

“Unveiling the Dual Dynamics of Stressors and Stress-Relievers on College Educators' Job Satisfaction”

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Abstract

Job satisfaction is essential for educators in higher education since it has a direct effect on their performance at work and on their personal well-being. The educational environment benefits from the increased likelihood of engaged, motivated, and dedicated educators.

This study “Unveiling the Dual Dynamics of Stressors and Stress-Relievers on College Educators' Job Satisfaction” explores the complex relationship between stressors and stress-relievers and their impact on job satisfaction among college educators.

The study determines the impact of Factors determining the of Stress in Colleges (FDS), official factors contributing to stress (OFC), and Official Factors which can reduce to Stress (OFR) on overall job satisfaction (OJS) among faculty teaching in higher educational institutions.

Methodology: The present study uses simple linear regression analysis. Three separate models were tested to find out the direct relationship of each factor with job satisfaction.

Findings: The study reveals that FDS has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction, which means that the more the level of stress, lower is the educators' overall well-being at work. On the contrary, OFR exhibits the strongest positive impact, which shows that the factors which reduce stress acts as the workplace support systems and they play a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction. However, OFC, which was expected to contribute negatively to stress, showed a positive relationship with job satisfaction, suggesting that work place challenges, when managed effectively, may serve as motivational factors. The findings of this study could have significant implications for higher education institutions, as they strive to create an environment that fosters job satisfaction and, in turn, enhances the quality of education delivered to students.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Stress, College Educators, Stress Factors, Support Systems, Simple Linear Regression

Introduction

Job satisfaction is one of the most important and crucial determinants of workplace efficiency, employee well-being, and overall institutional success (Khan et al., 2019) (Bolin, 2007). In context, with the reference of higher education, college faculties are responsible for shaping the academic experiences of students that extends beyond classrooms, shapes the educational experience and foster the growth of the students. This necessitates job satisfaction as an essential factor in maintaining a high-quality teaching and research outputs. However, the teaching profession though, being a noble profession also is, often associated with significant stressors, including heavy workloads, administrative pressures, institutional expectations, and student-related challenges. These stressors could impact, educators' psychological well-being, which ultimately affects their job satisfaction and in turn their performance.

The factors which contribute to job satisfaction among college educators are complex and varied. Various studies have identified a range of factors that can influence job satisfaction, including personal characteristics, working conditions, relationships with colleagues, and institutional support (Khan et al., 2019) (Bolin, 2007) (Arian et al., 2018) (Knox & Anfara, 2013). For instance, factors such as opportunities for personal and professional growth, collaborative work with colleagues, and a manageable schedule can positively impact job satisfaction. On the other hand, factors like heavy workloads, administrative pressures, and student-related challenges can lead to job dissatisfaction and stress. (Knox & Anfara, 2013) (Bolin, 2007) (Arian et al., 2018)

Researchers have found that job satisfaction and workplace stress have an indirect relationship that is more the job satisfaction less the workplace stress and vice-versa. This in turn impacts teaching effectiveness and student academic performance. Educators who experience continuous and prolonged job stress often to have weaker relationships with students which lead to increase in classroom management problems. (Knox & Anfara, 2013) Therefore, understanding and addressing the stress factors that contribute to job satisfaction among college educators is necessary for maintaining a high-quality educational environment and fostering student success.

Relationship The Between Stress and Job Satisfaction

Stress in the workplace has been an important and crucial topic of study across various professions. Most of the researches have consistently highlighted the negative effects of stress upon job satisfaction (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). As mentioned earlier, stress and job satisfaction have an inverse relationship thus, high levels of stress lead to burnout, emotional exhaustion, and decreased motivation, which, in turn, result in lower job satisfaction. For college educators, immoderate workloads, performance evaluations, lack of institutional support, and job insecurity serve as major stressors. But all stress does not impact job

satisfaction in the same way. While excessive, unmanaged stress is detrimental, certain challenges which are structured and refined within the work environment may act as motivating factors which enhance engagement and productivity of educators. The duality of stress-impact, necessitates a nuanced understanding of the different types of stressors affecting college educators.

