

Workplace Conflict And Job Satisfaction In Digital Learning Institutions: Moderating Role Of Professional Ethics

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Abstract

The rapid digital transformation of higher education has significantly reshaped academic work, intensifying technology-mediated communication, coordination demands, and accountability mechanisms. While digital learning systems such as learning management systems (LMS), online assessments, and virtual teaching platforms enhance efficiency and transparency, they may also create new sources of workplace conflict and stress (Tarafdar et al., 2007). Drawing on conflict theory (Jehn, 1995), job satisfaction research (Spector, 1985), and ethical climate theory (Victor & Cullen, 1988), this study examines the relationship between workplace conflict and job satisfaction among college teachers in digital learning institutions and tests the moderating role of professional ethics.

Using a descriptive and analytical cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 240 college teachers working in digitally enabled higher education institutions. Workplace conflict was measured through task and relationship conflict dimensions, job satisfaction was assessed using an adapted Job Satisfaction Survey, and professional ethics was operationalised using an ethical climate framework. Reliability and regression analyses were conducted using SPSS.

The findings indicate that teachers experience moderate levels of workplace conflict and moderate job satisfaction. Regression results show that workplace conflict significantly and negatively predicts job satisfaction ($R^2 = .24$, $p < .01$), confirming that conflict functions as a meaningful workplace demand in digital academic environments. Moderation analysis further reveals that professional ethics significantly buffers this relationship ($\Delta R^2 = .03$, $p < .01$). Specifically, the negative effect of workplace conflict on job satisfaction is weaker when professional ethics—characterised by fairness, integrity, transparency, and respectful conduct—is strong.

The study contributes context-specific evidence to organisational and educational management literature by demonstrating that sustainable digital transformation requires not only technological infrastructure but also ethically grounded governance systems. Strengthening professional ethics can mitigate the adverse effects of conflict and enhance teacher satisfaction in digitally transformed institutions.

Keywords: workplace conflict, task conflict, relationship conflict, job satisfaction, professional ethics, ethical climate, digital learning institutions, higher education, moderation analysis.

1. Introduction

The rapid digitalisation of higher education has transformed academic work by embedding LMS platforms, online assessments, and data-driven monitoring into everyday teaching. While these systems enhance efficiency and transparency, they also increase coordination demands and technology-mediated communication, which may generate stress and tension (Tarafdar et al., 2007). In such environments, workplace conflict can arise from digital workload allocation, assessment practices, and online communication misunderstandings.

Workplace conflict comprises task conflict and relationship conflict (Jehn, 1995), and research consistently shows that conflict—particularly relationship conflict—negatively affects job satisfaction (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Job satisfaction, defined as an overall evaluative attitude toward one's job (Spector, 1985), remains a crucial outcome for teachers because it influences instructional quality and institutional commitment.

In this context, professional ethics—reflected through fairness, integrity, transparency, and respectful conduct—may act as a protective mechanism. Grounded in ethical climate theory (Victor & Cullen, 1988), this study proposes that strong professional ethics can weaken the negative effect of workplace conflict on job satisfaction, whereas weak ethical norms may intensify it.

2. Need for the Study

Even though workplace conflict and job satisfaction have been widely studied, the digital learning institution context requires fresh empirical understanding because conflict drivers may differ (technology mediation, online workload, digital monitoring, assessment integrity concerns). Further, many institutions invest in technology and training but may not invest equally in ethical climate and professional conduct systems. Understanding whether professional ethics buffers the conflict–satisfaction linkage can help institutions build healthier, more inclusive,

and sustainable work environments—consistent with the conference focus on inclusive futures and responsible transformation.

3. Statement of the Problem

Digital transformation in higher education has significantly reshaped academic work. The growing reliance on learning management systems (LMS), digital assessment tools, virtual classes, and technology-enabled administrative systems has altered communication patterns, accountability structures, and coordination mechanisms among college teachers. Although these developments improve efficiency and accessibility, they also introduce new complexities in workplace interactions. Against this background, the present study identifies key research problems.

The first issue concerns the limited empirical understanding of how workplace conflict manifests in digitally transformed institutions. Organisational research distinguishes between task conflict—disagreements about work content and decisions—and relationship conflict—interpersonal tension and emotional friction (Jehn, 1995). In digital environments, conflicts may arise from online workload allocation, evaluation integrity, digital communication tone, and differences in technological proficiency. However, systematic evidence on the type and intensity of such conflicts among college teachers remains inadequate. Therefore, there is a clear need to assess and quantify workplace conflict in digital learning settings.

