



The Impact of Work Environment and Motivation on Job Satisfaction among Airline Ground Staff in Thailand

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Abstract

Background and Aims: In the aviation industry, the work environment and employee motivation are crucial in ensuring job satisfaction and operational efficiency. Airline ground staff, often exposed to high stress, complex customer interactions, and physically demanding tasks, receive limited attention in research. This study investigated the relationship between work environment, motivation, and job satisfaction among airline ground staff in Thailand. It sought to identify key factors influencing satisfaction and provide insights for improving organizational practices to enhance employee retention and performance. Looking into the Job Demands-Resources Model lens, this study examined how work demands and resources impact employee well-being alongside the Self-Determination Theory, highlighting the role of intrinsic needs in fostering motivation and job satisfaction.

Methodology: This correlational quantitative study used random sampling to survey 200 airline ground staff in Thailand. Validated questionnaires measured Work Environment ($\alpha = 0.822$), Motivation ($\alpha = 0.803$), and Job Satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.787$), showing good reliability. Descriptive statistics addressed the first three research questions, while Pearson correlation and regression analyses examined the relationships and predictive power of the independent variables on job satisfaction. The work environment tool is grounded in the Job Demands-Resources Model, explaining how a supportive work environment provides essential resources that help employees manage job demands and improve engagement. Motivation is explored through Self-





Determination Theory, emphasizing that fulfilling intrinsic needs is crucial for sustaining high motivation and well-being. Job satisfaction is framed by Social Exchange Theory, which posits that when employees perceive fairness and organizational support, they reciprocate with positive attitudes such as increased satisfaction and commitment.

Results: The findings revealed that employees perceived a high level of the work environment ($M = 4.11$, "good environment"), motivation ($M = 4.04$, "highly motivated"), and a positive level of job satisfaction ($M = 4.11$, "highly satisfied"). The results indicate that employees experience favorable working conditions and strong motivational factors. Significant correlations were observed between all work environment dimensions, specifically the physical and non-physical aspects, and job satisfaction, with the strongest relationship ($r = 0.603$, $p < .001$), indicating that both tangible and intangible elements of the work environment play an essential role in employee satisfaction. Likewise, all dimensions of motivation were significantly correlated with job satisfaction, with non-monetary motivation showing the strongest association ($r = 0.700$, $p < .001$), underscoring the critical role of intrinsic motivators in enhancing job satisfaction. The regression results revealed that the work environment model had an R^2 value of 0.405, indicating that 40.5% of the variance in job satisfaction can be explained by factors related to the work environment. The motivation model yielded a higher R^2 value of 0.519, suggesting that motivational factors account for 51.9% of the variance in job satisfaction. These findings imply that while both predictors significantly influence job satisfaction, motivation explains more of the variation, highlighting its stronger predictive power in the model. The stronger influence of intrinsic motivation on job satisfaction among airline ground staff can be explained by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, suggesting that true satisfaction arises from internal motivators like achievement and recognition rather than environmental conditions. Additionally, this is further supported by the Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes that intrinsic needs such as employee autonomy, competence, and relatedness are key drivers of motivation, leading to higher job satisfaction.

Conclusion: The result demonstrates the essential role of work environment and motivation in job satisfaction. However, intrinsic motivators exhibit a stronger predictive power, accounting for a greater proportion of variance in job satisfaction. These results underscore the importance of fostering a supportive and engaging work environment while emphasizing intrinsic motivational strategies to enhance employee satisfaction and organizational well-being.

Keywords: Work Environment; Intrinsic Motivation; Job Satisfaction; Airline Industry; Thailand





Introduction

Work environment and employee motivation are critical components in determining job satisfaction in the aviation industry. These factors are essential, especially among airline ground staff, in ensuring operational efficiency and enhancing passenger experience. Employee job satisfaction is a significant concern in today's dynamic business environment, as it influences organizational performance, staff retention, and overall service quality (Dziuba et al., 2020). The work environment includes the physical setting, safety conditions, and social climate in which employees perform their duties. At the same time, Zaeni et al. (2024) believed that motivation energizes employees to bring commitment, creativity, and high energy to the organization. Despite their importance, many organizations in the aviation sector underestimate these elements, resulting in workplace inefficiencies, employee dissatisfaction, and high turnover (Tabakovic, 2024).

However, there remains a lack of focused attention on the working conditions and motivational needs of airline ground staff, who often operate under high stress, complex customer interactions, and physically demanding routines (Del Villar et al., 2025). Health-related issues, such as joint and muscle problems, further exacerbate job dissatisfaction. Failing to address the work environment and reward systems adequately has contributed to increased turnover rates in aviation companies (Ghani et al., 2022). A strike by ground staff at Suvarnabhumi Airport in Thailand reported in 2017 disrupted operations due to concerns over low wages, poor working conditions, and inadequate welfare, underscoring the need to examine how the airline industry's work environment, motivation, and job satisfaction are interconnected.

This study investigated the impact of work environment and motivation on the job satisfaction of airline ground staff in Thailand. It examined the relationships between work environment, motivation, and job satisfaction. This study, guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Job Demands-Resources model, Social Exchange Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, explored how workplace conditions and motivational factors influence employees' job satisfaction. By identifying key factors contributing to job satisfaction, this study aimed to provide contextually relevant insights. The findings contributed to a deeper understanding of how tailored organizational practices can improve employee satisfaction and reduce turnover, ultimately leading to enhanced performance in the aviation industry.

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between the dimensions of the work environment and job satisfaction among airline ground staff in Thailand.
2. To examine the relationship between the dimensions of employee motivation and job satisfaction among airline ground staff in Thailand.





3. To identify whether the work environment and motivation, either individually or in combination, significantly influence job satisfaction among airline ground staff in Thailand.

