

## Original Paper

# Teacher's Autonomy Support Role in University Psychology Class Teaching Quality

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### **Abstract**

*This research investigates the relationship between the autonomy support afforded to teachers and class teaching. The profile of respondents includes a diverse group of teachers varying in sex, years of service, and highest educational attainment. Teachers' perceptions of autonomy support were generally positive, particularly in areas such as responsive teaching and providing rationale, although there is room for improvement in minimizing control and pressure. No significant differences were found in the perceived autonomy support based on sex, length of service, or educational attainment. The correlation analysis shows a nuanced relationship between autonomy support and class teaching. The research concludes that while overall teacher's autonomy support do not significantly correlate with general class teaching, specific practices can influence certain dimensions of class teaching. Recommendations include improving communication, fostering a supportive environment, increasing opportunities for teacher autonomy, and providing clear rationales for decisions. These insights aim to enhance teacher's class autonomy and contribute to creating a more effective educational environment for university students.*

### **Keywords**

*Teachers' autonomy support, Psychology, Class Teaching Quality*

## **1. Introduction**

Teacher's Autonomy Support is an educational concept and practice that refers to a teaching approach in which educators encourage and facilitate students' autonomy, independence, and self-regulation in their learning processes. This approach involves teachers providing choices, fostering a sense of

ownership and responsibility for learning, and acknowledging and respecting students' perspectives and needs. It includes:

- 1) Choice and Decision-Making: Teachers offer students choices and opportunities to make decisions related to their learning, such as selecting topics for projects or assignments. This empowers students to take ownership of their educational journey;
- 2) Acknowledgment of Feelings and Perspectives: Autonomy-supportive teachers recognize and validate students' feelings, thoughts, and opinions. They create a safe and open classroom environment where students feel heard and valued;
- 3) Minimized Control and Pressure: Teachers reduce controlling behaviors and avoid imposing excessive pressure or constraints on students. Instead, they guide and facilitate learning without creating an authoritarian atmosphere;
- 4) Fostering Intrinsic Motivation: Autonomy support aims to nurture intrinsic motivation in students. Teachers help students find personal relevance and meaning in their studies, encouraging them to engage in learning for its own sake, rather than for external rewards;
- 5) Providing Rationale: Teachers explain the reasons behind assignments, tasks, and classroom rules. By providing a clear rationale, educators help students understand the purpose of their activities, which can enhance their sense of autonomy;
- 6) Responsive Teaching: Autonomy-supportive teachers adapt their instructional methods to meet individual students' needs, preferences, and readiness levels. They tailor their support to promote self-regulated learning;
- 7) Promoting Self-Evaluation and Reflection: Teachers encourage students to assess their progress, set goals, and reflect on their learning experiences. This fosters metacognition and self-directed learning;
- 8) Positive Feedback and Encouragement: Autonomy-supportive educators provide positive feedback and encouragement to build students' confidence and self-efficacy. They celebrate students' achievements and efforts. In essence, teacher's autonomy support creates an educational environment where students feel empowered, motivated, and capable of taking an active role in their learning. This approach aligns with self-determination theory, which posits that autonomy is a fundamental psychological need, and satisfying this need contributes to enhanced learning outcomes, well-being, and intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

This research aims to delve into the deep relationship between the autonomy support afforded to teachers and class teaching. Drawing upon a lot of relevant literature and empirical evidence from a variety of studies, this study aims to explore how teacher's autonomy support influence class teaching effect on their students.

In general, these concepts not only influence the quality of education but also influence students' satisfaction, success, making them become key components of life success. Moreover, when students feel valued and supported, they are more likely to invest their time and energy into major learning and personal development, ultimately leading a happy life. Therefore, incorporating these concepts into

university *Psychology* class teaching is important for creating a successful and thriving learning environment.

## 2. Method

This study adopted a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The reasons for adopting the research method are as follows:

Firstly, the research seeks to assess the relationship between two variables: teacher's autonomy support and class teaching. Quantitative research is proper for this purpose as it allows for the systematic collection of numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to establish correlations and patterns. By employing a quantitative approach, the study can provide empirical evidence of the potential relationship between these variables, offering a clearer understanding of their interplay.

Secondly, the research aims to compare and analyze a variety of demographic profiles of teacher-respondents, including factors such as sex, years in service, and highest educational attainment. A comparative research design is essential to evaluate whether significant differences exist among these profiles concerning their assessments of teacher's autonomy support and class teaching. This design allows for the identification of patterns and variations across different teacher profiles, shedding light on potential disparities and trends within university teachers.