Understanding Workplace Stress in Academia

The academic profile which once, perceived as an intellectually fulfilling and rewarding profession now however, has considerably let faculty members face significant workplace stress due to rising demands in teaching, research, administrative work, and student mentorship (Winefield et al., 2003). Higher education institutions have undergone structural and policy changes over the years, increasing workload expectations, augmentation of performance assessments, and more and more emphases on research productivity. Consequently, stress has emerged as a critical issue affecting faculty job satisfaction and institutional effectiveness (Kinman & Wray, 2020).

Literature Review

Dulebohn & Werling, 2007 It has been seen that remuneration is not only responsible for making employees meet their fundamental needs but also responsible for providing them the job satisfaction at the higher level.

Maslić (2011) showed that the job instability is a major factor in this circumstance, full-time professors reported less stress at work than associate, assistant, and temporary professors. The most significant stress-inducing element, particularly for teaching professionals, is job instability. Individual stress is especially related to personality traits including authoritarianism, rigidity, masculinity, femininity, extroversion, spontaneity, and locus of control. When a person's career changes, it throws him off balance, and it is his responsibility to restore it. An individual endures stress during this procedure.

(Reddy & Purnima, 2012 explored Teachers' and local authorities' low motivation and lack of responsibility derive from the unusual direction the education system has taken. Therefore, in order to prevent burnout, the department head and coworkers should be inspired to provide the teachers with sufficient support for their teaching and research endeavours

According to Vijayadurai and Venkatesh (2012), there is no discernible correlation between a low pay and a lack of demanding job; nonetheless, both factors are linked to stress, and a low salary is one that raises employees' stress levels.

Sharma, (2014) explored in his study that Job insecurity means that you feel your job is unstable and you may lose it soon. The stress levels of the faculty members also differ as per their designation, which seems

to be a significant point to study role stress, as the change in designation leads to change in role which increases the job insecurity of a faculty

Dr. İlhan Günbayi (2014) in his study Understanding how stress affects academic staff's performance both negatively and positively, recognising the areas in academic settings where positive and negative stress exist, and knowing how to manage stressors that originate in academic settings are all crucial implications of research for academic staff members' professional work lives. This study was conducted to learn more about the definition of stress among academic staff, their perceptions of stress resulting from stressors encountered in the workplace, the effects of stressors on academic staff, their strategies for overcoming stress resulting from stressors in the academic setting, and what and why academic staff perceived job stress or stressors. As a result, participant observations, semi-structured individual and focus group interviews, and document analysis of staff members' weekly schedules were used to gather data.

Betonio, 2015 examined the effects of professional stress on college teaching staff can be felt either personally or in terms of disrupting relationships, which can put the reputation of the organisation at risk if employees perform poorly. It can also have an impact on students' working activities because stressed-out college teachers are less motivated to teach, which can lead to poor teaching practices, poorly prepared lectures, low application, or any other factor that is typically harmful to students.

(Makena Muguongo, 2015; Anastasiou & Papakonstantinou, 2014), According to them job satisfaction is depended on pleasant work environment without focusing on the types of demographics, schools, and colleges. Moreover, supportive characteristics of work conditions raise academicians' job satisfaction.

Sisir Ghorai, Isika Biswas, Tanushree Dhara (2024) in their study explored number of factors, including workload, senior management leadership, benefits and compensation, work environment, and organisational justice, as significant drivers of academics' job satisfaction. There is a correlation between the variables affecting stress and job satisfaction. If the causes of the stress at work and the desire line up, the reasons for job happiness may also correspond. Additionally, the study offers management and academicians some solutions for stress management and increased academicians' job satisfaction.

Sources of Workplace Stress in Higher Education

Stress among academicians arises from various organizational, professional, and personal factors. Research suggests that occupational stress leads to job dissatisfaction, burnout, and increased turnover rates, affecting both faculty well-being and institutional success (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

The main stressors identified in this study which align with previous literature and are classified as follows:

4.1. Workload Intensification and Time Pressure

One of the prominent stressors in academics is workload intensification, where faculty members must balance multiple responsibilities, including teaching, grading, curriculum development, research, and service activities (Gillespie et al., 2001). The growing emphasis on research publications ("publish or perish") increases pressures and it forces educators to allocate time for scholarly activities beyond their teaching duties (Dorenkamp & Weiß, 2018). Studies show that excessive workload and increase in paper work and unrealistic time constraints significantly decrease job satisfaction (Shin & Jung, 2014).

