

## A Review of the Correlates of Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction among College Teachers

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**Abstract:** Occupational stress and job satisfaction are important areas of study in the field of work and organizational psychology. College teachers have many responsibilities, including teaching, examination work, research, administrative duties, student guidance, meetings, and professional development. These responsibilities can create pressure and may influence teachers' satisfaction with their jobs. The present paper reviews previous research on the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among college and university teachers. Both Indian and international studies are included to provide a broader understanding of the topic. The review shows that workload, organizational climate, job security, administrative responsibilities, work-family conflict, burnout, institutional support, and career pressure are important correlates of occupational stress and job satisfaction.

Several Indian studies have reported a negative relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among college and university teachers. International research has similarly identified work stress, burnout, employment conditions, and organizational factors as important influences on teachers' professional well-being. However, the strength of the relationship differs across studies and settings. The review suggests that supportive organizational environments, reasonable workloads, job security, professional autonomy, and opportunities for development may contribute to better job satisfaction and lower occupational stress. The paper also identifies research gaps and suggests the need for further systematic and empirical research among college teachers.

**Keywords:** Occupational stress, job satisfaction, college teachers, university teachers, work environment, burnout, teacher well-being.

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### Introduction

Teaching is an important profession because teachers contribute to the academic, social, and professional development of students. College teachers have responsibilities that extend beyond classroom teaching. They may be required to prepare lectures, conduct examinations, evaluate students, conduct research, publish papers, attend meetings, complete administrative work, guide students, and participate in institutional activities. These responsibilities can sometimes become sources of occupational stress.

In recent years, higher education has become increasingly demanding. Teachers are expected to maintain teaching quality while also meeting research, administrative, and institutional requirements. When job demands are greater than the resources available to an employee, stress may develop. At the same time, the teacher's experience of salary, promotion, recognition, relationships, autonomy, workload, and working conditions can influence job satisfaction.

The relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction is important because teachers who experience high levels of stress may become dissatisfied with their work. However, the relationship is not always simple. Organizational support, job security, personality, coping strategies, work-family balance, and burnout may influence this relationship.

The present paper reviews literature on the correlates of occupational stress and job satisfaction among college teachers, with special attention to Indian and international research.

### Concept of Occupational Stress

The concept of stress has been studied for many decades. Selye (1956) described stress as a general response of the body to demands placed upon it. In the occupational context, stress refers specifically to pressure and strain associated with one's work.

Cooper and Marshall (1976) examined occupational sources of stress and identified several work-related conditions that may produce stress, including excessive workload, role conflict, ambiguity, poor working conditions, job insecurity, and difficulties in relationships at work. Their work became an important foundation for understanding occupational stress as a result of interaction between individuals and their work environments. ([British Psychological Society](#))

For college teachers, occupational stress can therefore be understood as the psychological pressure or strain experienced because of teaching responsibilities, workload, administrative requirements, research expectations, institutional conditions, interpersonal relationships, career demands, and other work-related factors.

## Definition of Occupational Stress

Cooper and Marshall (1976) viewed occupational stress in relation to negative environmental factors or stressors associated with a particular job, such as workload, role conflict, role ambiguity, and poor working conditions. ([British Psychological Society](#))

Thus, in the present paper, occupational stress refers to the psychological strain experienced by college teachers as a result of demands and conditions connected with their professional work.

## Concept of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is another important concept in organizational psychology. It describes how positively or negatively an individual evaluates their job.

Locke (1976) provided one of the most widely used definitions of job satisfaction. He described it as a positive emotional state that develops from an individual's evaluation of their job or job experiences. ([ScienceDirect](#))

Job satisfaction can include satisfaction with different aspects of work, such as salary, promotion, supervision, colleagues, working conditions, recognition, autonomy, and the actual work performed.

For college teachers, job satisfaction may develop when teachers feel that their work is meaningful, their efforts are recognized, their workplace is supportive, and their professional expectations are reasonably fulfilled.

## Definition of Job Satisfaction

According to Locke (1976), job satisfaction is a positive emotional response resulting from the evaluation of one's work and work experiences. ([ScienceDirect](#))

Therefore, in the present review, job satisfaction refers to the degree of positive feeling and contentment that college teachers experience toward their teaching job and its different aspects.

## Relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

Occupational stress and job satisfaction are closely related but are not identical concepts. Occupational stress refers mainly to the pressure or strain experienced at work, whereas job satisfaction concerns an individual's positive or negative evaluation of the job.

