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Research Paper

Job Stress and Job Satisfaction Among Construction Workers in Ernakulam, Kerala

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ABSTRACT

Job stress and Job satisfaction significantly impact employee's productivity, health, and performance in the construction sector, which is a rapidly growing in industries worldwide, including India. Most construction workers are unorganized, despite the sector's role in industrial development and job creation. They face high workplace stress due to hard labor, tight schedules, hazardous conditions, and unpredictable weather. The construction industry, known for its labor-intensive and high-risk environment, often exposes workers to significant levels of job stress, which can adversely impact their job satisfaction and overall well-being. This study aims to examine the correlation between job stress and job satisfaction among building construction workers in Ernakulam, Kerala. A descriptive research design was used, with data collected via a self-structured questionnaire incorporating job stress and job satisfaction scale and by using a convenient sampling method, 250 respondents were surveyed, and data was analyzed with SPSS software. The findings revealed a negative correlation between job stress and job satisfaction, indicating that higher stress levels influence a construction worker to reside with lower satisfaction. Job stress level differs regarding gender and it is higher in males. Similarly, job stress differs depending on the workers type i.e., skilled and unskilled, and the statistical test shows that unskilled construction workers experience more job stress. Conversely, factors contributing to job satisfaction included monthly income and the type of employment they are involved. The study highlights the need for targeted interventions such as improved working conditions, mental health support, and safety regulations to enhance job satisfaction and reduce stress among construction workers. These findings have significant implications for policymakers, employers, and labor organizations working to improve the quality of work life in the construction sector.

Keywords: *Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, Construction Workers, well-being, employee, employer*

Job satisfaction shall be viewed as the level to which an employee feels self-motivated, content, and satisfied with his/her job. It occurs when an employee feels that he/she has job stability, career growth, and a comfortable work life balance. This ensures that he or she is happy at work because the work meets the individual's aspiration. People who work in

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construction are less happy with their jobs when they are exposed to physical dangers. These hazards make workers uncomfortable, worried about their safety, and stressed out. Job expectations and disagreements with coworkers are other mental stressors that make people less happy at work. On the other hand, encouragement from supervisors makes people happier at work **(Hyun et al., 2024).**

A never-ending multitude of stimuli, challenges, and demands resulting from the complex and dynamic environment of hospitality industry may create stress for hotel staff. According to many assessments, the nature of labor in the hotel business has several obstacles, especially unusual working hours with really short breaks, lack of leave and holidays, and increased triggers. This prevented them from spending time with their family members and friends. Other professions give the same benefits that motivate employees, including a decent rate of pay, a work-life balance, a better working environment, and quicker opportunities for career advancement.

Work stress and work satisfaction are the key essential components that are influencing employee output according to **Salajegheh et al. (2016)**. For several decades, many sectors have experienced a notable shift in the character of the work. There are both internal and environmental elements that affect construction workers' job stress. For example, regular exercise can assist lower stress levels, while high job demands might raise them. Social support can also help. **(Putera & Martiana, 2022).** Sexual harassment and discrimination based on gender are two stressors that female construction workers confront. These stresses make them less happy at work and more likely to have mental and physical health problems. **(Goldenhar et al., 1998).** Job satisfaction is based on an employee's desire in many areas, including resources like skill development, perks and welfare. In many circumstances, it does not align with occupational stress and thus it influences the outcome as well as causes mental and physical stress. Supervised satisfaction and work stability immediately related to a reduction in stress levels, which in turn lowered the turnover intention **(Yusof et al., 2021).**

Construction sector is one among the fast-growing industries in the world including India. Many people work in the construction sector to find their daily livelihood. Usually, construction workers do not get basic conveniences as they usually come from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds and moreover mostly building construction employees are from middle class families and countryside areas. Construction sectors, supervisors have to organize all the possible means for the well fare of the workers. Laws and welfare programs have been created to maintain the wellness of employees by most of the countries as well as in India also. **Srivastava, R., & Sutradha (2016)**.

