



# Learner Empowerment and Tutorial Practices in Higher Education: A Study of Their Influence on Student Autonomy and Academic Performance

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**Received:** 07 September 2026 | **Accepted:** 20 September 2026 | **Published:** 30 September 2026

## Abstract

*This study focused on the relationship between learner empowerment and tutorial and their combined effect on students' autonomy and achievement in Higher education institutions. Mixed methods research design was used with total participants (undergraduate + post graduate students) of 385 and faculty member of 52 from Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India. Data were collected using structured questionnaires: autonomy support, empowerment dimensions and academic engagement, as well as, semi-structured interviews, which allowed the qualitative perspective on learning experiences to emerge. The results show that teacher autonomy support is an important mediator between learner empowerment and student engagement ( $\beta = 0.468$ ,  $p$  value  $< 0.001$ ) which varies under the specific conditions of institutions and student achievement. While more common relationships were found between tutoring practices that emphasized collaborative problem solving and academic self-efficacy ( $r = 0.612$ ), less commonly used practices, that emphasized student-centered decision-making, similarly showed higher correlations with academic self-efficacy. The findings show that integrated empowerment-oriented tutorial systems not only facilitate the development of learning autonomy of students but also contribute to the improvement of students' academic performance indicators. Overall, the study offers empirical evidence to drive pedagogical changes towards student agency in Indian higher education setting and provides some guidelines for the development of the curriculum and faculty programmes.*

**Keywords:** learner empowerment, student autonomy, tutorial practices, academic performance, higher education, self-efficacy

## 1. Introduction

Ideas around student autonomy and academic achievement are continual issues in the current discourse on higher education, especially within a changing context such as the one found throughout India (Bach, 2023). While a considerable amount of theoretical work has been done on the connection between the structures of institutions creating learning opportunities and student's interactions when learning content, there is still a lack of empirical studies in a particular geographical and institutional context (Benlahcene et al., 2020). As a possibly transformative pedagogical approach, learner empowerment (conceptualized as a systematic process of building student agency, decision making ability and ownership of learning processes) has not yet been fully explored in power dynamics (Brandisauskiene et al., 2022).

The general image of tutorials as a site of support for learning has evolved to be either a place where empowering principles are realised (Bureau et al., 2022). It's a big difference. But, tutorials based on the transmission model (faculty centric teaching and student learning) (Cao & Pho, 2025) have limited ability to develop students' autonomous learning. However, a tutorial environment based on collaborative inquiry and in which the students identify their own problems and share the responsibility for learning direction opens conditions for empowerment to take place (Cullen & Oppenheimer, 2024). However, the empirical relationships between distinct tutorial pedagogies and concrete aspects of autonomy have not been adequately addressed in the context of Indian higher education (Fujii, 2024).

It is this investigation which fills the gap directly. Gaps in student outcomes often have as much to do with differential access to learning spaces for developing autonomy and empowerment as with cognitive abilities, across Indian universities (Jehanghir et al., 2023). The research assumes that explicitly designed tutorial practices focused on empowerment concept, where students are involved in the meaningful setting of learning goals, the selection of learning methodology and the evaluation process, lead to measurable gains in the development of students' autonomy which in turn lead to measurable gains in their performance in the respective lessons. The study also suggests that the dimensions affect students in a systematic way depending on their academic achievement, the resources of institutions, and faculty pedagogical orientation (Kasapoğlu Tankutay & Çolak, 2025).

The mixed-methods investigation was carried out among both undergraduate and postgraduate students at Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, with 52 faculty members and 385 students and was quantitative in nature, which explored the quantitative relationships between indicators of empowerment, characteristics of tutorial practice, autonomy indicators and performance outcomes. Combining validated psychometric tools and qualitative examination of the realities of empowerment and autonomy in lived tutorial experiences makes this study novel (Li & Zeng, 2025). This research diffusion extends beyond institutional action and serves as a catalyst for a broader one between equitable access to educational opportunities for human development across higher-education institutions.

