

Effect of Privatisation and College Autonomy on Quality in Higher Education: Parents' Perception relating to their Satisfaction

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Abstract: The objectives of the study were to investigate i) the independent effect of privatisation on quality in higher education in terms of parents' perception; ii) the independent effect of college autonomy on quality in higher education in terms of parents' perception, and iii) the interaction effect of privatisation and college autonomy on quality in higher education in terms of parents' perception relating to their satisfaction with infrastructural facilities, quality of teachers, curriculum, quality of teaching, co-curricular activities, educational climate, extension services activities, examination and students support services. A sample of 120 parents mainly fathers (mothers in case fathers not alive) 30 each whose sons or daughters were studying in government autonomous colleges, private autonomous colleges, government non-autonomous colleges and private non-autonomous colleges were selected randomly using multi stage sampling technique. The Satisfaction Scale for Parents developed by the investigator was used to collect data. The "F" test used to analyze data revealed that i) quality of higher education in government colleges was better than the quality of higher education in private colleges as parents of students studying in government colleges were highly satisfied with different quality dimensions of higher education compared to the parents of students studying in private colleges. ii) quality of higher education in autonomous was better than the quality of higher education in non-autonomous colleges as perceived by parents, and iii) there found interaction effect of privatization and college autonomy on quality in higher education as perceived by parents of students relating to their satisfaction with infrastructural facilities, quality of teachers, curriculum, quality of teaching, co-curricular activities, educational climate, extension services activities, examination and students support services.

Keywords: Privatisation, College Autonomy, Quality Education, Higher Education

1. Introduction

The advancement of the nation's socio-political life is closely connected to the quality of higher education, so retaining its quality is a major concern all over the globe. For a country's economic and social growth, higher education is critical. Higher education institutions bear the burden of providing individuals with technical experience, qualifications, and specialised knowledge required for positions of responsibility in public and private offices, both of which are necessary for the advancement of quality of society. However, in a rapidly evolving global and local environment, higher education institutions around the world are confronted with daunting obstacles and restrictions, such as unprecedented demand for higher education and policymakers' reluctance or refusal to deliver it, inadequate funding, demands for accountability, weak infrastructure and institutional management, lack of efficient administrative body, weak and inexperienced faculty, overcrowded classrooms, low levels of teacher training programmes, irrelevant curriculum, student unrest, spineless administration, dubious examination etc.

An amalgamation of growing demand for admission to higher education and governments' failure or reluctance to provide the needed support has brought privatisation of higher education to the forefront. Privatization of higher education is one of the most diverse and fastest-growing sectors of postsecondary education around the world at the turn of the twenty-first century, steadily spreading in almost every part of the globe (Albatch, 2005). There has also been a growing demand for freedom and autonomy to higher educational institutions, for which Government of India has granted college autonomy to government and

private colleges in nation aimed at guaranteeing the standard of higher education. Autonomous colleges have educational freedom to set their own admissions policies, to frame their own curriculum and syllabi, admit students by conducting entrance examinations, innovate and experiment with new methods and strategies for transacting curriculum, conduct examination and publish results, and award degrees to the students.

2. Rationale of the Study

Customer's satisfaction and loyalty has long been regarded as a deciding factor in determining the quality of goods and services. According to the concepts of quality as proposed by Downey (1992) and Deming (1992), goods and services are judged to be quality if they meet, surpass, and delight consumers' needs demands. Next to students, parents are the second largest educational consumers. Parents who care for their children's education in the hopes of seeing a successful return on their investment. A retrospective analysis of the studies conducted by researchers on effectiveness privatisation on quality in higher education revealed both positive and negative impact of privatisation on quality in higher education.

