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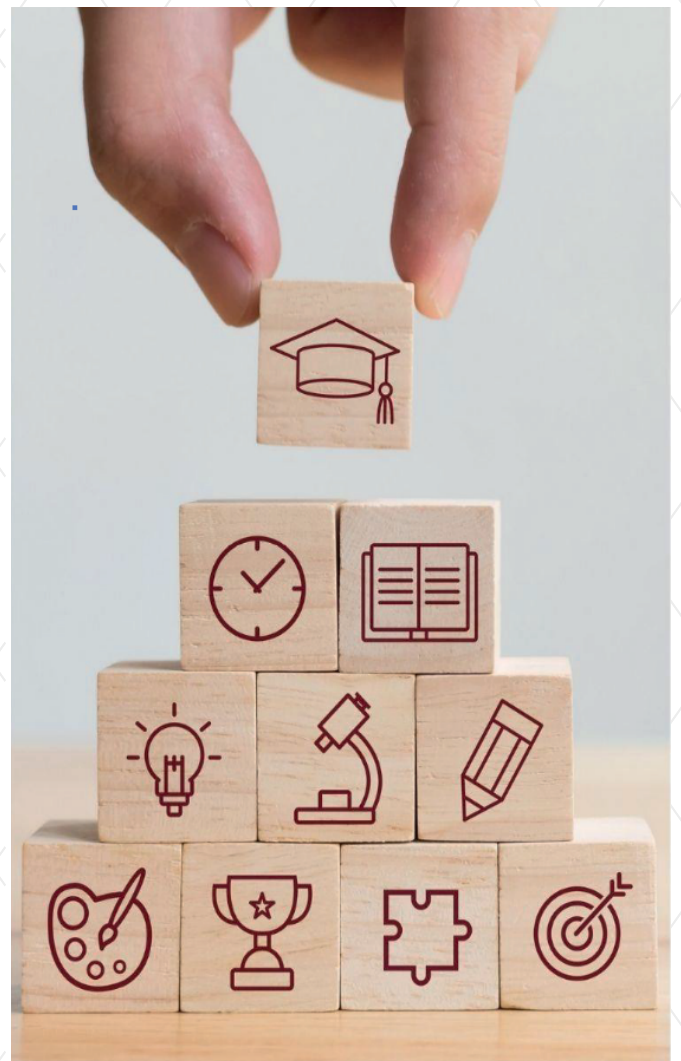
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muhammed.ekeen@gmail.com
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abdulkadirpalanci.29@gmail.com
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Affiliation: Biruni University (Faculty of Education) Istanbul, Turkey
10. Yıl Caddesi, Protokol Yolu No: 45, 34010 Topkapı, İstanbul
Email: biruniuniv@hs01.kep.tr
Phone: 444 8 276 (BRN)
Fax: +90 212 416 46 46

Direct Contact at Biruni University
Prof. Dr. Adnan Ömerustaoğlu
Biruni University, Faculty of Education, Turkey
aomerustaoglu@biruni.edu.tr

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English Teachers' Professional Autonomy: An Inductive/Deductive Hybrid Thematic Analysis Approach

Gizem Mutlu Gülbak, Biruni University, Türkiye, ggulbak@biruni.edu.tr

 0000-0002-4248-8003

Özkan Kırmızı, Karabük University, Türkiye ozkankirmizi@karabuk.edu.tr

 0000-0003-3419-8257

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Abstract

This study investigates the professional autonomy of in-service English language teachers in Türkiye through an inductive–deductive hybrid thematic analysis approach. The research aims to identify the motivational, structural, and contextual factors that shape teachers' perceptions of autonomy and their engagement in professional development. Data were collected from 117 in-service teachers via the Teachers' Professional Autonomy Questionnaire (Okay & Balçıklı, 2021) and follow-up qualitative interviews with seven volunteers. Quantitative findings revealed moderately high levels of professional autonomy, with the highest scores in capability and internal motivation and the lowest in time management and external motivation. A curvilinear pattern emerged across experience levels: mid-career teachers demonstrated stronger motivation and self-efficacy, while novice and veteran teachers reported lower perceived autonomy. Qualitative findings highlighted that autonomy was fostered by intrinsic motivation, collegial collaboration, and supportive leadership, but constrained by workload, centralized curricula, and limited institutional resources. The integrated results conceptualize teachers' autonomy as conditional professional autonomy, a dynamic balance between self-determination and systemic constraint. The study offers theoretical and practical insights for fostering teacher agency through context-sensitive professional development and participatory school leadership.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, shifts in educational theory and practice have underscored the centrality of teachers not merely as transmitters of knowledge but as active agents shaping learning (Biesta, 2013; Priestley, et al., 2015). While the concept of teacher autonomy has long been discussed in relation to classroom control, decision-making, and curriculum implementation (Breen & Mann, 1997), an emerging perspective highlights professional autonomy as a distinct dimension. Professional autonomy extends beyond technical control over tasks to encompass teachers' capacity and responsibility to grow as reflective practitioners within collaborative professional communities (Okay & Balçıkanlı, 2021).

Professional autonomy requires more than freedom from external constraint; it entails motivation, capacity, and collegial collaboration, as well as the time and resources necessary for ongoing professional development. When these conditions are absent, teachers' agency is constrained, and their potential to innovate and sustain effective practice diminishes (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2010). Conversely, when teachers are supported as autonomous professionals, they assume ownership of their work and contribute actively to educational quality and democratic practice (Hughes & Lewis, 2020).

Research suggests that professional autonomy is crucial not only for teacher well-being and retention but also for developing the pedagogical adaptability required by contemporary reforms and diverse student needs (e.g. Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014; Chaban & Du, 2017). In contexts such as Türkiye, where centralized systems and heavy workloads often limit autonomy, examining how teachers perceive and exercise their professional autonomy offers valuable insights for policy and practice. Considering that an in-depth examination of the multi-layered structure of teachers' professional autonomy can provide valuable insights for both theory and practice, this study examines professional autonomy through an inductive–deductive thematic analysis and aims to contribute to educational policies and professional development programs by offering solutions to enhance teachers' professional autonomy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher professional autonomy (TPA) has long been a central topic in discussions of educational quality and teacher development. In the field of language education, autonomy has been approached both from the perspectives of learner autonomy and teacher autonomy in general sense (La Ganza, 2004; Benson, 2011). In-service teachers, who operate within institutional systems and established professional norms, often navigate tensions between these two forms of autonomy. For teachers, autonomy is not merely about instructional freedom but also about sustained professional growth, reflective practice, and participation in collaborative decision-making structures that support ongoing learning (Okay & Balçıkanlı, 2021; Pineda & Frodden, 2008). On the other hand, professional autonomy is a narrower term that focuses more on professional actions that are self-guided (McGrath, 2000).

English language teachers face unique challenges in maintaining autonomy due to curricular standardization, heavy workloads, and limited institutional support (Dilekçi, 2022; Yıldırım, 2017). Despite these constraints, studies consistently highlight that autonomy serves as a key motivational and protective factor for teachers' well-being, job satisfaction, and professional identity (Chaaban & Du, 2017; Derakhshan et al., 2020; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Mansfield et al. (2016) found that higher autonomy correlates with greater job satisfaction and resilience, enabling teachers to sustain engagement despite systemic pressures. In the Turkish EFL context, autonomy has been shown to enhance teachers' sense of efficacy and reflective practice (Okay, 2018; Yükselir & Özer, 2022), suggesting that the ability to make professional decisions and self-direct development is crucial for effective and sustained teaching practice.

From a professional learning perspective, autonomy among in-service teachers is closely linked to intrinsic motivation and self-regulated professional development. Teachers who perceive themselves as autonomous are more likely to engage voluntarily in professional learning activities, explore new pedagogical methods, and integrate technology in innovative ways (Benson, 2011; Okay, 2018). However, this form of professional autonomy depends heavily on contextual factors such as institutional culture, administrative leadership, and access to resources. Research across various contexts has shown that supportive leadership and collegial collaboration enhance teachers' perceived autonomy and professional confidence (Hughes & Lewis, 2020; Pineda & Frodden, 2008), while rigid management structures tend to suppress initiative and innovation (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2010).

In Türkiye, where the education system remains largely centralized, in-service teachers often experience autonomy in a restricted or conditional form. Yıldırım (2017) found that English instructors valued autonomy but perceived limited space for independent decision-making. Similarly, Dinçer (2019) reported that although teachers desired greater professional freedom, structural and bureaucratic barriers limited their agency. More recent studies underline that autonomy among Turkish EFL teachers is not solely a matter of instructional control but rather a multidimensional construct encompassing capacity, motivation, collaboration, and time management, the dimensions that directly influence teachers' participation in meaningful professional development (e.g. Ertürk, 2023; Okay & Balçıklı, 2021).

In summary, the literature discusses teacher autonomy more in general sense rather than specifically professional autonomy and underscores that in-service English teachers' professional autonomy is both an individual and systemic phenomenon. It is strengthened by reflective practice, collaboration, and supportive leadership but weakened by centralized control, time pressure, and limited resources. Understanding how in-service teachers perceive and exercise autonomy in their professional development is therefore essential for designing context-sensitive policies and support systems that foster sustainable teacher growth and, consequently, higher educational quality.

THE STUDY

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by examining EFL teachers' perceptions of professional autonomy, offering a comprehensive perspective on the concept of professional autonomy. It holds significance for both educational research and practice as it provides an in-depth examination of in-service English teachers' professional autonomy within the Turkish EFL context, a dimension of teacher professionalism that remains underexplored in centralized education systems. By employing a hybrid inductive–deductive mixed-method approach, the study not only captures teachers' perceptions quantitatively but also explores the contextual and experiential factors that shape their sense of autonomy. The findings have the potential to inform teacher education programs, institutional policies, and professional development frameworks by identifying the key enablers and barriers that influence teachers' self-directed growth, motivation, and capacity for reflective practice. Moreover, understanding how autonomy varies across career stages can contribute to the design of differentiated support mechanisms that address the evolving professional needs of novice, mid-career, and veteran teachers. Ultimately, this study aims to strengthen the discourse on professional empowerment, emphasizing that enhancing in-service teachers' professional autonomy is essential not only for their well-being and professional satisfaction but also for improving instructional quality and student learning outcomes.

The research questions are formulated as follows:

- 1) What are the perceptions of professional autonomy of English teachers working at different levels and institutions (e.g., primary, secondary; state or private) in Türkiye?
- 2) What are the perceptions of professional autonomy of English teachers with different years of experience in Türkiye?

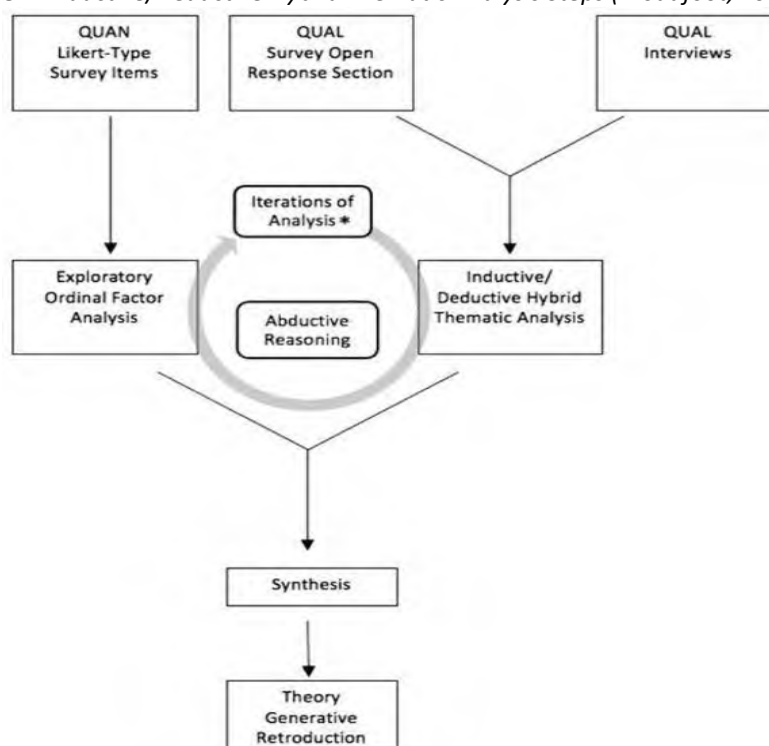
- 3) What are the factors (e.g. motivational, structural, contextual) affecting the professional autonomy of English teachers working at different levels and institutions (e.g., primary, secondary; state or private) in Türkiye?

