



INTRAPERSONAL CONFLICTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: AN INVESTIGATION

Peter Yidana (Ph.D.)

Head of Academic Affairs, C. K. Tedom University of Technology and Applied Sciences,
Navrongo, Upper East Region, Ghana.

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ABSTRACT: *Although existing research has predominantly focused on workplace conflicts, intrapersonal conflicts, such as cognitive dissonance, affective dissatisfaction, and role tension, have received comparatively less attention. This study examined the impact of intrapersonal conflict on job satisfaction and productivity within a higher education institution, with a particular focus on the mediating roles of cognitive overload, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy. Theories of cognitive dissonance, self-determination, stress, and coping guided the study. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, involving 206 participants. Data were analyzed using one-sample t-tests and structural equation modeling. The findings show that although intrapersonal conflict has a direct, significant, and adverse effect on job satisfaction, its impact on productivity is insignificant and negative. The results further reveal that intrapersonal conflict significantly increases cognitive overload, which, in turn, negatively affects job satisfaction and productivity. The results additionally demonstrate that intrapersonal conflict improves staff emotional regulation and self-efficacy. However, emotional regulation and self-efficacy do not significantly mediate the relationship between intrapersonal conflict and staff productivity and job satisfaction. These findings underscore the indirect mechanisms through which internal conflict shapes workplace experiences and suggest that additional mediators, such as emotional exhaustion and role ambiguity, may be influential. This study challenges prevailing assumptions about the buffering role of self-regulatory resources in workplace stress and advocates for addressing cognitive load in conflict research. The study further recommends organizational interventions aimed at enhancing role clarity and reducing stress to improve staff satisfaction and productivity.*

KEYWORDS: Intrapersonal conflict, Staff productivity, Job satisfaction, Cognitive overload, Emotional regulation and Self-efficacy.



INTRODUCTION

Institutions of higher learning are inherently diverse environments where conflicts frequently arise due to differences in socioeconomic status, cultural background, and individual expectations. While such diversity enriches institutional perspectives, it also heightens the potential for conflict, particularly in areas such as governance, leadership dynamics, and interpersonal relationships (Akpan & Adejumo, 2023; Yidana, 2022). Research studies (Musah, 2007; Okoth & Yambo, 2016) have identified poor communication, ambiguous policies, and competition over limited resources as key factors contributing to conflict. In the Ghanaian context, Opoku et al. (2015) examined how conflict among administrative staff undermines decision-making and erodes trust within academic departments. Conflict management strategies in higher education institutions (HEIs) have also been explored, with Akintoye et al. (2024) emphasizing the effectiveness of negotiation, collaboration, and participatory decision-making. Ghaffar (2019) highlighted the role of institutional culture, noting that hierarchical structures often suppress open dialogue, thereby complicating conflict resolution.

Despite the growing body of literature, most of these studies have focused on external or interpersonal conflicts, largely overlooking intrapersonal conflicts—internal struggles such as cognitive dissonance, affective dissatisfaction, and role tension. Organizational psychology increasingly recognizes that conflict is shaped by individual perceptions, emotions, and values and is often internal (Jordan, Ashkanasy & Hartel, 2002). Nevertheless, a notable gap remains in understanding how intrapersonal conflicts affect staff productivity and job satisfaction within higher education settings. This study addressed the gap by drawing on three theoretical frameworks: cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and stress and coping theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Although researchers apply these theories widely in organizational and psychological research, their integration within higher education contexts, particularly in the analysis of intrapersonal conflict, remains limited. Most existing studies emphasize interpersonal or structural dimensions of conflict, often neglecting the subjective, internal challenges faced by staff. The integration of these three frameworks enabled a more comprehensive analysis of intrapersonal conflict, addressing inconsistencies between beliefs and behaviors (Cognitive Dissonance Theory), unmet psychological needs (Self-Determination Theory), and coping mechanisms (Stress and Coping Theory).

Methodologically, this study also addressed a gap by employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the effects of intrapersonal conflict on staff productivity and job satisfaction. While prior studies have often employed regression analysis or ANOVA (Jehn, 1995; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003), SEM is better suited for analyzing complex, multivariate relationships and latent constructs (Byrne, 2016; Kline, 2016). This approach enabled a more nuanced and integrated understanding of how intrapersonal conflict influences work-related outcomes, thereby advancing both theoretical and methodological frontiers in the study of conflict in higher education.

The researcher undertook the study at a public university in the Upper East Region of Ghana. By examining the internal experiences of academic and administrative staff, this study aimed



to deepen the understanding of intrapersonal conflict and contribute to the development of more effective staff support and organizational strategies in higher education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of intrapersonal conflict on staff productivity and job satisfaction in a public university in Northern Ghana, with a particular focus on the mediating roles of cognitive overload, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy.

Hypotheses

The study tested the following hypotheses:

1. H_1 : Intrapersonal conflict is significantly prevalent among staff in institutions of higher learning.
 2. H_2 : Intrapersonal conflict has a significant adverse effect on staff productivity.
 3. H_3 : Intrapersonal conflict has a significant adverse effect on staff job satisfaction.
 4. H_a : Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between intrapersonal conflict and staff productivity.
- b. Cognitive overload mediates the relationship between intrapersonal conflict and staff productivity.
 - c. Emotional regulation mediates the relationship between intrapersonal conflict and staff productivity.
 - d. Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between intrapersonal conflict and job satisfaction.
 - c. Cognitive overload mediates the relationship between intrapersonal conflict and job satisfaction.
 - d. Emotional regulation mediates the relationship between intrapersonal conflict and job satisfaction.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on three interrelated psychological theories—Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957), Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and Stress and Coping Theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), to explain how intrapersonal conflict affects staff outcomes in higher education institutions (HEIs).

