

# Assessing Factors Influencing Employee Satisfaction In The Airline Industry: A Comparative Study Of India And Qatar Scheduled Airlines

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## Abstract:

*This study examines employee satisfaction in the airline industry through a comparative analysis between India and Qatar. Despite the aviation sector's dynamic growth-with India emerging as the world's third-largest market and Qatar Airways recording 10.4% capacity growth in 2024-research comparing employee satisfaction factors across these distinct markets remains limited. The study addresses this gap by investigating how organizational culture, leadership styles, and compensation structures influence satisfaction in these regions. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), data from 500 airline employees (250 from each country) was analyzed to test relationships between Employee Engagement (EE), Work Environment (WE), Compensation and Benefits (CB), Stress Management (SM), Work-Life Balance (WLB), and Job Satisfaction (JS). Results confirm all hypothesized relationships, with the strongest effect between WE and EE. Multi-group analysis reveals cultural nuances: Qatar Airways employees report higher compensation satisfaction (80% vs. 65% at Air India), while Indian carriers score better on work-life balance (3.9 vs. 3.7). The findings suggest tailored HR strategies: Indian airlines should enhance compensation structures, while Qatar Airways could improve scheduling flexibility. Limitations include cross-sectional design and purposive sampling. Future research should employ longitudinal approaches, stratified sampling across diverse roles, and investigate technological transformation impacts on satisfaction. This study advances theoretical understanding of satisfaction dynamics while providing practical insights for enhancing employee retention and service quality in global aviation.*

**Keywords:** Employee Satisfaction, Airline Industry, Work Environment, Compensation Benefits, Cross-cultural comparison.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aviation industry represents one of the most dynamic and challenging work environments globally, with employee satisfaction playing a pivotal role in organizational performance and service delivery. India's aviation sector has emerged as the world's third-largest market, demonstrating robust growth with domestic passenger traffic increasing by 11.04% year-on-year in February 2025 to approximately 1.40 crore passengers (ET Infra, 2025). The sector is projected to reach 480 million passengers by 2036, reflecting its tremendous growth potential (Jarvis Invest, 2025). In contrast, Qatar's aviation industry, led by Qatar Airways, has established itself as a global leader, recording a 10.4% increase in seat capacity in 2024, making it the world's fastest-growing airline in terms of capacity (ET Infra, 2025).

Employee satisfaction in this sector is particularly critical given the high-pressure environment, irregular schedules, and customer service demands inherent to airline operations (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Research by ET Infra (2025) indicates that India's passenger traffic is expected to grow at a strong pace of 7% in 2025, supported by an order book of nearly 1,900 aircraft among airlines based in the country. This growth trajectory necessitates a stable and satisfied workforce to maintain service quality and operational efficiency.

Previous studies have identified several factors influencing job satisfaction in the aviation industry. Saks & Gruman (2014) highlighted employee engagement, work environment, compensation and benefits, and stress management as key determinants. Similarly, Preston (2022) found that job autonomy, work-family conflict, and sympathy significantly affected job satisfaction among airline employees. Research by Kalawilapathirage and Ziedan (2019) emphasized the importance of retaining highly skilled staff through job satisfaction initiatives in the face of stiff competition.

Despite extensive research on employee satisfaction in various contexts, there remains a significant gap in comparative analyses between different aviation markets, particularly between rapidly growing markets like India

and established global players like Qatar. The post-pandemic aviation landscape has further transformed workplace dynamics, with health and safety, job security, fair compensation schemes, and collegiate organizational culture emerging as key factors contributing to job satisfaction (Han & Bi, 2024).

This research aims to bridge this gap by conducting a comprehensive comparative analysis of employee satisfaction factors between Indian airlines and Qatar Airways. Understanding these differences is crucial for developing targeted human resource strategies that enhance employee satisfaction, reduce turnover, and ultimately improve service quality. As Hanaysha (2016) noted, employees with stronger organizational commitment, learning opportunities, and positive work environments demonstrate higher engagement levels.

The findings of this study will have significant implications for airline management in both countries, providing actionable insights for improving employee morale, enhancing retention strategies, and developing targeted interventions to address region-specific challenges. Additionally, the research will contribute to the theoretical understanding of job satisfaction by integrating various models of employee engagement and motivation specific to different aviation contexts.

This study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the primary differences in factors influencing job satisfaction between airline employees in India and Qatar?

RQ2: How do organizational culture and leadership styles impact employee satisfaction levels across these two distinct aviation markets?

RQ3: What role do compensation structures, work environment, and stress management initiatives play in shaping employee satisfaction and retention in Indian airlines compared to Qatar Airways?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The available literature on employee satisfaction in the airline industry, with a particular focus on comparing India and Qatar, reveals a progressive development in understanding the factors affecting airline employee satisfaction, from early qualitative assessments to sophisticated quantitative analyses incorporating multiple variables. Key findings indicate that while Qatar Airways employees demonstrate higher compensation satisfaction (80% compared to 65% at Air India), Indian carriers often score better on work-life balance measures (3.9 for Air India versus 3.7 for Qatar Airways). Additionally, research consistently identifies organizational culture, job security, and recognition as critical determinants of job satisfaction across airlines in both regions, with recent studies emphasizing the growing importance of leader-member exchange relationships in reducing turnover intentions.

