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# ACADEMIC JOB STRESSORS IN AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION: A MEDIATED ANALYSIS THROUGH EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION AMONG FULL-TIME TEACHERS IN PUBLIC VOCATIONAL COLLEGES IN WESTERN GUANGDONG, CHINA

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of academic job stressors, specifically Teaching Stress (TS), Research Stress (RS), and Administrative Stress (AS), on Job Satisfaction (JS), using Emotional Exhaustion (EE) as a mediating variable. The research focuses on full time teachers in public vocational colleges in Western Guangdong, China. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire from a sample of 348 valid respondents using stratified random sampling. The quantitative analysis was performed using Smart PLS 4.0. The structural equation modeling results reveal that all three stressors significantly exacerbate emotional exhaustion and negatively influence job satisfaction both directly and indirectly. Regarding the impact on EE, Administrative Stress demonstrates the strongest predictive power ( $\beta = 0.389$ ), followed by Research Stress ( $\beta = 0.272$ ) and Teaching Stress ( $\beta = 0.228$ ). Simultaneously, these stressors exert direct negative effects on Job Satisfaction, with Teaching Stress showing the most substantial direct negative path ( $\beta = -0.175$ ), followed by Administrative Stress ( $\beta = -0.161$ ) and Research Stress ( $\beta = -0.131$ ). Furthermore, Emotional Exhaustion has a significant negative impact on Job Satisfaction ( $\beta = -0.411$ ), acting as a critical mediator. The model explains 47.9% of the variance in emotional exhaustion ( $R^2 = 0.479$ ) and 50.5% of the variance in job satisfaction ( $R^2 = 0.505$ ). These findings underscore that excessive administrative burdens, escalating research demands, and heavy teaching workloads directly diminish satisfaction while further depleting teachers' emotional resources. This study extends stress mediation theories to the vocational education sector in less developed regions. Practical implications suggest that institutional leaders should reduce administrative overhead and create supportive environments to enhance teacher sustainability and institutional excellence.

**Keywords:** Teaching Stress, Research Stress, Administrative Stress, Emotional Exhaustion Job Satisfaction

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Vocational education has emerged as a cornerstone of economic transformation in China,

particularly in regions undergoing rapid industrialization. Public vocational colleges play a pivotal role in cultivating technically skilled

workers, yet the effectiveness of these institutions ultimately depends on the wellbeing and sustainability of their teaching staff. Teachers in vocational colleges not only bear the responsibility of delivering technical and academic knowledge but also serve as mentors who shape students' professional identities and adaptability to labor market demands. Accordingly, their occupational wellbeing is not merely a personal concern but a systemic issue with far-reaching implications for educational quality, student outcomes, and regional socioeconomic development.

The ongoing expansion and reform of vocational education in China, however, have intensified the pressures on teachers, especially in under-resourced areas such as western Guangdong. Unlike faculty in research-intensive universities, vocational college teachers face a unique convergence of stressors across three domains: teaching stress, research stress, and administrative stress. Teaching stress is fueled by heavy workloads, diverse student needs, and performance-based evaluations, reinforcing the notion that teaching is among the most stressful professions (Johnson *et al.*, 2005; Greenier *et al.*, 2021). Research stress reflects increasing institutional demands for publications and grants, often mismatched with the applied mission of vocational colleges and compounded by limited resources (Miller *et al.*, 2011). Administrative stress arises from bureaucratic expectations, performance assessments, and non-academic duties, which divert energy away from instructional and professional responsibilities (Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

These stressors are closely linked to emotional exhaustion, the core dimension of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Emotional exhaustion is characterized by chronic fatigue, emotional depletion, and detachment, resulting from sustained exposure to excessive demands (Raju & Sekhar, 2024). For vocational college teachers, such exhaustion undermines teaching effectiveness, job satisfaction, and ultimately, retention. This is an especially critical issue in regions where the supply of qualified faculty is already constrained. Although the relationship between academic job stressors and job satisfaction has been extensively studied in higher education (Xu & Wang, 2023) significant gaps remain. Existing research has largely centered on universities or secondary schools, with limited attention to vocational institutions. Within China, most studies have emphasized research-intensive contexts, neglecting the distinct stress profiles of vocational college teachers who balance teaching-heavy

