Kazakhstani Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Autonomy

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☒To grant approval for this study

☐To grant approval for this study subject to minor changes, to be signed off by supervisor

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Within the last decade Kazakhstan's education system has undergone a number of major changes and reforms. These changes and reforms have had a massive effect on the teachers, as most of them had to undergo months of qualification courses and professional development workshops. In addition to current work overload, rising teacher turnover and decreasing influx of new teachers, this extra responsibility might affect teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. As teachers are the ones who act as the agents of the educational reforms and changes, the question of whether the teachers are allowed sufficient autonomy and freedom in making certain decisions arises.

A number of studies have revealed a strong link between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation. Moreover, research shows that the teachers' perception of their own autonomy, rather than actual autonomy, also has a substantial effect on their willingness to stay in teaching profession. This mixed-methods study aims to reveal perceptions of individual teachers of their own autonomy and to explore any links of teacher autonomy to job satisfaction and motivation. Nine teachers from three different schools were interviewed for the qualitative part of the research. The three schools are different in the way they are governed internally: a private school, a public mainstream school and a charter school. For the quantitative part of the study 131 teachers from the aforementioned three schools took part in an online survey with closed questions. The qualitative part of the study helps us understand the teachers' understanding of teacher autonomy and how it affects their practices and beliefs. Using the data gathered from the quantitative part of the study I attempted to establish any existing links between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation. In addition, the data helps us compare how teachers from schools with different institutional autonomy perceive their individual autonomy, or service autonomy.

Keywords: *teacher autonomy, job satisfaction, teacher motivation*

Понимание автономии учителя глазами Казахстанских учителей

Абстракт

За последние десятилетия Казахстанская система образования претерпела немало реформ и новшеств. Эти реформы оказали большое влияние на жизнь учителей, так как многим из них пришлось заново переучиваться и повышать квалификацию. Учителя считаются основной рабочей силой при внедрении и распространении реформ и других изменений. Помимотаких проблем как высокая нагрузка в школе, отток учителей из школ и низкая заинтересованность в профессии учителя среди молодежи, существует риск того, что дополнительная ответственность за ведрение реформ может отрицательно сказаться на мотивации учителей и их удоволетворенности своей работой. Так как именно на плечах учителей лежит непосредственная ответственность за внедрение новшеств, возникает вопрос о том, достаточно ли автономны учителя в принятии тех или иных решений. Данное иследование со смешанными методами нацеленно на выявление того насколько учителя понимают и осознают понятие "автономия учителя", а также на установление связи между автономией учителей и их мотивацией и удоволетворенностью своей работой. Качественная часть исследования была проведена посредством интервью с девятью учителями из трех разных школ: частной школы, государственной школы и государственной школы с внутренней автономией (чартерной школы). Качественная часть исследования была проведена при помощи онлайн-анкетирования 131 учителей указанных выше школ.

Качественная часть исследования поможет узнать что учителя думают о понятии "автономия учителя" и как наличие либо отсутствие автономии влияет на их работу. Количественная же часть исследования поможет установить возможную связь между наличием или отсутствием автономии учителей и их мотивацией и

удоволетворением своей работой. Мы также проведем сравнение между тем, как учителя трех разных по менеджменту школ понимают свою автономию.

Данное исследование поможет руководителям школ понять как автономия учителей влияет на их работу, мотивацию и желание развиваться в профессиональном плане. Также данное исследование поможет руководителям школ и образовательных учреждений взглянуть на понятие "автономия учителя" глазами казахстанских учителей.

Ключевые слова: автономия учителя, удоволетворение работой, мотивация учителя.

Қазақстандық мұғалімдердің мұғалім автономиясы туралы түсініктері

Абстракт

Соңғы он жылдың ішінде, еліміздің білім беру жүйесі біршама өзгеріске, оқыту реформаларына ұшырап үлгерді. Бұл жаңашылдықтар ең алдымен мұғалімдер қауымына әсерін тигізген, себебі олар біліктілікті арттыру курстары мен практикаларынан айлап өту керек болды. Жүйеміздегі оқытушыға жүктелген шамадан тыс жұмыс былай тұрсын, бұл саладан кетіп жатқан мамандар саны мен азайып жатқан жас мамандар санын ескерсек, мұндай өзгерістер мұғалімдердің мотивациясына да әсер ету мүмкін. Мұғалім, білім беру жүйесіндегі жаңашыл реформалар мен өзгерістерді оқушы алдында алғаш енгізетін адам болғандықтан, сабақты өз пайымына сай жүргізу автономиясы мен шешім қабылдау сербестігіне ие бола ала ма деген сұрақ туындайды. Сондықтан, бұл аралас-тәсілді бақылау көмегімен жеке оқытушылардың автономия жайлы түсінігін танып және осы автономия мен жұмысқа деген қанағаттанушылық, мотивация арасындағы қарым қатынасын іздейміз.

Ізденістің сапалық бөлімінде тоғыз мұғаліммен сұхбат өткізілген. Бұл мұғалімдер үш түрлі мектептен келеді (жеке мектеп, мемлекеттік орта мектеп және чартер мектебі). Ізденістің сандық бөлімін белгілі 3 мектептің 131 мұғалімінен алынған анонимді онлайн сауалнама нәтижесі құрастырды. Сапалық ізденістің көмегімен оқытушылардың автономия жайлы түсінігі мен оның жұмысы мен сенімдер жүйесіне қалайша әсер ететінін бақылаймыз. Сандық ізденістің нәтижесін ала отырып, мұғалімнің автономиясы және оның жұмысқа деген қанағаттанушылығы мен мотивациясы арасында болуы мүмкін қатынас іздедім. Бұған қосымша, үш түрлі мектеп әкімшілік саясаты астында жұмыс істейтін мұғалімдердің өзіндік (жеке) автономия шекараларын қалай белгілейтіндігін салыстырады.

Бұл зерттеу мектеп директорлары үшін өте пайдалы болатынына сенемін, себебі мұғалімдеріне маман ретінде өсуі үшін ортаның қалай орнатуын үйретеді. Сонымен қатар, мектеп әкімшілігі мен білім басқармасына қазақстандық мұғалімдердің автономия жайлы түсінігін ашады.

Кілт сөздер: мұғалім автономиясы, жұмыспен қанағаттану, мұғалім мотивациясы.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Within the last decade Kazakhstan's education system has undergone a number of major changes and reforms. Among them are the updated (or renewed) curriculum, trilingual education, and the more recent "Law on the Status of Teachers". These changes and reforms have had a massive effect on the teachers, as most of them had to undergo months of qualification courses and professional development workshops. In addition, the teachers were forced to relearn and reconsider their pedagogical beliefs and practices (Khegay, 2017, p. 13).

Teachers are expected to be the leading acting force of the many changes and reforms introduced by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). In addition to current work overload, rising teacher turnover and decreasing influx of new teachers have put extra responsibilities on teachers, affecting teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. As teachers are the ones who act as the agents of the educational reforms and changes, the question of whether the teachers are allowed sufficient autonomy and freedom in making certain decisions arises.

Currently, the latest edition of the Education Act by the MoES of the Republic of Kazakhstan contains only one chapter on "The Status of the Pedagogical Employee", which only lists teachers' rights, duties and responsibilities (2019). This does not mean, however, that teacher autonomy is not guaranteed by the law. The aforementioned chapter of The Education Act contains a list of a teacher's rights, among which there are such privileges as the right to do theoretical and empirical research studies, the right to individual pedagogical activities and the right "...to freely choose the methods and forms of pedagogical

activity provided that these methods comply with the national common standards..." (MoES, 2019, p.71). It is important to ensure that teachers are granted sufficient autonomy if a government wants to start solving current problems in schools (Short, 1994).

The background of the study, problem statement, the purpose and significance of the current research are discussed in this chapter.

1.2. Background of the Study

The image of teachers as mere employees limited in their freedom of choice and decision making coupled with constant struggle with financial and social problems has been a subject of many debates on education not only in Kazakhstan, but in many post-Soviet countries. This is listed as one of the consequences of "educational deterioration" that many post-Soviet countries have been experiencing since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Silova, 2007, p.166). Along with a significant decline in educational funding which led to a substantial decrease in teacher salaries, the professional community of teachers also suffered from a "demeaning public perception", as they were also forced into a competitive environment by the "performance- and outcomes-based reforms" introduced by the government (Silova, 2009, p. 4). Since then, the schools and teachers were allowed less autonomy in schools and much more accountability as they were forced to act as "passive executors" of the government initiatives (Khegay, 2017, p.2).

Autonomy is one of the three basic human motivation drivers along with *mastery* and *purpose* (Pink, 2011). Teachers who are deprived of the choice over what happens in their classrooms lose their will to work and be productive. Jackson (2013) states:

> ...teachers who continually experience threats to or a lack of autonomy can develop
> learned helplessness, similar to students who repeatedly fail or receive negative
> feedback. These teachers have gotten to the point where they throw up their hands
> and ask, "Why bother?" Why bother thinking through their instructional practice
> and being reflective when they are only going to be told what to do anyway? Why

bother trying to improve their instruction when the feedback they get is more directive than diagnostic—and often features the evaluator's pet instructional strategies rather than suggestions tailored to their own teaching style and needs? (p.75).

Recent initiatives such as the introduction of trilingual education and renewed curriculum, the increasing emphasis on managerialism, the shift from teacher-centered approach to student-centered one and many other reforms have only resulted in increased level of teacher accountability and intensification of their work (Khegay, 2017). This led to two big problems: (1) depreciating teacher professionalism and (2) teachers being forced to blindly implement government initiated reforms without understanding the rationale behind these reforms (Fimyar & Kurakbayev, 2016, p.95) The teachers are now held accountable for a number of decisions that were made not by themselves but by the authorities. This may lead to tensions between forced policies and teachers' beliefs and values, which will lead to lack of involvement in the implementation of reforms, initiatives and policies (Mausethagen & Mølstad, 2015).

1.3. Statement of the Problem

A teacher is not just another employee in an institution who is supposed to follow orders and directives. On the contrary, a teacher is supposed to be a "reflective, self-determining, lifelong learning practitioner with high-professional autonomy" (Surgrue, 2011 as cited in Wermke & Höstfält, 2013, p.58). Teachers nowadays are constantly struggling with the dilemma of whether to act as professional teachers, which implies being in charge of many crucial decisions taken in and outside the classroom, or to do what is required of them: follow the school guidelines and standard state curriculum (Wermke & Höstfält, 2013). Apart from such extrinsic reasons as low salaries and lack of fringe benefits, teachers also leave schools for such intrinsic reasons as *need for personal growth, desire for philosophy of education* and *lack of respect and recognition for their efforts*

(Brown, 1996 as cited in Pearson & Moomaw, 2006). In Kazakhstan, not much is known about whether these intrinsic and extrinsic factors affect teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. Thus, my study aimed to explore any existing links between teacher autonomy or lack thereof and teachers' job satisfaction and motivation.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this mixed-methods study is to find out how teachers in Kazakhstan understand and perceive their own autonomy. I also compare Kazakhstani teachers' subjective descriptions of teacher autonomy to the more objective ones derived from the literature. Since there are teachers from three different types of schools: private, mainstream and charter, I explore the similarities and differences among the degree of autonomy the teachers exercise in these schools. Next, the study attempts to understand whether the degree of autonomy is in any way correlated to job satisfaction, motivation and self-esteem of teachers.

1.5. Research Questions

The research question that guides this study is the following:

How do teachers in Kazakhstan understand 'teacher autonomy'?

Subsidiary Questions:

1) How does teachers' autonomy or lack thereof influence their practices?

2) Does teachers' autonomy or lack thereof affect their job satisfaction and motivation?

1.6. Significance of the Study

The study aims to find out how teachers perceive their own autonomy in different types of schools, and whether it has any influence on their job satisfaction and motivation. As the new "Law on the Status of Teachers" is being currently developed in Kazakhstan,

one of its main goals will be to provide teachers with adequate autonomy, which has not been mentioned in previous official documents by the MoES of Kazakhstan. Currently, as this study is being done, the law is in its development stage and the term 'teacher autonomy' is only mentioned as a chapter title. In order to understand and improve the process of policy implementation, it is important to listen to what teachers have to say about the issue, as they are the "key actors in realising" these policies (Lundström, 2015, p.75). This study may offer an insight on how teachers see and understand autonomy and what kind of autonomy should be provided to ensure that they are satisfied with their jobs and motivated to stay in schools.

School principals might also benefit from this study, as it may provide them with an action framework if they are willing to keep their teachers motivated to work and develop professionally. Even though there are commonly accepted definitions of what teacher autonomy is, it is important to know that the understanding of the concept and its perception may differ not only from country to country, but from one type of school to another. This study might help school administrators and policy-makers understand what 'teacher autonomy' is in terms of Kazakhstani teachers' perceptions. More importantly, there is hardly any study on teachers' autonomy in the context of Kazakhstan. Therefore this study may contribute to literature on this important topic.

1.7. Outline of the Study

The study consists of six chapters. The first chapter provides general information about the research. It contains information about the background and statement of the problem, research questions, and purpose of the research.

The second chapter includes an in-depth literature review. It explores what 'teacher autonomy' is in terms of previously done studies in various contexts. The information on what types of institutional and teacher autonomy there are and whether earlier studies

revealed any connection between the teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation.