High workload, lack of resources, poor organizational support, role conflict, and career pressure may increase stress. These conditions may also reduce satisfaction if teachers feel that the demands of the job are greater than the rewards or support they receive.

However, a stressful work situation does not necessarily produce dissatisfaction in every individual. Some teachers may find their work demanding but meaningful and satisfying. Therefore, individual differences and organizational conditions should also be considered.

## Review of Literature

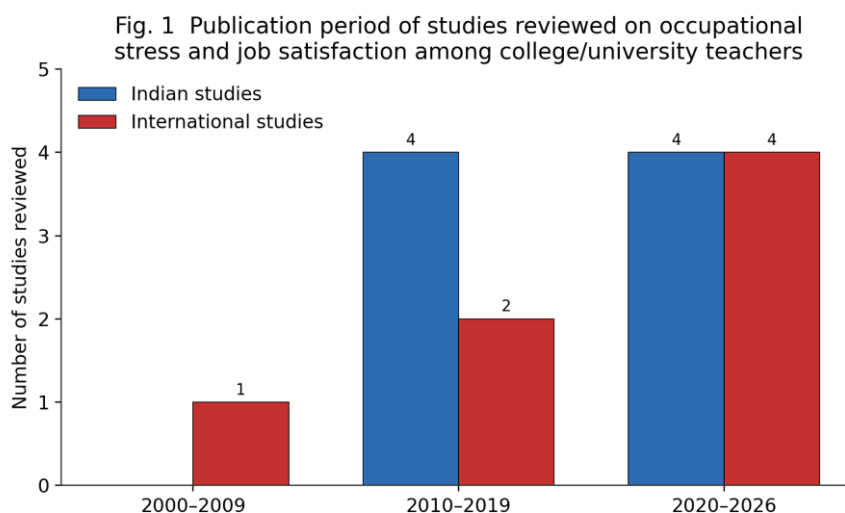


Fig. 1. Publication period of the Indian and international studies reviewed on occupational stress and job satisfaction among college/university teachers.

## Indian Studies

Kang and Sidhu (2015) examined work-related stressors among university teachers in India. Their study included 570 teachers from four universities in Punjab. The researchers identified several sources of stress, including inadequate competence, administrative formalities, unpleasant working conditions, lack of resources, poor quality of students, lack of control, and demanding work. The findings showed that work conditions and organizational factors can be important sources of stress for university teachers. ([Sage Journals](#))

This study is important because it shows that occupational stress among university teachers is not caused by a single factor. Both organizational and job-related conditions can contribute to stress.

Gahlawat (2017) studied occupational stress and job satisfaction among teachers from government and private colleges. The sample consisted of 100 college teachers, including 50 government and 50 private college teachers. The study used the Occupational Stress Index and a Job

Satisfaction Scale. Government college teachers were reported to have lower occupational stress and higher job satisfaction than teachers from private colleges. ([Multi Review Journal](#))

The findings suggest that employment conditions and institutional type may influence teachers' experiences of stress and satisfaction.

Gandhi (2017) examined the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among degree college teachers in Abohar, Punjab. The study included **100 teachers** and used the Occupational Stress Index and Job Satisfaction Scale. Pearson correlation was used to examine the relationship between the variables. The study reported a significant negative relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction. ([The Multidisciplinary Journal](#))

This finding suggests that teachers experiencing greater occupational stress may also report lower satisfaction with their jobs.

Rana and Soodan (2019) conducted a study among 412 college teachers in Punjab, India. They examined occupational and personal stress in relation to job satisfaction, burnout, and health. Their findings showed that occupational and personal stress significantly affected job satisfaction, burnout, and health. Major stressors included financial strain, intrinsic job issues, managerial responsibilities, and career and achievement pressures. The study also found that the organizational environment influenced teachers' stress levels. ([PubMed Central \(PMC\)](#))

The study is particularly important because it shows that occupational stress may influence several areas of teachers' professional and personal well-being, rather than job satisfaction alone.

Reddy, Shailaja, and Poornima (2020) studied occupational stress and job satisfaction among 992 university teachers from universities in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. The researchers reported that 74% of teachers experienced moderate or high occupational stress, while 85% experienced moderate or low job satisfaction. The study found a significant negative relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction. Organizational structure and climate and personal and professional efficiency were also identified as important dimensions associated with job satisfaction. ([IJCRT](#))

This study provides strong evidence from a large Indian sample and emphasizes the importance of organizational climate in teachers' work experiences.