workloads with mounting research and administrative duties. Furthermore, regional disparities in educational development suggest that teachers in less economically advantaged areas, such as western Guangdong, may experience stress differently than their counterparts in more prosperous provinces. Empirical research addressing this regional dimension is still scarce. While the literature on teacher job satisfaction is extensive, a significant research gap persists regarding the intricate relationships between academic job stressors, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction among faculty in public vocational colleges within economically developing regions, such as Western Guangdong. Furthermore, there is a lack of granular, mediated analysis exploring how teaching, research, and administrative stress independently contribute to emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction within vocational education. Consequently, there is an urgent need for methodologically rigorous research in these underserved regions to provide a representative empirical foundation for regional policy-making and to validate the theoretical mechanisms of faculty burnout across diverse institutional landscapes. Addressing this gap is essential to ensure that institutional expansion does not compromise the long-term psychological health and retention of the academic workforce.

To address these identified gaps, the present study aims to investigate how specific academic job stressors influence job satisfaction and to clarify the underlying mechanisms by examining the mediating role of emotional exhaustion. The findings are intended to provide a robust evidence based foundation for policymakers and institutional leaders to develop targeted interventions. These efforts are essential to enhance teacher well being, strengthen professional sustainability, and ultimately elevate the overall quality of vocational education in China.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 The Linkage between Teaching stress and job satisfaction

Kamil & Olagoke (2023) took public and private primary school teachers as research objects to explore the relationship between teachers' stress and job satisfaction. Changes in teaching methods, especially during the COVID-19 crisis phase and the transition, have increased the teaching stress. The results show that teaching stress is negatively correlated with job satisfaction. Xu & Wang (2023)

adopted quantitative research methods to conduct a questionnaire survey on junior college teachers in eastern China, and the results showed that teaching stress was negatively correlated with the job satisfaction of junior college teachers. Skaalvik (2023) utilized structural equation modeling with 340 principals to demonstrate that high workloads and time pressures significantly escalate Emotional Exhaustion while diminishing Job Satisfaction .

Based on the above, the following the hypothese is established:

H1:Teaching stress has a negative impact on the job satisfaction among full-time teachers at higher vocational colleges in western Guangdong, China.

## 2.2 The Linkage between Research stress and job satisfaction

Yang (2023) explored the mediating roles of research job satisfaction and achievement motivation between research stress and research performance, and found that: teachers in higher education colleges and universities are subject to higher research stress; research stress reduces the research job satisfaction of higher education teachers, and research stress has a negative predictive effect on research job satisfaction. Ertas *et al.* (2023) investigated the impact of journal choice on burnout and jealousy among scholars and analyzed its direct impact on job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Results show that publication frequency has a negative impact on job satisfaction, and academic promotion has a negative impact on job satisfaction. Lv *et al.* (2022) conducted a questionnaire survey on university researchers in Shandong Province (including those who did not lead the project but actually participated in scientific research). The results show that the requirements of scientific research assessment are too high, and the threshold of promotion is too high, which leads to the pressure of scientific research personnel. Moderate stress can promote the occurrence of positive behaviors and increase the performance output of researchers, while excessive stress can trigger negative psychology and behaviors and reduce job satisfaction .

Based on the above, the following the hypothese is established:

H2:Research stress has a negative impact on the job satisfaction among full-time teachers at higher vocational colleges in western Guangdong, China.

## 2.3 The Linkage between Administrative stress and job satisfaction

Skaalvik (2023) explores principals' perceptions of job-related needs and resources, and the relationship between perceived job demands and job resources and job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and motivation to quit. A study of 340 headteachers was conducted. The results showed that frequent meetings (a dimension of Administrative stress) were negatively associated with job satisfaction. Ahmad *et al.* (2021) explored the impact of emotional exhaustion on the work engagement of academic staff in Malaysian universities. A total of 190 academic administrators from public and private universities in Malaysia participated in the study. Results show that high levels of administrative stress are associated with an increase in emotional exhaustion, affecting work engagement and overall well-being . Similarly, Administrative stress is negatively related to teachers' job satisfaction. Xu and Wang (2023) utilized quantitative surveys and structural equation modeling on 202 junior university teachers in East China to investigate the impact of institutional burdens. Their findings indicate that administrative stress serves as a significant negative predictor of job satisfaction.

