



Impact of college autonomy on quality in higher education as perceived by teachers

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Abstract

The objective of the present study was to investigate the impact of college autonomy on quality in higher education in terms of teachers' perception relating to their satisfaction with principal as a leader, quality of teacher, linkages and interface, students, co-curricular activities, teaching, office management, relationships, material resource, examination and job satisfaction. A sample of 60 teachers 30 each from nine autonomous colleges and nine non-autonomous colleges was selected randomly. The teachers serve at least two years in those colleges were selected for sample group. The Mukhopadhyay's Institutional Profile Questionnaire for teachers (MIPQ) was adapted and used for collection of data. The "t" test reveals that (i) the teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with principal as a leader, but the teachers of autonomous colleges were more dissatisfied with principal as a leader ;(ii) the quality of teachers of autonomous colleges were better than the quality of teachers in non-autonomous colleges; (iii) the teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with linkages and interface ; (iv) the teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with students ; (v) the teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with co-curricular activities organized in colleges but the teachers of non-autonomous colleges were more dissatisfied with co-curricular activities organized in colleges;(vi) the quality of teaching in autonomous colleges was significantly better than the quality of teaching in non-autonomous colleges; (vii) the teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with the office management in colleges; (viii) the teachers of autonomous colleges showed less satisfaction with relationship than the teachers of non-autonomous colleges; (ix) the teachers of autonomous colleges were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with material resources, whereas the teachers of non-autonomous colleges were satisfied with material resources of the colleges; (x) the examination system in autonomous colleges was significantly better than the examination system in non-autonomous colleges; and (xi) the teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges showed their dissatisfaction with the job.

Keywords: autonomy, quality, higher education, autonomous college and teachers' satisfaction

Introduction

Reforms in structural and functional aspects of higher education might be necessary condition, but not sufficient condition in determining quality in education. Grant of autonomy to potential colleges by the universities concerned has been the new trend in Indian higher education since the implementation of the National Policy on Education (MHRD, 1986) [4] to ensure quality and excellence.

Quality in education depends on the satisfaction of beneficiaries. A critical examination of studies conducted on autonomous colleges revealed that most of the studied were conducted to know the functioning of autonomous colleges. Vedanayagam under Association of Indian Universities (1988) studied examination system of autonomous colleges. Sudha Rao *et al.* (1999) [10] studied organizational climate of the autonomous colleges. Reaction of students towards the examination system of autonomous colleges was studied by Panda (2002) [4], Padhi (2004) [7] and Dwibedi (2006) [3]. Some studies attempted to reveal teaching activities including methods followed, and skills and techniques used by teachers in autonomous colleges (Sahu, 1999; Bohidar, 2002) [10, 2]. Some researchers studied problems of autonomous colleges and on the basis of research findings recommendations were made for corrective measures (Sudha Rao, 1990; Mohanty,

1992; Sahu, 1999) [9, 5, 10]. There found a dearth of systematic research studies investigating the effect of college autonomy on quality in higher education in terms of satisfaction of such beneficiaries as students, parents, teachers, principals and members of community. For which the present study has been design to study the impact of college autonomy on quality in higher education as perceived by teachers.

Objective

The Objective of the Present Study Was

To study the impact of college autonomy on quality in higher education in terms of teachers' perception relating to their satisfaction with principal as a leader, quality of teacher, linkages and interface, students, co-curricular activities, teaching, office management, relationships, material resource, examination and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis

There exists significant difference between perception of teachers of autonomous colleges and non-autonomous colleges relating to their satisfaction with principal as a leader, quality of teacher, linkages and interface, students, co-curricular activities, teaching, office management, relationships, material resource, examination and job

satisfaction.

Sample

A sample of 60 teachers 30 each from nine autonomous colleges and nine non-autonomous colleges was selected randomly. The teachers serve at least two years in those colleges were selected for sample group.

Tools

The Mukhopadhyay's Institutional Profile Questionnaire for teachers (MIPQ) developed by Mukhopadhyay (2001) [6] was adapted by the investigator for the teachers working in colleges. The MIPQ consisted of 110 items to assess teachers' perception relating to their satisfaction with eleven dimensions of education such as principal as a leader, teacher quality, linkages and interface, students, co-curricular activities, teaching, office management, relationships material resources, examination and job satisfaction. The content validity of the scale was ascertained by the help of experts' judgment. The reliability co-efficient calculated for the questionnaire was .94.

