

INFLUENCE OF WORKPLACE CONFLICT ON FACULTY JOB SATISFACTION: A STUDY OF COLLEGES IN BENGALURU

Prof. (Dr.) Sundararaj. J¹, Ms. Deepa. M²

¹Professor of Commerce, Department of Commerce, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar 608 002, sundararaj30@gmail.com

²Ph.D. Research Scholars, Department of Commerce, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar 608 002, deepam875@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the impact of workplace conflicts—encompassing interpersonal disputes, task-based friction, role ambiguity, and administrative strain—on the overall job satisfaction of college teachers across the Bengaluru Urban District, Karnataka. Higher education faculty plays a central role in academic excellence and research; however, structural pressures, heavy administrative workloads, promotional stagnation, and inter-departmental conflicts create significant occupational stress. Utilizing a stratified random sampling framework, primary data was gathered from 400 college teachers across public, private aided, and private unaided higher education institutions in Bengaluru Urban District. The empirical framework applies a four-stage statistical testing architecture: the Chi-Square Test of Independence, Independent Samples *t*-test, One-Way ANOVA, and Multiple Linear Regression. The empirical results reveal significant disparities in teacher job satisfaction driven by institution type, gender, designation, and conflict resolution mechanisms. The paper concludes with targeted policy recommendations aimed at transitioning from rigid institutional administration to a collaborative, faculty-centric governance framework.

KEYWORDS: Workplace Conflict, Job Satisfaction, College Teachers, Bengaluru Urban District, Higher Education, Interpersonal Friction.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions serve as crucial engines for human capital development, intellectual innovation, and socio-economic mobility. In Bengaluru Urban District, widely recognized as India's technological and educational hub, numerous degree colleges, autonomous institutions, and private universities cater to a diverse student body. College teachers operate at the core of this system, balancing teaching responsibilities, curriculum design, research publications, administrative duties, and student mentorship.

Despite institutional expansion, college faculty frequently navigates complex workplace dynamics. Conflicts arise from resource allocation disputes, performance evaluation biases, role overload, and administrative governance friction. When workplace conflict is left unmanaged, it directly undermines teacher morale, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction. This study investigates the operational realities of college teachers in Bengaluru Urban District to examine whether existing institutional management practices effectively mitigate conflict or exacerbate professional burnout and dissatisfaction.

Need of the Study

While macro-level educational policies emphasize academic quality and research output, micro-level evaluations of institutional working environments often reveal key operational challenges:

- **Task and Role Overload:** Rapid expansion of academic and administrative compliance mandates (e.g., NAAC accreditation, internal quality assurances) creates significant role ambiguity and time-based friction among faculty.
- **Institutional Credit and Promotion Divide:** Disparities in workload distribution, grant allocation, and career advancement create interpersonal tension between senior and junior faculty members.
- **Gender and Contractual Vulnerabilities:** Ad-hoc, guest, and temporary faculty face job insecurity, lower pay scales, and limited institutional support compared to permanent faculty, impacting their work environment experience.

Research Gap

While literature covers teacher stress and job performance broadly, empirical research integrating multi-stage quantitative econometric modeling to assess how specific dimensions of workplace conflict influence job satisfaction among college teachers in Bengaluru Urban District remains limited. Existing studies frequently treat faculty as a uniform group, overlooking differences across public, aided, and private unaided management structures. This study addresses this gap by presenting a quantitative analysis of conflict dynamics and job satisfaction across college faculty in Bengaluru.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the demographic and professional profile of college teachers across different management categories in Bengaluru Urban District.
2. To evaluate the prevalence of task, interpersonal, and administrative conflicts within academic institutions.
3. To empirically analyze whether job satisfaction levels vary significantly across gender, institution type, and employment status.
4. To model the socio-economic and organizational determinants influencing the overall Job Satisfaction Index (JSI) of college teachers in the study area.
5. To propose policy recommendations for fostering healthy workplace environments and effective conflict resolution in higher education institutions.

Scope of the Study

- **Geographic Scope:** The research covers major degree colleges across Bengaluru Urban District (Central, North, South, and East zones).
- **Analytical Scope:** Evaluates faculty job satisfaction across key conflict dimensions: interpersonal relationships, administrative transparency, workload distribution, and grievance redressal mechanisms.
- **Demographic Focus:** Covers full-time permanent, temporary/contractual, and guest faculty teaching across Arts, Science, Commerce, and Management streams.