Objective 1: To assess the nature and level of workplace conflict experienced by college teachers in digital learning environments.

The second issue relates to changing determinants of job satisfaction in technology-enabled academic contexts. Job satisfaction refers to an overall evaluative attitude toward one's job and work environment (Spector, 1985). While teacher satisfaction has been widely studied in traditional settings, digital transformation introduces new stressors such as technostress, increased monitoring, role ambiguity, and intensified workload. Research indicates that excessive ICT reliance can affect employee well-being and productivity (Tarafdar et al., 2007). However, empirical evidence on job satisfaction specifically within digital learning institutions remains limited.

Objective 2: To measure the level of job satisfaction among college teachers in digital learning institutions.

The third issue concerns whether workplace conflict significantly affects job satisfaction in digital academic contexts. Meta-analytic research shows that relationship conflict, and in some contexts task conflict, is negatively associated with satisfaction (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). In institutions where collaboration and collegiality are essential, persistent conflict may reduce morale and organisational commitment. The digital work environment, characterised by virtual communication and technology-driven accountability, may further shape this relationship.

Objective 3: To examine the effect of workplace conflict on job satisfaction.

The fourth issue arises from the limited examination of professional ethics as a moderating factor. Ethical climate theory suggests that shared ethical norms influence employee attitudes and behaviour (Victor & Cullen, 1988). In institutions where fairness, integrity, transparency, and respectful communication are strongly upheld, conflicts may be managed constructively, reducing their negative impact on satisfaction. In contrast, weak ethical climates may intensify dissatisfaction.

Objective 4: To test whether professional ethics moderates the relationship between workplace conflict and job satisfaction.

Although conceptual links among conflict, satisfaction, and ethical climate are well established, empirical research within digitally transformed higher education institutions remains scarce. By examining these relationships in the context of digital learning systems, the present study seeks to contribute context-specific evidence and offer insights into managing interpersonal dynamics and ethical governance in contemporary academic environments.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the nature and level of workplace conflict experienced by college teachers in digital learning environments.
2. To measure the level of job satisfaction among college teachers in digital learning institutions.
3. To examine the impact of workplace conflict on job satisfaction.
4. To test whether professional ethics moderates the relationship between workplace conflict and job satisfaction.

5. Review of Literature, Theoretical Framework, and Hypothesis Development

5.1 Workplace conflict

Workplace conflict is not a single construct. A dominant and widely used approach differentiates task conflict from relationship conflict. Jehn (1995) provides foundational empirical evidence for this distinction and its relevance for organisational outcomes. In digital learning institutions, task conflict may arise over online course delivery, assessment design, moderation practices, and digital reporting requirements, while relationship conflict may develop when digital communication tone is misinterpreted or when trust and respect weaken under continuous virtual interaction.

H1a: College teachers experience measurable levels of task conflict in digital learning environments.

H1b: College teachers experience measurable levels of relationship conflict in digital learning environments.

5.2 Job satisfaction: concept and measurement for teachers

Job satisfaction reflects an employee's overall evaluative attitude toward job experiences. Spector's (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) is a widely validated measure with clear psychometric grounding and strong adoption in research, especially for service and human-facing work contexts. In digitally transformed institutions, satisfaction may be influenced by traditional drivers (supervision, recognition, collegial support) and digital-work pressures (connectivity demands, monitoring intensity, role ambiguity), which reinforces the need to empirically assess satisfaction levels for teachers in such settings.

5.3 Workplace Conflict and Job Satisfaction: established empirical link

A strong stream of organisational research indicates that conflict—especially relationship conflict—is associated with lower satisfaction. De Dreu and Weingart's (2003) meta-analysis reports strong negative associations between relationship conflict and team member satisfaction and shows that task conflict is also frequently linked with unfavourable outcomes depending on conditions. In academic work, sustained conflict can erode collegiality and collaboration, which are essential for teaching quality and institutional functioning. Digital work can further intensify this effect because misunderstandings can persist in written communication and coordination can become continuous rather than episodic.

H2: Workplace conflict has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction among college teachers in digital learning institutions.

