

Employee Competencies and their Impact on Career Development: An Analytical Study of Women College Teachers in Chennai

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Arthy Infanta Antonisamy

Research Scholar, Department of Management
Christhu Raj College, (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University)
Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India
 <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2803-3996>

R.S. Balakumar

Assistant Professor, Department of Management
Christhu Raj College, (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University)
Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and increasing demands for quality higher education, the competencies of teaching staff are paramount. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of key employee competencies and their impact on the career development of female college teachers in self-financing Arts and Science colleges in Chennai, India. The primary objective was to identify prevalent competencies and evaluate their predictive power for career progression. A quantitative research design was employed, utilising a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 100 female teachers selected through convenience sampling. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression. The findings reveal that the five core competencies—Educational, Learning, Social and Behavioural, Managerial, and Technological—collectively explain a significant portion of the variance in career development ($R^2 = 0.467$, $F(5, 94) = 16.45$, $p < .001$). Notably, Educational Competency emerged as the most potent predictor ($\beta = 0.399$, $p < .001$), followed by Managerial Competency ($\beta = 0.184$, $p = .002$), and Learning Competency ($\beta = 0.215$, $p = .016$). Paradoxically, Technological Competency was found to be a non-significant predictor. The study concludes that for female academics in this context, career advancement is more closely tied to integrated pedagogical and leadership capabilities than to isolated technical skills. These results have important policy implications for institutions. This suggests that colleges should prioritise holistic faculty development programs and establish formal career paths that reward a wide range of professional skills. Future research should focus on conducting longitudinal studies to track competency evolution and long-term career impacts, undertaking comparative analyses across institutional types and regions in India for broader generalisability, and pursuing qualitative investigations to uncover the reasons for the non-significance of Technological Competency and integration barriers.

Keywords: Employee Competencies, Career Development, Quantitative Study, Women Educators, Competency Profiling, Correlation Analysis

Introduction

The global context in which higher education is being conducted is itself undergoing a sea change, prompted by the combined forces of technological change and globalising economic activity. In this changing context, the need to develop a highly skilled and capable teaching profession has never been more compelling than it is now. Colleges are a melting pot of students, and the competency of college teachers is a pillar of the process, especially in an economy requiring the finest quality graduates in a knowledge-based economy.

Thus, developing employee competency has become an institutional strategic imperative and an individual desire of institutional managers and faculty to realise the fullest extent of career developmental possibilities. The current study aims to examine this complex relationship by examining and analysing the various competencies of women college teachers and assessing the role they play in career development in the specific context of self-financing Arts and Science Colleges in Chennai, India.

With the liberalisation of the Indian economy, there has been an urgent need to adopt international standards in higher education. The Indian education system, which is one of the largest in the world, has seen record growth in student enrolment, faculty numbers, and institutional expenditure over the past quarter century. However, this growth spurt has come at the cost of quality to such an extent that there has been a systemic slide in academic standards, particularly in colleges. In response, regulatory and accrediting bodies such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) have increasingly emphasized competency-based education and assessment initiatives, urging institutions to foster a closer relationship between the “world of skilled work” and the “world of competent-learning and teaching.”

Related Work

Drawing upon the efforts of Bolden et al. (2003), we provide an extensive review of leadership theory and its respective competency frameworks over the last 70 years. In the context of STEM learning, (Sánchez Carracedo et al. 2018; Consultado and Maria, 2011) offer a model to embed professional competencies into curricula of the European Higher Education Area. The authors noted the importance of harmonising professional competencies and subject-specific knowledge using competency maps. Ross et al. (2018) focused on medical education and competency-based medical education. Their focus on key competencies, such as professionalism and communication, is an expression of the ongoing discussion regarding the relevance and value of competency frameworks in the ever-changing practice of healthcare.

Alharbi (2024) performed a systematised review of the use of competency-based medical education practices, problems, and opportunities to be applied with such frameworks. (Shu et al., 2025) in a bibliometric study of 275 articles, this study analysed how ICT skills for university lecturers have developed. An evident trend toward flexible ICT models that can be tailored to institutions has emerged. (Zirra and Blessing, 2019) critically assessed the hindrances to the integration of technology in higher education, and the results demonstrated that although there is a shared consensus on the value of information technology in teaching, there are still major hindrances. (Khanal et al. 2024; Cui et al. 2024) Used PICRAT model to gauge how teachers integrated technology into teaching. Based on the behavioural analysis of 102 courses, the study identified three levels of innovation: basic, integrated, and high-level. The findings emphasise the relevance of gauging faculties’ digital literacy not only in terms of technology usage but also the innovation it brings about in teaching.