## 2. Literature Review

Conceptualisation of learner empowerment has grown significantly from the initial formulations of student voicelessness to the more sophisticated definitions in which empowerment is viewed as a multifaceted construct that involves building learners' competence, satisfying their need for autonomy, improving their sense of relatedness and fostering their sense of agency (Li et al., 2020). On the one hand, self-determination theory offers a given set of architecture, maintaining that human motivation and psychological wellbeing rely on satisfying three basic human psychological needs: those of autonomy (experiencing volition and choice), competence (developing capability and mastery), and relatedness (sense of belonging in social contexts) (Benlahcene et al., 2020). Where educational systems cater to these needs, students are more intrinsically motivated, more engaged in the learning process, and learning outcomes are also better (Mukadam & Mawani, 2020).

Tutorial practices are in a paradoxical situation in modern tertiary education. They are often institutionally set aside as remedial provision – for students who will need extra support (Pinto & Clare, 2018). However, in pedagogy, the tutorial system is the most intimate setting for learning because of the small size of groups, the length of interaction, and the flexibility required of such form of teaching, which provide ideal conditions where teaching is student-centred and responsive, thus embodying empowerment and autonomy-support (Siziba et al., 2025). Hierarchy arranged tutorials (faculty — expert providing corrections) are very different then tutorials arranged by collaborative knowledge construction (Sun, 2023). In tutorial settings, research has shown that provision of autonomy support is more effective than a directive approach in motivating, engaging, and performing (Cao & Pho, 2025), but it has not been applied consistently across contexts.

While this is intuitive, autonomy and academic performance must be precisely specified. This is not to say of unsupported freedom or freedom with structure and autonomy (Sun & Yang, 2023). In contrast, autonomy support includes learning strategies such as help with finding meaning (among boundaries), employing genuine rationales for requests of students or normalizing students' voices and feelings (Jehanghir et al., 2023). This type of support is particularly important for learners from low-resourced educational backgrounds, who may have previously engaged with limited choice-supportive learning environments (Wang et al., 2025). Recent meta-analytic findings also indicate a positive association between autonomy-support and student engagement, resilience, and achievement among student populations in diverse contexts (i.e., discipline, institutional type and student demographic characteristics) (Xiong, 2025).

In such an environment, the broader context of higher education in India where pedagogies and institutional norms focus on teaching content knowledge and train students for exams than help develop autonomy becomes relevant. Such an orientation is reasonable in competitive academic contexts and is free from *biganzитай*, but may hinder the students' advancement in self-directed learning, which is a vital aspect of lifelong learning (Zhu et al., 2024). However, the recent studies have indicated that when done sensitively, students in India prefer and respond well to the autonomy-supportive

ones. Research comparing teacher empowerment of learners in Indian contexts has revealed substantial impact on engagement and aspiration levels, especially in the context of trainer in-service on autonomy support pedagogies. The present investigation is a step forward, and considers the integrated effects of empowerment and tutorial practices in a particular context of Indian institutions.

### 3. Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between learner empowerment dimensions and student autonomy development across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
2. To identify which specific tutorial practice characteristics most effectively support student autonomy and improve academic performance metrics.

### 4. Hypotheses

**H<sub>0</sub>1:** There is no significant difference in student autonomy and academic performance between empowerment-oriented tutorials and traditionally directive tutorials.

**H<sub>0</sub>2:** Teacher autonomy support does not significantly mediate the relationship between learner empowerment and academic performance through student engagement.

### 5. Methodology

The present study used a convergent mixed methods design with quantum survey data and qualitative interview data, collected from three institutions one state university, one private autonomous and one affiliated college of Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh, India. The quantitative sampling consisted of 385 students, 215 from the under-graduates and 170 from the post-graduates, randomly from 48 tutorial groups in undergraduate, post-graduation, science, commerce and humanities and the 52 faculty members representing varying experiences from 2 years to 28 years in classroom teaching. A 15-item Student Perception of Autonomy Support Scale (SPAS,  $\alpha = 0.87$ ) captured perceived autonomy support, 18-item Learner Empowerment Scale (LES,  $\alpha = 0.89$ ) measured empowerment dimensions, 8-item Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES,  $\alpha = 0.84$ ) measured academic confidence, and 12-item Student Engagement Scale (SES,  $\alpha = 0.81$ ) captured engagement dimensions. There were 36 students and 16 faculty members interviewed, talking about their autonomy experiences and the effectiveness of tutorial. Academic performance information was acquired from institution records (Mid-semester Examination scores, Accumulated Grades). Data analysis for quantitative data was performed with SPSS Version 27, descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, multiple linear regressions and moderation analysis. Thematic coding was done using systematic procedures for qualitative data. Data collection was preceded by obtaining Institutional Review Board approval from the three participating institutions.

