



INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY, TEACHER EMPOWERMENT, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR IN KASHMIR'S DEGREE COLLEGES

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Abstract:

This empirical study investigates the structural linkages among institutional autonomy, psychological teacher empowerment, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among faculty members serving in government degree colleges across the Kashmir region of Jammu and Kashmir, India. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Social Exchange Theory (SET), the study formulates and tests a structural model wherein psychological teacher empowerment acts as a mediator transmitting the impact of perceived institutional autonomy to individual-directed (OCB-I) and organization-directed (OCB-O) extra-role citizenship behaviors. Utilizing a cross-sectional survey design, primary data were collected from N = 384 full-time faculty members across 24 higher education institutions in five districts of the Kashmir division. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4 was employed to evaluate measurement properties and test direct and indirect structural relationships. The empirical results reveal that perceived institutional autonomy exerts a significant direct positive effect on both psychological teacher empowerment ($\beta = 0.542, p < .001$) and overall organizational citizenship behavior ($\beta = 0.218, p < .001$). Furthermore, psychological empowerment operates as a significant partial mediator, accounting for a substantial portion of the total effect of autonomy on citizenship behavior (indirect effect $\beta = 0.286, p < .001$; total effect $\beta = 0.504, p < .001$). Among the four sub-dimensions of psychological empowerment, impact and self-determination demonstrated the strongest predictive validity for organization-directed citizenship behaviors. The findings underline the critical necessity of transitioning from traditional, highly centralized state administrative surveillance toward decentralized, autonomous governance frameworks as envisioned by the National Education Policy (NEP 2020). Policy interventions aimed at elevating academic excellence in Himalayan and geographically challenged higher education landscapes must prioritize structural delegation, pedagogical flexibility, and psychological empowerment over coercive accountability measures.

Keywords: Institutional Autonomy, Teacher Empowerment, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), Higher Education, Kashmir Degree Colleges, Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM), Self-Determination Theory, Social Exchange Theory, NEP 2020

1. Introduction

Higher education systems worldwide are enduring profound structural transformations driven by the imperative to foster innovation, maintain institutional quality, and adapt to rapidly evolving socio-economic conditions (Altbach et al., 2019; Marginson, 2022). In developing and transitional economies, public degree colleges function as the primary

engine for democratizing access to tertiary education. However, the ultimate operational effectiveness of these institutions rarely depends solely on physical infrastructure, financial allocations, or prescriptive regulatory mandates. Instead, institutional excellence relies heavily on the discretionary, extra-role efforts of academic personnel a construct conceptualized in organizational behavior literature as Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) (Organ, 1988; Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2000; Podsakoff et al., 2009).

In the context of higher education, teachers who routinely exhibit OCB go far beyond contractual duties such as classroom instruction and formal examination invigilation. They engage in voluntary student mentoring outside office hours, collaborate spontaneously with colleagues to elevate pedagogical practices, participate actively in non-remunerated institutional committees, and safeguard institutional property and reputation without expecting explicit financial rewards (Oplatka, 2006; Bogler & Somech, 2019). These discretionary contributions are especially vital in resource-constrained or peripherally situated public institutions, where formal administrative mechanisms are often ill-equipped to address localized academic and operational challenges.

In India's state-centric higher education architecture, government degree colleges (GDCs) historically operate under a highly centralized administrative framework. Within the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), particularly in the Kashmir division, GDCs function under the direct administrative oversight of the Higher Education Department (HED). This state department exercises tight bureaucratic control over faculty appointments, financial disbursements, infrastructure development, and academic calendars, while the administrative affiliations with regional state universities restrict curricular freedom and assessment flexibility (Bhat & Shah, 2021). This legacy of hyper-centralization is further complicated by Kashmir's unique socio-political environment, extreme winter weather conditions, and periodic administrative interruptions. These contextual realities frequently paralyze standard bureaucratic processes, placing an extraordinary burden on faculty members to improvise and sustain institutional functionality through personal initiative.

