

**Comparative Study**

## **Comparative Analysis of Stress Levels and Psychological Well-being: Permanent vs. Hourly Contract College Faculty**

Mr. Sachin Nagesh Gharat<sup>1\*</sup>

### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to explore and compare the levels of stress and psychological well-being among college faculty members employed in Contractual Hourly-Based (CHB) positions and Permanent positions. The sample consisted of 80 college teachers from various colleges in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Private University, Panvel, Navi Mumbai, divided into two groups: 40 CHB job teachers and 40 permanent job teachers. Data were collected using the Psychological Wellbeing Scale and the Social Readjustment Rating Scale to assess psychological well-being and stress levels, respectively. The findings revealed that permanent job teachers had significantly higher psychological well-being ( $M = 203.25$ ) compared to CHB job teachers ( $M = 191.34$ ), with a  $t$ -value of 7.62, significant at the 0.01 level. In terms of stress, CHB job teachers had higher stress levels ( $M = 764.35$ ) than their permanent counterparts ( $M = 744.15$ ), with a  $t$ -value of 15.89, also significant at the 0.01 level. These results suggest that permanent faculty experience better psychological well-being and lower stress than their CHB counterparts. The study underscores the importance of job security and work conditions in influencing the psychological health and stress levels of college teachers.

**Keywords:** *Psychological well-being, Stress levels, College teachers, Contractual Hourly-Based (CHB) jobs, Permanent jobs, Job security, Mental health, Stress assessment*

The issue of faculty job security and its impact on stress and well-being has become increasingly relevant in higher education. Within academic institutions, faculty members typically occupy two main types of positions: permanent (tenured or tenure-track) and hourly (contingent or adjunct). These employment categories differ significantly in terms of job stability, workload expectations, and overall career security, all of which may influence faculty members' psychological well-being. Research has shown that the nature of employment contracts plays a critical role in shaping faculty experiences, particularly in terms of stress levels and psychological health (Kezar & Sam, 2014). Permanent faculty members often benefit from job security, benefits, and greater professional autonomy, whereas hourly faculty members typically face job insecurity, fewer resources, and limited access to support networks. This comparative analysis explores how these differing employment statuses contribute to the stress levels and psychological well-being of college faculty.

<sup>1</sup>Head Constable Raigad Police, Khopoli Police Station, Tq - Khalapur, District – Raigad, Maharashtra India.

\*Corresponding Author

**Received: November 29, 2023; Revision Received: December 20, 2023; Accepted: December 30, 2023**

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Faculty stress is a growing concern in academic settings, with implications for not only the faculty members themselves but also for their students and the institutions they serve. The academic profession is inherently demanding, characterized by high workloads, time pressures, and constant expectations to balance teaching, research, and service responsibilities (Kinman & Wray, 2013). However, the extent of stress experienced by faculty members can vary depending on their employment status. Permanent faculty are typically afforded more control over their teaching schedules, research priorities, and institutional roles, factors that can alleviate stress (Pittman, 2013). Conversely, hourly faculty often face precarious employment conditions, such as fluctuating hours, lower pay, and the lack of institutional support, which may exacerbate stress levels (Brenner, 2015). The comparative experience of stress between permanent and hourly faculty has important implications for understanding the broader mental health challenges faced by higher education professionals.

Psychological well-being refers to the emotional, mental, and social well-being of individuals and is influenced by various factors, including job security, workload, and organizational support. Permanent faculty often enjoy greater institutional support, access to professional development opportunities, and clearer career pathways, all of which contribute to enhanced well-being (Bailyn, 2003). On the other hand, hourly faculty members are often relegated to roles with minimal access to institutional resources, which can hinder their professional growth and affect their overall psychological health (Hancock, 2017). In addition, the fear of job instability, lack of health benefits, and minimal long-term career prospects contribute to a heightened sense of anxiety and stress among hourly faculty, which may negatively impact their mental health and job satisfaction (Tuckman, 2016).

The difference in job security between permanent and hourly faculty can influence their levels of perceived stress. Job insecurity, which is a common feature of hourly positions, has been linked to negative mental health outcomes, such as increased anxiety, depression, and burnout (Ferris et al., 2011). Studies have shown that faculty in contingent positions, particularly adjuncts, report higher levels of stress due to the uncertainty surrounding their employment status and the lack of support structures typically available to permanent faculty (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). Moreover, job insecurity has been found to negatively impact self-esteem and overall life satisfaction (Mauno et al., 2005). In contrast, permanent faculty tend to experience lower levels of stress related to employment stability, which allows them to focus more on their academic and professional goals rather than on job-related concerns (Brenner, 2015).

In exploring psychological well-being, it is essential to recognize the role of workload and the demands placed on faculty members. Permanent faculty typically have more control over their schedules, which can contribute to a better work-life balance (Pittman, 2013). This greater autonomy, in turn, may lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and psychological well-being (Kinman & Wray, 2013). However, the expectations placed on permanent faculty to engage in research and service activities can also contribute to stress, particularly when the workload becomes overwhelming (Kezar & Sam, 2014). Conversely, hourly faculty members often experience a lack of control over their schedules, which can lead to difficulties in balancing work and personal life, exacerbating stress and diminishing their psychological well-being (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004).