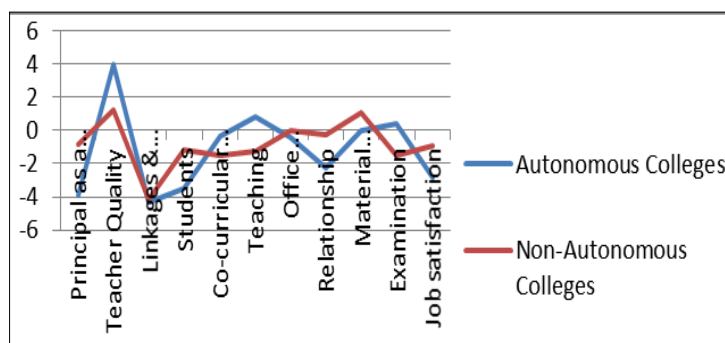
Results

As can be seen in Table 1 the teachers of autonomous colleges and non autonomous colleges differed significantly on their perception relating to satisfaction with principal as a leader ($t=3.91;df=58;P<0.01$). Further, the Figure 1 shows that the teachers of autonomous colleges were highly dissatisfied with principal as a leader as the average perception score was less

than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M= -3.89<M=0$), whereas, the teachers of non-autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with principal as a leader as the average perception score was less than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-0.86<M=0$). The perception of teachers in non autonomous colleges relating to satisfaction with principal as a leader was better than the teachers in autonomous colleges ($M=-3.89<M=-0.86$). The finding emerged that the teachers of autonomous colleges were highly dissatisfied with the principal as a leader; whereas the teachers of non autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with principal as a leader. As can be seen in Table 1 there found significance of difference between the perception of teachers of autonomous colleges and non autonomous colleges ($t=2.51; df=58;P<0.05$) in favour of teachers of autonomous colleges ($M=3.96>M=1.24$) relating to satisfaction with quality of teachers. Further, the Figure 1 shows that the teachers of autonomous colleges were satisfied with the quality of teachers as the average perception score was greater than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=3.96>M=0$). However, the teachers of non autonomous colleges were satisfied with the quality of teachers as the average perception score was greater than the average scale value for the neutral level of satisfaction ($M=1.24>M=0$). The teachers of autonomous colleges were more satisfied with the quality of teachers than the teachers of non-autonomous colleges.

Table 1: Summary of t' values for perception of teachers in autonomous and non-autonomous colleges relating to their satisfaction with different dimensions of quality in higher education (N=60)

Types of Colleges Quality Dimension	Autonomous college		Non-autonomous college		t' value	Level of significance
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Principal as leader	-3.89	2.51	-0.86	3.33	-3.91	0.01
Teacher quality	3.96	3.47	1.24	4.70	2.51	0.05
Linkages & interface	-4.37	3.88	-4.17	3.52	0.21	NS
Students	-3.48	3.79	-1.2	3.18	-2.47	0.05
Co-curricular activities	-0.34	3.55	-1.48	2.86	1.7	NS
Teaching	0.86	3.65	-1.24	2.81	2.46	0.05
Office management	-0.45	4.34	-0.03	3.83	0.38	NS
Relationships	-2.27	2.94	-0.27	3.19	-2.48	0.05
Material resources	0	3.35	1.1	2.59	-1.39	NS
Examination	0.41	4.15	-1.51	3.04	2.01	0.05
Job satisfaction	-2.86	2.60	-0.89	3.01	-2.66	0.05
Total	-12.13	38.23	-9.34	36.06	-0.72	NS



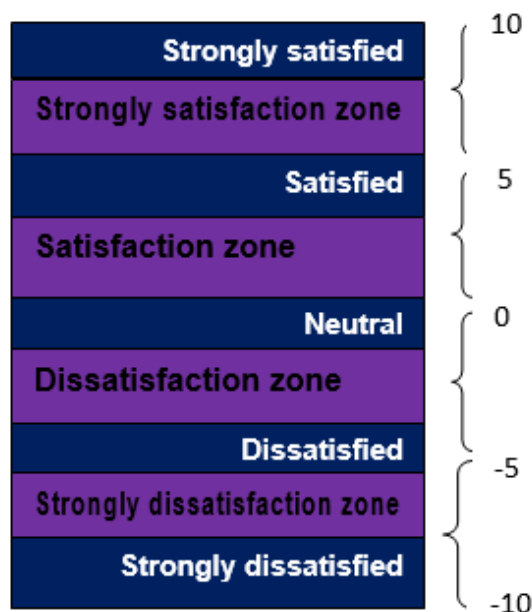


Fig 1: Line Graph on Perception of Teachers' of Autonomous and Non-Autonomous Colleges relating to their satisfaction with different dimensions of quality in Higher Education.