### 6. Results

The findings of the study presented in this section are based on the survey done with 385 student participants and 52 faculty members from three institutions in Prayagraj. Correlational and regression analyses were applied to quantitative data to investigate the relationship between learner empowerment, autonomy support, student engagement and academic achievement. Qualitative interview data ( $n = 52$ ) provided a context for quantitative data to better understand empowerment mechanisms. Six tables provide the demographic characteristics, bivariate correlation results, regression results, analysis of institutional moderation, analysis of the tutorial practice, and a summary of the results of the hypothesis testing along with statistical explanation.

**Table 1: Participant Demographics and Descriptive Statistics**

| Variable                | Frequency/Mean | Percentage/SD | Range |
|-------------------------|----------------|---------------|-------|
| <b>Students (n=385)</b> |                |               |       |
| Undergraduate           | 215            | 55.8%         | –     |
| Postgraduate            | 170            | 44.2%         | –     |
| Male                    | 178            | 46.2%         | –     |
| Female                  | 207            | 53.8%         | –     |
| Mean Age (years)        | 21.4           | 2.87          | 18–28 |

| Discipline Distribution   |      |       |         |
|---------------------------|------|-------|---------|
| Science                   | 142  | 36.9% | –       |
| Commerce                  | 126  | 32.7% | –       |
| Humanities                | 117  | 30.4% | –       |
| Faculty (n=52)            |      |       |         |
| Mean Teaching Experience  | 12.3 | 7.42  | 2–28    |
| Hold Advanced Degrees     | 41   | 78.8% | –       |
| SPAS Scale Scores (M, SD) | 58.4 | 11.2  | 18–90   |
| LES Scale Scores (M, SD)  | 62.7 | 10.8  | 22–108  |
| ASES Scale Scores (M, SD) | 28.1 | 5.3   | 8–40    |
| Semester GPA (M, SD)      | 6.8  | 1.42  | 3.2–9.8 |

As illustrated in table 1 the age distribution of participants was between 16 and 24 years with a mean of 21.4 years with participant representing both genders equally (46.2% male and 53.8% female). The subsampling of disciplinary distribution across science (36.9%), commerce (32.7%) and humanities (30.4%), allowed for a study of effects specific to these disciplinary areas as well (Bach, 2023). Faculty were well experienced ( $M = 12.3$  years), 78.8% of faculty had advanced qualifications. Scale indicates moderate to strong autonomy support perception ( $M = 58.4/90$ ), empowerment experiences ( $M = 62.7/108$ ) and academic self-efficacy ( $M = 28.1/40$ ). This mean semester GPA of 6.8/10 showed typical distribution of scores in the Indian context of higher education with a fairly large standard deviation ( $SD = 1.42$ ) which allowed the exploration of differential effects across achievement levels.