METHOD

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study has a mixed-method design which combines two different methodologies to examine the same phenomenon (Denzin, 1978), and to triangulate data in order to increase the validity and reliability (Mackey & Gass, 2005). In combining two different methodologies, Proudfoot's (2022) inductive/deductive hybrid thematic analysis was followed (Figure 1). Inductive and deductive hybrid thematic analysis requires the collection of quantitative and qualitative data and foresees that the inferences to be obtained within the scope of the study were drawn from both the data and the existing literature. The steps followed in the study within this framework are presented in Figure 1 below and explained in detail in the subsequent sections.

Figure 1. Inductive/Deductive Hybrid Thematic Analysis Steps (Proudfoot, 2022, s.5)



PARTICIPANTS AND SETTING

Participants were 117 in-service state school English teachers working in different regions and educational levels (primary, secondary and high school) across Türkiye. A snowball sampling method was used, and the questionnaire was distributed online. At the end of the survey, participants were asked if they would volunteer for interviews; seven teachers agreed and participated in the qualitative phase.

Demographic information revealed that participants' teaching experience was evenly distributed: 1–5 years (17.9%), 6–10 years (21.4%), 11–15 years (17.9%), 16–20 years (20.5%), and over 20 years (22.2%). Most participants held undergraduate degrees (85.5%) (i.e. English Language and Literature, English Language Teaching), while a smaller portion had master's (13.7%) or doctoral (0.8%) qualifications.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researchers addressed the ethical concerns before conducting the research to protect the rights and interests of participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Dörnyei, 2007). For the insurance of the ethical integrity, ethical approval was received from the university Ethics Committee (09/08/2023-2023/83-17) and informed consent was obtained from the participants after they were explained the research aims and procedures. The participants' right to anonymity was highly respected. Numbers were used to identify each instead of real names (e.g. P1, P2...). All data gathered and analyzed for the purposes of this study were kept confidential.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The instruments in the study are categorized under two main headings: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative data of the study were collected through the Teacher Professional Autonomy Questionnaire developed by Okay and Balçıklı (2021). TEPAQ, as shown in Figure 1 (QUAN Likert type survey items), were used to determine the level of professional autonomy of the participants. With 23 items, TEPAQ is suggested as an appropriate tool for understanding teachers' professional learning and raising their awareness of the importance of development in their profession. It was chosen because it was specifically designed and validated for Turkish EFL teachers.

The questionnaire was shared with the participants online via GoogleForms, with a consent form and questions on demographic information (age, position, years of experience, education, etc.). Quantitative data were analyzed using Jamovi 2.6.26 software. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) were computed. Exploratory factor analysis was not conducted due to the low number of participants for the analysis. Reliability analysis yielded the following Cronbach's alpha values for subscales: internal motivation (0.85), collaboration (0.82), capability (0.82), time management (0.77), and external motivation (0.67), with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.78, indicating high internal consistency.

Following the same model, three open-ended questions in line with the relevant literature and study purpose (QUAL Survey Open Response Section) were added at the end of the questionnaire (1- Would you describe yourself as autonomous as a teacher? Why?, 2- What motivates you to engage in professional development/learning activities? Why? 3- What are the things that hinder/obstruct your participation in professional development/learning activities? Why?). 51 of 117 teachers responded to the qualitative part of the questionnaire.

Another qualitative phase was individual interviews with teachers, as suggested in the model (QUAL interviews). Since participation in the interviews was voluntary, the statement "I agree to participate in the interview about the study" was added at the end of the questionnaire and the interviews were conducted with seven voluntary teachers via the online platform (Gmeet). The interview participants represented diverse professional backgrounds and institutional contexts: three teachers from state high schools, two from primary schools, and two from secondary schools. Their teaching experience ranged from four to twenty-two years, offering perspectives from novice, mid-career, and veteran teachers. In the interviews, in addition to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire, open-ended questions for the identification of factors related to the sub-headings of autonomy (motivation, capacity, collaboration and time management) were asked. (e.g. Do you find enough time for professional development activities? How? How often do you participate?) Interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants and transcribed.

In analyzing the qualitative data, Miles et al.'s (2013) framework was applied systematically through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During data reduction, both researchers independently conducted initial open coding of interview transcripts and open-ended survey responses, generating inductive codes while also applying deductive codes derived from the TEPAQ framework and the hybrid thematic model. In the data display stage, codes were

organized into matrices and thematic charts to compare patterns across participants and to examine how inductive and deductive categories intersected. Conclusion drawing involved iterative theme refinement, during which the researchers cross-checked interpretations, triangulated findings with quantitative results, and revisited the data to ensure analytic coherence. Two coders were involved throughout the process, and intercoder reliability was enhanced through regular comparison meetings; coding discrepancies were discussed until full consensus was reached, ensuring the rigor and transparency of the qualitative analysis.

FINDINGS

This section presents the results of the study derived from both quantitative and qualitative data sources in line with the mixed-method design described earlier. The findings are organized to reflect the inductive–deductive hybrid thematic analysis approach adopted in the research. First, the quantitative results are reported to illustrate participants’ overall perceptions of professional autonomy across the five subdimensions. This is followed by the qualitative findings gathered from open-ended survey responses and semi-structured interviews, which provide deeper insights into the factors shaping teachers’ professional autonomy. Finally, the synthesis of both datasets offers a comprehensive understanding of how motivational, institutional, and contextual dynamics interact to influence English teachers’ professional autonomy in the Turkish EFL context.

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Because the sample size of the present study ($N = 117$) did not meet the minimum requirements for conducting a new exploratory factor analysis, commonly recommended as at least 5–10 participants per item (Hair et al., 2019), the validated factor structure reported in Okay and Balçıkanlı (2021) was adopted. The five dimensions identified in the original study (Internal Motivation, Capabilities, Collaboration, Time Management, and External Motivation) were therefore used as the analytical framework for the current quantitative phase. This approach ensured conceptual comparability with the original instrument while allowing for a meaningful integration with the qualitative results presented later in the synthesis section.

The quantitative data revealed that the participants’ overall perceptions of professional autonomy were moderate to high. As shown in Table 1, the highest mean scores were obtained for capability ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.45$), followed by internal motivation ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.53$) and collaboration with colleagues ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.70$). The lowest mean scores were observed for time management ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.05$) and external motivation ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.01$). These results suggest that while teachers generally feel competent and intrinsically motivated to engage in professional development, they experience difficulties allocating sufficient time for it and are less driven by external incentives.

When examining the internal motivation subdimension (Table 1), it is observed that participants felt obliged to improve themselves professionally ($M = 4.14$), were willing to adopt new teaching methods ($M = 4.40$), and felt the need to progress professionally in order to meet students’ expectations ($M = 4.46$). In addition, participants stated that they enjoyed professional development ($M = 4.48$), that their engagement in professional learning was self-driven ($M = 4.14$), that they wished to advance professionally to address students’ needs ($M = 4.36$), and that they utilized all available opportunities for professional growth to perform their teaching duties in the best possible way ($M = 4.25$). The teachers who took part in the study also reported that they were able to access information related to professional development in teaching ($M = 4.38$), reach journals and books on the topic ($M = 4.18$), and improve their own teaching methods ($M = 4.43$). Similarly, they indicated that they could identify their own strengths and weaknesses ($M = 4.26$), use technology for professional development ($M = 4.39$), and keep up with the latest advancements in the field ($M = 4.21$). On the other hand, participants emphasized that professional development is not an obligation but rather an intrinsic desire ($M = 3.72$). In light of these findings on the internal motivation subdimension, it can be inferred

that the teachers participating in the study are highly willing to develop and enhance their professional autonomy.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for Internal Motivation*

	<i>N</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
I want to develop myself professionally because I feel I have to.	117	4.14	0.928	1	5
It is my own wish to continue my professional development.	117	4.14	0.928	1	5
I am curious about new ways to develop my teaching.	117	4.40	0.670	1	5
I want to develop professionally because it is a necessity to meet the needs of students.	117	4.46	0.714	1	5
I enjoy developing myself professionally.	117	4.48	0.638	1	5
I feel obliged to continue my development as a teacher.	117	3.72	1.144	1	5
I constantly look for ways to develop my teaching.	117	4.09	0.761	2	5
I want to develop professionally to meet the needs of my students.	117	4.36	0.663	1	5
I want to develop myself professionally in order to push the limits of my abilities as a teacher.	117	4.25	0.776	2	5

When examining the capabilities subdimension (Table 2), it appears that teachers also demonstrated a high level of self-confidence in this area ($M = 4.32$). Participants stated that they possessed the capacity to improve their own teaching methods ($M = 4.43$), had access to technology for professional development ($M = 4.39$), and were able to conduct research related to their professional growth ($M = 4.39$). They also reported being able to identify their strengths and weaknesses as teachers ($M = 4.26$), integrate the latest developments into their teaching practices ($M = 4.21$), and locate academic resources related to professional development ($M = 4.18$). These results suggest that participants display strong competencies within the framework of professional autonomy, indicating that they perceive themselves as capable and resourceful in managing their own professional learning.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for Capability*

	<i>N</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>
I have the ability to develop my teaching.	117	4.43	0.562	3	5
I have access to technology to continue my development as a teacher.	117	4.39	0.629	2	5
I am able to search out information about teaching.	117	4.39	0.539	2	5
I am able to use technology to develop my teaching.	117	4.39	0.601	2	5
I am able to identify my weaknesses/strengths as a teacher.	117	4.26	0.672	1	5
I can adapt to recent developments in teaching.	117	4.21	0.705	2	5
I can find profession-related materials (i.e. books, journals, etc.) about teaching.	117	4.18	0.816	1	5

When examining the collaboration subdimension (Table 3), the overall mean score was found to be 4.15. Within this dimension, participants indicated that they were willing to seek ideas from colleagues to improve their teaching methods ($M = 4.23$), could work collaboratively with peers to enhance their instructional practices ($M = 4.17$), and had colleagues they could consult with regarding matters of professional development ($M = 4.04$). These findings suggest that teachers value collegial interaction and view professional collaboration as an important component of their professional autonomy.

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics for Collaboration*

	<i>N</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>
I can work with my colleagues to develop my teaching.	117	4.17	0.813	1	5
I like to learn from my colleagues to develop my teaching.	117	4.23	0.736	2	5
I have colleagues whom I can consult when I need help about my professional development.	117	4.04	0.894	1	5

When it comes to the time management subdimension (Table 4), the overall mean score was found to be 3.44. This indicates that the English teachers who participated in the study were somewhat undecided about their ability to allocate sufficient time for professional development activities. Participants expressed that their heavy workload limited the time they could devote to such activities ($M = 3.37$) and that they had very little time for professional development outside of school hours ($M = 3.50$). These results suggest that time constraints constitute a significant challenge to teachers' professional growth and autonomy.

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics for Time Management*

	<i>N</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>
My workload is too heavy to engage in activities to develop myself as a teacher.	117	3.37	1.21	1	5
I find very little time outside the school for professional development activities.	117	3.50	1.11	1	5

Finally, when examining the external motivation subdimension (Table 5), the overall mean score was found to be 3.10. Participants generally disagreed with the idea that professional development is pursued for financial benefit ($M = 3.23$) or undertaken primarily to obtain a better position or promotion ($M = 2.98$). These results indicate that teachers' engagement in professional development is not driven by extrinsic rewards, but rather by intrinsic and self-directed motivations, reinforcing the findings observed in the internal motivation subdimension.

Table 5. *Descriptive Statistics for External Motivation*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Ort</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>
I want to develop myself professionally to better my financial condition.	116	3.23	1.12	1	5
I want to develop myself professionally for a chance of getting promoted to a better position.	117	2.98	1.20	1	5

An important component of this study was to examine whether English teachers' perceptions of professional autonomy varied according to their years of teaching experience. The results indicated that perceptions of autonomy indeed differed by experience level: teachers who had just begun their careers (0–5 years) and those with more than 20 years of experience demonstrated lower levels of self-confidence and perceived capability in this regard (Table 6).

Within the internal motivation subdimension, the item *"I want to improve myself because I find it necessary"* yielded the highest mean score among teachers with 6–10 years of experience, while the lowest means were observed among the 0–5 year and 20+ year groups. Similarly, for the item *"Professional progress is my own choice,"* teachers with 6–10 years of experience reported the highest levels of agreement, whereas novice teachers (0–5 years) and the most experienced group (20+ years) showed the lowest levels.

A statistically significant difference was also found for the item *"I am curious about new ways to improve my teaching"* ($F = 5.1269$, $p = .001$). Post hoc tests revealed that this difference stemmed from the gap between the 20+ years group and all other experience groups, with the 20+ years group showing the lowest mean ($M = 3.92$).