4.2. Job Insecurity and Career Advancement Challenges

The increasing dependency on contract-based faculty positions in universities and colleges has led to job insecurity (Winefield et al., 2003). These faculty members are always uncertain regarding contract renewals, and experience limited promotional opportunities, leading to unstable financial conditions, which contribute to anxiety and dissatisfaction (Boyd et al., 2011). Researches have confirmed that job security acts as a strong predictor of job satisfaction, with lack of stability is one of the leading causes of workplace stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

4.3. Financial Constraints and Pay Disparities

In many academic institutions with special reference to private institutions, faculty members report dissatisfaction with their remuneration, which are often not proportional to their workload and responsibilities (Fredman & Doughney, 2012). Compensation disparities between tenured, adjunct, and part-time faculty members adds icing on the cake with additional tension and frustration. Studies indicate that low pay and financial instability directly contribute to occupational stress and declining job satisfaction (Hakanen et al., 2006).

4.4. Bureaucratic and Administrative Burden

Due to the increase in pressure upon the institutions to get accreditation, and policy compliance has led to significant increase in administrative workloads for faculty members (Gillespie et al., 2001). Many educators presume that accreditation related obligations and paper work formalities interfere with their core academic roles, which adds unnecessary stress and reduction in job engagement (Sutherland & Taylor, 2011). Research suggests that administrative burden is a major factor contributing to faculty burnout and decreased job satisfaction (Shin & Jung, 2014).

4.5. Workplace Conflicts and Institutional Culture

Interpersonal interactions and work environment dynamics contribute significantly to faculty job satisfaction and well-being (Kinman & Wray, 2020). Interpersonal conflicts at work can occur based on prejudice, partiality, uneven workload allocation, or hierarchical management systems (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). Research indicates that faculty members who have poor superior-subordinate relations, discrimination, or restricted autonomy register higher stress levels and lower job satisfaction (Podsakoff et al., 2007).

4.6. Work-Life Imbalance and Commuting Stress

Academic staff in higher education tend to find it difficult to achieve work-life balance, as work duties tend to spill over beyond working hours (Demerouti et al., 2001). The need to grade, conduct research, and prepare lessons outside working hours is a source of chronic stress and mental fatigue. In addition, lengthy commuting distances place an extra burden, cutting down on time for personal life and self-care (Fredman & Doughney, 2012).

Categorization of Stress-Factors

This study bifurcates workplace stress-related factors into three main categories:

Stress-Determining Factors (FDS): These are the main factors which contributes to work-related stress and dissatisfaction. Examples may include long working hours, lack of autonomy, excessive bureaucratic processes, and poor work-life balance. Previous researches indicates that prolonged and continuous exposure to these stressors may leads to lower job satisfaction and higher burnout rates (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

Official Stress-Contributing Factors (OFC): These factors, though seemed to be as stress-inducing amongst educators, instead have positive effects when structured appropriately. Examples may include performance assessments, research expectations, and academic responsibilities. On the contrary to stress-determining

factors, these factors act as challenges that may enhance job satisfaction by offering opportunities for achievement, recognition, and career growth (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Official Stress-Reducing Factors (OFR): These factors refer to the support mechanisms that help ease out stress and improve job satisfaction. Examples may include mentorship programs, flexible work policies, mental health support, and institutional leadership. Existing researches suggest that strong workplace support systems have led to improved employee satisfaction, lower stress levels, and enhanced organizational commitment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction among college educators.

However, the specific objectives of the study are:

To analyse the impact of stress-determining factors (FDS) on job satisfaction and assess how these factors influence college educators.

To investigate the role of official stress-contributing factors (OFC) in shaping job satisfaction of college educators.

To evaluate the effectiveness of official stress-reducing factors (OFR) in enhancing job satisfaction of college educators.

To provide recommendations for improving workplace policies and support systems in higher education institutions based on the findings of the study so as to ensure a balance between job demands and faculty well-being.

Hypothesis development

H1: Stress-determining factors negatively impact job satisfaction.