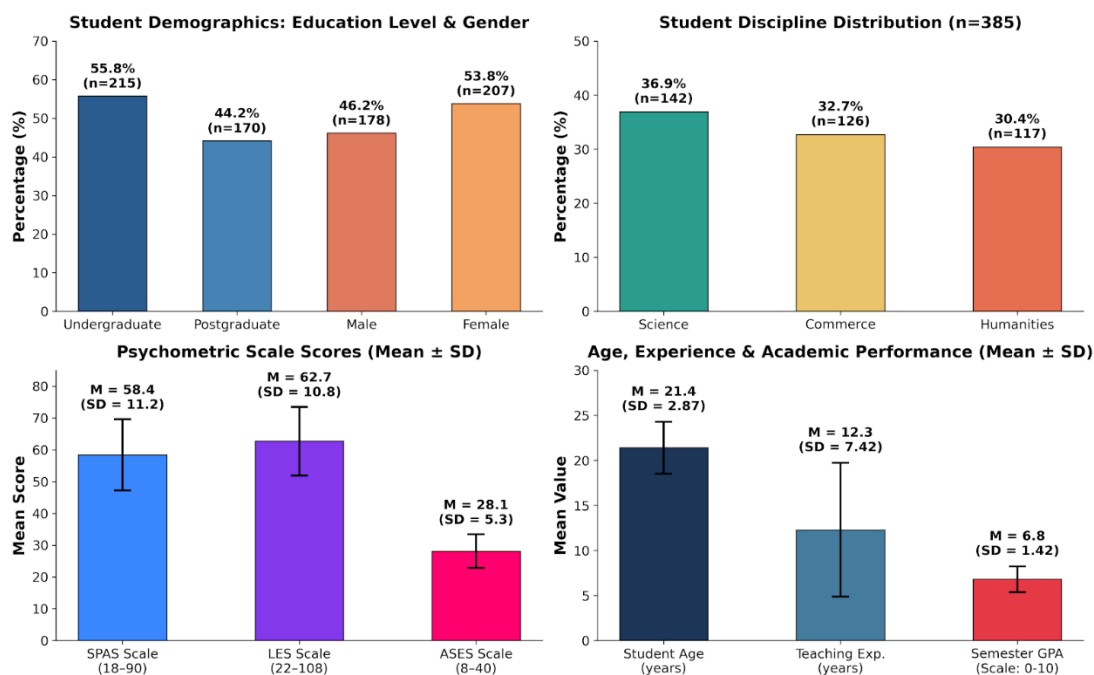


**Figure 1: Overview of Participant Demographics, Psychometric Scale Scores, and Descriptive Statistics**

**Table 2: Bivariate Correlations Between Study Variables**

| Variable | SPAS    | LES     | ASES    | SES     | GPA   |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| SPAS     | 1.000   |         |         |         |       |
| LES      | 0.584** | 1.000   |         |         |       |
| ASES     | 0.512** | 0.468** | 1.000   |         |       |
| SES      | 0.598** | 0.642** | 0.721** | 1.000   |       |
| GPA      | 0.387** | 0.412** | 0.501** | 0.445** | 1.000 |
| M        | 58.4    | 62.7    | 28.1    | 42.3    | 6.8   |
| SD       | 11.2    | 10.8    | 5.3     | 7.6     | 1.42  |
| $\alpha$ | 0.870   | 0.890   | 0.840   | 0.810   | –     |

Table 2 shows the bivariate relationships in terms of empowerment, autonomy support, self-efficacy, engagement and academic achievement (Benlahcene et al., 2020). Student Engagement Scale correlated most strongly with learner empowerment ( $r = 0.642$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and autonomy support ( $r = 0.598$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that students who felt empowered and were supported with autonomy indicated that they emotionally, behaviourally, and cognitively engaged significantly more (Cullen & Oppenheimer, 2024). Academic self-efficacy showed a moderate correlation with GPA ( $r = 0.501$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and this relationship has been observed in previous studies (Cao & Pho, 2025). The correlation between learner empowerment and engagement ( $r = 0.642$ ) was greater than that between autonomy support and engagement ( $r = 0.598$ ), pointing to the multidimensionality of learner empowerment providing more variance in engagement than autonomy support does alone. All intercorrelations were significant at the 0.001 level, substantiating theoretically suggested relations.