Table 1 shows that the teachers of autonomous colleges and non-autonomous colleges did not differ significantly on their perception relating to satisfaction with linkages and interface ($t=0.21; df=58; P>0.05$). The Figure 1, shows that teachers of autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with the linkages and interface as the average perception score was less than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-4.37 < M=0$). Similarly, the teachers of non-autonomous colleges were also dissatisfied with linkages and interface as the average perception score was less than the average scale value for the neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-4.17 < M=0$). The teachers of both autonomous and non autonomous colleges opined that they were not the members of any local clubs, old students of the colleges were not linked frequently and parents did not visit colleges frequently. Table 1 reveals that the teachers of autonomous colleges and non autonomous colleges differed significantly on their perception relating to satisfaction with students ($t=2.47; df=58; P<0.05$). Figure 1, shows that the teachers of autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with students as the average perception score was less than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-3.48 < M=0$). Similarly, the teacher of non autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with the students as the average perception score of the teachers was less than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-1.20 < M=0$). The perception of teacher in non autonomous college relating to the satisfaction with students was better than the perception of teachers in autonomous colleges ($M=-3.48 > M=-1.20$). The teachers of autonomous colleges were more dissatisfied with students than the teachers of non autonomous colleges. Table 1 reveals that teachers of autonomous colleges and non autonomous colleges did not differ significantly on their perception relating to satisfaction with co-curricular activities organised in the colleges ($t=1.70; df=58; P>0.05$). Figure 1, shows that the teachers of

autonomous colleges were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with co-curricular activities organised in colleges as the average perception score was equivalent with the average scale value for the neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-0.03 \sim M=0$), whereas the teachers of non autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with the co-curricular activities organised in their colleges as the average perception score was less than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-1.48 < M=0$). The finding emerged that the teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges were not satisfied with co-curricular activities in the colleges. Table 1 shows that the teachers of autonomous colleges and non autonomous colleges differed significantly on their perception relating to satisfaction with teaching ($t=2.45; df=58; P<0.05$). Figure 1 shows that the teachers of autonomous colleges were satisfied with the teaching as the average perception score was greater than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=.86 > M=0$), whereas, the teachers of non autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with teaching as the average perception score was less than the average scale value for the neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-1.24 < M=0$). The perception of teachers in autonomous colleges relating to satisfaction with teaching was better than the perception of teachers in non-autonomous colleges ($M=0.86 > M=-1.24$). The quality of teaching in autonomous colleges was significantly better than the quality of teaching in non autonomous. As it can seen in Table 1 there found no significance of difference between the perception of teachers of autonomous colleges and non-autonomous colleges ($t=0.38; df=58; P>0.05$) relating to their satisfaction with office management. Figure 1 shows that the teachers of autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with office management as the average perception score was less than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-0.45 < M=0$), whereas, the teachers of non autonomous colleges were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the office management as the average perception score was equivalent with the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-0.03 \sim M=0$). The teachers of autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with office management, whereas the teachers of non-autonomous colleges were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with office management in the colleges. Table 1 shows that the teachers of autonomous colleges and non autonomous colleges differed significantly on their perception relating to satisfaction with relationship ($t=2.48; df=58; P<0.05$). Figure 1 shows that the teachers of autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with relationship as the average perception score was less than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-2.27 < M=0$). The teachers of non autonomous colleges were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with relationship as the average perception score was just less than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-0.27 < M=0$). The perception of teachers in non autonomous colleges relating to satisfaction with relationship was better than the teachers in autonomous colleges ($M=-2.27 < M=0.27$). Table 1 shows that the teachers of autonomous colleges and non autonomous colleges did not differ significantly on their perception relating to satisfaction with material resources ($t=1.39; df=58; P>0.05$). Figure 1 shows that the teachers of autonomous colleges were neither