For the items *“I want to improve myself professionally because meeting students’ needs is a necessity”* and *“I enjoy professional development,”* all experience groups reported high mean scores, and no significant differences were observed. On the other hand, for the item *“As a teacher, I feel obliged to maintain my professional growth,”* only teachers with 11–15 years of experience had a notably high mean score ($M = 4.19$), while other groups reported lower values.

Another item where teaching experience appeared to play a key role was *“I constantly look for new ways to improve my teaching methods.”* Although teachers across nearly all experience groups scored high on this item, those in the 20+ years group showed a relatively lower mean ($M = 3.85$).

Similarly, for the item *“I need to improve myself professionally to meet students’ needs,”* a statistically significant difference was observed ($F = 3.9007$, $p = .007$). The 20+ years experience group again had a considerably lower mean ($M = 3.96$) compared to teachers in other groups. Finally, for the item *“As a teacher, I want to push the boundaries of my professional progress,”* the same pattern persisted — teachers with over 20 years of experience displayed lower mean scores ($M = 3.96$) than their less experienced colleagues.

Table 6. Internal Motivation Results Based On Teaching Experience (Years)

	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20+
I want to develop myself professionally because I feel I have to.	3.76	4.36	4.19	4.38	3.96
It is my own wish to continue my professional development.	3.76	4.36	4.19	4.38	3.96
I am curious about new ways to develop my teaching.	4.67	4.60	4.48	4.42	3.92
I want to develop professionally because it is a necessity to meet the needs of students.	4.57	4.44	4.57	4.50	4.27
I enjoy developing myself professionally.	4.67	4.48	4.62	4.50	4.19
I feel obliged to continue my development as a teacher.	3.38	3.96	4.19	3.67	3.42
I constantly look for ways to develop my teaching.	4.14	4.16	4.24	4.08	3.85
I want to develop professionally to meet the needs of my students.	4.57	4.40	4.62	4.33	3.96
I want to develop myself professionally in order to push the limits of my abilities as a teacher.	4.43	4.32	4.38	4.21	3.96

In summary, these findings suggest a curvilinear relationship between teaching experience and perceived professional autonomy. TPA tends to rise during mid-career stages (approximately 6–15 years) but declines slightly among teachers with very long experience, possibly due to professional fatigue, systemic limitations, or a sense of career plateau.

Teaching experience also proved to be an important factor within the capabilities subdimension (Table 7). A statistically significant difference was found among experience groups for the first item in this category ($F = 2.9400$, $p = .028$). Specifically, teachers with more than 20 years of experience felt less competent in the item *“I have the capacity to improve my own teaching methods”* compared to teachers in other experience groups ($M = 4.08$).

Overall, across the capabilities dimension, teachers in all experience groups reported that they were able to use technology effectively, identify their own strengths and weaknesses, and locate academic resources related to professional development. However, differences emerged in certain specific items. For example, regarding the item *“I can conduct research related to professional development,”* teachers with over 20 years of experience reported lower levels of competence ($F = 4.088$, $p = .006$). Similarly, for the item *“I can use technology for my professional development,”* teachers with 0–5, 6–10, and 11–15 years of experience demonstrated higher levels of competence compared to other groups ($F = 2.6657$, $p = .042$).

Finally, in the item *“I can keep up with the latest developments in terms of professional growth,”* teachers with 20 or more years of experience again exhibited lower levels of perceived competence ($M = 3.92$). Taken together, these results indicate that while most teachers feel capable

of managing their professional learning, veteran teachers tend to perceive themselves as less up-to-date and less active in adopting new practices compared to their younger or mid-career colleagues.

Table 7. *Capabilities Results Based On Teaching Experience (Years)*

	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20+
I have the ability to develop my teaching.	4.48	4.48	4.57	4.38	4.08
I have access to technology to continue my development as a teacher.	4.14	4.04	4.48	4.29	4.00
I am able to search out information about teaching.	4.57	4.52	4.57	4.42	4.12
I am able to use technology to develop my teaching.	4.48	4.28	4.48	4.08	4.04
I am able to identify my weaknesses/strengths as a teacher.	4.57	4.48	4.52	4.21	4.23
I can adapt to recent developments in teaching.	4.43	4.12	4.52	4.17	3.92
I can find profession-related materials (i.e. books, journals, etc.) about teaching.	4.62	4.36	4.52	4.42	4.12

Within the collaboration subdimension (Table 8), no statistically significant differences were found among teachers from different experience groups. Overall, teachers appeared to be open to collaboration and capable of working effectively with their colleagues. However, in the final item of this subdimension, “*When I need professional support, I can find a colleague around me to consult with*”, participants in the 0–5 years, 6–10 years, and 20+ years experience groups reported lower mean scores. This finding suggests that while teachers generally value collegial cooperation, those who are either new to the profession or in its later stages may experience a sense of isolation or limited access to professional support networks within their institutions.

Table 8. *Collaboration Results Based On Teaching Experience (Years)*

	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20+
I can work with my colleagues to develop my teaching.	4.19	4.20	4.19	4.21	4.08
I like to learn from my colleagues to develop my teaching.	4.29	4.16	4.52	4.21	4.04
I have colleagues whom I can consult when I need help about my professional development.	3.95	3.84	4.29	4.25	3.92

Similarly, within the time management subdimension (Table 9), no significant differences were found among teachers with different years of experience. However, it was observed that almost all experience groups reported low mean scores in this subdimension. This finding indicates that regardless of their level of professional experience, teachers face similar challenges in allocating sufficient time for professional development activities, largely due to heavy workloads and institutional demands.

Table 9. *Time Management Results Based On Teaching Experience (Years)*

	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20 +
My workload is too heavy to engage in activities to develop myself as a teacher.	3.38	3.28	3.43	3.42	3.35
I find very little time outside the school for professional development activities.	3.71	3.40	3.43	3.63	3.38

Lastly, within the external motivation subdimension (Table 10), no statistically significant differences were observed for the first item. In other words, teachers across all experience groups agreed that professional development is not pursued for economic gain. On the other hand, a statistically significant difference emerged for the item “*I want to improve myself professionally in order to be promoted to a better position*” ($F = 3.2587$, $p = 0.018$). According to this result, teachers with 11–15 years and 20 or more years of experience appeared less optimistic about advancing to higher professional positions. This suggests that as teachers gain more experience, their expectations

regarding promotion or career advancement tend to decline, possibly reflecting a sense of career stagnation or limited upward mobility within the educational system.

Table 10. *External Motivation Based On Teaching Experience (Years)*

	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20 +
I want to develop myself professionally to better my financial condition.	3.24	3.46	3.19	3.38	2.92
I want to develop myself professionally for a chance of getting promoted to a better position.	3.38	3.28	2.86	3.08	2.38

In summary, the findings indicate a curvilinear pattern in which autonomy and motivation were highest among mid-career teachers (6–15 years) but lower among novices (0–5 years) and veterans (20+ years). Mid-career teachers showed greater internal motivation, curiosity, and self-driven professional growth, while the most experienced teachers reported lower confidence, curiosity, and perceived capability, likely due to fatigue or a sense of plateau. Across capability measures, most teachers felt competent, yet those with over 20 years of experience were less confident in keeping up with new developments and using technology. Collaboration levels were generally high across groups, though newer and senior teachers felt less supported by peers. Time management was a consistent challenge for all groups, with heavy workloads limiting development opportunities. Lastly, external motivation (e.g., promotion or financial gain) declined with experience, suggesting that senior teachers felt fewer career advancement prospects.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The qualitative data of the study consisted of open-ended survey responses and individual interviews. The first open-ended survey question asked teachers how autonomous they felt in their profession. A summary of the participants' responses, along with illustrative quotations is given in Table 11.

Table 11. *Perceptions About TPA Themes*

Theme	Sample quotations
Pedagogical freedom and creativity	"Yes, I feel autonomous because I have the flexibility to choose teaching methods and adapt materials according to my students' needs." (P4)
Partial/ context-dependent autonomy	"I can say I am autonomous to a certain extent. I am free to choose how to deliver lessons, but I usually have to follow the set curriculum." (P2)
Systematic constraints and curriculum pressure	"No, because I have to strictly follow the daily plan determined by the Ministry of Education and apply it within limited time without much room for flexibility." (P49)
Experience and self-directed development	"Yes. Especially after starting my master's degree and with my 16 years of experience, I feel autonomous as a teacher who wants to promote learner autonomy." (P7)
Institutional environment and administrative support	"Yes, I can make my own decisions, and my principal always supports me." (P33)
Intrinsic motivation and personality-based autonomy	"Yes, because I have the freedom to make the best decisions for my students." (P25)

According to the analysis of responses, English teachers' perceptions of professional autonomy were clustered under six main themes. The most common theme was pedagogical freedom and creativity, where teachers reported feeling free in choosing teaching methods, adapting materials, and planning lessons. However, many also described their autonomy as partial, limited by the national curriculum, yearly plans, and administrative constraints. Curriculum rigidity, exam-oriented practices, and lack of time led some participants to state they did not feel autonomous at all.

Teachers with extensive experience, on the other hand, expressed that they sustained autonomy through self-directed professional development and individual learning efforts. Institutional support and administrative flexibility also appeared as key factors shaping perceptions of autonomy. Finally, some participants associated their autonomy primarily with personality traits and intrinsic motivation. Together, these themes demonstrate that teacher autonomy is influenced not only by individual capacity but also by structural and environmental conditions.

The second question aimed to explore participants' primary sources of motivation for engaging in professional development activities. A summary of their responses and representative quotes is provided in Table 12.

Table 12. *Sources For Motivation Themes*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sample quotation</i>
Student-centred motivation	"My motivation comes from wanting to improve my teaching and better support my students' learning. Seeing my students participate and progress reminds me why I teach." (P1)
Keeping up with educational and technological innovations	"Staying current and growing in my field is my main motivation. In a world where education and technology constantly evolve, being up to date makes me more effective, confident, and inspired." (P2)
Lifelong learning and personal growth	"As teachers, we must keep up with new generations that change every year. Lifelong learning is personally important to me—it makes me feel more motivated to teach." (P4)
Passion for teaching and intrinsic joy	"Loving my job. My intrinsic motivation is this: the more I learn and the better I do my job, the more I can help others." (P26)
Changing student needs	"As technology develops, students' needs change, and every year a new generation comes. I need to meet their expectations." (P22)
Systematic or institutional pressure	"Honestly, as English teachers we're tired of traditional professional development—it's usually the same presenters, same topics, same advice." (P10)
Interest in digital tools	"Because I'm curious about these topics and good at digital tools. I enjoy teaching my students new things." (P35)

Most participants shared student-centered motivation, expressing that their main reason for professional development was improving student success, addressing learners' needs, and enhancing classroom interaction. Following this, the need to keep up with educational and technological innovations emerged as another strong motivator. Teachers emphasized their desire to stay up to date with new teaching methods and tools.

Another salient theme was lifelong learning and personal growth. Participants viewed teaching as a profession that requires continual learning and saw professional growth as beneficial to both themselves and their students. Intrinsic motivation and passion for teaching were also highlighted by several teachers. Less common but noteworthy factors included changing student demographics, institutional pressures, and interest in technology. These diverse sources of motivation reveal that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors shape teachers' engagement in professional development.

The final survey question explored the barriers preventing participation in professional development. A summary of responses and illustrative quotes is presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Barriers for TPA

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sample quotation</i>
Time constraints	"The main barrier is lack of time. Lesson planning, grading, and sometimes private courses make it hard to find time for extra training." (P5)
Heavy workload	"My teaching schedule and the curriculum exhaust me mentally and physically. I can't even find quality time for myself." (P25)
Family responsibilities	"I struggle with time because I also have responsibilities as a mother and wife. These take time and energy, leaving little for professional activities." (P16)
Financial constraints	"Both time and money are factors. Even if we have free time, we don't want to spend it on work-related activities unless they're within working hours and compensated." (P12)
Irrelevance or ineffectiveness of activities	"Most professional development activities feel disconnected from real classroom realities, so I don't find them useful." (P7)
Low motivation	"Paperwork, teaching duties, and years of routine make me feel I'm already competent enough—so I don't feel motivated to attend." (P14)
Logistical problems	"I live far from central areas in Istanbul. I'd participate if these events were online." (P20)

The most frequently cited barrier was lack of time. Teachers emphasized that their heavy teaching loads, administrative paperwork, and family responsibilities left little time for professional development. Workload and fatigue further limited their participation, as did financial challenges such as the cost of materials or transportation. Some participants criticized traditional training events as irrelevant or impractical, while others mentioned low motivation or burnout as barriers. Finally, logistical and geographic factors, particularly for those in rural or distant areas, were additional constraints.

The other qualitative data source was individual semi-structured interviews. These interviews explored the deductively defined subdimensions of professional autonomy. The summary of the participants' responses and example quotations is presented in Table 14.

