

A Study on the Relationship Between Employee Perceived Autonomy and Job Satisfaction of Remote Employees

PD Karunarathne

Chartered Institute of Personnel Management, Sri Lanka

dumindashc@gmail.com

Abstract— The extant literature on the determinants of job satisfaction of the employees working from home/remote employees has mainly discussed from a strategic perspective, with little research exploring employee perceived autonomy and its relationship with the remote employees' job satisfaction. Perceived autonomy is considered to result in higher levels of job satisfaction. In consistence with this stream of research, this study aims to identify the relationship between perceived autonomy and the job satisfaction of remote working employees. For this purpose, data were collected through a five-point Likert scale measurement survey questionnaire from a sample of 92 employees of a leading organization in the financial services providing industry in Sri Lanka. The correlation coefficient was applied to understand the relationship between variables. A positive relationship between employee perceived autonomy and job satisfaction of remotely working employees was identified from the findings. Hence the study contributes to the literature by providing a differentiated insight into the relationship between perceived autonomy and job satisfaction. Theoretical and managerial implications followed by limitations and recommendations for future research have also been discussed in this paper.

Keywords— *job satisfaction, perceived autonomy, remote working*

I. INTRODUCTION

With the significant shift of work arrangements to remote working due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that top management of organizations understand the psychological implications and consequences of the remote working arrangements. According to Desrosiers

(2001) changes in work methods/arrangements and technological developments associated with them may have unintended or unforeseen psychological consequences. This study was an attempt to expand the knowledge in this stream by examining the relationship between employee perceived autonomy and job satisfaction of remote employees.

A. Problem Statement

With no much difference to the rest of the world, Sri Lankan corporate sector also experienced a dramatic shift to remote working and the financial service providing industry is among the top industries that embraced remote working as an ideal way of working in the 'new normal'.

The organization on which this research was based, is a medium scaled organization in the financial services providing sector in Sri Lanka and located in Colombo. When the first COVID-19 wave hit the country, the top management of the targeted organization has made the decision to declare work remotely and has been observing how the strategy worked over the months. It was evidenced that the work force was delighted at the initial stage with the benefits associated with remote working however soon after, the top management has experienced some criticisms from the workforce over the way they have been asked to work remotely, the way their performance is being reviewed and the felt lack of trust on them by their superiors during this time frame. Majority of the employees in the monthly feedback sessions have expressed their dissatisfaction and concerns about the lack of trust-based culture and the lack of autonomy they perceive with the shift to remote working.

As a response to the feedback and comments from employees regarding the lack of autonomy during remote working, the top management has taken necessary initiatives by providing guidance to the managers of remote employees to make sure the employees who are working remotely are provided with adequate autonomy to perform their tasks remotely. After six months from this initiative, the top management intended to assess the effectiveness & success of its autonomy initiatives through examining the perceptions of employees on the current levels of autonomy and the employees' satisfaction associated with it.

Having said that intention of the top management, this research which conducted upon the request of the top management of the target organization, attempted to identify the relationship between perceived autonomy and the job satisfaction of the remote working employees and through the outcome of the research to support the organization to strengthen the autonomy driven work environment for remote employees.

B. Objective of the study

To identify the relationship between perceived autonomy and the job satisfaction of the remote working employees.

C. Literature Review

1) *Remote working*: The remote working is a way of work that's been referred by various names such as working from home, telecommuting, teleworking, virtual employment etc. As per Schall (2019), the terms remote working, working remotely, working from home, teleworking and telecommuting are comparatively synonymous as their common idea is working outside the conventional office and communicating through technology.

In the attempt to clarify who is referred as a remote employee in this research, from the literature is it emphasized that remote working employees are considered as organizational employees in the same sense as traditional employees. Thus, remote workers include individuals who are full-time or part-time employees of a particular organization, who accomplish at least some or entire of their work from a remote location instead of at the work premises where this work being facilitated through the use of information technology and

personal telecommunication equipment (Desrosiers, 2001).

2) *Job Satisfaction*: Job satisfaction refers to a person's feeling of satisfaction on the job (Karunaratne, 2021). It can be identified as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from ones' job experience. (Locke, 1976 as cited in Karunaratne,2021). When focusing on the literature on the job satisfaction of remote working employees, according to Schall (2019), remote working has a positive relationship with job satisfaction. And that relationship is mediated by each perceived autonomy, work-family conflict & telecommuting intensity.

