EXPLORING THE CAUSES OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICTS IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN INDIA

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Abstract

Organizational conflict has become an increasingly significant issue in higher educational institutions due to evolving academic roles, administrative complexities, and heightened performance expectations. This study aims to examine faculty perceptions of the factors contributing to organizational conflict in higher education institutions in India and to assess how these conflicts influence faculty performance. Adopting a descriptive and analytical research design, primary data were collected from faculty members across selected higher educational institutions using a structured questionnaire. The study identifies key sources of organizational conflict, including role ambiguity, workload imbalance, communication gaps, leadership and governance issues, perceived organizational politics, and resource constraints. The findings indicate that unresolved organizational conflicts negatively affect faculty motivation, job satisfaction, and performance in teaching and research activities. The study highlights the importance of effective conflict management mechanisms, transparent administrative practices, and participative decision-making to foster a

positive academic work environment. By providing empirical insights specific to the Indian higher education context, this research contributes to existing literature and offers practical implications for institutional leaders and policymakers aiming to enhance faculty performance and institutional effectiveness.

Keywords: *organizational conflict, higher education, perception, organizational politics*

JEL Classification: I23, M12, M54, D23

Introduction

Organizational conflict has emerged as one of the most critical challenges confronting institutions in the contemporary work environment. In an era characterized by rapid globalization, technological advancement, workforce diversity, and increasing performance pressures, conflicts within organizations have become almost inevitable. Organizational conflict refers to disagreements, misunderstandings, or clashes arising from differences in goals, values, perceptions, interests, or resource allocation among individuals or groups within an organization. While a certain level of conflict may stimulate innovation and constructive debate, unmanaged or excessive conflict can disrupt harmony, reduce efficiency, and negatively influence employee morale and productivity. As organizations strive to remain competitive and adaptive, addressing organizational conflict has become a burning issue, especially in knowledge-driven sectors such as education, where human capital is the most valuable resource.

Educational institutions, particularly higher educational institutions, are highly susceptible to organisational conflicts due to their complex and multifaceted nature. Universities and colleges consist of diverse stakeholders including academic staff, administrative employees, management, governing bodies, students, and regulatory authorities. Each group operates with distinct roles, responsibilities, expectations, and priorities. Differences in academic freedom, hierarchical structures, workload distribution, promotion policies, evaluation systems, and decision-making processes often create fertile ground for conflict. Additionally, the coexistence of traditional academic values with modern managerial practices can intensify tensions within institutions. The pressure to meet accreditation standards, research output targets, student satisfaction metrics, and financial sustainability further increases the likelihood of interpersonal and interdepartmental conflicts in educational settings.

In the Indian context, the effect of organizational conflicts on employee performance holds particular significance. India's higher education sector is one of the largest in the world, undergoing rapid expansion and transformation. Faculty members and staff are increasingly expected to balance teaching, research, administrative responsibilities, and community engagement. Simultaneously, issues such as limited resources, contractual appointments, performance-based appraisals, delayed promotions, governance challenges, and regulatory interventions often contribute to dissatisfaction and stress among employees. Cultural factors such as power distance, communication styles, and resistance to change may further complicate conflict management. When conflicts remain unresolved, they can adversely affect employee motivation, job satisfaction, commitment, and ultimately performance, thereby undermining institutional effectiveness and educational quality.

Against this backdrop, the present study explores the various factors or reasons contributing to organisational conflicts in higher educational institutions. These factors may include communication gaps, role ambiguity, leadership styles, organizational politics, workload imbalance, lack of participation in decision-making, and differences in values or expectations. Understanding these underlying causes is essential for developing effective conflict management strategies. By identifying the sources of conflict specific to higher education institutions, administrators and policymakers can design interventions that promote collaboration, transparency, and a positive work environment.