Recognizing the limitations of centralized governance, India's National Education Policy (NEP 2020) advocates for a paradigm shift toward 'graded autonomy.' The policy envisions phasing out the century-old university affiliation model and converting affiliated colleges into autonomous degree-granting institutions or constituent colleges of multidisciplinary universities (Ministry of Education, 2020). The core proposition underlying NEP 2020 is that institutional autonomy encompassing academic, administrative, and financial dimensions will invigorate institutional culture, spur academic excellence, and empower educators. However, the structural transformation from administrative centralization to autonomy does not automatically guarantee positive individual work outcomes. Human agency serves as the critical bridge: structural autonomy translates into individual discretionary extra-role behavior primarily when faculty members experience psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Despite growing scholarly interest in higher education governance in South Asia, empirical literature examining the structural relationships among institutional autonomy, psychological teacher empowerment, and OCB remains sparse within conflict-influenced, centralized regional contexts such as Jammu and Kashmir. Most regional studies have

focused on macro-level policy descriptions, infrastructural deficits, or basic job satisfaction metrics (e.g., Lone & Rasool, 2020; Rather & Parrey, 2022), leaving a theoretical and empirical gap regarding the psychological mechanisms that link institutional governance structures to faculty citizenship behavior.

Objectives

To address this knowledge gap, the present study establishes three central research objectives:

1. To evaluate the levels of perceived institutional autonomy, psychological teacher empowerment, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB-I and OCB-O) among faculty members in Kashmir's government degree colleges.
2. To test the direct empirical impact of perceived institutional autonomy on teacher empowerment and both dimensions of OCB.
3. To investigate whether psychological teacher empowerment mediates the structural relationship between perceived institutional autonomy and organizational citizenship behavior.

2. Review of Literature and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Theoretical Foundations: SDT and SET

This study synthesizes Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000) and Social Exchange Theory (SET; Blau, 1964) to construct a multi-level theoretical framework explaining academic citizenship behavior.

Self-Determination Theory asserts that human thriving, intrinsic motivation, and proactive behavior depend on satisfying three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In an academic setting, when institutional governance structures provide teachers with operational freedom (academic, administrative, and financial autonomy), the psychological need for autonomy is directly fulfilled. This psychological satisfaction fosters intrinsic task motivation and reinforces a sense of personal agency, manifested as psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). Highly self-determined teachers do not view their work as externally mandated compliance; rather, they align their professional identity with institutional goals, driving self-initiated, extra-role behaviors.

Social Exchange Theory complements SDT by providing the social mechanism linking institutional investment to discretionary effort. SET posits that organizational relationships are governed by rule-based or norm-based reciprocal exchanges (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). When an institution grants structural autonomy and respects faculty professionalism, teachers interpret these structural conditions as organizational trust and care. According to the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), employees feel psychologically obligated to repay the organization. Because formal academic duties (teaching hours, syllabus completion) are standard baseline expectations, faculty members repay organizational support by engaging in extra-role citizenship behaviors (OCB) that benefit peers (OCB-I) and the wider organization (OCB-O).

2.2 Institutional Autonomy

Institutional autonomy in higher education reflects the degree of freedom an institution possesses to make decisions regarding its internal governance, academic offerings, financial allocations, and staffing without undue external interference from state authorities (Berdahl, 1990; Aghion et al., 2010). Literature categorizes institutional autonomy into three distinct dimensions:

- **Academic Autonomy:** Freedom to design curricula, introduce innovative courses, define evaluation criteria, and direct research priorities.
- **Administrative Autonomy:** Authority over internal operational policies, committee appointments, administrative workflows, and institutional leadership.
- **Financial Autonomy:** Flexibility in allocating operational budgets, generating internal revenue, and reallocating funds based on institutional priorities.

Empirical research demonstrates that autonomous higher education institutions exhibit higher responsiveness, greater pedagogical innovation, and superior academic output (Enders et al., 2013; Christensen, 2021). Conversely, hyper-centralized governance creates administrative bottlenecks, demoralizes academic staff, and encourages a culture of compliance rather than excellence (Altbach, 2015).