Based on the above, the following the hypothese is established:

H3: Administrative stress has a negative impact on the job satisfaction among full-time teachers at higher vocational colleges in western Guangdong, China.

## 2.4 The Linkage between Teaching Stress and Emotional Exhaustion

Extensive empirical evidence identifies academic job stressors as primary drivers of professional burnout across global educational contexts. Xu *et al.* (2023) and Xu and Jia (2022) utilized structural equation modeling to demonstrate that instructional and environmental demands directly escalate Emotional Exhaustion among Chinese faculty. These findings are supported by Vargas *et al.* (2021) and Wang (2020), who reported that between 48% and 60% of teachers suffer from significant occupational stress, with excessive workloads and new technology integration serving as key predictors of psychophysical discomfort. Furthermore, Baeriswyl *et al.* (2021) and Ubhale and Raje (2022) highlighted that specific burdens, such as heavy classroom teaching loads and conflict with stakeholders, are directly associated with increased depression and stress severity. While Han and Gao (2023) suggest

that institutional support and teacher autonomy can mitigate these negative effects, the prevailing literature underscores that high occupational stress consistently leads to emotional depletion.

Based on the above, the following the hypothes is established:

H4: Teaching stress increases the level of emotional exhaustion at higher vocational colleges in western Guangdong, China.

### 2.5 The Linkage between Research Stress and Emotional Exhaustion

Several studies have found a positive correlation between research stress and emotional exhaustion. For example, academic pressures such as the need to publish frequently and secure research funding contribute significantly to emotional exhaustion among researchers.

Current academic literature identifies a pervasive link between research related pressures and the depletion of emotional resources among faculty. Xu and Wang (2023) and Xu *et al.* (2021) emphasize that research stress, particularly the imperative to publish in high impact journals, serves as a significant predictor of Emotional Exhaustion and overall burnout. This "publish or perish" environment is further exacerbated by institutional factors; Lv *et al.* (2022) and Lin *et al.* (2024) highlight that rigorous assessment standards, impending promotion deadlines, and high title thresholds generate intense anxiety and negative psychological behaviors. While Ertaş *et al.* (2023) suggest that career advancement and high publication frequency may eventually reduce exhaustion, the initial pressure to compete often fosters envy and emotional strain. Collectively, these findings validate the inclusion of research stress as a critical antecedent in your model, demonstrating that excessive scientific demands directly contribute to the emotional resource depletion of teachers in the higher education sector.

Based on the above, the following the hypothes is established:

H5: Research stress increases the level emotional exhaustion at higher vocational colleges in western Guangdong, China.

### 2.6 The Linkage between Administrative Stress and Emotional Exhaustion

A growing body of global research highlights that administrative burdens are a critical factor in the depletion of emotional resources among educators and professionals. Xu and Wang (2023) and Ahmad *et al.* (2021) empirically demonstrate that administrative stress is positively correlated with

Emotional Exhaustion, particularly for faculty members juggling multiple roles. This relationship is further supported by Ling *et al.* (2022) and Petruzzelli *et al.* (2024), who found that heavy administrative workloads not only increase the risk of burnout but also manifest as tangible psychological and physiological symptoms. Furthermore, Noureen and Asad (2024) emphasize that the "endless wheeling" of paperwork and institutional obligations leads to low morale and diminishes overall job satisfaction. Collectively, these studies validate the inclusion of administrative stress as a major antecedent in your research model, confirming that administrative duties act as a significant stressor that triggers emotional exhaustion and ultimately undermines the professional well being of teachers in vocational colleges.

Based on the above, the following the hypothes is established:

H6: Administrative stress increases the level emotional exhaustion at higher vocational colleges in western Guangdong, China.

### 2.7 The Linkage between Emotional Exhaustion and Job Satisfaction

Kim & Maijan (2024) analyzed data collected from 450 Thai lectures using path analysis techniques. The results show that emotional exhaustion has a significant effect on job satisfaction. Allam *et al.* (2023) analyzed one of 200 responses from employees in the financial sector. The relationship between them is analyzed using structural equation modeling. The results show that emotional exhaustion is negatively related to job satisfaction. Skaalvik (2023) conducted a study of 340 school principals. Data were analyzed using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis and SEM analysis using AMOS 25 program. The results showed that emotional exhaustion was negatively correlated with job satisfaction. Werang *et al.* (2024) used a sample of 157 teachers from Catholic primary schools in South Papua province, Indonesia. The simple linear regression analysis technique was used for statistical analysis of the study data. The results showed that the job satisfaction of Catholic primary school teachers in South Papua province was negatively and significantly related to emotional exhaustion. Mohaisen & Mohammed (2024) selected a sample of 190 nurses from the hospitals of Baghdad / Al-Rusafa Health Bureau and Medical City Bureau, and used the method of questionnaire research. The study revealed a significant negative correlation between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction among nurses.