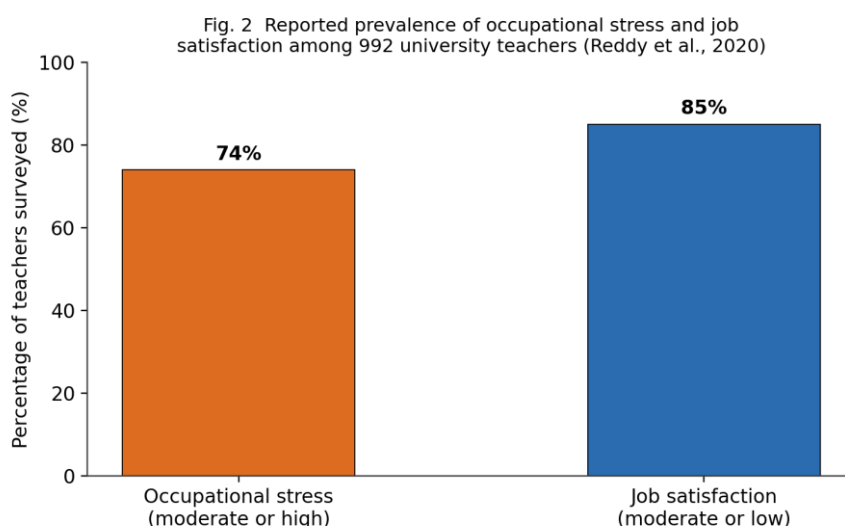


Fig. 2. Percentage of surveyed university teachers reporting moderate-to-high occupational stress and moderate-to-low job satisfaction (Reddy, Shailaja, & Poornima, 2020).

Thakare et al. (2023) examined occupational stress and job satisfaction among 100 college teachers in Pune. The study used a descriptive correlational design and assessed occupational stress and job satisfaction using standardized scales. A substantial proportion of the participants reported moderate or severe occupational stress. The study also examined demographic factors and found no statistically significant differences on the demographic variables considered. ([RJPN Research Journal](#))

The study provides evidence from Maharashtra and is therefore particularly relevant to research involving college teachers in the Indian context.

Sahay et al. (2025) examined occupational stress and job satisfaction among 300 college teachers in Bihar, including teachers from public and private institutions. The study reported a significant negative correlation between occupational stress and

job satisfaction. Institutional support was positively associated with job satisfaction and negatively associated with occupational stress. Teachers from private institutions reported higher stress and lower satisfaction than teachers from public institutions in this sample. ([EELET](#))

The study provides recent Indian evidence that organizational support may be an important factor in reducing occupational stress and improving job satisfaction.

Singh (2026) studied organizational commitment, occupational stress, and job satisfaction among 400 university teachers in Punjab. The study used correlation and regression methods. The findings indicated that higher organizational commitment was associated with lower occupational stress and more positive job-related feelings. Occupational stress emerged as an important predictor of job satisfaction in the study. ([Publishing India](#))

This recent study suggests that organizational commitment and occupational stress should be considered together when studying job satisfaction among university teachers.

### **International Studies**

Leung, Siu, and Spector (2000) examined faculty stressors, job satisfaction, and psychological distress among 106 university teachers from four tertiary institutions in Hong Kong. The study focused on sources of stress and their effects on job satisfaction and psychological distress. It also considered whether locus of control influenced the relationship between stress and psychological outcomes. ([ResearchGate](#))

This study demonstrates that occupational stress among university teachers is an international issue and that individual psychological characteristics may influence responses to workplace stress.

Cladellas-Pros et al. (2018) examined satisfaction, health, and work-related stress among university professors in Spain. The researchers studied 145 professors from seven public universities in Catalonia. Their findings indicated differences according to contractual status. Professors with temporary full-time contracts reported greater stress symptoms and lower job satisfaction compared with professors with more stable employment conditions.

This finding suggests that employment security may be an important correlate of teachers' occupational well-being.

Chichra et al. (2019) studied job stress, job satisfaction, and burnout among faculty members in a teaching hospital in South India. Although the sample consisted of medical faculty rather than general college teachers, the study is relevant to higher education. The researchers found that high job stress was associated with lower job satisfaction and burnout. ([PubMed Central \(PMC\)](#))

The findings suggest that occupational stress may influence both teachers' satisfaction and their risk of professional burnout.

Li et al. (2020) examined job stress, job burnout, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among university teachers in China. The research included a large sample of university teachers and used the Job Demands-Resources framework. The findings showed relationships among job stress, burnout, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The study suggested that burnout and job satisfaction may help explain how job stress relates to organizational commitment.