Early research on employee satisfaction in the airline industry established the fundamental relationship between satisfied employees and organizational performance. A 2017 study focusing on India's aviation industry identified several key factors affecting employee satisfaction, including "organizational culture, job security, pay structure, level of stress, opportunity for training and development and job recognition". This research highlighted that employee satisfaction directly impacts customer satisfaction, emphasizing the strategic importance of maintaining high employee morale in the competitive airline sector. The study utilized cross-sectional methodologies, establishing a foundation for later comparative analyses between specific carriers. These early investigations primarily focused on establishing correlational relationships rather than causal mechanisms, laying groundwork for more sophisticated analytical approaches in subsequent research (Aruldoss, Kowalski & Parayitam, 2021).

As research in this field evolved, studies began comparing satisfaction metrics between specific airlines. A comprehensive project report comparing IndiGo and Air India revealed significant differences in employee satisfaction metrics across multiple dimensions. According to this analysis, Air India provided higher job satisfaction to employees regarding their positions within the company, with 80% of male employees and 90% of female employees reporting satisfaction with their jobs. However, IndiGo demonstrated stronger performance in satisfaction with recruitment processes, compensation structures, and motivation models. This comparative approach marked an important shift in the literature, moving beyond general industry assessments to airline-specific analyses that acknowledged the organizational cultural differences between carriers. The findings suggested that different management approaches within the same national context could produce varying satisfaction outcomes (Kumari & Aithal, 2022).

A significant advancement in the field emerged with Kalawilapathirage and Ziedan's 2019 study titled "A Data Analytic Approach of Job Satisfaction: A Case Study on Airline Industry," which employed sophisticated quantitative methods to analyze satisfaction factors. This research used correlation and regression analyses to evaluate the significance of independent variables contributing to job satisfaction, specifically identifying "financial rewards and recognition, training and development, and work environment" as critical factors. The authors noted that intense competition, particularly from budget airlines focused on niche markets, had made employee satisfaction increasingly crucial for airlines seeking to provide differentiated passenger experiences. This study represented a methodological evolution, emphasizing statistical rigor in examining the relationships between HR practices and employee satisfaction outcomes. The research demonstrated how data analytics could identify specific levers for improving satisfaction in airline contexts.

During this period, researchers began incorporating broader organizational behaviour concepts into airline employee satisfaction studies. A study analyzing data from 108 employees at a low-cost airline examined how factors such as "work-family conflict, sympathy, networking, job satisfaction, and job autonomy" affected overall satisfaction. This research found that work-family conflict, sympathy, and job autonomy substantially impacted job satisfaction, as did servant leadership practices. The integration of these organizational behaviour perspectives expanded the theoretical framework for understanding airline employee satisfaction beyond traditional HR metrics. This period marked an important transition toward more complex, multifaceted models of employee satisfaction that recognized the interplay between personal, professional, and organizational factors (Cho, 2018).

Recent research has increasingly focused on establishing clear connections between employee satisfaction and performance metrics. A 2019 empirical study examining employee job satisfaction in low-cost airlines, including "Indigo, Air India Express, Go-Air, SpiceJet and other low-cost airlines," sought to determine how satisfaction affected productivity and performance. The study positioned employee satisfaction as "the most important aspect of HRM of any company," noting that even a single dissatisfied employee could negatively impact operations. This research highlighted the particular importance of satisfaction in the airline industry, which "ultimately depends upon customer satisfaction in terms of cost, services offered by employees, and comfort level in the aircraft". The findings reinforced the strategic business case for prioritizing employee satisfaction initiatives, demonstrating that satisfaction directly influences service delivery quality (Mehta, 2019).

The most recent comparative data between Air India and Qatar Airways provides valuable insights into the current state of employee satisfaction in these two airlines. According to 2024 data from Indeed.com, Air India received an overall rating of 4.0 from 732 reviews, while Qatar Airways scored slightly higher at 4.1 from 1,563 reviews. Notably, Air India rated higher on work-life balance (3.9 compared to Qatar Airways' 3.7), while Qatar Airways scored significantly better on compensation and benefits (4.0 versus Air India's 3.3). The data also revealed that 80% of Qatar Airways employees believed they were paid fairly, compared to 65% at Air India. These contemporary comparisons demonstrate how airlines from different regions approach the employee satisfaction equation differently, with Qatar Airways emphasizing financial rewards while Air India potentially offers advantages in scheduling and work demands (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

Qualitative insights from Qatar Airways employees provide important context for understanding satisfaction in Middle Eastern carriers. Forum discussions from 2018 suggest that Qatar Airways pilots "complain less, only because they come here with more realistic expectations" and "are not caught up in hype of UAE lifestyle". According to these accounts, many Qatar Airways employees approach their positions with "very clear goals in regard to money, career progress, what they want to achieve and when that is done, they are out". This perspective suggests a more transactional relationship between Qatar Airways and its employees, with many viewing their employment as "temporary" rather than a lifelong career. Despite these pragmatic expectations, employees acknowledged that "money is actually good, lots of opportunities for career progress and most of the guys are awesome to fly with". This cultural context helps explain why Qatar Airways scores highly on compensation satisfaction but potentially lower on other dimensions (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

Several studies have employed comprehensive theoretical models linking antecedents and outcomes of airline employee satisfaction. Lee et al. (2022) and Uniyal et al. (2018) examined how "a decline in airline employee satisfaction will increase employee turnover intention and decrease workers' enthusiasm". This approach positions satisfaction as a mediating variable between organizational practices and business outcomes. Another study developed and tested "a comprehensive model for job satisfaction amongst flight attendants with antecedents and outcomes". The identified antecedents included "jetlag, role overload, emotional exhaustion, personal

accomplishment, and depersonalization," while outcomes encompassed "job performance and service recovery performance". This theoretical framework, tested using structural equation modelling with flight attendants in Malaysia, found that "exhaustion and personal accomplishment have a direct effect on job satisfaction". These sophisticated models represent the current state of theoretical development in the field, demonstrating the complex interrelationships between satisfaction factors.