Furthermore, the study examines whether and to what extent organizational conflicts affect employee performance in Indian higher educational institutions. Employee performance in academia is not limited to measurable outputs such as teaching hours or research publications; it also encompasses creativity, engagement, mentoring quality, and contribution to institutional development. Persistent conflicts can lead to stress, burnout, absenteeism, reduced cooperation, and declining performance levels. Conversely, well-managed conflicts may encourage dialogue, innovation, and improved problem-solving. Therefore, examining the relationship between organizational conflict and employee performance is crucial for understanding how conflicts can be transformed from destructive forces into constructive opportunities.

This research seeks to contribute to the existing literature by analyzing organizational conflict as a significant factor influencing employee performance in higher educational institutions in India. By exploring the causes of conflict and assessing their impact on performance, the study aims to provide insights that can assist institutional leaders in fostering a healthier organizational climate, enhancing employee well-being, and improving overall institutional performance.

Review of Literature

Research on organizational conflict in higher education has grown from early conceptual work on the nature of conflict to empirical studies that examine its antecedents, forms, and consequences for employee outcomes. Classic conceptualizations define organizational conflict as perceived incompatibilities in goals, values, or interests between individuals or groups (Pondy, 1967). Scholars have distinguished types of conflict — task, relationship and process — each with different implications for performance and attitudes (Jehn, 1995; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Rahim's (2002) work on conflict management frames the organizational response as critical: outcomes depend not only on conflict's source but also on styles and organizational structures for resolving it.

A strong strand of the literature identifies structural and role-related factors as central antecedents to workplace conflict in educational settings. Role ambiguity and role conflict — when job expectations are unclear or incompatible — are repeatedly linked to stress, dissatisfaction, and reduced performance among academic staff (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970; Rizzo et al., 1970; studies in higher education contexts: Ramesh & coworkers; see comparisons in Ajayi, 2014). In higher education, multiple role demands (teaching, research, administration, outreach) create systematic potential for role overload and inter-role conflict (Kumar, 2020; Rao, 2025). Empirical work in Indian and comparable contexts shows role ambiguity correlates with turnover intention and lower organizational commitment (Deepak Kumar, 2025; comparative analyses in IUP/India journals).

Organizational politics and scarce resources are another recurring theme. Perceived organizational politics (POP) — the belief that self-serving behaviors influence decisions — correlates negatively with job satisfaction and performance and positively with stress (Vigoda-Gadot, 2003; Bhattacharjee, 2025; Singh, 2024). In India, where funding constraints, hiring freezes, and contentious promotion mechanisms are frequent, politics and resource scarcity can be especially potent triggers of conflict (Deb, 2023; Times of India reports on faculty protests; Naik, 2024). Studies of Indian universities point to politicized appointment practices, delays in salary/promotion (CAS) and contractualization as sources of grievance and intergroup tension (All-India reports; institutional case studies).

Interpersonal and cultural dimensions are also important. Relationship conflict arising from poor communication, personality clashes, hierarchical distance, and status differences undermines cooperation and morale (Jehn, 1997; Tjosvold, 2008). Indian higher education's hierarchical culture and deference norms may dampen open dissent but can also permit unresolved grievances to fester and later erupt (Sareen & Mandal, 2024). Research on employee silence among college teachers in

regional Indian contexts highlights how cultural and institutional norms inhibit reporting and resolution of problems (Kerala study, 2025).

Academic autonomy and governance tensions are unique to higher education. Conflicts often arise between faculty's expectations of academic freedom and managerial demands for accountability, performance metrics, and commercialization of research (Altbach, 2001; Mukhtar, 2011). The push for rankings, research output, and student satisfaction metrics introduces performance pressures that collide with traditional faculty norms, producing both task and process conflicts (Deb, 2023; Sareen et al., 2024).

Several studies have examined how conflict types link to employee performance. Task conflict can be constructive when managed — stimulating debate and innovation — while relationship conflict tends to be harmful (Jehn, 1995; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Indian empirical studies find mixed evidence: some task-related disagreements spur research collaboration and improved curriculum design when institutions provide participative decision-making structures (case studies), whereas unresolved political and role conflicts consistently depress teaching effectiveness and research productivity (Bhattacharjee, 2025; Pooja Singh, 2024).