Next, the Methodology chapter describes the methods used in this research. I describe how and why I chose mixed methods for my study and how I selected the research participants. I also describe in depth the process of analysing qualitative and quantitative data and the software I used during this stage.

The fourth section of my study contains the findings. I present the two parts of findings separately: qualitative and quantitative. Then, I attempt to compare the results of two methods to each other.

Chapter five contains the discussion part of my research and it is followed by the final section, Conclusion and Recommendations. I discuss the results of my study and present my view on the implications of this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze the concept of 'teacher autonomy' in literature. I look at various definitions of the term 'teacher autonomy" and any classification that follows. By reviewing the previously done research on the topic, I also try to see whether scholars found any correlation between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation.

The main questions that will be explored in the literature review are:

- what is 'teacher autonomy'?

- what is the difference between institutional and individual autonomy?

- how does teacher autonomy affect or influence a teacher's motivation and job satisfaction?

As of 2019, the topic of teacher autonomy has not been deeply explored by researchers in Kazakhstan. In this chapter, I look at different studies done in USA, Europe and Africa.

The first part of the literature review contains a number of different views on what 'teacher autonomy' means to different researchers and practitioners. Currently, there is no consensus on the meaning of the term, so it is important to clarify what the definition is within my study. Next, I explore the current classifications and types of teacher autonomy. Then, I attempt to find out whether previously done studies have found any significant link between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation.

2.2. What is "teacher autonomy"?

The term 'teacher autonomy' has become a matter of constant debate in different countries (Ramos, 2006). One of the reasons is that the definition of the term may vary from scholar to scholar and from context to context. It is important to know that some

scholars did not make a clear distinction between the term 'autonomy' and 'teacher autonomy'. Allwright (1990), for example, described autonomy as a constantly developing balance between "...maximal self-development and human interdependence" (p.184). The term "human interdependence" in this case is used to support numerous claims that even though 'autonomy' implies *self-rule* or "self-government", it does not always mean that an autonomous person works in complete isolation or alienation (Raya, 2007; Pearson & Moomaw, 2006, p.62). Pearson and Moomaw (2006) also describe teacher autonomy as "...teachers' feelings of whether they control themselves and their work environment" (p.46).

The concept of teacher autonomy has been undergoing a process of constant change and evolution over the years (Moomaw, 2005). The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines 'autonomy' as a "quality of being self-governing" (2019). A more commonly used definition in the literature is the one by Littlewood (2000), who defines autonomy as "...independent capacity to make and carry out choices which govern his or her actions" (p.184). Benson (2000) defines autonomy as being free from control by others. Because it appeals to many teachers nowadays, this particular definition is also very popular among educators (Ramos, 2006).

Teacher autonomy is often tied to teacher professionalism and teacher identity. Surgrue (2011) portrays teachers as "reflective, self-determining, lifelong learning practitioners with high professional autonomy" (as cited in Wermke & Höstfält, 2013, p.58). However, this creates a dilemma for teachers: having to tackle between being a professional practitioner in the classroom and depending on school policies and government-provided curriculum (Wermke & Höstfält, 2013). Most teachers work in state-funded mainstream schools, and this situation leads to the emergence of so-called "semi-professionals", teachers who are neither fully independent, nor completely autonomous in

their decisions (Wermke & Höstfält, 2013, p.61). However, Terhart (2011) argues that teacher should only act as full professionals, not as semi-professionals (as cited in Wermke & Höstfält, 2013). Thus, if teachers are to be accepted and regarded as independent and responsible professionals, then they "...must have the freedom, or 'autonomy', to prescribe the best treatment for their students" (Pearson & Moomaw, 2006, p.44). As professionals, teacher should be able to work independently, to make decisions, to exercise discretion, to be free of direct supervision (Shanker, 1985). In other words, in terms of professional judgment, trust and ethics, autonomy is a crucial element in the work of a true professional (Abbot & Wallace, 1990; Ingersoll, 1997; Sach, 2001).

2.3. Institutional and service autonomy

Teacher autonomy is not only about making professional decision about one's teaching practices, it also refers to involving teachers in decision-making processes on a school or district level (Ozturk, 2011). As it was mentioned earlier, autonomy does not mean total alienation from the system. Ballou (1998) states that autonomy is "the capacity of an agent to determine its own actions through independent choice within a system of principles and laws to which the agent is dedicated" (p.105). Moreover, individual teacher autonomy leads to improvements in school efficiency and effectiveness (Ozturk, 2011). Teacher autonomy will prosper in a school where the teachers are trusted to make decisions and to interact with each other in the process (Koehler, 1990). On the other hand, if teachers are deprived of autonomy, they tend to show "little originality in their thinking and little interest in originality" (Easterbrook, 1968, as cited in Moomaw, 2005, p.17).

When studying teacher autonomy, it is important to distinguish between individual and collective autonomy. While individual autonomy refers to a person's control over his or her daily activities (Frostenson, 2012, as cited in Mausethagen & Mølstad, 2015),

collective autonomy is usually related to teacher unions or other collegial organizations

exercising control over what individuals are supposed to do within that particular

organization (Mausethagen & Mølstad, 2015). Mausethagen and Mølstad also add that

both individual and collective autonomy are difficult to achieve in the context of modern

schools, since (1) teacher are no longer regarded as fully independent professionals, and

(2) even when working under a union, the views of individual teachers and local teacher

groups might often contradict the views of the union (p. 32).

The function of a teacher can be defined at two levels: (1) pedagogical: focusing on

teaching and assessment, and (2) organizational: such as professional development of the

staff and even budget planning (Friedman, 1999). Friedmann (1999) argues that schools

with a 'top-down' approach, where the decisions are made by principals only are usually

less effective than those schools where decisions are made collegially, in a "decentralized"

fashion (p.58). Some schools also struggle with the problem that teachers who feel that

they need guidance and direction do not want autonomy at all (Hughes, 1975 as cited in

Moomaw, 2005, Scoutten 1962 as cited in Samuels, 1970), and some teachers, even

though the do not require any guidance, just feel uncomfortable when encouraged to make

critical decisions, and prefer to be "told what to do" (Moomaw, 2005, p.17). It is important

to know, however, that teacher autonomy can be interpreted differently depending on the

cultural context. In countries where students are used to teacher-centered approach and the

teachers are more used to authoritarian top-down approach, granting autonomy may seem

as "abandoning [one's] responsibilities" (Phan, 2012, p.468).

Hoyle (2008) defines two dimensions of professionalism: (1) institutional and (2)

individual. The former dimension encompasses such aspects of the teaching profession as

"teachers' rights, salary, status, tasks and role in the society"; while the latter dimension

refers to teachers' options within the scope of classroom practice (Wermke and Höstfält,

2013, p.60). Wermke and Höstfält (2013) define these two dimensions as *institutional autonomy* and *service autonomy* (p.66). Institutional autonomy refers to teachers as a professional group, whereas service autonomy sees each teacher as a professional individual. In their study, Wermke and Höstfält introduce a notion of two qualities of autonomy: *restricted autonomy* and *extended autonomy* (p.67). The table below compares these two qualities:

Table 1. Extended/restricted institutional and service autonomy.

	Of the teaching profession as an institution	Of the teaching profession in service
Restricted autonomy	• State-regulated standards and measurement (product evaluation) • Accountability • Legitimation through efficiency regarding the achievement of goals and results • Principal = admin. manager (controls teachers)	• Regulated application of resources, content of schooling, and teacher professionalization (process evaluation)
Extended autonomy	• Sovereignty in defining standards of schooling • Responsibility • Legitimation through didactics • Control/standardization through collegiality (professional culture/code of ethics) • Principal = head teacher (controls and integrate teachers)	• Freedom of choice over the content of instruction, application of resources, and professionalization

Source: Wermke and Höstfält (2013)

The table above illustrates the concepts of restricted/extended institutional/service autonomy. Any given school may be following one of four possible models:

I) extended institutional autonomy - extended service autonomy;

II) extended institutional autonomy - restricted service autonomy;

III) restricted institutional autonomy - restricted service autonomy;

IV) restricted institutional autonomy - extended service autonomy.

However, even though all four models of school governance exist in many countries, two of the models are argued to be inefficient and even impossible to replicate in mass schooling (model I) and may lead to de-skilling and de-professionalisation (model III). The other two models, on the other hand prove to be quite effective if implemented properly (Wermke & Höstfält, 2013).

Table 2. Four models of school governance.
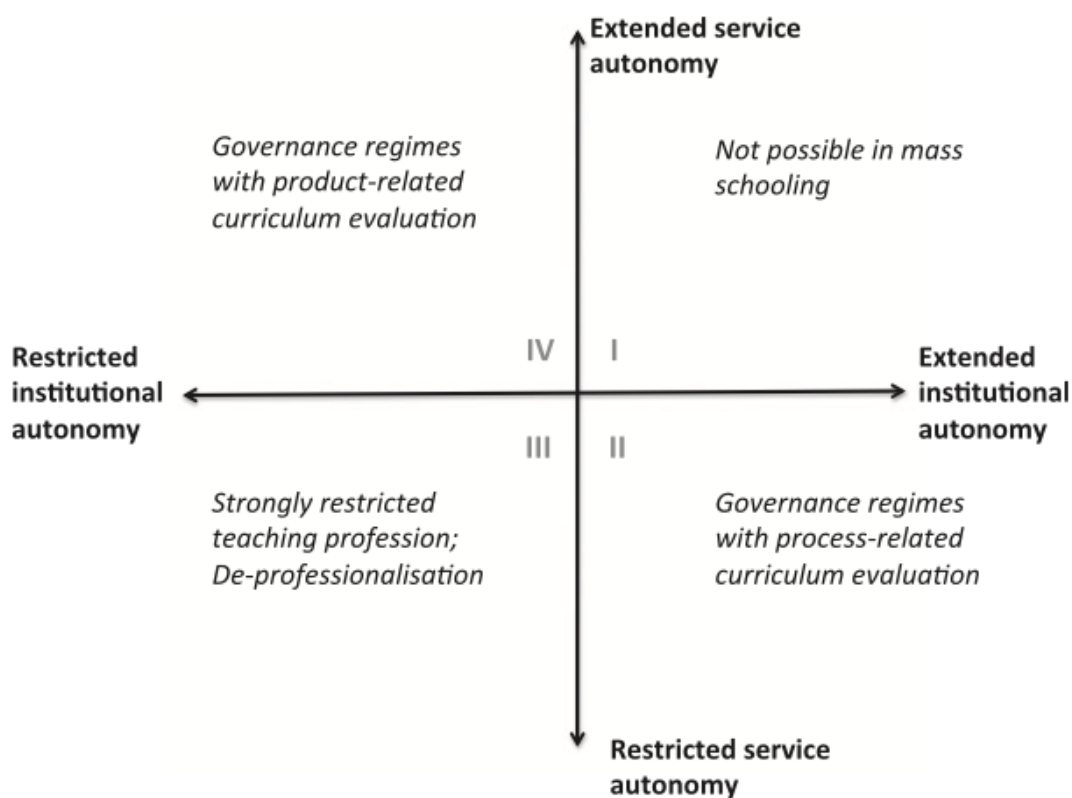
Source: Wermke and Höstfält (2013)

Before exploring the other two models (II and IV), it is necessary to mention the two types of governance regimes according to how the curriculum is evaluated by the government: (1) *product evaluation* - the government decides the learning goals, produces reliable measurement instruments and compares the students' outcomes to the predefined standard benchmarks; (2) *process evaluation* - the government defines what knowledge and skills a professional teacher should have, provides necessary training and professional

development and trusts the teacher to evaluate the students; performance and learning

process (Hopmann, 2003). These two types of educational management fit Wermke and

Höstfält's models of autonomy as follows: educational systems that apply *product*

evaluation lead to *restricted institutional autonomy* (Wermke & Höstfält, 2013). However,

since all standards are preset by the governing authorities and it is up to the teacher what

methods he/she will choose to achieve these standards, the *product evaluation* regime may

open way for *extended service autonomy (*model IV). Since "efficiency is the foundation of

accountability" (Svensson, 2008, as cited in Wermke & Höstfält, 2013, p.67), such regime

transforms school principals into managers and distances them from interfering in the

teachers' work. Thus, the teachers are more liberated in terms of choosing the content and

assessment criteria. On the other hand, those educational systems that evaluate schools in

terms of *process* lead to *extended institutional autonomy.* The government sets certain

standards for teacher competence, and the teachers as a collegial body decide how they

will achieve these standards within their institution. The school principal acts more like a

head teacher or mentor, and the schools decide on certain behaviour, practice and attitude

standards. All teachers in such schools are usually required to follow a certain "code of

ethics" or "professional culture" (Hoyle, 2008; Svensson 2008, as cited in Wermke &

Höstfält, 2013, p.66). This, however, limits the freedom of individual teachers in their

choice of content and methods, and leads to *restricted service autonomy (*model II).

2.4. The degrees and range of teacher autonomy

Myers (1973), argues that it is important to understand that teacher autonomy is not

an "all or nothing" concept, but it may rather have certain degrees in certain contexts (as

cited in Moomaw, 2005, p.11). In search of the precise definition of teacher autonomy,

different scholars provided various sets of characteristics and degrees of teacher autonomy.

Even negotiation skills are claimed to be a crucial part of teacher autonomy (Barfield et al, 2001, as cited in Phan 2012).