H2: Official stress-contributing factors negatively impact job satisfaction.

H3: Official stress-reducing factors positively impact job satisfaction.

H4: Occupational stress affects faculty well-being beyond job satisfaction.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The present study adopts a quantitative research approach to assess the impact of stress-inducing and stress-alleviating factors on faculty job satisfaction. For the collection of data, a structured questionnaire was floated via google forms and through printout amongst college educators.

A simple linear regression analysis was employed to examine the direct relationship between:

Stress-Determining Factors (FDS) and Job Satisfaction (OJS)

Official Stress-Contributing Factors (OFC) and Job Satisfaction (OJS)

Official Stress-Reducing Factors (OFR) and Job Satisfaction (OJS)

Population and Sample Selection

Target Population: College educators from various higher education institutions.

Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling was used due to accessibility and willingness of respondents.

Sample Size: A total of 390 educators participated in the study.

Inclusion Criteria: Faculty members engaged in teaching, research, or administrative roles in higher education institutions.

Exclusion Criteria: Non-teaching staff and temporary adjunct faculty with less than one year of experience were excluded.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was designed to understand the perceptions of faculty for drawing out a relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction.

The questionnaire consisted of three main sections:

Section 1: Stress-Determining Factors (FDS)

Items measuring increased stress over time, work-life balance issues, workload expansion, and administrative pressure.

Section 2: Official Stress-Contributing Factors (OFC)

Items assessing structured challenges in the workplace, including performance expectations, leadership demands, and time constraints.

Section 3: Official Stress-Reducing Factors (OFR)

Items measuring institutional support mechanisms, incentives, mentorship programs, and stress management initiatives.

Each statement was rated using a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree).

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for:

8.4.1. Descriptive Statistics:

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Frequency Distributions to summarize responses.

8.4.2. Reliability Analysis:

Cronbach's Alpha was used to check the reliability and internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis:

Three separate regression models were conducted to examine how FDS, OFC, and OFR influence job satisfaction (OJS).

Significance testing ($p < 0.05$) was used to determine statistical relationships.

Results and Discussions

9.1. Regression Analysis for Factors Determining Stress (FDS) and Job Satisfaction (OJS)

To assesses the impact of Factors Determining Stress (FDS) on Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS), a simple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results are presented in the following tables.

Table 9.1.1

Model Summary

Model R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.812	0.659	0.658

The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.812$) indicates a strong negative relationship between Factors Determining Stress (FDS) and Overall, Job Satisfaction (OJS). The R-Square value (0.659) shows that 65.9% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by workplace stress factors. The adjusted R-Square (0.658) ensures that this relationship remains stable even when generalized beyond the sample data.

These findings suggest that workplace stress is a major determinant of job satisfaction, accounting for a significant proportion of the changes in OJS.

Table 9.1.2

ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	46.798	1	46.798	748.711	0.000
Residual	24.252	388	0.063		
Total	71.049	389			

The ANOVA table indicates that the F-value (748.711) is highly significant ($p < 0.001$), confirming that the regression model is a good fit for predicting job satisfaction based on workplace stress factors. The high regression sum of squares (46.798) compared to residual sum of squares (24.252) further supports the strong explanatory power of the model.

Thus, it is statistically evident that workplace stress significantly affects job satisfaction among college educators.

Table 9.1.3

Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	6.350	0.103	-	61.505	0.000
FDS	-1.016	0.037	-0.812	-27.363	0.000

The regression coefficient for FDS (-1.016, $p < 0.001$) indicates that for each unit increase in workplace stress, job satisfaction decreases by 1.016 units. The negative Beta coefficient (-0.812) further reinforces the strong inverse relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction. The t-value (-27.363, $p = 0.000$) is highly significant, confirming that workplace stress has a substantial negative effect on job satisfaction.

H1: Higher workplace stress leads to lower job satisfaction. (Strongly Supported)

H2: Workplace stress significantly explains variations in job satisfaction. (Supported with $R^2 = 65.9\%$)

H3: Employees facing high stress levels experience significant reductions in job satisfaction. (Confirmed with $p < 0.001$)

Regression Analysis for Official Factors Contributing to Stress (OFC) and Job Satisfaction (OJS)

To assess the impact of Official Factors Contributing to Stress (OFC) on Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS), a simple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results are detailed below.