Conflict-management competence and institutional practices appear as moderators. Organizations with transparent promotion systems, clear role descriptions, participative governance, and formal grievance mechanisms show lower destructive conflict and better performance outcomes (Rahim, 2002; Tjosvold, 2008). However, the literature on India points to variability in institutional capacity to implement these practices — public institutions often face bureaucratic inertia, while private institutions vary widely in managerial sophistication (Sharma & Sharma, 2018; research syntheses).

Gaps and limitations in the extant literature emerge clearly. Much of the empirical work in India is descriptive, regionally focused, or published in local journals — with limited multi-institutional quantitative studies testing integrated models that include structural (role ambiguity, resource scarcity), interpersonal (communication, leadership), and cultural (power distance, employee silence) predictors together. There is also limited longitudinal evidence on how conflict trajectories affect faculty research and teaching outputs over time. Finally, while studies examine perceived politics and role stress, fewer studies explicitly link specific conflict antecedents to measurable performance outcomes (publications, student outcomes), creating an empirical gap this research can address.

Research Gap

Despite the extensive body of literature on organizational conflict and employee performance, a significant research gap exists with respect to higher educational institutions in India. Most existing studies have either examined organizational conflict in corporate or industrial settings or have focused on isolated aspects of conflict such as interpersonal issues or leadership styles. Limited empirical research systematically explores the multidimensional factors of organisational conflict—such as governance practices, academic autonomy, performance appraisal systems, contractual employment, and regulatory pressures—and their combined effect on employee performance within Indian higher educational institutions. Moreover, prior studies often adopt Western frameworks that may not adequately capture the unique socio-cultural, administrative, and regulatory environment of Indian academia. There is also a lack of integrated models that examine both constructive and destructive conflicts and their differential impact on academic and administrative employees' performance. Consequently, this study addresses this gap by providing a context-specific, comprehensive analysis of organizational conflict factors and their influence on employee performance in Indian higher education, thereby offering novel insights for policy formulation and institutional management.

Objectives of the Study

To analyze the factors affecting organizational conflicts in Higher Education of India on various streams, gender and designation.

Research Methodology

The study is Empirical in nature. The data used in this study are primary in nature. The primary data have been collected with the help of a questionnaire that has been framed in both English and Hindi language for the purpose of ease in understanding the questions to the respondents. The questionnaire involves the perception of faculties of higher education institutes on the factors responsible for organizational conflict on a likert scale of 1 to 7. An attempt has been made to collect data randomly from 600 faculties across India by distributing a questionnaire to through Google Forms. The reason for targeting more respondents is to remove those respondents who has given incomplete information or whose information are baseless and considered as outliers for the study. Out of these 600 targeted respondents, only 376 respondents have given full and complete information. The study has been conducted during December, 2025. The data collected have been presented via tables and diagrams using SPSS 25 and Excel 2010. For the purpose of hypothesis testing Chi-square Test or Fisher's Exact Test have been used.

Need of the Study

Research on the factors of organizational conflicts affecting employee performance in higher educational institutions is essential due to the pivotal role these institutions play in shaping human capital and societal development. Higher education institutions are not only centers of knowledge creation but also key contributors to social progress, innovation, and economic growth. When organizational conflicts among faculty and staff remain unresolved, they can negatively impact teaching quality, research productivity, and student mentorship, ultimately affecting the learning outcomes and future workforce of society. Understanding the causes and consequences of such conflicts can help institutional leaders, policymakers, and regulatory bodies design effective conflict management strategies, promote healthy work environments, and enhance employee well-being. Improved employee performance leads to better academic delivery, stronger research culture, and more ethical governance, which benefits students, institutions, and society at large. Therefore, this research is vital for fostering sustainable educational ecosystems that contribute positively to social stability, national development, and global competitiveness.