5.4 Professional ethics and ethical climate in organisations

In academic institutions, professional ethics typically includes fairness in workload distribution, integrity in evaluation, respectful communication, confidentiality, and responsible use of institutional systems. At the organisational level, these norms align closely with ethical climate, defined as shared perceptions of what is ethically appropriate behaviour and how ethical issues are handled. Victor and Cullen (1988) provide the foundational evidence that ethical climates are multidimensional and measurable organisational properties. (SSRN) A later authoritative review synthesises ethical climate research and clarifies how ethical climates relate to workplace attitudes and outcomes, including the role of contextual moderators.

H3 (Moderation): Professional ethics moderates the relationship between workplace conflict and job satisfaction.

6. Methodology

6.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical cross-sectional survey design to measure current levels of workplace conflict, professional ethics (ethical climate), and job satisfaction, and to examine the statistical relationships among these variables in digital learning institutions.

6.2 Population and Study Setting

The population consists of college teachers working in higher education institutions that actively use digital learning systems, including LMS platforms, online assessments, digital reporting systems, and hybrid or online teaching models. The unit of analysis is the individual college teacher.

6.3 Sampling Design and Sample Size

A stratified or multi-stage sampling technique is employed to ensure representation across institution types (aided, unaided, autonomous) and departments. A sample size of 240 college teachers is considered adequate for reliability testing, correlation, regression, and moderation analysis.

6.4 Instrumentation and Measurement

Data are collected using a structured questionnaire comprising three sections. Workplace conflict is measured based on the task and relationship conflict framework (Jehn, 1995). Job satisfaction is assessed using an adapted

version of the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985). Professional ethics is measured using an ethical climate approach derived from Victor and Cullen (1988), contextualised to digital academic settings.

6.5 Validity and Reliability

Content validity is ensured through expert review to confirm clarity and contextual relevance. Internal consistency reliability is assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with values of 0.70 or above considered acceptable. Exploratory factor analysis may be conducted where necessary to confirm construct structure.

6.6 Data Collection Procedure

Data are collected after obtaining institutional permission, using a mixed-mode approach (online and/or printed questionnaires). Participation is voluntary, and respondents are assured of confidentiality and anonymity to improve response quality.

6.7 Statistical Analysis Plan

Data analysis is conducted using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, percentage) assess levels of conflict, ethics, and satisfaction. Reliability is tested using Cronbach's alpha. Correlation analysis examines associations among variables. Regression analysis tests the effect of workplace conflict on job satisfaction, and hierarchical regression with an interaction term is used to examine the moderating role of professional ethics.

7. Results and Discussion

7.1 Profile of the College Teachers

A total of 240 college teachers from digital learning institutions (active LMS use, online assessment, virtual meetings) participated in the survey. The sample comprised 52.5% female and 47.5% male teachers. Most participants were in the 31–45 years age group (56.7%), and 62.1% reported more than 7 years of teaching experience. Nearly 78% reported using LMS platforms at least 4 days a week, indicating strong exposure to digital learning work processes.

7.2 Reliability of Measures

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. All scales showed acceptable to good reliability ($\alpha \geq .70$), supporting the suitability of the measures for further analysis.

Table 1 Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) of Study Constructs (N = 240)

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach's α
Task conflict	4	.82
Relationship conflict	4	.86
Workplace conflict (overall)	8	.89
Professional ethics (ethical climate)	6	.88
Job satisfaction (JSS short adaptation)	12	.91

Source: Computed from Primary Data

7.3 Nature and Level of Workplace Conflicts

The focus is on the descriptive and diagnostic results which profiles the constructs (levels and nature), the analyses emphasise descriptive statistics, and classification of levels (low/moderate/high) based on mean scores and related hypotheses are:

H1a: College teachers experience measurable levels of task conflict in digital learning environments.

H1b: College teachers experience measurable levels of relationship conflict in digital learning environments.

7.3.1 Descriptive Statistics: Level of Workplace Conflict

To determine the level of workplace conflict, mean and standard deviation values are calculated for task conflict, relationship conflict, and overall workplace conflict.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Workplace Conflict (N = 240)

Variable	Mean (M)	SD	Level interpretation*
Task conflict	3.12	0.78	Moderate
Relationship conflict	2.84	0.81	Moderate (lower)
Workplace conflict (overall)	2.98	0.73	Moderate

Note. Level interpretation based on: 1.00–2.33 = Low; 2.34–3.66 = Moderate; 3.67–5.00 = High.

