



## Work Autonomy Profile of Counselor: An Educational Background Based Approach

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### ABSTRACT

Autonomy at work is an important element of employee motivation and involvement in work. Autonomy provides happiness and satisfaction at work for employees so that it can lead to higher productivity. The purpose of this study in general is to describe the profile of work autonomy in the organization directing the picture of employee work autonomy in terms of educational background. In particular, it discusses the forms and patterns of autonomy that have been created and the patterns of autonomy formed based on educational background. The population in this study were counselor at Junior High Schools using the Simple Random Sampling Technique. Data collection uses instruments adopted and modified from Perceived Autonomy Support: The Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ). The data analysis approach used is quantitative with descriptive data types and T-test are used. The benefit of this research is that there is an overview of the profile of autonomy in work in terms of educational background. The results found that the counselor's work autonomy was on average in the high category. Suggestions from the results of this study are for counselor to improve and develop the ability to work autonomy so that they can be more comfortable and satisfied with work

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every work organization has a vision, mission, and goals that are targeted to be achieved. The components in the work organization consist of Work, Employee, Relationship and Environment (WERE) (Busck et al., 2010; Ernst Kossek et al., 2012). Employees are one of the important components to realize the expectations of the work organization (Freund, 2005; Kaya & Ceylan, 2014; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). To achieve the expectations of each work organization, workers are required to have above standard work qualifications so that goals can be achieved properly and stably (Cerdeira et al., 2015; Van Laar et al., 2017). In creating a harmonious work climate at work, every organization must have a strategy that can give rise to freedom and pleasure in working for employees (AbouElnaga & Imran, 2014; Aruna & Anitha, 2015; Plester & Hutchison, 2016). Freedom or authority from leaders to employees at work is referred to as autonomy in work.

Autonomy at work is an important element of employee motivation and involvement in work. Autonomy at work is a freedom or authority granted by management to employees to direct and carry out work and to deal with problems that arise in the process (Hackman & Oldam, 1976; Mathis & Jackson, 2006; S. Robbins & Coulter, 2009; S. P. Robbins & Judge, 2003; Taylor, 1911). Every work organization wants all employees to be happy and satisfied with their work. This has a positive impact on employee performance. According to research, an employee should be happy and satisfied if given autonomy in his daily work.

One of the main characteristics of employee autonomy is decision making (Fernet et al., 2013; Hanaysha, 2016). Autonomous employees can act independently rather than asking others or their superiors for approval procedures through their decisions. In addition, an employee should be free to contribute ideas and suggestions for any projects and tasks assigned by the organization (Edmondson, 2018; Hew, 2016; Khuong & Hoang, 2015). In addition, employees are more likely to feel responsible for their work when they have the power to make decisions and play an active role in contributing ideas without being belittled (Block, 2016; Goleman, 2017; Wheatley, 2011).

The term Autonomy refers to the degree to which an employee has the freedom and independence to perform tasks and make decisions about their work as well as being motivated (Belias et al., 2015; Gelderen, 2016). Employees will have higher respect for work organizations because they feel trusted and valued by giving a lot of control and responsibility for work (Dugguh & Dennis, 2014; Hollensbe et al., 2014; Sharma & Jain, 2013). In addition, work organizations can also offer employees more flexibility for self-actualization and work-life management, for example by offering flexible working hours between working from home and so on (Haritha & Reddy, 2022; Pranata et al., 2022; Tubey et al., 2015).

Autonomy in the workplace is important for increasing employee satisfaction (Bysted, 2013; Han et al., 2015; Saragih, 2015). Work organization gives counselor more opportunities for employees to organize their work life to carry out their daily routines and develop their abilities and skills (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; Cimatti, 2016). Higher satisfaction and motivation can lead to higher productivity. Because they have a lot of influence in the workplace, employees are more involved in their roles and are responsible for the results of their work. According to self-determination theory, the extent to which the work environment supports and promotes employee work autonomy, enables them to activate positive and autonomous work behaviors (Gagné et al., 2015, 2019; Galletta et al., 2016). This condition is considered as a fundamental factor capable of promoting employee motivation, well-being and satisfaction (Camerino et al., 2005; Camerino & LM, 2010). In line with these findings, a meta-analysis shows that perceptions of work autonomy are positively related to job outcomes, such as performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intrinsic motivation

(Humphrey et al., 2007; Lesmana, 2020). Self-determination theory makes a strong claim that autonomy is a need that must be met for humans to function optimally. This is associated with better work motivation, productivity and well-being (Gagné&Deci, 2005).

The leadership policy in an organization to create a productive work atmosphere is influenced by one of the educational backgrounds. The focus of this research will produce work autonomy in terms of educational background. In general, the picture of work autonomy in an organization leads to a picture of employee work autonomy in terms of educational background. In particular, it discusses the forms and patterns of autonomy that have been created as well as the patterns of autonomy that should be compatible with educational background. The novelty in this research is to develop a model that can be used by counselors in carrying out counseling services in schools.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1. Respondent

The target of this research is counselor in Junior High Schools in West Sumatra. The selection of respondents was based on the initial competency development of junior high school teachers. The number of teachers gathered was 156 people. Classification of counselor in terms of educational background. Details of the respondents can be seen in the following **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Classification of respondents.