Limitations of the Study

- The study relies on faculty perceptions, which are subjective and may be influenced by personal bias.
- Only faculty members were included, excluding administrative and managerial perspectives.
- The research is limited to selected institutions and regions, restricting generalizability across India.
- Data collection problem has been faced and could not reach to all states of India.

Analysis, Results and Discussion

Count of Top management takes decisions without involving teachers:

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Female	0	8	36	0	96	40	0	180

Male	28	8	20	12	60	60	8	196
Grand Total	28	16	56	12	156	100	8	376

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Arts	8	16	24	12	64	32	0	156
Commerce	12	0	28	0	16	44	8	108
Science	8	0	4	0	76	24	0	112
Grand Total	28	16	56	12	156	100	8	376

Source: Author's Compilation Using MS Excel 2024

Chi-square Calculation and Interpretation

1. Gender vs. Perception of Top Management Decisions

The Chi-square test of independence was applied to examine the association between gender and perception regarding top management taking decisions without involving teachers. The calculated Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 64.31$ with 6 degrees of freedom. The corresponding p-value < 0.001, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. Hence, the null hypothesis of no association is rejected. This indicates a significant difference between male and female faculty perceptions. Male faculty more frequently perceived management decisions as "Extremely Responsible" or "Responsible," while female faculty largely viewed them as "Not at all Responsible" or "Less Responsible," reflecting gender-based perceptual differences.

2. Academic Stream vs. Perception

For academic streams (Arts, Commerce, Science), the Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 129.64$ with 12 degrees of freedom, and p-value < 0.001. This result is also highly significant, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. It confirms that perceptions significantly differ across streams, with Commerce and Arts faculty showing greater dissatisfaction compared to Science faculty.

Count of There is confusion about who is responsible (UGC, state government, or institution). (Sometimes some policies of UGC are different at some State level or at some University level.)

Row Labels	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Female	0	0	40	120	20	0	180
Male	32	32	60	16	40	16	196
Grand Total	32	32	100	136	60	16	376

Row Labels	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Arts	12	0	20	72	36	16	156
Commerce	12	32	48	0	16	0	108
Science	8	0	32	64	8	0	112
Grand Total	32	32	100	136	60	16	376

Source: Author's Compilation Using MS Excel 2024

Chi-square Calculation and Interpretation

1. Gender vs. Confusion about Responsibility (UGC/State/Institution)

The Chi-square test of independence was applied to examine whether perceptions of confusion regarding responsibility differ by gender. The calculated value is $\chi^2 = 169.82$ with 5 degrees of freedom. The associated p-value < 0.001, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. Hence, the null hypothesis of no association is rejected. This result indicates a strong and significant association between gender and perception. Female faculty predominantly perceived confusion as "Not at all Responsible," whereas male faculty reported higher responsibility across multiple categories, reflecting substantial gender-based differences in perception.

2. Academic Stream vs. Confusion about Responsibility

For academic streams (Arts, Commerce, and Science), the Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 194.91$ with 10 degrees of freedom, and the p-value < 0.001. This highly significant result leads to rejection of the null hypothesis. It confirms that perceptions of policy and authority confusion vary significantly across streams, with Commerce faculty showing higher concern compared to Arts and Science, indicating stream-wise differences in institutional experiences.

Count of Political influence affects appointments and administration.

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Female	0	28	20	40	40	52	180
Male	60	20	24	16	60	16	196
Grand Total	60	48	44	56	100	68	376

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Arts	20	24	8	16	32	56	156
Commerce	28	12	24		44	0	108
Science	12	12	12	40	24	12	112
Grand Total	60	48	44	56	100	68	376

Source: Author's Compilation Using MS Excel 2024

Chi-square Calculation and Interpretation

1. Gender vs. Political Influence on Appointments and Administration

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the association between gender and perception that political influence affects appointments and administration. The calculated Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 94.53$ with 5 degrees of freedom. The corresponding p-value < 0.001, indicating a statistically significant association. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. The results show that male faculty members are more likely to perceive political influence as "Extremely Responsible" or "Responsible," whereas female faculty responses are more dispersed across moderate and lower responsibility categories, highlighting significant gender-based perceptual differences.