Cognitive Dissonance Theory explains the discomfort staff experience when their values clash with institutional demands, potentially leading to stress, low motivation, and reduced job satisfaction. Self-Determination Theory highlights how such conflict can undermine staff's needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, leading to disengagement and poor performance. The Stress and Coping Theory adds that intrapersonal conflict, as a chronic stressor, impacts outcomes depending on whether staff adopt adaptive or maladaptive coping strategies.

Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how internal conflicts affect psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity, and they inform strategies for institutional support and intervention.

Empirical Review

This empirical review explores the complex relationship between intrapersonal conflict, staff productivity, and job satisfaction. Additionally, it delves into the mediating roles of cognitive load, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy in moderating the impact of intrapersonal conflict on these outcomes. By synthesizing the relevant literature, this review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how internal conflicts influence employee well-being and performance in higher education institutions.

Intrapersonal Conflict and Staff Productivity

Research increasingly shows that intrapersonal conflict negatively affects staff productivity by draining emotional and cognitive resources. Jex and Bliese (1999) linked role ambiguity and conflicting demands to reduced focus and efficiency, while Smith and Lazarus (1990) emphasized how emotional strain from value-work conflicts weakens cognitive capacity. Herman and Goh (2020) highlighted cognitive dissonance as a key form of internal conflict, noting its impact on motivation and personal identity. However, Aydin and Ceylan (2021) argued that resolving such conflicts can enhance both productivity and innovation, particularly in complex higher education environments. This study extends these insights by exploring how intrapersonal conflict influences job satisfaction among university staff.

Intrapersonal Conflict and Job Satisfaction

Intrapersonal conflict is increasingly recognized as a key factor affecting job satisfaction. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) linked work-family conflict to role strain and disengagement, while Tinsley (1993) focused on value-based cognitive dissonance, demonstrating that acting against personal beliefs leads to dissatisfaction. Kraemer et al. (2017) highlighted emotional dissonance in high-stress environments, linking it to stress and low morale. Robinson and Judge (2007) specifically examined higher education, finding that misalignment between staff



aspirations and institutional goals leads to reduced job satisfaction. Together, these studies demonstrate that role conflict, value misalignment, and emotional strain all contribute to dissatisfaction, underscoring the importance of both individual coping mechanisms and institutional support.

Moderating Factors

While intrapersonal conflict is linked to reduced productivity and job satisfaction, several moderating factors can either buffer or intensify its effects. Emotional intelligence (EI) enables individuals to manage emotions and remain focused during internal struggles, thus reducing the negative impact on performance and satisfaction (Mayer et al., 2008). Those with high EI are better at regulating emotional responses and maintaining efficiency.

Self-efficacy also plays a key role. Employees who believe in their ability to overcome challenges are more resilient in the face of stress. Bandura (1997), along with Stajkovic and Luthans (1998), found that high self-efficacy enhances motivation and problem-solving. Studies by Schwarzer and Hallum (2008) and Chen et al. (2001) showed that it reduces emotional exhaustion and boosts performance.

Cognitive load is another important factor. Internal conflicts increase mental effort, diverting focus from work tasks. Paas et al. (2003) and Lavie et al. (2004) noted that excessive cognitive load can lead to fatigue and lower efficiency. Beal et al. (2005) and Schaufeli et al. (2009) linked high cognitive demands to impaired performance and burnout. Managing these moderating factors is essential to reducing the adverse effects of intrapersonal conflict in the workplace.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The researcher reviewed literature related to the relationship among intrapersonal conflicts, emotional regulation, cognitive load, self-efficacy, staff productivity, and job satisfaction. Figure 1 shows the various relationships.

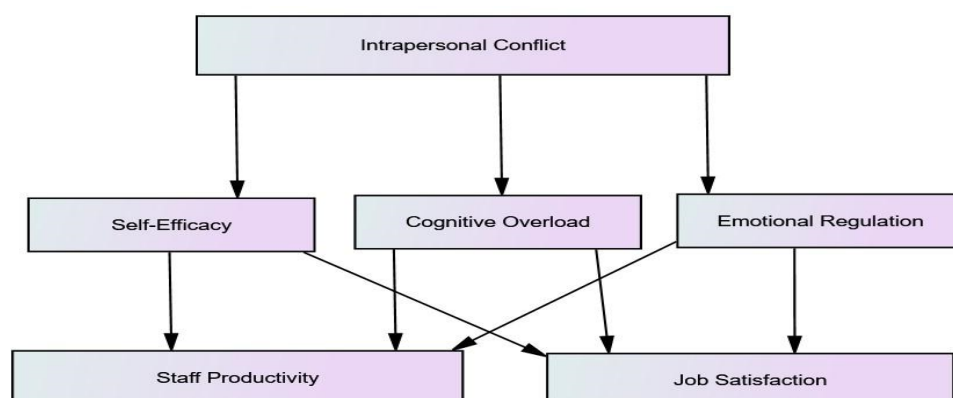


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study.