3) *Perceived autonomy*: Autonomy comes from the Latin words "autos" which means 'self' and "nomos" meaning 'rule' (Thompson, 2006).According to Spector (1986) as cited in Gajendran and Harrison (2007), perceived autonomy is the employees' personal assessments of the extent to which they can structure and control how and when they do their particular job tasks. As per Hackman and Oldham (1976) as cited in Gajendran and Harrison (2007), the increased flexibility in the timing and execution of tasks experienced by the employees will enhance the employees' perceptions of autonomy.

When considering the conceptualizations of autonomy, few popular concepts are found. Breugh (1985) as cited in Bhave and Gagne (2011), separated autonomy into three sub components - work method, work scheduling and work criteria. He has defined work method autonomy as the discretion in choosing the procedures/methods to go about one's work, work scheduling autonomy as the feeling of which one could take control of the sequencing or timing of his or her tasks and work criteria autonomy as the discretion in making changes to indicators/standards used to evaluate one's own performance.

Lin and Ping (2016) have viewed job autonomy as a favorable work condition that allows employees to involve their decision making in fulfilling the job responsibilities and also that employees' perceptions about their job autonomy tend to impact their psychological states of experienced meaningfulness of work, felt responsibility and knowledge of results according to Nwoku,

Chiamaka and Tochukwu (2013) as cited in Lin and Ping (2016).

Autonomy is conceptualized as the extent to which the job provides the employees the freedom and independence over their work schedules and work processes (Hackman and Oldham, 1975 as cited in Bhave and Gagne, 2011).

In line with the current thinking in organizational behavior studies, Humphrey and Morgeson (2006) in their study "The work design questionnaire (WDQ): developing and validating a comprehensive measure for assessing job design and the nature of work", have identified three distinct but complimentary perspectives on employee autonomy. They are work scheduling autonomy, work methods autonomy and decision-making autonomy. This conceptualization by Humphrey and Morgeson (2006) is considered as the base for the measurement of perceived autonomy in this research.

4) *Perceived autonomy and job satisfaction*: Not many researches are found from literature which examined solely the relationship between perceived autonomy and job satisfaction in a remote working context. In a study by Desrosiers (2001), the resulted positive relationship between the amount of telework and job satisfaction of teleworkers is identified to have mediated by the perceived autonomy. Thus, it appears that perceived autonomy on the job of remote employees is positively related to their job satisfaction.

The meta-analysis conducted by Gajendran and Harrison (2007) to analyze the psychological mediators between telecommuting and its consequences have identified that perceived autonomy mediates the positive effects of telecommuting on the job satisfaction of remote employees. It implies that perceived autonomy has positive effects on job satisfaction of telecommuters.

The findings of the research 'the relationship between remote work and job satisfaction: the mediating roles of perceived autonomy, work family conflict and telecommuting intensity' by Schall (2019) have revealed that perceived autonomy mediates the positive relationship between remote work and job satisfaction. This finding of Schall (2019) promotes the idea that

perceived autonomy has a positive relationship with job satisfaction in a remote working context.

Few researchers have explored the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction but not in a remote work environment. Russell (2017) has explored the relationship between job satisfaction, autonomy and motivation and he has used three different facets of autonomy - (work, scheduling and method) and four different facets of job satisfaction -(supervisors, coworkers, pay and operating procedures) for the measurement of the autonomy variable. A similar approach has been taken in the current research for the measurement of the independent variable. From the findings of Russell (2017), it was revealed that there was a significant relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction of pay.

In the research, 'The effects of job autonomy on work outcomes: self-efficacy as an intervening variable', Saragih (2011) has aimed to examine the relationship between job autonomy and work outcomes (job performance, job satisfaction, job stress) with self-efficacy as a mediating variable. As per the outcomes of the research, Saragih (2011) has concluded that job autonomy was significantly related to job satisfaction and performance with self-efficacy partially mediating the relationships.

Bradley, Nguyen and Taylor (2003) in their research 'Job autonomy and job satisfaction: new evidence' have tried to investigate the impact of perceived job autonomy on job satisfaction. From the results of their research, job autonomy is found to be a highly significant determinant of the five domains of job satisfaction (pay, fringe benefits, promotion prospects, job security and importance/challenge of work)

As per Chung (2017), autonomy is a predictor of job satisfaction and becoming more prominent in the workplace. In his attempt to investigate to which extent the relationship between job autonomy and job satisfaction exists, the results have shown a small but significant positive effect between job autonomy and job satisfaction.