Smith (2001), for example, lists 6 characteristics of teacher autonomy:

1) Self-directed professional action;

2) Capacity for self-directed professional action;

3) Freedom from control over professional action;

4) Self-directed professional development;

5) Capacity for self-directed professional development;

6) Freedom from control over professional development (p. 5).

If we look at Kazakhstani teachers' autonomy from this perspective, one might conclude that teachers in Kazakhstan are not autonomous at all. Teachers in Kazakhstan are supposed to follow only to the provided standards, and the dates, duration and content of their professional development is also decided by higher authorities.

Apart from professional action and professional development, Hui (2010) added a third dimension: professional attitude. Tort-Moloney (1997) claims that in order to develop teacher autonomy, teachers should be free to make decisions on teaching materials and curriculum, and they should also continuously do research on their practices (p. 50). Fay (1990) also adds that teachers should be involved in making important decisions on such matters as school policy.

Some scholars argue that the range of teacher autonomy must be much wider. According to Lieberman (as cited in Samuels, 1970), teachers should take an active role in making such decisions as:

- what subjects should be taught in school;

- what teaching materials and textbooks should be used;

- student enrollment and graduation criteria;

- the forms of tracking and reporting student progress;

- school boundary lines;

- teacher training qualifications;

- the length and content of teacher training programs;

- the standards of professional conduct (and whether someone has violated these standards).

Of course, such a wide range of teacher autonomy is only possible if the whole educational system is structured accordingly. In the case of Kazakhstan, the system is built on strict accountability and product evaluation. Thus, providing such a wide range of autonomy would burden the teacher with extra responsibility and accountability, which many teachers may find unfavorable.

2.5. The effect of teacher autonomy on job satisfaction and motivation

Teaching is a profession with an extremely high level of stress (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). This leads to dissatisfaction, burnout and quitting the job entirely (Moomaw, 2005). Primary intrinsic reasons why teachers quit their jobs are:

- need for personal growth;

- need for a clear understanding of the philosophy of education;

- lack of respect and recognition of their efforts (Brown, 1996 as cited in Pearson & Moomaw, 2006).

If these needs are not satisfied, teachers might rather prefer working in a private institution, such as a small educational centre, where these needs can be met more quickly and with less intrusion.

Teachers also leave schools because of lack of both professionalism and autonomy (Natale, 1993). Teacher autonomy is seen as a "critical component in teachers' motivation to stay or leave the teaching profession" (Pearson & Moomaw, 2006, p.46).

When provided autonomy, with time people become better at whatever they do (Ramos, 2006). This is mainly because a strong link exists between autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation (Pearson & Moomaw, 2006). Teachers are also highly motivated to work when they feel that they: help students learn; make a difference in society; and help students achieve (Pearson & Moomaw, 2006). In order to avoid stress and burnout, teachers need to have autonomy (Erpelding, 1999 as cited in Pearson & Moomaw, 2006). In a study of over 37000 school teachers, along with support from the administration, good school climate and good student behaviour, teacher autonomy has been proven to be one of the key factors leading to higher job satisfaction (Perie & Baker, 1997). Charters (1976) implies that even such 'privileges' as choosing "the criteria and techniques used to assess student performance" are highly appreciated by teachers and this leads to an increase in job satisfaction and motivation (p.221). It is also worth mentioning that higher motivation and job satisfaction are also tied not necessarily to actual autonomy, but to the teachers' perception of their autonomy (Pearson & Hall, 1993; Perie & Baker, 1997).

In Kazakhstan, teacher turnover has become a topic of intense debate. More and more teachers are quitting their jobs due to discontent with the working conditions, lack of control over the teaching process and professional development, too much paperwork and just being passive implementers of numerous reforms (Zhulmukhambetova, 2018). In Nur-Sultan, where I conducted my study, for example, there is a vacancy of over 700 teachers in schools ("700 vakansii: Kakih uchiteley ne hvataet stolitse?", 2019). Overall, teachers in Central Asia suffer too much "intervention from outside", and they also lack "protection of their professional interests" and self-governance, or in other words autonomy (Teleshaliyev, 2013, p.54).

2.6. Theoretical framework

To explore the range and amount of teacher autonomy in Kazakhstani schools, I used

Smith's (2001) characteristics of teacher autonomy along with Tort-Moloney's (1997) and

Fay's (1990) theories. Thus, 9 characteristics form the notion of teacher autonomy, which

forms one of the four will-drivers according to Pink's theory (2011). Autonomy is the

independent variable, which directly affects job satisfaction and motivation, according to

Pearson and Moomaw (2006).
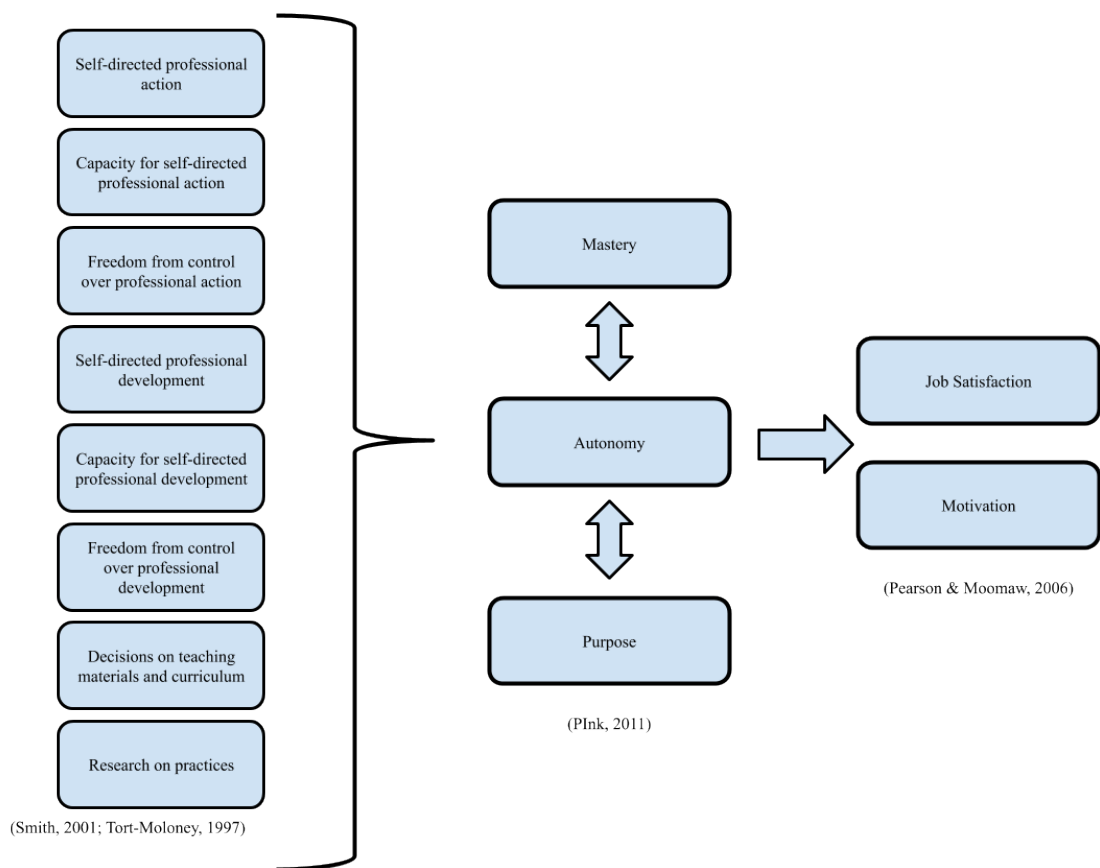
2.7. Summary

This chapter provides the fundamental information about teacher autonomy and its

importance in educational organizations. Even though there is no consensus regarding the

definition and broader understanding of teacher autonomy. We can understand, however,

that teacher autonomy comprises such concepts as *independent decision-making, self-*

directed professional action and freedom from control by others. Teacher autonomy plays a critical role in implementation of educational initiatives and reforms, as it is the teachers who are agents of change.

It is also important to understand that teacher autonomy does not mean total isolation and alienation from others. On the contrary, scholars emphasize the importance of *interdependence, collegiality* and *collaboration.* Thus, two key terms are mentioned in the literature: *institutional autonomy* and *service autonomy.* Institutional autonomy refers to teachers as a professional group, whereas service autonomy refers to a teacher's individual decisions about his or her classroom practice.

Two qualities of autonomy are introduced in this chapter: *extended* and *restricted.* Extended autonomy means giving more freedom to schools, teacher groups or unions (institutional autonomy) or to individual teacher (service autonomy). If the autonomy is restricted, most decisions are made not by teacher unions or teachers themselves, but by the government authority.

Four different models of education governance are discussed in this chapter:

 I) extended institutional autonomy - extended service autonomy;

II) extended institutional autonomy - restricted service autonomy;

III) restricted institutional autonomy - restricted service autonomy;

IV) restricted institutional autonomy - extended service autonomy.

In my study, I attempt to analyze the data and compare the governing models of the schools to those of Wermke and Höstfält (2013). However, this review also confirms that there is hardly any study on teacher autonomy in the context of Kazakhstan and therefore not much is known about how teacher autonomy is understood and exercised in schools in Kazakhstan. Thus, this study makes a modest contribution to bridging this important knowledge gap in the Kazakhstani context.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides details about the research design and methodology employed in this study. It also discusses the rationale and justifications for choosing mixed-methods study, sampling strategy, and data collection methods. The chapter ends with a description on ethical considerations taken into account throughout this study.

3.2. Research Design

Since I tried to explore both teachers' perceptions of teacher autonomy and to find any existing statistical correlations between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation, I decided to choose mixed methods approach in my study. I analyzed the qualitative and quantitative data separately, and compared the results to each other. This approach is known as *convergent parallel mixed methods design* (Creswell, 2013). According to Cronholm and Hjalmarsson (2011, such an approach is considered to be a strong one because (a) words and narratives contribute meaning to numerical data, and numbers add precision to words and narratives; (b) a wider range of research questions can be covered; (c) a more reliable conclusion can be drawn; (d) cross validation of data can provide higher validity; (e) more understanding can be obtained rather than when single method is used; (f) the results have a better capability of being generalized (as cited in Caruth, 2013, p.115).

The qualitative data was gathered using interviews, the most common data collection method in qualitative research design (Jamshed, 2014). Due to the nature of my study, I used semi-structured interviews with pre-set open-ended questions. Even though it might lead to some discomfort between the interviewer and the respondent, during such interviews audio-recording is usually preferred since handwritten notes are considered

"unreliable" and the recording allows the interviewer to focus more on the conversation rather than taking notes (Jamshed, 2014). However, I had no issues with getting permission to record the interviews, and signed consent forms were obtained from each participant. The basis for the questions was taken from a study on 'scope for decision-making' by Joanna Samuels (1970), who did a study on how teachers in different districts perceived their freedom to make decisions.

As for the quantitative part, the data obtained helped me explore whether there are any substantial links between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation. To collect the data I used a cross-sectional survey. Surveys allow researchers to "generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences can be made about some characteristic, attitude, or behavior of this population" (Creswell, 2013). In my case, I attempted to make inferences about teacher autonomy and its link to job satisfaction and motivation. There are many ways to administer a survey: via telephone, on paper, personal interviews or mass administration (Fowler, 2009 as cited in Creswell, 2013). I chose to conduct the survey via online survey platform as it is more efficient and effective in terms of time, cost and involvement of a large population. All the data was then analyzed using SPSS software.

3.3. Participants of the Study

Two groups of participants from three different schools were involved in my study. The first group consisted of 9 teachers: 3 teachers from each of 3 different schools. They were involved in the qualitative part of my mixed methods study. I tried to use maximum variation sampling method when selecting the participants to ensure optimal heterogeneity in terms of age, subject, gender and work experience. Such method allows researchers to find "shared patterns that cut across cases" (Palinkas et al, 2015).

For the quantitative part of the study a total of 131 teachers took part in the survey. The teachers were all from the same three schools that took part in the qualitative part of my study. This allowed me to break the data into three types of schools and make necessary comparisons and inferences.

3.4. Research site

The three schools that were selected for the study are different in terms of their internal governance. The first school (S1) is a public mainstream school, running the national curriculum as it is. The second school (S2), is a private school that runs its own curriculum, but the curriculum is based on the national standard curriculum. School S3 is a school that is funded by the government, but is allowed autonomy in terms of curriculum and some flexibility in relation to standards. The system of S3 is similar to grammar schools in the UK or charter schools in the US. Since my research is about teacher autonomy, I found it reasonable to have teachers participate from different types of schools, so that I could compare how teachers with different institutional autonomy perceive their individual service autonomy.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure and Tools

For my study all interviews were conducted in the schools mentioned above. After I got approval from the GSE Ethical Review Committee, I contacted the principals and explained the aim, procedures and how the schools and teachers would benefit from the results of the study. The principals agreed to let me come and talk to their teachers, and they made sure the interviews took place in a separate room where no other staff members could see or hear who was being interviewed.

Qualitative data

To collect qualitative data for my study, I contacted the principals of the schools and told them about the research I was doing. I haven't worked for any of the principals before, but the fact that all three principals knew me both professionally and personally helped me establish relationships and trust from the start. After I explained the purpose of the study, all the benefits and risks, the principals expressed their interest in the research and willingness to help. Next, I sent the consent forms to the principals and agreed on the date and time of the interviews. Each school provided a separate room for the interview and the principals made sure the interviews were not interrupted and the participants' responses could not be overheard by other staff members.