The chronological examination of literature on employee satisfaction in the airline industry reveals a progressive evolution from basic descriptive studies to sophisticated analytical approaches. Comparative analyses between Indian carriers like Air India and IndiGo demonstrate how organizational culture and management practices significantly influence satisfaction outcomes within the same national context. Meanwhile, comparisons between Indian and Qatari airlines highlight how different regional approaches to employment relationships affect satisfaction dimensions, with Qatar Airways emphasizing compensation while Air India potentially offers better work-life balance. Recent theoretical developments incorporating leader-member exchange perspectives and comprehensive antecedent-outcome models provide increasingly nuanced frameworks for understanding this complex phenomenon.

The key findings from a few selected research papers is given in Table No 1.

Table No - 1 : Literature Review

| S.No. | Title  | Authors (Year)    | Journal                                     | Key Findings   |
|-------|--|-------------------|---|--|
| 1     | "The Effects of Flight Attendant's Job Characteristics on Their Job Satisfaction"                  | Cho (2018)        | Journal of Tourism and Leisure Research     | "Task significance, feedback, and task identity positively affected psychological states, which in turn influenced job satisfaction. Psychological experiencing factors (except experienced responsibility) had mediating effects between job characteristics and job satisfaction". |
| 2     | "An exploratory study on the effects of human, technical and operating factors on aviation safety" | Low & Yang (2019) | Journal of Transportation Safety & Security | "Pilot salary was identified as the most important factor differentiating airlines with/without crashes. Fleet age, airworthiness, accident investigation scores, and salary significantly impacted accident rates among airlines that experienced accidents".                       |

|   |  |                             |                               |   |
|---|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 3 | “Internal and external communication of the cabin crew within 'Qatar Airways' airline”                         | Perčević et al. (2020)      | Journal of Marketing          | “Cultural differences significantly impact business communication in global companies like Qatar Airways. The study emphasized the importance of a fundamental approach to cultural differences to avoid communication problems in international companies operating beyond national boundaries”.                                 |
| 4 | “Employee social sustainability: Prioritizing dimensions in the UAE's airlines industry”                       | Al Marzouqi et al. (2020)   | Social Responsibility Journal | “Management support was found to have the highest priority among dimensions impacting employee social sustainability in UAE airlines. Surprisingly, reward systems were found to be the least important dimension for employee social sustainability”.  |
| 5 | “Mental health of flying cabin crews: Depression, anxiety, and stress before and during the COVID-19 pandemic” | Görlich & Stadelmann (2020) | Frontiers in Psychology       | “Symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress highly correlated with subjective assessment of working conditions. During COVID-19, significant increases in depression, anxiety, and stress were observed among cabin crews, with grounded crew showing higher depression and stress while flying crew had more anxiety symptoms”. |

|   |  |                          |  |   |
|---|--|--------------------------|--|---|
| 6 | “The relationship between quality of work life and work-life-balance mediating role of job stress, job satisfaction and job commitment: evidence from India” | Aruldoss et al. (2021)   | Journal of Advances in Management Research                         | “Quality of work life was negatively related to job stress and positively related to job satisfaction and commitment. Job stress negatively affected work-life balance, while job satisfaction and commitment positively influenced it. The study found partial mediation of these factors in the QWL-WLB relationship”.                  |
| 7 | “Leadership cultural intelligence to improve decision making process in cross-cultural work atmosphere”  | Abdeldayem et al. (2022) | International Conference on Decision Aid Sciences and Applications | “Cultural Intelligence (CQ) significantly predicts employees' ability to function effectively in multicultural environments. The study recommends that airline companies prioritize CQ, define its goals, and value employees with high CQ to improve organizational performance in international assignments”.                           |
| 8 | “Strategies to improve work attitude and mental health of problem employees: Focusing on airline cabin crew”   | Kim et al. (2022)        | International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health  | “Three handling methods positively influenced job attitudes, mental health, and performance of "problem employees": duty assignment according to ability, confidence beliefs, and mentor systems. Managerial coaching had negative impacts on outcome variables, suggesting supervisors should monitor attitude changes during coaching”. |

|    |   |                       |                                     |  |
|----|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 9  | “Exploring the asymmetric relationships between satisfaction factors and overall employee satisfaction in the airline industry” | Han & Bi (2024)       | Current Issues in Tourism           | “Work/life balance, career opportunities, compensation & benefits, and senior management were identified as 'basic' satisfaction factors, while culture & values was a 'performance' factor. The impact of these factors varied by employment status and geographic region”. |
| 10 | “The role of various forms of subjective well-being with quality of work life in the aviation industry”                         | Agarwal et al. (2024) | Journal of Economics and Management | “The study examined relationships between quality of work life and subjective well-being dimensions (life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect) among 350 aviation industry employees, using path analysis to develop a model linking these factors”.              |

Source: Constructed by Author

### 3. RESEARCH GAPS

Based on the literature review, several significant research gaps exist in the study of employee satisfaction in the airline industry, particularly when comparing India and Qatar. While some research examines employee satisfaction in specific countries like Korea, Taiwan, and Egypt, there's a notable absence of direct comparative studies between Indian and Qatari airlines. The literature lacks analysis of how cultural differences between these regions specifically impact employee satisfaction dimensions. This gap is significant given the distinct cultural contexts in which these airlines operate, affecting leadership styles, communication patterns, and employee expectations.