The research 'Perceived autonomy and job satisfaction in occupational therapists' by Bordieri and Davis (1988), has surveyed perceived autonomy, overall job satisfaction, and specific work incentives and disincentives on 249

occupational therapists. From the results of the survey, it was evident that perceived autonomy was positively related to overall job satisfaction.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Conceptual Framework

The independent variable of the study was perceived autonomy. This has been measured using three perspectives of autonomy which were conceptualized by Humphrey and Morgeson (2006). The three perspectives are namely work scheduling autonomy, work methods autonomy and decision-making autonomy. The dependent variable of the study was the job satisfaction of remote working employees.

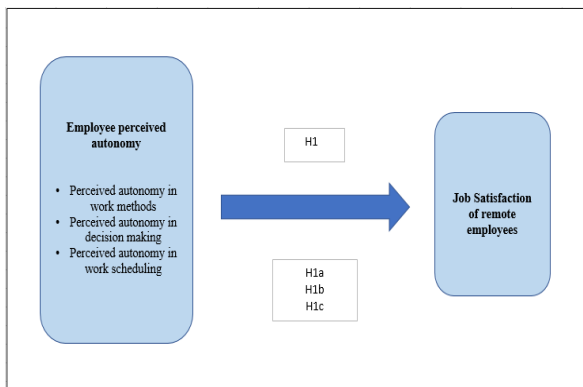


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

B. Development of Hypothesis

The conceptual framework has paved the way to developing the hypothesis which is designed in a way that would answer the research question and meet the objective of the research. Three sub hypotheses were developed under H1 to get more comprehensive studying of the three perspectives of the perceived autonomy.

H1: Perceived Autonomy has a positive relationship with job satisfaction of remote employees

H1a: Perceived autonomy in work methods has a positive relationship with the job satisfaction of remote employees

H1b: Perceived autonomy in decision making has a positive relationship with the job satisfaction of remote employees

H1c: Perceived autonomy in work scheduling has a positive relationship with the job satisfaction of remote employees

C. Research Design

The descriptive survey design has been used so the researcher was able to describe the scenario as it was in the natural setting, source maximum information with minimal effort and time. The unit of analysis of this research is identified as individuals. This research is conducted during a specific time frame so the cross-sectional time horizon is used.

D. Population and Sampling

For this study, business analysts, finance system analysts and financial planning consultants who are currently working remotely since the year 2020 employed at the target organization which is located in Colombo Sri Lanka were identified as the target population. A total of 120 people was identified as the target population.

Based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size, for a given population of 120, a sample size of 92 respondents was appropriate to adequately represent a cross-section of the population at a 95% confidence level. Simple random sampling was then used to select the sample to ensure that the sample was selected as a representative of the population and thus the findings could be generalized.

E. Research Instrument

The research instrument utilized in this research takes the form of a questionnaire. It was based on the previous researches related to autonomy, remote working and the Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire. The questionnaire items related to perceived autonomy are based on the work autonomy scale by Breugh (1985) as cited in Russell (2017) and Work design questionnaire by Humphrey and Morgeson (2006). The items related to job satisfaction are based on the well-known Minnesota satisfaction survey. The perceived autonomy and job satisfaction items are followed by five items related to demographic survey. The items other than demographic responses were tested based on a 5-points Likert scale.

F. Data Analysis Techniques

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the items in the questionnaire. Spearman correlation was used to determine the strength & direction of the identified monotonic relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

III. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

A. Data Analysis

The expected sample population was 92 respondents of which 75 completed and returned for analysis. This was a representation of 81.5% of the randomly selected sample which was fairly good for the study analysis. The data collected were analyzed using correlation coefficient using SPSS 25.0 between variables and the results were presented in tables & graphs and discussed accordingly.

According to the case processing summary, the number of valid data is 75 units while the missing data is zero which implies that all the data is processed. From the reliability statistics, the researcher obtained a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.964. The general rule of thumb is that a Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 or above is good, hence can be concluded that this research questionnaire has a high level of reliability.

Having tested for validity and reliability, the distribution of the data in the two variables (independent and dependent) is tested using Kolmogorov - Smirnov test. Based on the one-sample Kolmogorov - Smirnov Test, the Asymp. Sig values of the independent and dependent variables are 0.028 and 0.200 accordingly. Theoretically, as the value for the independent variable of the study is <0.05, it can be concluded that the data of the independent variable is not normally distributed while the data of the dependent variable is normally distributed.