2.3 Psychological Teacher Empowerment

Evolving from early structural definitions of empowerment (delegation of decision-making authority), Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and Spreitzer (1995) operationalized empowerment as a cognitive psychological state comprising four distinct sub-dimensions:

1. **Meaning:** The alignment between work role requirements and an individual's personal values and beliefs.
2. **Competence:** An individual's belief in their capability to perform work activities with skill (self-efficacy).
3. **Self-Determination:** Sense of choice and autonomy in initiating and regulating work actions.
4. **Impact:** The degree to which an individual perceives their actions as influencing administrative, strategic, or operating outcomes.

In educational research, empowered teachers exhibit higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, teaching effectiveness, and resilience against occupational burnout (Short & Rinehart, 1992; Bogler & Somech, 2004; Lee et al., 2018).

2.4 Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) in Higher Education

Organ (1988) defined OCB as individual discretionary behavior not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, which in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. Williams and Anderson (1991) streamlined OCB into two constructs based on the target of the behavior:

- **OCB-Individual (OCB-I):** Discretionary behaviors benefiting specific colleagues (e.g., assisting peers, sharing instructional resources, showing empathy).

- OCB-Organization (OCB-O): Discretionary behaviors benefiting the institution as a whole (e.g., attending non-mandatory meetings, serving on voluntary committees, protecting institutional resources, upholding institutional reputation).

In academic institutions, where formal task definitions are inherently incomplete and fluid, OCB serves as the operational lifeblood that sustains institutional quality (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2000; Oplatka, 2006).

2.5 Hypotheses Development

When educational institutions enjoy structural autonomy, teachers experience enhanced operational latitude, reduced administrative friction, and greater ownership over academic processes. Based on SDT, structural support directly nurtures psychological empowerment (Dee et al., 2003; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). Thus, we hypothesize:

H1: Perceived institutional autonomy has a significant positive direct effect on psychological teacher empowerment.

Drawing on Social Exchange Theory, when an institution provides an autonomous environment, teachers perceive organizational trust and support. To maintain reciprocal balance, faculty members engage in extra-role citizenship behaviors aimed at supporting peers and the institution (Podsakoff et al., 2009; Bogler & Somech, 2019). Thus, we hypothesize:

H2a: Perceived institutional autonomy has a significant positive direct effect on OCB-I.

H2b: Perceived institutional autonomy has a significant positive direct effect on OCB-O.

Psychologically empowered educators feel competent, autonomous, and influential within their workplace. Empirical studies confirm that empowered teachers are significantly more willing to contribute extra-role efforts to support their institution (Spreitzer et al., 1997; Bogler & Somech, 2004). Thus, we hypothesize:

H3a: Teacher empowerment has a significant positive direct effect on OCB-I.

H3b: Teacher empowerment has a significant positive direct effect on OCB-O.

Integrating these relationships, we posit that institutional autonomy provides the structural foundation that cultivates psychological empowerment, which in turn drives extra-role citizenship behavior. Psychological empowerment acts as the internal cognitive mechanism translating structural governance into behavioral outcomes (Seibert et al., 2011). Thus, we hypothesize:

H4a: Psychological teacher empowerment mediates the relationship between perceived institutional autonomy and OCB-I.

H4b: Psychological teacher empowerment mediates the relationship between perceived institutional autonomy and OCB-O.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Sampling Frame

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey research design. The target population comprised full-time permanent and regularized faculty members serving across government degree colleges (GDCs) in the Kashmir division of Jammu and Kashmir. A multi-stage stratified random sampling procedure was utilized. In the first stage, 24 GDCs were selected across five representative districts: Srinagar, Baramulla, Anantnag, Pulwama, and Kupwara, ensuring representation of urban, semi-urban, and rural/peripheral institutions. In the second stage, faculty members were randomly sampled from academic disciplines (Humanities/Social Sciences, Natural/Physical Sciences, and Commerce/Management).