Table 14. Subdimensional Themes

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sample quotation</i>
Intrinsic motivation	"For me, professional autonomy means having the freedom to decide how to teach and what materials to use. It increases both my confidence and creativity." (P3) "When my students participate actively, I feel motivated. Their development pushes me to improve too." (P5)
Extrinsic motivation	"Even though the administration gives us freedom, ministry inspections and fixed plans still limit our decisions." (P7) "Certificates from in-service trainings are valued by administrators." (P2)
Time management	"I teach 30 hours a week. Finding time for extra activities is hard, especially with a small child." (P2)
Collaboration	"We share teaching ideas in a WhatsApp group. This synergy helps me try new methods I hadn't considered before." (P7)
Capacity	"In my rural school there's no computer or internet, but I bring my own laptop and use what I can." (P1) "I watch YouTube videos and follow podcasts to learn informally." (P7)

The structured interviews supported five main deductive themes (i.e. intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, time management, collaboration, and capacity). Teachers' narratives provided a multifaceted picture of their professional autonomy and the factors shaping it. Participants reported that they felt most autonomous and motivated when they could make pedagogical decisions and contribute to student learning. However, administrative control and centralized curriculum requirements led many to feel constrained and externally regulated.

Time management challenges stemming from heavy workloads and personal responsibilities were recurrently mentioned as barriers to professional development. Collaboration emerged as a positive force as teachers highlighted that sharing experiences and producing materials collectively enhanced their learning. Under the capacity theme, participants drew attention to technological limitations and lack of access to resources, both of which restricted their ability to act autonomously.

As part of the hybrid thematic analysis, all qualitative data obtained were synthesized and presented in Table 15.

Table 15. *Hybrid Thematic Analysis*

<i>Theme area</i>	<i>Deductive themes</i>	<i>Inductive themes</i>	<i>Hybrid analysis themes</i>
Motivation	Intrinsic motivation Extrinsic motivation	Student-centered motivation Lifelong learning Intrinsic joy	Participants mostly based their motivation for professional development on internal sources, emphasizing student success and personal satisfaction. However, some also noted that external pressures (institutional expectations, inspectors, exam systems) influenced their motivation.
Time/ Workload	Time management	Lack of time Family responsibilities Fatigue	Time constraints emerged as the most prominent barrier in both open-ended responses and interviews. Ineffective time management directly affects both professional development and decision-making autonomy.
Collaboration	Collaboration	Willingness to collaborate with colleagues Shared learning opportunities	Teachers emphasized that collaboration with colleagues supports both their autonomy and professional growth, yet they complained that such collaboration is rarely encouraged at the institutional level.
Capacity/ Resources	Capacity (technology, materials, training opportunities)	Lack of technological infrastructure Limited access to teaching materials	Participants highlighted that they lack sufficient materials, technology, and training opportunities to make autonomous decisions. This lack of physical capacity is particularly significant for teachers working in rural areas.
Systemic/ Institutional Factors	External motivation (rules, expectations, supervision)	Curriculum pressure Centralization Administrative restrictions	Teachers' perceptions of autonomy are largely limited by the centralized education system and school management practices. As a result, some decisions are made out of obligation rather than professional choice.

The hybrid thematic analysis used in this study enabled the interpretation of qualitative data through both inductive (data-driven) and deductive (theory-driven) approaches. Themes derived from open-ended survey questions reflected participants' authentic experiences, while data from interviews were analyzed according to predefined theoretical dimensions of professional autonomy.

When combined, these two approaches provided a multidimensional understanding of teachers' perceptions of professional autonomy and the factors shaping them. For example, the motivation theme was analyzed inductively in relation to intrinsic satisfaction gained from student achievement, and deductively in relation to external factors such as institutional performance expectations and administrative pressures. Similarly, the time management and capacity themes were evaluated both in terms of individual limitations and their broader implications for TPA.

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

Following Proudfoot’s (2022) hybrid inductive–deductive framework, this section integrates the quantitative and qualitative results to move beyond simple corroboration toward theory-generative retroduction, an interpretive process that seeks to uncover the underlying mechanisms shaping teachers’ professional autonomy. The combination of numeric trends and lived experiences allows for the emergence of deeper conceptual patterns explaining *why* and *how* in-service English teachers in Türkiye perceive autonomy as they do. To this end, a joint display (Table 16) was developed to illustrate the points of convergence, complementarity, and divergence between the EFA-based factors and the emergent qualitative themes.

Table 16. *Joint Display*

<i>EFA Factor (Quantitative Dimension)</i>	<i>Quantitative Findings (Summary)</i>	<i>Qualitative Insights</i>	<i>Integrated Interpretation</i>
Internal motivation	Mid-career teachers (6–15 yrs) reported highest intrinsic motivation; lowest among novice and veteran teachers.	Teachers linked motivation to self-driven growth and student success, not external rewards.	Both strands show motivation as internally sustained and highest when autonomy and self-efficacy align.
Capabilities	Veteran teachers (20+ yrs) perceived lower competence in adapting to new methods and technologies.	Qualitative data showed senior teachers felt “outdated” due to systemic rigidity and lack of institutional support.	Experience moderates capability; institutional culture amplifies or reduces confidence.
Collaboration	No significant quantitative difference; moderate-high means overall.	TPA depended on school culture—supportive leadership encouraged peer learning, while rigid environments reduced collaboration.	Quantitative stability masks qualitative variability due to contextual leadership factors.
Time management	Low means across all groups; no significant differences.	Teachers cited heavy workload and administrative duties as barriers to autonomy and professional development.	Both strands identify time and workload as universal constraints.
External motivation	Decline in promotion-related motivation with more experience.	Teachers perceived limited career mobility and systemic stagnation.	Reduced extrinsic incentives may reinforce intrinsic but limit sustained engagement.

The quantitative data indicated that teachers generally demonstrate strong internal motivation and professional capability, while reporting lower levels of external motivation and time management. These results suggest a teaching workforce that is intrinsically driven and self-reliant but hindered by systemic and temporal constraints. At the same time, the qualitative findings revealed that autonomy is understood by teachers not merely as individual independence but as a contextually negotiated and relational phenomenon, one shaped by institutional culture, workload, leadership practices, and access to professional resources.

Through retroductive reasoning, these strands converge around a central theoretical insight. Professional autonomy among in-service teachers is a dynamic equilibrium between personal agency and structural constraint. Teachers’ narratives illustrate that while they take personal responsibility for their development and exhibit strong intrinsic motivation, their autonomy is continuously

moderated by organizational and systemic factors such as rigid curricula, hierarchical leadership, and limited recognition of teacher expertise.

The integration of findings also points to an experience-based differentiation in the autonomy process. Mid-career teachers (6–15 years) emerge as the most autonomous and self-confident group, balancing institutional expectations with individual initiative. In contrast, novice teachers (0–5 years) and veteran teachers (20+ years) experience reduced autonomy for different reasons, the former due to dependency and lack of confidence, the latter due to fatigue, disillusionment, or structural stagnation. This pattern supports a developmental interpretation of professional autonomy, where teachers' agency evolves but remains contingent upon institutional affordances and professional recognition.

Furthermore, the synthesis underscores the multidimensional nature of TPA as conceptualized earlier. Quantitative correlations among these dimensions, reinforced by qualitative accounts, indicate that internal motivation and professional capability function as core enablers, while time constraints and lack of institutional support act as systemic inhibitors. This interplay suggests that TPA is not a static trait but an emergent property arising from the interaction between teacher self-determination and institutional ecology.

In retroductive terms, the underlying generative mechanism revealed by the integrated data can be articulated as “conditional professional autonomy”, a state in which teachers' intrinsic motivation sustains professional growth despite limited structural empowerment. This mechanism operates through teachers' adaptive strategies, such as self-initiated learning, peer collaboration, and informal resource-sharing, that compensate for institutional deficiencies. The persistence of these adaptive behaviors points to a resilient professional culture where teachers internalize responsibility for their own learning even in the absence of systemic facilitation.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to explore in-service English teachers' perceptions of professional autonomy and to examine how these perceptions vary across experience levels within the Turkish EFL context. Using Proudfoot's (2022) hybrid inductive–deductive approach, the study generated a retroductive explanation of how professional autonomy is both experienced and constrained within institutional systems. The integrated findings revealed that teachers' autonomy is characterized by strong internal motivation and professional capability, yet limited by systemic workload, time constraints, and hierarchical control. To strengthen the alignment with the study's aims, the following discussion explicitly addresses each research question in turn, linking interpretive claims directly to the corresponding quantitative and qualitative findings.

The findings confirm that teachers' professional autonomy is multifaceted, encompassing internal, interpersonal, and contextual dimensions (Okay & Balçıkanlı, 2021). The high scores for internal motivation and capability suggest that teachers perceive themselves as competent and self-directed professionals who take ownership of their learning. In relation to first research question, these results clearly demonstrate that teachers perceive themselves as highly capable and intrinsically motivated, a conclusion supported by the consistently high quantitative scores in internal motivation, capability, and collaboration (Tables 1–5). These results align with previous research emphasizing that autonomy is grounded in intrinsic motivation and reflective professional growth (Benson, 2011; Okay, 2018). Teachers' preference for self-initiated professional learning over externally imposed activities mirrors the concept of self-regulated autonomy, where professional learning is sustained by internalized values rather than administrative requirements (Derakhshan et al., 2020). This interpretation is grounded in both the statistical findings and the qualitative narratives, which repeatedly highlighted teachers' self-directed engagement and internal sources of professional drive. However, despite their intrinsic motivation, teachers reported limited time and institutional support

for professional development, resulting in lower mean scores in the time management subdimension. This finding corroborates earlier studies (Dilekçi, 2022; Yıldırım, 2017) showing that centralized educational structures and heavy teaching loads restrict teachers' capacity for continuous development. In this sense, teachers' autonomy is not diminished by a lack of will, but by the structural conditions that impede its full expression.

A notable contribution of this study is the evidence that perceptions of TPA vary according to years of teaching experience, following a curvilinear trajectory. Addressing second research question, the analysis indicates that autonomy is strongest during mid-career stages (6–15 years) and declines for novice and veteran teachers, a pattern directly reflected in the quantitative results (Tables 6–10) and supported by qualitative accounts. This developmental pattern suggests that autonomy evolves through experience, but may also plateau or decline when professional recognition and growth opportunities are limited. The lower scores among early-career teachers reflect dependence on institutional norms and reduced confidence in pedagogical decision-making, a phenomenon widely reported in studies on teacher identity formation (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014; Chaaban & Du, 2017). Conversely, veteran teachers' reduced autonomy appears linked to institutional fatigue, where long-term exposure to rigid systems diminishes motivation for self-directed learning (Derakhshan et al., 2020; Warren, 2018). For veteran teachers, lower levels of perceived autonomy appeared might be tied to symptoms of professional fatigue within highly centralized and workload-intensive institutional structures. Their reduced motivation and capability may be shaped not only by intrinsic factors but also by external pressures including rigid curricula, limited career advancement opportunities, and insufficient systemic support. These combined influences suggest that burnout among experienced teachers is driven by an interaction of internal decline in professional stimulation. Overall, within Proudfoot's (2022) theory-generative lens, this pattern can be interpreted as evidence that autonomy is not a static competence but an emergent and contingent property influenced by the interplay between teachers' intrinsic motivation and the affordances of their professional environment.

The qualitative findings underscored the importance of institutional leadership and collegial culture as mediating conditions that either enable or inhibit teacher autonomy. Teachers working in supportive environments expressed higher professional confidence and satisfaction. This observation aligns with Hughes and Lewis (2020) and Pineda and Frodden (2008), who emphasized that participatory leadership fosters teacher agency and professional learning communities. Conversely, participants described that excessive administrative control and prescriptive curricular demands limited their decision-making power, creating an environment of compliance rather than empowerment. In addressing third research question, these qualitative insights illuminate the specific institutional, motivational, and contextual factors shaping teachers' autonomy and explain why structural conditions frequently override teachers' individual capacity and willingness to act autonomously. The accounts echo previous findings that external regulation undermines teacher motivation and narrows professional judgment (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2010; Dilekçi, 2022). In this study, autonomy is therefore shown to be relational: it thrives where institutional structures allow teachers to engage in shared leadership and declines where decision-making remains centralized.

Another key insight emerging from the integration of findings is the strong link between TPA, professional identity, and intrinsic motivation. Teachers frequently described autonomy as the freedom to make pedagogical choices and as a moral responsibility to improve learning outcomes. This aligns with the ecological perspective of teacher agency (Priestley et al., 2015), which conceptualizes autonomy as the intersection of teachers' personal capacity, structural conditions, and social context. Teachers' emphasis on intrinsic satisfaction, such as the joy of student learning, resonates with Mansfield et al. (2016), who argue that autonomy contributes to teacher resilience and sustained engagement. In-service teachers in this study viewed professional learning not as an institutional obligation but as an extension of their identity as educators. Such self-determined motivation

represents the *inner logic of autonomy*, a mechanism through which teachers construct meaning and maintain agency even in constraining environments (Benson, 2011).