Kulal et al. (2024), in their pre-post analysis of the Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs), showed how systematic technology training hugely boosted teachers’ motivation, innovation, and ability. (Martin et al. 2013) identify the psychological barriers women encounter in traditionally masculine professional domains, highlighting the effects of poor training, mentoring, and gender discrimination. Building on this train of thought, Raburu and Pamela (2015) continue to examine the double burden on female academics, especially in African contexts, due to cultural attitudes and structural arrangements reinforcing gender distinctions. Paoloni and Demartini (2016) present a backward look at ten years of gender research, proposing that improvements have been made, but there are still areas of the literature waiting to be explored.

Cohen and Emily (2018) examined college athletics, noting the scarcity of women in executive roles. She highlights barriers shaped by work–family conflict and entrenched “good old boy” networks. Mentorship is a valuable tool for countering these systemic challenges. (Mitchell and Zachary, 2018) documents gender bias at Rollins College, with pay and recognition gaps persisting

Alfano et al. (2025) show that in Italy, women PhD holders remain less likely than men to secure tenure, even when productivity and experience are accounted for, pointing to systemic early stage barriers. She et al. (2024) found similar patterns in physics, where women are underrepresented as principal investigators and often confined to close networks that limit broader advancement. Rahmani and Weckman (2025), who analysed over 336,000 U.S. faculty, confirm that women—particularly older cohorts—advance more slowly despite comparable performance indicators. Publication and citation metrics weigh disproportionately against female academics, thereby reinforcing structural inequities. Collectively, these studies highlight the persistent gendered obstacles to academic-career progression. They also stress the need for institutional contrasts, since support mechanisms and barriers vary across different types of universities and research environments. (Smith and Steven, 2016) goes further with the discussion by examining drivers that encourage faculty to seek external funding in public institutions.

More broadly, Villarreal and Ruby (2018) condemn US and UK funding models, revealing the complexities and problems with various models. (van den Berg and Marieke, 2021) examine the changing funding responsibility of higher education and emphasise the interaction between government grants and tuition revenues. His observations show increasing faith in individual responsibility for funding education, with implications for the manner in which institutions handle their funding models and career-development initiatives. The fee-based funding trend has the capacity to affect self-funding institutions disproportionately, with student responsibility affecting the level of resources devoted to career development.

Collectively, these studies present a robust description of the journey from teacher to academic leader, emphasising managerial skills and the multiple constituents involved in this journey. This study posits that the competencies of female college teachers not only influence their teaching performance but also have a direct and positive relationship with their career development. Given that Chennai is a major educational hub in South

India, it provides fertile ground for this investigation. This study attempts to assess the impact of employee competencies on the career development of female college teachers working in self-financing Arts and Science Colleges in the city.

Based on these considerations, this study is guided by the following objectives and hypotheses:

- Objective 1: To identify the level of various competencies (Educational, Learning, Social & Behavioural, Technological, Managerial) possessed by female college teachers.
- Objective 2: To analyse the significant difference in competencies between married and unmarried women college teachers.
- H_0 : There is no significant difference between married and unmarried women college teachers with respect to the various employee competencies they possess.
- Objective 3: Examine the relationship between employee competencies and career development.
- Objective 4: To evaluate the impact of employee competencies on the career development of female college teachers.
- H_1 : The set of five employee competencies (Educational, Learning, Social & Behavioural, Technological, Managerial) significantly predicts career development.

By addressing these objectives, this research seeks to provide valuable insights for higher educational institutions, faculty members, and policymakers, offering evidence-based recommendations to enhance competency development and foster meaningful career progression in the academic profession.

Methodology

A quantitative method was most suitable for this research because it enables statistical analysis of quantitative data and allows one to determine significant relationships as well as the magnitude of the effect of independent variables (competencies) on a dependent variable (career growth). The design is descriptive in that it aims to profile the competency levels of the target population and exploratory in its investigation of the underlying factors that influence career progression. A survey method was used to collect primary data, which is an efficient means of

gathering information on perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours from a large sample size.