Based on the above, the following the hypothese is established:

H7: Emotional exhaustion has a negative impact on the job satisfaction among full-time teachers at higher vocational colleges in western Guangdong, China.

**2.8 The Mediating Effect of Emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction**

Awwad *et al.* (2022) used partial least squares path modeling to conduct a cross-sectional study of 279 front-line employees from 14 banks in Palestine. The study found that job demands (job stress and WFC) increase job burnout. Job burnout reduces the job satisfaction of front-line bank employees. Regarding the mediating effect, job burnout fully mediated the relationship between job demands and job satisfaction. This study extends previous research by investigating the conditional indirect effect of job stress on job satisfaction with job burnout as a mediating variable and EI as a moderator variable. Kim & Maijan (2024) studied the factors that influence lecturer job satisfaction, using path analysis techniques to analyze data collected from 450 Thai lecturers. The results showed that job satisfaction was significantly affected by stress and burnout, and that emotional exhaustion moderated the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. Xu and Wang (2023) discussed how job stress affects the life satisfaction level of junior college teachers and the reasons. Questionnaires were distributed to young college teachers in East China by snowball sampling method, and 202 valid questionnaires were collected. The results show that the three sub-fields of work stress, namely research stress, teaching stress and , Administrative stress have

significant indirect effects on life satisfaction through emotional burnout. Since life satisfaction and job satisfaction positively affect each other (Luhmann & Hennecke, 2017), the three sub-fields of academic job stressors, namely research stress, teaching stress and administrative stress, also have significant indirect effects on job satisfaction through emotional burnout.

**Therefore, the following three hypotheses are proposed:**

H8: There is a statistically important mediating effect of emotional exhaustion on the relationship between teaching stress and job satisfaction at higher vocational colleges in Western Guangdong, China.

H9: There is a statistically important mediating effect of emotional exhaustion on the relationship between research stress and job satisfaction at higher vocational colleges in Western Guangdong, China.

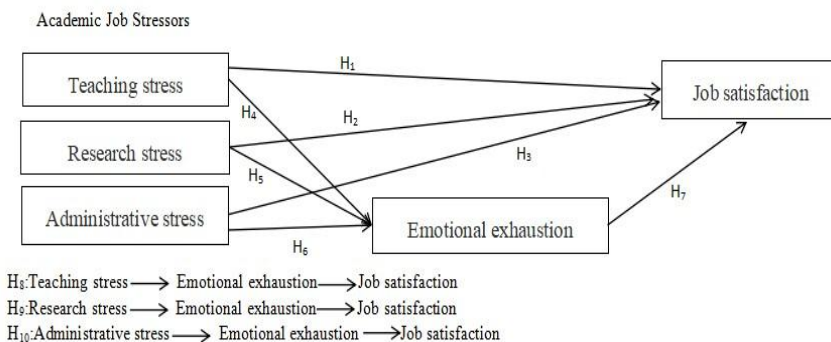
H10: There is a statistically important mediating effect of emotional exhaustion on the relationship between Administrative stress and job satisfaction at higher vocational colleges in Western Guangdong, China.

**3. Hypothesis Model**

Based on the above assumptions, the researchers put forward the following conceptual framework model, which mainly studies the effects of teaching stress, research stress, administrative stress , emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction.

- Independent Variable:** a) Teaching Stress  
 b) Research Stress  
 c) Administrative Stress

**Mediating Variable :** Emotional Exhaustion **Dependent Variable:** Job Satisfaction



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework (Source: Xu & Wang, 2023)**

**4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**4.1 Study sample**

Teachers from six public vocational colleges in Western Guangdong, China, as the sampling

frame for this study. According to Krejcie and Morgan(1970), we also performed a 95% confidence interval (e=0.05) calculation using Raosoft Inc. In a population size of 2500, the

sample size (n) is 331. Groves (2005) suggests that when dealing with low response rates or high attrition rates, an oversampling rate of approximately 20% to 50% is typically recommended. Given that the questionnaire was conducted in a controlled school environment, a reasonable 20% was established based on a stable target audience, a convenient survey process, strong organizational support, high willingness to participate, and an effective reminder mechanism. Therefore, a total of 402 questionnaires were distributed in order to achieve the required sample size.