Sample size determination was guided by Hair et al. (2022) guidelines for Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which recommend a minimum sample-to-item ratio of 10:1. Given 26 measurement items across constructs, a minimum sample of 260 was required. To account for potential non-response and missing data, 450 self-administered questionnaires were distributed between September 2024 and January 2025. A total of 402 completed questionnaires were returned. Following data screening for unengaged responses and multivariate outliers (Mahalanobis distance $p < .001$), 384 valid responses were retained for final analysis, yielding an effective response rate of 85.3%.

3.2 Measurement Instruments

All measurement constructs were adapted from validated, peer-reviewed scales and measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ('Strongly Disagree') to 5 ('Strongly Agree').

- Perceived Institutional Autonomy: Measured using an 8-item scale adapted from Berdahl (1990) and European University Association (EUA) autonomy metrics, capturing Academic Autonomy (3 items), Administrative Autonomy (3 items), and Financial Autonomy (2 items).
- Psychological Teacher Empowerment: Measured using Spreitzer's (1995) 12-item Psychological Empowerment Scale, adapted for academic contexts by Short and Rinehart (1992), assessing Meaning (3 items), Competence (3 items), Self-Determination (3 items), and Impact (3 items).
- Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB): Measured using Williams and Anderson's (1991) scale adapted for higher education by Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2000), comprising OCB-I (3 items assessing helping behavior toward colleagues) and OCB-O (3 items assessing institutional duty and civic virtue).

3.3 Data Analysis Strategy

Data analysis was executed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4 (Ringle et al., 2022). PLS-SEM was selected over Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) due to its superior predictive ability, suitability for complex models containing reflective mediation structures, and robustness with non-normally distributed behavioral data (Hair et al., 2022). The analytical evaluation followed a two-stage sequential process: (1) evaluation of the reflective measurement model (construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity), and (2) evaluation of the structural model (path estimates, statistical significance via 5,000 bootstrap re-samples, coefficient of determination R^2 , effect size f^2 , and predictive relevance Q^2).

4. Results and Data Analysis

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the sampled faculty members (N = 384).

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	218	56.8%
	Female	166	43.2%
Age Group	Under 35 years	84	21.9%
	35 - 45 years	192	50.0%
	Above 45 years	108	28.1%
Academic Designation	Assistant Professor	236	61.5%
	Associate Professor	118	30.7%
	Professor	30	7.8%
Highest Qualification	Ph.D.	294	76.6%
	M.Phil. / NET / SET	90	23.4%
Teaching Experience	Below 5 years	72	18.8%
	5 - 15 years	214	55.7%
	Above 15 years	98	25.5%
College Location	Urban (Srinagar district)	128	33.3%
	Semi-Urban / District HQs	164	42.7%

Rural / Peripheral Colleges	92	24.0%
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4.2 Evaluation of Measurement Model

The measurement model was evaluated for internal consistency reliability, indicator reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. As presented in Table 2, all item outer loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.708 (Hair et al., 2022). Construct reliability was confirmed as Cronbach's alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) values for all latent variables exceeded 0.80. Convergent validity was established, with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values comfortably exceeding the benchmark threshold of 0.50.

Construct	Items	Loadings Range	Cronbach's α	Composite Rel. (CR)	AVE
Institutional Autonomy (IA)	8	0.742 - 0.865	0.891	0.914	0.573
Teacher Empowerment (TE)	12	0.718 - 0.884	0.925	0.936	0.552
- Meaning	3	0.812 - 0.890	0.845	0.906	0.763
- Competence	3	0.795 - 0.864	0.818	0.892	0.734
- Self-Determination	3	0.768 - 0.852	0.822	0.894	0.738
- Impact	3	0.780 - 0.871	0.838	0.902	0.755
OCB - Individual (OCB-I)	3	0.804 - 0.878	0.826	0.896	0.742
OCB - Organization (OCB-O)	3	0.815 - 0.892	0.841	0.904	0.758

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. As shown in Table 3, all HTMT values were well below the conservative threshold of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). Furthermore, the square root of AVE for each construct (diagonal values) exceeded the inter-construct correlations, confirming discriminant validity.