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It is also crucial to consider the role of professional identity in the stress and well-being of faculty. Permanent faculty members often have clearer and more defined professional identities within their institutions, which can enhance feelings of belonging and job satisfaction (Bailyn, 2003). Hourly faculty, on the other hand, may struggle with feelings of marginalization or invisibility, which can lead to decreased self-esteem and overall dissatisfaction with their professional roles (Brenner, 2015). The lack of recognition and inclusion in academic communities can create a sense of isolation for hourly faculty, negatively impacting their psychological well-being (Kezar & Sam, 2014). This disparity in professional identity and institutional support further underscores the contrasting experiences of stress and psychological well-being between permanent and hourly faculty.

### *Objectives of study*

- This study aims to assess stress levels and psychological well-being among college teachers.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### *Hypotheses*

- There is a significant difference in psychological well-being between college teachers in CHB jobs and those in permanent employment.
- There are significant differences in stress levels between CHB jobs and permanent college teaching positions.

### *Sample*

The sample for this research study consisted of 80 college teachers from various colleges in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Private University, Panvel, Navi Mumbai. The participants were divided into two categories based on their job type: 40 College teachers on a Contractual Hourly Basis (CHB Job) and 40 Permanent Job college teachers. Further, the sample was categorized by gender within each group, with 40 samples selected from each gender category.

The age range of the selected participants was between 30 and 40 years. The participants were chosen based on their voluntary consent to participate in the study, ensuring that only those who were willing to engage were included. The sampling method employed for this study was purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the research. This approach allowed the researchers to focus on teachers who were in the defined age range and job categories, ensuring the study's focus remained on the experiences of both CHB and Permanent Job college teachers. By using purposive sampling, the researchers aimed to gather insights from a targeted group of individuals who could provide meaningful data regarding their professional experiences and job-related perceptions.

### *Variable*

#### **1. Independent Variable**

Type of Teacher    1) Permanent    2) CHB

#### **2. Dependent Variable**

a. Psychological wellbeing    b. Stress

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### Research Tools

- 1. Psychological wellbeing scale by Dr. Devendra Singh Sisodia and Pooja Choudary:** The Psychological Wellbeing Scale assesses an individual's psychological wellbeing across five dimensions: satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health, and interpersonal relations. The scale consists of 50 items that are divided into these five subscales. The response format uses a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The reliability of the test is reported to be 0.80.
- 2. Social Readjustment Rating Scale by Holmes and Rahey:** The Social Readjustment Rating Scale, also known as the Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory, is a tool that assesses common life stressors. It consists of 43 items, and individuals are asked to report how many times each event has occurred in their lives over specific periods, such as months or years. The reliability of this scale has been found to be satisfactory.

### ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

#### Comparison of psychological well-being and stress among College Teachers

| Variables               | Type of group                  | N  | Mean   | SD   | t value |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----|--------|------|---------|
| Psychological wellbeing | CHB Job college teachers       | 50 | 191.34 | 7.56 | 7.62**  |
|                         | Permanent Job college teachers | 50 | 203.25 | 8.06 |         |
| Stress                  | CHB Job college teachers       | 50 | 764.35 | 5.91 | 15.89*  |
|                         | Permanent Job college teachers | 50 | 744.15 | 6.77 |         |

\*\* t value is significant at 0.01 level      \*t value is significant at 0.05 level.

The hypothesis proposed a significant psychological wellbeing difference among college teachers was tested. The mean score for psychological wellbeing for CHB (Contractual) Job college teachers was 191.34, while for Permanent Job college teachers, it was 203.25. The standard deviations for these groups were 7.56 and 8.06, respectively. A t-test was conducted to examine the difference between the two groups, and the resulting t-value for psychological well-being was 7.62, which was significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, the hypothesis that there would be a significant difference in psychological wellbeing between the two groups of college teachers was supported.

The hypothesis that there would be a significant difference between CHB Job and Permanent Job college teachers with respect to stress was also tested. The mean stress score for CHB Job college teachers was 764.35, while for Permanent Job college teachers, it was 744.15. The standard deviations for the two groups were 5.91 and 6.77, respectively. The obtained t-value for stress was 15.89, which was significant at the 0.01 level. Thus, the hypothesis stating a significant difference in stress levels between CHB Job and Permanent Job college teachers was also accepted.

### CONCLUSION

1. Permanent job teachers demonstrated higher levels of psychological well-being compared to college teachers in CHB jobs.
2. College teachers in CHB (Contractual Hourly-Based) positions experience higher levels of stress than those in permanent positions.

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### Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Gharat, S. N. (2023). Comparative Analysis of Stress Levels and Psychological Well-being: Permanent vs. Hourly Contract College Faculty. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(4), 3298-3302. DIP:18.01.314.20231104, DOI:10.25215/1104.314