Null Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between the work environment and job satisfaction among airline ground staff.

H₀₂: There is no statistically significant relationship between employee motivation and job satisfaction among airline ground staff.

H₀₃: The work environment and motivation, either individually or together, do not significantly predict job satisfaction among airline ground staff.

Literature Review

The work environment and motivation significantly influence airline ground staff's job satisfaction, directly impacting the organization's image. When ground staff experience dissatisfaction, it can lead to poor service delivery and unprofessional behavior, negatively affecting customer perceptions, loyalty, and future patronage. For instance, Gu et al. (2022) emphasized that a positive work environment enhances employee satisfaction and productivity, while unfavorable conditions limit their potential. In support of this, initiatives such as continuous staff development through training and education and the promotion of cultural inclusivity have been shown to sustain motivation and improve job satisfaction. Asaari et al. (2019) highlighted that fair salaries, employee benefits, and recognition of task significance are critical motivators that enhance performance. Similarly, Aisyah et al. (2020) underscored the importance of physical and psychological workplace elements, including calmness, effective communication, teamwork, and appreciation in fostering a supportive work setting. Organizational culture and communication further shape employee satisfaction, with Smith and Thompson (2022) asserting that a positive culture promotes engagement and reduces turnover.

In addition, motivation is crucial in shaping employee morale, engagement, and overall job satisfaction. Radu (2023) affirmed that workplace culture is a key driver of engagement and retention, which aligns with the focus of this study on motivation. Sihite et al. (2024) emphasized that monetary and non-monetary incentives such as recognition, professional development, and career growth opportunities are essential in cultivating employee commitment and maintaining motivation. Positive workplace relationships and well-structured training programs enhance collaboration and reinforce employees' sense of value and belonging (Anderson & Williams, 2022; Nguyen & Harris, 2023). Moreover, Miller and Thompson (2022) stressed the importance of workplace safety and security, which contribute to employee well-being and operational





efficiency. Collectively, these findings affirm the central argument of this study: that a conducive work environment and sustained motivation are essential to enhancing job satisfaction among airline ground staff.

Conceptual Framework

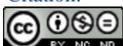
This study is anchored on multiple theoretical perspectives integrating Two-Factor Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and the Job Demands-Resources Model to provide a multidimensional understanding of the relationship between work environment, motivation, and job satisfaction.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Herzberg et al. (1959) highlighted that this theory comprises two dimensions - hygiene and motivators. Galanakis and Peramatzis (2022) believed hygiene factors prevent employee dissatisfaction but do not necessarily increase satisfaction when improved, such as salary, employment security, working conditions, and policies. On the other hand, motivator factors are intrinsic elements that directly contribute to employee job satisfaction (Aljumah, 2023). In the context of the present study, understanding these distinctions helps identify which aspects of the work environment reduce dissatisfaction and which enhance motivation and commitment.

Social Exchange Theory. Blau (1964) presented that individual relationships are created by weighing the costs and benefits. In the workplace, this theory emphasizes reciprocal relationships between employees and employers. When organizations invest in their employees through fair treatment, supportive supervision, and adequate compensation, employees are more likely to reciprocate with higher job performance and organizational loyalty (Sadaf et al., 2022). In addition, Yean et al. (2022) expressed that a poor exchange often results in dissatisfaction and a desire to leave the organization. This is highly relevant to airline ground staff in Thailand, where dissatisfaction has led to strikes and high turnover.

Self-Determination Theory. This theory highlights three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The theory emphasizes that employees feel motivated, satisfied, and committed to their job responsibilities if their needs are met. Airline ground staff who feel competent in their tasks, supported by their supervisors, and connected with their team will likely experience greater job satisfaction.

Job Demands-Resources Model. This model provides a practical approach to understanding the work environment and believes every job has specific risk factors associated with stress and satisfaction (Scholze & Hecker, 2024). Demerouti (2025) posited that Job resources reduce the impact of job demands and stimulate employee motivation. Balancing these demands and resources is essential for maintaining the airline ground staff's well-being and job satisfaction.



Based on these theories and models, the conceptual framework of this study suggests that the work environment and motivation significantly influence the job satisfaction of airline ground staff.

The framework posits that improving the work environment and employee motivation will lead to higher levels of job satisfaction, which may reduce turnover, enhance service quality, and contribute to organizational success.

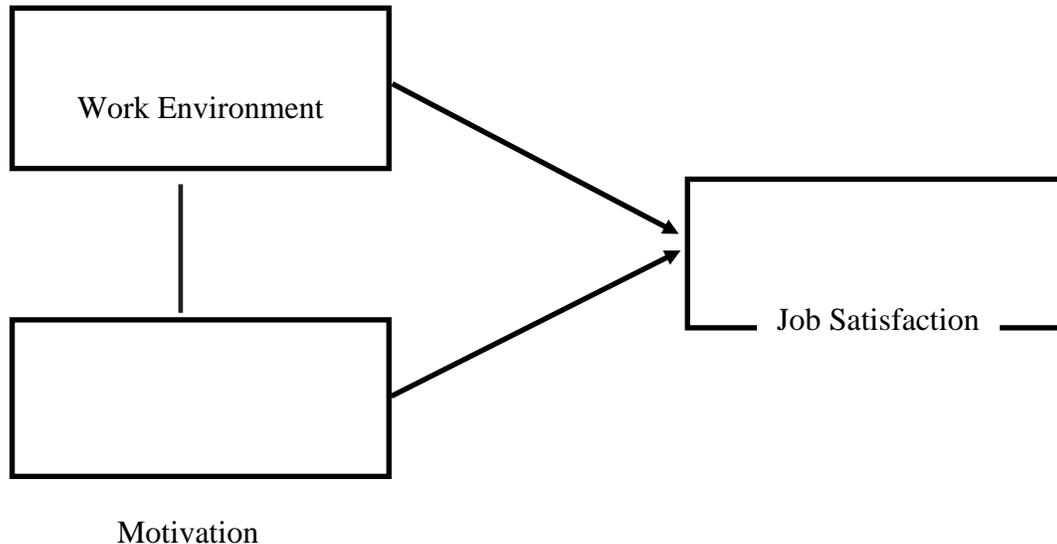


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study employed a correlational quantitative research design, exploring the relationships between work environment, motivation, and job satisfaction among ground staff. Quantitative research focuses on numerical data to uncover patterns, trends, and associations among variables (Lim, 2024). Likewise, Curtis et al. (2016) emphasized that correlational research is valuable in identifying relationships and forecasting outcomes.