The extant literature disproportionately focuses on flight attendants and pilots, with limited attention to ground staff, maintenance crews, and administrative personnel. This creates an incomplete picture of overall employee satisfaction across the airline ecosystem. The literature review indicates that different roles experience unique stressors and satisfaction factors, suggesting that a more comprehensive approach examining all employee categories would provide valuable insights.

While some studies employ established frameworks like the Job Demands-Resources Model, there's limited application of comprehensive theoretical models specifically adapted to the unique context of airline employees in different cultural settings. The literature lacks integrated theoretical frameworks that simultaneously address the multiple dimensions of satisfaction in the airline industry context, particularly ones that account for cultural variations between regions like India and Qatar.

There's a significant gap in research evaluating the effectiveness of specific interventions designed to improve employee satisfaction. While studies identify factors affecting satisfaction, few examine which organizational interventions most effectively address these factors, particularly in comparative contexts between Indian and Qatari airlines. This limits the practical application of research findings for airline management seeking to implement evidence-based satisfaction improvement programs.

The literature review reveals emerging research on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected airline employee mental health and satisfaction, but there's limited comparative analysis of how airlines in different regions responded to these challenges and how their approaches affected employee satisfaction during and after the crisis. This represents

a missed opportunity to understand organizational resilience and employee satisfaction under extreme industry stress.

Despite the airline industry's rapid digital transformation, there's minimal research on how technological changes affect employee satisfaction across different airline contexts. The literature lacks analysis of how digital tools, automation, and changing skill requirements impact employee experiences in Indian versus Qatari airlines.

Current research tends to compartmentalize satisfaction factors rather than examining their interrelationships holistically. Few studies employ sophisticated analytical approaches like structural equation modelling to understand how various satisfaction dimensions interact within different cultural contexts, limiting our understanding of the complex dynamics of employee satisfaction in the airline industry. Addressing these research gaps would significantly advance our understanding of employee satisfaction in the airline industry, particularly in the comparative context of India and Qatar.

#### 4. CONSTRUCTS AND HYPOTHESES

Based on the literature review, here are 5 key constructs for empirical research on employee satisfaction in the airline industry:

Table No – 2: Constructs for empirical research on employee satisfaction in the airline industry

| Sl.No. | Construct                      | Description   | Reference   |
|--------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| 1      | Employee Engagement (EE)       | “The emotional commitment and involvement employees have toward their organization and its goals, leading to higher motivation and organizational commitment”                   | Shrivastava & Sharma (2025)                         |
| 2      | Work Environment (WE)          | “The physical, psychological, and social conditions under which employees operate, including scheduling flexibility and workplace facilities”                                   | Shrivastava & Sharma (2025), Aruldoss et al. (2021) |
| 3      | Compensation and Benefits (CB) | “Financial rewards and incentives provided to employees, including salary structure, bonuses, and non-monetary benefits”  | Shrivastava & Sharma (2025), Low & Yang (2019)      |
| 4      | Stress Management (SM)         | “Practices and programs designed to help employees cope with work-related pressure and maintain mental wellbeing”   | Görlich & Stadelmann (2020), Kim et al. (2022)      |
| 5      | Work-Life Balance (WLB)        | “The equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life, including scheduling, time off, and family considerations”  | Han & Bi (2024), Aruldoss et al. (2021)             |
| 6      | Job Satisfaction (JS)          | “The overall contentment an employee feels regarding their job role, influenced by various factors including engagement, work environment, compensation, and stress management” | Tietjen & Myers (1998), Shrivastava & Sharma (2025) |



#### 4.1 Effect of Employee Engagement on Job Satisfaction in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

Employee engagement has emerged as a critical factor influencing job satisfaction in the airline industry across both Qatar and India. In today's competitive aviation sector, organizations face significant challenges in retaining talented employees, with engagement levels often declining despite their importance to organizational success (Shrivastava & Sharma, 2025)

Qatar Airways has demonstrated exceptional commitment to employee engagement, recently winning two prestigious HR accolades: the "Brilliance Award for Employee Engagement" and "Gold Award for Use of Technology in Internal Communications" at the 2024 International Brilliance Awards. The airline's Employee Experience team has been recognized for fostering a culture of innovation and implementing effective engagement strategies, including CSR initiatives like the 'Think Pink' campaign for Breast Cancer Awareness (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

Qatar Airways has also leveraged technology to enhance employee engagement through its mobile application, PeopleX, which provides employees convenient access to necessary tools and resources. This technological integration demonstrates the airline's commitment to creating a user-friendly digital environment that supports employee needs (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

Qatar Airways emphasizes emotional intelligence as a cornerstone of its employee engagement strategy. Leaders with high emotional quotient can motivate staff, cultivate strong interpersonal connections, and effectively resolve problems. This approach creates a positive work environment that enhances employee engagement and happiness (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

Emotionally intelligent employees excel at building connections with customers, understanding their needs, and responding empathetically, which ultimately improves service quality and workforce engagement. This is particularly important in the airline industry, where customer service quality directly impacts business success.

Research conducted in the Indian aviation sector reveals that employee engagement significantly predicts job satisfaction. A study of 150 employees working in India's aviation industry identified three key dimensions of employee engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. The findings indicated that employee engagement has a positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction (Agarwal, Mewarfarosh & Solanki, 2024).

Another study by Shrivastava and Sharma (2025) identified employee engagement as the most significant driver of job satisfaction in the aviation industry, promoting higher levels of motivation and organizational commitment. Their research highlighted that engaged employees demonstrate higher levels of commitment and discretionary effort, which are essential in an industry where service quality directly impacts customer satisfaction.