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Workers in this sector face many physical, psychological, emotional, and cognitive challenges including construction work causes body pain, dust allergy, back pain, eye irritation, chemical exposures, headaches, injuries and other physical difficulties, stress, work life balance, tensions, anxieties, depression, safety issues, chances of falls, slips, unsafe manual material handling, anger, frustrations, burnouts, exploitation by the supervisors and contractors, conflicts with coworkers, bullying, financial insecurities, and wage disparities. Recent study has proven that workplace stress and satisfaction are strongly associated, especially for those doing physical labor. Important elements that affect job satisfaction which might inspire and involve employees more actively include job security policies, compensations, and honors. High job satisfaction may be attained by lowering the

negative effects of job stress, which will enhance team performance and personal well-being. Mainly there are two kinds of laborers who are skilled and unskilled. Skilled workers are those who have specialized training or knowledge in particular construction tasks such as plumbing, masonry, electrical, welding, and carpentry. While the people who perform general labor, material handling, and site cleanup tasks, which do not need any specialized training, are handlings, and site cleanup tasks, which do not need any specialized training, are called unskilled laborers. Usually, unless it's a contract job, the pay of building construction workers is daily. The pay for construction workers differs depending on their skill level, kind of job and knowledge. Unskilled laborers earn an average of 700 to 900 Indian rupees daily. Average daily pay for semi-skilled laborers is 900 to 1200 Indian rupees. Skilled workers are paid on average 1200 to 1600 per day. Highly competent employees earn an average of 1600 to 2500 each day. In Kerala, many construction workers are under contract and in general the working hours in India is considered as 8 hours.

KERALA CONSTRUCTION WELFARE BOARD (BOCW)

The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, 1996 (BOCW Act 1996) was enacted with the objective of regulating the activities of building construction and promoting the welfare of construction workers.

Workers who do register with the board are granted a 'Labour Card', an identity card that looks like a passbook and contains their employment and identifying details. Among the many advantages the welfare board offers health insurances, life insurances, financial help for marriage, pregnancy, childcare, pension and more. The welfare board oversee the following responsibilities:

- Medical insurances and accident care assistance.
- Pension system for workers beyond 60
- Approving loans for workers to construct their own houses.
- Financial assistance for studies to worker's children and their medical requirements.

The welfare board provides support and maternity benefits for registered female workers. welfare board helps by providing financial aid for the allocation of loans or subsidies to the pertinent employer or local authority.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Roy et al. (2024) conducted a cross-sectional study exploring the prevalence and associated factors of mental health issues—specifically depression, anxiety, and stress—among construction workers in Bangladesh. Using the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21), the study found that 17.9% of workers reported stress, 30.3% reported anxiety, and 12% reported depression. Variables like insufficient sleep and respiratory problems were identified as significant risk factors. Conversely, maintaining healthy sleep habits was associated with a 64% reduction in depression risk. The authors highlighted the urgent need for mental health interventions and safer workplace conditions in the construction industry.

Memon et al. (2023) examined job satisfaction and employee performance among construction workers in Pakistan. Using a quantitative survey method, Likert-scale-based questionnaires were distributed to assess variables like recognition, communication, growth opportunities, and performance appraisal systems. The study revealed that higher levels of job satisfaction were positively correlated with enhanced performance and reduced employee turnover. The findings stress the need for transparent performance evaluations and better employee engagement strategies to boost productivity in construction environments.

Priya et al. (2023) conducted a study in South India to explore factors influencing the Work–Family Interface (WFI) among construction professionals. They applied quantitative methods and used a structured questionnaire analyzed through statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. Results showed that personal satisfaction was the most influential factor (Mean = 3.55), followed by work–family balance (3.15), stress (2.91), and work culture (2.83). Interestingly, while work culture had a minimal correlation with other factors, it still played a crucial role in shaping the broader work-life dynamics. The researchers developed a structural model to interpret these relationships more clearly.

Dodanwala and Santoso (2022) focused on how job stress mediates the relationship between various facets of job satisfaction and turnover intention among construction project professionals in Sri Lanka. Using a quantitative approach, they employed the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), analyzed through structural equation modeling (SEM). Results confirmed that higher job stress diminished job satisfaction and increased intentions to quit. The study emphasized that improving individual job satisfaction dimensions such as supervision, pay, and promotion opportunities could significantly reduce turnover.