#### 4.2 Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling is a probability sampling technique where the researcher divides the entire population into different subgroups or strata, then randomly selects the final subjects proportionally from the different strata. This method is used when the researcher wants to highlight specific subgroups within the population, ensuring that each subgroup is adequately represented in the final sample. By grouping members of the population into relatively homogeneous strata before sampling, researchers can reduce sampling error and obtain a more precise estimate of the population parameters compared to simple random sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The primary objective of employing a stratified random sampling technique is to enhance the representativeness of the sample across the diverse institutional landscape of Western Guangdong. By stratifying the population by school prior to random selection, this study ensures that the unique teaching, research, and administrative stressors, as well as levels of emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction specific to each college, are accurately captured. This approach effectively prevents larger institutions from exerting a disproportionate influence on the data compared to smaller ones. Furthermore, this methodological choice significantly reduces sampling error and provides a balanced statistical foundation with greater precision. Ultimately, by ensuring that small but significant subgroups are not overlooked, this method strengthens the generalizability of the findings to the broader vocational education sector within the region.

#### 4.3 Instrument and measurement

This paper is mainly based on the questionnaire method to collect the data needed for empirical research. The contents of the questionnaire mainly include the following four aspects: the first is the

basic situation survey of the respondents, the second is the status survey of teaching stress, research stress and administrative stress of full-time teachers in public vocational colleges in the west of Guangdong Province, and the third is the emotional exhaustion scale of full-time teachers in the west of Guangdong Province. Finally, the job satisfaction scale of full-time teachers in the west of Guangdong Province. The teaching stress scale (TSS), research stress scale (RSS) and administrative stress scale (ASS) in this paper are mainly designed on the basis of the questionnaire compiled by Min (2020), Chen (2020), Lv *et al.* (2022). The emotional exhaustion scale of teachers in this paper is mainly designed by referring to the emotional exhaustion part of the current mainstream MBI. To measure Job Satisfaction the scale suggested by Brayfield & Rothe (1951) and shortened by Judge *et al.* (1998) with 5 items were used.

#### 4.4 Survey

This study employed a questionnaire survey method designed using Questionnaire Star and utilized stratified random sampling to collect data from teachers at six public vocational colleges in western Guangdong, China. The data collection period spanned from November to December 2024, during which respondents participated by scanning a QR code to complete the survey.

#### 4.5 Data analysis

After the data collection, the data was first cleaned. After the data was cleaned, a total of 348 valid data remained. SmartPLS 4.0 was used to further analyze the data and analyze the relationship between variables. To ensure data completeness and accuracy, this study utilized a Questionnaire Star platform. The survey platform was configured to require a response for each question before submission, effectively preventing missing data. As a result, all 348 collected questionnaires were fully completed and valid, with no missing values. This study utilizes Z-scores to identify and manage outliers. A common method for detecting univariate outliers is the use of Z-scores, which measure the deviation of a value from the mean in terms of standard deviations. The typical threshold is  $Z > |3.29|$ , meaning values beyond this range are considered potential outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). In this research, 357 questionnaires were collected, of which 9 were outliers, and only 348 were available. The Z-score of TS1-TS7 shows four outliers with values greater than 3.29. The Z-score for RS1-RS7 shows two outliers. The Z-scores of AD1-AD9 have three outliers. The Z-score of JS1-JS5 has two outliers.

After data cleaning and outlier analysis, 348 respondents were valid, and further analysis was conducted.