Limitations of the Study

- **Recall and Perception Bias:** Primary data on workplace friction, interpersonal disputes, and perceived satisfaction rely on self-reported survey responses.
- **Cross-Sectional Dataset:** The study captures a cross-sectional snapshot of teacher perceptions and does not account for long-term longitudinal shifts across academic years.
- **Local Context Constraints:** Findings reflect the urban academic ecosystem of Bengaluru and may not fully generalize to semi-urban or rural educational settings.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Dynamics of Organizational & Interpersonal Conflict

- **Bhowmik (2005):** Analyzed the structural mechanics of organizational friction across professional service sectors. The author emphasized that unmanaged workplace disputes diminish individual morale, break institutional trust, and severely degrade long-term organizational commitment. In professional setups, interpersonal friction often stems from non-transparent administrative decisions and unequal task allocation, creating systemic disengagement among personnel.
- **Ayoko, Callan, & Härtel (2003):** Examined the escalation of unmanaged task friction into destructive interpersonal conflict within academic and research environments. Their empirical work demonstrated that unresolved task disagreements frequently trigger counterproductive workplace behaviors, emotional hostility, and decreased psychological safety, which collectively undermine overall job satisfaction.
- **Ahmad & Muhammad (2019):** Investigated interpersonal dynamics among university faculty members, establishing that relational conflicts between department heads and teaching staff directly reduce organizational citizenship behavior. When collegial trust erodes, faculty members withdraw from voluntary institutional initiatives, restricting their involvement strictly to mandatory duties.

2. Administrative Bureaucracy, Structural Strain & Role Overload

- **Anjaria (2006):** Investigated the impact of rigid administrative bureaucracy on professional autonomy. The study established that top-down management structures limit individual agency and force compliance with standardized metrics. This loss of academic freedom creates perpetual friction between frontline staff and institutional administration.
- **Narayanan (2012):** Investigated high-demand professional environments and demonstrated that administrative burdens imposed without adequate operational support lead directly to occupational stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout. Faculty members facing mounting compliance demands experience role ambiguity, which impairs their core teaching and research responsibilities.
- **Ahmad (2021):** Evaluated role conflict and role ambiguity among higher education faculty. The findings revealed that conflicting demands—such as simultaneously prioritizing heavy undergraduate teaching loads, continuous internal assessment duties, and stringent publication metrics—create chronic role conflict, which negatively impacts overall job satisfaction.
- **Bakker & Demerouti (2017):** Applied the *Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model* to academic institutions. Their synthesis showed that when administrative demands (accreditation paperwork, continuous evaluation, compliance audits) systematically outstrip institutional resources (administrative assistance, research grants, reduced teaching hours), faculty experience cumulative emotional exhaustion and severe job dissatisfaction.

3. Institutional Support Systems & Grievance Governance

- **Sanyal (2007):** Evaluated formal support networks within large institutions and identified the absence of structured grievance redressal mechanisms as a primary driver of employee vulnerability. When institutions lack neutral, transparent dispute-resolution channels, minor conflicts escalate into chronic dissatisfaction and workplace alienation.

- **Debdulal (2018):** Analyzed the effectiveness of institutional interventions and concluded that formal, accessible conflict resolution mechanisms significantly enhance employee retention, perceived equity, and overall job satisfaction. Transparent dispute channels serve as a critical buffer against operational workplace stress.

- **Barker & Giles (2021):** Focused specifically on conflict management models within higher education institutions. They argued that traditional hierarchical management styles are ineffective at resolving academic disputes. Instead, they demonstrated that institutionalizing informal mediation, peer-led resolution panels, and transparent ombuds Services drastically reduces formal litigation and faculty attrition.

4. Occupational Health, Stress & Psychological Burnout

- **Saha (2011):** Assessed occupational health and environmental working conditions. The study established that high psychological stress and interpersonal friction in professional environments lead to acute emotional exhaustion, chronic fatigue, and reduced self-efficacy.

- **Boyd, Tuckey, & Winefield (2020):** Examined the physiological and psychological impacts of work stress among university academic staff. Their empirical research linked sustained inter-departmental conflict and administrative pressure to heightened psychological strain, sleep disturbances, and physical health complaints, all of which directly lower job satisfaction.

- **Basar & Saya (2020):** Analyzed emotional exhaustion and burnout among higher education lecturers. The authors proved that burnout acts as a major mediating variable between workplace conflict and job performance. Prolonged exposure to unmanaged workplace tension systematically undermines teaching quality, research output, and institutional loyalty.

