

Roles of Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction, Flourishing, and Systems Thinking in Indian University Faculty: A Cross-Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT:

This study examined the relationship between systems thinking, basic psychological need satisfaction, and flourishing among university teaching faculty. The study used a cross-sectional survey to collect data. The study examined the predictive role of systems thinking and the basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) in flourishing. The findings show that systems thinking, competence, and relatedness were significant positive predictors of flourishing, whereas autonomy was a non-significant predictor. Together, the predictors explained 32% of the variance in flourishing. Findings highlight the importance of systems thinking and psychological need satisfaction to enhance faculty flourishing. The results found that competence, positive professional relationships, and enhancing systems thinking may contribute to higher levels of flourishing among university faculty. The study provides practical implications for faculty development initiatives and offers directions for future research by recommending the inclusion of additional psychological and organizational variables, longitudinal research designs, and broader institutional contexts to improve the understanding of flourishing in higher education.

Keywords: Systems thinking, Flourishing, University faculty, Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction

1. Introduction

The teachers of private universities work within the dynamic educational system. For better professional development, prosperity, and flourishing they need attention, motivation, psychological needs, and well-being. A comprehensive institutional framework promotes system thinking, and satisfied basic psychological needs make a meaningful life and enhance flourishing (Roos & Borkoski, 2021). University faculty members' functioning and development can be understood as an interconnected systems of organizational work

practices, work pressures, and interpersonal relationships among staff. For instance, the basic psychological needs of faculty members are met within their professional context, which is shaped by both growth opportunities and work pressure requirements. Here, Systems thinking emphasizes a holistic view of interactions between events and acknowledges faculty members' experiences (Roos & Borkoski, 2021). Outcomes are shaped not only by individual factors but also by institutional structures and workplace culture.

Systems thinking is a cognitive framework that emphasises understanding the complexity of

organisational and institutional environments and their interdependence. In the context of university faculty, systems thinking can enable individuals to recognise how organisational practices, workplace culture, and interpersonal relationships affect their professional experiences and development (Ros & Borkoski, 2021; Tackle & Vanderlinde, 2019). In practice, systems thinking helps faculty to understand how their teaching, research, and service activities are integrated into a broad range of institutional goals and processes. For example, recognising feedback loops between curriculum design, student learning outcomes, departmental policies, and administrative support helps faculty align their efforts with systems thinking objectives and promote coherence and efficiency.

Furthermore, systems thinking supports faculty in managing dynamic tensions between competing demands, such as the balance between productivity and teaching quality and service responsibilities. By linking systems thinking to meet basic psychological need satisfaction, a faculty that adopts a systems thinking perspective is better positioned to exercise autonomy by adjusting its professional actions to both personal values and organizational priorities. Thus, systems thinking not only enriches faculty members' cognitive engagement with their professional environment but also creates conditions conducive to fulfilling their basic psychological need satisfaction, which are essential for sustained professional commitment and development. This integrative approach underscores that faculty roles are not isolated functions but are embedded within dynamic systems that shape opportunities, challenges, and outcomes in higher education settings. This integrative approach is rooted in Self-determination theory (SDT).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), proposed by Deci and Ryan (1980), highlights the importance of satisfying basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) as a strong foundation for motivation and well-being across different workplace settings. As per the previous study, in university faculty, engagement

and intrinsic motivation contribute to academic engagement and retention as a foster of psychological needs (Karimi & Sotoodeh, 2019; Tack & Vanderlinde, 2019). Moreover, basic psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) mediates the relationship between leadership style, training, and development, and work outcomes. These findings highlight the importance of flourishing in academic environments (Jiang & Wei, 2024; Mahomed & Rothmann, 2019).

Systems thinking views flourishing as a holistic approach that includes life satisfaction and much more than happiness. The rise of flourishing includes the integration of emotional, psychological, and social dimensions that collectively emphasize optimal functioning in the role of higher education (Martela, 2024). Experiencing flow may help faculty cope more effectively with work demands and stressors of academic work. Freedom not only includes engagement and achievements, but also covers the perspective of resilience and positive social functioning (Faiza et al., 2024; Herrera et al., 2021).