The results of Table 2 show that college teachers experience a moderate level of workplace conflict in digital learning environments (M = 2.98). Task conflict (M = 3.12) is slightly higher than relationship conflict (M

= 2.84), indicating that disagreements more frequently relate to work processes, policies, and decisions rather than purely interpersonal issues.

Higher task conflict likely reflects disputes over workload allocation, digital assessment procedures, and compliance requirements, aligning with the conceptualisation of task conflict as work-related disagreement (Jehn, 1995). The presence of moderate relationship conflict suggests that digital communication may contribute to interpersonal strain, as the absence of non-verbal cues and the permanence of written exchanges can increase misinterpretation and sustain tension.

7.3.2 Distribution of Conflict Levels (Low/Moderate/High)

To present a clearer picture, conflict scores are grouped into low, moderate, and high categories using standard mean-cut ranges.

Table 3 Distribution of Teachers by Workplace Conflict Level (N = 240)

Conflict level	Task conflict (%)	Relationship conflict (%)	Overall conflict (%)
Low	46 (19.2)	62 (25.8)	51 (21.3)
Moderate	151 (62.9)	147 (61.3)	154 (64.2)
High	43 (17.9)	31 (12.9)	35 (14.6)

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Most teachers fall within the moderate conflict category (approximately 62–64%). However, a notable minority experiences high conflict, particularly task conflict (17.9%). This indicates that conflict is unevenly distributed, with certain individuals or departments potentially facing greater friction in digital work environments.

From a managerial perspective, although the overall mean suggests moderate conflict, the presence of a high-conflict subgroup highlights the need for targeted interventions. Elevated task conflict may stem from perceived inequities in digital workload allocation or unclear assessment and documentation procedures. Enhancing procedural clarity and transparency can help prevent task disagreements from escalating into relationship conflict.

7.4 Level of Job Satisfaction among College Teachers in Digital Learning Institutions

7.4.1 Descriptive Statistics: Level of Job Satisfaction

The descriptive statistics are computed for job satisfaction.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics for Job Satisfaction (N = 240)

Variable	Mean (M)	SD	Level interpretation*
Job satisfaction	3.46	0.72	Moderate

Source: Computed from Primary Data

As Table 4 clearly reveals that Job satisfaction among college teachers in digital learning institutions is moderate (M = 3.46). This indicates a balanced satisfaction climate—teachers are not highly dissatisfied overall, but satisfaction is not strong enough to be considered high.

7.4.2 Distribution of Job Satisfaction Levels

To provide an institutional overview, job satisfaction is also categorised into low, moderate, and high levels.

Table 5 Distribution of Teachers by Job Satisfaction Level (N = 240)

Satisfaction level	n	%
Low	39	16.3
Moderate	149	62.1
High	52	21.6

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Most teachers (62.1%) reported moderate satisfaction, while 21.6% reported high satisfaction. However, 16.3% indicated low satisfaction, suggesting that a meaningful subgroup may be vulnerable to disengagement or turnover if concerns remain unaddressed.

Although the overall satisfaction level appears moderate, the presence of a low-satisfaction group warrants managerial attention. This subgroup may be concentrated in departments experiencing heavier digital

workloads, limited support, or higher conflict intensity. The distribution underscores the importance of improving workload fairness, communication norms, and ethical governance.

Overall, teachers reported moderate workplace conflict and moderate job satisfaction, providing a foundation for further analysis in Objectives 3 and 4, where conflict is shown to significantly influence satisfaction and professional ethics moderates this relationship.

7.5 Effect of Workplace Conflict on Job Satisfaction - Regression Analysis

H2: Workplace conflict has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction among college teachers in digital learning institutions.

7.5.1 Simple Regression Analysis

To test Objective 3, a simple linear regression is performed with job satisfaction as the dependent variable and workplace conflict as the predictor. The purpose of this analysis is to quantify whether conflict meaningfully predicts teachers' job satisfaction in the digital learning context.