The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the instruments used in the study were as follows: Work Environment ($\alpha = 0.822$), Motivation ($\alpha = 0.803$), and Job Satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.787$), indicating acceptable to good internal consistency.

This study was conducted at Suvarnabhumi International Airport (BKK), Southeast Asia's largest airport and central aviation hub. Data were collected from 200 airline ground staff, both from outsourcing and airline companies, using a simple random sampling technique to reduce bias and enhance representativeness (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Permission from the authority

to conduct the study on-site was obtained. Descriptive statistics addressed the first three research questions for data analysis, providing summaries of respondents' perceptions. Inferential statistics, specifically Pearson correlation analysis, was applied to test the relationship between work environment, motivation, and job satisfaction (problems 4 and 5). Lastly, problem 6 used a regression analysis to determine which independent variables singly or in combination influence job satisfaction. All statistical analyses were conducted using Jamovi software.

Results and Discussions

Table 1 Respondent's Assessment of Their Work Environment

| Indicators | Mean | SD | Description | Interpretation |
|---|------|-------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. My workplace is full of amenities and technologies. | 4.45 | 0.687 | Strongly agree | Very good environment |
| 2. I feel safe and supported in my work environment. | 4.39 | 0.737 | Strongly agree | Very good environment |
| 3. I was encouraged by my supervisor or colleagues. | 3.83 | 1.054 | Agree | Good environment |
| 4. My workstation is comfortable. | 3.48 | 1.218 | Agree | Good environment |
| 5. My company preserves Thai culture by encouraging employees to greet each other with a "Wai". | 4.52 | 0.703 | Strongly agree | Very good environment |
| 6. My company respects its employees and customers from different cultures. | 4.51 | 0.688 | Strongly agree | Very good environment |
| 7. My company supports the LGBTQ+ people in my workplace. | 4.32 | 0.802 | Strongly agree | Very good environment |
| 8. I feel a sense of belonging and camaraderie with my colleagues. | 3.82 | 1.149 | Agree | Good environment |
| 9. My company has clear and comprehensive communication for employees. | 4.27 | 0.789 | Strongly agree | Very good environment |
| 10. My supervisor and colleagues are open to listening to my opinions. | 3.87 | 1.031 | Agree | Good environment |
| 11. I am comfortable providing feedback to the supervisor or management team. | 3.23 | 1.324 | Neutral | Fair |
| 12. I have received clear and effective training from my supervisor or colleagues. | 4.44 | 0.686 | Strongly agree | Very good environment |

| Indicators | Mean | SD | Description | Interpretation |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 13. My supervisor has excellent leadership skills and a strong sense of responsibility. | 4.35 | 0.880 | Strongly agree | Very good environment |
| 14. My supervisor handles workplace issues very well. | 4.33 | 0.652 | Strongly agree | Very good environment |
| 15. This job provides me with challenges and interesting tasks. | 4.31 | 0.849 | Strongly agree | Very good environment |
| 16. I feel recognized and appreciated for my work. | 4.10 | 0.870 | Agree | Good environment |
| 17. I receive opportunities for professional growth and development. | 4.02 | 0.931 | Agree | Good environment |
| 18. My supervisor supports me with the projects or tasks. | 3.82 | 1.018 | Agree | Good environment |
| Overall Mean | 4.11 | 0.37 | Agree | Good environment |

Note: 4.21-5.0 Strongly agree (Very Good); 3.41-4.20 Agree (Good); 2.61-3.40 Neutral (Fair); 1.81-2.60 Disagree (Poor); 1.0-1.80 Strongly disagree (Very Poor)

Table 1 presents the assessment of airline ground staff of their work environment, with an overall mean of 4.11, $SD = 0.37$, interpreted as a "Good Environment." This finding indicates that employees generally perceive their work setting positively. To provide a deeper understanding of these results, the discussion is framed using four theoretical models, Two-Factor Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and the Job Demands-Resources Model, while drawing on related empirical research.

Consistent with the Two-Factor Theory, which distinguishes between hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction and motivator factors that promote satisfaction (Galanakis & Peramatzis, 2022). The results demonstrated strong hygiene conditions. For instance, high scores on items such as access to modern technologies ($M = 4.45$), workplace safety and support ($M = 4.39$), and culturally inclusive practices (e.g., preserving Thai traditions with "Wai" greetings, $M = 4.52$; support for LGBTQ+ individuals, $M = 4.32$) reflect effective management of hygiene factors. These findings align with studies by Donley (2021) and Dumitriu et al. (2025) which emphasized the role of a safe and respectful environment in reducing job dissatisfaction. Additionally, motivator factors such as strong supervisory leadership ($M = 4.35$), effective training ($M = 4.44$), and engaging tasks ($M = 4.31$) support Herzberg's premise that intrinsic motivators elevate job satisfaction. Similar results were



observed in the research of Singh et al. (2024), who found that intrinsic motivators such as professional development and recognition are central to motivating service employees.