To select the teacher for the interview, I briefly explained what kind of teachers I needed so that maximum variation sampling was ensured. The principals showed me the list of teachers who were available for the interview and we offered the potential participants to take part in the study on a voluntary basis. Before starting the interview I spent a few minutes getting to know the participants, telling them about myself, what I do and why I was sitting in front of them. I explained the purpose of my study and how our conversation with them would contribute to the research. I also told them about all the benefits and risks, and offered to sign the consent forms. Interestingly enough, some participants seemed to feel more relaxed until I mentioned the consent forms. I asked each participant to record the interview and explained why I was doing it. Despite my expectations that asking permission to use an audio recorder during interviews might cause some discomfort, all participants had no objections to being recorded.

The interviews were conducted in the native languages of the participants: Kazakh and Russian. The questions followed the interview protocol that was approved by the Ethics Review Committee. In order not to lose focus, I did not take any notes during the

interviews since all interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder. Each interview took from 15 to 30 minutes.

Quantitative data

The quantitative part of my research was done via an online survey. First, I used some questions from a study done by Pearson and Moomaw (2006) and adapted them to the purpose of my research. This study was aimed to quantify teacher autonomy and the resulting scale was called *Teacher Autonomy Scale (TAS)*. I used the questions from their study as the basis for my survey. The questions were translated into Kazakh and Russian and compiled into an online questionnaire. All questions were converted into Likert-scale type questions. I compiled the survey using Google Forms, an online tool for surveys, questionnaires, application forms and quizzes. I preferred Google Forms to other tools such as Surveymonkey or Qualtrics because I am more familiar with the tool and the user interface is more friendly for the respondents. Among the advantages of Google Forms are: modular structure, which makes it easier to add questions and organize them into topics; cloud storage of the results in a separate spreadsheet; unlimited number of questions and surveys (Haddad & Kalaani, 2014).

I contacted the principals of the three participating schools and asked for permission to conduct the online survey with their teachers. After getting permission from the principals, I created three separate identical surveys for each school (a) in order to protect the confidentiality of each school as an institution and (b) so that the results do not get mixed up by mistake. Each survey was shared as a short URL link with each principal and the principals were asked to share the link with their teachers. The teachers answered the questions using their mobile phones and personal computers. Each participant spent 5-10 minutes to answer all questions. Google Forms also allowed me to see the timestamp of each participant's submission. After completing the survey, each participant was shown a

short text thanking them for participation. In order to eliminate duplicate submissions, I

included authorization by email, but the email addresses were not collected for the sake of

privacy and confidentiality.

3.6. Data Analysis

Analysis of qualitative data

Analysing the data is important in order to "get the sense" of the information

gathered (Creswell, 2013). Since qualitative data is often too rich, especially if audio or

visual information is analyzed, it is crucial to filter out the unnecessary parts of the

interview and group the remaining data into relevant themes (Creswell, 2013).

After all interviews had been recorded, I collected the audio files into a separate

folder and imported the folder into MAXQDA, a software package for qualitative and

mixed methods research. Since analyzing and coding data by hand is a difficult task, many

researchers, including me, rely on software solutions when analyzing qualitative data

(Creswell, 2013). First, I transcribed all the audio files using the built-in transcribing

feature of MAXQDA. This helped me not only to have a text version of the interview, but

also to have every single paragraph timestamped, which allowed me to listen to specific

parts of the interview by clicking on the sentences in the text.

After all interviews had been transcribed, I started the coding, "the process of

organizing the data by bracketing chunks and writing a word representing a category in the

margins" (Rossman & Rallis, 2012 as cited in Creswell, 2013, p.247). Since my interviews

were semi-constructed, the questions I asked revolved around certain topics. This allowed

me to use *selective coding* approach when coding the text segments. After I have coded all

the interviews, MAXQDA allowed me to organize the coded segments into themes and

topics, and to export the data into printable format. Since all interviews were conducted in

Kazakh and Russian, I coded the original interviews and translated only the coded segments.

Quantitative data

The quantitative data was collected using Google Forms. This tool allows researchers to create a dynamic spreadsheet in Google Sheets and the data in the spreadsheet automatically updates each time a new response is submitted.

The problem with Google Sheets, however is that the information is recorded "as it is", which means that every respondent's answer is recorded not as a *value,* but as the answer choice provided in the survey. This creates an extra obstacle if a researcher wants to start analyzing the data in a software package immediately. This problem, however, can be easily solved by using the built-in "find and replace" feature within Google Sheets.

After all responses have been collected, I renamed the columns in the Google spreadsheet in order for SPSS software to recognize the columns as variable names.

3.7. Ethical Issues

The study was done in accordance with NU GSE Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research. An oral and written permission was obtained from each of the participating schools prior to data collection procedures. All participants were selected on a voluntary basis and each of them was first acquainted with the research purpose and procedures. They were also informed about the potential risks and benefits and their rights to withdraw from the study at any time. A letter about the research and consent forms were sent via email to the principals and teachers beforehand.

The participants of the qualitative part of the study benefited from the opportunity to self-reflect on their role in the educational system and to express their opinions about teacher autonomy. The participants' perceptions and opinions about teacher autonomy and

its effects on their practices will allow policy-makers and school administrators to understand what affects teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. These reflections will help shape the new "Law on the Status of Teachers" so as to guarantee teachers more professional freedom, protection and autonomy.

As for the risks, there were no sensitive questions that would put the participants in any danger. In all my records, all names were replaced with participant codes and the recorded interviews were kept in a separate folder with password protection. The participants were free to refuse to answer any of the questions, so there was no pressure on them in this regard. I also made sure that the participants were interviewed during their free time, so that they would not feel the stress of missing a class. To avoid unnecessary nervousness, the interviews were held in places selected by the participants themselves, which would usually be their own classroom. Thus, they would feel "at home" and be more relaxed and open during the interviews. Also, if any other teacher entered the room, there was no clear indication that the teacher was being interviewed for a study.

As for the quantitative part of the study, the survey was done online and anonymously, so the participants did not have to identify themselves. To avoid multiple entries, the survey was set up so that each participant could only respond once. All questions were optional, so the participants had the freedom to skip any question they were not willing to answer, or to submit the whole survey without answering any questions. The data was recorded in a separate spreadsheet under a password.

3.8. Limitations

One of the limitations of my study was the small population size of the qualitative part of the study. Each of the three participating schools was represented by three teachers, which does not allow to make generalized statements or conclusions.

Another limitation of the study was that some of the participants were not quite open during the interviews, and they tended to give generic, "trouble-proof" answers to some of the questions. This might have occurred due to the fact that the participants knew that their principals were aware of the interview taking place in their classroom. Also, some of the participants were clearly not used to talking openly about their issues or problems.

As for the quantitative part of the study, one of the limitations was that the survey was done online. Even though I assume that all teachers nowadays have access to the internet, there might have been some teachers who could not take part in my survey because they simply did not have the opportunity.

Another limitation was that since the questions in the survey were close ended Likert Scale Multiple Choice questions, some participants might have answered some (or all) of the questions randomly, in order to save their time. To avoid this, I included a description of the research, the purpose and benefits at the beginning of the survey, asking the teachers to answer responsibly.

One more limitation of the quantitative part of the study was the uneven distribution of the participants. 51.1% of the participants were from School 1, 22.9% from School 2 and 26% of the teachers were from School 3. Since the majority of the participants were from School 1, this might skew some of the statistical analysis. This does not, however, affect any statistical analysis which includes comparing means. I also tried to tackle this issue by breaking down some of the analysis into 3 schools separately.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study. The aim was to explore the teachers' perceptions about teacher autonomy in schools in Kazakhstan and whether the degree of autonomy they enjoy affects their job satisfaction, motivation and stress level. The study was done using a mixed method approach: qualitative interview-based research and quantitative survey-based analysis. Both methods were aimed to reveal information on how teachers in three different schools in Kazakhstan understand and perceive teacher autonomy.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: first the characteristics of the schools and the participants are given. Next, I present the results of the qualitative part of the study. Each theme of the interviews is explored separately according to the codes. Then, the findings of the quantitative part of the research are presented. The results of each individual question are presented to identify the level and degrees of teacher autonomy in three types of schools. By combining different variables, a Teacher Autonomy Index is computed. This independent index variable is used to establish links between the two dependent variables: teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation.

4.2. Characteristics of Schools

Three schools in Nur-Sultan city were selected for the study: a public school, a private school and a government-funded charter school. The names and numbers of the schools are not revealed due to ethical reasons.

School 1

School 1 (further S1) is a regular public school in Nur-Sultan. It accommodates more than 1500 students from KG to Grade 11. The school follows a standard national curriculum, and it has been one of the pioneers of the updated curriculum initiative. As many schools in Nur-Sultan, this is a relatively young school, which has been in operation for about 5 years. The students are accepted on a space available basis.

School 2

S2 is a private school located in Nur-Sultan. The school has more than 1500 students and about 150 teachers. The curriculum in this school is based on the national standards, but it has more emphasis on English language and Sciences. The students of all grades are admitted on an entry test basis.

School 3

S3 is a lyceum (grades 5-11) fully funded by the government. Despite nominally being a state school, the school is given a certain degree of academic autonomy. There are more than 500 students and about 80 teachers in this school. Each year the school only accepts students of lower grades on an entry test basis.

4.3. Characteristics of Participants

Qualitative interview participants

A total of nine teachers were selected from the three schools, three teachers from each school. The age of the participants ranged from 22 to 63. The teachers in each school were selected with a maximum variation in mind in terms of age, sex, subject and work experience. All the interviews were done in their native languages, Kazakh and Russian,

and were then transcribed and translated into English. Each respondent was assigned an

alphanumeric code and their identities are kept confidential.

Table 3. Qualitative interview participants.

Participant code	Age	Work experience	Subject
S1T1	50	28	Elementary school teacher
S1T2	46	23	Math
S1T3	23	2	English
S2T1	30	9	Physics
S2T2	23	2	Math
S2T3	63	40	Geography
S3T1	22	1	Biology
S3T2	27	6	ICT
S3T3	46	23	Kazakh language

The age and work experience might be important factors affecting how a teacher

perceives his/her autonomy, therefore I tried to include a variety of teachers based on these

factors. In addition, beginning teachers tend to perceive such problems as stress, workload

and psychological well-being in a different way than their more experienced colleagues

(Veenman, 1984). I also tried to include teachers of different subjects to see if there is a

difference in teacher autonomy among different subjects.

Quantitative survey participants

To collect the quantitative data for my study, I conducted an online survey via

Google Forms. There were a total of 29 closed question items in the survey, and one extra

open question for the participants. The total number of valid responses was 131 (S1:67,

S2:30, S3:34). In this chapter, I am going to analyze the results of the quantitative part of

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my study separately and then I will attempt to compare the findings with that of the

qualitative part.

Table 4. The number of qualitative survey participants.

School					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	S1	67	51.1	51.1	51.1
	S2	30	22.9	22.9	74
	S3	34	26	26	100
Valid	Total	131	100	100	

It can be seen from the table above that the majority of the participants (51.1%) were from

School 1, even though the total number of teachers in these schools is roughly the same.

4.4. Results of Qualitative part of the study

During the interview, the participants were asked to explain how they understood

the term "teacher autonomy", what type of autonomy they had in their schools and whether

the autonomy they enjoyed had any effect on their teaching practices, job satisfaction and

motivation. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured fashion, and the responses

were then coded and broken into themes. The table below shows the codes and the

respective themes in alphabetical order. The order of the appearance of the themes within

the interview was different for each participant.

Table 5. Interview codes and themes.

Code	Theme
negative autonomy	Negative consequences of teacher autonomy

wish could decide	Types of decisions that teachers would want to decide themselves
stress at work	The level of stress in the workplace
autonomy	How a teacher understands and perceives his/her autonomy
student benefit	How teacher autonomy affects student achievement
job satisfaction	To what extent the teacher is satisfied with his/her current employment
motivation	What motivates the teachers to keep working in schools. How a teacher's motivation is affected by teacher autonomy or lack of thereof
own initiative	What types of activities, changes occur by the teacher's decision
relationship with administration	What is the degree of relationship between the teacher and the school administration
recognition	Whether the teachers' achievements are recognized by the school administration
plans administration	Whether the teacher plans to become a school principal or school administrator
other school	The teachers' reflections of their previous school experience and the degree of autonomy they had there
policy	Whether the schools have any kind of policies on teacher autonomy

Perceptions about Teacher Autonomy

The interviews revealed that different teachers understand the term "teacher autonomy" in different ways. Since there is no single objective description of teacher autonomy in official documents yet, some of the teachers even needed clarification of the term before answering the questions. Some of them feel fully autonomous when they are given the freedom to reorganize their classroom space or bring pots with plants, while others think that teachers are autonomous when they are not bothered while they are working. Here are some quotes from the teachers I interviewed:

> I keep my classroom clean and tidy without consulting with the administration. I like room flowers. So I look after my own flowers in my classroom. (S1T1)

> I think being autonomous means being unique, and being able to express your uniqueness. (S3T3)

> I don't know. It's when you do whatever you want, not just because you were told to do so. (S2T2)

A few participants think that teacher autonomy is related to what happens during the lessons:

> [teacher autonomy] is when a teacher can decide what kind of lesson to conduct, what methods to use… It's when the school administration fully trusts the teacher. (S3T2)

> It is when you have total freedom. You decide what to do during the lessons, and after the lessons. (S2T1)

> Teachers' creativity should not be limited. They should decide themselves how to work. No obstacles. (S2T3)

> Fully independent teaching, being able to select own methods of teaching...freedom from paperwork. (S3T1)

Actual teacher autonomy

As with perception, different schools seem to allow different degree of autonomy to their teachers. In some cases different teachers from the same school described their autonomy differently. In the table below, the areas of autonomy are compared among all the participants. The table highlights common topics mentioned by all nine respondents. If a teacher mentioned that he/she experienced autonomy in a certain area, the corresponding cell was marked as "yes". If a respondent indicated that they do not have a certain degree of autonomy, the corresponding cell was marked as "no". The "-" sign indicates that there was no mention of the topic by the respondent.