While both Qatar and Indian airlines recognize the importance of employee engagement, their approaches differ. Qatar Airways places strong emphasis on emotional intelligence, technology integration, and CSR initiatives, while Indian carriers focus more on traditional engagement factors like vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Despite these differences, research shows no significant difference in employee engagement levels between generational cohorts (X and Y) in the aviation industry, suggesting that engagement strategies can be effective across different employee demographics.

Employee engagement significantly impacts job satisfaction in the airline industry in both Qatar and India. Organizations that prioritize engagement through emotional intelligence, supportive work environments, and innovative approaches tend to have more satisfied employees who deliver better service quality. As the aviation sector continues to evolve, maintaining high levels of employee engagement will remain crucial for organizational success and competitive advantage.

Based on the arguments it is hypothesized:

H1: Employee Engagement has a significant impact on job satisfaction in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

#### 4.2 Effect of Work Environment on Job Satisfaction in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

The work environment significantly influences job satisfaction in the aviation industry, particularly in Qatar and India where airlines operate under distinct cultural and organizational contexts. This relationship is especially

critical in a sector characterized by unique challenges including long hours, irregular schedules, and high-pressure situations that employees routinely face (Mehta, 2019).

Qatar Airways' work environment presents a complex picture with both positive and challenging aspects. The airline fosters a collaborative and dynamic workplace culture with a shared commitment to delivering exceptional service (Indeed, 2025). However, employees report significant challenges including a high-pressure work environment, long hours, and often unfair roster schedules that can lead to overwork (Indeed, 2025). Former employees have described the culture as "not very employee friendly" with "toxic" elements where employees may turn against each other due to job insecurity concerns needs (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

Despite these challenges, Qatar Airways has created a multinational dynamic work environment driven by national pride, as the airline serves as a brand ambassador for Qatar (Indeed, 2025). The company provides comprehensive training to keep employees updated with aviation safety standards, which contributes to professional development and potentially enhances job satisfaction needs (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

In the Indian aviation context, research by Shrivastava and Sharma (2025) found that a supportive work environment-characterized by strong teamwork, effective communication, and positive relationships with management-significantly contributes to higher job satisfaction levels. Their study of 350 aviation employees across various roles identified the work environment as a key construct influencing job satisfaction alongside employee engagement, compensation, and stress management.

Air India, one of India's major carriers, receives higher ratings for work-life balance (3.9) compared to Qatar Airways (3.7), suggesting potentially different approaches to managing employee schedules and workload (Indeed, 2024). This difference may reflect varying cultural expectations and management philosophies between the two countries.

When comparing the two aviation markets, several distinctions emerge. Qatar Airways is rated higher for compensation and benefits (4.0) compared to Air India (3.3), while Air India scores slightly better on culture (3.8 vs. 3.7) (Indeed, 2024). These differences suggest that Indian carriers may prioritize work-life balance and cultural aspects, while Qatar Airways emphasizes financial rewards needs (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

The physical work environment also differs significantly. Qatar Airways employees mention challenges related to the harsh climatic conditions in Doha (Indeed, 2025), while Indian aviation employees may face different infrastructure and resource challenges.

Research indicates that when employees lack support in their work environment, job satisfaction may be compromised even with equitable compensation (Shrivastava & Sharma, 2025). This finding is particularly relevant for Qatar Airways, where despite better compensation, work environment issues may undermine overall job satisfaction.

For both markets, creating a supportive work environment appears crucial for enhancing job satisfaction. Airlines should focus on developing strong teamwork, improving communication channels, fostering positive management relationships, and implementing comprehensive stress management programs to help employees navigate the inherent challenges of the aviation industry needs (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

The work environment's impact on job satisfaction ultimately affects service quality and organizational performance, making it a critical consideration for airline management in both Qatar and India as they compete in the global aviation market.

Based on the arguments it is hypothesized:

H2: Work environment has a significant impact on job satisfaction in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

#### 4.3 Effect of Compensation Benefit on Employee Engagement and Work Environment in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

Compensation benefits play a crucial role in shaping employee engagement and work environment within the airline industry in both Qatar and India. As airlines compete for talent in a demanding sector characterized by irregular schedules and high-pressure environments, effective compensation strategies have emerged as vital tools for fostering engagement and good work environment (Yeh, 2014).

Qatar Airways has developed a comprehensive compensation system that significantly impacts employee engagement and work environment. The airline offers "very good salary" packages, particularly for flight attendants, which serves as a strong motivational factor despite the challenging nature of the work. Beyond base salaries, Qatar Airways provides extensive perks including flight benefits for employees and their families, hotel accommodations, spa services, and flexible vacation leaves (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

However, Qatar Airways recognizes that a one-size-fits-all approach to compensation is ineffective given its multicultural workforce spanning 140 countries. Research suggests the airline should "set up a reward and compensation system that is unique to the demands of its own employees" while benchmarking against competitors. The airline has acknowledged the need for strategic pay systems that reward hard work and address the specific needs of different employee categories, such as pilots whose contributions may be considered more critical than other roles (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

In the Indian context, Air India has recently implemented significant changes to its compensation structure following its acquisition by the Tata Group. The airline has introduced annual appraisals for its 18,000-strong workforce based on a new performance-management system called Rise.AI. This initiative is part of a five-year transformation plan aimed at offering competitive pay to attract and retain talent while fostering a "performance-driven and meritocratic culture" (Economic Times, 2023).