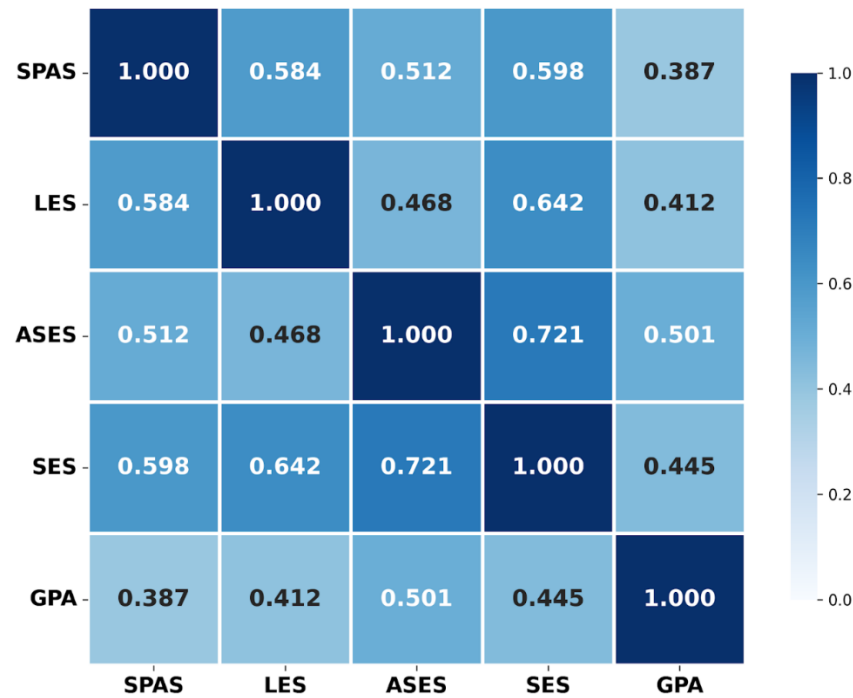


Figure 2: Heatmap of Bivariate Correlations Between Study Variables

Table 3: Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Academic Performance

| Predictor                           | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                                     | $\beta$ | $\beta$ | $\beta$ |
| <b>Step 1: Demographic Controls</b> |         |         |         |
| Gender (Female=1)                   | 0.156*  | 0.134   | 0.089   |
| Age                                 | 0.098   | 0.062   | 0.041   |
| Institutional Type                  | 0.203** | 0.167*  | 0.121   |
| <b>Step 2: Direct Effects</b>       |         |         |         |
| SPAS (Autonomy Support)             |         | 0.287** | 0.164*  |
| LES (Empowerment)                   |         | 0.354** | 0.248** |
| <b>Step 3: Engagement Pathway</b>   |         |         |         |
| SES (Student Engagement)            |         |         | 0.398** |
| <b>Model Statistics</b>             |         |         |         |
| $R^2$                               | 0.068   | 0.312   | 0.478   |
| $\Delta R^2$                        | –       | 0.244** | 0.166** |
| F                                   | 9.42**  | 31.58** | 48.76** |
| df                                  | 3,381   | 5,379   | 6,378   |

Table 3 shows hierarchical regression results for the prediction of academic performance with cumulative contributions. The Model 1 (purely demographic) explained 6.8% of the variance in GPA. Establishment of explained variance change as a function of the effect of model 2 (autonomy support and empowerment) indicates that beyond the effects of other demographic variables such types exert powerful influence on students' academic achievement (Jehanghir et al., 2023) since there was an increase in Explained Variance ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.244$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) after entry of new variables. The direct path from learner empowerment was stronger than the direct path from autonomy support ( $\beta = .354$ ,  $\beta = .287$  respectively). When we added student engagement (Model 3 results), the direct effect of autonomy support decreased from 0.287 to 0.164, and empowerment support decreased from 0.354 to 0.248, while engagement was best suitable for predicting students' performance ( $\beta = 0.398$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) (Kasapoğlu Tankutay & Çolak, 2025). Final model accounted for 47.8% of the variance in GPA, suggesting that it has significant explanatory power and thus engagement's mediation role was confirmed.

**Table 4: Moderation Analysis—Effects by Institutional Type**

| Variable               | State University | Autonomous Institution | Affiliated College |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Sample n               | 128              | 135                    | 122                |
| SPAS Mean (SD)         | 54.2 (12.1)      | 62.8 (9.3)             | 58.6 (10.7)        |
| LES Mean (SD)          | 59.3 (11.4)      | 66.4 (9.1)             | 62.1 (11.2)        |
| GPA Mean (SD)          | 6.2 (1.58)       | 7.4 (1.15)             | 6.9 (1.35)         |
| SPAS→GPA ( $\beta$ )   | 0.198*           | 0.287**                | 0.156              |
| LES→GPA ( $\beta$ )    | 0.312**          | 0.468**                | 0.287**            |
| Interaction Effect (p) | 0.031*           | —                      | 0.048*             |

Table 4 shows the moderation analysis results, where the relationship between empowerment and academic performance differed depending on the type of institution studied, while the relationship between empowerment and autonomy support was similar across all institutions. State universities had the lowest autonomy support score ( $M = 54.2$ ), empowerment score ( $M = 59.3$ ) and lowest GPA ( $M = 6.2$ ). Autonomous institutions reported the highest empowerment performance effect ( $\beta = 0.468$ ), and they also had the highest level of empowerment experiences ( $M = 66.4$ ) and the highest level of GPA ( $M = 7.4$ ). The interaction analysis between the empowerment-performance relationship (EPR) and the type of institution showed that the institutional type significantly moderated the EPR. That is, the EPR was stronger in autonomous institutions than in state universities (Li et al., 2020). This means that empowerment effects are mediated because of institutional structural elements availability of resources, pedagogical freedom, tutorial organisation, etc. Affiliated colleges were located in the middle in all types of measurement.