Manivannan et al. (2022) analyzed the effects of occupational stress on work-life balance among construction employees. Their mixed-methods study identified high job demands, extended work hours, and job insecurity as critical stressors. These factors negatively impacted workers' ability to balance professional and personal lives. Although the study didn't specify the measurement scales used, it emphasized implementing organizational-level interventions, such as flexible working arrangements and mental health counseling, to foster better work-life integration.

Aim

- This study aims primarily to explore the significant correlation between job satisfaction and Job Stress among building construction workers in Ernakulam District, Kerala, India.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the Socio-Demographic factors of the respondents.
2. To measure the Key Variables: Job Stress and Job Satisfaction among the respondents.
3. To analyze the socio demographic factors influencing the key variables: Job Stress and Job Satisfaction among the respondents.
4. To measure the relationship among the key variables: Job Stress and Job Satisfaction among the respondents.
5. To suggest the ways & measure to increase the level of Job Satisfaction and to cope up with the Job Stress.

Hypotheses

- Levels of Job Stress differ regarding gender among the construction workers.
- Type of work the construction workers involve influences the level of job stress.
- Levels of Job Satisfaction differ with regard to the monthly income among the construction workers.
- Employment type influences job satisfaction among the construction workers.

METHODOLOGY

Research design:

On the demand of the study, descriptive survey research methodology was used for investigating and collection of data to study the relationship between the key variable and the Socio-Demographic data. This study describes the factors that are influencing Job Stress and Job Satisfaction among the construction workers in Eranakulam, Kerela.

Universe:

All male and female building construction workers currently employed at various construction sites in the Ernakulam district of Kerala, irrespective of age, experience, or type of construction work (residential, commercial, or public infrastructure). This includes both:

- Skilled workers (masons, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, etc.)
- Unskilled workers (helpers, laborers, loaders, etc.)

Sampling:

The researcher has used the convenience sampling method technique. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which researcher select participants that is easily accessible or readily available to participate in the study.

Sample size*:*

The respondent size is 250 and the participants of the research consist of both male and female workers age between 25 to 60 belonging to Mr. Antony Thomas Construction Pvt. Ltd., Ernakulam.

Tools for Data Collection:

The researcher has utilized questionnaire and it has the following parts:

1. A Socio-Demographic information sheet was prepared by the author to collect background information among construction workers, visiting each construction sites, such as, name, age, gender, education, family type, working hours, working salary, number of children, and health status.
2. Moorhead. G. Griffin. R. W. that consists of a set of 20 items, which has 3 responses namely Seldom True, Sometimes True, and Mostly True, measures level of Job Stress among the hotel employees using a scale "Measuring the Level of Job stress". The scoring can be given as 1 for seldom true, 2 for sometimes true & 3 for mostly true. The stress level can be categorized into 3 levels according to the score range as given by the author which is as follows:
   - **Low Level of Job Stress (20 – 29)**
   - **Moderate Level of Job Stress (30 – 49)**
   - **High Level of Job Stress (50 – 60).**

     The more the score the higher the Level of Job Stress.
3. "Job Satisfaction Survey Scale" by Paul E. Spector is used to gauge hotel employees' Job Satisfaction. Job Satisfaction can be classified as follows:
   - **36 to 108 - Low Level of Job Satisfaction**
   - **108 to 144 – Moderate Level of Job Satisfaction**
   - **144 to 216 – High Level of Job Satisfaction**

MAJOR FINDINGS & DISCUSSION:

