



Understanding Professional Identity and Emotional Strain: A Psychological Study on CHB Professors in Maharashtra

Mr. Ganesh Jandev Tambe

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Chhatrapati Shivaji College, Satara

Constituent College of Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil University, Satara

E-Mail Id: ganesh tambe2016@gmail.com

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Accepted: 21-05-2025

Published: 10-06-2025

Keywords:

*Professional Identity,
Emotional Strain, CHB
Professors.*

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to understand the development of professional identity and the experience of emotional strain among CHB (Clock Hour Basis) professors in Maharashtra. This study critically examines prior studies conducted within the state, focusing on occupational psychology, emotional well-being, and professional development. A qualitative research methodology was employed, using secondary data sources such as research papers, books, and expert analyses. Findings indicate that CHB professors face significant emotional strain due to precarious employment conditions, lack of institutional support, and challenges in forming a stable professional identity. The research highlights the importance of addressing emotional well-being and providing structural support to help CHB professors develop a resilient professional identity and improve their psychological health.

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15655361>



INTRODUCTION

In many teaching fields, the challenges faced by contractual or part-time faculty are quite similar. Whether it is school teachers, coaching staff, or college instructors, issues like job insecurity, lack of recognition, and unclear professional roles are common. However, this study specifically focuses on higher education, where these problems take on unique dimensions due to the academic environment, workload expectations, and institutional structures found in colleges and universities.

In today's higher education system, CHB professors are an important group who often go unnoticed. These professors work on a part-time or temporary basis and teach at many colleges across Maharashtra. Unlike permanent professors who have stable jobs, CHB professors face many unique problems such as job insecurity, low recognition, and neglect by their institutions. Their employment status makes it difficult for them to feel secure in their roles or to be fully included in the academic community.

While many teaching fields share similar challenges, this study focuses specifically on higher education because the issues faced by CHB professors in this sector are particularly significant. The pressure, workload, and lack of institutional support in colleges and universities often have a more direct impact on their professional identity and emotional well-being compared to other educational levels.

Professional identity refers to how a person sees and understands themselves in their job role. It includes their beliefs about their work, the skills they have developed, and their sense of belonging to their profession. For CHB professors, developing a strong and stable professional identity is very difficult because their jobs are temporary and insecure. This uncertainty creates confusion and instability about their professional role and future career possibilities, making it harder for them to feel confident and motivated in their work (Patil, 2021).

Emotional strain is the mental and emotional stress caused by ongoing pressures at work. These pressures include heavy workloads, high expectations for performance, and having little control or autonomy in their jobs (Deshmukh, 2020). Many CHB professors often experience emotional strain because they are highly qualified but do not have permanent positions. This leads to feelings of frustration, exhaustion, burnout, and lower job satisfaction (Joshi, 2022). The constant stress can negatively affect both their mental health and their ability to perform effectively as educators.



Maharashtra is a major center for education in India, with many colleges and universities spread across the state. This makes it particularly important to understand the challenges faced by CHB professors working in this region. By studying how their professional identity and emotional strain are connected, based on earlier research conducted in Maharashtra, this study aims to provide deeper insights into their difficult experiences. It also seeks to explore potential solutions that can help improve both their psychological well-being and their professional development, ensuring they receive the support they need to thrive in their academic roles.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the formation and challenges of professional identity among CHB professors in Maharashtra.
2. To critically analyze prior research findings on emotional strain and occupational stress among CHB professors.
3. To explore the psychological implications of precarious employment on the well-being of CHB faculty.
4. To identify strategies for strengthening professional identity and reducing emotional strain in CHB teaching roles.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study offers important insights into the lived experiences of CHB professors, a group often marginalized within the academic system. By focusing on prior research from Maharashtra, it sheds light on regional trends, systemic challenges, and their impact on psychological well-being. The findings can inform educational policymakers, administrators, and mental health professionals about necessary interventions to support CHB faculty, enhance their job satisfaction, and promote the development of a strong, resilient professional identity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research adopts a qualitative approach, using secondary data sources such as academic journals, research articles, institutional reports, and books. The data was thematically analyzed to identify patterns related to professional identity formation, emotional strain, and psychological well-being, with a focus on studies conducted in the context of Maharashtra's higher education system.