Through Proudfoot's (2022) retroductive process, the integrated data suggest that in-service English teachers' professional autonomy in Türkiye can best be described as conditional professional autonomy. It is possible to suggest that this form of professional autonomy is characterized by three interdependent mechanisms:

1. Intrinsic motivation as the primary driver of professional learning.
2. Institutional mediation, where leadership and collegial culture either amplify or suppress teachers' agency.
3. Structural constraint, wherein centralized policies and workload pressures delimit the practical exercise of autonomy.

Conditional professional autonomy thus represents a negotiated balance between teachers' self-determination and the institutional conditions under which they operate. This conceptualization extends previous models of teacher autonomy (Okay & Balçıklı, 2021; Yıldırım, 2017) by foregrounding the adaptive strategies teachers employ to reconcile professional ideals with systemic realities.

CONCLUSION

This study provides an empirically grounded and theoretically generative understanding of English teachers' professional autonomy within the Turkish EFL context. Using Proudfoot's (2022) hybrid inductive–deductive approach, the study identified conditional professional autonomy as the core mechanism explaining how teachers sustain agency despite institutional and systemic constraints. The findings suggest that autonomy among in-service teachers is a relational and adaptive construct, shaped by intrinsic motivation, professional capability, and the surrounding institutional ecology. Teachers demonstrate strong self-determination and commitment to professional learning, yet their ability to act autonomously is limited by workload pressures, centralized curricular mandates, and uneven leadership practices.

From a practical standpoint, the study underscores the importance of context-sensitive professional development that empowers teachers to make pedagogical and developmental decisions based on their expertise. School leaders and policymakers should support shared decision-making, collegial collaboration, and distributed professionalism to strengthen teachers' sense of agency. Creating institutional cultures that value teachers' voices and professional judgment will be crucial to translating individual motivation into sustainable educational improvement. The findings suggest that enhancing teacher autonomy in Türkiye requires systemic and institutional reforms that recognize teachers as knowledgeable professionals rather than passive implementers of policy. Providing context-sensitive professional development, reducing administrative burdens, and promoting collaborative school cultures could enable teachers to exercise greater agency over their learning and practice. Leadership training for school administrators should also emphasize shared decision-making and distributed professionalism.

From a theoretical standpoint, the study contributes to the literature by demonstrating how Proudfoot's (2022) hybrid method can yield generative explanations that connect micro-level teacher experiences with macro-level educational structures. By identifying *conditional professional autonomy* as the underlying mechanism, the study advances understanding of how autonomy is enacted, negotiated, and sustained across different stages of teachers' professional lives.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size, while adequate for mixed-method interpretation, was limited. As such, the results may not fully capture the diversity of experiences among teachers. Second, while the qualitative

interviews provided valuable contextual insights, their relatively small number limited the breadth of perspectives that could be explored. Future research should employ longitudinal or comparative designs to examine how teachers' professional autonomy evolves over time and across institutional settings. Including additional variables, such as school leadership style, policy changes, or institutional culture, would also enrich understanding of the systemic mechanisms influencing teacher agency. Expanding the scope beyond English teachers to other disciplines could help validate and extend the concept of conditional professional autonomy in broader educational contexts.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

First author have made substantial contributions to acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data, and drafting the manuscript.

Second author have made substantial contributions to conceptual design and revising the manuscript for important intellectual content.

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Partner Abuse Scale for Woman: Turkish Adaptation and Exploration of the Relationship with Relationship Satisfaction and Depression *

Hatice Deniz Özdemir, Ph.D., İstanbul Esenyurt University, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Türkiye, deniz.dozdemir@gmail.com  0000-0003-3468-2065

Mehmet Engin Deniz, Prof. Dr., Yıldız Technical University, Guidance and Psychological Counseling, Türkiye, edeniz@yildiz.edu.tr  0000-0003-0455-7458

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to adapt the Composite Abuse Scale (CAS), a multidimensional instrument measuring partner violence, into Turkish and to examine its validity and reliability. The research employed a relational survey design and followed standard procedures for scale adaptation. A purposive sampling method, one of the non-probability sampling techniques, was used. Data were collected from three separate sample consisting of female students enrolled at Trakya University. In the criterion-related validity analyses, a significant negative correlation was found between the partner abuse and relationship satisfaction ($r = -.70$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher levels of partner violence were associated with lower relationship satisfaction. In addition, a significant positive correlation emerged between the partner abuse and depression levels ($r = .58$, $p < .001$), suggesting that higher levels of violence were linked to increased depression. The internal consistency of the scale was high, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .91. Confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated that the scale exhibited acceptable model fit indices. Overall, the findings indicate that as experiences of partner violence increase, individuals' relationship satisfaction decreases, while their depression levels rise. The results support the Turkish form of the Scale a valid and reliable instrument for assessing partner violence.

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INTRODUCTION

There is no definition of violence that is acceptable to all people. At the same time, the behaviours considered as violence vary over time. In parallel with sociological and technological changes, the factors included in this concept are constantly evolving. Generally, violence can be defined as a set of intentional attitudes and behaviours that cause psychological and physical harm to an individual and lead to personal destruction (Özcan, 2009). According to the World Health Organisation, violence is the intentional use of physical force against oneself, another person, a group, or a community, either actually or threatened, which results or is likely to result in death, injury, psychological harm, poor development, or deprivation (WHO, 2024). The Turkish Language Association defines violence as “the degree of a movement, a force, intensity, hardness, speed, the use of brute force against those with opposing views; brute force, excessiveness of emotion or behaviour” (TDK, 2024).

Despite different definitions violence, often involves the use of physical force in ways not accepted by law, threats, behaviours against morality, coercion, and destruction of property (Özerkmen, 2012). Violence manifests differently across times and societies, and can vary from person to person. Factors such as family structure, personal experiences, societal norms, and cultural environment influence an individual's tendency toward violent behaviour (Adak, 2012). Among the segments of society exposed to violence, intimate relationships-partners, spouses, or lovers-represent a particularly important context. Violent behaviours or threats within romantic relationships are defined as abuse (Kılınçer & Dost, 2013).

It has been reported that approximately 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime, with the majority being partner violence (WHO, 2024). Violence against women is any behaviour based on gender that harms women or has the potential to cause mental, physical, or sexual damage. It also includes actions that arbitrarily restrict their freedom or impose pressure in private and social life (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005; Subaşı & Akın, 2003). Such violence is usually perpetrated by individuals close to the victim, such as siblings, fathers, brothers, husbands, or partners, and may target one or more aspects of women's psychological, physical, sexual, or economic integrity (Güven, 2010).

To further understand the dynamics of violence, it is essential to examine intimate partner relationships, as these often constitute the primary context in which women experience multiple forms of abuse. In such relationships, violence refers to a range of behaviours by the partner, including physical and sexual aggression, psychological pressure, and controlling actions. This form of violence is widely recognised as a serious medical and social issue (Dillon et al., 2013; Hamberger et al., 2004).

Violence against women rooted in gender roles can be perpetrated not only by men in a woman's immediate environment, such as her partner or husband, but also by men she may or may not know, as well as by other women within the family or broader social environment (Jansen et al., 2009). In patriarchal societies—where men are regarded as superior and gender roles are strictly defined—women are exposed to higher levels of violence (Page & İnce, 2008). When women resist behaviours or attitudes that conflict with their identities, men may perceive this resistance as a threat to their dominance, which can lead to acts of violence (Özmen, 2004).

Different forms of partner violence can be categorised as physical, sexual, and emotional. Physical violence includes any attack against the body, such as pushing, slapping, punching, kicking, shaking, beating, tying, pulling hair, biting, choking, scratching, throwing objects, using firearms or cutting instruments, forcing unhealthy living conditions, torturing, preventing access to health services, and killing (Adak, 2012; Foshee et al., 2007). Sexual violence involves using sexuality as a means of intimidation, threat, control, or forcing an individual into non-consensual sexual acts. It also includes forcing abortion or birth control (Miller et al., 2007; Rickert et al., 2004). Sexual violence, often

rooted in traditional gender roles, is mostly hidden due to societal taboos, making it difficult to detect. Victims often struggle to disclose such abuse (Adak, 2012).

Emotional violence is a type of violence that targets mental health rather than physical healthy. Mostly, behaviors that have a continuity rather than one-time actions are defined as psychological violence (Uluocak et al., 2014). While the effects of emotional violence are generally underestimated because they are not observable, they can cause severe wounds in the individual's world (Vahip & Doğanavşargil, 2006). Emotional violence is the behaviours that do not involve physical violence, such as scolding, humiliating, humiliating the person emotionally and psychologically (Offenhauer & Buchalter, 2011). Although emotional violence is included in all types of abuse, it is sometimes not accepted as emotional abuse depending on the social and cultural environment in which the person lives. Sometimes, although there is an element of emotional violence in the established communication, the person does not perceive this element as emotional violence and the concept of emotional violence can be normalised (Erşanlı et al., 2013).

Building on these forms of violence, partner violence encompasses multiple dimensions. Couples may perpetrate emotional, verbal, physical, and sexual violence against each other, as well as impose social restrictions (Aslan et al., 2008). When analysing partner violence, the physical, emotional, and sexual dimensions are especially prominent (Kılınçer & Dost, 2013; Kılınçer & Dost, 2014). But It is also possible to come across behavioral motives related to other types of violence while mentioning about one type of violence (Damka, 2009). Cases of violence against women within families are often treated as private and concealed from authorities, making it difficult to determine prevalence. Violence in intimate relationships is unacceptable under any circumstances. Measuring attitudes toward violence is therefore crucial. While existing violence attitude scales have been developed in various languages (Adıbelli, Saçan, & Türkoğlu, 2018; Çetin, 2011; Fernández-González et al., 2017; Yumuşak, 2013; Yumuşak & Şahin, 2014), Despite this multidimensional structure of violence, it seems that the existing measurement tools are insufficient to capture all dimensions. This highlights the need to adapt a domain-specific scale that can fully measure all dimensions of violence. The current study was conducted to address this need.

The aim of our study is to adapt the Partner Abuse Scale (PAS), which will determine the partner violence of women exposed to violence in their partner relationships, into Turkish and to conduct a validity and reliability study. According to this purpose, our hypotheses are:

1. Partner Abuse Scale is a valid instrument.
2. Partner Abuse Scale is a reliable instrument.
3. There is a significant positive relationship between partner violence and depression.
4. There is a significant negative relationship between partner violence and relationship satisfaction.

METHOD

In this section of the study, the research design, ethical permission, data collection process, data collection tools and data analysis of the study are presented.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to adapt the Composite Abuse Scale (CAS) into Turkish and to conduct validity and reliability studies, the necessary permissions were obtained firstly from Hegarty, then from Trakya University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Decision 12.09.2018/2018.08.06) and Trakya University Rectorate. For the validity and reliability study of the Partner Abuse Scale (PAS), the original form of the scale was translated into Turkish by five academicians. In the next stage, it was examined by three academicians who are experts in the field and turned into a single form. This form was first analysed in terms of language equivalence, and then test-retest, construct and criterion-

related studies were conducted. The data obtained throughout the research were then transferred to the relevant package programmes. In the analysis of the data, firstly descriptive statistics were used. The conformity of the variables to normal distribution was evaluated by Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk test, skewness and kurtosis coefficients. While Spearman Rho was used to evaluate the relationship between variables, Wilcoxon t test was used for language equivalence and test-retest evaluation, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to evaluate construct validity. In addition, the reliability analyses of the scales were examined with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. SPSS 22.00 and LISREL 8.80 were used in the study.

WORKING GROUPS

The data of the validity and reliability study were collected from woman students studying at Trakya University. The purpose of the study was explained to the students and their participation was ensured by adhering to the principle of voluntary participation. The study group was selected by purposive sampling method from 12 faculties, four colleges, six vocational schools, social, health and science institutes located in Edirne Centre of Trakya University.

A linguistic equivalence study was conducted to measure the equivalence of the original test items and the items translated into Turkish and to determine the extent to which the scale items reflected their meanings. First, the English form and then the Turkish form of the scale were administered to 90 graduate students and research assistants at Trakya University Faculty of Medicine, fluent in both languages, two weeks apart. Pre-test and post-test data were collected from a total of 86 individuals. Five individuals were excluded from the study data due to incomplete information, and the data of 81 individuals were evaluated.