In addition, the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) posits that favorable treatment by the organization prompts employees to reciprocate with favorable attitudes and behaviors. In this study, high ratings on indicators such as supervisor support ($M = 3.82$), respect for cultural diversity ($M = 4.51$), and open communication ($M = 3.87$) suggest that staff perceive a reciprocal and respectful relationship with their employer. These perceptions are congruent with findings by Neway and Singh (2023), who argued that employees with high-quality exchange relationships exhibit greater organizational commitment and reduced turnover intentions. However, the relatively lower score in comfort when giving feedback ($M = 3.23$) implies a potential weakness in trust and psychological safety, echoing findings by Patil et al. (2023) on the critical role of psychological safety in open communication.

Using Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which emphasizes the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key drivers of motivation, the findings reveal partial support for these needs. Training and development ($M = 4.44$) respond well to the need for competence, while cultural inclusivity ($M = 4.51$) and communication ($M = 3.87$) address relatedness. These findings are supported by Cabler et al. (2022), who identified these three needs as predictors of employee engagement. However, moderate ratings on peer encouragement ($M = 3.83$) and sense of camaraderie ($M = 3.82$) suggest that the social dimension of relatedness could be further enhanced. Moreover, the low comfort in providing feedback hints at limitations in autonomy, which remains critical for employees to feel empowered and involved in workplace decision-making (Rogito & Makabe, 2023).

Finally, the Job Demands-Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) frames work environments by balancing demands and resources. In this context, the work environment appears resource-rich, offering training, inclusive policies, supervisory support, and recognition. Such resources have been empirically linked to improved motivation, engagement, and well-being (Chompukum & Vanichbuncha, 2025). Nevertheless, specific demands such as lack of physical comfort ($M = 3.48$) and difficulty expressing feedback ($M = 3.23$) signal unaddressed stressors that could affect job performance and satisfaction. Similar patterns were documented by Bakker and de Vries (2020), who noted that persistent demands can lead to burnout or disengagement over time, even in resourceful settings.

In summary, the overall assessment reveals a generally favorable work environment with cultural inclusivity, supervisor support, and professional development strengths. This aligns with a broader body of literature that underscores the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic workplace factors in shaping employee experiences. However, the findings also highlight specific areas for



improvement, particularly in promoting feedback culture, enhancing peer support, and addressing physical workspace comfort. Targeted efforts in these domains could further enhance employee well-being, motivation, and organizational commitment.

Table 2 shows that the overall mean score of the respondents' motivation is 4.04, $SD = 0.69$, categorized as *Agree* and interpreted as *Highly Motivated*, suggesting that the airline ground staff perceive themselves as highly motivated in their roles, which may be attributed to both extrinsic rewards and intrinsic factors present in their work environment.

Table 2 Respondents' level of motivation

| Indicators | Mean | SD | Description | Interpretation |
|---|------|-------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. I prefer to work in a company with medical insurance for its employees. | 4.66 | 0.606 | Strongly agree | Very highly motivated |
| 2. I am more likely to work for an airline that pays for my sick leave. | 4.45 | 0.914 | Strongly agree | Very highly motivated |
| 3. My productivity increases when I get my expected paycheck. | 4.32 | 0.802 | Strongly agree | Very highly motivated |
| 4. My company provides bonuses and overtime pay. | 4.51 | 0.731 | Strongly agree | Very highly motivated |
| 5. I am allowed to have an appropriate day off and able to take vacation leave. | 4.24 | 0.900 | Strongly agree | Very highly motivated |
| 6. I receive praise from my supervisor. | 3.89 | 0.919 | Agree | Highly motivated |
| 7. It is easier for me to work for a boss who is well spoken. | 4.44 | 0.782 | Strongly agree | Very highly motivated |
| 8. I have received a warm welcome from my supervisor and colleagues. | 3.99 | 1.150 | Agree | Highly motivated |
| 9. I feel it is hard to work with my co-workers. | 3.05 | 1.200 | Neutral | Moderately motivated |
| 10. My colleagues exhibit inappropriate behavior and language usage. | 2.54 | 1.201 | Disagree | Low motivated |
| 11. I feel more confident to be trained before I actually work in the company. | 4.41 | 0.683 | Strongly agree | Very highly motivated |
| 12. The employee training course in my company is effective to my workflow. | 4.39 | 0.874 | Strongly agree | Very highly motivated |



| Indicators | Mean | SD | Description | Interpretation |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 13. The company’s training is worth my time and makes staying worth it. | 4.38 | 0.801 | Strongly agree | Very highly motivated |
| 14. I feel less pressured to do tasks that are suitable for my skills. | 4.60 | 0.681 | Strongly agree | Very highly motivated |
| 15. I feel unfair when a task that is out of my area is given to me. | 4.21 | 1.047 | Strongly agree | Very highly motivated |
| 16. When given a difficult task, I tend to shy away or give the work to my colleague instead. | 2.61 | 1.399 | Neutral | Moderately motivated |
| Overall Mean | 4.04 | 0.69 | Agree | Highly motivated |

Note: 4.21-5.0 Strongly agree (Very highly motivated); 3.41-4.20 Agree (Highly motivated); 2.61-3.40 Neutral (Moderately motivated); 1.81-2.60 Disagree (Low motivated); 1.0-1.80 Strongly disagree (Very low motivated)

This finding supports Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg et al., 1959), which classifies the sources of motivation into *hygiene factors* and *motivators*. Items with the highest mean scores, such as “I receive medical insurance” ($M = 4.66$), “I receive bonuses and overtime pay” ($M = 4.51$), and “I have paid sick leave” ($M = 4.45$), clearly represent hygiene factors that, while not leading to higher motivation alone, prevent dissatisfaction and ensure employees remain engaged. Meanwhile, motivators such as “I am trained before I am assigned to work” ($M = 4.41$) and “I am assigned with tasks aligned with my skills” ($M = 4.60$) demonstrate that intrinsic elements such as personal growth and achievement are also being met, an ideal combination for sustained motivation, as supported by Morris et al. (2022).