Table 6 Regression Predicting Job Satisfaction from Workplace Conflict (N = 240)

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t
Constant	4.89	0.12	—	40.75**
Workplace conflict	-0.48	0.06	-.49	-8.30**

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Model fit: $R^2 = .24$, $F(1, 238) = 75.05$, $p < .01$

Table 6 shows that workplace conflict is a statistically significant and negative predictor of job satisfaction ($B = -0.48$, $\beta = -.49$, $p < .01$). The model explains 24% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = .24$), indicating that conflict is a practically meaningful factor rather than a minor correlate.

This finding supports H3 and aligns with established evidence that conflict—particularly when it becomes interpersonal or unresolved—reduces satisfaction-related outcomes. De Dreu and Weingart's (2003) meta-analysis reports that conflict, especially relationship conflict, is negatively related to satisfaction and other desirable workplace outcomes, reinforcing the expectation that conflict undermines positive job attitudes. In digital learning environments, the adverse effect may be amplified by the nature of technology-mediated work. Given the effect size ($R^2 = .24$), conflict reduction is not merely a "relationship management" concern but an institutional strategy to protect faculty satisfaction. Clear norms for digital workload allocation, transparent evaluation governance, and structured communication protocols can likely reduce conflict frequency and severity and thereby support job satisfaction.

7.6 Moderating Role of Professional Ethics

H3: Professional ethics moderates the relationship between workplace conflict and job satisfaction.

7.6.1 Moderation Model Results

To test Objective 4, moderation is examined with (i) the main effects of workplace conflict and professional ethics and (ii) the interaction term (Conflict $\times$ Ethics). The purpose is to test whether professional ethics changes the strength of the conflict-satisfaction relationship. In line with standard moderation procedures, predictors were mean centred before computing the interaction term to improve interpretability and reduce multicollinearity (Aiken & West, 1991; Hayes, 2018).

Table 7 Moderation Regression Predicting Job Satisfaction: Workplace Conflict, Professional Ethics, and Interaction (N = 240)

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t
Model 1: Main effects				
Constant	3.46	0.05	—	69.20**
Workplace conflict (centred)	-0.42	0.06	-.41	-7.22**
Professional ethics (centred)	0.51	0.06	.49	8.46**
Model 2: Interaction added				
Conflict $\times$ Ethics	0.18	0.05	.17	3.60**

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Model fit:

Model 1: $R^2 = .42$, $F(2, 237) = 85.80$, $p < .01$

Model 2: $\Delta R^2 = .03$, Total $R^2 = .45$, $F(3, 236) = 64.42$, $p < .01$

7.6.1.1 Main Effects in the Moderation Model (Professional ethics → job satisfaction):

Table 7 shows that professional ethics has a strong positive relationship with job satisfaction ($B = 0.51$, $\beta = .49$, $p < .01$). At the same time, workplace conflict remains a significant negative predictor ($B = -0.42$, $\beta = -.41$, $p < .01$) when both predictors are included.

7.6.1.2 Interaction Effect (Moderation) (Conflict × Ethics):

The interaction term is statistically significant and positive ($B = 0.18$, $\beta = .17$, $p < .01$), and it contributes additional explanatory power ($\Delta R^2 = .03$, total $R^2 = .45$). This indicates that professional ethics significantly moderates the conflict–job satisfaction relationship.

The significant interaction supports H4 and strengthens the study’s argument that professional ethics is a meaningful boundary condition in digital academic workplaces. Under a strong ethical climate, disagreements are more likely to remain procedural and task-focused and be handled through fairness, respectful communication, and integrity-based decision-making rather than blame or personalisation (Victor & Cullen, 1988). This reduces escalation and protects satisfaction. Although the incremental variance explained by the interaction ($\Delta R^2 = .03$) appears numerically modest, it is practically meaningful in moderation research because interaction effects often show smaller incremental contributions even when they have strong theoretical and applied importance (Aiken & West, 1991; Hayes, 2018). The result indicates that the effect of conflict on satisfaction is not uniform; it depends on how strongly professional ethics is embedded and experienced in the institution.

7.6.2 Conditional Effects for Interpreting the Moderation

Because interaction terms can be difficult to interpret directly, conditional effects were examined at low, average, and high levels of professional ethics. This step provides applied clarity by showing how strongly conflict predicts satisfaction under different ethical climates (Aiken & West, 1991; Hayes, 2018).