The test-retest reliability study of the second group scale was administered to first- and second-year female students studying in various departments at Trakya University Vocational School of Health Services at a 15-day interval. In the test-retest reliability study, data were collected from 100 individuals in the first administration, and 85 of these individuals were contacted in the second administration. In the criterion-related validity and construct validity study, data were collected from 350 female students at Trakya University who were married or in a partner relationship in the last 12 months. Because of 5 data are missing and Z score of 16 data are lower or high than 3.70, 21 data are excluded from the evaluation, In total criterion-related validity and construct validity studies were conducted with the data collected from 329 female students.

THE DATA COLLECTION TOOLS USED IN THE STUDY

Composite Abuse Scale (CAS): It is a comprehensive, reliable and valid, short, self-report scale that analyses violence in four sub-factors: physical, sexual, psychological and harassment. CAS was created by Hegarty et al. (1999) and revised by Hegarty et al. (2005). It was then re-developed by Loxton et al. in 2013 (Hegarty et al., 1999; Hegarty et al., 2005; Loxton et al., 2013). The scale consists of 30 items in total and $\alpha=.85$. When the sub-dimensions are analysed, it has been found that serious violence $\alpha=.91$, and emotional violence $\alpha=.93$, physical violence $\alpha=.94$ and harassment sub-dimension $\alpha=.87$ (Hegarty et al., 2005). The scale consists of 30 items according to its sub-dimensions such as Serious violence consists of 8 items (2,4,7,15,18,22,25,26), emotional violence 11 items (1,5,8,9,12,19,20,21,24,28,29), physical violence 7 items (6,10,14,17,23,27,30) and harassment 4 items (3,11,13,16) (Hegarty et al., 2005). The total score of the CAS ranges from 0 to 150. The test developers and adaptors recommend using the total scale score rather than the subscale scores (Ford-Gilboe et al., 2016; Hegarty et al., 1999; Hegarty et al., 2005; Loxton et al., 2013).

Beck Depression Inventory (BDI): It was developed by Beck to determine the depression levels of individuals (Beck et al., 1961). It is a unidimensional scale consisting of 21 items with scoring ranging from 0-3. Its adaptation into Turkish, validity and reliability study was conducted by Hisli (Hisli, 1988;

Hisli, 1989; Ulusoy et al., 1998). In the study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this scale was found to be .92.

Relationship Satisfaction Scale (RSS): It was developed by Hendrick in 1988 to measure the level of relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships (Hendrick, 1988). The scale, whose 4th and 7th items are reverse scored, is a 7-item, 1-factor, 7-point Likert-type self-report scale. In 2001, Curun conducted the Turkish adaptation of the RSS. He found the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale as .86 in the factor analysis (Curun, 2001). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was found to be .93.

FINDINGS

A linguistic equivalence study was conducted to measure the equivalence of the original test items and the items translated into Turkish and to determine the extent to which the scale items reflected their intended meanings. First, the English form and then the Turkish form of the scale were administered to 90 graduate students and research assistants at Trakya University Faculty of Medicine, fluent in both languages, two weeks apart. Pre-test and Post-test data were collected from a total of 86 individuals. Five individuals were excluded from the study data due to incomplete information, and the data of 81 individuals were evaluated. The data were examined for normal distribution using skewness and kurtosis coefficients, and the Shapiro-Wilk test revealed that the quantitative data were not normally distributed. Therefore, Spearman's Rho correlation analysis and the Wilcoxon t test were used as nonparametric tests. Statistical findings of Spearman's Rho Correlation and Wilcoxon Paired T Test for CAS and PAS are given in Table 2.

Table 1. *Spearman's Rho Correlation and Wilcoxon Paired T Test Results for CAS and PAS*

		Item	Items	r	p	z	p
Serious	English	8	2, 4, 7, 15, 18, 22, 25, 26	.88	.001	.535	.593
	Turkish						
Emotional	English	11	1, 5, 8, 9, 12, 19, 20,	.93	.001	1.908	.560
	Turkish		21, 24, 28, 29				
Physical	English	7	6, 10, 14, 17, 23, 27, 30	.88	.001	.141	.888
	Turkish						
Abuse	English	4	3, 11, 13, 16	.92	.001	.420	.675
	Turkish						
Cas-Pas Total	English	30	1-30	.93	.001	.738	.461
	Turkish						

When Table 1 is examined; the relationship between the English and Turkish applications for the linguistic equivalence of the scale was analysed by Spearman's Rho correlation and Wilcoxon Paired t test. It was observed that the relationship between the items in the Turkish and English forms ranged between ($r=.88-.93$, $p<.001$). At the same time, the t-test showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the total scores ($z= -.738$, $p>.05$). As a result, it can be said that there is a high level of positive relationship between the English form and the Turkish form and there is no significant difference. In all sub-dimensions of CAS and PAS (serious, emotional, physical, harassment), a very high level of significant correlation was found between English and Turkish applications ($r=.88-.93$, $p<.001$). There was also a very high correlation between CAS and PAS total severity scale scores ($r=.93$, $p<.001$). In the light of all the findings, we can say that the linguistic equivalence of the scale was fully achieved, that is, the Turkish scale fully represents the original English form.

The test-retest reliability study was conducted with first- and second-year female students from various departments of Trakya University Vocational School of Health Services, with a 15-day interval between administrations. Data were collected from 85 participants, with a mean age of 20.52 ± 2.20

years. The normality of the data from both administrations was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test, along with skewness and kurtosis coefficients. As the data did not meet the assumptions of normality, Spearman's Rho correlation analysis and the Wilcoxon signed-rank test were employed. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Test-Retest Reliability of the Partner Abuse Scale: Spearman's Rho Correlation and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results*

		<i>N</i>	\bar{X}	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean (Min-Max)</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
PAS	1. App	85	5.57	11.034	1.00 (0.00-58.00)	.945	0.001	-1.236	0.216
	2.App		5.15	9.933	1.00 (0.00-59.00)				

In reliability studies conducted with test-retest method, it is expected that there is a significant relationship between the two applications of the measurement tool according to the result of Spearman's Rho correlation analysis and that there is no significant difference between the two applications as a result of Wilcoxon t test (Hergüner, 2010). When Table 5 is analysed, it is seen that there is a very high correlation between the total scores of PAS ($r = .95$, $p < .001$) and there is no statistically significant difference between the two measurements ($z = -1.236$, $p > .05$).

Criterion-related validity study is conducted to examine the relationship between the scores obtained from a scale and one or more criterion (Hergüner, 2010). Criterion-related validity and construct validity studies were conducted with data collected from 329 female students. Since the data evaluated for the Criterion-related validity study did not meet the normality assumptions, non-parametric analyses were used. The Descriptive statistical findings and Internal Consistency Coefficients of PAS, Relationship Satisfaction Scale and Beck Depression Inventory are given in Table 3

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency Coefficients for the Partner Abuse Scale, Depression, and Relationship Satisfaction Scale*

	<i>N</i>	α	<i>Mean±SD</i>
PAS Total	329	.944	14.22±19.50
Depression	329	.919	15.25±11.26
Relationship Satisfaction	329	.932	30.86±12.01
Serious	329	.749	1.71±3.61
Emotional	329	.896	7.22±9.78
Physical	329	.943	3.24±5.89
Abuse	329	.845	2.06±3.65

The means and standard deviations of the scales used in the criterion-related validity study of the PAS ranged from 1.71 ± 3.61 to 30.86 ± 12.01 . Reliability analysis indicated that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the scales ranged between .84 and .94, demonstrating that the data obtained from the scales are reliable. Subsequently, the criterion-related validity of the scale was examined. Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients were computed between the Partner Abuse Scale (PAS), its subscale scores, and the criterion variables (Depression and Relationship Satisfaction). The results are presented in Table 4.

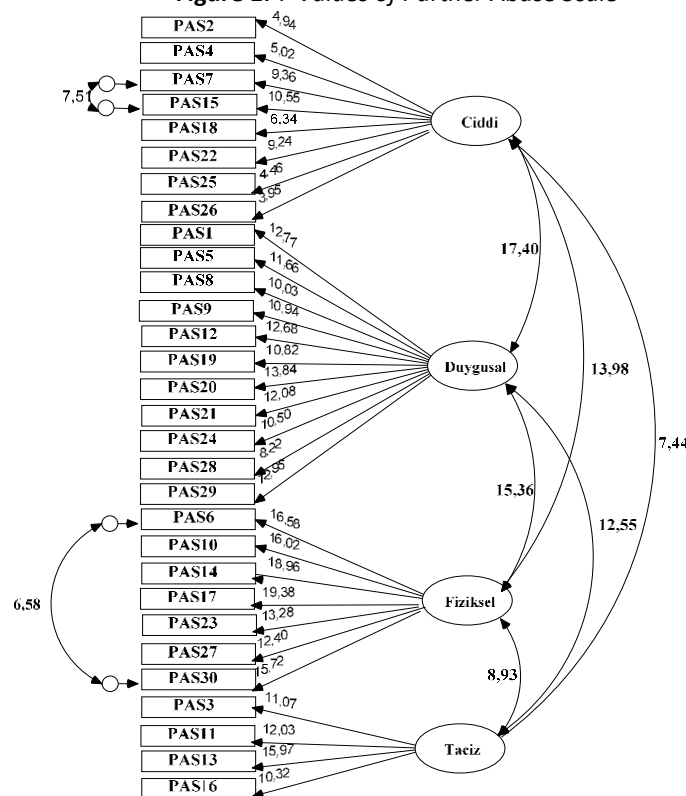
Table 4. *Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficients Between the Partner Abuse Scale, Its Subscales, Depression, and Relationship Satisfaction*

		<i>PAS</i>	<i>Serious</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Physical</i>	<i>Abuse</i>
Depression	<i>r</i>	.58	.38	.55	.42	.35
	<i>P</i>	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
Relationship Satisfaction	<i>r</i>	-.70	-.44	-.65	-.51	-.45
	<i>P</i>	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

In Table 4, the relationship between the total scores of PAS and relationship satisfaction and depression scores was analysed by Spearman's Rho correlation analysis. While The relationship between PAS total score and relationship satisfaction was found to be ($r = -.70, p < .001$), the relationship between depression level score was found to be ($r = .58, p < .001$). In addition, the relationship between the sub-dimensions of PAS and relationship satisfaction and depression was analysed. While the relationship between the serious violence sub-dimension of PAS and depression was found to be ($r = .38, p < .001$), the relationship between relationship satisfaction was found to be ($r = -.44, p < .001$). The relationship between the physical violence sub-dimension of PAS and depression is ($r = .42, p < .001$) and the relationship between relationship satisfaction is ($r = -.51, p < .001$). At the same time, the relationship between the emotional violence sub-dimension of PAS and depression was found to be ($r = .55, p < .001$) and the relationship between relationship satisfaction was found to be ($r = -.65, p < .001$). In addition, the relationship between the harassment sub-dimension of PAS and depression was found to be ($r = .35, p < .001$), while relationship satisfaction was found to be ($r = -.45, p < .001$). After the criterion-related validity study of the scale, CFA was conducted.

In this study, the data were evaluated directly through CFA without exploratory factor analysis. In the evaluation of the construct validity of the PAS, the sample size for CFA was In this study, the data were evaluated directly through CFA without exploratory factor analysis. In the evaluation of the construct validity of the PAS, the sample size for CFA was evaluated by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO). It was found that the sample size was sufficient (KMO=.85). The suitability of the sample was analysed by Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Chi-Square: 4365.29, $p < .001$) and it was found that this test result was significant and the sample was suitable for CFA. There is a 4-factor structure in the original scale of PAS and accordingly, CFA was conducted according to the 4-factor structure without exploratory factor analysis. The CFA t-values are given in Figure-1.