**RESULTS**

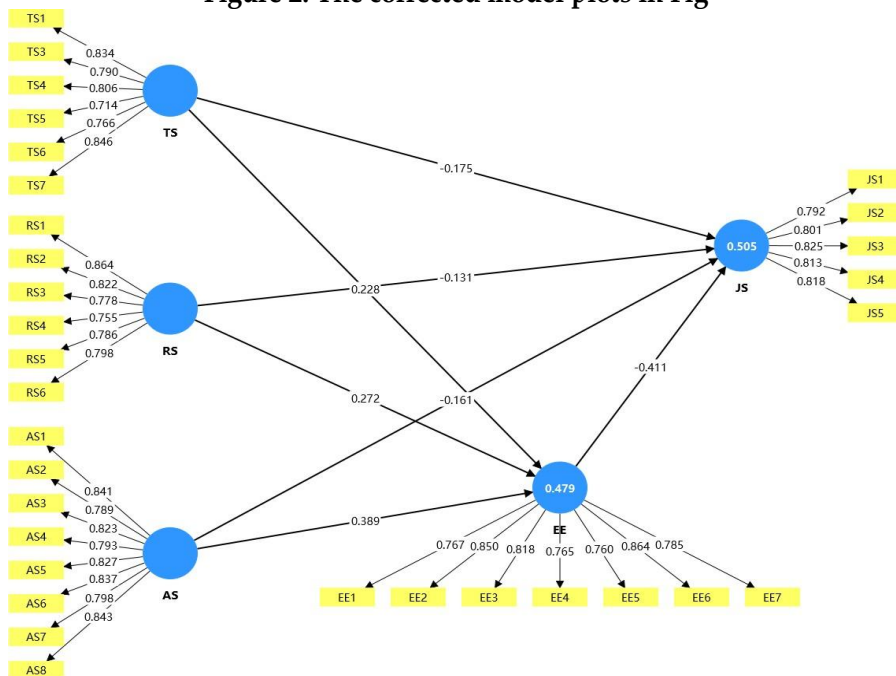
**5.1 Assessment of the Measurement Model**

The assessment of indicator reliability through the Factor Loadings presented in Table 1 confirms the strength and suitability of the measurement model. In structural equation modeling, individual item reliability is established when the factor loading of each indicator on its respective latent construct exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.708.

As shown in the matrix, the loadings for Administrative Stress (AS1 to AS8) range from

0.789 to 0.843, while Emotional Exhaustion (EE1 to EE7) ranges from 0.760 to 0.864. Similarly, the indicators for Job Satisfaction (JS1 to JS5) exhibit loadings between 0.792 and 0.825, Research Stress (RS1 to RS6) between 0.755 and 0.864, and Teaching Stress (TS1 to TS7) between 0.714 and 0.846. These results demonstrate that each observed variable shares a substantial portion of variance with its intended latent construct, specifically exceeding the 50% variance extraction mark. The high and consistent loadings across all thirty two items indicate that the research instrument possesses excellent individual item reliability, providing a stable foundation for evaluating the relationships between job stressors and teacher satisfaction.

**Figure 2: The corrected model plots in Fig**



**Table 1: Factor Loading**

	AS	EE	JS	RS	TS
AS1	0.841				
AS2	0.789				
AS3	0.823				
AS4	0.793				
AS5	0.827				
AS6	0.837				
AS7	0.798				
AS8	0.843				
EE1		0.767			
EE2		0.850			
EE3		0.818			
EE4		0.765			
EE5		0.760			
EE6		0.864			
EE7		0.785			
JS1			0.792		
JS2			0.801		
JS3			0.825		

JS4			0.813		
JS5			0.818		
RS1				0.864	
RS2				0.822	
RS3				0.778	
RS4				0.755	
RS5				0.786	
RS6				0.798	
TS1					0.834
TS3					0.790
TS4					0.806
TS5					0.714
TS6					0.766
TS7					0.846

The measurement model results presented in Table 2 demonstrate high internal consistency and convergent validity for all constructs. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.869 to 0.930, and Composite Reliability (rho\_a and rho\_c) values for Administrative Stress (AS), Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Job Satisfaction (JS), Research Stress (RS), and Teaching Stress (TS) all exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the indicators are highly reliable in measuring their respective latent variables. Furthermore, the Average Variance

Extracted (AVE) for each construct ranges from 0.630 to 0.671, well above the standard requirement of 0.50. This confirms that more than half of the variance in the indicators is captured by the latent constructs, thereby establishing robust convergent validity. Collectively, these statistics verify that the measurement instruments used for academic job stressors and satisfaction are both reliable and valid, providing a sound empirical basis for subsequent structural analysis.