Previous research on the student population highlighted that flourishing helps teachers engage more in academic work; as a result, teachers are performing better in their professional role (Datu, 2016). A cross-sectional study on Canadian school teachers reveals that autonomy relates to basic psychological need satisfaction, which helps to predict work-related perceptions such as well-being, motivation, and job satisfaction (Collie et al., 2016). This result indicates that a work environment for university faculty should provide opportunities to meet their autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs. They demonstrate enhancement of integral components of psychological functioning to flourishing. Moreover, research focusing explicitly on academics in higher education reveals that training and development initiatives, along with personal strength use, positively influence need satisfaction, particularly autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which subsequently promote thriving and reduce

intentions to leave the institution (Mahomed & Rothmann, 2019). This mediational role underscores the importance of institutional practices that support need fulfilment as a path to fostering flourishing faculty members.

Further evidence is seen in university music students, where perceived autonomy-supportive teaching styles increase basic psychological need satisfaction, which positively predicts flourishing states, highlighting the motivational mechanism linking supportive contexts to well-being (Herrera et al., 2021). Although conducted among students, these motivational dynamics are analogous and highly relevant to university faculty, whose flourishing similarly depends on satisfying psychological needs within the organizational and interpersonal contexts.

Additionally, in more technologically evolving academic environments, AI literacy among university faculty has been found to enhance autonomy, competence, and relatedness need satisfaction, thereby indirectly supporting work-life balance and job satisfaction, which are key aspects of flourishing in faculty work life (Huang & Zhao, 2025). This further corroborates the critical role of psychological need satisfaction as a foundational mechanism for promoting faculty well-being amid changing work demands.

A comprehensive literature review of job flourishing also highlights that although the field is diverse in theoretical approaches, basic psychological need satisfaction remains a central predictor of flourishing-related outcomes such as job performance and turnover intention (A'Yuninnisa et al., 2023). When these basic psychological needs are met, university faculty are more engaged, resilient, and successful in their professional role. These findings provide a strong theoretical and practical foundation for targeting psychological need satisfaction in interventions aimed at promoting faculty flourishing for academic success. Systems thinking, by promoting a holistic understanding of interconnected organizational practices, interpersonal relationships, and institutional cultures, provides a valuable framework for enhancing the conditions that fulfill faculty

members' autonomy, competence, and relatedness. A study by Cann et al. (2022) involving 559 educators from 12 schools in New Zealand found that organizational factors, particularly perceptions of trust and collaboration within schools, were the strongest predictors of educator well-being. These school-level conditions were more influential than individual or relational factors, suggesting that supportive and trusting environments promote psychological need satisfaction and enhance the flourishing of university faculty. Further supporting this, an international study of 1,410 university faculty across German, Indian, and US institutions revealed that basic psychological need satisfaction was a central explanatory factor for faculty motivation and goal-pursuit. This study highlighted how institutional contexts influence need fulfilment, which in turn affects teaching quality, positive affect, and professional learning outcomes. These results show that the positive work environment helps to meet the well-being of the faculty and also fulfil the needs (Daumiller et al., 2021).

Past research shows that a supportive and flexible environment helps faculty to be independent, confident, and motivated in the institution (Granero-Gallegos et al., 2022). Moreover, Systems thinking plays a crucial role in social and relational dynamics. Studies evaluating social influences on motivation demonstrate that teammates and close colleagues can facilitate or hinder individuals' psychological need satisfaction, highlighting the embeddedness of faculty within dynamic social systems that impact their motivational states (Raabe et al., 2016).

Similarly, systemic disruptions to relational connections during the COVID-19 pandemic were found to impair students' relatedness needs, indirectly pointing to the importance of reestablishing supportive academic systems for well-being (Kiltz et al., 2023). In addition, broader systems-informed educational frameworks emphasize that university faculty's emotional competencies and the overall educational culture reflect systemic factors that are deeply tied to relational quality and

interpersonal support. Influences of systems thinking not only enhance faculty's basic psychological need satisfaction but also students' outcomes and effectiveness of institutional practices (Brandao De Souza & Jacomuzzi, 2025). In summary, findings of the various studies show that it helps to create a positive work environment through collaboration, trust, strong leadership, and supportive relationships. Such an environment helps to meet the basic psychological need satisfaction of university faculty: autonomy, relatedness, and competence, which helps to promote flourishing among university faculty. The approach of systems thinking helps to build a foundation for fostering faculty motivation, well-being, and professional growth within complex higher educational settings.