Table 9.2.1

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.939	0.881	0.881	0.14758

The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.939$) suggests a very strong relationship between Official Factors Contributing to Stress (OFC) and Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS). However, the direction of the relationship must be analyzed further through the coefficients.

The R-Square value (0.881) indicates that 88.1% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by official stress factors. The adjusted R-Square (0.881) confirms the model's reliability.

Table 9.2.2

ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	62.599	1	62.599	2874.298	0.000
Residual	8.450	388	0.022		
Total	71.049	389			

The F-value (2874.298, $p < 0.001$) confirms that the regression model is statistically significant and that official stress factors have a significant influence on job satisfaction. The low residual sum of squares (8.450) compared to the regression sum of squares (62.599) further validates the model's robustness.

Table 9.2.3

Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.729	0.053	-	13.745	0.000
OFC	0.754	0.014	0.939	53.612	0.000

The regression coefficient for OFC (0.754, $p < 0.001$) suggests that for each unit increase in official stress factors, job satisfaction increases by 0.754 units.

H1: Higher stress levels (FDS) negatively impact job satisfaction (OJS). (Supported)

H2: Official stress-contributing factors (OFC) negatively impact job satisfaction (OJS). (Not Supported)

H3: Official stress-reducing factors (OFR) positively impact job satisfaction (OJS). (Supported)

H4: Workplace stress (FDS & OFC) affects faculty well-being beyond job satisfaction. (Supported via qualitative responses)

Regression Analysis for Official Factors Reducing Stress (OFR) and Job Satisfaction (OJS)

To assess the impact of Official Factors Reducing Stress (OFR) on Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS), a simple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results are detailed below.

Table 9.3.1

Model Summary

Model R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.945	0.894	0.13942

The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.945$) suggests a very strong positive relationship between Official Factors Reducing Stress (OFR) and Overall, Job Satisfaction (OJS). The R-Square value (0.894) indicates that 89.4% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by OFR. The adjusted R-Square (0.894) confirms the model's robustness, ensuring its reliability when generalized to a broader population.

The low standard error of the estimate (0.13942) further indicates that the model's predictions are highly precise, reinforcing the strong influence of stress-reducing official factors on job satisfaction.

Table 9.3.2

ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	63.507	1	63.507	3267.257	0.000
Residual	7.542	388	0.019		
Total	71.049	389			

The F-value (3267.257, $p < 0.001$) is highly significant, confirming that the regression model is a good fit for predicting job satisfaction based on stress-reducing official factors. The high regression sum of squares (63.507) compared to residual sum of squares (7.542) suggests that OFR is a key determinant of job satisfaction.

Thus, it is statistically evident that stress-reducing official factors have a strong positive effect on job satisfaction among college educators.

Table 9.3.3

Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-0.176	0.066	-	-2.689	0.007
OFR	1.108	0.019	0.945	57.160	0.000

The constant (-0.176, $p = 0.007$) is not of major interpretative concern but suggests that without stress-reducing official factors, job satisfaction might remain slightly negative.

The unstandardized coefficient for OFR (1.108, $p < 0.001$) indicates that for each unit increase in OFR, job satisfaction increases by 1.108 units. The highly positive Beta coefficient (0.945) confirms the strong direct relationship between stress-reducing official factors and job satisfaction. The t-value (57.160, $p = 0.000$) further reinforces that OFR is a highly significant predictor of job satisfaction.

H3: Greater institutional efforts to reduce stress positively impact job satisfaction. (Strongly Supported)

H4: Employees who experience strong organizational support for stress relief report higher job satisfaction. (Confirmed with $p < 0.001$)

Table 9.4

Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis Statement	Expected Impact	Regression Result	Supported?
H1 Higher stress levels (FDS) negatively impact job satisfaction (OJS).	Negative	$B = -1.016, p < 0.001$	Supported
H2 Official stress-contributing factors (OFC) negatively impact job satisfaction (OJS).	Negative	$B = +0.754, p < 0.001$ (Unexpected positive effect)	Not Supported
H3 Official stress-reducing factors (OFR) positively impact job satisfaction (OJS).	Positive	$B = +1.108, p < 0.001$	Supported

Hypothesis Statement	Expected Impact	Regression Result	Supported?
H4 Workplace stress (FDS & OFC) affects faculty well-being beyond job satisfaction.	Indirect Effect	Supported via qualitative responses	Supported

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction among college educators. The regression analysis results confirm that stress-inducing and stress-alleviating factors significantly influence job satisfaction, though not always in the expected manner. Below is a discussion of key findings in relation to existing literature.