INTERPRETATION AND RESULTS

Objective No. 1: To understand the formation and challenges of professional identity among CHB professors in Maharashtra.

In the Indian higher education context, the formation of professional identity among contractual or part-time faculty like CHB professors presents unique challenges linked closely to the nature of temporary employment. Research conducted within India highlights that professional identity is not only shaped by academic qualifications and teaching roles but also significantly influenced by institutional culture, job security, and recognition (Patil, 2021; Deshmukh, 2020).

Studies from Maharashtra and other Indian states reveal that CHB professors experience marginalization in academic environments, which severely impacts their professional self-concept. Patil (2021), in a focused Maharashtra study, reports that many CHB faculty members feel treated as “second-class” academics, with limited inclusion in academic governance and decision-making processes. This exclusion undermines their sense of belonging and professional identity, which is vital for motivation and career satisfaction (Patkar, 2019).

Further, Deshmukh’s (2020) research within Indian universities demonstrates that the lack of permanent contracts leads to a constant state of insecurity, affecting professors’ confidence and willingness to engage in long-term academic projects or research. The Indian academic system’s emphasis on permanent faculty status as a mark of legitimacy exacerbates this insecurity among CHB professors, making it harder for them to perceive themselves as full members of the academic community (Joshi, 2022).

Joshi’s (2022) study from Maharashtra highlights role ambiguity faced by contractual professors, where expectations are unclear, and additional responsibilities are often imposed without formal acknowledgment or compensation. This blurring of professional boundaries causes psychological distress, which further fragments their professional identity. Indian studies align with global research showing that such role ambiguity can increase occupational stress and reduce job satisfaction (Singh, 2021).

Moreover, the Indian education system’s hierarchical structure, where contractual faculty are often sidelined compared to permanent staff, leads to emotional and professional vulnerability (Kumar & Deshpande, 2021). The precarious employment conditions not only affect professional identity but



also have negative psychological impacts such as anxiety, burnout, and reduced teaching efficacy (Sawant, 2023).

Given these insights from India-specific research, this objective aims to deepen the understanding of how CHB professors in Maharashtra develop their professional identities within the constraints imposed by temporary employment and institutional neglect. Understanding these factors is critical to designing policies and interventions tailored to the Indian higher education landscape that support CHB faculty in building a stable and positive professional identity.

Objective No. 2: To critically analyze prior research findings on emotional strain and occupational stress among CHB professors.

Across India, especially in Maharashtra, research consistently shows that CHB professors face considerable emotional strain and occupational stress due to their uncertain and temporary employment conditions. Joshi (2022), in a detailed study from Maharashtra, highlights how the lack of job security creates feelings of emotional exhaustion and frustration among these professors. Many feel professionally inadequate despite their qualifications, as they worry constantly about whether their contracts will be renewed. This persistent uncertainty leads to ongoing psychological pressure that directly affects their mental well-being.

Similarly, Patil (2021) reports that CHB professors suffer from stress caused not only by the fear of contract termination but also by irregular salary payments and an unbalanced workload. These factors combine to intensify their emotional strain, making it difficult for them to focus fully on teaching or professional development.

Deshmukh's (2020) research further explores the emotional toll on contractual faculty, noting symptoms of burnout such as emotional fatigue, detachment from students and colleagues (depersonalization), and a diminished sense of accomplishment. These symptoms show that many CHB professors are pushed to their emotional limits, which harms both their personal lives and teaching quality.

One important aspect contributing to this strain is the lack of institutional support. Sawant (2021) emphasizes that many CHB professors work in isolation, receiving little peer support or mentorship from permanent faculty. This isolation exacerbates their feelings of dissatisfaction and disconnection within their academic communities.



Moreover, Kumar and Deshpande (2021), in their study focusing on workload issues among CHB professors in Maharashtra, reveal a significant problem: the lack of clear workload allocation. Although CHB contracts usually specify only the number of teaching hours, professors are often assigned additional tasks such as administrative work, student supervision, and departmental duties without any formal agreements or compensation.

Singh (2020) points out that this ambiguity in roles causes confusion about where a CHB professor's professional responsibilities begin and end. Many CHB faculty members report that they are expected to be available for sudden, extra duties without clear instructions or recognition. This unclear division of work results in heightened stress and anxiety, as professors feel pressured to perform tasks beyond their contracted obligations, without job security or adequate pay.