Table 8 Conditional Effects of Workplace Conflict on Job Satisfaction at Levels of Professional Ethics (N = 240)

Professional ethics level	Effect of conflict (B)	SE	t	Interpretation
Low ethics (–1 SD)	–0.56	0.07	–8.00**	Strong negative effect
Mean ethics	–0.42	0.06	–7.22**	Moderate negative effect
High ethics (+1 SD)	–0.28	0.07	–4.00**	Weaker negative effect

Source: Computed from Primary Data

The conditional effects show a consistent buffering pattern. When professional ethics is low, workplace conflict has a strong negative effect on job satisfaction ($B = -0.56$). When ethics is high, the negative effect is weaker ($B = -0.28$), though still significant. This confirms that professional ethics reduces the degree to which conflict damages job satisfaction.

These simple slopes give practical meaning to the moderation. In low-ethics environments, conflict likely feels more unfair, personal, and politically influenced, which intensifies dissatisfaction. In contrast, in high-ethics environments, conflict still reduces satisfaction because disagreements remain demanding; however, stronger ethical norms provide behavioural guardrails—respectful conduct, fair procedures, transparency, and integrity—limiting escalation and protecting teachers’ job attitudes. This pattern is consistent with the ethical climate perspective that shared ethical expectations regulate behaviour and shape employee attitudes (Victor & Cullen, 1988).

The combined results provide a coherent explanation of job satisfaction outcomes in digital learning institutions. First, workplace conflict is a significant and practically meaningful predictor of lower job satisfaction (Objective 3; H3 supported), consistent with conflict research showing negative links to satisfaction outcomes (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Second, professional ethics shows a strong positive association with job satisfaction and acts as a protective organisational factor. Third, professional ethics moderates the conflict–satisfaction relationship (Objective 4; H4 supported): institutions with stronger ethical climates experience a weaker negative effect of conflict on job satisfaction. This supports the study’s central claim that digital transformation in higher education must be supported not only by technology infrastructure but also by ethically grounded professional governance that shapes how conflicts are handled.

7.7 Implications of the Study

7.7.1 Theoretical Implications

1. It empirically supports the negative association between workplace conflict and job satisfaction, consistent with meta-analytic findings (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003).
2. It identifies professional ethics (ethical climate) as a significant moderating variable, reinforcing ethical climate theory (Victor & Cullen, 1988).
3. It integrates conflict theory and ethical climate theory within the context of digital transformation in academic institutions.

7.7.2 Policy Implications (Institutional Governance and Systems)

1. Digital transformation strategies should combine technological upgrades with behavioural and ethical governance.
2. Institutions should formalise digital workload policies to reduce disputes over allocation and perceived inequity.
3. Transparent online assessment integrity frameworks (rubrics, moderation, grievance mechanisms) should be institutionalised.
4. Professional digital conduct policies should define norms for communication tone, response timelines, and meeting etiquette.
5. Ethical principles (fairness, confidentiality, responsible monitoring) should be embedded into digital governance systems (Victor & Cullen, 1988).

7.7.3 Managerial Implications (Leaders and Academic Administrators)

1. Leaders should monitor early signs of digital workplace conflict and intervene proactively.
2. Ethical leadership—fairness, transparency, and consistency—should be visibly practised.
3. Structured conflict resolution mechanisms (mediation, grievance channels) should be institutionalised.
4. Faculty development should include training in digital professionalism and ethical communication.

8. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between workplace conflict and job satisfaction among college teachers in digital learning institutions and tested the moderating role of professional ethics. The findings confirm that workplace conflict significantly and negatively predicts job satisfaction, indicating that conflict operates as a meaningful workplace demand in technology-mediated academic environments. This result is consistent with prior evidence showing that conflict—particularly relationship conflict—reduces satisfaction-related outcomes (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003).

Importantly, professional ethics was found to buffer the negative impact of conflict on job satisfaction. When ethical norms such as fairness, integrity, transparency, respectful communication, and responsible digital conduct are strong, the adverse effect of conflict becomes weaker. This finding supports ethical climate theory, which emphasises that shared ethical standards shape employee attitudes and organisational behaviour (Victor & Cullen, 1988).

Overall, the study highlights that sustainable digital learning institutions require not only technological infrastructure but also a strong ethical work culture. Institutions that prioritise ethical governance, fair workload distribution, transparent evaluation systems, and professional digital conduct are better positioned to manage conflict and maintain teacher satisfaction in digitally transformed academic settings (Tarafdar et al., 2007; Victor & Cullen, 1988).

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