Table 6. Topics covered by teachers in terms of teacher autonomy.

Area	S1T1	S1T2	S1T3	S2T1	S2T2	S2T3	S3T1	S3T2	S3T3
Free to express own opinion	yes	yes	-	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	-
Free to choose teaching methods	yes	-	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	-
Free to choose own teaching materials	yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Free from excessive paperwork	yes	-	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	-
Free to design own classroom	yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Free from forced subscription (newspaper etc.)	yes	yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Free to choose dressing style	-	-	-	yes	-	yes	-	-	-
Free to organize trips and other extracurricular activities	yes	no	yes	-	-	-	-	-	-

When asked what kind of autonomy they had in their schools, almost all participants

mentioned the ability to freely express their opinions to the school administration.

> ..[when planning the annual activities] all teachers express their opinions. We share ideas with each other. (S1T1)

> I can freely express my opinion, explain my point of view. If I agree [with the administration], I tell them so. If I don't, I say "I'm sorry, but I disagree". I am completely free. (S1T2)

> [the principal] consults with us when making important decisions: "What would you do in this situation?", "what would YOU suggest?". We are free to express our own opinions. (S2T3)

While most participants tried to avoid saying anything negative about their schools in their

interviews, one participant S3T2 expressed a different opinion:

> All decisions regarding the students and teachers should be made by a kind of a council. I hate it when the administration makes a decision and the teachers and students simply obey. It is not reasonable, since the administration might miss some important points, they might not fully understand the problem. (S3T2)

In the case of S3T3, this teacher did not mention any of the areas of autonomy when asked about her freedom of decisions. Her understanding of autonomy seems to be significantly different from others :

> Rather than being independent, [autonomy] is all about being unique. Being a unique teacher.

Own initiatives

In order to identify what degrees of autonomy the teachers are allowed in their schools, I asked them to describe what kinds of activities they did acting on their own initiatives. The reason such question was included is that since many teachers still don't have a full understanding of what teacher autonomy is, some of them might be experiencing a wider range of autonomy than they perceive. Participant S1T1, for example, influenced the administration's decision on what math textbook to use:

> "...and then I spoke out and suggested we use "Peterson's" textbook, published in Russia. At first I feared they would not listen to my suggestion....The principal asked me to show the textbook to her and a week later she called me and said "I agree with you, let's purchase this textbook for our school"

The same teacher re-introduced the practice of "dictation" method, which is no longer used in the updated curriculum. Four out of nine respondents emphasised that they enjoyed the freedom to conduct extra lessons whenever needed and in any form selected by the teacher.

> I conduct extra English lessons after classes. There I am free to use my own methods, experience and approaches. (S1T3)

> I am free to decide when and where to conduct extra lessons. I think I have full freedom. (S2T1)

> No one from the administration ever interferes with my olympiad lessons…. I am free to do extracurricular activities with my class. (S2T2)

> This year I changed the way I teach my subject. I am no longer a teacher, but a mentor to them…. The students use an online learning platform, and I approach each student and explain what they didn't understand. (S3T2)

Wish could decide

In order to find out what areas the teachers are limited in, I asked them what kinds of decisions they would like to make on their own, without consulting with the administration. Participants S1T1 and S1T3 expressed discontent with the curriculum. They said they would like to make some changes, but they are not allowed to.

> I wish I could modify the contents of the "literacy" subject....Apparently the authors of the textbook were oriented at the students at a lower level...But it is not something I can change on my own. (S1T1)

> When doing the summative assessment we are required to follow the standards, but everything is now available online, and the students and their parents know this. So they come prepared in advance. We used to grade students daily on a 1-5 scale, but now we do it only once a semester. This might negatively affect the students' learning… I think teachers should be given freedom to modify the assessment. (S1T3)

Some students in Kazakhstani schools take part in subject olympiads. The task of preparing these students for such competitions lies on the teachers. The students are usually pre-selected by the faculty and divided into groups according to their subject. One of the study participants (S2T2) felt that they needed more autonomy in selecting these students, since teachers are usually held accountable for the students' success or failure.

Depending on the type of school, the teachers' responses differed too. Thus, two out of three respondents from school S2 reported that they would like to change the teachers' dress code. Two out of three teachers from school S3, however, told that they wished they could affect how their lesson schedule was constructed.

Other schools

During the interview, many respondents tended to compare their current school with the school they previously worked at. Another interesting fact is that when talking

about previous employment or other schools, the participants more open to criticize and to

point out negative aspects of their, or their friends' work there.

> I came from another city. We didn't have any autonomy there. We only did what
> we were told to do by the principal. Once a week we had to renovate our
> classroom. It was obligatory. The principal used to come and check whether we had
> washed everything properly. (S1T1)

> When I used to work in my previous school, I could never speak my mind during
> the meetings. If I ever did that, I would then be prosecuted by the administration.
> (S2T3)

Thus the data shows that the participants feel more autonomous at their present schools but

complain about lack of autonomy in their previous schools. This also indicates that they

may be afraid of being critical to the current schools or with the time the level of autonomy

in schools is increasing.

Influences of teacher autonomy on students' academic performance

One of the questions in the interview was whether the teachers thought that their

autonomy would somehow affect their students' academic achievement. All of the

participants hesitated when answering this particular question. Their responses, again,

depended on how they understand the notion of teacher autonomy. Even though each

respondent believed that the students would benefit from their teachers' autonomy, most of

them struggled with providing a convincing reason or argument for their response.

> [There are] a lot of benefits for the students. A teacher should be able to adapt to
> each student… if we are given the freedom to conduct lesson as a game, the
> students will like it. A teacher should be able to feel the kids' emotions…. A
> teacher should have emotional intelligence. The teacher's autonomy is good for the
> kids. (S1T3)

> If a teacher is placed within some borders and restrictions, then he/she will not be
> able to adapt to the students' needs, because of all these rules. But if a teacher is
> flexible, they can simplify a task or an exam, and this is a big advantage for the
> students. (S2T1)

> I think the teacher will be able to become closer to the students, and his/her
> authority will rise. (S2T2)

The less the paperwork, the more attention I will be able to pay to my students. (S3T1)

I can differentiate the materials I use and adapt to different student groups. (S3T2)

We are currently following an educational system which was built in 18-19th centuries. It is now very hard to use the same methods as we used to have in the past. If teachers are trusted to [make their own decisions], they would be able to develop unique, "super" methods and approaches. We are still looking for such ultimate approach. This would be the greatest benefit [for the students]. If each teacher were allowed to experiment with methods, one of them would ultimately find one great method and share with others. (S3T2)

Relationship with administration

Even though there was no direct questions on what the participants thought about their relationship with the school administration, all of them reflected on this matter during the interview. Interestingly enough, all the participants spoke highly of their principals and attributed their autonomy to the leadership style of their administrators.

[compared to my previous school] We have absolute freedom in this school. The principal emphasises that we spend more time with the kids. (S1T1)

I am grateful to my principal. She always asks "how are you?", "What have you learned today?" "Is there anything I can do to help you?"...We are in very good relations with the administration. I thank God for this. (S1T2)

I can always talk to them. But I know they are very busy. (S2T2)

They try to help us if they can. (S2T3)

I think I can always go and talk to the headmaster or the principal. Even if they are busy, I can write an email and they will reply later. (S3T2)

Recognition

When talking about teacher autonomy and teacher-initiated activities, recognizing individual achievements is very important, as it might affect job satisfaction and motivation. When asked whether their achievements are seen and recognized by the school

administration, the participants' responses make it clear that the three schools have

different approaches:

> We frequently have award ceremonies [among teachers]... One great thing is that no one's hard work goes unnoticed. We receive monetary bonuses too. They praise teachers a lot. (S1T1)

> If any of my students achieve something, the whole staff congratulates me. And the administration gives me extra bonuses for this. (S1T3)

School S2 seems to have a different approach in recognizing teachers' achievements:

> It used to be better, but now it's not. Some teachers are even offended by it. They don't say this, but they feel it. They almost never do it. Some teachers think it's not a big deal, but it is very important for others. (S2T1)

> [when a teacher makes an accomplishment] they immediately announce this in our Whatsapp group chat. (S2T2)

> I told them about this. I had some achievements in science projects and subject olympiads...They just told me "these achievements are only for you". What I understood from this is that they no longer value teacher achievements.(S2T3)

Apparently, school S2 used to pay more attention to the accomplishments of their teachers

in the past, but it has changed for some reason. In the case of school S3, however, it seems

this practice was never applied in the first place.

> I have never noticed [recognition]. We had an olympiad, but no ceremony afterwards. (S3T1)

> I have never seen anything like it. I don't know. (S3T2)

Policy

It was important for me to know whether any of the schools had any written

policies mentioning the degree of teacher autonomy, or at least the field of teacher

responsibility and accountability. All participants reported that they had never heard or

seen any kind of such documents.

Motivation

The interview did not include a direct question on what motivated the teachers to work in schools, but they shared relevant information while answering other questions. All participants except for one reported having intrinsic motivation that keeps them working in schools.

> My sole purpose is to make my students literate. (S1T1)

> Would I be sitting here if I didn't enjoy my job? I wouldn't have spent 23 years teaching if I didn't like it. (S1T2)

> I feel myself comfortable. If have any problems, I can easily solve them. There are no barriers...sometimes I stay as late as 8pm, even though I don't have to. There's no pressure on me and I feel comfortable. I like it very much. (S2T1)

> Even if they don't tell me to prepare [for my lessons], I still prepare for myself. (S2T3)

Only one teacher S2T3 openly admitted that she would be more motivated to work harder if her salary was a bit higher.

Negative aspects of teacher autonomy

During the interview the participants were also asked whether they thought there could be any negative effects of teacher autonomy. Most of the respondents said that they couldn't see any negative sides of teacher autonomy. One participant implied that the restrictions they have in their school is a good thing:

> Our teachers are not free-roaming employees. Even though we have autonomy, we also have restrictions. Our school is successful because of such autonomy. (S1T1)

Participant S1T2 provided a quite extended argument why providing teachers with autonomy in adjusting curriculum might have a negative effect on those students who switched schools for certain reasons:

> Of course teacher autonomy has negative effects. If I make my own decisions on what to teach in class, and my student decides to transfer to another school, my

> curriculum would be different from that of his new school. What would be the child's fate? I have no guarantee that I will have particular students in my school until they graduate…. Autonomy is not about making own decisions, it is all about consulting with colleagues and making decisions collegially.

Most teachers understand that autonomy goes with responsibility and accountability. Six of the nine respondents indicated that it is themselves, the teachers, who might be the problem once given freedom and autonomy:

> "Give an inch, and they take a mile". Some people see no boundaries. I think there should be certain limits [to what a teacher may or may not do]. However, without autonomy you can't be creative. (S2T1)

> [If you give teachers full autonomy] they will just do nothing. (S2T2)

> I think it is wrong to give too much autonomy to teachers. Some teachers might assume that they are free to do anything they like. I don't think teachers should be too autonomous. (S2T3)

> Everyone will start doing their own willing. To avoid this, someone should be in charge. Autonomy has its good and bad sides. For example, if you give the teachers the freedom to make their own lesson plans, they will just stop doing it altogether. (S3T1)

> Of course there are [negative sides of teacher autonomy]. Not all teachers are good enough to be trusted with autonomy…. I think the school administration should decide who gets autonomy and who doesn't. They might even administer a kind of a test or survey to determine which of the teachers can be trusted. I don't know, it's just my opinion. (S3T2)

> If I had sufficient autonomy, I would be able to come up with new ideas. However, I think that even if teachers are provided with autonomy, they must still write reports about what they do. (S3T3)

4.5. Results of Quantitative part of the study

A total of 131 teachers took part in the survey. All of the questions in the survey were close-ended multiple choice questions. Since the respondents were free to skip any of the questions, I report only the valid percentage, which means that in some of the statistics the total population might differ slightly. The survey was done in order to collect more data on teacher autonomy in schools and to find any existing links between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation. The correlations were analyzed using

Bivariate Correlation procedure in SPSS software with Pearson's *r* as the value indicator of links between the variables.

In some of the topics, the findings are reported in two ways: in relation to the total population and in relation to each school separately.

The survey included 29 items, most of which were Likert-scale type questions (completely disagree/disagree/neither agree nor disagree/agree/completely agree), the rest being rating questions from 1 to 5. For a more clear interpretation, when reporting on separate items in the survey, in some cases I grouped the values 'strongly disagree' with 'disagree', and 'agree' with 'strongly agree'. However, all values were used to obtain more precise results when reporting on the average values of the items.