Altbach (2005) highlighted trends and realities of institution of private higher education worldwide; Gupta (2005) analysed global institution of private higher education and its trends; Wilkinson and Yussuf (2005) examined the public and private provision of higher education with regards to infrastructure, enrolment, expenses and quality; Nicolescu (2007) studied academicians' perception about privatisation in higher education; Azad and Chandra (2008) studied private sector's involvement in funding higher education; Brezis (2008) studied effects of privatisation on quality in higher education; Agarwal (2009) investigated trends towards privatisation and globalisation of higher education; Holzhacker et al. (2009) studied trends, policies, problems, and solutions of privatisation in higher education; Al-Harthy (2011) studied the rationale, development and challenges in the institution of private higher education; Raghavan (2011) studied liberalization, privatisation and globalization of higher education; Sawahel (2011) studied growth of private institutions; Okunola and Oladipo (2012) examined critical issues in privatisation of higher education; Varghese (2012) analyzed movement of private sector in the institution of higher education; Mwebi and Simatwa (2013) studied development and expansion of private universities and its impact on quality; Parashar (2013) studied functioning, academic environment, research etc. of private universities; Tiwari et al. (2013) studied role and responsibility of private institution of higher education; Chougale (2014) investigated college teachers' perception on privatisation of higher education; Gregorutti et al. (2016) investigated the issues in privatising higher education; Yeravdekar and Tiwari (2014) studied private participants' contribution to the Indian higher education; Angam (2015) studied growth pattern and policy perspectives of private universities; Ravi (2015) studied perception of teachers towards the impact of privatisation of higher education; Singh (2015) studied major issues and significant challenges of privatisation in higher education; Kaur and Bhalla (2016) conducted a case study on privatisation of higher education; Sudarshan and Subramanian (2016) conducted a study on role of private sector in higher education; Stander (2016) conducted a study on quality assurance management in private higher education institutions; Yirci and Kocabaş (2016) examined privatisation of higher education in terms of views of public and private university instructors; Baweja (2017) studied needs and impact of privatisation of higher education; Ahmad and Nisa (2017) studied privatisation of higher education system; Baliyan and Moorad (2018) analysed students' perception on effectiveness of teaching in private higher education institutions; Kaur and Kaur (2018) studied major issues in the institutions of higher education after entry of private sector and globalization; and Srisruthi and Jasmin (2018) studied quality of education by comparing private and public funded universities.

Further, a critical examination of studies conducted on effectiveness of college autonomy and quality in higher education discovered that the majority of the researches were conducted to know the status of autonomous college, major functioning, efficacy and teaching activities of autonomous colleges, examination system, financing, staffing, students' satisfaction, infrastructural facilities, job satisfaction of teachers empowerment of Principals and teachers, classroom teaching, appointment of teachers, curriculum, administration excellence and quality education. Bohidar (2002) studied classroom practices, instructional methods and techniques of teaching used by teachers in an autonomous college; Panda (2002) studied reaction of post graduate students of an autonomous college towards examination system; Padhi (2004) studied views of undergraduate students towards the examination system of an autonomous college; Tilak (2004) studied growth, problems and prospects of autonomous colleges; Mohanty (2005) studied college autonomy and its impact of on quality in higher education as per the perception of teachers and students; Dwibedi (2006) studied financing of an autonomous college; Moses (2006) studied autonomy of universities; Weber (2006) studied university autonomy in higher education; Teerawut (2011) studied factors responsible for students' satisfaction in autonomous universities; Barik (2013) studied college autonomy and quality in higher education by comparing level of stakeholders' satisfaction belonging to government autonomous colleges and government non autonomous colleges; Sornam et al. (2013) investigated perception of faculty members on library facilities available in autonomous colleges; Deo and Kohli (2014) compared autonomous and non-autonomous institutes through students' satisfaction; Harikrishnan (2014) studied implementation of autonomy in higher education system; Rao and Viswanadhan (2014) studied perception

of teachers towards performance of self-financing autonomous and non-autonomous engineering colleges; Rao (2015) studied status and progress of college autonomy in India; Mathew and Patrick (2016) studied functioning of autonomous colleges; Sumesh et al. (2016) examined autonomous colleges by studied the attitude of teachers towards autonomy; Sharma et al. (2017) studied inclination towards autonomy in higher education; Margaret and Kavitha (2018) studied autonomous status in higher education institution; and Sharma and Singh (2018) studied autonomy position of universities in higher education. Bania and Sarangi (2020) studied effect of privatisation and college autonomy on quality in higher education as perceived by teachers and found that quality in government and autonomous colleges was better than quality in private and non-autonomous colleges respectively.

According to the results of the above analyses, no single research has been performed to assess both the independent and interaction effects of privatisation and autonomy on higher education quality as perceived by parents across different components of quality in higher education such as quality of teaching, infrastructural facilities, research activities, curriculum, quality of teachers, educational climate, co-curricular activities, extension services activities, examination and students support services.