A cross-sectional study of university music students found that autonomy and supportive teaching styles help to reflect basic psychological need satisfaction, which involves autonomy, relatedness, and competence, and systems thinking, which in turn positively predicted flourishing (Herrera et al., 2021). Previous studies suggest that systems thinking improves flourishing by first satisfying basic psychological need satisfaction. That indicates basic psychological need satisfaction acts as a bridge between systems thinking and flourishing for the university teaching faculty. Similarly, a study of academic employees at South African universities found that training and development opportunities help to meet their basic psychological needs satisfaction (Mahomed & Rothmann, 2019). This finding aligns with how organizational structures and practices shape psychological needs by demonstrating a systems thinking approach, which subsequently enables positive psychological functioning. Furthermore, the evidence comes from a study done in New Zealand schools, which found that organizational factors, such as trust, social relations, and collaboration embedded in the educational system, are the strongest predictors of educator well-being, including flourishing dimensions (Cann et al., 2022). These findings show that a positive environment in the organizational

systems and it helps to meet basic psychological need satisfaction, which in return promotes flourishing. However, most of the studies used cross-sectional and correlational designs, so they cannot confirm that systems thinking directly causes flourishing.

The present study tries to find the predictive role of systems thinking in flourishing via basic psychological need satisfaction. In addition, some research found that the direct effects of systems thinking on outcomes such as AI literacy or job satisfaction are mediated predominantly via autonomy and competence needs, but may not influence relatedness or flourishing directly without such mediation (Shen & Cui, 2024). One limitation is that existing research has not clearly explained whether systems thinking directly improves flourishing or whether it affects flourishing mainly work through basic psychological need satisfaction. While flourishing factors strongly relate to basic psychological need satisfaction, other factors, such as individual adaptability and social support, also independently predict flourishing as an outcome, sometimes operating alongside but not fully mediated by basic psychological need satisfaction (Holliman et al., 2022). This finding suggests that the influence of systems thinking may be partially indirect or co-occur with other psychosocial variables.

In summary, integrative evidence from motivational and organizational psychology supports the proposition that systems thinking promotes faculty flourishing by meeting basic psychological need satisfaction, with a nuanced understanding of individual and contextual factors. Future longitudinal and experimental research will be valuable in more conclusively delineating these direct and mediated pathways.

Integrative Framework: Systems Thinking, Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction, and Flourishing

Incorporating systems thinking helps clarify the factors that influence university faculty members. As a result, faculty are more likely to flourish and perform well in academic progress. (Herrera et

al., 2021; Jiang & Wei, 2024). Additionally, flourishing in faculty builds the capacity to thrive in professional functions linked to well-being, growth, and a willingness to remain within the academic institutions (Mahomed & Rothmann, 2019). This study aimed to examine the predictive role of systems thinking and basic psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) and their impact on flourishing among university faculty. Holistically, these variables can inform a targeted approach that supports teaching faculty flourishing and contributes to improved educational quality in the institution for success.

A noticeable gap in the literature is that limited research exists regarding how systems thinking and basic psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) influence flourishing, specifically among university faculty. However, the past research on flourishing has been heavily studied in relation to student performance outcomes, such as academic achievement, engagement, and well-being (Datu, 2016; Faizah et al., 2024). Research focusing on university teaching faculty remains underexplored. Existing literature largely addresses flourishing from the student perspective or considers faculty development primarily through isolated constructs such as professional identity or psychological capital (Freire et al., 2020; Puhr, 2024). Moreover, studies on teaching faculty have examined certain aspects of basic psychological need satisfaction and workplace success (Jiang & Wei, 2024; Mahomed & Rothmann, 2019). The effect of institutional environments, organizational dynamics, and leadership styles has not been studied enough with flourishing outcomes. Similarly, the role of systems thinking has been widely applied to improving teaching faculty flourishing through holistic, interconnected approaches, which is underdeveloped. Most of the systems thinking approach is used for the students' learning and curricular outcomes rather than teaching faculty well-being and flourishing (Jackson & Hurst, 2021). Systems thinking is not only one of the dynamic, interconnected, organizational, and interpersonal factors but also

helps to reveal how these elements collectively sustain or undermine faculty flourishing. This holistic concept aligns with recent educational research emphasizing the importance of systems thinking and basic psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) as foundational to fostering flourishing among university teaching faculty (Herrera et al., 2021; Jiang & Wei, 2024).

