



**Borka D. Malčić<sup>1</sup>**  
**Stanislava D. Marić Jurišin**  
**Nataša D. Tančić**  
University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy,  
Novi Sad, Serbia

**Original  
research paper**

Paper received: Apr 13 2023  
Paper accepted: Aug 7 2023  
Article Published: Oct 25 2023

## ***Factor Structure of the Teacher Autonomy Scale***

### **Extended summary**

The goal of the research was to check psychometric characteristics, determine the factor structure of the instrument Teaching Autonomy Scale-TAS (Pearson and Hall, 1993), and present the significance of the obtained results for further use of this scale in Serbia, with an aim of improving teachers' professional development. Teacher autonomy implies (self)activity of teachers, the right and opportunity for taking responsibility for one's own choices and decisions, as well as accepting the consequences of these decisions. An autonomous teacher is the teacher who, by playing his/her roles, feels good, while the sense of competence and individual creativity in educational work reflects on their achievements and a better quality of work at school. Accordingly, teacher autonomy is one of the basic modern-day teacher competences and it is increasingly gaining momentum in pedagogical research. As the school organization model changes, teachers are expected to constantly adapt to the changes, which affects the perception of their autonomy and experience of responsibility for their students' success. In this light, it was important to examine the construct of teacher autonomy on a sample of teachers in Serbia and determine the factor structure of the scale which, after validation, will be applicable in future research on teacher autonomy in different educational contexts in Serbia. Based on the stated goal of the research, the general hypothesis was that we assume that in the factor structure of the teacher autonomy scale, two factors of autonomy will be distinguished (general teacher autonomy and teacher autonomy relative to the curriculum). The research sample consisted of 310 teachers of the first and second cycles of primary education, from 16 primary

---

<sup>1</sup> [borka.malcic@ff.uns.ac.rs](mailto:borka.malcic@ff.uns.ac.rs)

Copyright © 2023 by the authors, licensee Teacher Education Faculty University of Belgrade, SERBIA.

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original paper is accurately cited.

---

schools in the territory of Novi Sad. The research was conducted using a questionnaire, in written form, anonymously and voluntarily, during 2020. Scaling and survey techniques were used in the research. The instrument was combined and consisted of two parts. The purpose of the introductory part of the instrument was to collect the data on personal characteristics of the respondents, while the second part of the instrument was the Teaching Autonomy Scale (Pearson and Hall, 1993). The scale includes 18 items classified into four categories: choice of activities and materials; standards of behaviour in the classroom; planning and sequence of teaching; personal decision-making at work. The first and third categories fall under the curriculum autonomy factor, while the second and fourth categories fall under the general teaching autonomy factor. The results of the research were as follows: three factors were initially extracted using Horn's parallel analysis, but due to the low reliability of the third subscale, the use of a shortened version of the instrument, with two factors and 10 items, was proposed. The first factor represents teaching autonomy in relation to the curriculum and includes the following categories: use of one's own guidelines and procedures in teaching, independent selection of teaching material and content, and an autonomous definition of goals and tasks in teaching. The second factor refers to general teaching autonomy, which includes the freedom of teachers to make decisions in the classroom. Given that self-evaluation and teaching autonomy contribute to the improvement of the professional and personal aspects of the life and work of teachers, in the future it would be important, taking into account the proposed scale model, to evaluate the factor structure on different and larger samples of teachers who teach in diverse cultural and educational contexts and at different levels of education. The findings obtained in this research can be significant for all actors of the educational system, teachers, principals, but also creators of educational policies. It is primarily to them that we explicitly indicate the importance of improving the quality of school work through the application of this questionnaire on new sample structures in Serbia. This would undoubtedly represent a significant step towards certain changes when it comes to understanding the importance and respecting the voice of teachers when creating the curriculum and organizing educational work in schools.

**Keywords:** teacher autonomy, psychometric characteristics, primary school, Serbia

## References

- Benson, P. and Huang, J. (2008). Autonomy in the transition from foreign language learning to foreign language teaching. *DELTA*, 24, 421-439. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-44502008000300003>
- Behroozi, A. and Osam, Ü. V. (2016). Teacher autonomy from the perspective of Iranian English teachers. *Journal of Teaching and Education*, 5 (2), 91-98.
- Brunetti, G. J. (2001). Why do they teach? A study of job satisfaction among long-term high school teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 28 (3), 49-74.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences, second edition*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Dikilitaş, K. and Mumford, S. E. (2019). Teacher autonomy development through reading teacher research: Agency, motivation and identity. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 13 (3), 253-266.