Therefore, empirical research is necessary to assess both the independent and interaction effects of privatisation and college autonomy on higher education quality as perceived by parents in terms of their satisfaction with various aspects of higher education quality. As a result, the findings would be useful in improving the standard of higher education.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 To investigate the independent effect of privatisation on quality in higher education as per the perception of parents.
- 3.2 To investigate the independent effect of college autonomy on quality in higher education as per the perception of parents.
- 3.3 To investigate the interaction effect of privatisation and college autonomy on quality in higher education as per the perception of parents.

4. Hypotheses

- 4.1 There exists significant independent effect of privatisation on quality in higher education as per the perception of parents.
- 4.2 There exists significant independent effect of college autonomy on quality in higher education as per the perception of parents.
- 4.3 There exists significant interaction effect of privatisation and college autonomy on quality in higher education as per the perception of parents.

5. Methodology of the Study

5.1 Design:

Since the primary goal of this investigation was to determine the effect of privatisation and college autonomy on higher education quality in terms of parental satisfaction, perception of parents of students studying in government colleges with private colleges and autonomous colleges with non-autonomous colleges in terms of various components of higher education have been compared. The causal- comparative method and ex-post facto research design have been used in the study.

5.2 Sample:

By using multi stage sampling technique, 120 parents mainly fathers (mothers in case fathers not alive) 30 each whose sons or daughters were studying in government autonomous colleges, private autonomous colleges, government non-autonomous colleges and private non-autonomous colleges were selected randomly.

5.3 Tools:

The investigator developed the Satisfaction Scale for Parents, which was used to gather evidence. Three-point rating scale used in the study to assess parents' satisfaction with nine different aspects of higher education consisted of 36 items. The various dimensions were infrastructural facilities, teachers' quality, quality of teaching, co-curricular activities, educational climate, extension services activities, examination and students support services.

5.4 Validity and Reliability of the tools:

Expert judgment was used to determine the scale's content validity, and the scale's reliability co-efficient was .92 which was determined through test-retest method.

6. The Results

6.1 Effect of Privatisation on Quality in Higher Education as per the perception of Parents

By collapsing college autonomy, as can be seen in Table 1, there found out independent effect of privatisation on quality in higher education as perceived by parents of students with regard to their satisfaction with infrastructural facilities, quality of teachers, curriculum, quality of teaching, co-curricular activities, educational climate, extension services activities, examination and students support services ($F=178.90$; $df = 1$; $P < .01$).

TABLE - 1

Summary of 'F' values for effect of College Autonomy and Privatisation on Quality in Higher Education relating to Parents' Satisfaction (N=120)

Sources of variance	Degree of freedom (df)	Sum of Squares (SS)	Mean Square (MS)	'F' Values	Level of Significance
Privatisation	1	5293.41	5293.41	178.90	0.01
Colleges Autonomy	1	5320.01	5320.01	179.80	0.01
Interaction	1	310.41	310.41	10.49	0.01
Within	116	3431.97	29.59		

Further, it was found out from Table 2 that there was significance of difference between government and private colleges in favour of government colleges on quality in higher education as perceived by parents with regard to their satisfaction with different dimensions of quality in higher education as mean score of parents of students studying in government colleges on satisfaction scale was better than mean score of parents of students studying in private colleges ($M=87.85 > M=74.56$).

Table- 2

Summary of Mean Scores on Quality in Higher Education in Government and Private Colleges as perceived by Parents relating to their Satisfactions

Groups	Mean Scores
Government Colleges	87.85
Private Colleges	74.56

Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there exists no independent effect of privatisation on quality in higher education as perceived by parents relating to their satisfaction was rejected in favour of research hypothesis.

The result emerged was also supported by bar diagram in Figure 1 showing a significant edge of quality of higher education in government colleges over private colleges as perceived by parents with regard to their satisfaction with infrastructural facilities, quality of teachers, curriculum, quality of teaching, co-curricular activities, educational climate, extension services activities, examination and students support services as parents

of students studying in government colleges were highly satisfied with different quality dimensions of higher education compared to the parents of students studying in private colleges.