1) Associations between the perceived autonomy perspectives and the overall job satisfaction of remote working employees: Scatter plots are drawn to see the associations between the perspectives of employee perceived autonomy and job satisfaction.

When the level of fondness for perceived autonomy dimensions increases, the satisfaction levels of the job increase. Hence it provided an impression that there are positive associations

between the dimensions of perceived autonomy and the job satisfaction. To verify these positive associations, non- parametric test - Spearman's rho was conducted on the autonomy dimension variables and dependent variable and arrived at the below-summarized correlation results.

Table 1. Summary Correlations between the perceived autonomy dimensions and job satisfaction of remote employees

Independent variable dimensions	Spearman Correlation results with dependent variable (Job Satisfaction)
Perceived autonomy in work methods	0.613
Perceived autonomy in decision making	0.850
Perceived autonomy in work scheduling	0.849
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)	

Source: Survey Data

According to table 1, Spearman's rho test resulted the given correlation coefficient, at p value<0.01, which depict that there are significant positive associations between the three autonomy dimension variables and the dependent variable. The resulting of strong positive associations between the perceived autonomy dimensions and Job Satisfaction, we can conclude that all three sub hypotheses (H1a, H1b, H1c) are accepted.

2) Association between overall perceived autonomy and job satisfaction of remote employees: A scatter plot is drawn to see the association between the independent variable and dependent variable. R squared of 86.8% implies that approximately 86.8% of the observed variation can be explained by the model inputs. When the level of fondness for overall perceived autonomy increases, the satisfaction level of remote employees increases. Therefore, a monotonic direct relationship was visible between the two variables - perceived autonomy and job satisfaction of the remote working employees. To verify the positive association between the above two variables, the non-parametric test - Spearman's rho was conducted.

Correlations

		Perceived_Au tonomy	Job_Satisfacti on
Spearman's rho	Perceived_Autonomy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.928**
		N	75
Job_Satisfaction	Perceived_Autonomy	Correlation Coefficient	.928**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	1.000
		N	75

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Figure 2. Correlation between overall perceived autonomy and job satisfaction

Source: Survey Data

According to figure 2, Spearman's rho test resulted in a 0.928 correlation coefficient, at $p < 0.001$, depicts that there is a significant positive association between the two variables. The resulting of a large positive association between the overall perceived autonomy and job satisfaction, we can conclude that there is a positive relationship between perceived autonomy and job satisfaction of the remote employees. Hence H1 is accepted. To conclude the analysis, the demographic summary of the 75 respondents are as below;

Table 2. Summary of demographic analysis of respondents

Sample Descriptive							
Age (yrs)	n	%	Gender	n	%	Qualification	n %
<20	4	5.3	Male	49	65.3	GCE A/LS	0 -
20-29	35	46.7	Female	26	34.7	Diploma	17 22.7
30-39	33	44.0	Total n	75	100.0	Bachelor's Degree	38 50.7
40-49	3	4.0				Post graduate Diploma	18 24.0
50<	0	-	Experience	n	%	Masters Degree and above	2 2.7
Total n	75	100.0	< 3 months	5	6.7	Total n	75 100.0
Marital Status	n	%	3-11 months	12	16.0		
Single	45	60.0	1-5 yrs	34	45.3		
Married	30	40.0	6-10 yrs	23	30.7		
Other	0	-	10 Yrsc	1	1.3		
Total n	75	100.0	Total n	75	100.0		

Source: Survey Data

IV. CONCLUSION

A. Findings

As mentioned in the conceptual framework, the independent variable – perceived autonomy was overall measured through its three conceptualized dimensions namely work methods, decision making and work scheduling.

Given that, the findings of this study were evolved around perceived autonomy dimensions relationships with the dependent variable. The results from the research revealed that each of the perceived autonomy dimensions (work methods, decision making and work scheduling) have positive relationship with job satisfaction of remote working employees. This partially

supports the findings of Russell (2017) who tried to identify the relationship among autonomy job satisfaction and motivation through similar autonomy dimensions discussed in this research.

Not much literature available which have focused on the relationship that these individual perceived autonomy dimensions possess with the job satisfaction. So, the current research extends the perceived autonomy literature and strengthens the understanding of the impact of perceived autonomy on job satisfaction with more detailed exploration along the autonomy dimensions.