These studies from Maharashtra clearly show that the lack of transparency and fair workload distribution plays a major role in increasing emotional strain and occupational stress among CHB professors. The findings suggest that institutional neglect and unclear policies reinforce the precarious nature of their employment, making it harder for these faculty members to maintain emotional and professional well-being (Kumar & Deshpande, 2021; Singh, 2020).

By critically analyzing these research findings, this objective aims to deepen the understanding of how emotional strain manifests among CHB professors in the Indian higher education system. It highlights the urgent need for institutions to improve clarity in workload management, provide psychological support, and recognize the contributions of CHB faculty to reduce their occupational stress and improve job satisfaction.

Objective No. 3: To explore the psychological implications of precarious employment on the well-being of CHB faculty.

In the world of higher education, CHB (Clock Hour Basis) professors work under contracts that are often unstable and uncertain. They never really know if their job will continue next semester, if their contract will be renewed, or if they will suddenly be left without work. This constant uncertainty creates a lot of mental pressure and emotional strain, which slowly takes a toll on their well-being.

Patil (2021) explains that when someone is always unsure about their job future, they start feeling stressed all the time — not just at work, but even at home. Many CHB professors struggle with sleepless nights, anxiety, and sometimes even symptoms of depression. They worry constantly about



whether they will be replaced, whether their salary will be delayed, or whether they will be treated fairly by the institution. Over time, this persistent stress chips away at their mental health, making it hard for them to relax or feel confident about the future.

Deshmukh (2020) points out that the emotional pressure of working without any long-term job security also affects how CHB professors see themselves. Even though they are well-qualified and passionate about teaching, they often feel like they are “less than” their permanent colleagues. They can’t plan for the future, invest in their careers, or fully commit to their academic goals because they are always busy trying to survive one contract at a time. This damages their self-esteem and disrupts their personal lives, making it hard to maintain a healthy balance between work and home.

Sawant (2021) adds that emotional strain doesn’t just hurt the professors themselves — it also impacts their students and colleagues. When professors are emotionally exhausted, they have less energy and motivation to engage with students, prepare exciting lessons, or participate in teamwork. This lowers their overall job satisfaction and reduces the quality of the educational experience for everyone involved.

However, there is some hope. Studies suggest that when CHB professors are given opportunities to attend workshops, join professional networks, or participate in academic events, they start to feel more connected and confident. According to Patil (2021), even though their job status doesn’t change overnight, being part of professional communities helps reduce feelings of isolation and builds a sense of belonging. These small steps can make a big difference in easing emotional strain and helping CHB professors feel more valued and supported.

In short, this objective looks closely at how precarious work conditions affect not just the job but the whole life of CHB professors — their mental health, emotional balance, teaching quality, and even their relationships. By exploring these hidden struggles, this research hopes to highlight the urgent need for institutions to offer more support, care, and opportunities for one of the most overlooked groups in the Indian higher education system.

Objective No. 4: To identify strategies for strengthening professional identity and reducing emotional strain in CHB teaching roles.

Many researchers agree that we can’t just leave CHB (Clock Hour Basis) professors to figure things out on their own — there’s a real need for both institutional reforms (changes made by colleges



and universities) and personal strategies (things professors can do for themselves) to improve their professional and emotional well-being.

Patil (2021) suggests that one of the best ways to help CHB professors feel more confident and professionally grounded is to offer professional development programs — things like skill workshops, research projects, and mentoring opportunities. When CHB faculty members are invited to develop their expertise and work alongside peers, they start feeling like valued members of the academic community, rather than outsiders or “temporary workers.”

Deshmukh (2020) highlights that institutions also need to directly address the mental health challenges these professors face. This could include offering access to counseling, creating spaces for open conversations about stress and workload, and giving training on how to manage job-related stress. On top of that, colleges should make sure their communication is clear and transparent — professors should know exactly what’s expected of them, how many hours they’ll work, and what support they can count on.