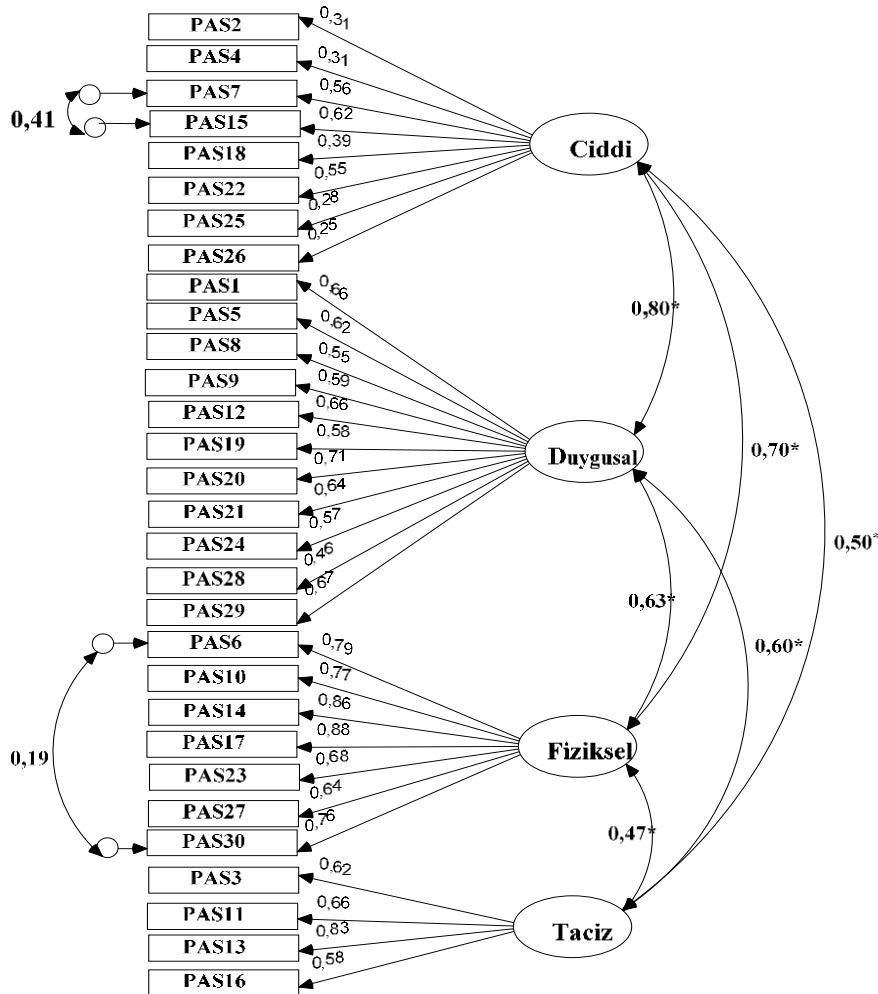
Figure 1. T-Values of Partner Abuse Scale



Chi-Square=1195.14, df=397, RMSEA= .080

An examination of Figure 1 reveals that *t* values ranged from 3.95 to 19.38. Two modifications were made to improve model fit in the CFA of the PAS, between PAS 6 and PAS 30 and between PAS 7 and PAS 15. When CFA is performed, the RMSEA value is expected to be less than 0.05, and statistically significant parameters on the diagram are expected to be greater than 1.96, meaning that the *t*-values are significant (Çelik and Yılmaz, 2016). In our study, the *t* value was found to be significant for all PAS items ($p < .05$). The RMSEA value was greater than .050, but the acceptable fit value was .080. The standardized path coefficients of the scale are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Standardized Solution Values of Partner Abuse Scale



Chi-Square=1195.14, df=397, RMSEA= .080

When the standardised path coefficients of PAS are examined in Figure 2, it is seen that they vary between .25 and .88. In the study, the goodness of fit values of the scale were analysed using χ^2/df , SRMR, RMSEA, RMR, NFI, NNFI, CFI, IFI, GFI and CFA. The goodness of fit values of the scale are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Goodness of Fit Values for Partner Abuse Scale

χ^2	<i>df</i>	χ^2/df	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	NFI	NNFI	IFI	GFI	RMR
1195.14	397	3.010	.080	.071	.94	.91	.93	.94	.80	.05

The CFA goodness of fit values of the PAS are $\chi^2=1195.14$, $df=397$, $p<0.001$, $RMSEA=.080$, $NFI=.91$, $NNFI=.93$, $CFI=.94$, $IFI=.94$, $GFI=.80$, $RMR=.05$, $SRMR=.071$. When the goodness of fit values in CFA for PAS in Table 5 are examined, it is seen that most of them have acceptable fit level (Çokluk et al., 2021; Şimşek, 2007). As a result of the validity study of the scale, it was found that PAS is a scale with a high validity level that can measure partner violence.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this study, Cronbach's alpha analysis was conducted to determine the internal consistency reliability of the adapted scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient reveals the similarity of items within a measurement tool while measuring a specific conceptual quality (Kalaycı, 2009; Şencan, 2005; Şenocak, 2009). In this study, the Cronbach's α coefficient values for the PAS were found to be consistent with those for its original form, the CAS (Hegarty et al., 2005). Similarly, in similar studies conducted in our country, the Cronbach's α coefficient for sexual violence was found to be .52 (Kaya & Bilgin, 2012). In this study, it was observed that only the Cronbach's α coefficient for the serious violence sub-dimension was lower than the Cronbach's α coefficient value for the serious violence sub-dimension in the original form. This may be due to women in Turkish society hiding this type of violence or to sample differences. The sample difference between the studies can be explained by the fact that the sample in this study was not a clinical sample and did not consist of women who presented to judicial authorities or the emergency room. When the Cronbach's α coefficients of the sub-dimensions of the scale were examined, the Serious Abuse subscale was found to have acceptable but relatively lower reliability, the Abuse subscale showed good reliability, and the Emotional and Physical Abuse subscales, as well as the total scale, demonstrated high reliability (İslamoğlu & Alniaçık, 2016; Özdamar, 2004). These results indicate that the internal consistency of the PAS is comparable to that of the original CAS scale.

In a scale adaptation study, a high correlation is expected between the scores of the original form and the adapted form administered to the same individual. Spearman's Rho Correlation and Wilcoxon Paired T-tests were used in the language equivalence study. A high positive and significant correlation was observed between the English and Turkish forms, and there was no significant difference between the scores of the English and Turkish forms. It was concluded that these two scales were perceived similarly by the respondents. A test-retest study conducted 15 days apart to examine the scale's score invariance revealed a very high, statistically significant positive correlation between the scores of both administrations, while the Wilcoxon T-test found no statistically significant difference between the scores. Statistical evaluations demonstrated that the PAS is a reliable measurement tool. Our hypothesis that the Partner Abuse Scale is a reliable scale has been confirmed.

Validity studies determine the extent to which a measurement tool accurately and completely measures the characteristic it is expected to measure (Ercan & Kan, 2004; Seçer, 2015; Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2011). Criterion-related validity contributes to both validity and reliability. It is a technique that examines the relationship between test scores and one or more external criteria (Hergüner, 2010). The criterion-related validity study of the scale examined the relationships among partner violence, relationship satisfaction, and depression. In our study, consistent with the literature (Kılınçer & Dost, 2013), a moderate negative relationship was found between violence and relationship satisfaction, and a moderate positive relationship was found between violence and depression. This finding is consistent with the literature (Brown et al., 2016; Cleveland et al., 2003; Cutter-Wilson & Richmond, 2011; Denhof & Spinaris, 2014; Devries et al., 2013; Exner-Cortens et al., 2013; Flannery et al., 2004; Gilchrist et al., 2010). Accordingly, a significant and positive relationship was found between partner violence and depression, while a significant and negative relationship was found between partner

violence and relationship satisfaction. As the level of violence increases, individuals' relationship satisfaction decreases and their depression levels increase. The findings indicate that the scale meets criterion-related validity (Seçer, 2015; Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2011). The third and fourth hypotheses of the study were confirmed.

In the CFA analysis of the PAS, factor loadings ranged from .88 to .25. These factor loadings were found to be significantly different from the original form (Hegarty et al., 2005). Despite the low factor loadings and R2 values, no item was removed from the scale because the T values were statistically significant. These results were associated with dominant views and myths in Turkish culture (Breaking an arm and keeping it in a sleeve, vomiting blood and drinking cranberry sherbet, isn't it a husband? He beats and curses, what happens in the family stays in the family, there is privacy in this matter, etc.). We also believe this is due to sample differences between the studies. Furthermore, because our sample did not consist of clinical samples presenting to judicial authorities or emergency services, we can interpret this as indicating low factor loadings. Hypothesis 2, which states that the Partner Abuse Scale adapted to Turkish is a valid scale, was confirmed.

When the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results for the PAS were examined, it was observed that the goodness-of-fit values (χ^2/df , NFI, NNFI, CFI, IFI, RMR, SRMR, and RMSEA), with the exception of the GFI, were within the limits accepted in the literature (Çokluk et al., 2021; Şimşek, 2007; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2016). Based on these findings, it was concluded that the PAS reliably measured the intended construct and that its factor structure was valid.

The findings of the validity and reliability study conducted on the scale indicate that the PAS is a valid and reliable measurement tool that can be used in various studies. Therefore, it was concluded that the PAS is a valid and reliable scale that can be used in the Turkish population. Furthermore, the literature indicates that the researchers who developed and adapted the scale recommended using the total scale score rather than the subscale scores (Ford-Gilboe et al., 2016; Hegarty et al., 1999; Hegarty et al., 2005; Loxton et al., 2013).

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This study, like many other studies, has some limitations. The fact that the sample consisted only of Trakya University students and that the age groups of the women included in the study were not equal are among the important limitations of the study. In addition, during the period when the study was conducted, the fact that partner violence was a crime punishable by imprisonment was given in public service announcements affected the participation of women who were subjected to violence in the study. This situation constituted the biggest limitation of our study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the validity and reliability study of the scale be conducted on other sample groups, paying attention to the age range. It is also recommended that a safe environment be provided in which women will not be afraid or hesitant to express the violence they experience. In addition, considering that it is quite unrealistic to say that partner violence is a type of violence that only women are exposed to, it is recommended that scales be developed or adapted to measure the type and level of violence that men are also subjected to.

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Influence of Family Violence on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

Grace Igaba Onongha, Dr., Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria,
grace.onongha@uniosun.edu.ng  0009-0001-7784-7707

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Abstract

This study investigated influence of family violence on the academic performance of secondary school students in Etung-Obubura constituency, Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey design of the ex-post facto approach. Four towns were selected from the constituency using simple random technique. Ten secondary schools (5 in Etung and 5 in Obubura) were randomly selected with family violence as stratum. Approximately Twenty-six to Twenty-seven students (earlier identified in a previous visit) were randomly selected. In all three hundred (300) students constituted the study sample. Two research instruments (Family Violence Questionnaire (FVQ)) and students' first term examination scores in English and Mathematics) provided data for the study. Results demonstrated a significant difference in the academic performance of students from violent and non-violent families respectively for English Language and Mathematics with a p-value of less than .05); male and female students (t-value of 5.69 and 4.46 with a p-value of less than 0.05 respectively); and students exposed to high and low intensity of violence (t-value of 5.03 and 5.12 respectively with a p-value of less than .05). The study recommended the need for cohesion among parents and entirely members of the family.

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INTRODUCTION

Attaining success in academic pursuit is the bed rock in a child's education programme. It is one of the best contributory factors to the future experience of a child. Tadese et al. (2022) and Arora (2016) defined academic performance as the extent of some academic work attainment. It represents the performance outcome that reveals the level to which an individual has accomplished specific goals that formed the main focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in schools, colleges and universities (Ormroid, 2011). In furtherance, Ormroid, stressed that the definition of academic performance, is however relative to its measuring indicator such as, continuous assessments, tests and examinations. However, there is no universal consensus on how best it is tested or the more important aspects, procedural knowledge like skills or declarative knowledge like facts. According to Giami and Alete-Omoni (2023), academic performance of students could be influenced by factors like learning environment. Therefore, a learning environment which is devoid of bullying, antagonism, rejection and extreme stress provides the student with enabling ground for academic pursuit, which is likely to translate into better academic performance. It would be correct then to say that an environment characterised by violence is not a fertile ground for sound academic endeavour. It is against this background that the present study sought to examine the influence of family violence on academic performance of secondary school students in Etung-Obubura constituency, Cross River State, Nigeria.

The family is the base for child developmental process. What the child is taught at home and the motivation provided towards education, contributes to the child's academic performance in school. Therefore, the family being a powerful factor on the child and the important role it plays as the first agent of socialization could undoubtedly make or mar the academic performance of the child depending on the psychosocial climate in the home.

Violence is the application of coercive type of power. Here, the perpetrator uses force or threat to compel an individual to do something that the individual might not ordinarily do. It is an aspect of a continuum ranging from legitimate power (a person does something because of its rightness) through utilitarian power (a person does something because of the reward attached) to coercive power (Tony, 2002). Violence has been defined by World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) as the intentional use of physical force or power, threat or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group, or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation. Violence could also be directed at limiting or denying another person certain rights and freedom. Violence can take different forms, such as physical abuse (slapping, punching choking or throwing things); emotional abuse (yelling, making insult or threats); sexual abuse (such as unwanted touching, incest or rape, neglect, withholding: affection, money, food, health care or other needed things).

Family Violence (FV) or Domestic Violence (DV) is violence in close relationship or family setting which can take the form of physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or threats of psychical or sexual violence that are inflicted on members of the family (Akpan & Usoroh, 2005; Lanchimba et al., 2023). Family violence can occur to anyone irrespective of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender (Siemienuk, Krentz, Gish & Gill, 2010). According to UNICEF (2014) Domestic violence is the victimization of an individual who the abuser has or has had an intimate, romantic, spousal relationship.