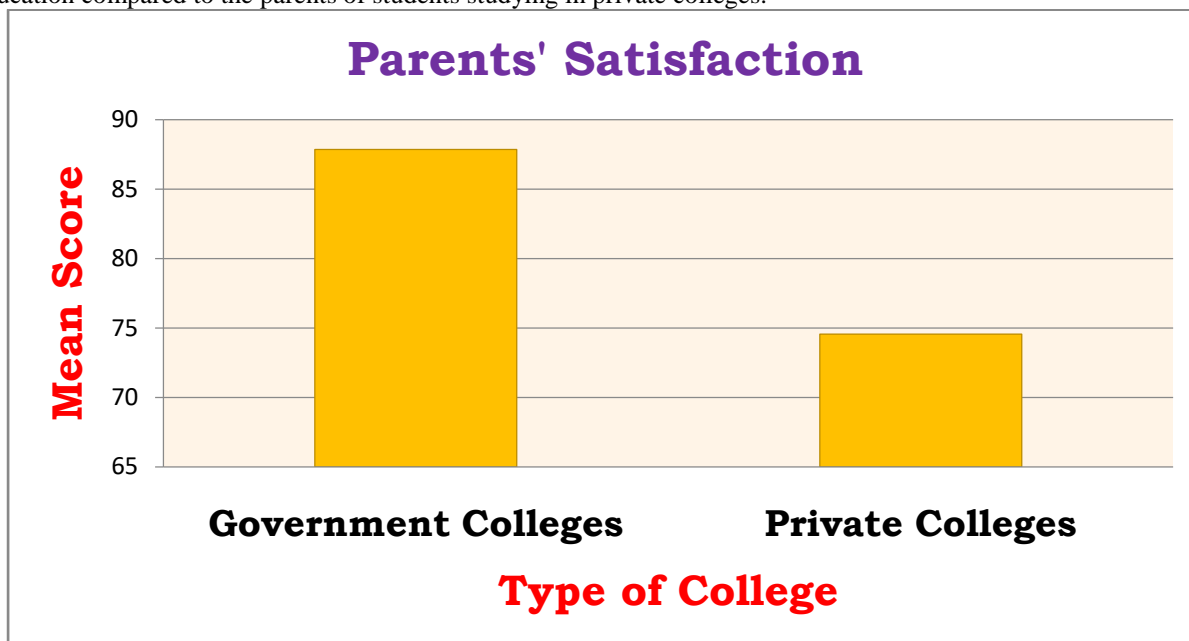


FIGURE-1 Bar diagram showing mean scores for quality in higher education in government and private colleges relating to Parents' satisfaction.

6.2 Effect of College Autonomy on Quality in Higher Education in terms of Parents' Satisfaction

By collapsing privatisation, as can be seen in Table 1, there found out independent effect of college autonomy on quality in higher education as perceived by parents of students with regard to their satisfaction with infrastructural facilities, quality of teachers, curriculum, quality of teaching, co-curricular activities, educational climate, extension services activities, examination and students support services ($F=179.80$; $df =1$; $P<.01$).

Further, Table 2 shows that there was significance of difference between autonomous and non-autonomous colleges in favour of autonomous colleges on quality in higher education as per the perception by parents on their satisfaction with different dimensions of quality in higher education as mean score of parents of students studying in autonomous colleges on satisfaction scale was better than mean score of parents of students studying in non-autonomous colleges ($M= 87.86 > M=74.55$).

Table- 2
Summary of Mean Scores on quality in Higher Education in Autonomous and Non-autonomous Colleges as perceived by Parents relating to their Satisfactions

Groups	Mean Scores
Autonomous Colleges	87.86
Non-autonomous Colleges	74.55

Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there exists no independent effect of college autonomy on quality in higher education as perceived by parents with regard to their satisfaction was rejected in favour of research hypothesis.

