clarify what teachers' autonomy is not and uncovers distorted meanings given to the concept which is given below in points.

1. Perceiving teachers' autonomy as isolation justifies educational policies that impose practices of collaborative work, exert control and pressure over teachers' work, and promote homogenization of teaching and learning based on standardized curricula and testing. Teachers' autonomy is not independence or isolation. It entails interdependence, responsibility, mutual support, professional discretion, and commitment to the educational community.
2. Teachers' autonomy refers to the right of the teachers to exert initiative and carry out professional action according to school stakeholders' needs and based on the necessary conditions for success.
3. The study of teachers' autonomy involves the analysis of personal beliefs, professional competence, and environmental factors that interrelate for the successful exercise of control over school matters. Teachers' autonomy cannot be explained as an exclusive psychological, technical, or political issue or just in terms of the promotion of student autonomy as has been frequently suggested in applied linguistics.
4. Teachers' autonomy is not a static entity that some people possess whilst others do not. It is a changeable condition that varies across different domains of teachers' decision-making and by situational, personal, and external constraints.
5. Teachers' autonomy does not refer to an absolute state of freedom from constraints. It refers to the responsible exercise of discretion within the limits of the interest and needs of the school's stakeholders.

Hurdles to Teachers' Autonomy

The pursuit of developing and practicing teachers' autonomy faces many obstacles which are given below:

1. The first source of obstacles is fear of change, a powerful one because familiarly doing things is safer than navigating new, unknown waters.
2. Another strong obstacle to teachers' autonomy is the fear of letting go. It can be very frustrating not to be in charge of all the details anymore and empowering students through exercises of the balance of power in the classroom is something that many of us are not prepared to promote.
3. A third source of constraints that we all experience comes from educational authorities, government, or organizational institutions, whose goal is to regulate the actions of teachers.
4. A fourth, and no less important source of obstacles lies within us: our attitude can be a major obstacle.
5. At the school level, the curriculum, administrator demands, PEI, differences with colleagues with whom we must coordinate activities, and even the need to please parents, students, other teachers, and the community in general, teachers may work against autonomy and sometimes they do.
6. Another important factor in institutional constraints is the fact that while demands can be very high, they can come in too often, leaving little room for teachers to critically analyze, adapt and prepare.
7. Our personal and professional growth and development, sometimes, is the reason why we prefer to be followers and don't want to lead, so we rely on our old practice, experience, and material instead of trying new things.
8. even after we have evidence that they can improve our work and the learning of our students even then we do not want soon to learn and adopt new things but we keep hesitant.
9. A negative attitude, at times, is what holds us back in terms of progress, innovations, knowledge, and skills, and even on the career ladder. Etc.

Conclusion

Teachers' autonomy is driven by a need for personal and professional improvement, so autonomous teachers may seek out opportunities throughout their careers to develop further. The positive form of autonomy represents the freedom of creation of the teachers. Degree of autonomy, Current job satisfaction among new teachers, and indicating positive responsiveness to teaching, and teachers with higher autonomy scores expressed a desire to re-enter teaching when faced with that decision (Pearson & Hall, 1993). Concepts of autonomy have been found.

Teachers' personal and professional sides also need to be protected from external pressures. On the professional side, we need to protect our teachers' professional roles such as teaching, managing the classroom, evaluating students, developing curriculum, etc. On the other hand, we have to preserve

teachers' power in teachers' side roles, such as responsibility, honesty, eagerness, wisdom, etc. They need to do all of it in freedom.

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