This present study examines how systems thinking and basic psychological need satisfaction in faculty promote flourishing beyond individual factors such as hope, resilience, optimism, and personal identity. It has been identified that faculty's flourishing is also influenced by the wider organizational environment. When organizational factors such as culture, leadership support from colleagues, and administrative policy work together, they help to shape the teaching faculty members' work experience. Such faculty are more likely to flourish and grow professionally and remain committed to their institution. Most of the previous studies on higher education focus on student flourishing. These studies found that psychological well-being, purpose of life, and social support improve students' flourishing and academic success. However, there is limited research on the flourishing of the university faculty.

Unsupportive work environments, poor communication, and lack of trust can increase stress and lower engagement. In contrast who encourage trust, open communication, and help meet faculty basic psychological need satisfaction (Hubbart, 2024). Therefore, integrating an analysis of work environment into a systems thinking framework offers a vital lens for understanding how institutional culture and work practices systematically influence teaching faculty's basic psychological need satisfaction and flourishing outcomes. Systems thinking helps us understand how organizational conditions support and hinder teaching faculty members' basic psychological need satisfaction. Leadership plays an important role in systems thinking, highlighting that supportive leaders help faculty feel more autonomous, relatedness, and

competence, which improves their flourishing. Including leadership in systems thinking provides a better understanding of how universities can promote faculty well-being through organizational practices. Recent research shows that universities need a wide, systematic approach to support faculty mental health. Programs such as mindfulness, wellness initiatives, and peer support can help to reduce stress and improve coping (Abraham et al., 2025). The past research conducted on the student population also supports increased positive performance based on social, environmental, and psychological factors. Similarly, applying this approach to teaching faculty recognises their crucial role in maintaining the quality of education. Supporting faculty's basic psychological need satisfaction, it can improve faculty flourishing and contribute to the institution's performance (Mahomed & Rothmann, 2019).

The present study views the university as a complex system in which teaching faculty, institutional policy, and the work environment

interact to influence faculty flourishing. This idea suggests that improving faculty flourishing requires a holistic approach that supports multiple aspects of the university complex system. The study also shows that professional development and strong collegial relationships help faculty become more flourishing. Overall combining systems thinking and basic psychological need satisfaction with flourishing provides a stronger framework for understanding and improving university faculty flourishing. It also offers empirical evidence that promotes long-term institutional success.

Objectives:

Objectives of the present study are given below:

1. To examine the predictive role of systems thinking and flourishing among university teaching faculty
2. To examine the predictive role of basic psychological need satisfaction and flourishing among university teaching faculty.

Figure 1 Conceptual Model:

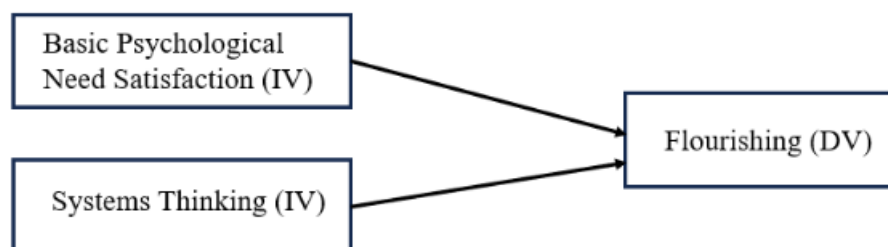


Figure 1 model examines the direct relationship between basic psychological need satisfaction and systems thinking in predicting the flourishing of university faculty. Where basic psychological need satisfaction and systems thinking act as predictor variables, and flourishing acts as an outcome variable in the study.