Intrapersonal conflict negatively affects staff productivity and job satisfaction by increasing emotional stress and cognitive load and reducing self-efficacy. These factors mediate the



relationship, as shown in Figure 1. Unresolved internal tensions hinder decision-making and motivation, resulting in lower performance and satisfaction. However, staff with strong emotional regulation and high self-efficacy can buffer these effects, maintaining better focus, motivation, and well-being despite internal conflict.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive, and correlational cross-sectional design to investigate the impact of intrapersonal conflict on staff productivity and job satisfaction. Data were collected once from university staff to examine relationships without experimental manipulation (Creswell, 2014). The design is suitable for addressing real-world issues, such as intrapersonal conflict (Field, 2013), and is effective for identifying broad patterns in large populations (Levin, 2006). As noted by Bryman (2016), it offers valuable insights into how personal conflicts impact workplace outcomes.

Population and Sample

The study was conducted at a public university in Ghana's Upper East Region, involving all teaching and non-teaching staff in a census approach. This comprehensive participation eliminated sampling bias and enhanced the accuracy of the findings (Fowler, 2014). By including the entire staff population, the study captured a more comprehensive picture of how intrapersonal conflict affects job performance and satisfaction across different roles, yielding more profound and reliable insights than a limited sample would have provided.

Data Collection Instrument

The researcher used a questionnaire to collect data on the impact of intrapersonal conflict on staff productivity and job satisfaction. This method was efficient for reaching a large university population and enabled broad, consistent data collection (Creswell, 2014). Likert-scale items measured conflict, satisfaction, and productivity, supporting statistical analysis and generalization. A standardized format enhanced reliability and reduced bias (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014; Fink, 2017).

The instrument included four sections: demographics (A), effects on productivity (B), job satisfaction (C), and mediating variables (D), all rated on a 5-point Likert scale. It was developed through literature review and expert input, then pilot-tested for validity, reliability, and factor structure.

Pilot questionnaire test

Pilot testing was conducted to enhance the clarity, accuracy, and consistency of the questionnaire. The researcher administered the instrument to 150 staff members (102 males, 48 females) at a Technical University in Ghana's Upper East Region. Ambiguities in seven items were identified and revised for clarity (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2014). This process ensured the instrument effectively measured intrapersonal conflict, productivity, and job satisfaction. The pilot data also facilitated exploratory factor analysis and tests of reliability and validity.



Factor analysis

The purpose of the factor analysis was to reduce numerous variables related to intrapersonal conflict, productivity, and job satisfaction into fewer, meaningful latent factors (Hair et al., 2010). The process involved two main steps.

First, the researcher assessed the data's suitability for factor analysis using four indicators: the Determinant, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. A near-zero determinant suggested the presence of multicollinearity (Fabrigar et al., 1999), while a KMO value between 0.8 and 1 indicated adequate sampling adequacy (Hair et al., 2010). A significant Bartlett's Test ($p < .05$) confirmed that the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor analysis (Bartlett, 1954; Field, 2013).

Second, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used for factor extraction. PCA was suitable due to the high variable intercorrelations and the exploratory nature of the study, which helped identify core components explaining most of the variance.

Data collection procedure

The researcher notified the university of his intention to conduct a study on the effect of intrapersonal conflict on staff productivity and job satisfaction. After obtaining permission from the Registrar, the researcher proceeded to administer the questionnaire. Four (4) trained research assistants assisted the researcher during the data collection exercise. The respondents completed the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher and research assistants. The researcher clarified items that required further clarification. The exercise commenced on March 28, 2025, and concluded on April 17, 2025, spanning approximately three weeks. The researcher sent out three hundred and twenty (320) questionnaires. Out of this number, respondents completed 232 (72% of the total).

Research ethics

The researcher fully addressed ethical considerations. Participants were informed of the study's purpose and assured that participation was voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. All sources used in the literature review were acknowledged correctly, and AI tools were employed solely for proofreading and grammar correction, thereby preserving the integrity and originality of the research.

Data Analysis Procedure

Two main tools were used to analyze the data. First, a one-sample t-test was used to assess whether the level of intrapersonal conflict reported by university staff significantly differed from the neutral midpoint score of 15 on a five-item, five-point Likert scale. This test is suitable for comparing a sample mean to a hypothesized value (Field, 2018; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2017), enabling the researcher to determine whether responses indicate a level of conflict above or below neutrality.

Second, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to investigate the impact of intrapersonal conflict on staff productivity and job satisfaction, while examining the mediating roles of emotional regulation, self-efficacy, and cognitive load. SEM was chosen for its ability to assess complex direct and indirect relationships. Prior to analysis, the data were carefully



reviewed for suitability. This involved handling missing data (excluding variables with excessive gaps and imputing small amounts), testing for normality (using skewness, kurtosis, and Q-Q plots), and checking for outliers using Mahalanobis distance—none of which were extreme enough to affect the model.

Confirming the Model

After preparing the data, the researcher conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to assess how well our proposed model fits the data. The analysis involved several fit indices:

1. Chi-square (χ^2) and degrees of freedom (df): evaluate the model's goodness of fit by comparing it to the observed data.
2. The comparative fit index (CFI): Assesses fit quality while adjusting for model complexity.
3. The Tucker-Lewis index (TLI): Another measure of model fit that accounts for model complexity.
4. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is a parameter that estimates how well the model fits the data in the population.

Testing Relationship Paths

After validating the model, the study tested hypothesized relationships by analyzing standardized path coefficients (β) and their significance through p-values. R^2 values were also examined to assess the extent to which variables predicted one another. To ensure the reliability of the results, bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was used to estimate direct, indirect, and total effects.