**Table 2: Reliability**

	Cronbach's alpha X	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
AS	0.930	0.931	0.942	0.671
EE	0.907	0.913	0.926	0.643
JS	0.869	0.869	0.905	0.656
RS	0.888	0.893	0.915	0.642
TS	0.882	0.886	0.911	0.630

The Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) matrix presented in Table 3 serves as the primary evidence for establishing Discriminant Validity among the latent constructs in this study. In structural equation modeling, discriminant validity is confirmed when HTMT values remain below the conservative threshold of 0.85 or the more liberal limit of 0.90. As shown in the matrix, all correlation ratios range from a minimum of 0.373 (between RS and AS) to a maximum of 0.738 (between JS and EE). Since every value is

significantly lower than the 0.85 criterion, it is empirically demonstrated that each construct, Administrative Stress (AS), Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Job Satisfaction (JS), Research Stress (RS), and Teaching Stress (TS), is distinct and represents a unique phenomenon within the research model. This high degree of differentiation ensures that there is no multi collinearity or conceptual redundancy, providing a valid foundation for subsequent structural path analysis and hypothesis testing.

**Table 3: HTMT Matrix**

	AS	EE	JS	RS	TS
AS EE	0.634				
JS	0.588	0.738			
RS	0.373	0.536	0.511		
TS	0.522	0.568	0.578	0.404	

The variance inflation factor (VIF) was used to evaluate the collinearity problem. The VIF of AS to EE was 1.353, the VIF of AS to JS was 1.643, the VIF of EE to JS was 1.921, and the VIF of RS to EE was 1.204. The VIF of RS to JS is 1.346, the VIF of TS to EE is 1.370, and the VIF of TS to JS is 1.470, all less than 3. This shows that there is no serious collinearity problem in the model, the regression analysis results are reliable, the independent variables do not interfere with each other, and can independently affect the dependent variable.

**Table 4: VIF-Inter Model -Matrix**

	VIF
AS -> EE	1.353
AS -> JS	1.643
EE -> JS	1.921
RS -> EE	1.204
RS -> JS	1.346
TS -> EE	1.370
TS -> JS	1.470

**5.2 Assessment of the structural model**

The path coefficient analysis presented in Table 5 confirms that all hypothesized relationships within the structural model are statistically significant, with all P values recorded at or below 0.004. Emotional Exhaustion (EE) is identified as a primary driver of reduced Job Satisfaction (JS), exhibiting the strongest negative path coefficient ( $\beta = -0.411$ ,  $T = 7.452$ ). Among the academic stressors, Administrative Stress (AS) has the most substantial impact on increasing teacher exhaustion ( $\beta = 0.389$ ,  $T = 7.828$ ), while also directly diminishing satisfaction ( $\beta = -0.161$ ,  $T = 3.017$ ). Similarly, Research Stress (RS) and Teaching Stress

(TS) significantly contribute to higher exhaustion levels ( $\beta = 0.272$  and  $\beta = 0.228$ , respectively) and exert direct negative influences on job satisfaction, with Teaching Stress showing a slightly stronger direct negative effect ( $\beta = -0.175$ ) than Research Stress ( $\beta = -0.131$ ). These results, supported by T statistics well above the critical value of 1.96, demonstrate a robust dual impact where academic stressors not only damage job satisfaction directly but also exert a powerful indirect influence by depleting the emotional resources of faculty members in Western Guangdong vocational colleges.

**Table 5: Path Coefficients (Mean,STDEV, T values, P values)**

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
AS -> EE	0.389	0.388	0.050	7.828	0.000
AS -> JS	-0.161	-0.162	0.054	3.017	0.003
EE -> JS	-0.411	-0.409	0.055	7.452	0.000
RS -> EE	0.272	0.273	0.041	6.586	0.000
RS -> JS	-0.131	-0.133	0.045	2.887	0.004
TS -> EE	0.228	0.229	0.047	4.861	0.000
TS -> JS	-0.175	-0.176	0.052	3.338	0.001