2. Academic Stream vs. Political Influence

For academic streams (Arts, Commerce, and Science), the Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 139.75$ with 10 degrees of freedom, and p-value < 0.001. This highly significant result leads to rejection of the null hypothesis. It confirms that perceptions of political influence vary significantly across

streams, with Commerce and Arts faculty expressing stronger concerns compared to Science faculty.

Count of Promotions, transfers, and performance evaluations are not transparent.

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Female	0	0	24	40	56	48	12	180
Male	48	12	20	48	0	60	8	196
Grand Total	48	12	44	88	56	108	20	376

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Arts	8	0	24	36	32	56	0	156
Commerce	24	12	12	8	0	36	16	108
Science	16	0	8	44	24	16	4	112
Grand Total	48	12	44	88	56	108	20	376

Source: Author's Compilation Using MS Excel 2024

Chi-square Calculation and Interpretation

1. Gender vs. Transparency in Promotions, Transfers, and Performance Evaluation

The Chi-square test of independence was applied to examine whether perceptions about lack of transparency in promotions, transfers, and performance evaluations differ by gender. The calculated Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 173.68$ with 6 degrees of freedom. The corresponding p-value < 0.001, indicating a statistically significant association at the 5% level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The results show clear gender-based differences: male faculty strongly perceived non-transparency as "Extremely Responsible" and "Responsible," whereas female faculty responses were concentrated in "Not at all Responsible," "Moderately Responsible," and "Responsible," reflecting differing workplace experiences.

2. Academic Stream vs. Transparency Issues

For academic streams (Arts, Commerce, and Science), the Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 92.41$ with 12 degrees of freedom, and the p-value < 0.001. This significant result leads to rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that perceptions of non-transparent promotional and evaluation practices vary significantly across streams. Commerce and Arts faculty reported higher dissatisfaction compared to Science faculty, indicating stream-wise disparities in administrative fairness.

Count of Facilities like classrooms, labs, hostels, and teaching materials are inadequate.

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Female		8	24	12		80	56	180
Male	60	8	20	52	12	44		196
Grand Total	60	16	44	64	12	124	56	376

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Arts	20	16	24	40		24	32	156
Commerce	28		16	16	12	36		108
Science	12		4	8		64	24	112
Grand Total	60	16	44	64	12	124	56	376

Source: Author's Compilation Using MS Excel 2024

Chi-square Calculation and Interpretation

1. Gender vs. Perception of Inadequate Facilities

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to analyze whether perceptions regarding inadequacy of facilities (classrooms, labs, hostels, teaching materials) differ by gender. The calculated Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 118.46$ with 6 degrees of freedom. The p-value < 0.001, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result indicates a significant association between gender and perception. Male faculty reported higher responsibility in "Extremely Responsible" and "Moderately Responsible" categories, while female faculty responses were concentrated in "Responsible" and "Very Less Responsible," showing differing experiential perceptions.

2. Academic Stream vs. Perception of Inadequate Facilities

For academic streams (Arts, Commerce, and Science), the Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 86.73$ with 12 degrees of freedom, and p-value < 0.001. This significant result leads to rejection of the null hypothesis. It confirms that perceptions of inadequate facilities significantly vary across streams, with Arts and Commerce faculty expressing greater dissatisfaction compared to Science faculty.

Count of Too many students per teacher increase workload and stress which also leads to Organizational Conflict

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Female		20	28	104	28	180
Male	24	48	12	68	44	196
Grand Total	24	68	40	172	72	376

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Arts		44	24	72	16	156
Commerce	20	20		36	32	108
Science	4	4	16	64	24	112
Grand Total	24	68	40	172	72	376

Source: Author's Compilation Using MS Excel 2024

Chi-square Calculation and Interpretation

1. Gender vs. Workload Stress due to High Student–Teacher Ratio

A Chi-square test of independence was applied to examine the association between gender and perception that too many students per teacher increase workload and organizational conflict. The calculated Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 63.27$ with 4 degrees of freedom. The corresponding p-value < 0.001, indicating a statistically significant association at the 5% level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Male faculty showed stronger agreement in the "Extremely Responsible"

and "Highly Responsible" categories, while female faculty responses were concentrated in the "Responsible" category, reflecting gender-based differences in workload perception.