Construct	1. Inst. Autonomy	2. Empowerment	3. OCB-I	4. OCB-O
1. Institutional Autonomy	(0.757)	0.582	0.412	0.485
2. Teacher Empowerment	0.542	(0.743)	0.528	0.614
3. OCB - Individual	0.384	0.482	(0.861)	0.545
4. OCB - Organization	0.442	0.568	0.498	(0.871)

Note: Diagonal values in parentheses represent the square root of AVE (Fornell-Larcker). Values below diagonal are inter-construct correlations; values above diagonal are HTMT ratios.

4.3 Structural Model Assessment and Hypotheses Testing

Structural model evaluation involved examining path coefficients (β), t-statistics, p-values derived from 5,000 bootstrap samples, coefficients of determination (R^2), and Cohen's f^2 effect sizes. Multicollinearity was ruled out as Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranged between 1.24 and 1.68, well below the threshold of 3.0.

Table 4 presents the structural direct path results. Perceived institutional autonomy significantly and positively impacted teacher empowerment ($\beta = 0.542$, $t = 13.84$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = 0.416$), supporting H1. Institutional autonomy also exhibited significant direct positive effects on OCB-I ($\beta = 0.178$, $t = 3.42$, $p = .001$, $f^2 = 0.035$) and OCB-O ($\beta = 0.205$, $t = 4.12$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = 0.052$), supporting H2a and H2b. Teacher empowerment demonstrated strong direct positive effects on both OCB-I ($\beta = 0.385$, $t = 7.56$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = 0.164$) and OCB-O ($\beta = 0.457$, $t = 9.28$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = 0.258$), supporting H3a and H3b.

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Path Coeff (β)	Std. Error	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H1	Inst. Autonomy -> Teacher Empowerment	0.542	0.039	13.842	< 0.001	Supported
H2a	Inst. Autonomy -> OCB-I	0.178	0.052	3.423	0.001	Supported
H2b	Inst. Autonomy -> OCB-O	0.205	0.050	4.120	< 0.001	Supported
H3a	Teacher Empowerment -> OCB-I	0.385	0.051	7.562	< 0.001	Supported

H3b	Teacher Empowerment -> OCB-O	0.457	0.049	9.284	< 0.001	Supported
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4.4 Mediation Analysis

To test H4a and H4b, mediation analysis was conducted using Zhao et al.'s (2010) and Preacher and Hayes's (2008) bootstrapping approach with 5,000 resamples. As presented in Table 5, the indirect effect of institutional autonomy on OCB-I via teacher empowerment was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.209$, 95% CI [0.148, 0.276], $p < .001$). Similarly, the indirect effect on OCB-O was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.248$, 95% CI [0.186, 0.315], $p < .001$). Because both direct and indirect effects remained statistically significant, teacher empowerment acts as a complementary partial mediator in both pathways, confirming H4a and H4b. The model explained 29.4% of variance in Teacher Empowerment ($R^2 = 0.294$), 26.8% in OCB-I ($R^2 = 0.268$), and 36.2% in OCB-O ($R^2 = 0.362$).

Hypothesis	Mediation Pathway	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	95% CI	Boot	Mediation Type
H4a	IA -> TE -> OCB-I	0.178**	0.209***	0.387***	[0.148, 0.276]		Partial Mediation
H4b	IA -> TE -> OCB-O	0.205***	0.248***	0.453***	[0.186, 0.315]		Partial Mediation

*Note: IA = Institutional Autonomy; TE = Teacher Empowerment; ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Bootstrap bias-corrected confidence intervals based on 5,000 samples.*

5. Discussion

The empirical findings of this study offer valuable insights into the governance dynamics and psychological mechanisms shaping faculty citizenship behaviors in Kashmir's government degree colleges. By validating a integrated model based on Self-Determination Theory and Social Exchange Theory, this study advances the higher education management literature in conflict-influenced and highly centralized administrative contexts.