According to the research outcomes, a large positive association was identified between overall perceived autonomy and job satisfaction of remote employees. The R squared value of the linear model of these two variables stands at 86.8% which depicts that the dimensions tested under perceived autonomy are positively related with job satisfaction and the increase in perceived autonomy will increase the job satisfaction level of the remote working employees. Under this ground, H1 is accepted.

This fairly supports the findings of Chung (2017); Bradley, Nguyen and Taylor (2003); Saragih (2011) and Bordieri and Davis (1988) which have identified positive associations between perceived autonomy and job satisfaction. However, the mentioned evidences from the literature have derived from a non-remote working context.

Very little studies have explored the relationship between perceived autonomy and job satisfaction in a remote working context. Desrosiers (2001); Gajendran and Harrison (2007); Karunarathne (2021) and Schall (2019) are among the few that have contributed to the literature for a positive relationship between perceived autonomy and job satisfaction of remote employees. Hence, findings of this research would strengthen this stream of literature.

B. Theoretical & Practical Implications

The current research provides breadth to the knowledge of employee perceived autonomy and tries to fill the gap arising due to shortage of literature that's specifically related to perceived autonomy of remote employees, identifying the positive relationship of perceived autonomy with job satisfaction of remote working employees by measuring through three perspectives of

perceived autonomy as well as carrying out the study in a remote working context in a developing South Asian country and on a fast-growing financial services providing industry.

The study provides the top management of the target organization and the HR practitioners in general with an indication that employees feeling of 'freedom and independence' provided by superiors/organization has a positive relationship with the job satisfaction of the remote working employees.

Considering the outcome of this research, the managers/ organizations need to focus on cultivating a autonomy based culture which is developed around trust and confidence among the people who are working remotely. This culture needs to be strong enough to make the remote working employees feel that they are 'being trusted for the decisions they make and the work they do' by their bosses or organization while they perform the duties and responsibilities of the job remotely. At the same time as the other side of the coin, it is also important that remote employees fulfill or live to the expectations of organization in a way that would build adequate confidence and trust on them in the minds of the managers/ organization to receive the autonomy at work.

C. Limitations of the study

The research was conducted within a fairly short period which enabled limited exploring further avenues of analysis within the research scope. Also, the lack of physical interaction with the respondents blocked the opportunity for the researcher to connect with the respondents in ways such as informal interviews/observations which would have been helpful otherwise to get a better understanding of the scenario around perceived autonomy in the target organization.

In terms non-response rate, out of the 92 distributed questionnaires (through email), 17 were not reverted. The selected three dimensions of perceived autonomy considered in the study were based on the concept by Humphrey and Morgeson (2006). However, there are several other conceptualizations around perceived autonomy that also can be considered for similar analysis. It's worthwhile to acknowledge that the omission of some other mediators/variables that may qualify the results of this research.

More researches may be required to better understand the positive relationship between perceived autonomy and job satisfaction of remote employees in more remote context-specific work environments as this research has covered only a single (Financial Services) industry.

D. Conclusion

The objective of this research was to identify the relationship between perceived autonomy (feeling of freedom and independence over the work methods, decision making and work scheduling from an employee perspective) and the job satisfaction of remote working employees.

The findings of the research conclude that there is a positive relationship between perceived autonomy and job satisfaction of remote working employees. Based on the statistical analysis, the hypothesis is accepted. Out of the three dimensions of perceived autonomy that were tested, the perceived autonomy in decision making is identified as having the highest correlation with job satisfaction followed by perceived autonomy in work scheduling. The perceived autonomy in work methods resulted a relatively low correlation with job satisfaction compared to the rest of the two autonomy dimensions. This outcome implies the importance of providing adequate autonomy according to the nature of the jobs of employees that will fit into the remote working environment in organizations. Hence, the management of the target organization needs to consider the autonomy related preferences/concerns of employees in a remote working context and improve the remote working culture in a way that motivates employees and increases job satisfaction. Overall, all the three dimensions of perceived autonomy have been embraced by the employees which leads to job satisfaction while working remotely. Hence, we can conclude that the research has accomplished its objective.

E. Recommendations

Considering the demographic factors of the sample population, 77% are Bachelors and above degree holders. And out of the three perceived autonomy dimensions tested in the research, the perceived autonomy in decision making is identified to have the highest correlation with job satisfaction. This implies the fact that majority of employees are expecting that the organization would delegate the

decision-making authority accordingly and also adequate freedom and independence upon the decisions they make at work based on their intellectual knowledge from professional qualifications and experience.