2. Methodology

The present study adopted a quantitative, survey research design to examine the predictors of flourishing among university faculty. In the study, basic psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, relatedness, competence) and systems thinking are independent variables, and flourishing is the dependent variable. The target sample comprises

university faculty from higher education institutions. The total sample size is 242 teaching faculty members from different private universities located in Bangalore and Chennai, which are tier-one cities in India. Data will be collected through a standardized self-report questionnaire through snowball and purposive sampling. Participants were asked to sign a consent form stating that their responses would be kept confidential. The collected was analysis through using descriptive statistics, correlational analysis, and multiple regression techniques to examine the relationship among the key variables of the study.

Selection Criteria

1. Employees who are Full-time teaching faculty at the private university.
2. Employees who voluntarily participated in the study to complete the self-report questionnaire.
3. Employees are from tier-one cities such as Bangalore and Chennai.

Instrument

Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction at Work Scale:

The basic psychological need satisfaction scale was developed by Deci et al. in 2001. This scale has three dimensions: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This scale typically consists of 21 items. Each item of the scale measures on 7 points Likert- scale. The first dimension of the scale is autonomy, which has seven items. Subsequently, the second dimension of the scale is competence, which has six items, and the third dimension of the scale is relatedness, which has eight items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the scale range from approximately 0.80 to 0.90, confirming good internal consistency and construct validity within occupational samples (Gillet et al., 2019; Szulawski et al., 2021).

Flourishing Scale:

The flourishing scale was developed by Diener in 2010. This scale has two dimensions: psychological well-being and flourishing. This scale typically consists of 8 items. Each item of the scale measures on 7 points Likert scale, where 1 indicates strongly disagree, 2 indicates disagree, 3 indicates slightly disagree, 4 indicates neither agree nor disagree, 5 indicates slightly agree, 6 indicates agree, and 7 indicates strongly agree. The total score ranges in the scale from 8 to 56, with higher scores reflecting greater flourishing. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient was reported as 0.82 to 0.89.

Systems Thinking Scale:

The Systems Thinking Scale (STS) was developed by Dolansky and Moore (2013). The scale encompasses one dimension: the interdependencies of system components. This scale comprises 20 items, each assessed on a 6-point Likert scale. It has demonstrated reliability, evidenced by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89.

Procedure

Before the data collection, approval was obtained from the institutional ethical committee. Participants who met the inclusion criteria were identified and approached directly through institutional and professional networks. For the data collection, snowball sampling was used. Informed consent was provided to the participants before proceeding to the data collection. A survey was conducted online through a self-report questionnaire. A total of 242 valid responses were retained for analysis.

Data Analysis

Correlation analyses were performed to examine the strength and direction of the relationship among systems thinking, basic psychological need satisfaction, and flourishing. Multiple linear regression was conducted to find the predictive role of basic psychological need satisfaction and systems thinking (independent variables) on flourishing (dependent variable), and to assess the relative strength of each predictor. Data was analysed by using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22.

RESULTS

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether systems thinking and basic psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) significantly predicted flourishing among university faculty.

Table 1 *Descriptive Statistics of study variables*

	Mean	SD	N
Flourishing	45.63	6.810	242
Autonomy	32.08	4.511	242

Competence	26.30	4.490	242
Relatedness	38.12	5.640	242
Systems Thinking	51.33	11.408	242

Table 2 *Testing a hypothesis (R and R² of the predictor and outcome variables)*

Outcome Variable	Predictor	R	R ²	F
Flourishing	Systems thinking			
	Autonomy	.567	.322	28.110
	Competences			
	Relatedness			

Table 2 shows that the overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(4, 237) = 28.11, p < .001$. The predictor variables jointly explained 32.2% of the variance in flourishing ($R^2 = .322$;

Adjusted $R^2 = .310$), indicating that systems thinking and basic psychological need satisfaction significantly predicted flourishing among university teaching faculty.

Table 3 *P-value of the predictor and outcome variable*

Outcome Variable	Predictor	B	β	t	P	95% CI
Flourishing	Systems thinking	.102	.171	3.149	<.001	[.038, .166]
	Autonomy	.026	.017	.256	.798	[-.171, .222]
	Competences	.668	.440	6.717	<.001	[.472, .864]
	Relatedness	.185	.153	.002	<.001	[.344, .395]

Table 3 presents the regression coefficients of each predictor included in the model. Competence emerged as the strongest predictor of flourishing ($\beta = .440, p < .001$), followed by systems thinking ($\beta = .171, p < .001$) and relatedness ($\beta = .153, p < .001$). Autonomy did not significantly predict flourishing ($\beta = .017, t = 0.256, p = .798$).