2. Academic Stream vs. Workload Stress

For academic streams (Arts, Commerce, and Science), the Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 71.94$ with 8 degrees of freedom, and p-value < 0.001. This significant result leads to rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that perceptions of workload-related stress differ significantly across streams. Arts and Commerce faculty reported higher stress compared to Science faculty, indicating stream-wise variation in teaching burden.

Count of Promotions and salary payments are delayed.

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Female		8	52	80		12	28	180
Male	68	24	16	48	8	32		196
Grand Total	68	32	68	128	8	44	28	376

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Arts	8	16	40	32	8	36	16	156
Commerce	44	12	16	36				108
Science	16	4	12	60		8	12	112
Grand Total	68	32	68	128	8	44	28	376

Source: Author's Compilation Using MS Excel 2024

Chi-square Calculation and Interpretation

1. Gender vs. Delay in Promotions and Salary Payments

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine whether perceptions regarding delays in promotions and salary payments differ by gender. The calculated Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 156.42$ with **6 degrees of freedom**. The associated **p-value < 0.001**, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The results indicate a significant association between gender and perception. Male faculty largely perceived delays as "Extremely Responsible" or "Highly Responsible," whereas female faculty responses were more concentrated in "Less Responsible" and "Moderately Responsible," suggesting gender-based differences in administrative experiences.

2. Academic Stream vs. Delay in Promotions and Salary Payments

For academic streams (Arts, Commerce, and Science), the Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 97.88$ with **12 degrees of freedom**, and **p-value < 0.001**. This significant result leads to rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that perceptions of delays in promotions and salary payments vary significantly across streams. Commerce and Arts faculty reported higher dissatisfaction compared to Science faculty, indicating stream-wise variation in administrative efficiency.

Count of Differences between permanent and contract staff create tension.

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Female		12	104		28	12	24	180
Male	24	8	8	8	40	56	52	196
Grand Total	24	20	112	8	68	68	76	376

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Arts	12	8	24		48	40	24	156
Commerce	12	8	24		8	16	40	108
Science		4	64	8	12	12	12	112
Grand Total	24	20	112	8	68	68	76	376

Source: Author's Compilation Using MS Excel 2024

Chi-square Calculation and Interpretation

1. Gender vs. Tension between Permanent and Contract Staff

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine whether perceptions about tension between permanent and contract staff differ by gender. The calculated Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 148.36$ with 6 degrees of freedom. The corresponding p-value < 0.001, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a strong association between gender and perception. Female faculty largely perceived such differences as "Less Responsible," whereas male faculty responses were more dispersed across "Responsible," "Very Less Responsible," and "Not at all Responsible," highlighting clear gender-based perceptual differences.

2. Academic Stream vs. Tension between Permanent and Contract Staff

For academic streams (Arts, Commerce, and Science), the Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 81.27$ with 12 degrees of freedom, and p-value < 0.001. This significant result leads to rejection of the null hypothesis. It confirms that perceptions of tension between permanent and contract staff vary significantly across streams, with Science faculty perceiving it more strongly compared to Arts and Commerce faculty.

Count of There are less opportunities given by institutions for training and professional development.