Exploring Mediation and Moderation

The study also examined whether emotional regulation, self-efficacy, and cognitive load acted as mediators between intrapersonal conflict and outcomes such as productivity and job satisfaction. Moderation analysis was conducted to determine whether certain conditions influenced the strength or direction of these relationships.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

Results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis, Validity, and Reliability Tests (Summary)

After pilot testing, the researcher conducted exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using SPSS version 26. The data were cleaned for outliers and incomplete responses; no extreme outliers were identified. Questionnaires with less than 95% completion were removed, while those with over 95% were edited.

Factorability tests showed the data were suitable for EFA:

1. The determinant of the correlation matrix was 0.009, indicating low multicollinearity (Field, 2018).
2. The KMO value was 0.624, exceeding the 0.6 threshold (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).
3. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(153) = 932.197$, $p < 0.001$), supporting factorability.
4. Diagonals of the anti-image matrix were above 0.5, and item communalities exceeded 0.5, further validating the data's suitability.
5. Q-Q plots showed that all variables were approximately normally distributed.

From the original 30 items, 12 were removed due to low factor loadings (below .30). The remaining 18 items loaded onto six distinct factors, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Factor Loadings

Item	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
PIC1		.866				
PIC3		.671				
PIC6		.738				
SP1				.783		
SP2				.830		
SP4				.651		
JS1						.694
JS2						.849
JS4						.646
ER2	.884					
ER3	.809					
ER4	.694					
CL2			.833			
CL3			.810			
CL4			.623			
SE1					.551	
SE2					.854	
SE4					.812	



Given this, the 18-item 6-factor solution was deemed appropriate. Table 2 shows the description of the various items.

Table 2: 18-Item Five-Factor Model of Intrapersonal Conflict, Staff Productivity, Cognitive Overload, Self-Efficacy, and Emotional Regulation

Code	Variable	Construct
PIC1	To what extent do you experience conflicting thoughts or emotions about your work responsibility?	Prevalence of Intrapersonal Conflicts
PIC3	How often do you feel uncertain about the goals or priorities in your job?	
PIC6	How often do you find it difficult to reconcile your values with the demands of your job?	
SP1	How often do you find yourself distracted or unable to focus on work because of personal conflicts or stress?	Staff Productivity
SP2	To what extent do you think intrapersonal conflict affects the ability to complete tasks on time?	
SP4	To what extent are you of the view that internal conflicts about work-related decisions impact productivity?	
JS1	How satisfied are you with your current role?	Job Satisfaction
JS2	How will you rank your overall sense of accomplishment at work, given your current internal conflicts?	
JS4	How likely are you to recommend your job to a friend or family member, considering your personal experience?	
ER2	How often are you able to effectively manage your emotions when dealing with internal conflicts at work?	Emotional Regulation
ER3	To what extent do you feel that your emotional responses to personal conflicts affect your work performance?	
ER4	To what extent are you able to control your emotions when faced with stressful situations at work?	
CL2	How often do you feel mentally overwhelmed by conflicting thoughts or feelings about your work responsibilities?	Cognitive Overload
CL3	To what extent does intrapersonal conflict increase the mental workload, making it harder to focus on your tasks?	
CL4	How frequently are you mentally exhausted by trying to resolve internal conflicts while performing your job?	
SE1	How confident are you in your ability to perform your job tasks despite the existence of internal conflicts?	Self-Efficacy
SE2	Do you believe that resolving personal conflicts will make you more effective at your job?	
SE4	Can you effectively navigate complex intrapersonal conflict situations to perform your role?	



Validity and reliability test results

The researcher performed validity and reliability tests to ensure that the data were appropriate for further statistical analysis. To this end, the researcher conducted two forms of validity tests. The study conducted a convergent validity test to determine the extent to which multiple measures of constructs that theoretically should be related are related (Geffen, Straub, and Boudreau, 2000). For instance, the researcher assessed the multiple indicators measuring students' perceptions of the prevalence of intrapersonal conflicts under convergent validity to ascertain whether the indicators converged to measure the underlying construct (prevalence of intrapersonal conflict). The researcher assessed it using Average Variance extracted (AVE).

$$AVE = (\sum \text{Standardized Factor Loadings}^2) / (\sum \text{Standardized Factor Loadings}^2 + \sum \text{Error Variance})$$

Where:

- Standardized Factor Loadings = λ (lambda)
- Error Variance = $1 - \lambda^2$ for each item

The AVE indicates the proportion of the indicator variance that the latent variable can explain. An AVE greater than .50 provides empirical evidence for convergent validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). An AVE greater than .50 implies that the construct explains at least 50% of the variance in its items, suggesting the items share a high proportion of variance in common and measure the same concept.

The researcher performed a discriminant validity test to determine the degree to which measures that should not be highly correlated with each other are distinct from one another. Discriminant validity indicates the extent to which a given construct differs from other constructs (Anderson & Gerbig, 1988). For example, measures of the staff productivity construct should be completely distinct from those of the staff job satisfaction construct. Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommended the shared variance approach for assessing the discriminant validity of constructs. The study determined the discriminant validity index by taking the square root of the AVE. The formula is as follows:

For A and B, discriminant validity is established between A and B when

$$\sqrt{AVE_A} > r_{AB} \text{ and } \sqrt{AVE_B} > r_{BA}$$

Where:

- $\sqrt{AVE_A}$ is the square root of the Average Variance Extracted from Construct A.
- $\sqrt{AVE_B}$ is the square root of the Average Variance Extracted from Construct B.
- r_{AB} , and r_{BA} are the correlations between Construct A and B.