Table.No.1 Socio Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Socio Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Group	Below 25	25	10%
	25–34	***75***	***30%***
	35–44	63	25.2%
	45–54	50	20%
	55 and above	37	14.8%
Gender	***Male***	***200***	***80%***
	Female	50	20%
Marital Status	Single	45	18%
	Married	***175***	***70%***
	Separated	18	7.2%
	Widowed	12	4.8%
Education Level	Illiterate	63	25.2%
	Primary	***75***	***30%***
	Secondary	63	25.2%
	Higher Secondary	38	15.2%
	Graduate and above	11	4.4%
Worker Type	Skilled	100	40%
	Unskilled	***150***	***60%***
Work Experience	Less than 1 year	25	10%
	1–3 years	50	20%
	4–6 years	***75***	***30%***
	More than 6 years	100	40%
Monthly Income	Less than ₹10,000	90	36%
	₹10,001–20,000	***100***	***40%***
	Above ₹20,000	60	24%
Work Hours/Day	Less than 8 hours	38	15.2%
	8–10 hours	***138***	***55.2%***
	More than 10 hours	74	29.6%
Employment Type	***Daily Wage***	***125***	***50%***
	Contract	88	35.2%
	Permanent	37	14.8%
Residence Type	***Urban***	***100***	***40%***
	Semi-Urban	75	30%
	Rural	75	30%
Migration Status	***Local***	***150***	***60%***
	Migrant	100	40%
Family Type	***Nuclear***	***113***	***45.2%***
	Joint	100	40%
	Extended	37	14.8%

The above table explains the Personal Variables i.e. Socio Demographic variables of the study. The authors have framed 12 personal variables, the above explains the distribution of the variables. In the sample of construction workers, less than half of the total respondents 75 (30%) are between the age group 35 to 44 years, majority of the respondents 200 (80%) are male, almost 175 (70%) of the respondents are Married, considering the education level of the construction workers the data shows less than one third of the total respondents i.e., 63 (25.2%) are illiterate and nearly 75 (30%) of the construction workers have studied only primary level of education. The samples consist of 150 (60%) of the construction workers involved in unskilled work and less than half of the total respondents 100 (40%) are involved in skilled work, only one third of the construction workers 75 (30%) have experience ranging 4 to 6 years, less than half of the total respondents 100 (40%) can earn moderate level of monthly income, more than half of the total respondents 138 (55.2%) work nearly 8 to 10 hours per day, majority of the respondents 100 (40%) live in urban area, most of the construction workers in the sample 100 (60%) are from local area and less than half of the total respondents 100 (40%) are migrants, majority of the construction workers 113 (45.2%) live in nuclear family.

Table.No.2 Measuring Key Variable

Key Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Job Stress of the Respondents	Low Level of Job Stress	55	22%
	Moderate Level of Job Stress	***110***	***44%***
	High Level of Job Stress	85	34%
	Total	250	100%
Job Satisfaction of the respondents	Low Level of Job Satisfaction	70	28%
	Moderate Level of Job Satisfaction	***120***	***48%***
	High Level of Job Satisfaction	60	24%
	Total	250	100%

The above table shows the level of key variables of the study in which less than half of the construction workers 110 (44%) are suffering due to moderate level of job stress in the construction field this may be understood as most of respondents are not engaged in skilled type of work. Similarly, 120 (48%) of the construction workers possess moderate level of job satisfaction. This may be understood that odd working hours and minimal salary received by the construction workers may be the triggering factors for the level of job stress and job satisfaction.

Table.No.3 Relationship between the Key Variables
Job Stress & Job Satisfaction among the respondents

Key Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Job Satisfaction	3.40	0.75	250
Job Stress	3.80	0.82	250

Variables	Job Satisfaction	Job Stress
Job Satisfaction	1.00	-0.52**
Job Stress	-0.52**	1.00

** *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

The descriptive statistics reveal the mean and standard deviation for the 2 key variables: job stress & job satisfaction. The respondents' average level of job stress is 3.40, with a standard deviation of 0.75, suggesting a moderate level of job stress and average level of job satisfaction is 3.80 with a standard deviation of 0.82.

The correlation analysis shows that job stress is negatively correlated to job satisfaction. However, there is a strong, significant negative correlation between Job Stress & Job Satisfaction, with a correlation coefficient of – 0.52 at the 0.01 level 2 tailed. This suggests that higher levels of Job Stress are negatively associated with the lower level of Job Satisfaction among the construction workers.