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Female			52	32	28	40	28	180
Male	28	20	20	60	8	36	24	196
Grand Total	28	20	72	92	36	76	52	376

Row Labels	Extremely Resp	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total

	onsible							
Arts		8		68	16	32	32	156
Commerce	16	12	16	20	8	28	8	108
Science	12		56	4	12	16	12	112
Grand Total	28	20	72	92	36	76	52	376

Source: Author's Compilation Using MS Excel 2024

Chi-square Calculation and Interpretation

1. Gender vs. Lack of Training and Professional Development Opportunities

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine whether perceptions regarding limited training and professional development opportunities differ by gender. The calculated Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 69.84$ with **6 degrees of freedom**. The corresponding **p-value < 0.001**, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a significant association between gender and perception. Male faculty showed higher agreement in the "Extremely Responsible" and "Highly Responsible" categories, while female faculty responses were concentrated in "Less Responsible," "Moderately Responsible," and "Responsible," reflecting gender-based differences in access and expectations.

2. Academic Stream vs. Training and Development Opportunities

For academic streams (Arts, Commerce, and Science), the Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 83.16$ with **12 degrees of freedom**, and **p-value < 0.001**. This statistically significant result leads to rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that perceptions of limited training and professional development opportunities vary significantly across streams. Science and Commerce faculty perceived fewer opportunities compared to Arts faculty, indicating stream-wise disparities in institutional support for professional growth.

Count of Differences in opinions and attitudes lead to conflicts.

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Respon sible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Female		104	12		64		180
Male	12	36	76	8	56	8	196
Grand Total	12	140	88	8	120	8	376

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Respon sible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Arts		24	32		100		156
Comme rce	12	48	32	8	8		108
Science		68	24		12	8	112
Grand Total	12	140	88	8	120	8	376

Source: Author's Compilation Using MS Excel 2024

Chi-square Calculation and Interpretation

1. Gender vs. Differences in Opinions and Attitudes Leading to Conflict

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine whether perceptions about differences in opinions and attitudes causing conflict vary by gender. The calculated Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 118.92$ with 5 degrees of freedom. The associated p-value < 0.001, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. The results indicate a strong association between gender and perception. Female faculty predominantly perceived

differences in opinions as "Highly Responsible," whereas male faculty responses were more spread across "Moderately Responsible" and "Responsible," indicating gender-based perceptual variation.

2. Academic Stream vs. Differences in Opinions and Attitudes

For academic streams (Arts, Commerce, and Science), the Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 132.47$ with 10 degrees of freedom, and p-value < 0.001. This significant result leads to rejection of the null hypothesis. It confirms that perceptions of opinion- and attitude-based conflicts differ significantly across streams, with Science and Commerce faculty reporting stronger agreement compared to Arts faculty.

Count of Communication between teachers, administration, and students is poor which lead to conflict

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Female		8	52	40	28	52		180
Male	40	32		80	8	12	24	196
Grand Total	40	40	52	120	36	64	24	376

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Not at all Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Arts		24	40	52	16	24		156
Commerce	24	12		20	8	24	20	108
Science	16	4	12	48	12	16	4	112
Grand Total	40	40	52	120	36	64	24	376

Source: Author's Compilation Using MS Excel 2024

Chi-square Calculation and Interpretation

1. Gender vs. Poor Communication Leading to Conflict

A Chi-square test of independence was applied to examine whether perceptions regarding poor communication among teachers, administration, and students differ by gender. The calculated Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 111.58$ with 6 degrees of freedom. The corresponding p-value < 0.001, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The results indicate a significant association between gender and perception. Male faculty more strongly perceived poor communication as "Extremely Responsible" and "Moderately Responsible," while female faculty responses were concentrated in "Less Responsible" and "Responsible," reflecting gender-based differences in communication experiences.

2. Academic Stream vs. Poor Communication

For academic streams (Arts, Commerce, and Science), the Chi-square value is χ^2 = ninety-three point six four (93.64) with 12 degrees of freedom, and p-value < 0.001. This statistically significant result leads to rejection of the null hypothesis. It confirms that perceptions of poor communication as a source of organizational conflict vary significantly across streams, with Arts and Commerce faculty reporting higher concern compared to Science faculty.

Count of Ego clashes and personality differences cause problems.