The researcher computed the Composite Reliability (CR) to assess the internal consistency of the latent constructs used in this study. Unlike Cronbach's alpha, which assumes equal factor loadings and may underestimate reliability, composite reliability accounts for the actual loadings of each item on its corresponding construct, providing a more accurate and robust



measure of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019; Raykov, 1997). CR values of 0.70 or higher are generally considered acceptable, indicating that the items consistently reflect the intended latent construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 3 shows the results of the composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity tests.

Table 3: Composite Reliability, Convergent, and Discriminant Validity Test Results

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Factor Loading</i>	<i>Latent Variable</i>	<i>AVE</i>	<i>Alpha</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>
PIC1	.866	Intrapersonal Conflict	0.8696	0.9325	.707
PIC3	.671				
PIC6	.738				
SP1	.783				
SP2	.830	Staff Productivity	0.8676	0.9314	.701
SP4	.651				
JS1	.694				
JS2	.849	Job Satisfaction	0.8528	0.9234	.788
JS4	.646				
ER2	.884				
ER3	.809	Emotional Regulation	0.8909	0.9438	.722
ER4	.694				
CL2	.833				
CL3	.810	Cognitive Load	0.8673	0.9313	.704
CL4	.623				
SE1	.551				
SE2	.854	Self-Efficacy	0.8558	0.9251	.770
SE4	.812				

Following Fornell and Larcker's (1981) guidelines, the study confirmed convergent validity, with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranging from 0.7462 to 0.8678, all of which exceeded the 0.50 threshold. All factor loadings exceeded 0.50 and were statistically significant, consistent with the findings of Hair et al. (2010).

Discriminant validity was also established using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The square roots of AVEs for each construct were greater than their inter-construct correlations. For instance, the correlation between supervisors' competence and time allocation was 0.820, which was lower than their respective AVE square roots (0.8395 and 0.9316), indicating distinct constructs.

Composite reliability (CR) values, calculated using SPSS version 21, ranged from 0.75 to 0.90, surpassing the 0.70 threshold recommended by Hair et al. (2010) and Bagozzi and Yi (1988), thus confirming strong internal consistency for all constructs (see Table 2).



Confirmation of the Measurement Model

Model Fit Indices: A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on the measurement model to assess how well our proposed model fits the data. The model demonstrated an acceptable fit to the data: $\chi^2 (120) = 171.581$, $p < .001$; CFI = .94; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .046. Figure 1 shows the measurement model graphically.