Additionally, the results also align with the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which emphasizes fulfilling three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The high ratings for being adequately trained and given appropriate tasks support the need for competence, while indicators such as “I am welcomed by my supervisor and co-workers” ($M = 3.99$) address the need for relatedness. However, the relatively lower scores in items such as “Some of my co-workers are difficult to work with” ($M = 3.05$) and “Some of my co-workers show inappropriate behavior” ($M = 2.54$) suggest that the relatedness need may not be fully met. These interpersonal challenges could hinder intrinsic motivation in the long term. This is consistent with Gagné et al. (2022), who noted that disruptions in workplace relationships can affect self-determined motivation even when structural supports are in place.



From the lens of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), employees reciprocate organizational support through increased loyalty and performance. High mean scores for receiving support from supervisors ($M = 4.21$), being appreciated or praised ($M = 3.89$), and being welcomed ($M = 3.99$) suggest a positive exchange relationship. However, negative behaviors among co-workers may diminish this exchange balance, which could explain why some motivation items scored lower despite high levels. As Suhail et al. (2025) emphasized, the quality of social exchange between employees and the organization, especially with supervisors, strongly predicts commitment and motivation.

Additionally, the results can be interpreted using the Job Demands-Resources Model, which posits that resources such as feedback, support, and development opportunities buffer the effects of job demands. The presence of key resources such as training, medical benefits, bonuses, leave, and task alignment serves as a motivational driver and stress mitigator. However, moderate ratings in items like “I avoid tasks that are difficult for me to do” ($M = 2.61$) and “I cannot work well when I am not trained” ($M = 2.67$) may point to task-related stress and training gaps, indicating potential areas for improvement. These findings reflect the conclusion of Demerouti (2025) that job resources reduce demands and foster employee engagement and motivation.

In summary, the high level of motivation reported by airline ground staff is attributed to adequate compensation, structured training, and supportive supervision. Nonetheless, peer interaction issues and task-related stressors may need intervention to maintain high motivation levels. These findings reinforce the importance of extrinsic support systems and intrinsic job design in motivating employees. Similar findings were reported in a study by Giday and Elantheraiyan (2023), who found that interpersonal relationships and training opportunities in service-based industries significantly influence employee engagement and motivation. Additionally, Engen and Gartzia (2024) stressed the role of leadership and social support in maintaining employee motivation in fast-paced work environments like transportation and aviation.

Table 3 Respondents’ level of job satisfaction

| Indicators | Mean | SD | Description | Interpretation |
|--|------|-------|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Rapid problem-solving skills are one of the key elements of my job. | 4.64 | 0.611 | Strongly agree | Highly satisfied |
| 2. My company has clear safety and security policies. | 4.54 | 0.687 | Strongly agree | Highly satisfied |



| Indicators | Mean | SD | Description | Interpretation |
|---|------|-------|----------------|---------------------|
| 3. My workplace meets the basic safety standards. | 4.53 | 0.642 | Strongly agree | Highly satisfied |
| 4. I have received training on safety and security and emergency survival skills. | 4.51 | 0.611 | Strongly agree | Highly satisfied |
| 5. I feel my work is valued by the company and its customers. | 4.43 | 0.728 | Strongly agree | Highly satisfied |
| 6. My skills and talents are effectively utilized in the role I have. | 4.40 | 0.752 | Strongly agree | Highly satisfied |
| 7. I believe my salary fairly matches my skill set. | 4.11 | 0.874 | Agree | Generally satisfied |
| 8. I believe my compensation is fair compared to airline industry standards. | 4.06 | 0.908 | Agree | Generally satisfied |
| 9. I think my opinions and inputs are valued within the organization. | 4.06 | 0.862 | Agree | Generally satisfied |
| 10. I feel satisfied with my current position. | 3.96 | 0.994 | Agree | Generally satisfied |
| 11. I feel satisfied with my current salary. | 3.91 | 1.025 | Agree | Generally satisfied |
| 12. I can deal with difficult customers well. | 3.84 | 1.060 | Agree | Generally satisfied |
| 13. I feel overwhelmed by work-related stress. | 3.83 | 0.899 | Agree | Generally satisfied |
| 14. I can handle an overload of work well. | 3.78 | 1.030 | Agree | Generally satisfied |
| 15. I can maintain a healthy work-life balance in my current role. | 3.62 | 1.300 | Agree | Generally satisfied |
| 16. I can work long-hours while still maintaining the quality of my performance. | 3.60 | 1.263 | Agree | Generally satisfied |



| Indicators | Mean | SD | Description | Interpretation |
|--------------|------|-------|-------------|---------------------|
| Overall Mean | 4.11 | 0.890 | Agree | Generally satisfied |

Note: 4.21-5.0 Strongly agree (Highly satisfied); 3.41-4.20 Agree (Generally satisfied); 2.61-3.40 Neutral (Moderately satisfied); 1.81-2.60 Disagree (Generally dissatisfied); 1.0-1.80 Strongly disagree (Highly dissatisfied)

Table 3 reveals that the overall mean score for job satisfaction among airline ground staff is 4.11, $SD = 0.89$, interpreted as *Agree*, corresponding to a general level of satisfaction, suggesting that while respondents are not overwhelmingly satisfied, they do perceive their work environment and roles positively across multiple aspects of their job.