satisfied nor dissatisfied with the material resources of the college as the average perception score was equal to the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=0=M=0$), whereas, the teachers of non autonomous colleges were satisfied with the material resources as the average perception score was greater than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=1.10>M=0$). Table 1 reveals that the teachers of autonomous colleges and non autonomous colleges differed significantly on their perception relating to satisfaction with examination system in the colleges ($t=2.01$; $df=58$; $P<0.05$). Figure 1 shows that the teachers of autonomous colleges were satisfied with examination system in the colleges as the average perception score was greater than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=0.41>M=0$) whereas, the teachers of non autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with examination system in the colleges as the average perception score was less than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-1.51<M=0$). The perception of teachers in autonomous colleges relating to satisfaction with examination system was better than the teachers in non autonomous colleges ($M=0.41>M=-1.51$). The examination system in autonomous colleges was significantly better than the examination system in non autonomous colleges. In autonomous colleges impartialities was maintained in examination; examination result was published in time; and examination result was used to give feedback for improvement in learning. Similarly, Table 1 shows that the teachers of autonomous colleges and non-autonomous colleges differed significantly on their perception relating to satisfaction with job ($t=2.66$; $df=58$; $P>0.05$). Figure 1 shows that teachers of autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with their job as the average perception score was less than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-2.86<M=0$). The teachers of autonomous colleges were also dissatisfied with the job as the average perception score was also less than the average scale value for neutral level of satisfaction ($M=-0.89<M=0$). The perception of teachers in non autonomous colleges relating to satisfaction with the job was better than the teachers in autonomous colleges ($M=-2.86<M=-0.89$). The teachers of both autonomous and non autonomous colleges were dissatisfaction with their job. However, the teachers of autonomous colleges were more dissatisfied with their job than the teachers of non-autonomous colleges. Teachers in autonomous and non-autonomous colleges did not enjoy their job; principals had less confidence on the faculty; and the facilities available were not adequate for the teachers.

Major Findings

1. The teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with principal as a leader, but the teachers of autonomous colleges were more dissatisfied with principal as a leader.
2. The quality of teachers of autonomous colleges were better than the quality of teachers in non-autonomous colleges.
3. The teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with linkages and interface.
4. The teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with students.
5. The teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with co-curricular activities organized in colleges but the teachers of non-autonomous colleges were more dissatisfied with co-curricular activities organized in colleges.
6. The quality of teaching in autonomous colleges was significantly better than the quality of teaching in non-autonomous colleges.
7. The teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges were dissatisfied with the office management in colleges.
8. The teachers of autonomous colleges showed less satisfaction with relationship than the teachers of non-autonomous colleges.
9. The teachers of autonomous colleges were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with material resources, whereas the teachers of non-autonomous colleges were satisfied with material resources of the colleges.
10. The examination system in autonomous colleges was significantly better than the examination system in non-autonomous colleges, and
11. The teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges showed their dissatisfaction with the job.

Discussion

Teachers of autonomous colleges were more satisfied with the quality of teachers, quality of teaching and the examination system than the teachers of non-autonomous colleges; whereas teachers of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges showed their dissatisfaction towards principals, linkages interface, students, co-curricular activities, office management, relationship, material resources and jobs. Teachers are no doubt important internal customer of an educational system. Their perception relating to satisfaction with different dimensions of higher education cannot be simply ignored while assessing the quality of higher education. The dissatisfaction of teachers with eight important dimensions questions the quality of higher education in autonomous colleges. Perhaps, college autonomy fails to meet the needs and expectations of the teachers. The existing structure of college autonomy might fail to provide ample freedom to the teachers for procurement of material resources, references, organisation of co-curricular activities, office management etc. Their dissatisfaction with jobs might be attributed to administrative red tism. Their achievements and progress might not be properly rewarded. The present structure of college autonomy in India provides academic freedom to the autonomous colleges but not administrative freedom. Administrative freedom to some extent is given to the principals only. Administration of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges is completely governed by the government bureaucracy. The finding that teachers of autonomous colleges were more satisfied with the quality of teachers, methods of teaching and examination system than the teachers of non-autonomous colleges can be attributed to the academic freedom given to the teachers of autonomous colleges under college autonomy, whereas teachers of non-

autonomous colleges lack academic freedom.

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