Overall, the findings indicate that systems thinking, competence, and relatedness made significant unique contributions to the prediction of flourishing, whereas autonomy did not contribute significantly after controlling for the other predictors. Therefore, the hypothesis was supported, as the overall regression model demonstrated that systems thinking and basic psychological need satisfaction significantly

predicted flourishing among university teaching faculty.

A multiple linear regression was conducted to examine whether autonomy, competence, relatedness, and systems thinking predicted flourishing. The model explains 32% of the variance in flourishing. Preliminary analyses indicated that the assumptions of multiple linear regression were satisfactorily met: skewness and kurtosis values were within acceptable limits, the Shapiro–Wilk test suggested minor deviations without violating normality assumptions given the sample size, the Durbin–Watson statistic was 2.045 indicating independence of errors, and multicollinearity was not a concern (VIF range = 1.025 to 1.571, tolerance > .10). No influential outliers were detected (standardized residuals

within ± 3 ; Cook's distance < 1), and visual inspection of residual plots confirmed homoscedasticity.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the predictive roles of basic psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) and systems thinking on the flourishing of university faculty. The present study is grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT). The results show that among all the predictors, competence shows the strongest relationship with flourishing, followed by systems thinking and relatedness. These outcomes align with earlier research, underscoring competence as a particularly robust contributor to well-being and growth (McGuinness & Nordstokke, 2021; Sheldon and Filak, 2008).

The multiple studies are consistent with self-determination theory (Hui et al., 2019; McGuinness & Nordstokke, 2021). The finding suggested that a positive relationship between systems thinking and flourishing helps to promote individual to understand complex interactions and help to adapt a broader organizational perspective, which supports an adaptive cognitive framework. A unique finding was that autonomy did not significantly predict flourishing in this analysis, despite having a positive correlation with key variables. This finding suggests the influence of autonomy may be weaker than other predictors in the study. The nonsignificant finding shows that autonomy does not correlate with flourishing, and its influence may be indirect or context-dependent, which requires further investigation.

The model explains 32% of the variance in flourishing, which indicates that basic psychological need satisfaction and systems thinking together make a meaningful contribution. Future study should investigate additional psychosocial and organizational variables that influence flourishing. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of the role of competence and relatedness in promoting flourishing. And suggesting that further

examination should focus on the skill and strengthening supportive social relations. The positive role of systems thinking further indicates a holistic understanding of the factors supporting flourishing in complex environments.

The current findings of the study contribute to the growing body of literature on flourishing through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), elucidating the distinct and collective roles of the basic psychological needs (competence, relatedness, and autonomy) and systems thinking. The finding that highlights the predominant role of competence as the strongest predictor aligns with past research and promotes well-being in the workplace. Feeling motivated, capable and confident in the work tasks helps individuals to grow psychologically and experience the highest level of well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon & Filak, 2008). This finding highlights the importance of skill development, and mastery can promote flourishing (Ryan et al., 2023; Neufeld, 2025). These outcomes align with past research, underscoring competence as a particularly strong contributor to well-being and thriving (McGuinness & Nordstokke, 2021; Sheldon and Filak, 2008).

The framework of systems thinking also aligns with the emerging emphasis on holistic approaches in the educational sector, such as happiness-based training and value-oriented pedagogies that consider emotional well-being and academic competence. These findings suggest that university teaching faculty are not only influenced by individual factors but also by their work environment and relationships with others. Identifying these interdependencies highlights the crucial role of developing comprehensive strategies and basic psychological need satisfaction, strengthening the workplace culture, and providing better support to university teaching faculty. Furthermore, the potential of systems thinking is becoming increasingly significant in this present study. By emphasizing the connections between systems thinking and basic psychological need satisfaction help to develop long-term faculty flourishing. This perspective is especially relevant to higher

education because of the challenges that they are facing, such as heavy workload, limited social support, and the need to maintain the quality of education.