From the perspective of Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg et al., 1959), the highest-rated items such as “Rapid problem-solving skills is one of the key elements of my job” ($M = 4.64$), “My company has clear safety and security policies” ($M = 4.54$), “I have received training on safety and emergency skills” ($M = 4.51$), and “My skills and talents are effectively utilized in the role I have” ($M = 4.40$) reflect *motivator factors* that foster intrinsic job satisfaction. These findings indicate that employees derive a strong sense of fulfillment from autonomy, responsibility, and professional development, which underscores skill variety, task significance, and autonomy as core drivers of job satisfaction (Zychová et al., 2024)

Meanwhile, *hygiene factors* such as salary fairness ($M = 4.11$), compensation compared to industry standards ($M = 4.06$), and satisfaction with current salary ($M = 3.91$) received moderately high ratings. According to Herzberg et al. (1959), hygiene factors do not inherently motivate, but their absence causes dissatisfaction. The findings suggest that while the organization meets basic compensation expectations, these extrinsic elements are insufficient to elevate overall satisfaction to the “highly satisfied” level. This is consistent with Adanlawo et al. (2023), who found that salary satisfaction plays a supporting but not dominant role in overall job fulfillment among airline employees. Del Villar et al. (2024) also argued that inclusive practices give airline employees better satisfaction.

From the lens of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), employees engage in a reciprocal relationship with the organization. High ratings in perceived value from the company and customers ($M = 4.43$) and the sense that opinions are respected ($M = 4.06$) suggest positive exchange dynamics, where recognition and trust foster organizational commitment. This is supported by Maan et al. (2020) through the concept of Perceived Organizational Support (POS),

where employees' belief that the organization values their contributions predicts both satisfaction and performance.

However, the relatively moderate scores in managing demanding customers ($M = 3.84$), handling work overload ($M = 3.78$), maintaining work-life balance ($M = 3.62$), and working long hours while maintaining performance ($M = 3.60$) highlight potential stressors that could affect long-term job satisfaction. These stress indicators support the Job Demands-Resources Model, where excessive demands without sufficient resources can lead to strain and burnout. Similarly, Lubbadah (2020) argued that employee burnout is likely when mismatches occur in workload, control, and reward, factors that are somewhat reflected in these middling ratings.

These concerns are echoed in the study of Del Villar et al. (2025), who emphasized that front-line aviation staff face high emotional labor and irregular schedules, significantly impacting their work-life balance and job satisfaction. Although respondents express general satisfaction, organizations should be cautious of emerging dissatisfaction signals, especially concerning long working hours and stress management.

In summary, the results indicate that the airline ground staff are generally satisfied, especially regarding meaningful work, skills utilization, and workplace safety. Motivational factors are present and effective. However, the moderate satisfaction levels with compensation and the challenges of maintaining a healthy work-life balance and managing stress suggest that interventions should focus on fairer compensation structures, psychosocial support, and wellness programs to sustain and enhance employee satisfaction. As Khan (2021) found, job satisfaction is strongly correlated with employee retention and performance, making these enhancements crucial for long-term organizational success.

Table 4 Correlation Matrix Between the Dimensions of Work Environment and Job Satisfaction

| Work Environment (Independent Variables) | Job Satisfaction (Dependent Variables) | | | |
|--|--|---------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| | R-value | P-value | Interpretation | Decision |
| Physical and non-physical aspects | 0.603 | <0.001 | Significant relationship | Reject the null hypothesis |
| Culture | 0.409 | <0.001 | Significant relationship | Reject the null hypothesis |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|-------|--------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Communication | 0.519 | <0.001 | Significant relationship | Reject the null hypothesis |
| Leadership | 0.393 | <0.001 | Significant relationship | Reject the null hypothesis |
| Employee engagement | 0.518 | <0.001 | Significant relationship | Reject the null hypothesis |

Table 4 presents the correlation coefficients between various work environment dimensions (independent variables) and job satisfaction (dependent variable). All relationships are statistically significant, with p -values < 0.001 , leading to rejecting the null hypothesis for each dimension.

The strongest correlation was found between the physical and non-physical aspects of the work environment and job satisfaction ($r = 0.603$), indicating a strong positive relationship, meaning that as the quality of these workplace factors improves, employees' job satisfaction also significantly increases. The result suggests that tangible elements, such as safety, amenities, and ergonomic infrastructure, and intangible factors, such as inclusivity, emotional safety, and psychological climate, play a vital role in shaping employees' overall satisfaction. This finding aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), which differentiates between hygiene factors (e.g., physical conditions and organizational policies) and motivator factors (e.g., recognition and responsibility). While hygiene factors may not directly increase motivation, their adequacy helps prevent dissatisfaction and establishes a foundation for intrinsic satisfaction.

Communication ($r = 0.519$) and employee engagement ($r = 0.518$) also have a moderate positive correlation with job satisfaction, suggesting that improved communication practices and higher levels of engagement are associated with increased employee satisfaction. These results align with the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which posits that reciprocal relationships between employees and the organization, characterized by open dialogue, shared decision-making, and mutual respect, enhance emotional attachment and job fulfillment. In line with this, Wang et al. (2024) found that perceived organizational support and transparent communication significantly influence job satisfaction and reduce turnover intentions.

The organizational culture dimension ($r = 0.409$) also shows a significant moderate positive correlation, indicating that a supportive and values-driven workplace culture contributes meaningfully to employee satisfaction. A supportive, respectful, and inclusive culture contributes to psychological safety, an essential condition for job satisfaction. This is supported by Ardebilpour et al. (2024), who emphasize that strong organizational cultures promote employee morale and commitment. Additionally, leadership ($r = 0.393$), while showing a weak positive correlation, still

significantly predicts job satisfaction, highlighting the influential role of leadership practices in shaping employee experiences. This is consistent with Messmann et al. (2021), which underscores that satisfaction is enhanced when leadership fosters employees’ autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Moreover, under the Job Demands-Resources Model (Demerouti, 2025), all dimensions analyzed in this table (e.g., supportive leadership, open communication, inclusive culture, physical comfort) serve as *job resources*. These resources buffer job demands, reduce burnout, and enhance job satisfaction, thus explaining the observed positive correlations. The model suggests that enhancing such resources leads to favorable employee outcomes, including increased motivation, well-being, and organizational loyalty.