I summarized the results according to the theoretical framework and my research questions. I also formulated hypotheses and tested them using SPSS.

After all items had been analyzed, I attempted to combine the responses into a single index variable AUTONOMY INDEX. Even though this index may not reflect the actual teacher autonomy in schools, it enabled me to establish links between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation.

Self-directed professional action

According to Smith (2001) and Tort-Moloney (1997), teacher autonomy is characterized by the following factors: self-directed professional action, self-directed professional development, making decisions on teaching materials and curriculum and ability and freedom to conduct research on practices. In my survey, I asked a number of questions in order to explore how autonomous teachers saw themselves in terms of such areas as

- Being creative in teaching approach;
- Selection of student-learning activities;

- Being able to set their own standards for student behaviour;

- Freedom to use own guidelines and procedures in teaching;

- Selecting content and skills for teaching;

- Selecting own learning goals and objectives;

- Freedom to use alternative methods in teaching;

- Control over how classroom space is used;

Each of the items above was presented in a form of a statement, such as "The content and skills taught in my class are those I select" or "I am free to be creative in my teaching approach", and the answer choices were presented in a form of Likert-scale options (strongly disagree/disagree/neither agree nor disagree/agree/strongly agree). To avoid misdirection due to some teachers randomly clicking on the answer options, some questions were rephrased and repeated in the form of negative statements, such as "I have little say over the content and skills that are selected for teaching". In the table below, I compare the percentage of teachers who either disagree (D), neither agree nor agree (N), or agree (A) with the statements. I also compare the answers from each school separately (S1, S2, S3) to each other and to general statistics (All schools).

The table below shows the percentage of answers to each of the questions. At a glance, it looks like teachers exercise a decent amount of autonomy in schools. Overall, around 60-70% of teachers tend to agree with the positive statements and disagree with the negative statements. As for schools separately, the statistics shown by each school do not seem to deviate far from the general statistics.

Table 7. Percentage of teachers who disagree/neither agree nor agree/agree with the statements.

	All schools			S1			S2			S3		
	D	N	A	D	N	A	D	N	A	D	N	A
I am free to be creative in my teaching approach.	11.4%	14.6%	74.0%	20.0%	8.3%	71.6%	3.3%	16.7%	80.0%	3.0%	24.2%	72.7%
The selection of student-learning activities is under my control.	11.4%	11.4%	77.3%	20.3%	8.5%	71.2%	3.3%	10.0%	86.6%	2.9%	17.6%	79.4%
Standards of student behaviour in my classroom are set primarily by myself	25.8%	22.6%	51.6%	32.8%	26.2%	41.0%	27.6%	13.8%	58.6%	11.8%	23.5%	64.7%
My job does not allow for much discretion on my part.	72.7%	18.8%	8.6%	75.0%	14.1%	11.9%	73.3%	16.7%	10.0%	67.6%	29.4%	2.9%
In my teaching, I use my own guidelines and procedures.	17.6%	17.6%	64.8%	22.6%	17.7%	59.7%	3.3%	10.0%	86.7%	21.2%	24.2%	54.5%
I have little say over the content and skills that are selected for teaching.	52.8%	20.5%	26.7%	57.1%	14.3%	28.6%	53.3%	23.3%	23.4%	44.1%	29.4%	26.5%
The scheduling of use of time in my classroom is under my control.	12.3%	8.2%	79.5%	22.0%	6.8%	71.2%	3.3%	3.3%	93.3%	3.0%	15.2%	81.8%
My teaching focuses on those goals and objectives I select myself.	22.6%	19.4%	58.1%	25.0%	20.0%	55.0%	23.3%	10.0%	66.7%	17.6%	26.5%	55.9%
I seldom use alternative procedures in my teaching.	37.1%	33.9%	29.0%	45.9%	32.8%	21.4%	33.3%	26.7%	40.0%	24.2%	42.4%	33.3%
I follow my own guidelines on instruction.	8.9%	6.5%	84.6%	15.0%	5.0%	80.0%	3.3%	10.0%	86.7%	3.0%	6.1%	90.9%
What I teach in my class is determined for the most part by myself.	25.2%	22.8%	52.0%	38.3%	25.0%	36.7%	16.7%	13.3%	70.0%	9.1%	27.3%	63.7%
The materials I use in my class are chosen for the most part by myself.	11.6%	18.2%	70.3%	19.0%	22.4%	58.6%	3.3%	10.0%	86.6%	6.1%	18.2%	75.7%
The evaluation and assessment activities are selected by others.	44.0%	24.8%	31.2%	46.8%	21.0%	32.3%	43.3%	16.7%	40.0%	39.4%	39.4%	21.2%
I select the teaching methods and strategies I use with my students.	14.4%	9.6%	76.0%	23.0%	11.5%	65.6%	3.3%	10.0%	86.7%	8.8%	5.9%	85.3%
I have little say over the scheduling of time in my classroom.	45.2%	27.8%	27.0%	52.4%	33.3%	14.3%	46.7%	23.3%	30.0%	30.3%	21.2%	48.5%
The content and skills taught in my class are those I select.	13.8%	18.7%	67.5%	21.7%	23.3%	55.0%	6.7%	10.0%	84.4%	6.1%	18.2%	75.7%

However, by simply rearranging the rows two important tendencies can be noticed. First, when it comes to disagreeing with positive statements, the teachers of School 1 tend to disagree far more often than the teachers from Schools 2 and 3. In 12 out of 16 items in the table below, the difference of S1 teachers in the percentage of those who disagreed by far exceeds that of S2 and S3. This finding might suggest that teachers in S1 are less autonomous than teachers in S2 and S3.

Another outlier is School 2, where more teachers tend to agree with the positive statements and disagree with the negative ones.

Such big differences might suggest that when different types of schools are compared, teachers in private schools are likely to be more autonomous than teachers in mainstream public schools.

Table 8. Percentage of answers by schools.

	Disagree				Neutral				Agree			
	ALL	S1	S2	S3	ALL	S1	S2	S3	ALL	S1	S2	S3
I am free to be creative in my teaching approach.	11.4%	**20.0%**	3.3%	3.0%	14.6%	8.3%	16.7%	24.2%	74.0%	71.6%	80.0%	72.7%
The selection of student-learning activities is under my control.	11.4%	**20.3%**	3.3%	2.9%	11.4%	8.5%	10.0%	17.6%	77.3%	71.2%	**86.6%**	79.4%
Standards of student behaviour in my classroom are set primarily by myself	25.8%	**32.8%**	27.6%	11.8%	22.6%	26.2%	13.8%	23.5%	51.6%	41.0%	58.6%	64.7%
My job does not allow for much discretion on my part.	72.7%	75.0%	73.3%	67.6%	18.8%	14.1%	16.7%	29.4%	8.6%	11.9%	10.0%	2.9%
In my teaching, I use my own guidelines and procedures.	17.6%	22.6%	**3.3%**	21.2%	17.6%	17.7%	10.0%	24.2%	64.8%	59.7%	**86.7%**	54.5%
I have little say over the content and skills that are selected for teaching.	52.8%	57.1%	53.3%	44.1%	20.5%	14.3%	23.3%	29.4%	26.7%	28.6%	23.4%	26.5%

The scheduling of use of time in my classroom is under my control.	12.3%	**22.0%**	3.3%	3.0%	8.2%	6.8%	3.3%	15.2%	79.5%	71.2%	**93.3%**	81.8%
My teaching focuses on those goals and objectives I select myself.	22.6%	25.0%	23.3%	17.6%	19.4%	20.0%	10.0%	26.5%	58.1%	55.0%	66.7%	55.9%
I seldom use alternative procedures in my teaching.	37.1%	**45.9%**	33.3%	24.2%	33.9%	32.8%	26.7%	42.4%	29.0%	21.4%	**40.0%**	33.3%
I follow my own guidelines on instruction.	8.9%	**15.0%**	3.3%	3.0%	6.5%	5.0%	10.0%	6.1%	84.6%	80.0%	86.7%	90.9%
What I teach in my class is determined for the most part by myself.	25.2%	**38.3%**	16.7%	9.1%	22.8%	25.0%	13.3%	27.3%	52.0%	36.7%	70.0%	63.7%
The materials I use in my class are chosen for the most part by myself.	11.6%	**19.0%**	3.3%	6.1%	18.2%	22.4%	10.0%	18.2%	70.3%	58.6%	**86.6%**	75.7%
The evaluation and assessment activities are selected by others.	44.0%	46.8%	43.3%	39.4%	24.8%	21.0%	16.7%	39.4%	31.2%	32.3%	40.0%	21.2%
I select the teaching methods and strategies I use with my students.	14.4%	**23.0%**	3.3%	8.8%	9.6%	11.5%	10.0%	5.9%	76.0%	65.6%	**86.7%**	85.3%
I have little say over the scheduling of time in my classroom.	45.2%	**52.4%**	46.7%	30.3%	27.8%	33.3%	23.3%	21.2%	27.0%	14.3%	30.0%	48.5%
The content and skills taught in my class are those I select.	13.8%	**21.7%**	6.7%	6.1%	18.7%	23.3%	10.0%	18.2%	67.5%	55.0%	**84.4%**	75.7%

Job satisfaction and motivation

The participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with certain statements about their workplace, salary and working conditions. Each respondent was given questions asking to give answers in the form of a rating from 1 to 5 (1- lowest, 5- highest). This procedure allowed me to compare the average value of different items.

When asked about how satisfied they were with their current employment, the teachers of S1 gave the highest average of 4.17, while the teacher of S2 and S3 averaged at 3.87 and 3.79 respectively. This might seem counterintuitive to the previous finding about the level of autonomy - teachers from the school with less autonomy seem to be more satisfied with their school than their colleagues from schools with higher autonomy.

These findings are supported by another statistic - motivation to keep working in the same school within the next five years. As in job satisfaction, teachers from S1 gave a high average rating of 4.24, whereas their colleagues from S2 and S3 are less likely to stay in school, with an average rating of 3.63 and 3.47 respectively.

When asked about satisfaction with their salaries, however, the teachers of S2 were the ones with the lowest average rating: 3.03 as opposed to S1 (3.30) and S3 (3.59). This suggests that even though teachers in S1 are more autonomous, they are less satisfied with their working conditions and salaries.

When asked to describe the stress level of their working environments, all three schools produced similar average results: S1 - 2.73, S2 - 2.80, S3 - 2.85.

Teacher Autonomy Index

In order to check one of my main hypotheses "Teacher autonomy affects job satisfaction and motivation", I first needed to come up with a way to combine the values of different questions into one single independent index variable. For that, I used the 'Compute variable' function in SPSS and calculated the new variable called AUTONOMYINDEX by adding the Likert-scale values of positive statements and dividing them by the number of variables. In other words, each value of AUTONOMYINDEX for each case was an average of a number of answers to different questions with the same 1 to 5 Likert-scale values.

$$AUTONOMYINDEX=(CREATIVEAPPROACH+CONTROLACTIVITIES+SETBEHAVSTANDARDS+OWNGUIDELINESAPPR+CONTROLCLASSROOMTIME+SELECTGOALSANDOBJCTVS+OWNINSTRUCTGUIDELINES+IDETERMINEWHATTOTEACH+CHOOSEOWNMATERIALS+ISELECTMETHODSTRAGEIES+ISELECTCONTENTSKILLS)/11$$

How autonomous are teachers in Kazakhstani schools?

To answer this question, I ran the 'compare means' procedure in SPSS. The average value of AUTONOMYINDEX for all participants is 3.72, with 1 being the lowest value possible and 5 - the highest. Thus, it can be said that the participants of my survey are moderately autonomous. This, however, does not answer the next question, which I put in a form of a hypothesis.

H1: Teachers in private schools are more autonomous than teachers in mainstream schools.

To test this hypothesis, I ran a 'Split file' procedure to split the data according to the type of school, and then compared the means.

Table 9. Average values of teacher autonomy.

School	Mean
S1	3.54
S2	3.95
S3	3.8

According to the numbers above, S2 has the highest value of AUTONOMYINDEX - 3.95, S3 is the second with 3.8 and S1 is the third with an average value of 3.54. This supports the hypothesis that teachers in private schools are more autonomous than teachers in mainstream public schools, with charter schools being in the middle.

H2: Teacher autonomy has a positive effect on job satisfaction

In order to test this hypothesis, I used the Bivariate Correlation procedure and Pearson's *r*. First I correlated the variable AUTONOMYINDEX with the variable RATEJOBSATISFIED (how satisfied are you with your current employment).

Table 10. Relationship between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction in all schools.

		AUTONOMYINDEX	How satisfied are you with current employment?
AUTONOMYINDEX	Pearson Correlation	1	.247**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.008
	N	115	115

Thus, it can be said there is a **weak positive relationship** between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction. Pearson's *r* value is 0.247, with a significance level of 0.0008, which means that the probability of this being a coincidence is less than 1%. This, however, is only true when we take all the participants into consideration. When I break the results into types of schools, the results are significantly different. The relationship between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction appears to be **moderately positive** in the cases of schools S2 (0.537) and S3 (0.468) with a high significance value in both cases. Interestingly enough, in school S1 the relationship is **very weak** (0.154), and even this result is not statistically significant, with more than 27% chance of it being random coincidence.