Population and Sampling

The target population for this study comprised 10 women college teachers working in self-financing Arts and Science colleges in Chennai, India. A random sample of 100 female teachers was selected for the study from a total of 456 female teachers. A non-probability sampling technique, specifically convenience sampling, was used. This method was chosen for its practicality and efficiency, considering the constraints of time and resources. This allowed the researcher to access a readily available pool of respondents within the defined geographical area of Chennai. While this method limits the generalisability of the findings, it is suitable for an exploratory study of this nature, focused on a specific, localised context.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed between June 2025 and July 2025. The questionnaire was designed to capture demographic information and measure key variables of the study. The core of the instrument consisted of questions measuring five distinct competencies: Educational, Learning, Social and Behavioural, Technological, and Managerial, as well as the dependent variable, Career Development. These items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Secondary data were also gathered from academic journals, reports, books, and online resources to build the theoretical framework and support the discussion of the findings.

Results

This section reports the empirical results of the study based on statistical tests of data collected through the questionnaires of 100 female college instructors. The findings are divided into three categories: demographic profile of the sample, descriptive statistics of the key competencies, and inferential analysis employed to test the hypotheses.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile of the sample in Table 1 provides the background against which to understand the results of this study. The majority of respondents were married (68%), and the age range of 41-50 years was the largest (46%). In terms of qualifications, an overwhelming majority had a PG with M.Phil & NET/SET (47%). The most common designation was Assistant Professor (52%). Most of the teachers (54%) had 6-10 years of teaching experience and worked in non-autonomous colleges (54%). The sample was predominantly from the arts department (62%).

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Women College Teachers (N=100)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Marital Status	Married	68	68.0
	Unmarried	32	32.0
Age	Upto 40 Years	36	36.0
	41 - 50 Years	46	46.0
	Above 50 Years	18	18.0
Qualification	PG with M. Phil	12	12.0
	PG, M. Phil & NET/SET	47	47.0
	PG, M. Phil, NET/SET & Ph.D.	31	31.0
	PG, M. Phil & Ph.D.	10	10.0
Designation	Assistant Professor	52	52.0
	Associate Professor	22	22.0
	Professor	10	10.0
	Professor and Head/ In-charge	16	16.0

Descriptive Statistics of Employee Competencies

A descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the perceived level of the five core competencies among the respondents. Each competency was measured using three questions on a 5-point scale,

making the maximum possible score for each competency 15 and the total score for all competencies 75. The results, presented in Table 2, indicate that all competencies were perceived to be above-average. Educational Competency ranked the highest, with a mean score of 13.20, while Technological Competency ranked the lowest, with a mean of 9.72. The overall mean competency score was 58.61 (78.15%), suggesting a high level of self-perceived competence among teachers.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Employee Competencies (N=100)

Competency	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
Educational Competency	13.20	1.761	1
Learning Competency	12.42	1.117	2
Managerial Competency	11.94	1.798	3
Social and Behavioural Competency	11.33	1.644	4
Technological Competency	9.72	1.646	5
Overall Employee Competencies	58.61	2.325	-

Inferential Analysis

Inferential statistics were used to test the research hypotheses and explore the relationships among the variables.

Independent Samples t-test: Competencies by Marital Status

An independent samples t-test was conducted to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in competencies between married and unmarried teachers. The analysis compared the overall competency scores of the two groups. The results showed no statistically significant difference,

with a t-statistic of 0.567 and a p-value of 0.572. Because the p-value is greater than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that marital status does not significantly influence the perceived competency levels of female college teachers in this sample. Table 3 provides the t-test results.

Table 3 T-test Result

Test Type	Degrees of Freedom (df)	t-value	p-value	Significance
t-test	98	0.567	0.572	Not significant

Chi-Square Test of Independence: Designation and Competency Level

To examine the relationship between skills and professional roles more comprehensively, a Chi-Square Test of Independence was performed, as shown in Table 3. The test determines whether a statistically significant relationship exists between the 'Designation' (ordinal variable) of a teacher and the level of 'Educational Competency' he/she possesses. To facilitate the analysis, the continuous scores of Educational Competency were categorised into three categories: "Low", "Medium", and "High" based on the distribution of scores. The test sought to determine whether the proportion of teachers at those levels of competence varied significantly depending on the professional titles.

H_0 (Null Hypothesis): No statistically significant correlation exists between a teacher's designation and their classified Educational Competency level.

H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a statistically significant correlation between a teacher's designation and their classified Educational Competency level.