These results are consistent with empirical findings by Shrivastava (2025), who emphasized that a positive work environment is a critical predictor of job satisfaction in service-intensive sectors like aviation. Similarly, Mehmood and Maitlo (2020) highlighted that leadership effectiveness, participatory culture, and physical working conditions are among the strongest predictors of job satisfaction in the airline industry.

In a nutshell, job satisfaction is not driven by a single element but by a constellation of interconnected workplace factors. Organizations that foster a safe, inclusive, communicative, and engaging environment, supported by strong leadership, are more likely to see higher levels of employee satisfaction. These results offer actionable insights for human resources and managers of the airlines, who should invest in strengthening workplace infrastructure, communication strategies, leadership training, and employee involvement initiatives to sustain and elevate workforce satisfaction and retention.

Table 5 Correlation Matrix Between the Dimensions of Motivation and Job Satisfaction

| Motivation (Independent Variables) | Job Satisfaction (Dependent Variables) | | | |
|--|--|---------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | R-value | P-value | Interpretation | Decision |
| Work benefits | 0.231 | 0.021 | Significant relationship | Reject the null hypothesis |
| Non- monetary incentives | 0.700 | <0.001 | Significant relationship | Reject the null hypothesis |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|--------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Relationship | 0.348 | <0.001 | Significant relationship | Reject the null hypothesis |
| Training | 0.299 | 0.002 | Significant relationship | Reject the null hypothesis |
| Task significance | 0.136 | 0.177 | Non-significant relationship | Accept the null hypothesis |

Table 5 presents the correlation matrix between the dimensions of motivation and job satisfaction among airline ground staff. The results reveal a statistically significant positive relationship between four out of five motivational variables and job satisfaction, as their p-values are less than 0.05.

The strongest correlation is observed between non-monetary incentives and job satisfaction ($r = 0.700$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the critical role of intrinsic motivators such as recognition, autonomy, and opportunities for personal growth; as these non-monetary incentives increase, job satisfaction also tends to increase significantly. This finding is well-grounded in Self-Determination Theory, which asserts that satisfying psychological needs, particularly autonomy, competence, and relatedness, facilitates sustained motivation and well-being. Similarly, the Two-Factor Theory underscores that motivators, particularly intrinsic ones, are more influential in promoting job satisfaction than extrinsic hygiene factors like pay or job security.

On the other hand, while the correlation is weak, relationships ($r = 0.348$, $p < 0.001$), training ($r = 0.299$, $p = 0.002$), and work benefits ($r = 0.231$, $p = 0.021$) have positive and statistically significant values, indicating that these factors still meaningfully contribute to job satisfaction. The data means that improvements in workplace relationships, access to training, and the provision of work benefits are associated with increased employee satisfaction, even if the strength of these associations is smaller than that of other factors. In practical terms, these elements support job satisfaction, complementing stronger motivators in the work environment. These findings align with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that employees who perceive reciprocal organizational support through fair benefits, professional development, and strong social connections tend to exhibit higher engagement and satisfaction. Training, in particular, enhances perceived competence (Siswanto, 2024) and serves as a critical resource within the Job Demands-Resources Model, enabling employees to manage job demands more effectively (Demerouti, 2025).

In contrast, task significance does not show a statistically significant relationship with job satisfaction ($r = 0.136$, $p = 0.177$). This suggests that recognizing the importance of one's work in isolation may not be sufficient to drive satisfaction. Demerouti (2025) supports this interpretation,

emphasizing that motivational job characteristics must be supported by adequate resources such as feedback, leadership, and autonomy to influence satisfaction meaningfully. Without such resources, the motivational potential of task significance remains underutilized.

Overall, the results suggest that intrinsic motivators, particularly non-monetary incentives and relational resources, contribute more significantly to job satisfaction than merely recognizing task importance. These findings reinforce organizations' need to cultivate a motivating environment rich in autonomy, recognition, developmental opportunities, and strong social ties to promote employee satisfaction and retention.

Table 6 Multiple Regression Analysis of Work Environment and Motivation as Predictors of Job Satisfaction

| Predictor Variable | B | SE B | t | p |
|------------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|---------|
| Work Environment Components | | | | |
| Physical and non-physical aspects | 0.294 | 0.094 | 3.15 | 0.002 |
| Culture | -0.039 | 0.109 | -0.36 | 0.720 |
| Communication | 0.097 | 0.075 | 1.30 | 0.197 |
| Leadership | 0.067 | 0.092 | 0.73 | 0.466 |
| Employee engagement | 0.104 | 0.089 | 1.17 | 0.245 |
| Motivation Components | | | | |
| Work benefits | 0.092 | 0.076 | 1.22 | 0.021* |
| Non-monetary incentives | 0.561 | 0.070 | 7.99 | < .001* |
| Relationship | 0.142 | 0.079 | 1.79 | 0.001* |
| Training | -0.069 | 0.075 | -0.09 | 0.002* |
| Task significance | -0.027 | 0.063 | -0.04 | 0.117 |

Model Summary

| Model | R | R ² | Adjusted R ² | F | p |
|------------------------|-------|----------------|-------------------------|-------|--------|
| Work Environment Model | 0.636 | 0.405 | 0.073 | 12.79 | < .001 |
| Motivation Model | 0.720 | 0.519 | 0.493 | 20.26 | < .001 |

Note. p < .05 indicates statistical significance.