- 
- Dinham, S. and Scott, C. (1996). *Teacher satisfaction, motivation and health: Phase one of the Teacher 2000 project*. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. New York.
  - Dymoke, S. and Harrison, J. K. (2006). Professional development and the beginning teacher: Issues of teacher autonomy and institutional conformity in the performance review process. *Journal of Education for Teaching*. 32 (1), 71-92.
  - Đerić, I., Malinić, D. i Šefer, J. (2017). Kako unaprediti proces inoviranja školske prakse. *Inovacije u nastavi*. 30 (4), 1-13.
  - Evans, R. H. (1996). An Analysis of Criterion Variable Reliability in Conjoint Analysis. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*. 84, 988-990.
  - Evers, A. T., Verboon, P. and Klaijnsen, A. (2017). The development and validation of a scale measuring teacher autonomous behaviour. *British Educational Research Journal*. 43 (4), 805-821.
  - Fajgelj, S. (2005). *Psihometrija: Metod i teorija psihološkog merenja (II dopunjeno izdanje)*. Beograd: Centar za primenjenu psihologiju.
  - Firestone, W. A. and Pennell, J. R. (1993). Teacher commitment, working conditions, and differential incentive policies. *Review of Educational Research*. 63, 489-525.
  - Friedman, I. A. (1999). Teacher-perceived work autonomy: The concept and its measurement. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*. 59 (1), 58-76.
  - Havelka, N. (1996). Pitanje odnosa autonomije nastavnika i autonomije učenika [The question of the relationship between teacher autonomy and student autonomy]. U: Gašić-Pavišić, S. (ur.). *Autonomija ličnosti i vaspitanje* (167-180). Beograd: Pedagoško društvo Srbije.
  - Havelka, N. (2000). Teacher's role in various concepts of education. *Nastava i vaspitanje*. 49 (1-2), 60-81.
  - Hong, W. P. and Youngs, P. (2016). Why are teachers afraid of curricular autonomy? Contradictory effects of the new national curriculum in South Korea. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*. 36 (1), 20-33.
  - Huang, J. (2005). Teacher autonomy in language learning: A review of the research. In: Katyal, K. R., Lam H. C. and Ding, X. J. (Eds.). *Research studies education 3* (203-218). Hong Kong: Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong.
  - Ingersoll, R. M. (2007). Short on power long on responsibility. *Educational Leadership*. 65 (1), 20-25.
  - Khmelkov, V. T. (2000). Developing professionalism: Effects of school workplace organization on novice teachers' sense of responsibility and efficacy (doctoral dissertation). University of Notre Dame.
  - Klecker, B. J. and Loadman, W. (1996). *Exploring the relationship between teacher empowerment and teacher job satisfaction* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 400 254).
  - Koustelios, A. D., Karabatzaki, D. and Kousteliou, I. (2004). Autonomy and job satisfaction for a sample of Greek teachers. *Psychological Reports*. 95 (3), 883-886.
  - Lamb, T. E. (2008). Learner autonomy and teacher autonomy. Synthesizing an agenda. In: Lamb, T. and Reinders, H. (Eds.). *Learner and teacher autonomy: Concepts, realities and responses* (269-285). John Benjamins.
  - Little, D. (1999). Developing learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom: A social interactive view of learning and three fundamental pedagogical principles. *Canarian Journal of English Studies / Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*. 38, 77-88.
  - Littlewood, W. (1999). Defining and developing autonomy in East Asian contexts. *Applied linguistics*. 20 (1), 71-94.
-