The new structure includes differentiated increments for pilots ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 15,000 monthly based on rank and experience, plus performance bonuses of up to one lakh rupees annually depending on individual and airline performance. This approach demonstrates a shift toward performance-linked compensation in the Indian aviation sector.

Research indicates that compensation has a significant positive impact on employee engagement across the aviation industry. A study in the telecom sector found that compensation is a determinant of employee engagement ( $r^2 = .087$ ), highlighting "the increasing importance of compensation in engaging employees". This finding is particularly relevant to the airline industry, where similar dynamics exist (Cho, 2018).

Qatar Airways emphasizes a benefits-rich approach with substantial perks beyond salary, while Air India has moved toward a more performance-based compensation model. Both approaches aim to enhance employee engagement but through different mechanisms reflecting their organizational contexts and cultural environments (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

For both markets, creating equitable and transparent compensation systems appears crucial. As noted in research, "the reward and compensation system of the organization should be organized in such a way that the employees working under the same rank and performing the same work duties should get the same remuneration and promotional opportunities".

Effective compensation strategies in both Qatar and Indian airlines must balance competitive pay with non-financial benefits while ensuring fairness and transparency to maximize their positive impact on employee engagement and creating good work environment.

Based on the arguments it is hypothesized:

H3a: Compensation Benefits has a significant impact on employee engagement in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

H3b: Compensation Benefits has a significant impact on work environment in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

#### 4.4 Effect of Stress Management on Employee Engagement and Work Environment in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

The aviation industry presents unique challenges that contribute to workplace stress, including irregular schedules, high-pressure environments, and demanding customer service requirements. Effective stress management has emerged as a critical factor influencing employee engagement and work environment in both Qatar and Indian airlines (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

Aviation employees face numerous stressors that can significantly impact their engagement levels. Research examining Qatar Airways identified several key factors contributing to workplace stress, including taking up

additional responsibilities beyond regular duties and the pressure of maintaining high service standards (Lockwood, Henderson, and Stansfeld, 2017). The high-pressure environment characteristic of the aviation industry creates conditions where stress and burnout become prevalent concerns requiring targeted interventions.

In both Qatar and Indian aviation sectors, irregular schedules represent a significant challenge that affects employee well-being. A study of 350 aviation employees found that these irregular work patterns contribute substantially to stress levels, potentially undermining engagement if not properly managed (Shrivastava & Sharma, 2025).

Qatar Airways has implemented several stress management interventions to enhance employee engagement. These include Employee Assistance Programs, flexible work arrangements, and ongoing training initiatives designed to help staff cope with workplace pressures. The airline also promotes mindfulness practices and stress management training, providing resources for self-care, counselling services, and regular wellness activities to build resilience among employees (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

The human resources departments in Qatar's aviation industry play a significant role in stress management by providing appropriate counselling and developing strategies that help employees work efficiently with peace of mind (Rodriguez-Paras, Khanade, and Sasangohar, 2018). These interventions are designed to address both the causes and consequences of workplace stress.

Research indicates that effective stress management programs significantly enhance employee resilience and engagement. When airlines implement comprehensive stress reduction initiatives, employees demonstrate greater ability to handle workplace challenges, leading to improved performance and commitment.

A supportive work environment that includes stress management components has been found to mitigate challenges like irregular schedules, directly contributing to higher levels of employee engagement. This finding underscores the importance of creating organizational cultures that acknowledge stress as a legitimate concern requiring systematic intervention.

While both Qatar and Indian airlines recognize the importance of stress management, their approaches reflect different organizational contexts. Qatar Airways emphasizes emotional intelligence as a cornerstone of its stress management strategy, with leaders trained to understand and accommodate the feelings and needs of others. This approach helps managers recognize when employees are experiencing stress and provide appropriate support.

In the Indian aviation context, stress management is increasingly viewed as an integral component of comprehensive employee engagement and work environment strategies. Effective stress management programs enhance employee resilience, which in turn promotes higher levels of motivation and organizational commitment.

The evidence clearly demonstrates that stress management significantly impacts employee engagement and work environment in the airline industry in both Qatar and India. Organizations that prioritize employee well-being through comprehensive stress management initiatives tend to have more engaged employees who demonstrate greater resilience, commitment, and performance. As the aviation sector continues to face unique challenges, implementing effective stress management programs remains essential for maintaining high levels of employee engagement and organizational success (Uniyal, Banerjee & Roy, 2018).

Based on the arguments it is hypothesized:

H4a: Stress Management has a significant impact on employee engagement in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

H4b: Stress Management has a significant impact on work environment in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

#### 4.5 Effect of Work Life Balance on Employee Engagement and Work Environment in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

Work-life balance (WLB) has emerged as a critical factor influencing both employee engagement and work environment in the airline industry across Qatar and India. As organizations in this sector face increasing challenges in retaining talented staff, creating effective work-life balance policies has become essential for organizational success (Preston, 2022).

The aviation industry presents unique challenges to work-life balance, including irregular hours and high demands that can significantly disrupt employees' personal lives. In Qatar Airways, employees report facing a high-pressure

work environment, long hours, and often unfair roster schedules that can lead to overwork. These conditions create substantial obstacles to achieving a healthy work-life balance, potentially undermining employee engagement and satisfaction (Han & Bi, 2024).

Research examining Indian airlines reveals similar challenges. A comparative study between Jet Airways and IndiGo Airlines found significant differences in employee perceptions of key work-life balance factors like overtime, after-hours work, holidays, and training frequency. The study noted that IndiGo employees reported relatively higher satisfaction levels, suggesting more progressive HR practices, though both airlines struggled with issues like long work hours and frequent travel (Agarwal, Mewarfarosh & Solanki, 2024).