A number of children are affected by violence exposure in their lifetime (U.S Department of Justice, 2012). For example, UNICEF (2006) reported that over 275 million children globally are reported to have been victims of domestic violence. Similarly, Finkelhor, Turner, Shattuck, and Hamby (2015) indicated that 58% of adolescents have been victims of violence in their community and 32% have likewise been exposed to some sort of family violence in their lifetime. Exposure to home violence has been said to be related to internalizing and externalizing problems (Mrug & Windle, 2010). Additionally, Orr et al. (2023) revealed that witnessing home or family violence is associated with lower

academic achievement. The lower academic achievement may emanate from emotional and behavioural problem witnessed by youth after exposure to violence (Schwartz & Gorman, 2003). Internalizing problems, like depressive and anxious symptoms, are linked with diminished concentration in school, decreased motivation and school refusal, which adversely affect achievement (Flannery et al., 2004).

Similarly, Osborne et al. (2024) stated that adolescents with behaviour problems are prone to truancy and less engaged in school, which down play achievement. Students exposed to DV or FV are more vulnerable compared to their counterparts who experience many difficulties, as well as the likely effects varying in age and developmental stage. (National Child Traumatic Stress Network in Child Welfare Gateway, 2014). Seimeniuk Krentz, Gish, and Gill, (2010) revealed that students with abused mothers have intelligence quotients (IQs) lower than usual. Similarly, Silverstein, Augustyn, Cabral and Zuckerman (2006) indicated that children who have higher experience of family violence possess lesser abilities in reading, Mathematics, and general knowledge. Studies have reported varied findings on the association between cognitive development and witnessing family violence. For instance, Mathias, Mertin and Murray (1995) did not find difference in the academic abilities of children who witness violence and other students. On the other hand, Tsunga et al. (2025) found that increase in violence exposure was associated with lower cognitive functioning. Lawal and Ishaq (2010) showed that children with higher levels of adjustment tend to withstand the effect of family violence. Tambawal (2012) demonstrated that family violence has significant effects on the academic performance of secondary school students. Gaylord, Holt, Kenny and Kitzman (2003), indicated that children exposed to violence showed academic outcomes similar or better than the non-exposed children.

Feminist theory postulated that violence is the manifestation of the patriarchal composition in our culture, which is reflected in the patterns of behaviours and attitudes of individuals, that means that violence instead of being an individual psychological problem is an expression of male domination of females (Denmark et al., 2006; Mshweshwe, 2020). This theoretical perspective suggests that the unequal power relations between males and females create a social context in which violence is used as a means of control, thereby producing differential experiences and outcomes for both genders. In the context of the present study, feminist theory provides the basis for examining whether such patriarchal structures, as expressed through family violence, might differentially affect the academic performance of male and female students, hence shaping the hypothesis regarding gender differences. Prior research on gender revealed no significant difference in the academic performance of students exposed to violence (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). Elujekwute et al. (2021) concluded that the environment in which a student comes from can greatly influence his performance in school (irrespective of gender) which results in jealousy and poverty. Contrarily, Medina (2013) reported that family violence exerted impact on the cognitive development of both male and female children. They argued that male and female children who have difficulty with attention and memory may not be sensitive to important social cues and expectations, and thus find themselves struggling with school rules, peer relationships, and classroom instructions.

Therefore, the cognitive effects of violence exposure may disrupt students' successful functioning in the school environment in addition to hindering academic competence. Experiencing violence in the family has been associated with poorer academic performance. Family violence has equally been viewed as a social malady that threatens the stability, psychological development and academic performance of children in our society.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the present study is to examine the influence of family violence on the academic performance of secondary schools in Etung-Obubura constituency, Cross River State. The specific objectives of this study are to:

- i. Examine the academic performance of students from non - violent families and violent families.
- ii. Ascertain gender difference in the influence of family violence on the academic performance of students.
- iii. Determine difference in family violence intensity on the academic performance of students.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypothesis was raised

H1: There will be no significant difference in the academic performance of students from non - violent families and violent families.

H2: There will be no gender difference in the academic performance of students from violent families

H3: There will be no significance difference in the academic performance of students exposed to low and high intensity of violence.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design of the ex-post facto type. The researcher did not have direct control on the independent variable because their manifestations have already occurred or because inherently they cannot be manipulated.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The population for the study comprised all senior secondary school students in Etung-Obubura constituency in Cross River State, Nigeria. The multi-stage selection procedure was adopted in the study. Four towns were randomly selected from the constituency. Ten secondary schools (5 in Etung 5 in Obubura) were randomly selected. Twenty-six or twenty-seven as the case may be (among the earlier identified in a previous visit) were randomly selected. In all, three hundred (300) students constituted the study sample. Their age ranged between 13 and 19 years. Gender distribution was 137 males and 163 females. The demographic information of the respondents was presented in Table 1.

INSTRUMENT

A self-developed instrument was utilized in the study, titled Family Violence Questionnaire (FVQ) as well as first term scores of students in English Language and Mathematic to determine academic performance of students. The FVQ is a self-constructed instrument, developed by the researcher through interactions with previous literature. The instrument contained two sections of A and B. Section A sought demographic data of respondents, while section B contained 14 items (example of an item is 'the use of corporal punishment, e.g., beating, kicking, pushing, chocking, pushing'). The instrument was formatted on a four point scale, Strongly Disagree (SD=1), Disagree (D=2), Agree (A=3), Strongly Agree (SA=4). The obtainable score range between 1 and 56. Score between 1 to 19 was considered non-violent; while a score between 20 to 56 is considered violent. Further, a score between 20 to 37 is considered low intensity of violence, and 38 to 56 is high intensity of violence. The test-retest over a period of two weeks was used to establish the internal consistency of FVQ. Copies of the questionnaire were administered on thirty 30 students who were not part of the study sample. The Pearson product moment correlation was used to analyse both test scores. The reliability index of 0.86 was established.

PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The researchers sought and obtained the permission of the principals and class teachers as well as the consents of the participants. Following the identification, selection and numbering of participants, the researchers personally administered the instruments employing the help of two research assistants. The exercise lasted for a period of ten working days. The participants were

required to fill the questionnaires on the spot and were retrieved. Data collected were analysed using the t-test statistical method.

RESULTS

HYPOTHESIS 1

There will be no significant difference in the academic performance of students from Non - violent families and violent families

Table 1. *T-test of Academic Performances of Students in Non-violent and Violent Families*

Family type	Subject	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	P	Remarks
Non-violent	English Language	146	65.01	14.84	6.97	298	.000	Significant
Violent		154	52.73	15.62				
Non-violent	Mathematics	146	59.85	15.30	4.97	298	.000	Significant
Violent		154	51.38	14.21				

The result revealed that 51.68% of the students came from violent families, indicating more than half of the sample. The mean score of the students from violent families in both subjects is comparably lower to their non-violent counterpart. The t-test statistic revealed t-value of 6.97 and 4.97 respectively for English Language and Mathematics with a p-value of less than 0.05. This showed a significant difference in mean scores of students in both English Language and Mathematics of non-violent and violent families; indicating that students from non-violent families performed in better in both subjects than students from violent families.

HYPOTHESIS 2

There will be no gender difference in the academic performance of students from violent families

Table 2. *T-test of Academic Performances of Male and Female Students in Violent Families*

Gender	Subject	N	Mean	SD	T	df	p	Remarks
Male	English Language	74	59.58	15.34	5.69	152	.000	Significant
Female		80	46.56	13.04				
Male	Mathematics	74	56.31	14.62	4.46	152	.000	Significant
Female		80	46.68	12.12				

The result showed that more than half of the sample (51.95%) of the students in violent families are females. The results revealed that mean scores of male students in both subjects were higher than their female counterpart. The t-test statistics revealed t-value of 5.69 and 4.46 with a p-value of less than 0.05 respectively. This showed a significant difference in mean scores of students in both English Language and Mathematics of male and female families; indicating that male students outperformed the female students.

HYPOTHESIS 3

There will be no significance difference in the academic performance of students exposed to low and high intensity of violence.

Table 3. *T-test of Academic Performances of Students Exposed to Intense Violence*

<i>Intensity of violence</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Remark</i>
Low	English Language	78	58.23	17.11	5.03	152	.000	Significant
High	Mathematics	76	46.42	11.40				
Low	English Language	78	56.71	13.39	5.12	152	.000	Significant
High	Mathematics	76	45.83	12.96				

The result revealed that 49.35% of the students in violent families are exposed to high level of intense violence, indicating about half of the sample. Their mean scores in both subjects are comparably lower to those that are exposed to low level of intense violence. The t-test statistic revealed t-value of 5.03 and 5.12 respectively with a p-value of less than .05. It showed a significant difference in means of students in the low and high levels of violence exposure; indicating that students exposed to low levels of violence outperformed students exposed to high level of violence.

DISCUSSION

Results of this study revealed that students in families with no violence performed academically better than those from violent families. This was clearly shown as the academic performance of students from non-violent families in both Mathematics and English was higher than that of students who came from families with violence. This finding further affirms what several other scholars have earlier observed. For instance, Augustine and Ihongu (2019), Williams, Oyundoyin and Adeyemi (2024), and Okite (2021) all found that students from families where there is domestic violence are more likely to experience academic failure than those from non-violent families. Probable reason for this result may be that family violence affects students in several domains — physical, psychological, emotional and even spiritual (Sim and Fulu, 2023; Williams, Oyundoyin, Adeyemi, 2024). When students are unable to maintain an appropriate balance in all these areas, they are likely to experience distractions that make it difficult to focus in class or during examinations, which ultimately results in poor academic performance. This also agrees with López-Martínez et al. (2023) who noted that violence creates a stressful environment that impairs cognitive functioning, such as the ability to concentrate. This aligns with the author's observation that such students may struggle to keep up with schoolwork, which then reflects in their poor performance.

In addition, the results of this study showed that male students from violent families performed better than their female counterparts from similar backgrounds. This was evident in both Mathematics and English results, where male students outperformed female students. This finding is consistent with the work of Williams, Oyundoyin and Adeyemi (2024), and Wotango, Walka and Tadesse (2021), who found that the effect of violence is more pronounced on female students than male students. The author could not find studies that contradict this, which makes the result even more interesting. From the author's perspectives, a probable reason for this is that women are often at the receiving end of family violence. In many traditional settings, women are expected to submit within the home, with limited rights to defend themselves. Moreover, the emotional effects of family violence may weigh more heavily on female students, as females are generally regarded as more emotionally expressive and, in some contexts, more emotionally vulnerable than males (Oliffe et al., 2023). It is then believed that this heightened emotional impact may explain why female students tend to have lower academic performance compared to their male counterparts in violent family contexts.

The results also revealed a difference in academic performance based on the intensity of violence. Students who experienced low levels of violence performed better in both subjects than

those exposed to high levels of violence. At the time of conducting this study, the author could not find other research that examined students' performance based on levels of violence exposure. However, it is my opinion that high levels of violence are likely to result in increased psychological and social distress (Sim and Fulu, 2023). This heightened distress can, in turn, limit students' ability to concentrate on academics and other aspects of their lives (López-Martínez et al., 2023). This could explain why students experiencing lower levels of family violence performed better than those subjected to high levels.

CONCLUSION

From the above study, it can be concluded that family violence affects the academic performance of students in secondary schools. In addition, it was found that family violence had more pronounced effects on female students than male students, implying that female are at the receiving ends of family violence than male students. Also, those who came from family with high level of violence were more affected academically than those from family with non-violence. This study underscore the adverse effects of domestic violence on the stability and performance of students, with female students being more affected as they tend to be at the receiving ends due to the societal pressures and expectations placed on them. This also signifies that family violence magnifies distress level among students and lead to distraction as well as the cognitive disruption of the students. This highlights the cumulative and compounding nature of violence on a child's academic performance. Addressing family violence, therefore, is not only a social and moral responsibility but also an educational priority that requires the collective effort of parents, teachers, policymakers, and community stakeholders to ensure that students are given a safe and supportive environment in which to thrive.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES AND RECOMMENDATION

This study was conducted in a selected constituency in Cross Rivers State, it is suggested that further research focus on other areas and/or expand the sample to include samples from other areas of Nigeria, such as the Southwest and Northern regions. This will help in knowing the levels of family violence in these areas as well as the effects on students.

It is also suggested that further research be conducted on the strategies which could be used in heling students from violent families. This could be achieved through research into the social and psychological effects of family violence on students and how best this could be addressed in order to enhance the performance of these students in their academic and other areas.

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