



**WORK FROM HOME AND IT EMPLOYEES' WORK AUTONOMY**

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**Abstract**

*This study discusses the IT sector employees' work autonomy during their work from home in the COVID-19 pandemic. Work autonomy ensures productivity in the employees' work and also improves the morale of the employee. The study is quantitative and simple random sampling is employed. Google forms were used for data collection. The results show that work autonomy has a significant statistical difference concerning gender, family type, and distance travelled to the office. However, the marital status of the respondents has no role in work autonomy in this study. As normalcy is regaining the work autonomy in the office environment needs to be studied to understand the job commitment of the employees.*

**Keywords:** work autonomy, work from home, COVID-19, job commitment

**Introduction**

Autonomy is defined as “the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying out” (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Turner & Lawrence (1965) said autonomy is “the amount of discretion the worker is expected to exercise in carrying out assigned work activities”. Autonomy improves the employees' intrinsic motivation and effectiveness in work (Naqvi, 2013). This study analyses the work autonomy of IT employees during their work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To study the socio-demographic profile of the respondents
2. To find the relationship between the sub-scales of work-autonomy
3. To understand the statistical difference between the study variables and work-autonomy

**Research Hypothesis**

1. **H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a difference between the gender of the respondents and work autonomy
2. **H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a difference between the type of family and work autonomy

**Results of the Study**

**Table 1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Variables	N	Per cent	Variables	N	Per cent
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Family Type</b>		
Male	34	56.7	Nuclear	33	55.0
Female	26	43.3	Joint	27	45.0
Total	60	100.0	Total	60	100.0
<b>Residence</b>			<b>Received Awards</b>		

3. **H<sub>3</sub>:** There is a difference between the marital status of the respondents and work autonomy
4. **H<sub>4</sub>:** There is a difference between the distance travelled and work autonomy of the respondents

**Materials & Methods**

The study is descriptive and a simple random sampling technique is used for the selection of the respondents. A total of 60 responses were collected. The work autonomy scale (Breugh, 1985) was used along with the socio-demographic profile. The work autonomy scale has 9 items and the 9 items are equally distributed to measure the components of work method autonomy, work scheduling autonomy, and work criteria autonomy. The reliability value (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) of work autonomy is .74. The respondent's mail ids were collected and the questionnaire was mailed to the respondents using the google form. The response rate for the questionnaire was 78%. Owing to the COVID-19 protocols, the respondents were all working from home and it was not feasible to meet them in person to discuss the objectives of the study. Hence the Google forms were circulated for the collection of data. The research ethics were strictly adhered to in this study.

Urban	58	96.7	Yes	28	46.7
Rural	2	3.3	No	32	53.3
Total	60	100.0	Total	60	100.0
<b>Education</b>			<b>Work Experience</b>		
UG	45	75.0	0-2 years	30	50.0
PG	15	25.0	2-4 years	25	41.7
Total	60	100.0	4-6 years	5	8.3
<b>Distance Travelled</b>			Total	60	100.0
0-5 Km	12	20.0	<b>Marital Status</b>		
5-10 Km	9	15.0	Unmarried	46	76.7
10-15 Km	11	18.3	Married	14	23.3
15-20 Km	13	21.7	Total	60	100.0
> 20 Km	15	25.0			
Total	60	100.0			

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic profile of the respondents with respect to the study variables.

**Table 2 Correlation between sub-scales of Work Autonomy**

	Work method Autonomy	Work scheduling Autonomy	Work criteria Autonomy
Work method Autonomy	1	.648**	.601**
Work scheduling Autonomy		1	.685**
Work criteria Autonomy			1

. Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows the inter-correlation between the sub-scales of work autonomy viz, work method autonomy, work scheduling autonomy and work criteria autonomy. The sub-scale values show a moderately positive correlation.

**Table 3 Independent sample t-test between gender of the respondents and work autonomy**

Work autonomy	N	Mean	SD	t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	34	26.35	5.415	-3.664	58	0.001**
Female	26	31.81	6.086			
Total	60	29.08	5.75			

significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The null hypothesis is rejected ( $p < .05$ ) and the research hypothesis is accepted. Table 3 depicts the difference between gender and work autonomy. The Cohen's d (Field, 2013) value is

.94 and it shows a large effect size. This signifies the female has to take care of household activities and also focus on their work from home.

**Table 4 Independent sample t-test between family type and work autonomy**

Family Type	N	Mean	SD	t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Nuclear	33	31.45	6.255	4.229	58	0.001**
Joint	27	25.37	4.516			
Total	60	28.51	5.39			

significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The null hypothesis is rejected ( $p < .05$ ) and the research hypothesis is accepted. Table 4 depicts the difference between type of family and work autonomy. The Cohen's d (Field, 2013) value is 1.11 and it shows a large effect size. This

signifies that the respondents from the nuclear family have a lesser burden than those from the joint family. The mean value also signifies a higher work autonomy score for the respondents from the nuclear family.

**Table 5 Independent sample t-test between marital status and work autonomy**

Marital status	N	Mean	SD	t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Married	33	76.30	9.544	1.514	57.29	0.135
Unmarried	27	73.07	6.944			

<b>Total</b>	60	74.69	8.244			
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The null hypothesis is accepted ( $p > .05$ ) and the research hypothesis is accepted. Table 5 explains no difference between marital status and work autonomy.

**Table 6 One-way ANOVA between distance travelled and work autonomy of the respondents**

Distance travelled	N	Mean	SD	F value	Sig. (2-tailed)
0-5 Km	12	31.67	5.6	F = 2.580 df = 4, 55	0.047**
5-10 Km	9	31.00	4.50		
10-15 Km	11	29.09	8.24		
15-20 Km	13	28.46	4.20		
> 20 Km	15	24.93	6.33		
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>28.72</b>	<b>6.29</b>		

\*\*significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The null hypothesis is rejected ( $p < .05$ ) and the research hypothesis is accepted. Table 6 represents that work autonomy is influenced by the distance travelled for the work. The Eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ) value is .39 and it shows a medium effect size.

### Conclusion

The results show that work autonomy has a significant statistical difference concerning the gender of the respondents, family type, and distance travelled to the office. However, the marital status of the respondents has no role in work autonomy in this study. The limitation of the study is that the work autonomy was not studied before the COVID-19 period. Hence the comparison between the pre-and post-COVID-19 period could not be ascertained. As normalcy is regaining the work autonomy in the office environment needs to be studied to understand the job commitment of the employees.

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