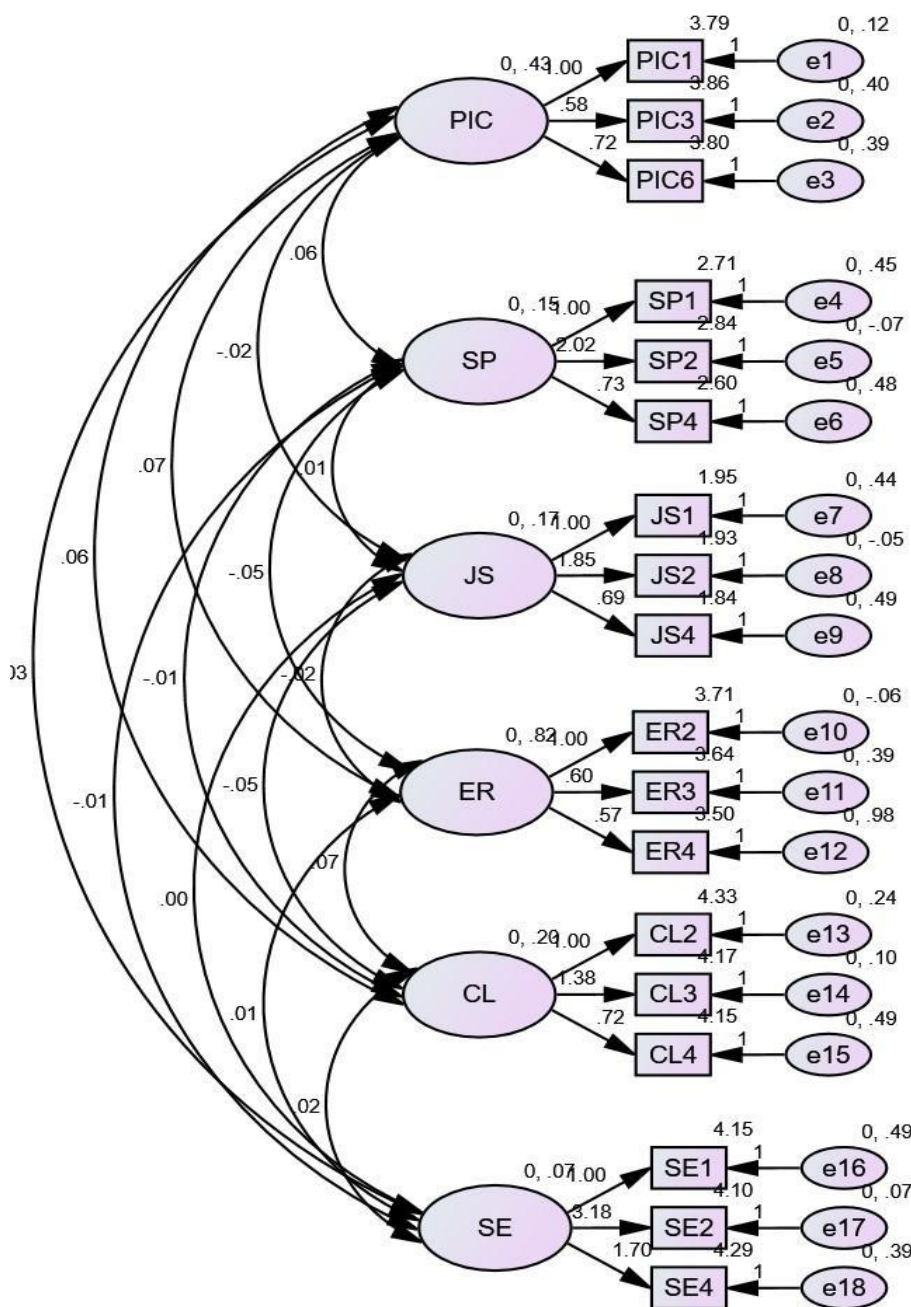


Figure 1: Effects of the Measurement Model of Intrapersonal Conflicts



Research Hypothesis 1: Intrapersonal conflict is significantly prevalent among staff in institutions of higher education.

A one-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the level of intrapersonal conflict reported by staff in higher education institutions was significantly different from the average composite score of 15, which represents the midpoint (neutral point) on a five-item, five-point Likert scale. The composite score was created by summing responses across the five items that assessed intrapersonal conflict and computing the mean. Table 4 shows the results.

Table 4: One-sample t-test Results

Variable	M	SD	Test Value	t	df	p	95% CI	Mean diff
Prevalence of Intrapersonal Conflicts	23.42	2.97	15	40.68	205	0.001	8.01, 8.83	8.42

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *t* = t-test statistic; *df* = degrees of freedom; *p* = significance level; *CI* = confidence interval.

The study found that staff reported significantly high levels of intrapersonal conflict ($M = 23.42$, $SD = 2.97$), well above the neutral midpoint of 15, $t(205) = 40.68$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size ($d = 2.89$). This indicates that intrapersonal conflict is a prevalent and meaningful issue in the university setting.

The findings align with prior research, which shows that academic environments—characterized by high demands, limited resources, and conflicting roles—can lead to cognitive dissonance and emotional strain (Kahn et al., 1964; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Fried et al., 2008). The results support the view that unresolved internal tensions contribute to stress and disengagement, particularly in settings characterized by role ambiguity (Duffy et al., 2002).

In conclusion, intrapersonal conflict has a significant impact on staff well-being and institutional performance. The study recommends interventions such as conflict resolution training, role clarification, and psychological support services to enhance productivity, morale, and staff retention (Van den Bossche et al., 2006).

Path Analysis

The researcher conducted a path analysis to examine the direct and indirect effects of intrapersonal conflict, job satisfaction, and staff productivity and to assess the mediating roles of cognitive load, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation. The results are presented in accordance with the set hypothesis.

Research hypothesis 2: Intrapersonal conflicts significantly and negatively affect staff job satisfaction

The researcher conducted a path analysis to examine the direct and indirect effects of intrapersonal conflict on job satisfaction and to assess the mediating roles of cognitive overload, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation. Table 5 presents the results.

**Table 5: Effect of Intrapersonal Conflict on Job Satisfaction**

	Path		β	S.E.	CR.	P
Satisfaction	<---	Conflict	-.120	.067	-1.727	.008

The direct effect of intrapersonal conflict on job satisfaction was negative but significant ($\beta = 0.120$, $p < 0.05$). This result suggests that as intrapersonal conflicts increase, staff job satisfaction declines, indicating that intrapersonal conflicts may lead to staff demotivation and decreased job satisfaction. These findings align with De Dreu and Beersma (2005) and Spector and Jex (1998), who found that intrapersonal conflict negatively impacts job satisfaction.

When the relationship was mediated by cognitive overload, as seen in Table 6, intrapersonal conflict had a significant positive effect on cognitive overload ($\beta = 0.175$, $p < 0.05$), which in turn negatively and significantly predicted job satisfaction ($\beta = 158$, $p < 0.05$). The indirect effect of intrapersonal conflict on job satisfaction through cognitive overload was adverse ($\beta = -0.045$) but statistically insignificant. The total effect was also significant but negative ($\beta = -0.115$, $p < 0.05$). Table 6 presents the results.

Table 6: Effect of Intrapersonal Conflict on Job Satisfaction Mediated by Cognitive Overload

	Path		B	S.E.	CR.	P
Cognitive	<---	Conflict	.175	.064	2.466	.014
Satisfaction	<---	Cognitive	-.272	.070	-3.865	.001
Satisfaction	<---	Conflict	-.0045	.065	-1.106	.269

This finding suggests that as intrapersonal conflict increases, cognitive overload also increases, indicating that intrapersonal conflict may lead people to feel more mentally burdened or overwhelmed. Increased cognitive overload resulting from intrapersonal conflict significantly decreases job satisfaction. Overall, with mediation, although the indirect path alone might seem weak or mixed, the overall effect is that more intrapersonal conflict leads to lower job satisfaction due to its impact on cognitive overload. The insignificance of the indirect path suggests that cognitive overload alone does not fully mediate the relationship between intrapersonal conflict and job satisfaction. Other variables, such as emotional exhaustion and role ambiguity, may act as mediators.

Consistent with Ganster and Rosen (2013), the findings confirmed that intrapersonal conflict increases cognitive overload, which in turn negatively affects job satisfaction. However, unlike Bowling et al. (2010), the indirect effect of intrapersonal conflict on job satisfaction through cognitive overload was negative and statistically insignificant. These findings support Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957), which suggests that psychological discomfort (cognitive overload) reduces job satisfaction.