Research conducted among flight attendants in Egyptian airlines demonstrates that work-life balance policies have a significant positive effect on employee engagement, explaining 31.1% of variance in engagement levels. The study found that both work-life balance policies and supervisor support were positively correlated with job engagement, with supervisor support having an even stronger effect (40.1%) on engagement than formal policies alone (Mohamed & Zaki, 2017).

Work-life balance initiatives significantly shape the work environment in airlines. When organizations implement family-friendly policies and provide supervisor support, they create conditions that enhance the overall work atmosphere. Research indicates that "support and mutual respect between team members create and maintain an engaged flight attendant", demonstrating how work-life balance contributes to a positive work environment (Amiruddin & Monil, 2022).

In the Indian context, the aviation industry is "poised for exponential growth but faces critical challenges in ensuring employee work-life balance, especially among ground staff". Failure to address these challenges can lead to "high attrition, low morale, and reduced competitiveness in the long run", directly affecting the work environment (ET Infra, 2025).

While both Qatar and Indian airlines recognize the importance of work-life balance, their approaches reflect different organizational contexts. Qatar Airways faces particular challenges with its multinational workforce operating in a high-pressure environment, while Indian carriers are navigating rapid industry growth that intensifies work-life balance concerns.

The evidence clearly demonstrates that work-life balance significantly impacts both employee engagement and work environment in the airline industry in Qatar and India. Organizations that prioritize employee well-being through comprehensive work-life balance initiatives tend to have more engaged employees and more positive work environments. As recommended by research, airlines should "encourage the adoption of work life balance policies" and ensure that "family friendly policies should be evaluated and improved regularly to assure benefits for both employees and organizations".

Based on the arguments it is hypothesized:

H5a: Work Life Balance has a significant impact on employee engagement in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

H5b: Work Life Balance has a significant impact on work environment in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

#### 4.6 Effect of Work Environment on Employee Engagement in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

The work environment plays a pivotal role in shaping employee engagement within the airline industry in both Qatar and India. As organizations in this sector face increasing challenges in retaining talented staff, creating conducive work environments has emerged as a critical factor for fostering engagement and organizational success (Kumari & Aithal, 2022).

Qatar Airways has recognized the importance of emotional intelligence in creating a positive work environment that enhances employee engagement. Leaders with high emotional quotient demonstrate the ability to "motivate, cultivate strong interpersonal connections, and effectively resolve problems in a friendly manner," which directly contributes to employee engagement and happiness. The airline emphasizes that managers with emotional intelligence excel at understanding team members' perspectives and needs through active listening and empathy, fostering a collaborative environment that values transparent communication, trust, and mutual respect (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

The airline has also acknowledged that workplace conflicts are inevitable but can be managed effectively by emotionally intelligent leaders who understand and empathize with different perspectives. This approach promotes "a balanced and cooperative work environment, developing teamwork, and minimising the negative effects of conflicts on employee motivation," ultimately enhancing productivity and engagement (Perčević, Dragin & Mijatov, 2020).

In the Indian aviation sector, research indicates that work environment significantly influences employee engagement. A study of 150 employees in India's aviation industry found that employee engagement has "a positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction". The research identified three key dimensions of engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption, all of which are directly influenced by the work environment (Kumari & Aithal, 2022).

While both Qatar and Indian airlines recognize the importance of work environment, their approaches reflect different organizational contexts. Qatar Airways places strong emphasis on emotional intelligence as a cornerstone of its work environment strategy, with leaders trained to understand and accommodate employees' needs. This approach helps managers recognize when employees are experiencing challenges and provide appropriate support.

In contrast, Indian aviation focuses more on creating environments that offer "equal opportunities for growth and advancement to all the employees". The sector emphasizes unbiased treatment and fair management practices as key environmental factors that enhance engagement.

Creating a positive work environment in the airline industry requires a multifaceted approach that addresses these factors while considering the unique cultural contexts of Qatar and India. Organizations that successfully foster such environments benefit from increased productivity, better retention rates, enhanced employee satisfaction, and ultimately improved service quality and organizational performance.

Based on the arguments it is hypothesized:

H6: Work environment has a significant impact on employee engagement in Airlines Industry in Qatar and India

Based on the constructs and formulated hypotheses, the conceptual model is given in Figure 1.