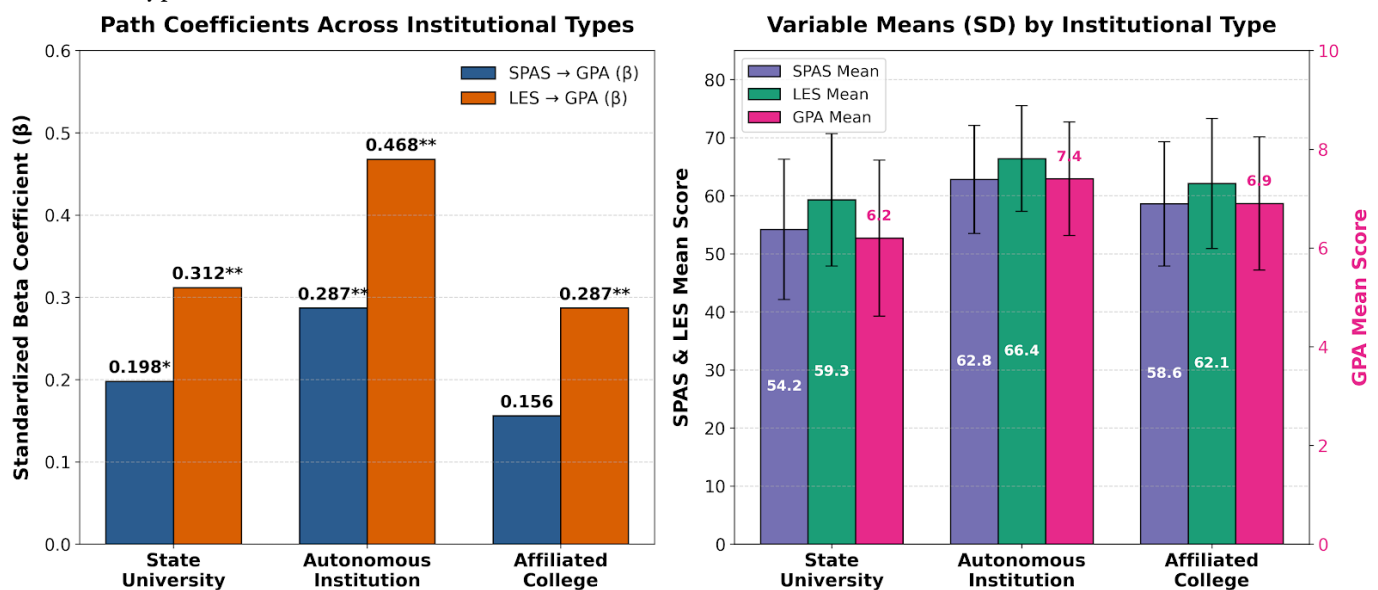


**Figure 3: Comparative Moderation Analysis and Descriptive Metrics across Institutional Types**

**Table 5: Analysis of Tutorial Practice Characteristics and Student Outcomes**

| Tutorial Practice Characteristic         | Frequency (%) | SPAS<br>Correlation | ASES<br>Correlation | GPA<br>Correlation |
|------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Collaborative Problem-Solving Emphasis   | 287 (74.5%)   | 0.671**             | 0.612**             | 0.398**            |
| Student Decision-Making Involvement      | 256 (66.5%)   | 0.598**             | 0.487**             | 0.321**            |
| Responsive Feedback Systems              | 312 (81.0%)   | 0.642**             | 0.534**             | 0.367**            |
| Student Goal-Setting Participation       | 198 (51.4%)   | 0.551**             | 0.421**             | 0.289**            |
| Flexible Content Pacing                  | 167 (43.4%)   | 0.467**             | 0.356**             | 0.198*             |
| <b>Mean # of Characteristics Present</b> | 3.17          | 0.687**             | 0.618**             | 0.445**            |