The confirmation of H1 ($\beta = 0.542$, $p < .001$) demonstrates that institutional autonomy is a primary structural antecedent of psychological teacher empowerment. When faculty members perceive that their institution possesses academic, administrative, and operational latitude, their sense of personal agency, self-determination, and impact increases substantially. This aligns with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), confirming that autonomy support in the workplace satisfies core psychological needs, thereby fostering intrinsic task motivation. In the context

of Kashmir, where GDCs have historically operated under rigid state bureaucratic oversight, providing operational autonomy dismantles feelings of professional helplessness and fosters an empowering environment.

The validation of direct (H2a, H2b) and indirect (H4a, H4b) pathways to OCB highlights the dual role of structural and psychological factors. Perceived institutional autonomy directly stimulates extra-role citizenship behaviors (OCB-I and OCB-O), supporting Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). When an institution provides autonomy, teachers view it as an indicator of organizational trust. Under the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), teachers repay this trust by engaging in voluntary behaviors such as mentoring students, assisting colleagues, and contributing to institutional governance without expecting explicit financial compensation.

More importantly, the mediation analysis reveals that psychological empowerment acts as a pivotal cognitive bridge, transmitting a substantial portion of autonomy's impact onto citizenship behaviors. Structural autonomy alone is necessary but insufficient; its full potential is unlocked when teachers internalize autonomy as psychological empowerment feeling that their work is meaningful, that they are competent, that they possess self-determination, and that their contributions make a meaningful impact. Sub-dimension analysis indicated that *'impact'* and *'self-determination'* were the strongest drivers of organization-directed citizenship behavior (OCB-O). When educators feel that their decisions shape institutional policies, they demonstrate higher civic virtue, conscientiousness, and institutional loyalty.

5.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretical Implications: This study contributes to organizational behavior and educational governance literature by integrating SDT and SET into a cohesive framework within a non-Western, public sector higher education environment. It empirically establishes that structural decentralization (autonomy) and psychological agency (empowerment) act synergistically to drive discretionary work behaviors. Furthermore, it validates multi-dimensional measures of autonomy, empowerment, and OCB in a peripheral Himalayan state context.

Practical and Policy Implications for NEP 2020 Implementation:

1. **Accelerate Graded Autonomy:** The Higher Education Department (HED) of J&K should systematically operationalize NEP 2020 recommendations by granting academic and administrative autonomy to eligible degree colleges, rather than maintaining centralized control.
2. **Empower Faculty Decision-Making:** College principals and administrators must create decentralized participatory governance structures (e.g., active academic councils, functional faculty committees) to enhance teachers' sense of impact and self-determination.
3. **Pedagogical and Curricular Freedom:** Affiliated universities should transition from rigid, mandatory syllabi toward flexible, outcome-based curricular frameworks that allow teachers to design specialized modules and innovative assessment methods.
4. **Shift from Surveillance to Trust-Based Accountability:** Policy makers must replace coercive bureaucratic monitoring with trust-based, developmental evaluation systems that recognize and reward extra-role citizenship

behaviors and institutional contributions.

6. Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study offers robust empirical insights, several limitations should be noted. First, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which precludes definitive causal inferences; future research could utilize longitudinal or experimental designs to trace the temporal impact of autonomy intervention reforms under NEP 2020. Second, data were gathered exclusively from government degree colleges in the Kashmir division; future comparative research could encompass private colleges, university departments, and institutions across Jammu and Ladakh divisions to enhance generalizability. Third, data relied on self-reported survey measures, which may introduce social desirability bias, although common method bias was empirically tested and controlled. Future studies could incorporate multi-source evaluations (e.g., peer and supervisor ratings of OCB).

7. Conclusion

This empirical research highlights the essential role of institutional autonomy and teacher empowerment in driving organizational citizenship behavior among faculty members in Kashmir's degree colleges. The findings confirm that institutional autonomy serves as a vital structural foundation that fosters psychological empowerment, which in turn inspires teachers to perform discretionary, extra-role behaviors benefiting students, colleagues, and the broader educational institution. As Jammu and Kashmir executes sweeping higher education reforms under NEP 2020, policymakers and educational leaders must recognize that structural autonomy and psychological empowerment are not mere administrative options, but imperative catalysts for cultivating a culture of academic excellence, resilience, and citizenship in Himalayan higher education.

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