The researcher introduced another mediator (emotional regulation), and Table 7 presents the results.

**Table 7: Effect of Intrapersonal Conflict on Job Satisfaction, Mediated by Emotional Regulation**

	<i>Direction</i>		β	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>CR.</i>	<i>P</i>
Emotional Regulation	<---	Conflict	.254	.088	2.898	.004
Satisfaction	<---	Emotional Regulation	-.055	.053	-1.032	.302
Satisfaction	<---	Conflict	-0.014	.068	-1.492	.136

The analysis revealed that intrapersonal conflict significantly and positively influenced emotional regulation ($\beta = 0.254$, $p < .05$), indicating that employees experiencing higher levels of internal conflict (e.g., value tension, self-doubt, or cognitive dissonance) are more likely to engage in emotional regulation strategies. This supports the notion that individuals attempt to manage their emotional responses in response to internal strain, aligning with Gross's (1998, 2015) process model of emotion regulation and related empirical findings (Mikolajczak et al., 2009; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013).

However, emotional regulation did not significantly predict job satisfaction, although the relationship was negative and weak ($\beta = -0.055$, $p > .05$). This suggests that, while greater emotional regulation may be slightly associated with lower job satisfaction, the effect is not statistically reliable. As such, emotional regulation does not serve as a significant mediator between intrapersonal conflict and job satisfaction. The indirect effect of intrapersonal conflict on job satisfaction through emotional regulation was also negative but non-significant ($\beta = -0.014$, $p > .05$). These findings indicate that emotional regulation neither buffers nor amplifies the influence of internal conflict on job satisfaction in any meaningful way.

Furthermore, the total effect of intrapersonal conflict on job satisfaction was negative but statistically insignificant ($\beta = -0.115$), which reinforces the interpretation that, although a higher level of internal conflict tends to reduce job satisfaction, the overall impact is weak and unreliable in this context.

These findings are consistent with previous literature highlighting the complex and resource-draining nature of emotional regulation. Studies such as those by Brotheridge and Lee (2003) and Hülshager and Schewe (2011) show that frequent emotional labor—especially surface acting—can deplete psychological resources, which may subtly undermine satisfaction even if the effect is not always statistically significant. The weak negative association observed here may reflect such a pattern, where regulation is necessary for workplace composure but also psychologically taxing.

Intrapersonal Conflict and Self-Efficacy as a Mediator

The mediation analysis further examined whether self-efficacy mediates the relationship between intrapersonal conflict and job satisfaction. The results showed that intrapersonal conflict had a significant positive effect on self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.181$, $p < .05$), suggesting that confronting and managing internal conflicts may, paradoxically, enhance individuals' beliefs in their capabilities. This may be explained by the notion that navigating internal tensions can reinforce adaptive coping mechanisms and confidence.



However, self-efficacy did not predict job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.00$), and consequently, no significant indirect effect was found between intrapersonal conflict and job satisfaction through self-efficacy. These findings imply that, although intrapersonal conflict may stimulate self-efficacy, this enhancement in self-belief does not translate into greater job satisfaction within the current context.

Overall, the results highlight the complexity of the psychological mechanisms underlying the relationship between intrapersonal conflict and job satisfaction. While emotional regulation and self-efficacy are activated in response to internal conflict, they do not meaningfully alter the satisfaction levels of employees, possibly due to moderating influences such as organizational culture, support systems, or personal values, as noted by Bono and Vey (2005).

Table 8: Effect of Intrapersonal Conflict on Job Satisfaction, Mediated by Self-efficacy

	<i>Path</i>		β	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>CR.</i>	<i>P</i>
Self-Efficacy	<---	Conflict	.181	.070	2.637	.008
Satisfaction	<---	Conflict	-.120	.068	-1.702	.009
Satisfaction	<---	Self-efficacy	.002	.066	.024	.981

The results suggest that experiencing intrapersonal conflict may enhance employees' self-belief. One plausible explanation is that grappling with internal tensions and resolving personal uncertainties may help individuals develop greater confidence in their abilities, thus fostering stronger self-efficacy. This outcome suggests that internal conflict, although often viewed negatively, can serve as a valuable developmental experience. By working through personal dilemmas or internal contradictions, individuals may emerge with a heightened sense of competence. This finding aligns with Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, which posits that mastery experiences are the most influential source of self-efficacy beliefs. Similarly, Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) argued that overcoming adversity—particularly when perceived as manageable—can enhance self-efficacy by reinforcing one's perceived ability to cope.

Despite this significant positive relationship between intrapersonal conflict and self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.181$, $p < .05$), self-efficacy did not significantly predict job satisfaction ($\beta = .000$, $p > .05$). This suggests that although employees may feel more capable and resilient in the face of internal challenges, this sense of personal competence does not necessarily lead to enhanced job satisfaction. Thus, self-efficacy does not mediate the relationship between intrapersonal conflict and job satisfaction.

This result contradicts much of the existing literature, which typically identifies a positive association between self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Judge & Bono, 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). A likely explanation for this discrepancy may lie in the contextual factors of the work environment. While employees may feel internally competent, their external work conditions—such as excessive workload, poor leadership, lack of recognition, or toxic organizational culture—may still detract from their overall job satisfaction (Locke, 1976). In other words, personal confidence might be a necessary but insufficient condition for job satisfaction, particularly when structural and environmental constraints remain unaddressed.