Therefore, the choice of a combination of quantitative and qualitative research method is imperative for this study. It enables the systematic investigation of relationships, the comparison of teacher profiles, and the evidence-based development of teacher's autonomy and students' class learning.

## 3. Result

**Table 1. The Assessment of the Extent of Teacher's Autonomy Support**

Indicator			Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1.	Choice	and Decision-Making	3.11	.29	Agree	Evident	5
2.	Acknowledgment of Feelings	and Perspectives	3.10	.30	Agree	Evident	7
3.	Minimized Control	and Pressure	3.09	.30	Agree	Evident	8
4.	Fostering Intrinsic Motivation		3.11	.31	Agree	Evident	5
5.	Providing		3.12	.30	Agree	Evident	2.5

Rationale						
6. Responsive Teaching	3.13	.30	Agree	Evident	1	
7. Promoting Self-Evaluation and Reflection	3.12	.30	Agree	Evident	2.5	
8. Positive Feedback and Encouragement	3.11	.30	Agree	Evident	5	
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>.10</b>	Agree	Evident		

Legend: 3.51 – 4.00 (Strongly Agree-Highly Evident); 2.51 – 3.50 (Agree- Evident); 1.51 – 2.50 (Disagree-Slightly Evident); 1.0-1.50 (Strongly Disagree-Not at all Evident).

The table on the extent of autonomy support afforded to teachers reveals a consistent pattern across various indicators, with all mean scores falling within the "Agree" range, indicating that autonomy support is evident in the school's practices. The overall mean score of 3.11, with a standard deviation of 0.10, underscores a general agreement among teachers that they receive autonomy support across multiple dimensions.

Responsive Teaching ranks the highest with a mean score of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 0.30. This indicates that teachers feel particularly supported in adapting their teaching methods to meet individual student needs and responding effectively to classroom challenges. This high ranking highlights the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in teaching practices.

Both Providing Rationale and Promoting Self-Evaluation and Reflection share the second rank, each with a mean score of 3.12 and a standard deviation of 0.30. These scores suggest that teachers feel adequately informed about the reasons behind decisions and policies, as well as encouraged to engage in self-reflection and professional growth. The recognition of the importance of understanding and continuous improvement is evident in these areas.

Choice and Decision-Making, Fostering Intrinsic Motivation, and Positive Feedback and Encouragement all have a mean score of 3.11 and a standard deviation of 0.30, sharing the fifth rank. These scores reflect that teachers feel they have a degree of autonomy in their instructional decisions, are supported in fostering students' intrinsic motivation, and receive positive feedback and encouragement. These areas are crucial for maintaining teacher motivation and effectiveness.

Acknowledgment of Feelings and Perspectives ranks seventh, with a mean score of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 0.30. This suggests that while teachers feel their emotions and viewpoints are generally acknowledged, there is room for more consistent recognition and support in this area.

Minimized Control and Pressure ranks eighth, with a mean score of 3.09 and a standard deviation of 0.30. Although still within the "Agree" range, this indicates that teachers feel the least amount of autonomy support in terms of experiencing minimal control and pressure from school leadership.

Reducing control and pressure further could enhance teachers' sense of autonomy and job satisfaction. In summary, the overall assessment shows that teachers perceive a substantial degree of autonomy support across various dimensions, with particular strengths in responsive teaching, providing rationale, and promoting self-evaluation. However, there is potential for improvement in acknowledging feelings and perspectives, as well as minimizing control and pressure. The consistency in responses, as indicated by the relatively low variability in standard deviations, suggests a cohesive perception of autonomy support among teachers.

#### 4. Discussion

Extent of Autonomy Support Afforded to Teachers represents the tangible and intangible support provided by school and university to empower teachers with autonomy and decision-making authority in their professional roles and then cultivate students' autonomy through class instruction in their learning processes. The goal of the university Psychology course is to enable students to acquire knowledge in psychology, experience psychological processes, establish an autonomous awareness of mental health, and inherently align with the theory of autonomy. In class teaching, *Psychology* teachers use such approach as providing choices, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for learning, which lead to acknowledging and respecting students' perspectives and needs. In the context of this study, the correlations found between teacher's autonomy support and class teaching highlight the importance of autonomy support that empower teachers to reduce unnecessary control, and acknowledge students' self-development.

Overall, the findings suggest that teacher's autonomy practices, particularly those that emphasize clear communication and appropriate delegation, are crucial in fostering an class environment where students feel supported and autonomous. This aligns with the broader educational philosophy of promoting autonomy support, not just for students but also for educators, ensuring a holistic approach to enhancing the educational experience and improving teaching quality.

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