The evidenced highest correlation between perceived autonomy in decision making and job satisfaction is also supported by the tenure that employees are been with the organization. Based on the demographic analysis, 45% of employees are in the time range of 1-5 years, 31% are in the range of 6-10 years and 1% are in the range of more than 10 years. This means the majority of the remote employees are known to the business for more than one year and undoubtedly when employees staying longer than one year they tend to expect a significant amount of freedom and independence in making decisions while performing their jobs.

Moreover, given the circumstances with remote working and based on the nature of the work performed in most jobs for example like finance system analysts, the jobs require the employees to make prompt decisions while dealing with finance systems. And before the pandemic when employees were physically available at work station they could consult their managers and get approvals for decisions then and there easily but with the remote work setting it may not be possible sometimes to reach the managers remotely and delays caused due to waiting for manager approvals. This was one of the major reasons that employees have raised their concerns to the top management about adequate autonomy while working from home at the monthly reviews in 2020. This is revealed through an informal remark made by an employee in the questionnaire apart from the structured questions.

Given the above employee experience and the evidence from the research outcomes, it is suggested to the top management of the target organization to widen the currently provided autonomy on decision making to adequate extent and to review the process frequently to make sure the people are feeling the provided levels of freedom for decision making are adequate.

Also, its recommended for the T&D division to conduct training/workshop sessions to managers of remote employees on delegating decision making/ authority and responsibilities effectively

to suit for a remote working context. On the other hand, though employees are happy with the autonomy they perceive while working remotely, some employees may need assistance in handling the new-found autonomy at work. So in such cases, it's suggested to the managers of the remote employees to maintain a supportive and trust based relationship with the subordinates and also to encourage them to get the maximum benefits out of the provided autonomy in most effective and accurate ways.

The second highest correlation is evidenced between the perceived autonomy in work scheduling and job satisfaction on remote employees. This implies that employees prefer to have some control over scheduling and sequencing their work processes around the remote working phenomena and that employees value the support and freedom their managers have given to them to strike a balance between work and life. In order to strengthen the current satisfaction levels of employees with this regard, it's suggested to the management to take a flexible approach when dealing with any requests coming from employees related to their work scheduling and working hours. Because remote working is a new experience for many employees despite the fact that majority of the global workforce was forced to embrace it as a safety measure during the pandemic. For some employees might have issues in defining the boundary between work and family life. So, it's important that the managers make the employees feel that they are being supported and provided with adequate flexibility throughout the process. Having frequent informal chats with them and providing advice and suggestions to balance their work-life, organizing socialization forums, etc. are some of the initiatives suggested to managers with this regard.

Also, it's recommended to the T&D division to conduct sessions on time management to employees for better time management and work scheduling in the future.

It's suggested to the management of the target organization to shift the performance evaluation culture of the organization from time based monitoring into results/targets based evaluation. This will eventually facilitate the autonomy for work scheduling for the remote employees and enable them to sequence their tasks in the most

effective way that they feel fit for their remote work environment at home towards achieving the targets.

The identified comparatively low correlation between perceived autonomy on work methods and job satisfaction is mainly due to the nature of the jobs. Most of the job roles are already well structured and it's revealed that there are no urgent requirements for the employees to change or amend work methods due to the shift to remote working as almost all the tasks are supported by technology (Laptop and network) and can be performed remotely. So, it's implied that employees have not considered perceived autonomy on work methods as a crucial dimension of autonomy leading to job satisfaction.

However, its recommended to the management of the target organization to review the work methods in a timely manner to make sure the employees are comfortable with the methods that are in use in a remote working environment.

Overall, it is suggested to the management of the target organization to carefully review the perceptions around autonomy that employees have communicated via the responses in this research.

The recommendations based on the three dimensions of perceived autonomy that were examined in this study are discussed above. It's strongly recommended to the policy makers of the target organization and in general, to ensure the employees are provided with adequate autonomy that would fit for a remote working context to get the optimum benefits out of remote working to employees and organization and to keep the employees satisfied while working from home.

F. Suggestions for future research

There are not many studies found in the literature which have examined the impact of employee perceived autonomy on job satisfaction in a remote working context. Hence it is recommended for future researchers to extend examining on the particular scope.