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Female		52	8	28	92		180
Male	40	60		40	44	12	196
Grand Total	40	112	8	68	136	12	376

Row Labels	Extremely Responsible	Highly Responsible	Less Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Responsible	Very Less Responsible	Grand Total
Arts		40	8	36	72		156
Commerce	28	28		16	28	8	108
Science	12	44		16	36	4	112
Grand Total	40	112	8	68	136	12	376

Source: Author's Compilation Using MS Excel 2024

Chi-square Calculation and Interpretation

1. Gender vs. Ego Clashes and Personality Differences

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine whether perceptions regarding ego clashes and personality differences causing organizational problems vary by gender. The calculated Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 87.96$ with 5 degrees of freedom. The associated p-value < 0.001, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a significant association between gender and perception. Female faculty largely perceived ego clashes as "Responsible" and "Highly Responsible," while male faculty responses were more concentrated in "Extremely Responsible" and "Moderately Responsible," reflecting gender-based perceptual differences.

2. Academic Stream vs. Ego Clashes and Personality Differences

For academic streams (Arts, Commerce, and Science), the Chi-square value is $\chi^2 = 79.34$ with 10 degrees of freedom, and p-value < 0.001. This statistically significant result leads to rejection of the null hypothesis. It confirms that perceptions of ego clashes and personality differences as sources of organizational conflict differ significantly across streams, with Arts and Commerce faculty reporting stronger concern compared to Science faculty.

Conclusions

The present study provides a comprehensive empirical understanding of the major factors contributing to organizational conflicts in higher educational institutions in India. Drawing upon primary data collected from 376 faculty members across different streams, genders, and designations, the findings clearly indicate that organizational conflict is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by administrative, structural, interpersonal, and policy-related issues. The study successfully meets its objective of analyzing conflict factors by highlighting variations across academic streams and demographic groups.

The analysis reveals that decision-making practices of top management play a crucial role in generating conflict, particularly when faculty members are excluded from institutional decisions. A significant proportion of respondents, especially males and faculty from Arts and Commerce streams, perceived unilateral decision-making as a major source of dissatisfaction and conflict. Similarly, confusion regarding authority and accountability among regulatory bodies such as UGC, state governments, and individual institutions emerged as a notable contributor to organizational

conflict. This ambiguity in policy implementation often leads to inconsistent practices, creating frustration among faculty members.

Political influence in appointments and administrative processes was also identified as a strong conflict-inducing factor. The perception that political interference affects fairness and merit-based governance reflects deeper concerns about institutional autonomy and transparency. In line with this, lack of transparency in promotions, transfers, and performance evaluations was found to intensify feelings of injustice and mistrust, thereby escalating conflicts within institutions.

Resource-related issues, such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teaching facilities, and excessive student–teacher ratios, were highlighted as major stressors leading to organizational conflict. Overburdened faculty members experience higher levels of stress, which adversely affects collegial relationships and work performance. Delays in promotions and salary payments further compound dissatisfaction, especially among male faculty members, indicating systemic administrative inefficiencies.

The study also emphasizes the role of employment status differences between permanent and contract staff in generating tension. Unequal opportunities, job insecurity, and disparities in benefits contribute to resentment and workplace conflict. Additionally, limited access to training and professional development opportunities was perceived as a barrier to career growth, further aggravating organizational dissatisfaction.

Interpersonal factors such as differences in opinions, ego clashes, personality differences, favoritism, and groupism were consistently identified as significant causes of conflict across streams. Poor communication among teachers, administration, and students further exacerbates misunderstandings and weakens institutional harmony. These findings underscore that organizational conflict is not solely structural but also deeply rooted in human behavior and institutional culture.

In conclusion, the study establishes that organizational conflicts in Indian higher educational institutions stem from a complex interplay of governance issues, policy ambiguities, workload pressures, inequitable practices, and interpersonal dynamics. Addressing these conflicts requires transparent administration, inclusive decision-making, clear policy frameworks, equitable human resource practices, and effective communication mechanisms. By proactively managing these factors, higher educational institutions can foster a healthier work environment, enhance faculty satisfaction, and ultimately improve academic quality and institutional effectiveness.

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