In science research,  $R^2 > 0.25$  is of practical significance (Hair et al., 2018), and the current model has strong explanatory power for EE and JS. The  $R^2$  value of emotional exhaustion (EE) was 0.479, indicating that the independent variables in the model (such as teaching stress, research stress, and Administrative stress) could explain 47.9% of the variation in EE. Job satisfaction (JS) has an R-squared value of 0.505, indicating that the model can explain JS. The T values of EE and JS are 10.388 and 12.611, respectively, which are much higher

than the critical values (usually  $|T| > 1.96$  is significant,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The P values are 0.000 ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that the r-squared is significantly different from zero, and the model's predictions for EE and JS are statistically significant. 50.5% variation. The sample mean (M) is close to the original sample (O) (EE: 0.486 vs. 0.479; JS: 0.513 vs. 0.505) with a small standard deviation (STDEV) (EE: 0.046; JS: 0.040), indicating that the Bootstrap resampling results are stable and the model is highly reliable.

**Table 6: R<sup>2</sup>**

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
EE	0.479	0.486	0.046	10.388	0.000
JS	0.505	0.513	0.040	12.611	0.000

The analysis of effect sizes ( $f^2$ ) reveals that Administrative Stress (AS) exerts the most substantial impact on Emotional Exhaustion (EE) with a medium effect size of 0.215, followed by the

influence of Emotional Exhaustion (EE) on Job Satisfaction (JS) at 0.178, and Research Stress (RS) on Emotional Exhaustion (EE) at 0.118. These significant paths, supported by T statistics

exceeding the critical threshold, confirm that academic stressors primarily diminish job satisfaction by significantly escalating emotional exhaustion. Conversely, the direct effects of Teaching Stress (TS), Administrative Stress (AS),

and Research Stress (RS) on Job Satisfaction (JS) are notably weak or insignificant, with  $f^2$  values ranging from 0.026 to 0.042 and T statistics falling below the conventional 1.96 level.

**Table 7: f-Square List**

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )
AS -> EE	0.215	0.222	0.067	3.203
AS -> JS	0.032	0.036	0.023	1.395
EE -> JS	0.178	0.183	0.059	3.032
RS -> EE	0.118	0.122	0.038	3.099
RS -> JS	0.026	0.030	0.019	1.361
TS -> EE	0.073	0.077	0.032	2.308
TS -> JS	0.042	0.047	0.027	1.525

**6. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The structural model results demonstrate that academic job stressors, particularly Administrative Stress (AS), Research Stress (RS), and Teaching Stress (TS), are critical determinants of faculty well being, collectively accounting for 47.9% of the variance in Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and 50.5% of the variance in Job Satisfaction (JS). The significant positive paths from these stressors to exhaustion, led by administrative burdens ( $\beta= 0.389$ ), confirm that the proliferation of non academic duties acts as a primary catalyst for resource depletion among vocational college teachers. Furthermore, the strong negative impact of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction ( $\beta= -0.411$ ), combined with the direct negative paths from teaching ( $\beta= -0.175$ ) and research stress ( $\beta= -0.131$ ), underscores a dual pathway of professional decline where stress both directly erodes fulfillment and indirectly exhausts the teacher through psychological fatigue. These findings imply that institutional leaders in Western Guangdong must prioritize the streamlining of administrative processes and the optimization of workload distribution to mitigate burnout. By fostering a supportive environment that balances performance expectations with emotional resource preservation, colleges can enhance professional sustainability and ensure that the rapid expansion of vocational education does not come at the cost of teacher retention and instructional quality.

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**7. Limitations and Future Research Recommendations**

**Limitations of the Study**  
 This study has several key limitations. It focuses exclusively on the negative effects of academic job stressors, overlooking potential beneficial aspects of certain challenging stressors that may enhance motivation and performance. Methodologically, the cross-sectional design and sampling method limit the generalizability of the findings, while a longitudinal approach would offer more dynamic insights. Furthermore, the relatively small and geographically restricted sample from public vocational colleges in western Guangdong constrains the broader applicability of the results to other regions or types of higher education institutions.

**Future Research Recommendations**

First, longitudinal studies are needed to track the evolution of academic job stressors and its impact on job satisfaction across different career stages, offering dynamic insights into long term well being. Second, expanding the scope of sampling to include teachers from private universities by accounting for variations in policies, resources, and working conditions would enhance the generalizability of findings. Finally, incorporating qualitative approaches such as interviews and focus groups could provide rich, nuanced understandings of lived experiences, underlying causes of stress, and effective coping mechanisms, thereby supporting the development of more targeted and effective interventions.

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