Table 6 presents a multiple regression analysis examining the predictive capacity of work environment and motivation components on job satisfaction among airline ground staff. The analysis reveals differential predictive strengths between the two constructs.



The work environment model demonstrated an R -value of 0.636 and an R^2 of 0.405, indicating that 40.5% of the variance in job satisfaction is attributable to factors associated with the work environment, $F(1, N) = 12.79$, $p < .001$. Among the predictors within this model, only the variable encompassing both physical and non-physical aspects of the work environment emerged as a significant contributor to job satisfaction ($B = 0.294$, $p = 0.002$). This finding underscores the importance of tangible and intangible elements in shaping employees' overall satisfaction. Conversely, organizational culture ($p = 0.720$), communication ($p = 0.197$), leadership ($p = 0.466$), and employee engagement ($p = 0.245$) were not found to be statistically significant predictors. These non-significant results suggest the potential for indirect or mediated effects not accounted for within the current regression framework.

The motivation model exhibited a higher R -value of 0.720 and an R^2 of 0.519, indicating that motivational factors explain 51.9% of the variance in job satisfaction, $F(1, N) = 20.26$, $p < .001$. The greater R^2 and adjusted R^2 values suggest that the motivation model holds stronger predictive power than the work environment model. Among the motivational predictors, non-monetary incentives emerge as the most significant predictor ($B = 0.561$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the centrality of intrinsic motivators such as recognition, autonomy, and meaningful work. This is consistent with Self-Determination Theory and Two-Factor Theory, which emphasize the primacy of intrinsic motivation in fostering satisfaction. In addition, work benefits ($p = 0.021$) and relationship ($p = 0.001$) variables also significantly predict job satisfaction, underscoring the role of extrinsic rewards and supportive interpersonal dynamics. These findings resonate with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that perceived organizational support fosters reciprocated employee commitment and satisfaction. Training shows a statistically significant but negative coefficient ($B = -0.069$, $p = 0.002$), suggesting potential misalignment between training content and employee expectations, quality issues, or opportunity costs. This result warrants further investigation, possibly integrating employee feedback and program evaluations to assess the effectiveness and relevance of training interventions. Elagaili et al. (2024) pointed out that alignment of training and development to job roles is necessary as it leads to job satisfaction. Despite its theoretical relevance, task significance does not significantly predict job satisfaction ($p = 0.117$), consistent with prior findings that its motivational potential may be contingent upon the presence of other job resources, such as feedback or autonomy, as suggested in the Job Demands-Resources Model.

In conclusion, the analysis highlights that motivation, particularly intrinsic rewards, exerts a more robust influence on job satisfaction than work environment variables alone. To improve employee satisfaction, organizations should prioritize strategies that enhance non-monetary incentives, promote meaningful relationships, and ensure that training is tailored to employee





needs and roles. Simultaneously, maintaining a well-structured and comfortable physical work environment remains essential as a foundational support mechanism.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis, the following conclusions are drawn:

The findings of this study indicate that airline ground staff generally perceive their work environment positively, particularly regarding inclusivity, leadership, and opportunities for professional development. However, feedback openness, peer support, and physical comfort require improvement, enhancing psychological safety and organizational commitment. The ground staff demonstrates high motivation driven by extrinsic rewards (e.g., medical insurance and bonuses) and intrinsic factors (e.g., meaningful training and task alignment). Notably, job satisfaction is highest in safety and skill utilization but moderate in compensation, work-life balance, and stress management. Regression analysis revealed that non-monetary incentives are stronger predictors of job satisfaction than work environment components. While physical and non-physical aspects significantly predict satisfaction, leadership, communication, and employee engagement show limited direct effects. Therefore, prioritizing intrinsic motivators, strengthening peer relationships, aligning training with employee needs, and maintaining a supportive work environment are essential for enhancing job satisfaction among airline ground staff.

Recommendation

From the findings of the study, several recommendations are made.

Although airline ground staff generally view their work environment positively, physical comfort improvements and employee feedback opportunities are needed. Upgrading workstations to reduce physical strain and establishing safe, accessible channels for sharing opinions will help reduce stress and increase satisfaction. Encouraging peer support and trust through regular team-building activities, communication workshops, and peer feedback systems can strengthen teamwork and promote autonomy, which enhances motivation and well-being.

While financial benefits and meaningful work motivate ground staff effectively, some employees feel neutral or uncomfortable in their peer relationships. Supervisors should mentor employees to boost confidence and ensure fair task distribution, fostering a sense of connection and responsibility. Issues such as pay fairness, long hours, and work-life balance require attention to prevent burnout and turnover. The company should review compensation against industry standards and consider wellness programs or flexible schedules to support a healthier, more engaged workforce.





Furthermore, organizational culture and leadership play crucial roles in job satisfaction. Improving physical conditions by providing safe, well-equipped spaces, clear communication, and meaningful employee involvement will create a more supportive environment. Leadership should empower employees by addressing their psychological needs for autonomy and belonging, boosting motivation, reducing turnover, and enhancing overall well-being.

Non-monetary incentives, such as recognition and meaningful tasks, strongly influence job satisfaction and should be prioritized. Employee development through relevant training and relationship-building activities like mentoring can enhance motivation. Although monetary benefits remain important, intrinsic rewards have a greater impact. Therefore, the company should foster an environment that combines task significance with continuous feedback and autonomy. Finally, training programs should be carefully reviewed and improved, as current satisfaction with training is lower. Strengthening intrinsic motivators and maintaining a supportive physical environment will best improve staff satisfaction and retention.

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