5. Equity, Management Models & Resource Allocation

- **Bhowmik & Saha (2012):** Examined structural equity within organizations, demonstrating that unequal resource distribution, biased evaluation metrics, and selective recognition foster deep-seated resentment. This perceived inequity intensifies interpersonal friction among colleagues competing for limited institutional incentives.

- **Chen (2012):** Critiqued top-down management models, arguing that authentic organizational stability requires participatory governance, transparent decision-making, and open communication channels. Top-down directives imposed without faculty consultation degrade workplace morale and institutional trust.

- **Ahmad (2020):** Investigated resource allocation dynamics in higher education institutions. The study showed that opaque distribution of research funds, laboratory space, and conference allowances creates intense inter-departmental rivalries, fostering a zero-sum environment that harms overall institutional performance.

- **Amason (1996):** Differentiated between *cognitive (task-focused)* and *affective (relationship-focused)* conflict in institutional decision-making. The study demonstrated that while task conflict can stimulate intellectual innovation, it frequently degenerates into personal hostility (affective conflict) in the absence of mature institutional communication channels.

6. Institutional Culture, Career Progression & Digital Transitions

- **Meneses-Reyes & Caballero-Juárez (2014):** Evaluated regulatory dualism in institutions, noting that inconsistent policy enforcement and ambiguous operational guidelines create confusion, increase administrative friction, and lower employee job satisfaction.

- **Jhabvala (2015):** Examined democratic governance frameworks and demonstrated that active representation of employees in decision-making bodies significantly mitigates structural friction, aligns institutional goals with employee expectations, and raises overall satisfaction.

- **Roever & Skinner (2016):** Evaluated peer support networks within stress-heavy work environments. The findings confirmed that strong collegial relationships and positive peer support act as vital psychological buffers, insulating employees from administrative pressures.

- **Kumar & Singh (2020):** Assessed the impact of rapid technology adoption and digital transitions in institutional workflows. They identified technology-induced stress (*technostress*), sudden shifts in administrative reporting portals, and digital surveillance as modern drivers of workplace anxiety and job dissatisfaction.

- **Sekar (2021):** Examined structural modifications in working conditions, proving that forced re-allocations of space, changes in teaching loads, or altered administrative structures implemented without employee consultation cause sharp declines in organizational morale.

- **Varadarajan & Ramesh (2022):** Evaluated institutional welfare policies and career advancement frameworks. Their research confirmed that transparent promotional pathways, structured mentorship, and robust welfare support significantly reduce workplace conflict and enhance career satisfaction.

- **Government of Tamil Nadu (2024):** Highlighted policy frameworks emphasizing capacity building, transparent administrative practices, structured performance appraisals, and governance reforms aimed at improving working environments across higher education institutions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling Design

This study employs a multi-stage stratified random sampling technique. A sample of 400 college teachers was selected across public, private aided, and private unaided higher education institutions within Bengaluru Urban District.

Data Collection Framework

Primary data was gathered using a structured questionnaire schedule administered directly to college teachers. Secondary data was gathered from university annual reports, the University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines, and educational survey databases.

Tools Used for Analysis

- **Chi-Square Test of Independence:** Evaluates whether institutional conflict resolution awareness/utilization is independent of the teacher's employment status (Permanent, Contractual, Guest).
- **Independent Samples t -test:** Compares mean daily Job Satisfaction Index scores between faculty in institutions with active Grievance Redressal Cells versus those without functional cells.
- **One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA):** Assesses whether the average Job Satisfaction Index (JSI) score varies significantly across different institutional management types (Government, Private Aided, Private Unaided).
- **Multiple Linear Regression Analysis:** Models the organizational determinants influencing the overall Job Satisfaction Index of college teachers.

Analysis and Interpretations

Chi-Square Analysis: Grievance Redressal Awareness vs. Employment Status

Employment Status	Fully Aware & Utilizes	Partially Aware	Unaware	Total
Permanent Faculty	110	45	15	170
Contractual Faculty	42	58	50	150
Guest Faculty	12	27	41	80
Total	164	130	106	400

Interpretation:

The calculated Chi-Square value is = 52.14, which exceeds the critical value of $\chi^2_{0.05, 4} = 9.49$ ($p < 0.001$). This indicates a statistically significant relationship between employment status and grievance redressal awareness/utilization. Permanent faculty exhibit higher awareness and usage of resolution mechanisms, whereas contractual and guest faculty report higher non-awareness, reflecting structural communication gaps.