Sawant (2021) goes further by arguing for bigger, system-level changes. For example, CHB professors should receive fair pay, not be left hanging with delayed or incomplete salaries. There should also be clearer career pathways so that talented and dedicated CHB faculty have a chance to advance and secure more permanent positions. Plus, they should be included in important decision-making within the department or institution, which would give them a stronger sense of belonging and control over their work life.

Interestingly, Kulkarni (2019) points out that it’s not just about what the institution does - CHB professors can also take personal steps to care for their own emotional health. This might involve practicing self-care, learning mindfulness techniques, or participating in resilience training to help handle daily pressures. Building these inner resources can help professors feel less overwhelmed, even when the external situation is tough.

In short, this objective focuses on finding practical, meaningful solutions- both from institutions and from individual professors to reduce the emotional strain and build a stronger sense of professional identity among CHB faculty. By combining systemic improvements with personal well-being strategies, we can create a healthier, more supportive environment for these vital members of the higher education system.



CONCLUSION

1. CHB professors in Maharashtra face significant challenges in forming a stable professional identity because their temporary and insecure job status limits their sense of belonging and recognition within educational institutions.
2. Emotional strain is a common experience for CHB faculty, driven by unclear workload expectations, job insecurity, salary delays, and lack of institutional support, which negatively affects their mental health and job satisfaction.
3. The psychological impact of precarious employment on CHB professors includes chronic stress, anxiety, low self-esteem, and burnout, all of which reduce their overall well-being and teaching effectiveness.
4. Research suggests that professional development opportunities, peer mentoring, mental health support, and clearer communication from institutions can help reduce emotional strain and strengthen professional identity among CHB faculty.
5. To truly improve the situation for CHB professors, systemic changes such as fair compensation, inclusion in decision-making, and clear career paths must be combined with individual-level strategies like resilience training and self-care, ensuring their long-term well-being and professional growth.

Recommendations

- Higher education institutions in Maharashtra should establish formal workload policies specifically for CHB professors (Verma, 2021).
- These policies must clearly define teaching hours, administrative duties, and compensation for additional tasks (Verma, 2021).
- Institutes should provide CHB faculty with written, transparent communication about their term-wise workload, avoiding informal or last-minute changes (Khatri & Singh, 2022).
- Institutional leaders need to implement fair workload distribution to prevent overburdening some CHB professors while others have lighter loads (Khatri & Singh, 2022).



- Developing detailed job descriptions and workload agreements will reduce role ambiguity, strengthen professional identity, and decrease emotional strain among CHB professors (Verma, 2021).
- Periodic reviews and feedback mechanisms should be set up to allow CHB faculty to voice workload concerns and participate in decisions related to their roles (Khatri & Singh, 2022).

REFERENCES

- Deshmukh, A. (2022). Emotional well-being of contractual faculty. *Indian Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 18(4), 132–150.
- Deshmukh, R. (2023). *Professional identity development in academia*. Mumbai University Press.
- Joshi, P. (2020). Burnout and emotional strain among temporary faculty: A study from Maharashtra. Pune University Press.
- Kulkarni, S. (2021). Strengthening resilience among academic staff. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, 10(2), 47–63.
- Patil, R. (2019). Psychological challenges of CHB professors. *Mumbai Educational Studies*, 15(2), 88–102.
- Patkar, H. (2019). Institutional support and professional identity. *Journal of Educational Development*, 14(1), 75–90.
- Sawant, V. (2023). Coping strategies for academic stress. *Maharashtra Institute of Psychology*, 9(1), 21–39.
- Sharma, R. (2021). Occupational stress in higher education. *Maharashtra Journal of Psychology*, 12(3), 56–74.
- Singh, M. (2021). Mental health of contractual employees. *Indian Journal of Applied Psychology*, 6(3), 67–89.
- Verma, T. (2020). Professional challenges of temporary faculty. *Indian Journal of Behavioral Research*, 7(3), 112–126.
- Kumar, S., & Deshpande, V. (2021). Workload ambiguity and emotional strain among CHB professors in Maharashtra. *Journal of Higher Education Research*, 8(2), 103–118.
- Singh, R. (2020). Role ambiguity and workload stress in academic contractual staff. *Indian Journal of Psychology and Education*, 9(1), 45–59.



- Khatri, P., & Singh, A. (2022). Communication and workload management in higher education institutions. *Educational Management Review*, 11(4), 201–215.