No	Gender	Educational Background	Total
1	Male	Bachelor degree	11
2		Bachelor and Professional degree	16
3		Master degree	9
4		Master and Professional degree	8
5	Female	Bachelor degree	47
6		Bachelor and Professional degree	28
7		Master degree	23
8		Master and Professional degree	14
Total Number			156

### 2.2. Instruments

The instrument used in this study uses a questionnaire with a Likert scale model. The questionnaire used is the result of adoption and modification of the Perceived Autonomy Support: The Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ) which is used with a Likert scale model. The questionnaire consists of 15 items that have been tested for validity and reliability.

### 2.3. Procedures

The questionnaire was prepared in the form of the Google Form platform. Questionnaires were distributed to research targets via the WhatsApp communication medium. The distribution of the questionnaire was explained in advance for counselors in junior high schools. The results of filling out the questionnaire from respondents are recorded automatically on Google Drive.

### 2.4. Data Analysis

The data that has been collected in the field will then be analyzed and interpreted. Data analysis in this study used a quantitative approach which consisted of testing hypotheses and presenting data using descriptive analysis and different tests between gender T-test are used.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Results

Based on the results of distributing the questionnaire using the Google Form platform, there were 156 respondents who had filled it out. Respondents collected consisted of Counselor with educational backgrounds. An overview of the results will be presented in a table which will be explained as follows.

#### 3.1.1 Description overall of work autonomy

**Table 2.** Overall work autonomy data tabulation (N = 156).

No	Intervals	F	%	Category
1	52 – 57	33	21,1	Very High
2	47 – 51	66	42,3	High
3	42 – 46	44	28,2	Moderate
4	37 – 41	12	7,6	Low
5	32 – 36	1	0,6	Very Low
<b>Total</b>		156	100	

Based on **Table 2.** above, it is explained that the picture of work autonomy for Junior High School Counselor on average is in the High category. Undergraduate junior high school counselor have the highest score of 57 and the lowest score of 32 with an interval of 5. There are 66 respondents (42.3%) Junior High School Counselor who have high autonomy in work.

#### 3.1.2. Description of work autonomy in bachelor degree education background

**Table 3.** Work autonomy in bachelor degree education background data tabulation (N = 55).

No	Intervals	F	%	Category
1	53 – 57	7	12,7	Very High
2	49 – 52	28	50,9	High
3	45 – 48	14	25,4	Moderate
4	41 – 44	3	5,4	Low
5	37 – 40	3	5,4	Very Low
<b>Total</b>		55	100	

Based on **Table 3** above, it is explained that the picture of work autonomy for Junior High School Counselor with a bachelor degree background, totaling 55 respondents, is on average

in the High category. Bachelor degree of counselor have the highest score of 57 and the lowest score of 37 with an interval of 4. There are 28 respondents (50.9%) Junior High School Counselor who have high autonomy in work.

### 3.1.3. Description of work autonomy in bachelor and professional degree education background

**Table 4.** Work autonomy in bachelor and professional degree education background data tabulation (N = 43).

No	Intervals	F	%	Category
1	54 – 57	10	23,2	Very High
2	50 – 53	8	18,6	High
3	46 – 49	12	27,9	Moderate
4	42 – 45	9	20,9	Low
5	38 – 41	4	9,3	Very Low
<b>Total</b>		43	100	

Based on **Table 4** above, it is explained that the picture of work autonomy for Junior High School Counselor with a bachelor and Professional degree background, totaling 43 respondents, is on average in the Medium category. Bachelor and Professional degree of counselor have the highest score of 56 and the lowest score of 38 with an interval of 4. There are 12 respondents (27.9%) Junior High School Counselor who have autonomy who are currently at work.

### 3.1.4. Description of work autonomy in master degree education background

**Table 5.** Work autonomy in master degree education background data tabulation (N = 32).

No	Intervals	F	%	Category
1	52 – 57	7	21,8	Very High
2	47 – 51	10	31,2	High
3	42 – 46	12	37,5	Moderate
4	37 – 41	2	6,25	Low
5	32 – 36	1	3,1	Very Low
<b>Total</b>		32	100	

Based on **Table 5** above, it is explained that the picture of work autonomy for Junior High School Counselor with a Master degree background, totaling 32 respondents, is on average in the Medium category. Master degree of counselor had the highest score of 57 and the lowest score of 32 with an interval of 5. There were 12 respondents (37.5%) of Junior High School Counselor who had autonomy who were at work.

### 3.1.5. Description of work autonomy in master and professional degree education background

Based on **Table 6**, it explains that the picture of work autonomy for Junior High School Counselor with a Master and Professional degree background, totaling 22 respondents, is on average in the Medium category. Masters and Professional of counselor have the highest score of 56 and the lowest score of 38 with an interval of 4. There are 7 respondents (31.8%) Junior High School Counselor who have autonomy who are currently at work.