The Negative Impact of Stress-Determining Factors (FDS) on Job Satisfaction (H1 – Supported)

The regression results confirmed that higher levels of workplace stress (FDS) lead to lower job satisfaction (OJS) ($B = -1.016$, $p < 0.001$). This aligns with previous research that workplace stress negatively affects faculty performance, engagement, and overall well-being (Kinman & Wray, 2020).

Increased workload, excessive administrative duties, and time pressures contribute to faculty burnout.

The emotional exhaustion associated with high-stress work environments reduces intrinsic motivation.

These results reinforce the need for stress management programs and workload balance strategies in higher education institutions.

The Unexpected Positive Impact of Official Stress-Contributing Factors (OFC) on Job Satisfaction (H2 – Not Supported)

Contrary to expectations, OFC (official stress-contributing factors) showed a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction ($B = +0.754$, $p < 0.001$). This contradicts the assumption that institutional stressors always lead to dissatisfaction.

Some structured challenges in academia (e.g., performance expectations, tenure requirements) may serve as motivators, enhancing professional growth.

Faculty members might perceive certain workplace demands as stimulating rather than stressful, leading to higher engagement.

This aligns with the Challenge-Hindrance Stress Model (Cavanaugh et al., 2000), which differentiates between hindrance stressors (negative impact) and challenge stressors (positive impact on motivation and performance).

Future research should further examine whether specific types of OFC act as motivating stressors rather than purely negative influences.

The Strong Positive Impact of Official Factors Reducing Stress (OFR) on Job Satisfaction (H3 – Supported)

The regression analysis revealed that OFR (stress-reducing official factors) had the strongest positive impact on job satisfaction ($B = +1.108$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 89.4\%$). This highlights that institutional support systems play a crucial role in enhancing faculty well-being and job satisfaction.

Key reasons why OFR has the strongest impact:

Fair workload distribution and supportive leadership contribute to faculty satisfaction.

Mental health initiatives and stress management policies create a positive academic environment.

Recognition and incentives for performance increase faculty engagement and motivation.

These results emphasize the need for educational institutions to prioritize stress reduction policies as a core part of faculty development strategies.

The Broader Impact of Workplace Stress on Faculty Well-being Beyond Job Satisfaction (H4– Supported via Qualitative Findings)

While this study primarily measured job satisfaction, the questionnaire responses suggest that stress affects faculty well-being more broadly.

Faculty members reported that:

High stress levels impacted mental health and motivation (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The need for regular breaks and workplace support was strongly emphasized (Leiter & Maslach, 2009).

Institutions with strong stress-management policies had better faculty engagement and lower turnover (Taris & Schreurs, 2009).

These findings suggest that faculty well-being extends beyond job satisfaction and should be considered in future studies.

This study examined the dual dynamics of stress-inducing (FDS, OFC) and stress-relieving (OFR) factors on job satisfaction (OJS) among college educators. The findings confirm that workplace stress has a significant impact on faculty job satisfaction, though not always in the expected manner.

Factors contributing to stress (FDS) negatively affect job satisfaction ($B = -1.016$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing prior research that high stress leads to reduced faculty well-being and engagement (Kinman & Wray, 2020).

Official factors reducing stress (OFR) had the strongest positive effect on job satisfaction ($B = +1.108$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 89.4\%$), emphasizing the crucial role of institutional support mechanisms such as workload distribution, incentives, and leadership support in enhancing faculty satisfaction (Salanova et al., 2010).

However, one of the most surprising findings was that official stress-contributing factors (OFC) had a positive relationship with job satisfaction ($B = +0.754$, $p < 0.001$). This unexpected result suggests that not all stressors negatively impact job satisfaction.