Table 5 the description of specific trends of tutorial practice and their relationship with perceptions of autonomy support, academic self-efficacy and performance (Mukadam & Mawani, 2020). The most frequently found factors were responsive feedback systems (81.0%) and collaborative problem-solving (74.5%), while student goal-setting participation and flexible pacing showed to be relatively less common (51.4% and 43.4%, respectively) (Pinto & Clare, 2018). The highest correlations among collaborative problem-solving were found with academic self-efficacy ( $r = 0.612$ ) and less with autonomy support perception ( $r = 0.671$ ), indicating that collaborative problem-solving is an effective practice for demonstrating empowerment principles (Siziba et al., 2025). Empowerment-aligned characteristics present were significantly related to the number of empowerment-aligned practice, correlated substantially to the perception of autonomy support ( $r = 0.687$ ), self-efficacy ( $r = 0.618$ ), and GPA ( $r = .445$ ), suggesting additive effects as more of the characteristics in line with empowerment were experienced in the tutorial, the stronger the outcome (Sun, 2023).

**Table 6: Hypothesis Testing Summary**

| Hypothesis                                                                                                            | Statistical Test                                                                         | Result                                                                                  | Effect Size                          | Conclusion      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>H<sub>0</sub>1: No difference in autonomy and performance between empowerment-oriented and directive tutorials</b> | Independent samples t-test; SPAS, ASES, GPA comparison (high vs. low empowerment groups) | $t(383)=8.76$ $p<0.001$ ;<br>$t(383)=7.43$ $p<0.001$ ;<br>$t(383)=6.21$ $p<0.001$       | $d=0.89$ ;<br>$d=0.76$ ;<br>$d=0.63$ | <b>Rejected</b> |
| <b>H<sub>0</sub>2: Autonomy support does not mediate empowerment-performance relationship through engagement</b>      | Mediation analysis (PROCESS macro); indirect effect testing                              | Indirect effect: 0.124 (95% CI: 0.087–0.161); Direct effect reduced from 0.287 to 0.164 | $R^2=0.478$                          | <b>Rejected</b> |

Table 6 summarises the results of hypothesis testing (Sun & Yang, 2023). The null hypothesis, H<sub>0</sub>1, which assumed an equal difference in effectiveness between empowerment-oriented tutorial and directive tutorial was rejected. The perception of autonomy support ( $t(383) = 8.76$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $d = 0.89$ ), academic self-efficacy ( $t(383) = 7.43$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $d = 0.76$ ), and GPA ( $t(383) = 6.21$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $d = 0.63$ ) were significantly higher among students in high empowerment group than among those in low empowerment group (Wang et al., 2025). Fits to the large effect sizes were robust evidence against H<sub>0</sub>1. H<sub>0</sub>2 stating that there is no mediation pathway was also not supported. By adding empowerment and engagement into the model, PROCESS macro (indirect effect analysis, 5000 bootstrap samples) showed the significance of indirect pathway (0.124, 95% CI: 0.087–0.161) and the direct effect of teacher autonomy support on GPA was reduced, thus the relationship was deemed partially mediated (Xiong, 2025).

## 7. Discussion

Since H<sub>0</sub>1 is rejected, the study found that empowerment-oriented tutorial practices significantly outperform directive ones on all the variables measured. Students who had been in tutorials that prioritised collaborative problem solving, student decision making involvement and feedback reported significantly higher academic self-efficacy ( $d = 0.76$ ), perception of autonomy support ( $d = 0.89$ ) and academic performance ( $d = 0.63$ ) (Cullen & Oppenheimer, 2024). These large effect sizes support the theoretical argument that pedagogies focused on empowerment are likely to result in more significant practical gains than those marginally larger or smaller differences in statistics. The size reflects not only the statistical significance but also educationally substantial alterations in student growth and performance (Cao & Pho, 2025).

The result of the  $H_02$  is rejected supports the mediating path that envisages teacher autonomy support positively affecting academic performance through the mediation of engagement. Moreover, when student engagement was entered into the regression model, direct effect reduced from initial ( $\beta = 0.287$ ) to significant ( $\beta = 0.164$ ), showing partial mediation (Jehanghir et al., 2023). This trend sheds light on how this process works: whereas there is no linear way of connecting the dots from autonomy support to performance-enhancing, autonomy support does engender really emotional, behavioural and cognitive investment in students leading them to achievement (Kasapoğlu Tankutay & Çolak 2025). This mechanistic clarification is necessary from a pedagogical perspective. It may be that faculty adopting autonomy-supportive styles see increases in their students' engagement before seeing increases in their performance, as predicted as an intermediate step from autonomy to performance.