Table 11. Relationship between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction in three types of schools.

School			AUTONOMYINDEX	How satisfied are you with current employment?

S1	AUTONOMYINDEX	Pearson Correlation		1	0.154
		Sig. (2-tailed)			0.271
S2	AUTONOMYINDEX	Pearson Correlation		1	.537**
		Sig. (2-tailed)			0.003
S3	AUTONOMYINDEX	Pearson Correlation		1	.468**
		Sig. (2-tailed)			0.006

H3: Teacher autonomy has a positive effect on teacher motivation

The same procedure was used to identify the strength between the variables AUTONOMYINDEX and RATEKEEPWRKING5YEARS (How likely are you to keep working in this school within the next 5 years?). When correlating the responses of all participants, the relationship appears to be **very weak** (0.034), with no statistical significance (0.72).

Table 12. Relationship between teacher autonomy and teacher motivation in all schools.

		AUTONOMYINDEX	How likely are you to keep working in this school within the next 5 years?
AUTONOMYINDEX	Pearson Correlation	1	0.034
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.72

Before rejecting the hypothesis altogether, it makes sense to compare the results of each school separately. The relationship between teacher autonomy and teacher motivation remains very weak and insignificant in the case of School S1. However, in the case of School S2 there is a **moderate positive** relationship (0.425) with a statistical significance

value of 0.022. As for School S3, we can observe a **weak negative** relationship (-0.204) between teacher autonomy and teacher motivation, but with no statistical significance (0.256).

Table 13. Relationship between teacher autonomy and teacher motivation in three types of schools.

School			AUTONOMYIN DEX	How likely are you to keep working in this school within the next 5 years?
S1	AUTONOMYIND EX	Pearson Correlation	1	0.07
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.617
S2	AUTONOMYIND EX	Pearson Correlation	1	.425*
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.022
S3	AUTONOMYIND EX	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.204
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.256

Thus, the hypothesis can be rejected for schools S1 and S3, but cannot be rejected for school S2. Obviously, teacher autonomy has a moderate positive effect on teacher motivation in the case of private school only, a school with a higher level of overall teacher autonomy.

4.6. Summary

This chapter presented the findings from both qualitative and quantitative parts of the study. The first part explored the teachers' perceptions of their autonomy, what they think autonomy is and is not, and in what areas they wish they were more autonomous. The teachers also shared their views on what benefits and risks there could be if teachers

were more autonomous in their schools. I also tried to explore the teachers' reflections on what motivated them to stay in the teaching profession.

The second part of the chapter focused on analyzing the data from the quantitative part of the study. I explored the degrees of teacher autonomy in three types of schools and the average levels of job satisfaction and teacher motivation. From the data gathered, I attempted to construct a collective index variable AUTONOMYINDEX, which allowed me to establish any existing links between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation.

Even though both parts of the mixed methods study focused on slightly different questions, one apparent mismatch was found between the findings of the qualitative part and those of quantitative part. Judging from the interviews, teachers of mainstream school S1 described themselves being autonomous in more aspects of their job in comparison to what teachers of private school S2 and charter school S3. However, the quantitative survey revealed that teachers from School S1 are the least autonomous among the three schools, with teachers of the private school S2 being the most autonomous. This difference might have occurred due to the fact that: (a) there were only nine interview respondents in the qualitative part of the study, while the quantitative part covered 131 teachers; and (b) since the quantitative survey was done online and anonymously, the teacher might have approached the questions with less stress and pressure and with more honesty. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented the major findings of the qualitative and quantitative parts of my study. While the qualitative part was focused more on the teachers' perception of teacher autonomy, the quantitative part explored more objective data in order to identify how autonomous teachers in different schools are, and to establish any existing links between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation. This chapter presents my interpretation of the results. It consists of two major parts: findings about teachers' perceptions about teacher autonomy, which were mostly derived from the qualitative part and findings about the level of teacher autonomy as emerged from analysis of the quantitative part of my study. In this chapter, the findings are compared to the reviewed literature and the theoretical framework.

5.2. Teachers' perceptions of teacher autonomy

Understanding teacher autonomy

Finding 1 of the study is that teachers have a limited understanding of what teacher autonomy is. According to the interviews, most teachers agree that teacher autonomy comprises such areas as *freedom to express own opinion, freedom to choose teaching methods, freedom from excessive paperwork.* This finding is backed by Littlewood's definition of autonomy as the independent capacity to make decisions about one's actions (2000). It also coincides with Pearson's and Moomaw's (2006) views that teacher autonomy can be described as the teachers' feeling that they are in control of their work and working environment. One teacher, for instance, said that she felt she had sufficient autonomy because she was allowed to bring her own room flowers in the classroom and

she was also allowed to rearrange desks the way she wanted. As for the theoretical

framework, this finding only partially supports one of the nine characteristics of teacher

autonomy by Tort-Moloney (1997): *being free to make decisions on teaching materials.*

Range of actual autonomy vs. teachers' perceptions of their autonomy

Finding 2 is that the actual range of autonomy of the teachers is often different

from what they think it is. When asked about their autonomy, all respondents indicated that

they felt autonomous enough, but at the same time they said they wished they had more

autonomy in other areas, such as *making adjustments in the curriculum, freedom to select*

assessment system and *taking part in decisions on school dress code for teachers.* Because

of the limited understanding of what teacher autonomy is, the teachers seem to think that

these areas are not part of teacher autonomy, but something that they should "be allowed to

do". Sehrawat (2014) argues, "a teacher can promote his autonomy himself" (p. 7) if he

fully understands what autonomy is and seeks out for academic freedom. The author

further states,

> Teacher autonomy is driven by a need for personal and professional improvement,
> so that an autonomous teacher may seek out opportunities over the course of his or
> her career to develop further. If the teacher possesses these qualities then he will be
> autonomous and studies show that the autonomous teacher teaches very effectively
> and conveniently than non autonomous teachers (p. 7).

Both the finding 2 of my study and the citation from Sehrawat explain that

teachers' own understanding of autonomy affects the range of autonomy they exercise in

school .

What motivates teachers to keep working

Finding 3 is that teachers are mostly motivated to stay in the teaching job due to

intrinsic reasons, such as satisfaction in *helping students learn, positive working*

environment and enjoying one's work. This aligns with the claim by Pearson and Moomaw

(2006) that teachers are more motivated to work when they feel they are making a difference for their students and for the society. According to the literature review, teacher autonomy is one of the main factors affecting teacher motivation, and the lack of teacher autonomy is one of the reasons teachers leave schools (Natale, 1993). In my interviews with teachers, however, the teachers did not provide any information whether autonomy had any connection to their inner motivation to work.

Teacher professionalism

Another finding, (Finding 4), is that the teachers in Kazakhstan seem to see themselves as employees of the school rather than true professionals. Teacher autonomy is an intrinsic part of teacher professionalism (Wermke & Hofsfalt, 2013; Pearson & Moomaw, 2006; Shanker, 1985; Abbot & Wallace, 1990; Ingersoll, 1997; Sach, 2001). According to the literature, teachers require full autonomy in order to develop professionally (Shanker, 1985). However, the participants of my study seemed content with just following orders from the management, as long as there was little interference in their classroom practices. The participants of the study even stated that teacher autonomy may lead to negative outcomes in schools. Even those teachers who said that they need more autonomy also added that they need someone to supervise them, or otherwise this might lead to chaos and disorder. This indicates that these teachers do not want unlimited autonomy but autonomy only to make decisions about their lessons and pedagogical choices.

Talking about other schools

During the interviews, it was obvious that most of the teachers preferred to "take the safe path", as they tried to avoid criticizing their school or school management, or complaining about their working environment. However, when asked about their previous

schools (experienced teachers) or other schools that they are familiar with (beginning teachers), the teachers were more relaxed and more open to talk about negative aspects of teaching profession. As for teacher autonomy, all experienced teachers recalled that "they didn't use to have as much autonomy" as they now have in their current schools.

This might be due to the reason that even though the participants were guaranteed total privacy and confidentiality, the level of trust between the researcher and the interviewees was still not sufficient enough to freely discuss negative aspects of their work in school. This is one of the anticipated ethical issues, according to Creswell (2013) who emphasises that researchers build trust with participants prior to conducting interviews.

Influence of teacher autonomy on student performance

The participants of the study believe that the students will benefit if the teachers are given more autonomy. Most of the teachers supported this statement with the ability of the teachers to differentiate content and curriculum according to students' needs and abilities. This finding perfectly matches the views of Pearson and Moomaw (2006), who claim that if teachers acted as fully autonomous professionals, they would be able to "prescribe the best treatment" for their students' needs.

Institutional autonomy

In the literature review, I explored the notion of institutional autonomy and its relation to individual, or service autonomy. This is important because teachers are not totally independent from each other and some of the decisions they make will in one way or another affect their colleagues' practices or beliefs.

The findings of my study suggest that most teachers understand that each of them is a part of a collective body. When describing their own autonomy, teachers emphasised their freedom to take part in collegial decisions, consulting with each other and working in

unions. Even when talking about the lack of autonomy in certain areas, some teachers also mentioned that they felt they needed to work and make decisions collectively.

This aligns with Ozturk's (2011) views that teacher autonomy should not only be seen as being independent as an individual, but it also should include teachers' involvement in decision-making on a school level. However, Mausethagen & Mølstad (2015) argue that it is very problematic to achieve both individual and institutional autonomy, due to two major reasons: (1) teachers are no longer seen as professionals; (2) individual opinions and interests often contradict the views of a collective body of teachers.

Nevertheless, nearly all participants of this study indicated that: (a) they see the freedom to work with others in groups, boards or unions as an important part of their autonomy (those who have such freedom) and (b) that such freedom is needed for them to feel more autonomous (those who do not have such freedom).

5.3. Teacher autonomy and its relation to job satisfaction and motivation

Existing studies on teachers' job satisfaction and motivation have repeatedly shown a strong connection with teacher autonomy (Pearson & Moomaw, 2006; Natale, 1993). Teachers who are satisfied with their jobs are less likely to change schools or leave the profession (Choy et al., 1993 as cited in Rudolf , 2006). This part of the discussion chapter will discuss the statistical relationship between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation. I will also explore and compare the level of autonomy in three types of schools, a mainstream public school, a private school and a charter school. It should be noted that the survey questions in the quantitative part of my study were not open-ended and did not aim to reveal teachers' opinions. Instead, they were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with certain statements about their work, practices, job satisfaction and motivation. Another crucial difference of the survey form the interviews in my study was

that the survey was done anonymously, in order to release the respondents from unnecessary stress or fear.

The level of autonomy in Kazakhstani schools

According to the statistical data, it can be concluded that teachers in Kazakhstan are moderately autonomous. Overall, most teachers (60-70%) teachers tend to agree with positive statements about their autonomy, while disagreeing with the negative statements. This suggests that teachers do have a substantial amount of autonomy in such areas as being creative in teaching approach; selection of student-learning activities; being able to set their own standards for student behaviour; freedom to use own guidelines and procedures in teaching; selecting content and skills for teaching; setting own learning goals and objectives; using alternative methods in teaching; and control over how classroom space is used. However, teachers from different types of schools have different ratios of teachers who either agreed or disagreed with the statements. For instance, the majority of people who disagreed with the statements, thus stating that they lacked autonomy, were teachers from S1 - a mainstream public school. On the other hand, the majority of people who agreed with the statements were from School S2 - a private school. Thus, it can be concluded that teachers in the mainstream school are less autonomous than their colleagues who work in the private school.

This finding is particularly interesting, because it contradicts with the findings of the qualitative part of the study, according to which the teachers of school S1 seemed more autonomous than their counterparts from other schools. Since the qualitative part focused on teacher perceptions, and the quantitative part analyzed objective data, it can be concluded that teachers in schools with lower institutional autonomy tend to feel themselves more autonomous, while teachers in schools with higher institutional autonomy tend to feel themselves less autonomous. This fact coincides with the qualities of

institutional and service autonomy, described by Wermke and Höstfält (2013), who claim

that out of four models of school governance, only two are easier to implement in mass

schooling and lead to consistent achievements in modern education: (1) schools with

restricted institutional autonomy and extended service autonomy, and (2) schools with

extended institutional autonomy and restricted service autonomy. In our case, school S1

seems to fit the former model, while school S2 aligns with the latter. The fact that teachers

in the private school feel less autonomous while actually being more autonomous might

also be due to a higher level of responsibility and accountability.

The effect of teacher autonomy on job satisfaction and motivation

According to literature review, research suggests that teacher autonomy has a

strong effect on job satisfaction and motivation. It is seen as a "critical component" when it

comes to deciding whether to leave or stay in the teaching profession (Pearson &

Moomaw, 2006). Higher levels of teacher autonomy also lead to reduced levels of stress

and burnout (Erpelding, 1999 as cited in Pearson & Moomaw, 2006).

Teacher Autonomy Index was used to determine if there are any correlations

between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation. I discuss the findings in the

form of three hypotheses.

H1. Teachers in private schools are more autonomous than teachers in mainstream schools.

This hypothesis was proven true in the case of my study. The average value of

teacher autonomy index was the highest for the teachers of the private schools S2 and the

lowest for the teachers of the mainstream school S1. This finding might produce more

research questions for further studies.