The positive relationship of relatedness observed in this study further supports self-determination theory's claims that meaningful social connections are integral to human flourishing. Relatedness, representing the need to feel connected in the social setting, consistently emerges as an important contributor to psychological wellness, social engagement, and flourishing in diverse populations (Sheldon & Filak, 2008; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). The inclusion of relatedness in predictive role parallels existing evidence indicating that social bonds buffer maladaptive outcomes and enhance individuals' adaptive capacities (Hui et al., 2019). In practical terms, creating educational, organizational, and technological environments that encourage supportive relationships can help flourishing.

An especially novel contribution is the demonstrated positive relationship between systems thinking and flourishing. Systems thinking is defined as the ability to recognize and synthesize patterns, interactions, and interdependencies in a set of activities designed for a specific purpose (Dolansky & Moores, 2014). The results show that autonomy did not significantly predict flourishing, and it required nuanced interpretation. Previous studies have also reported that autonomy was positively associated with flourishing and did not make a unique contribution (Sheldon & Filak, 2008; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). These findings may indicate that the relationship between autonomy and flourishing is influenced by context and may be influenced by other factors such as relatedness and systems thinking. For instance, in collectivist cultures, people often place greater importance on social relationships and group harmony, which may reduce the direct influence of autonomy on flourishing (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). Additionally, the effect of autonomy may be influenced by flourishing indirectly by motivational and meaningful goal which helping

individual. Future studies should examine this indirect effect and explore how organizational factors influence the role of autonomy in flourishing.

The model explained 32% of the variance in flourishing, indicating that systems thinking and basic psychological need satisfaction are important contributors to flourishing. Moreover, findings highlight that additional factors such as personal, social, and environmental factors play a vital role. Additional factors such as emotional regulation, purpose, and meaning in life, socioeconomic condition, and supportive social group may also influence flourishing, and it should be considered for future research.

Moreover, longitudinal and experimental studies are needed to confirm the causal pathways and temporal dynamics among these constructs. In summary, these findings reinforce the centrality of competence and relatedness needs in cultivating flourishing, providing empirical support that may guide targeted interventions in educational, clinical, and organizational settings. The emergent role of systems thinking adds a novel cognitive dimension to flourishing frameworks, emphasizing the importance of equipping individuals with complex perspective-taking and integrative reasoning skills. Despite the unexpectedly limited unique role of autonomy, this does not diminish its theoretical significance within SDT but rather invites more refined investigations into its contextual and indirect effects. Collectively, this study advances a more holistic understanding of the psychological and cognitive processes underpinning flourishing and points to practical avenues for promoting well-being in complex and evolving environments.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide meaningful insight into the predictors of flourishing among university faculty, with the regression model accounting for 32% of the variance in flourishing based on basic psychological need satisfaction and systems thinking. Among the predictors examined, competence emerged as the strongest

contributor, a result consistent with prior research emphasizing the role of skill, mastery, and confidence in fostering psychological well-being (McGuinness & Nordstokke, 2021; Sheldon & Filak, 2008). Systems thinking emerged as the second-strongest predictor in the findings of the study. Highlights that faculty members who can recognize interdependencies and adopt a broader organizational perspective are better positioned to flourish, thereby extending the traditional needs-based framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to include a cognitive dimension. Relatedness also demonstrated a positive association with flourishing. Notably, autonomy did not show a significant unique predictor of flourishing despite showing a positive bivariate correlation with the outcome variable. This result will be attributable to cultural context, particularly in collectivist settings where relational harmony and group cohesion are often prioritized over individual self-direction. These findings underscore the

centrality of competence and relatedness in cultivating faculty flourishing, while positioning systems thinking as a novel and meaningful contributor to the flourishing framework.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies should examine the indirect role of autonomy by examining mediation and moderation models. Additionally, more psychological and contextual variables such as emotional regulation, organizational support, and meaning in life should be incorporated into the research to explain the remaining unexplained variances in flourishing. Longitudinal and experimental designs are recommended to establish the causal and temporal relationship. Finally, the generalizability of the present findings should be assessed by replicating the study across public universities, different geographical regions, and diverse professional groups beyond faculty members employed in private universities.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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