Conclusion

This study aimed to unveil the dual dynamics of workplace stress—both stress-inducing and stress-alleviating factors—on job satisfaction among college educators. The findings confirm that stress is not inherently negative, and its impact on job satisfaction depends on how it is structured and managed.

The regression analysis demonstrated three key outcomes:

Factors Determining Stress (FDS) negatively impact job satisfaction ($B = -1.016$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing previous research that high workplace stress leads to job dissatisfaction, burnout, and disengagement (Kinman & Wray, 2020; Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

Official Factors Reducing Stress (OFR) had the strongest positive effect on job satisfaction ($B = +1.108$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 89.4\%$), confirming that institutional support mechanisms such as fair workload distribution, incentives, and leadership support significantly enhance faculty satisfaction (Salanova et al., 2010; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Official Factors Contributing to Stress (OFC) unexpectedly showed a positive relationship with job satisfaction ($B = +0.754$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that some structured stressors may act as motivators rather than deterrents when faculty receive adequate institutional support (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Podsakoff et al., 2007).

11.1. The Dual Impact of Stress: Hindrance vs. Challenge Stressors

Traditionally, workplace stress has been viewed as a barrier to productivity and satisfaction. However, the unexpected positive impact of OFC suggests that not all stress is detrimental. This aligns with the Challenge-Hindrance Stress Model (Cavanaugh et al., 2000), which categorizes stress into:

Hindrance Stressors – Stressors such as job insecurity, bureaucratic constraints, excessive workload, and workplace conflicts, which directly hinder performance and decrease satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Challenge Stressors – Stressors such as academic targets, research expectations, and leadership responsibilities, which enhance motivation and increase job satisfaction when managed effectively (Podsakoff et al., 2007).

The findings indicate that some academic stressors (OFC), when structured as challenges rather than hindrances, may drive motivation and engagement rather than reducing job satisfaction.

11.2. Implications for Higher Education Institutions

The study's findings carry practical implications for academic institutions aiming to improve faculty job satisfaction:

Minimizing Hindrance Stressors: Universities should implement policies to reduce bureaucratic obstacles, workload imbalances, and job insecurity, which have been shown to negatively affect job satisfaction (Taris & Schreurs, 2009).

Enhancing Challenge Stressors as Motivators: Structured academic challenges, such as research goals and leadership opportunities, should be accompanied by adequate institutional support to transform potential stress into professional motivation.

Strengthening Institutional Support Mechanisms: Since OFR had the strongest positive impact on job satisfaction, universities should prioritize stress-reduction initiatives such as workload equity, faculty well-being programs, and mental health support services.

By balancing workplace demands with institutional support, universities can foster a work environment where faculty members feel both challenged and supported—leading to higher job satisfaction and overall well-being.

11.3. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the dynamics of workplace stress and job satisfaction, certain limitations should be acknowledged:

Moderation Effect of OFR on OFC (H4) was not tested – Future research should explore whether institutional support (OFR) can buffer the negative effects of workplace stress (OFC) through moderated regression analysis (Edwards & Lambert, 2007).

Faculty Well-being Beyond Job Satisfaction (H5) Requires Further Study – While job satisfaction was the primary dependent variable, stress impacts faculty motivation, mental health, and engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Future studies should incorporate a broader set of faculty well-being indicators.

Distinguishing Between Hindrance and Challenge Stressors in Academia – This study found that OFC had an unexpected positive effect on job satisfaction, suggesting that some stressors may act as challenges rather than hindrances. Future research should differentiate between which workplace stressors enhance motivation and which contribute to burnout.

Final Thoughts: The Path Forward

This study provides strong evidence that stress is a double-edged sword. While uncontrolled workplace stress (FDS) reduces job satisfaction, certain structured stressors (OFC) may enhance satisfaction when faculty members receive adequate support (OFR).

To improve faculty well-being and job satisfaction, universities must:

Minimize hindrance stressors that cause unnecessary workload burdens and emotional strain.

Leverage challenge stressors to encourage motivation and professional growth.
Strengthen institutional support (OFR) through mental health programs, work-life balance policies, and fair workload distribution.

By implementing these strategies, higher education institutions can create an environment where faculty members are both challenged and supported, leading to long-term job satisfaction, motivation, and retention.

Conflict of Interest

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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