Table 4 Analysis of the Relationship between Designation vs. Educational Competency Levels: A Chi-Square Test Approach

Variables	Alternative Hypothesis (H1)	Null Hypothesis (H0)	Pearson Chi-Square Value	df	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided)
Designation vs. Educational Competency Level	There is a measurable association between Designation and Educational Competency Level.	There is no measurable association between Designation and Educational Competency Level.	5.241	6	.513

The result of the chi-square test ($\chi^2(6) = 5.241$, $p = .513$) reflects that the p-value is greater than the 0.05 significance level. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis. This result reveals that there is no statistically significant relationship between a teacher's professional title and their perceived level (Low, Medium, or High) of educational competence. While other analyses (like ANOVA) may show the differences in the mean scores of specific skills like managerial competency, the test shows that high educational competency among the faculty is not present only at higher-level positions, but it occurs at all designation levels.

One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

ANOVA was conducted to explore differences in competencies across various demographic groups. For instance, an analysis of Social & Behavioural Competency by Qualification level showed no significant difference ($F(3, 96) = 0.89$, $p = 0.45$). However, a key analysis central to the study's objectives examined the differences in Managerial Competency across different faculty designations (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor,

Professor and Head/In-charge). This test revealed a statistically significant difference, suggesting that managerial competency levels vary according to the teacher's academic rank. This finding is crucial as it implies that as teachers progress in their careers to higher designations, their managerial skills are perceived to be different, likely increasing with their responsibility.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationship between each of the five competencies and Career Development. As shown in Table 4, all five competencies demonstrated a positive and statistically significant correlation with Career Development. The strongest relationship was observed between Educational Competency and Career Development ($r = 0.642$, $p < .001$), followed by Managerial Competency ($r = 0.558$, $p < .001$). Technological Competency, while still significant, had the weakest correlation ($r = 0.287$, $p < .01$). These results strongly suggest that the potential for career development increases with each competency.

Table 5 Correlation between Competencies and Career Development (N=100)

Competency	Pearson Correlation (r) with Career Development	p-Value	Competency
Educational Competency	0.642	< .001	Educational Competency
Learning Competency	0.498	< .001	Learning Competency
Social and Behavioural Competency	0.395	< .001	Social and Behavioural Competency
Technological Competency	0.287	< .01	Technological Competency
Managerial Competency	0.558	< .001	Managerial Competency

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

To assess the combined predictive power of the five competencies on Career Development, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. Table 5The overall model was highly significant ($F(5, 94) = 16.45$, $p < .001$), indicating that the set of five competencies was a strong predictor of Career Development. The model explains 46.7% of the variance in Career Development, as indicated by the

R-squared value of 0.467. The Adjusted R-squared, which accounts for the number of predictors, was 0.438, confirming the robustness of the model.

Model Fit Summary: $R^2 = 0.467$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.438$, $F(5, 94) = 16.45$, $p = 1.22e-11$

The detailed results for each of the predictors are presented in Table 5. The analysis revealed that three of the five competencies were statistically significant predictors of Career Development:

- Educational Competency was the strongest significant predictor ($\beta = 0.399$, $p < .001$).
 - Learning Competency was a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.215$, $p = .016$).
 - Managerial Competency was also a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.184$, $p = .002$).
- Conversely, Social & Behavioural Competency ($p = .151$) and, most notably, Technological

Competency ($p = .337$) were found to be non-significant predictors in the presence of the other variables. This implies that while they may have a simple correlation with career development, their unique contribution to predicting it is not statistically significant when other, more powerful competencies are accounted for.

Table 6 Multiple Linear Regression Results Predicting Career Development

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coeff. (β)	Std. Error	t-Value	p-Value	Significance
(Constant)	2.000	1.468	1.362	.176	
Educational Competency	0.399	0.058	6.908	< .001	Significant
Learning Competency	0.215	0.088	2.448	.016	Significant
Social & Behavioural Competency	0.094	0.065	1.449	.151	Not Significant
Technological Competency	-0.056	0.058	-0.966	.337	Not Significant
Managerial Competency	0.184	0.056	3.256	.002	Significant
(Constant)	2.000	1.468	1.362	.176	

Discussion

The findings of this study offer a nuanced and compelling narrative regarding the drivers of career development for female college teachers in Chennai's self-financing institutions. The multiple regression model is the centrepiece of this study, explaining 46.7% of the variance in career development. This R-squared value is robust for social science research and strongly supports the central premise that a faculty member's competency profile is a critical determinant of their professional trajectory. This validates the focus on competency-based frameworks, as advocated by bodies such as the UGC and NAAC, and suggests that institutional efforts to foster these skills are likely to yield tangible results in faculty career progression.