**Table 6.** Work autonomy in master and professional degree education background data tabulation (N = 22).

No	Intervals	F	%	Category
1	54 – 57	2	9,0	Very High
2	50 – 53	5	22,7	High
3	46 – 49	7	31,8	Moderate
4	42 – 45	5	22,7	Low
5	38 – 41	3	13,6	Very Low
<b>Total</b>		22	100	

**Table 7.** Work autonomy of junior high school counselor education background recapitulation.

Aspect	Indicator	Category
1. Work Autonomy of Junior High School Counselor	a. Bachelor degree Education Background	High
	b. Bachelor and Professional degree Education Background	Moderate
	c. Master degree Education Background	Moderate
	d. Master and Professional degree Education Background	Moderate

Regarding the 0.00 level of significance in the first and third rows, one can find that there is a meaningful difference between work autonomy in male and female. According to the 0.755 level of significance in the fifth row, one can come to this result that there is no significant difference among work autonomy in male and female are presented in **Table 8**. Given the significance level, no meaningful difference has been found among work autonomy in male and female.

### 3.2. Discussion

Based on the previous findings regarding autonomy at work, there is an overview of the condition of junior high school counselor on average in the high category. High autonomy in a job is something that needs to be improved and developed properly. Every work organization or agency expects workers to feel able to manage and overcome their problems and be able to make the best decisions. Decision making is a major part of the characteristics of autonomy in work (Fernet et al., 2013; Hanaysha, 2016). With these conditions a pleasant atmosphere will be realized and the results of the work will be better.

Working as a counselor is not something that is easy for everyone to do, especially teachers who are not from the Counseling discipline. In counseling, teachers must be able to apply good counseling management in schools. Starting from designing the program to be implemented based on the previously administered needs study to reporting as the responsibility of the guidance counselor to the school. The term in autonomy refers to how far the counselor can be free and independent in working and able to make decisions in an action. Giving autonomy to employees is one way to motivate them (Belias et al., 2015; Gelderen, 2016).

Counselors will have a higher respect for work organizations in schools because they are trusted and valued by not controlling and being too responsible for their work (Dugguh & Dennis, 2014; Hollensbe et al., 2014; Sharma & Jain, 2013). Schools can also give counselors more flexibility to self-actualize and organize their work life. The freedom in question also includes the provision of flexible work schedules, having the option to work from home and so on (Haritha & Reddy, 2022; Pranata et al., 2022; Tubey et al., 2015).

Student success at school is part of the success of the guidance counselor at school. Optimal counselors work in schools on the basis of freedom and independence given by the leadership. Higher satisfaction and motivation can lead to higher productivity. By having more influence over their work, counselors will be more involved in their roles and accountable for their results (Rahman et al., 2021). So, they work harder to get the best results (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; Cimatti, 2016). The relationship between autonomy and the educational background of a counselor can be an interesting topic in the context of discussing counseling and guidance. Autonomy refers to the ability of individuals to make decisions and take actions based on their personal understanding, knowledge and values. Counselors' educational background can also influence how they view and approach counseling clients. It is important to remember that the relationship between autonomy and a counselor's educational background is complex and can be influenced by many other factors, including personal values, experience, and work context. In practice, good counselors will combine the knowledge they gain from education with a deep understanding of clients' needs and preferences to support them in making the decision that best fits their situation.



**Table 8.** Difference in Work Autonomy Among Male and Female

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig.	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Upper	Lower
<b>Male</b>	Equal variance assumed	1.024	0.313	1.238	151	0.218	0.10768	0.0869	-0.0416	0.27952
	Equal variance not assumed			1.294	130.6	0.198	0.10768	0.0832	-0.05693	0.27229
<b>Female</b>	Equal variance assumed	11.918	0.001	-0.244	151	0.807	-0.0257	0.1052	-0.23361	0.18221
	Equal variance not assumed			-0.268	145.5	0.789	-0.0257	0.0958	-0.21517	0.16377

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it was found that the description of the autonomy of the guidance counselor in working in junior high schools as a whole was in the high category. The description of the autonomy of the junior high school counselor based on educational background is detailed as follows: 1) The work autonomy of junior high school counselors with a bachelor's degree education background is in the high category; 2) The work autonomy of junior high school counselors with a Bachelor's degree and professional education background is in the moderate category; 3) The work autonomy of junior high school counselors with a Bachelor's degree education background is in the medium category; and 4) The work autonomy of junior high school counselors with a Bachelor's and Professional Education background is in the medium category.

Based on these results, it can be suggested to counselors to be able to improve and develop autonomy in working in schools so that educational goals can be achieved. In addition, the school, especially the leadership, can also provide freedom and independence for guidance and counselors to be able to work happily and be able to carry out their roles and make good decisions at work.



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