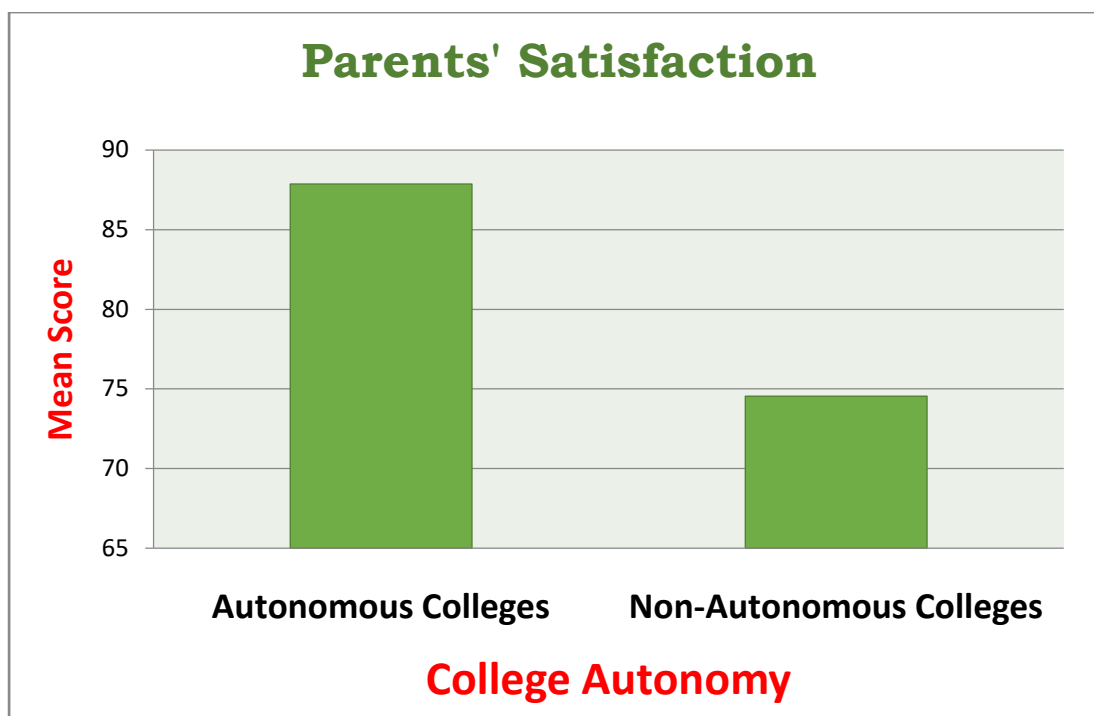


FIGURE-2 Bar diagram showing mean scores for quality in higher education in autonomous and non-autonomous colleges relating to parents' satisfaction.

The result emerged was also supported by bar diagram given in Figure-2 showing a significant edge of quality of higher education in autonomous colleges over non-autonomous colleges as per the perception parents on their satisfaction with infrastructural facilities, quality of teachers, curriculum, quality of teaching, co-curricular activities, educational climate, extension services, examination and students' support services as parents of students studying in autonomous colleges were highly satisfied with different quality dimensions of higher education than parents of students studying in non autonomous colleges.

6.3 Interaction effect of Privatisation and College Autonomy on Quality in Higher Education in terms of Parents' Satisfaction

Table 1 shows that there found out interaction effect of privatization and college autonomy on quality in higher education as per the perception of parents of students on their satisfaction with infrastructural facilities, quality of teachers, curriculum, quality of teaching, co-curricular activities, educational climate, extension services activities, examination and students support services ($F=10.49$; $df=1$; $P<.01$).

Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there exists no interaction effect of privatization and college autonomy on quality in higher education as per the perception of parents with regard to their satisfaction was rejected in favour of research hypothesis.

The Table 4 showing multiple comparison of different groups for interaction effect of privatisation and college autonomy on quality in higher education using Scheffe method revealed a significance of difference between quality of higher education in government autonomous colleges and private autonomous colleges ($F=8.16$; $df=116$; $P<.01$) in favour of government autonomous colleges ($M=92.90 > M=82.83$).

TABLE-4

'F' values obtained by the Scheffe Method for multiple comparisons of Quality in Higher Education relating to Parents' Satisfaction (N=60)

Groups	Mean	'F' Values	Level of Significance
Govt. Auto. Colleges Vs Pvt. Auto. Colleges	92.90 82.83	8.16	0.01
Govt. Auto. Colleges Vs Govt. Non-auto. Colleges	92.90 82.80	8.21	0.01
Govt. Auto. Colleges Vs Pvt. Non-auto. Colleges	92.90 66.40	56.51	0.01
Pvt. Auto. Colleges Vs Govt. Non-auto. Colleges	82.83 82.80	0.02	NS
Pvt. Auto. Colleges Vs Pvt. Non-auto. Colleges	82.83 66.30	21.99	0.01
Govt. Non-auto. Colleges Vs Pvt. Non-auto. Colleges	82.80 66.30	21.91	0.01