Table. No.4 T Test table between Job Stress * Gender of the respondents

Hypothesis.No.1: Level of Job stress differs with regard to Gender among the construction workers.

To test this hypothesis Independent Sample t test was applied, the results are mentioned below:

Descriptives

Group Statistics	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Job Stress	Male	200	3.85	0.80	0.057
	Female	50	3.60	0.70	0.099

Test Applied	F Value	Significance
Independent sample t test	1.425	0.044

Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The data indicates significant differences between male and female construction workers with regard to their level of Job Stress. Female construction workers have a mean Job Stress score of 3.60 (SD = 0.70), while male construction workers have a higher mean score of 3.85 (SD = 0.80). This difference is statistically significant with an F-value of 1.425 and a p-value of 0.044, suggesting that male workers possess more Job Stress than female workers.

We can interpret that living in a nuclear family, with a minimal salary and odd working hours male construction workers face more job stress than females because they may be the only bread winner of the family. This induces their stress level to be high which in turn minimize the Job Satisfaction Level.

Table.No.5 T Test table between Job Stress * Workers type (Skilled or un skilled) of the respondents

Hypothesis.No.2: Type of work the construction workers involve influences the Level of Job stress.

To test this hypothesis Independent Sample t test was applied, the results are mentioned below:

Descriptive Statistics

Worker Type	N	Mean (Job Stress)	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Skilled	100	3.65	0.78	0.071
Unskilled	150	3.90	0.80	0.070

Test Applied	F Value	Significance
Independent sample t test	0.005	0.006

Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The data indicates significant differences between skilled & unskilled construction workers with regard to their level of Job Stress. Skilled construction workers have a mean Job Stress score of 3.65 (SD = 0.78), while unskilled construction workers have a higher mean score of 3.90 (SD = 0.80). This difference is statistically significant with an F-value of 0.005 and a p-value of 0.006, suggesting that unskilled construction workers possess more Job Stress than skilled workers.

We can interpret that majority of the samples are engaged in daily wages work and they are unskilled which may be a triggering factor for Job stress, if they are skilled enough they will be paid good and have lesser Job stress.

Table.No.6 ANOVA table between Job Satisfaction* Monthly Income of the respondents

Hypothesis.No.3: Level of Job satisfaction differs with regard to the monthly Income among the construction workers.
To test this hypothesis One way ANOVA test was applied, the results are mentioned below:

Descriptive Statistics

Income Group	N	Mean (Job Satisfaction)	Std. Deviation
Low Income (< ₹10,000)	90	3.20	0.65
Medium Income (₹10,000–₹20,000)	100	3.45	0.70
High Income (> ₹20,000)	60	3.75	0.60

Test Applied	F Value	Significance
One Way Anova	4.784	0.009

Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The ANOVA test results reveal significant differences in Job Satisfaction based on the monthly Income of the respondents. For Job Satisfaction, the F-value of 4.784 and a p-value of 0.009 indicate that respondents earning the monthly income have significantly different levels of Jos Satisfaction. Moreover, construction workers who are getting High Income i.e above 20,000/- Rs per month has higher level of Job satisfaction. Overall, the monthly income of the construction workers has a statistically significant impact on the key variable i.e. Job satisfaction.

Table.No.7 Chi Square table between Job Satisfaction* Employment type of the respondents

Hypothesis.No.3: Employment type influences job satisfaction among the construction workers
To test this hypothesis Chi square test was applied, the results are mentioned below:

Cross Tabulation

Job Satisfaction \ Employment Type	**Daily Wage**	**Contract**	**Permanent**	**Row Total**
Low	40	20	10	70
Moderate	60	45	15	120
High	25	23	12	60
Column Total	125	88	37	250

Test Applied	**Degrees of Freedom**	**Chi Square Value**	**Significance**
Chi Square	4	4.31	0.008

Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The Chi-Square test between Job satisfaction and the type of employment reveals a statistically significant association, with a Pearson Chi-Square value of 4.31 at 4 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.008, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This indicates that type of employment that the construction worker involved has a significant relationship with the level of Job Satisfaction among respondents. From the table, we see construction workers receiving daily wages possess moderate level of Job Satisfaction when compared to other type of employment of the respondents.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study offer relevant insights to the demographical, working conditions, Job Stress and job satisfaction of the construction workers:

When the clear introspection is made into the socio-demographic profile, job stress, and job satisfaction of construction workers. The results shows that a majority of the respondents are **male, married, and engaged in unskilled work, with limited educational qualifications**. Considerable number of respondents live in **nuclear families** and they are **either migrants or from the local nearby areas**.