- 
- Lorenzo-Seva, U. and Fernando, P. J. (2006). FACTOR: A computer program to fit the exploratory factor analysis model. *Behavior research methods*. 37 (1), 88-91.
  - Maksimović, A. (2017). Određivanje ciljeva, zadataka i ishoda nastavnog časa iz perspektive nastavnika. *Inovacije u nastavi*. 30 (2), 98-113.
  - Manzano-Vázquez, B. (2018). Teacher development for autonomy: An exploratory review of language teacher education for learner and teacher autonomy. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*. 12 (4), 387-398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2016.1235171>
  - Marić Jurišin, S. i Malčić, B. (2022). *Samoprocena nastavničke profesije u savremenom obrazovnom kontekstu*. Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet.
  - Maričić, S. (2017). Samovrednovanje i kvalitet pedagoškog rada škole. *Inovacije u nastavi*. 30 (1), 12-24.
  - Marshall, P. A. (2019). Teacher Autonomy on English Communication Courses in Japanese Universities. *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*. 11 (2), 87-99.
  - OECD (2010). *Politike obrazovanja i usavršavanja – nastavnici su bitni – kako privući, usavršavati i zadržati efikasne nastavnike [Education and training policies – teachers are important – how to attract, train and retain effective teachers]*. Beograd: Ministarstvo prosvete Republike Srbije – Zavod za udžbenike – Službeni glasnik.
  - Pearson, L. C. and Hall, B. C. (1993). Initial construct validation of the teaching autonomy scale. *The Journal of Educational Research*. 86, 172-177.
  - Pearson, L. C. and Moomaw, W. (2005). The relationship between teacher autonomy and stress, work satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism. *Educational research quarterly*. 29 (1), 38-54.
  - Pearson, L. C. and Moomaw, W. (2006). Continuing validation of the teaching autonomy scale. *The Journal of Educational Research*. 100 (1), 44-51.
  - Pelletier, L.G., Seguin-Levesque, C. and Legault, L. (2002). Pressure from above and pressure from below as determinants of teachers' motivation and teaching behaviors. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. 94, 186-196.
  - Pelletier, L. G. & Sharp, E. C. (2009). Administrative pressures and teachers' interpersonal behaviour in the classroom. *Theory and Research in Education*. 7 (2), 174-183.
  - Pemberton, R., Li, E. S., Or, W. W. and Pierson, H. D. (1996). *Taking control: Autonomy in language learning (Vol. 1)*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University press.
  - Pešikan, A., Antić, S. i Marinković, S. (2010). Konceptija stručnog usavršavanja nastavnika u Srbiji – između proklamovanog i skrivenog modela. [In-service teacher training concept in Serbia – between the proclaimed and hidden models]. *Nastava i vaspitanje*. 59 (2), 278-296.
  - Raković, J. (2012). Autonomija škole i saradnja sa roditeljima i lokalnom zajednicom. [School autonomy and cooperation with parents and the local community]. *Nastavnici u Srbiji: stavovi o profesiji I*. 13-30.
  - Ramos Cárdenas, R. (2006). Considerations on the role of teacher autonomy. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*. (8), 183-202. <https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.10510>
  - Ryan, R. M. and Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary educational psychology*. 25 (1), 54-67.
  - Skilbeck, M. (2005). School-based curriculum development. In: Lieberman, A. (Ed.). *The roots of educational change* (109-132). Springer.
  - Stamatović, J. (2006). In-service training as a segment of professional development of teachers: The process and the needs. *Nastava i vaspitanje*. 55 (4), 473-482.
-

- 
- Tadić, A. (2015). Autonomija učenika u razrednom kontekstu - kritička perspektiva teorije samoodređenja [Student autonomy in the classroom context - a critical perspective of self-determination theory]. *Nastava i vaspitanje*. 64 (1), 101-115.
  - Yolcu, O. and Akar-Vural, R. (2021). An examination of instructional autonomy practices of science teachers. *International Journal of Educational Methodology*. 7 (1), 79-94. <https://doi.org/10.12973/ijem.7.1.79>
  - Vangrieken, K., Grosemans, I., Dochy, F. and Kyndt, E. (2017). Teacher autonomy and collaboration: A paradox? Conceptualising and measuring teachers' autonomy and collaborative attitude. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 67, 302-315. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.06.021>
  - Varatharaj, R., Abdullah, A. G. K. and Ismail, A. (2015). The effect of teacher autonomy on assessment practices among Malaysian cluster school teachers. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*. 5 (1), 31-36.
  - Vieira, F. (1997). Teacher development for learner autonomy: Ideas from an in-service teacher training project. *English Language Teaching News*. 33, 61-67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2016.1235171>
  - Vujisić Živković, N. i Vranješević, J. (2019). Konceptualizacija i istraživanje profesionalnog razvoja nastavnika. *Inovacije u nastavi*. 32 (3), 13-23.
  - *Zakon o osnovama sistema obrazovanja i vaspitanja* (2020). Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije, br. 6.
  - Živković, P. (2012). *Profesionalni identitet nastavnika i samoprocena kvaliteta rada [Teacher professional identity and self-assessment of work quality]*. Jagodina: Filozofski fakultet.