Research Hypothesis 3: Intrapersonal conflict has a significant and negative effect on staff productivity.

The hypothesis aimed to determine whether internal conflicts among individuals impact their productivity in a university setting. The study conducted path analysis to examine the direct and indirect effects of intrapersonal conflict on productivity, as well as to assess the mediating roles of cognitive overload, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation. Table 9 shows the direct effect results.

Table 9: Effect of Intrapersonal Conflict on Staff Productivity

<i>Path</i>		β	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>CR.</i>	<i>P</i>
Productivity <---	Conflict	.064	.069	.920	.357

The results revealed that the direct effect of intrapersonal conflict on staff productivity was adverse but not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.064$, $p > .05$). This indicates that while higher levels of intrapersonal conflict were associated with a slight decline in productivity, the relationship was weak and statistically unreliable. Thus, within the context of this study, intrapersonal conflict does not exert a direct or meaningful influence on staff productivity.

This finding aligns with the broader empirical literature, which suggests that the impact of intrapersonal conflict on job performance tends to be indirect or contingent upon mediating and moderating variables. For instance, Schmidt and Neubach (2007) found that while role-related and internal conflicts can increase psychological strain; they do not consistently lead to diminished performance unless compounded by emotional exhaustion, burnout, or inadequate coping resources. Similarly, Jex and Beehr (1991) emphasized that organizational stressors—such as internal tensions and conflicts—often affect psychological well-being more than immediate task performance, unless these stressors become chronic or severe.

The researcher introduced cognitive overload as a mediator variable between intrapersonal conflict and staff productivity. Table 10 shows the results.

Table 10: Effect of Intrapersonal Conflicts on Productivity Mediated Cognitive Overload

<i>Path</i>		β	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>CR.</i>	<i>P</i>
Cognitive <---	Conflict	.159	.064	2.466	.014
Productivity <---	Cognitive	-.170	.074	-2.271	.023
Productivity <---	Conflict	-.027	.069	1.304	.192

Introducing the mediator variable revealed that intrapersonal conflict had a positive and significant effect on cognitive overload ($\beta = 0.159$, $p < .05$), indicating that internal struggles among university staff increased mental strain. This supports the notion that unresolved internal conflicts consume cognitive resources, resulting in cognitive overload (Sweller, 1988). Cognitive overload, in turn, negatively affected productivity and job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.170$, $p < .05$), consistent with prior research showing its detrimental impact on focus and performance (LePine et al., 2005).



However, the indirect effect of intrapersonal conflict on productivity through cognitive overload was adverse but not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.027$, $p > .05$). This suggests that while cognitive overload plays a role, it may not be the primary pathway linking internal conflict to reduced productivity. This aligns with studies (e.g., Spector & Jex, 1998) that show stress-related performance declines often depend on additional factors, such as emotional exhaustion or reduced coping ability.

To explore further, the researcher introduced emotional regulation as another mediating variable (see Table 11).

Table 11: Effect of Intrapersonal Conflict on Staff Productivity with Emotional Regulation as a Mediator

	<i>Path</i>	β	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>CR.</i>	<i>P</i>
Emotional Regulation	<--- Conflict	.198	.088	2.898	.004
Staff Productivity	<--- Emotional Regulation	-.029	.055	-.528	.598
Staff Productivity	<--- Conflict	-.007	.070	1.007	.314

As shown in Table 11, intrapersonal conflict had a positive and significant effect on emotional regulation ($\beta = 0.198$, $p < .05$), suggesting that staff experiencing internal conflict tend to intensify efforts to manage their emotions. However, emotional regulation had no significant impact on productivity ($\beta = -0.029$, $p > .05$). Its indirect effect on productivity was also negative but insignificant ($\beta = -0.0007$, $p > .05$). The total effect of intrapersonal conflict on productivity remained negative and statistically non-significant ($\beta = -0.064$, $p > .05$).

Although prior studies have associated intrapersonal conflict with emotional dysregulation, this study suggests that staff may respond by engaging in emotional regulation. Nevertheless, if regulation involves suppression, it may deplete cognitive resources without enhancing productivity. These findings suggest that emotional regulation does not mediate the relationship between conflict and productivity unless more adaptive strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal, are employed.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that although intrapersonal conflict directly and significantly reduces job satisfaction, it does not have a direct and significant impact on productivity. Intrapersonal conflict significantly increases cognitive overload, which negatively impacts these outcomes. However, cognitive overload only partially mediated these relationships, suggesting that other contributing factors, such as emotional exhaustion and role ambiguity, may also be at play. Emotional regulation also increased in the presence of conflict but did not significantly impact job satisfaction or productivity, suggesting that it neither buffers nor exacerbates the effects of conflict. Similarly, while conflict boosted self-efficacy, it did not translate into improved job satisfaction. These results suggest that greater self-belief alone cannot compensate for the emotional and cognitive burden of internal conflict. Overall, intrapersonal conflict undermines staff well-being through complex, indirect pathways. The generally weak and inconsistent effects underscore the need for institutions to address mental strain and cognitive overload.



Future research should investigate additional mediators and moderators to fully capture how internal conflict influences workplace outcomes in higher education settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Higher education institutions should implement conflict management programs, address cognitive overload through task redesign, and enhance emotional regulation training by addressing role ambiguity and conflicting demands. Holistic well-being policies, individualized support, and future research on additional mediators, such as emotional exhaustion, can further enhance staff satisfaction and productivity by effectively managing intrapersonal conflict.

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