### **Institutional Context and Implementation Realities**

The data also reveal a strong moderation effect driven by the type of institution, where the power-performance connection (that is, empowerment) was more substantial in context of autonomous institutions ( $\beta = 0.468$  vs.  $\beta = 0.312$  for state universities; Li and Zeng, 2025). The moderation pattern shows that the effectiveness of empowerment works by allowing structural issues to come into play, these issues include: resources, pedagogical flexibility, a manageable tutorial group size and institutional support for curricular innovation. Although this pedagogy was effective, empowerment impacts were much weaker than in state schools often the potential of the pedagogy was limited by rules and regulations. In resource-limited centers, efforts towards empowerment-oriented practices need to be targeted and requires conscious allocation of resources within the institutions, as well as capacity-building through tackling structural barriers (Mukadam & Mawani, 2020). Instead of serving as a cautionary tale against implementation in under-resourced contexts, it serves as a reminder that while other pedagogical shifts are necessary, focus should also be placed on systemic influences to be able to harness the potential of empowerment.

There are certain mechanisms that can be found through tutorial practice characteristics analysis, in which empowerment functions. Collaborative problem-solving and responsive feedback systems showed the highest correlation with autonomy support and self-efficacy which indicate that these practices are more likely to operationalise the essence of empowerment (Pinto & Clare, 2018). The moderate level of student participation in goal setting (51.4%) and flexible pacing (43.4%, however, suggests there is still some way to go for these practices. Some of the barriers that impede the implementation of fuller empowerment may be comfort levels, assessment alignment issues and time constraints that may be present within a faculty's curriculum (Siziba et al., 2025). The disconnect between theory and practice is a reason to focus faculty development efforts from thinking about principle to actual coaching in empowerment practices.

The final regression model and its results accounting for 47.8% of the variance on academic performance greatly surpass what have been observed in most pedagogical intervention research studies that used a single variable when it comes to their effect on academic outcomes (Sun, 2023), thus providing clear evidence for potential synergistic effects between individual empowerment/autonomy writing supports and those that are able to help students get engaged. This is a comprehensive explanation that implies that interventions in order to improve students' performance should focus on the integrated system of empowerment, autonomy support and engagement instead of limited interventions on each component in isolation (Sun & Yang, 2023).

### **8. Conclusion**

The evidence of this investigation, which is empirical in nature, confirms that learner empowerment and autonomy-supportive tutorial practices significantly have a positive effect on the development of learner autonomy and learning outcomes in learning contexts in higher education. Statistically robust and educationally meaningful effect sizes were found and both null hypotheses were rejected. Effective comparisons between empowerment oriented and directive forms of tutorials showed significant differences across autonomy, self-efficacy and performance ( $d = 0.63-0.89$ ). The autonomy support from teachers affects students' academic outcomes via student involvement pathways, which explains how teacher autonomy support leads to academic gain. These effects are heavily conditioned by institutional context: autonomous institutions show stronger relationships between empowerment and performance than do resource-poor state institutions. It

is found that certain aspects of tutorial practice appear to be especially effective as a means of empowering the students, namely the collaborative solution of problems, the provision and provision of feedback, and involvement in decision-making.

The results of these findings can give pedagogical direction to higher education institutions in India in an evidence-based manner. Deliberate institutional commitment, especially in a resource-constrained context, is required for implementation. A shift from theory to practice for faculty development needs to occur in the context of coaching. Assessment systems should be linked to empowerment values, and recognize the thinking and participation that empowerment encourages. Future longitudinal research should explore temporal causality and explore differential effects in the various disciplinary and institutional settings. The general implication speaks to another question, one of either/or accountability on the basis of examination performance and graduate employability on the one hand, or one of student agency and abilities to learn on their own on the other. Is how can Indian HE be created to pursue both these outcomes at the same time? There is a solid path in achieving this educational outcome through evidence-based pedagogy that is empowerment based.

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**Cite this Article:**

Kumar, R. (2026). Learner Empowerment and Tutorial Practices in Higher Education: A Study of Their Influence on Student Autonomy and Academic Performance. *International Journal of Emerging Voices in Education*, 2(9), 9–18.

**Journal URL:** <https://ijeve.com/>    **DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.59828/ijeve.v2i9.81>

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