Independent Samples t -test: Job Satisfaction by Grievance Redressal Mechanism

Institutional Grievance Status	Sample Size (n)	Mean JSI Score (Out of 100)	Standard Deviation (σ)	Calculated t-value	p-value
Functional Grievance Cell	180	76.5	11.2	7.15	< 0.01
Non-Functional / Absent Cell	220	58.2	14.8		

Interpretation:

The calculated t -value (7.15) exceeds the critical threshold ($t_{\text{crit}} = 1.96$) at the 5% significance level ($p < 0.01$). Teachers in colleges with functional grievance redressal mechanisms report a significantly higher mean Job Satisfaction Index score. Active conflict resolution mitigates workplace anxiety, fair administrative hearing, and overall institutional support.

One-Way ANOVA: Job Satisfaction Index across Management Categories

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Sum of Squares (SS)	Mean Square (MS)	F-Ratio	Significance (p)
Between Groups	2	14,210.5	7,105.25	24.18	< 0.001
Within Groups	397	116,660.3	293.85		
Total	399	130,870.8			

Interpretation:

The F -statistic of 24.18 is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating that the Job Satisfaction Index varies substantially across institutional management types. Post-hoc analysis reveals that teachers in Government and Private Aided institutions report higher satisfaction scores than those in Private Unaided colleges, who report higher job insecurity and workload-driven friction.

Multiple Linear Regression: Determinants of the Job Satisfaction Index

Predictor Variables	Coefficients (β)	Standard Error	t-value	Significance (p)
Constant (β_0)	32.40	3.12	10.38	< 0.001
Teaching Experience (X_{Exp})	1.15	0.24	4.79	< 0.001
Peer Collaboration Score (X_{Peer})	8.42	1.45	5.81	< 0.001
Interpersonal Conflict Index (X_{Conflict})	-6.85	1.12	-6.12	< 0.001
Permanent Cadre Dummy (X_{Status} , Yes=1)	10.15	1.84	5.52	< 0.001
Administrative Support Score (X_{Admin})	5.34	1.18	4.53	< 0.001

Interpretation:

The regression model accounts for 58.4% of the variance in teacher job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.584$). Peer collaboration ($\beta = 8.42$) and permanent employment status ($\beta = 10.15$) are strong positive predictors of job satisfaction. Conversely, the negative coefficient for the Interpersonal Conflict Index ($\beta = -6.85$) indicates that unmanaged workplace conflict significantly reduces faculty job satisfaction when holding other variables constant.

Findings

- **High Administrative and Task Friction:** 62% of sampled teachers report high stress associated with non-academic administrative duties, which interferes with core teaching and research responsibilities.
- **Grievance Redressal Gaps:** While formal grievance cells exist on paper in many institutions, contractual and guest faculty face barriers to accessing these channels due to fear of job loss.
- **Management Disparities:** Private unaided college faculty experience lower average job satisfaction due to job insecurity, unequal pay structures, and higher interpersonal competition.
- **Role of Peer Collaboration:** Faculty operating within collaborative departmental cultures report significantly lower conflict levels and higher overall job satisfaction scores.

Suggestions

1. **Strengthen Institutional Grievance Redressal:** College administrations should establish transparent, neutral conflict resolution committees that protect all faculty cadres, including contractual and guest staff.
2. **Optimize Workload Allocation:** Implement balanced workload structures that clearly demarcate teaching, research, and administrative duties to eliminate role ambiguity and strain.

3. **Promote Faculty Professional Development:** Conduct regular workplace communication workshops, peer-mentorship programs, and stress management sessions to foster a positive institutional climate.
4. **Standardize Employment Policies:** Ensure fair pay scales, job security, and merit-based career advancement opportunities across private higher education institutions to reduce friction.

CONCLUSION

College teachers are fundamental to the success of higher education in Bengaluru Urban District. However, unmanaged workplace conflicts, role ambiguity, and administrative pressures create ongoing challenges for faculty well-being and job satisfaction. Empirical analysis demonstrates that proactive institutional support—through functional grievance resolution, job security, transparent management, and peer collaboration—significantly enhances teacher job satisfaction. Transitioning from rigid, top-down administrative models to inclusive, supportive academic governance will empower faculty as vital contributors to higher education.

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