This study indicates that job satisfaction may act as part of a broader psychological process rather than being influenced by stress alone.

Mahesar et al. (2021) investigated work-family conflict, job stress, job satisfaction, burnout, and turnover intentions among university teachers in Pakistan. The researchers found that burnout was important in explaining relationships among several of the variables. Interestingly, the direct relationship between job stress and job satisfaction was not significant in their structural model.

This finding is important because it demonstrates that the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction may sometimes be influenced by intervening variables such as burnout.

Wang et al. (2023) examined job stress and life satisfaction among university junior faculty members in China. The study considered teaching, research, and administrative stress. The

researchers found that research stress, teaching stress, and administrative stress were negatively related to life satisfaction, while emotional burnout helped explain these relationships. ([Frontiers](#))

Although life satisfaction is different from job satisfaction, this study demonstrates the broader psychological effects that different forms of university work stress can have on faculty members.

Wartenberg et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of correlates of teachers' job satisfaction. The analysis included 101 studies and more than 323,000 teachers. The study found relationships between job satisfaction and several professional outcomes, including turnover intentions, absenteeism, teacher-student interaction, student motivation, and student achievement.

Most studies in this review concerned school teachers rather than college teachers, so the findings should not be directly generalized to higher education. However, the study provides broad evidence that job satisfaction is an important part of teachers' professional functioning.

### **Major Correlates of Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction**

The reviewed Indian and international studies indicate that several factors are related to occupational stress and job satisfaction among college teachers.

#### **Workload**

Excessive teaching, research, examination, and administrative duties may increase stress. When workload becomes difficult to manage, teachers may experience dissatisfaction.

#### **Organizational Climate**

A supportive organizational climate can improve teachers' professional experiences. Poor communication, lack of participation in decision-making, inadequate resources, and unsupportive management may increase stress.

#### **Job Security**

Employment stability is particularly important for teachers working on temporary or contractual appointments. Uncertainty about future employment can create stress and reduce satisfaction.

#### **Administrative Responsibilities**

College teachers often perform administrative work in addition to teaching and research. Excessive administrative responsibilities may reduce the time available for academic work and increase occupational pressure.

#### **Burnout**

Burnout is an important psychological correlate of occupational stress. Long-term stress may contribute to emotional exhaustion and reduced enthusiasm for work. Research among college faculty has connected stress, job satisfaction, and burnout. ([PubMed Central \(PMC\)](#))

#### **Work-Family Conflict**

Teachers who experience difficulty balancing professional and family responsibilities may experience greater stress. Work-family conflict may also reduce satisfaction with one's job and general well-being.

## Institutional Support

Support from college or university administration may reduce occupational stress and increase job satisfaction. Recent Indian research has specifically reported positive associations between institutional support and job satisfaction. (EELET)

## Career Development

Opportunities for promotion, professional development, research, recognition, and career advancement can influence job satisfaction. Limited opportunities may create frustration and stress.