Analysis results found that the **level of Job Stress is moderate among the respondents, especially in male and unskilled workers, and it may be because of economic burden, odd working hours, job insecurity, and poor salary**. The correlation analysis shows a **strong negative relationship between job stress and job satisfaction, implies as the job stress increases, Job satisfaction decreases.**

Further, **income level was found to have a significant impact on job satisfaction, where workers earning higher monthly income exhibited higher satisfaction levels.**

Interestingly, unskilled workers, though forming a major portion of the workforce, experience greater job stress, possibly due to lack of job security, low income, and fewer opportunities for growth. Additionally, male workers face more job stress, possibly because they are perceived as the primary breadwinners.

Suggestion:

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are made to **reduce job stress and enhance job satisfaction** among construction workers:

- **Expand Access to Digital and Modular Skill Development Programs:** Implement blended learning models combining onsite practical training with digital platforms (like Skill India Digital, e-Shram Portal) to provide flexible upskilling in trades such as masonry, electrical work, plumbing, and sustainable construction practices. Recognize prior learning to fast-track certification and improve job mobility.
- **Strengthen Onsite Mental Health Support and Peer Networks:** Deploy mobile mental health units, tele-counselling services (linked to platforms like Tele-MANAS), and peer-led support groups to address stress, depression, and substance abuse. Train supervisors in Psychological First Aid (PFA) and basic emotional care to identify early signs of distress.
- **Implement Transparent Wage Systems with Digital Payments:** Ensure timely and fair wages using Aadhaar-linked digital payment systems, supported by tools like the National Mobile Monitoring Software (NMMS) and unified labour codes. Mandate wage payments based on clear documentation of hours worked and skill level, to avoid exploitation.
- **Enforce Decent Work Conditions and Rest Provisions:** Monitor worksites for compliance with labour standards on working hours, rest breaks, hydration, and ergonomic practices. Use real-time health and safety monitoring (such as wearable tech and AI-based site audits) to reduce risks and fatigue.
- **Provide Comprehensive Social Security Coverage:** Integrate construction workers under e-Shram and Ayushman Bharat schemes for free health coverage, and enroll them in PM Suraksha Bima Yojana (accident insurance) and Atal Pension Yojana for long-term security. Encourage portable benefits through mobile-based registration and tracking.
- **Facilitate Long-Term Engagement and Career Progression:** Introduce apprenticeship-linked contracts, micro-credentialing, and RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) that allow workers to grow into supervisory roles or become certified contractors. Provide incentives for employers offering multi-year contracts and training-linked employment guarantees.
- **Promote Worker Empowerment Through Rights and Financial Literacy:** Regularly conduct bilingual awareness campaigns on labour rights, contract terms, and grievance redressal mechanisms (like Samadhan Portal). Link workers to banking services, savings schemes, and mobile-based financial literacy tools (like Jan Dhan, PM SVANidhi for microcredit).

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the **complex interplay between job stress and job satisfaction** among construction workers. The findings reveal that **demographic and economic factors**, such as **gender**, **skill level**, and **income**, significantly influence the psychological well-being of workers.

The **moderate to high levels of job stress** and the **negative correlation with job satisfaction** emphasize the need for **comprehensive workplace interventions**. Addressing **working conditions**, offering **skill development opportunities**, and ensuring **fair compensation** can substantially improve the **job satisfaction and overall well-being** of construction workers.

Thus, a **collaborative effort from employers, policymakers, and welfare organizations** is crucial to build a healthier and more productive construction workforce.

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Conflict of Interest

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