This research was conducted to explore the relationship between the perceived autonomy and the job satisfaction of the employees who are working remotely in the Financial services providing industry in the Sri Lankan context.

Further research could be conducted to cover the remote employees in other industries as there can be variation in the preference of perceived autonomy dimensions based on the nature of the industry. Then research can be extended to compare between industries about the extent to which employees in different industries get satisfied to the same autonomy dimensions.

Also, the scope of this research can be examined based on demographical factors such as gender, age, education level, marital status, and experience in future studies. Even though a demographic analysis in done for the sample population of this study, the association or the impact of those factors with the variables was not tested or examined. For example, people who have been with the organization for a longer period would experience a higher level of autonomy than the ones with a short tenure because of the trust they have built over time with the organization. That will result in higher satisfaction levels among long serving employees.

Also, based on the age, the way employees perceive the autonomy can vary. For example, the demographic analysis demonstrated that majority of the employees in the sample belong to generations Y and Z. People belong to those generations expect higher levels of freedom, independence and flexibility than previous generations. So such employees would cherish the provided autonomy as a privilege. Therefore, future researches can be conducted through these demographical channels to better understand the relationship between perceived autonomy and job satisfaction.

Lastly, the relationships studied in this research were assessed based on the data obtained from the employees based in Sri Lanka, a developing Asian country. This may raise concerns about generalizing the outcome globally. With this realization, employing cross-national studies to ascertain the relationship between perceived autonomy and job satisfaction of remote employees would add to the existing knowledge base and broaden the literature in this research stream.

REFERENCES

Chung, E. (2017) *The relationship between job autonomy, job satisfaction and the mediating role of job crafting*. Bachelor's thesis. Tilburg University.

Davis, G. and Bordieri, J. (1988) Perceived Autonomy and Job Satisfaction in Occupational Therapists. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 42(9), pp.591-595.

Desrosiers, E. (2001) *Telework and work attitudes: The relationship between telecommuting and employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived organizational support and perceived co-worker support*. PhD thesis. Purdue University.

Gagne, M. and Bhave, D. (2011) Autonomy in the workplace: An essential ingredient to employee engagement and well-being in every culture. In: *Human anatomy in cross-cultural context: Perspectives on the psychology of agency, freedom and well-being*, 1st ed. [online] Research collection Lee Kong Chian school of business, pp.163-187. Available at: <https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/lkcsb_research/3676> (Accessed 15 May 2021).

Gajendran, R. and Harrison, D. (2007) The good, the bad, and the unknown about telecommuting: Meta-analysis of psychological mediators and individual consequences. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(6), pp.1524-1541.

Karunarathne, P.D. (2021) The relationship between perceived superiors' trust and the job satisfaction of remote working employees. In: *5th CIPM International Research Symposium on HRM 2021*. Colombo: Chartered Institute of Personnel Management Sri Lanka.

Krejcie, R.V. and Morgan, D.W. (1970) Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and psychological measurement*, 30, pp.607-610.

Lin, J. and Ping, N. (2016) Perceived job autonomy and employee engagement as predictors of organizational commitment. *Undergraduate Journal of Psychology*, 29(1).

Morgeson, F. and Humphrey, S. (2006) The Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ): Developing and validating a

comprehensive measure for assessing job design and the nature of work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(6), pp.1321-1339.

Russell, M. (2017) *The relationships among autonomy, job satisfaction and motivation*. Honors thesis. University of North Georgia.

Saragih, S. (2011) The effects of job autonomy on work outcomes: Self efficacy as an intervening variable. *International research journal of business studies*, 4(3), pp.203-215.

Schall, M. (2019) *The relationship between remote work and job satisfaction: The mediating roles of perceived autonomy, work family conflict and telecommuting intensity*. Master's thesis. San Jose State University.

Taylor, J., Bradley, S. and Nguyen, A.N. (2003) Job autonomy and job satisfaction: new evidence. Economics Working Paper Series, The Department of Economics, Lancaster University.

Thompson, R.A. (2006) Cognitive autonomy in adolescence. All graduate theses and dissertations. 2550, Utah State University.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



P.D. Karunarathne is a resource person at CIPM SL and an independent researcher in Management/HRM/Finance streams. She possesses seven years teaching and nine years industry experience and currently holds an executive position at group finance level of a USA owned MNC. She obtained her Master of HRM degree from University of Kelaniya and Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Ruhuna. She holds memberships in CPA Australia and CIMA UK.