The Primacy of Educational Competency

The most striking finding is the overwhelming significance of Educational Competency ($\beta = 0.399$, $p < .001$) as the primary driver of career development. This competency encompasses core pedagogical skills, curriculum design, student assessment, and the ability to create effective learning environments. This suggests that, within this academic context, the

fundamental quality of teaching and academic engagement remains the most valued attribute for career advancement. This aligns with the foundational purpose of higher-education institutions and reinforces the idea that, despite numerous other pressures and demands, excellence in the core mission of education is what is ultimately recognised and rewarded.

The Paradox of Technological Competency

Perhaps the most counterintuitive and thought-provoking result is the non-significance of Technological Competency ($p = .337$) in the regression model. This finding resonates strongly with the literature. Shu et al. (2025) and She et al. (2024) found a disconnect between the availability of technology and its meaningful pedagogical application. The results of this study provide empirical support for these conclusions. It is plausible that career development is not driven by the ability to use a learning management system but by the ability to integrate that system into a coherent and effective teaching strategy, which falls under Educational Competency.

The Emerging Role of Managerial and Learning Competencies

The significance of Managerial Competency ($\beta = 0.184$, $p = .002$) and Learning Competency ($\beta = 0.215$, $p = .016$) highlights two other crucial dimensions of academic-career growth. The importance of managerial skills aligns with the literature on the transition from educator to an academic leader (Alfano, 2024). As teachers advance, they are expected to take on administrative responsibilities, lead departments, and manage projects in their schools. This finding confirms that the skills required for leadership roles are a significant factor in career progression. Institutions that fail to cultivate these competencies may inadvertently create a “leadership pipeline” problem.

Contextual Factors: Gender and Institutional Type

While the t-test showed no significant difference in competencies based on marital status, this does not negate the broader challenges faced by women in academia, as highlighted in the literature (Martin et al. 2013; Raburu and Pamela 2015). The study’s focus on a specific demographic within self-financing colleges—a sector often characterised by different employment conditions and career structures than public institutions (Ross et al. 2018)—is important. The findings may reflect a context in which performance metrics are heavily tied to teaching and administrative duties, thus elevating educational and managerial competencies as key differentiators for promotion and advancement.

Limitations

Although this study offers valuable insights into the relationship between employee competencies and career development among female college teachers in Chennai, certain limitations must be acknowledged. This study employed a convenience sampling technique with a relatively small sample size of 100 respondents. Although appropriate for exploratory investigations, this approach restricts the generalisability of the findings to wider populations. In addition this research is focused on five core competencies and did not incorporate other contextual factors—such as institutional policies, socio-economic background, mentoring

opportunities, or cultural influences—that may also play a significant role in shaping career development

Conclusion

This study aimed to demystify the complex relationship between employee competencies and career development for female college teachers in the unique context of Chennai’s self-financing higher education sector. By systematically analysing a comprehensive set of competencies, this study provides empirical evidence that challenges conventional wisdom and offers a more nuanced understanding of what truly drives academic-career progression. The findings conclusively demonstrate that a combination of Educational, Learning, and Managerial competencies explains nearly half the variance in career development, establishing a strong predictive model for success.

The most critical takeaway from this study is the clear distinction between possessing a skill and applying it effectively. The non-significance of Technological Competency, when contrasted with the dominance of Educational Competency, delivers a powerful message: for educators, career advancement is not contingent on the tools they possess, but on their mastery of the craft of teaching. The ability to design engaging learning experiences, manage academic responsibilities effectively, and continuously adapt and grow forges the path to a successful and fulfilling academic career.

Ultimately, this study contributes vital information to the puzzle of faculty development in India. It provides a data-driven foundation for individual educators to chart their professional growth, institutions to build more effective support systems, and policymakers to craft more insightful standards of excellence. By shifting the focus from isolated skills to integrated, holistic competencies, we can better equip educators to meet the challenges of the 21st century and, in doing so, elevate the quality of higher education for generations to come.

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Author Details

Arthy Infanta Antonisamy, Research Scholar, Department of Management, Christhu Raj College, (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University), Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India, **Email Id:** arthyinfanta@atomicmail.io.

R.S. Balakumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Christhu Raj College, (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University), Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India, **Email Id:** balakumartrichy1969@gmail.com.