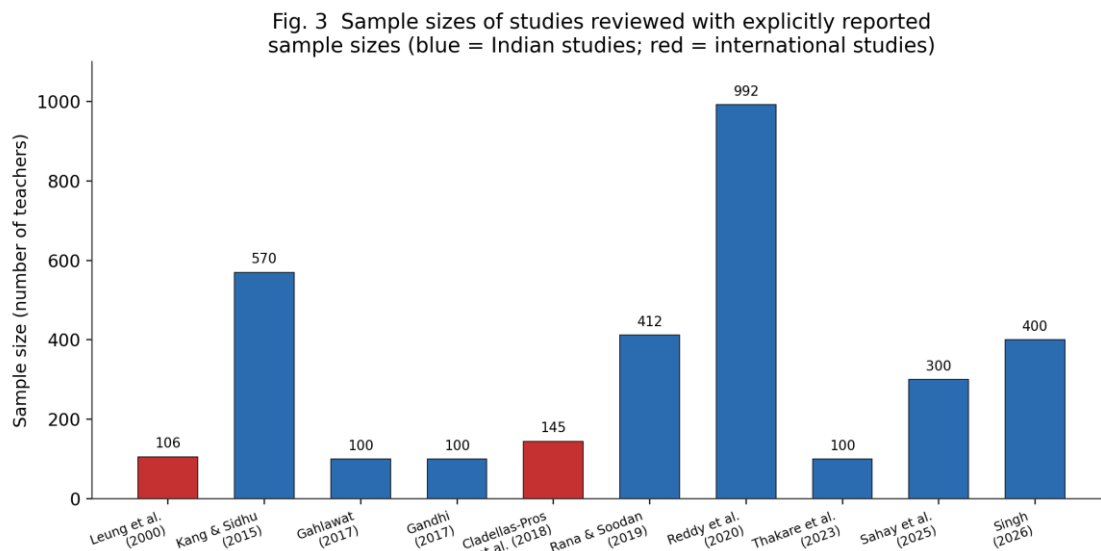


Fig. 3. Sample sizes of the reviewed studies that reported an explicit number of participating teachers (blue = Indian studies; red = international studies).

## Discussion

The literature reviewed in this paper indicates that occupational stress and job satisfaction are important and related aspects of college teachers' professional lives. Several Indian studies have reported a negative relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction. For example, Gandhi (2017), Reddy et al. (2020), and Sahay et al. (2025) reported evidence of this inverse relationship. (The Multidisciplinary Journal)

The findings also suggest that stress is influenced by the organizational environment. Workload, lack of resources, administrative responsibilities, job insecurity, and organizational climate appear repeatedly in the literature.

International studies show a similar pattern but also demonstrate that the relationship may be more complex. Employment status, burnout, work-family conflict, and psychological factors can influence how teachers respond to occupational stress. For example, Mahesar et al. (2021) found that burnout played an important role in the relationship among job stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions.

Therefore, occupational stress should not be viewed as an isolated variable. It is influenced by the interaction between teachers and their work environment. Similarly, job satisfaction depends on several aspects of employment rather than on stress alone.

## Research Gap

Although considerable research has been conducted on teacher stress and job satisfaction, several gaps remain.

First, many studies are cross-sectional. Such studies can identify relationships but cannot clearly establish cause and effect.

Second, researchers have used different tools to measure occupational stress and job satisfaction. This makes it difficult to directly compare findings across studies.

Third, many international reviews combine school teachers with college and university teachers. Higher-education teachers have unique responsibilities involving research, publication, academic promotion, and institutional administration. Therefore, separate research focusing on college teachers is necessary.

Fourth, relatively fewer Indian studies have examined the combined influence of organizational support, workload, burnout, work-family conflict, and job satisfaction in the same model.

Finally, more research is needed in different Indian states and among teachers from different types of colleges, including government, private, aided, autonomous, and affiliated institutions.

## Implications

The reviewed literature has several implications for colleges and universities.

Institutions can attempt to reduce unnecessary workload and distribute responsibilities fairly among teachers. Administrative procedures can be simplified where possible. Teachers should also receive adequate resources for teaching and research.

Colleges can provide professional-development opportunities, mentoring, and career guidance. Transparent promotion policies and recognition of teachers' contributions may also improve job satisfaction.

Institutional leaders should encourage communication between teachers and management. Teachers may benefit from

having opportunities to participate in decisions that directly affect their work.

Stress-management programs may also be useful. However, individual stress-management programs should not replace organizational changes when the main sources of stress arise from workload, inadequate resources, or poor working conditions.

### Limitations

This paper is a narrative review rather than a statistical meta-analysis. Therefore, it does not calculate a single pooled correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction.

The reviewed studies differ in sample size, geographical location, measurement tools, institutional settings, and research design. Some studies focus on university teachers, while others include college teachers or specialized faculty such as medical teachers. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted according to the population studied.

Some of the available studies also use cross-sectional designs, which limits conclusions about causality.

### Conclusion

Occupational stress and job satisfaction are important psychological variables among college teachers. The reviewed literature from India and other countries suggests that teachers' professional experiences are influenced by workload, organizational climate, job security, administrative duties, career demands, burnout, work-family conflict, and institutional support.

Several Indian studies have reported that greater occupational stress is associated with lower job satisfaction. International studies also support the importance of work-related stress but show that the relationship can be influenced by burnout, employment conditions, and other psychological and organizational factors.

College teachers are responsible for important educational and social functions. Therefore, their psychological well-being should be considered an important part of the quality of higher education. Creating supportive organizational environments, reducing unnecessary work pressure, improving job security, recognizing teachers' contributions, and providing professional development may contribute to healthier and more satisfying work experiences.

Future research should use larger samples, longitudinal designs, standardized psychological measures, and systematic review or meta-analysis methods. Research should also pay greater attention to the Indian higher-education context and differences between government and private institutions.

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