H2: Teacher autonomy has a positive effect on job satisfaction

After a statistical analysis of the data gathered, I found that according to my study this hypothesis was confirmed. There is a **weak positive relationship** between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction. This means that if teachers are provided with more autonomy, it will positively affect their job satisfaction. However, there are two issues with this finding:

- the relationship is weak (Pearson's $r = 0.247$), but significant (Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.008). This still allows us to agree with the hypothesis, but the effect itself does not seem to be strong enough. In other words, the effect will take place only in about 25% of cases.

- this relationship might be misleading, as I ran the procedure with all 131 participants as one group of Kazakhstani teachers.

After running the same correlation procedure for each school separately, interesting findings were revealed:

1. The relationship between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction is **stronger and more significant** in the cases of private school S2 and charter school S3;

2. The relationship between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction is **very weak and not statistically significant** in the case of mainstream public school S1.

Thus, while it can be said that teacher autonomy has a positive effect on job satisfaction among Kazakhstani teachers, this statement is only true for teachers of private school and charter school - schools with a higher level of teacher autonomy, according to my findings.

H3: Teacher autonomy has a positive effect on teacher motivation

When I analyzed the population of all participants of the survey, i.e. teachers of all three schools, the resulting relationship between teacher autonomy and teacher motivation was **very weak** and **not statistically significant.** Thus, the hypothesis can be rejected.

However, three different findings are revealed when we look at each school differently:

1. Teacher autonomy shows no effect on teacher motivation in the case of mainstream public school S1. The relation is **very weak** and **insignificant**.

2. Teacher autonomy has a **weak negative** effect on teacher motivation in the case of charter school S3. It can be said that the more autonomous the teachers, the less motivated they are. However, this relationship is not statistically significant.

3. Finally, in the private school S2 there is a **moderate positive** relationship between teacher autonomy and teacher motivation and the results are **statistically significant**.

Thus, the hypothesis only holds true in the case of private school S2, and can be rejected in the case of mainstream school S1 and charter school S3. Even though the literature suggests that there is a strong link between teacher autonomy and teacher motivation, in Kazakhstan this can only be said for private school, where teacher autonomy is higher.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

This final chapter recalls the research questions that guided this study and presents a summary of findings responding to each research question. It also makes recommendations for school administrators and policy makers in Kazakhstan to revisit policies and practices related to teacher autonomy. The chapter also highlights the limitation of this study and ends with a brief reflection of the researcher.

6.1. Revisiting the research questions

How do teachers in Kazakhstan understand 'teacher autonomy'?

Even though the notion of teacher autonomy covers a wide range of actions and decisions, Kazakhstani teachers have a limited understanding of teacher autonomy. Most participants believe that teacher autonomy is exercised only within the classroom walls during the classes. They also think that autonomy comprises such areas as the freedom to express one's opinion and little amount of paperwork. Apparently, Kazakhstani teachers' understanding of teacher autonomy and its range and scope differs from the existing theories and definitions found in the literature. Knowing how teachers understand autonomy is crucial for policymakers as the new "Law on the Status of Teachers" has a whole chapter dedicated to teacher autonomy. Simply stating that teachers will be guaranteed extended autonomy might lead to misinterpretation of the concept, thus it is crucial that policymakers, school administrators and the teachers themselves "speak the same language" and demonstrate shared understanding of teacher autonomy.

How does teacher autonomy or lack thereof influence teachers' practices?

The participants of the study agree that with more autonomy they will be able to help students perform better academically. They believe that freedom to choose own

teaching materials, adjust or augment curriculum, and more importantly to differentiate the whole teaching-learning process according to students' needs will allow them to cater to each student's needs and requirements. This is not possible with "one-size-fits-all" approach to education that is still present in our schools despite the numerous reforms.

Another issue that was revealed in the study is that not only are teachers seen as employees rather than independent professionals, but also the teachers themselves have adapted to the situation and some don't even want to be autonomous, because they feel the need to be controlled. Another reason for this is the fear of extra responsibility and accountability. It can be concluded that while Kazakhstani teacher feel the need for more autonomy in certain areas, such as modifying curriculum and selecting teaching materials, they clearly indicate that they do not require complete freedom.

Moreover, the range of teacher autonomy and teachers' perceptions of teacher autonomy differs depending on the type of school. Thus, teachers in private schools have more degrees of freedom when it comes to autonomy, but at the same time feel themselves more restricted. On the other hand, teachers in mainstream school have less autonomy, but nevertheless feel more autonomous. Since different schools show different results in my study, it is important that previous studies on schools in Kazakhstan be revisited and even replicated for different types of schools.

Does teachers' autonomy or lack thereof affect their job satisfaction and motivation?

The study revealed that there is a link between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation. Since teacher autonomy is an extrinsic factor (independent variable), and job satisfaction and motivation are intrinsic factors (dependent variables), it can be concluded that teacher autonomy affects job satisfaction and motivation. However,

since different schools have different levels of autonomy, it is more reasonable to consider the case of each school separately.

Teacher autonomy has a significant effect on job satisfaction and motivation only in private school, where teachers have more degrees of freedom. This is despite the fact that the teachers themselves do not consider themselves as autonomous.

In the case of mainstream public school, however, no significant correlation was found between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and motivation.

As for the charter school, teacher autonomy appears to be affecting only job satisfaction, but not the motivation.

To conclude, the effect of teacher autonomy on job satisfaction and motivation differs either according to the type of school, or to the level of teacher autonomy exercised by teachers.

Recommendations

Recommendations for school administrators

School principals and administrators are recommended to reconsider the range and amount of autonomy their teachers have in their schools. This might help avoid or prevent issues of work stress, burnout and teacher attrition. Moreover, as evidence suggests, teachers in different schools perceive autonomy differently, so it is important that school administrators understand what specific areas their teachers need more autonomy in.

Recommendations for policymakers

First of all, policymakers are recommended to revisit the current legislation on the status of teachers and provide a precise definition of the term. This will help Kazakhstani

researchers frame their future research on teacher autonomy, and it will also help educators have a shared understanding and vision of autonomy.

Another suggestion for policymakers is that the new "Law in the Status of Teachers" should contain a separate chapter, and therefore guarantee, a wider range of autonomy to teachers. This might provide a wider latitude for school administrators when it comes to involving teachers in decision-making process.

Limitations and directions for further research

The first limitation of the study is a small number of participants in both qualitative and quantitative parts of my study. In order to develop a more voluminous understanding of teachers' perceptions, a study with a bigger number of participants could be done in the future. Moreover, each of the three types of schools (mainstream, private and charter) that participated in the research is only a single representative of the respective type. This does not allow us to draw conclusions about all private, mainstream or charter schools. Moreover, since different schools produce different results, similar studies could be done for each of the school types separately.

Final reflections

First and foremost, this study has helped me realize how biased I had been towards teacher autonomy. I used to believe that absolutely all teachers need full autonomy in all areas of action, but this belief has changed after this study.

To conduct this research, I had to read a huge number of articles on teacher autonomy, job satisfaction and motivation. This new knowledge led to more potential research questions and motivates me to keep doing research after I graduate.

While doing this research, I shared my interest and enthusiasm in the topic with my colleagues abroad, and they also expressed their interest in studying teacher autonomy in the context of their countries.

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Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHER

Title of the study

"Kazakhstani Teachers` Perceptions of Teacher Autonomy in Kazakhstan"

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by ===============, a M.Sc. in Educational Leadership 2-year student at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education, aimed at exploring how teachers of Grade 7-12 understand and exploit "teacher autonomy" in their practices as well as investigating into the challenges they face when given limited or unrestricted autonomy, and the strategies they use to address those challenges. The teachers in your school will be asked to participate in a mixed methods study including interviews and survey regarding their understanding, experiences and challenges of teacher autonomy at your school. The interviews will be audio taped and the recording will be transcribed into a written text. The recording will not be shared with anybody.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation will take approximately 40-60 minutes.

RISKS AND BENEFITS:
There are no known risks for you as your participation in the study will not have any impact or negative implications for your employment and relationships in the school. However, you may feel uncomfortable or inconvenient to talk about your perception of teacher autonomy, and your own experiences and challenges related to teacher autonomy during the interview. To eliminate this stress you will be reassured that your responses will not be judged or criticized and your personal identity will be ensured. The risks will be avoided by using pseudonyms instead of the real name and locations. The research site and your name will be coded.

The main benefit for you will be the opportunity to share your perception, attitude and challenges of teacher autonomy in school by being self-reflected on how you presently perceive and exploit teacher autonomy. Thus, that reflection may be helpful for you in identifying the benefits, disadvantages and challenges of teacher autonomy or lack of thereof in schools, and outlining the further steps and plans for your future work in this sphere. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your employment.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The alternative is not to participate. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at an academic, scientific or professional meetings, conferences or published in journals, but without disclosing your identity.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master's Thesis Supervisor for this student work, Professor Mir Afzal Tajik, afzal.mir@nu.edu.kz, or the researcher, Nurlan Imangaliyev +77017332948.

Independent Contact: If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee to speak to someone independent of the research team at +7 7172 709359. You can also write an email to the NUGSE Research Committee at gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

Please sign this consent from if you agree to participate in this study.

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;
- With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

The extra copy of this signed and dated consent form is for you to keep.

According to the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan an individual under the age of 18 is considered a child. Any participant falling into that category should be given the Parental Consent Form and have it signed by at least one of his/her parent(s) or guardian(s).

Appendix B

Interview Protocol (Samples of interview questions)

Project: Kazakhstani Teachers` Perceptions of Teacher Autonomy in Kazakhstan
Interviewer: Nurlan Imangaliyev
 Sample questions:

Perceptions:
1. What is your understanding of the term "teacher autonomy"?
2. In your view, how restricted or free do you feel yourself when making important choices and decisions in your school?
3. In your opinion, what is the effect of teacher autonomy on your practice?
4. How would you describe your school's policy on teacher autonomy?

Practice:
1. What kind of decisions can you make in school without consulting with the management first?
2. What decisions in school would you want to make on your own? Why?
3. What decisions would you leave to the school management to make? Why?
4. What creative decisions have you made in school on your own in the recent years?
5. In what ways do you think teacher autonomy could be increased in schools?
6. What negative consequences can teacher autonomy have in schools?
7. In your opinion, how do students benefit from teacher autonomy?

Job Satisfaction and Motivation:

1. How satisfied are you with current employment?
2. How would you characterize the instructional load placed on you in your classes?
3. How would you describe the paperwork load placed on you as a teacher?
4. How would you describe the stress level of your work environment?
5. How satisfied are you with your current salary situation?
6. Are you active on any work groups or committees in your school?
7. Are you active on any work groups or committees on a district/regional level?
8. Do you have any interest in moving into an administrative or supervisory position in the near future?
9. How often does your school's administration consider the opinions of the faculty about matters that directly affect them?
10. How would you rate the openness and accessibility of school administration to the faculty?
11. How would you rate the school's administration in terms of involving instructional staff in the development of school policy which affects their work?
12. How often are the concerns of the instructional staff taken into account in the decisions made by the school administration?
    13. How would you rate the school administration in terms of providing frequent recognition for high performance among the faculty?

Appendix C

Survey Guide (Samples of survey questions)

Project: Kazakhstani Teachers` Perceptions of Teacher Autonomy in Kazakhstan
Interviewer: Nurlan Imangaliyev
Sample questions:

(Likert scale - strongly agree/agree/neither agree nor disagree/disagree/strongly disagree)

1. I am free to be creative in my teaching approach.
2. The selection of student-learning activities is under my control.
3. Standards of student behaviour in my classroom are set primarily by myself
4. My job does not allow for much discretion on my part.
5. In my teaching, I use my own guidelines and procedures.
6. I have little say over the content and skills that are selected for teaching.
7. The scheduling of use of time in my classroom is under my control.
8. My teaching focuses on those goals and objectives I select myself.
9. I seldom use alternative procedures in my teaching.
10. I follow my own guidelines on instruction.
11. I have only limited latitude in how major problems are resolved.
12. What I teach in my class is determined for the most part by myself.
13. I have little control over how classroom space is used.
14. The materials I use in my class are chosen for the most part by myself.
15. The evaluation and assessment activities are selected by others.
16. I select the teaching methods and strategies I use with my students.
17. I have little say over the scheduling of time in my classroom.
18. The content and skills taught in my class are those I select.

Other questions (1-5 scale)

14. How satisfied are you with current employment? (1-completely dissatisfied, 5-very satisfied)
15. How likely are you to keep working in this school within the next 5 years? (1-very unlikely, 5-very likely)
16. How would you characterize the instructional load place on you in your classes? (1-very little, 5- too much)
17. How would you describe the paper work load place on you as a teacher? (1-very little, 5- too much)
18. How would you describe the stress level of your work environment? (1-very low, 5- too much)
19. How satisfied are you with your current salary situation? (1-completely dissatisfied, 5-very satisfied)
20. How often does your school's administration consider the opinions of the faculty about matters that directly affect them? (1-never, 5-always)
21. How would you rate the openness and accessibility of school administration to the faculty? (1-not accessible, 5- very open)
22. How often does the school's administration involve instructional staff in the development of school policy which affects their work? (1-never, 5-always)

23.   How often are the concerns of the instructional staff taken into account in the decisions made by the school administration? (1-never, 5-always)
24.   How frequently does the school's administration provide recognition for high performance among the faculty? (1-never, 5-always)