Further, it was also found out significance of difference between quality of higher education in government autonomous colleges and government non-autonomous colleges ($F=8.21$; $df=116$; $P<.01$) in favour of government autonomous colleges ($M=92.90>M=82.80$); government autonomous colleges and private non-autonomous colleges ($F=56.51$; $df=116$; $P<.01$) in favour of government autonomous colleges ($M=92.90>M=66.40$); private autonomous colleges and private non-autonomous colleges ($F=21.99$; $df=116$; $P<.01$) in favour of private autonomous colleges ($M=82.83>M=66.40$); government non-autonomous colleges and private non-autonomous colleges ($F=21.91$; $df=116$; $P<.01$) in favour of government non autonomous colleges ($M=82.80>M=66.30$) as perceived by parents relating to their satisfaction with infrastructural facilities, quality of teachers, curriculum, quality of teaching, co-curricular activities, educational climate, extension services activities, examination and students support services.

Whereas, there found out no significance of difference between quality of higher education in private autonomous colleges and government non-autonomous colleges ($F=0.02$; $df=116$; $P>.01$) as perceived by parents relating to their satisfaction with different dimensions of quality in higher education.

7. Major Findings.

- 1) There was significant independent effect of privatization on quality in higher education as per the perception parents with regard to their satisfaction. It can be concluded that, in the views of parents, the quality of higher education in government colleges was better to the quality of higher education in private colleges.
- 2) There was significant independent effect of college autonomy on quality of higher education as per the perception parents with regard to their satisfaction. It can be concluded that, in the views of parents, the quality of higher education in autonomous colleges was better to the quality of higher education in non-autonomous colleges.
- 3) There was interaction effect of privatisation and college autonomy on in higher education quality as per the perception of parents. (i) quality of higher education in government autonomous colleges was better than the quality of higher education in private autonomous colleges; (ii) quality of higher education in government autonomous colleges was better than the quality of higher education in government non- autonomous colleges; (iii) quality of higher education in government autonomous colleges was better than the quality of higher education in private non-autonomous colleges; (iv)

quality of higher education in private autonomous colleges was better than the quality of higher education in private non-autonomous colleges; (v) quality of higher education in government non-autonomous colleges was better than quality of higher education in private non-autonomous; and vi) quality of higher education in private autonomous colleges and government non-autonomous colleges was on similar line as perceived by parents.

8. Conclusion and Discussion

The findings of the present study revealing that quality of higher education in government colleges were significantly better than the quality of higher education in private colleges; quality of higher education in autonomous colleges was better than the quality of higher education in non-autonomous colleges as per the perception of parents relating to their satisfaction. Parents of students studying in government and autonomous colleges were highly satisfied different dimensions of higher education as infrastructural facilities, quality of teachers, curriculum, quality of teaching, co-curricular activities, educational climate, extension services activities, examination and students support services compared to parents of students studying in private colleges. Next to students, parents are the important customers of higher education who have high expectations from the institution where their sons and daughters are studying. Good quality of teaching, better educational climate, transparent examination system, job opportunities, quality of teachers, less admission and other fees, better student support services in government colleges and autonomous might lead to satisfaction in parents of students studying in government colleges and autonomous colleges.

On the other hand, students who are not getting seat in government colleges go to private colleges in order to complete their college education by giving a high capitation fee might lead to dissatisfaction in parents of students studying in private colleges. Further better teacher-taught relationship, better teacher-teacher relationship, availability of various types scholarships, availability of hostel facilities with minimum rent, frequent organizations of seminar/conference/ workshop in government colleges might be the factors for parents' satisfaction which might not be followed and conducted in private colleges lead to dissatisfaction in parents of students studying in private colleges.

As it is clear from the present study, the educational facilities given to children under college autonomy satisfy the parents. Children's academic growth, innovative and new approaches and techniques of teaching, timely conduct of tests, continuous internal assessment, timely publication of results are the possible factors that determine satisfaction of parents of students studying in autonomous colleges. Therefore, it can be concluded there is a positive effect of college autonomy on quality in higher education as it is evident from the findings of the present study.

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