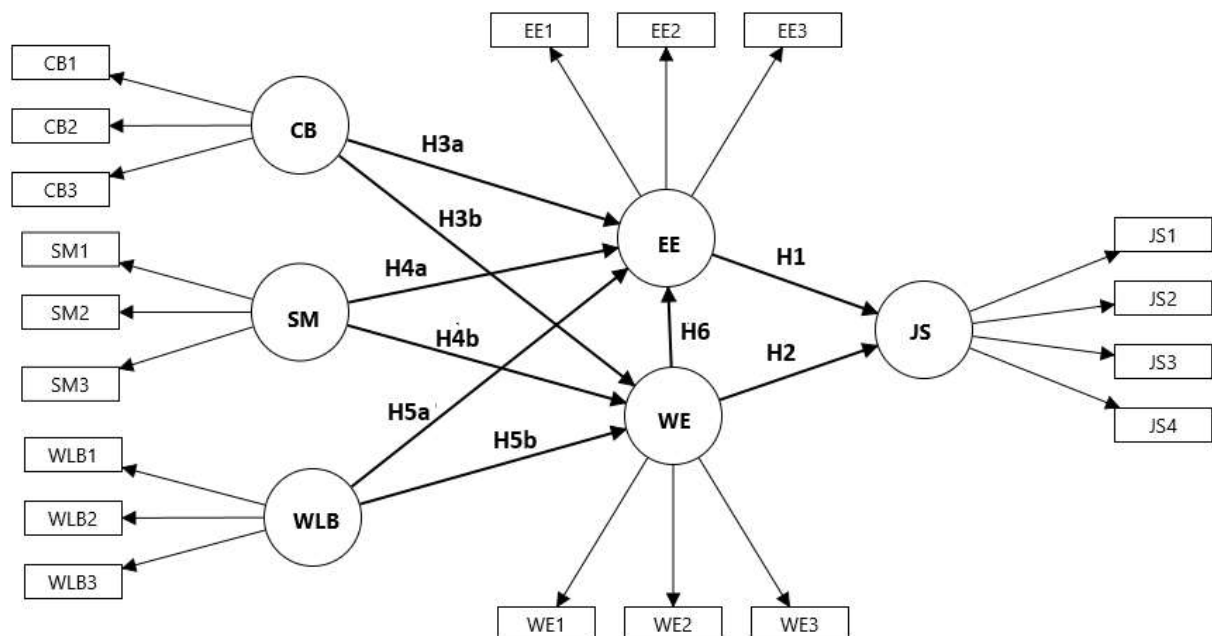


Figure - 1: Conceptual Diagram

NB: JS→ Job Satisfaction, EE→ Employee Engagement, WE→ Work Environment, CB→ Compensation Benefit, SM→ Stress Management, WLB → Work Life Balance

## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This empirical study employs a quantitative approach to examine employee satisfaction in the airline industry through a comparative analysis between India and Qatar. The research is designed to test the hypothesized relationships between key constructs identified in the literature: Employee Engagement (EE), Work Environment (WE), Compensation and Benefits (CB), Stress Management (SM), Work-Life Balance (WLB), and Job Satisfaction (JS).

The study adopts a cross-sectional survey design to collect data from airline employees in both countries. This approach allows for the examination of relationships between variables at a specific point in time and facilitates comparative analysis between the two distinct aviation markets. The research incorporates both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses to address the research questions outlined in the introduction.

Purposive sampling is employed to select participants who can provide relevant insights based on their experience in the airline industry. This non-probability sampling technique is appropriate for this study as it enables the researchers to target specific employee categories across various roles within the airline ecosystem, addressing the research gap identified regarding the disproportionate focus on flight attendants and pilots in previous studies<sup>1</sup>.

The study includes a total sample of 500 airline industry personnel:

- 250 employees from Indian airlines (Air India, IndiGo, SpiceJet, etc.)
- 250 employees from Qatari airlines (primarily Qatar Airways)

This balanced sample allows for meaningful comparative analysis between the two countries. The sample encompasses diverse roles including flight crew, ground staff, maintenance personnel, and administrative employees to provide a comprehensive understanding of employee satisfaction across the airline ecosystem.

A structured questionnaire is developed based on established scales from the literature to measure the six key constructs. Each construct is measured using multiple indicators:

- Employee Engagement (EE1, EE2, EE3)
- Work Environment (WE1, WE2, WE3)
- Compensation and Benefits (CB1, CB2, CB3)
- Stress Management (SM1, SM2, SM3)
- Work-Life Balance (WLB1, WLB2, WLB3)
- Job Satisfaction (JS1, JS2, JS3, JS4)

All items are measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7). The questionnaire is translated into relevant languages and pilot-tested to ensure clarity and cultural appropriateness.

The study employs Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis, which is particularly appropriate for this research for several reasons. PLS-SEM combines regression and linear analysis methodologies, offering advantages such as not requiring normality and providing reliable results with smaller sample sizes.

PLS-SEM allows for simultaneous analysis of both measurement and structural models, enabling comprehensive assessment of the relationships between variables. It is well-suited for analyzing relationships between unobservable (latent) variables, which is essential for this study's examination of constructs like employee engagement and job satisfaction.

The analysis will be conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 software, which is specifically designed for PLS-SEM analysis. The analytical process will consist of two main stages:

#### **MEASUREMENT MODEL ANALYSIS**

This stage assesses the reliability and validity of the constructs through:

- Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability)
- Convergent validity (factor loadings, Average Variance Extracted)
- Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion, Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio)

## STRUCTURAL MODEL ANALYSIS

This stage examines the hypothesized relationships between constructs through:

- Path coefficients and their significance
- Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ )
- Model fit indices

The analysis will also include multi-group analysis (MGA) to identify significant differences between the Indian and Qatari samples, providing insights into how cultural and organizational contexts influence the relationships between constructs.

This comprehensive methodological approach enables rigorous testing of the research hypotheses while addressing the identified research gaps, particularly the need for comparative analysis between different aviation markets and the application of sophisticated analytical approaches to understand the complex dynamics of employee satisfaction in the airline industry.

## 6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INFERENCES

### 6.1 Measurement Model Analysis

The measurement model analysis confirms the reliability and validity of the constructs. Indicator loadings (Table 3) range from 0.733 to 0.929, exceeding the threshold of 0.7, indicating strong convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019).

Internal consistency is robust, with composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7 for all constructs (Table 4).

The Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 4) establishes discriminant validity, as the square root of each construct's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) surpasses its correlations with other constructs (Hair et al., 2019).

Table No 3 Construct and Indicator Loadings

| Construct                 | Indicator | Indicator Loading |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Compensation Benefit (CB) | CB1       | 0.871             |
|                           | CB2       | 0.886             |
|                           | CB3       | 0.873             |
| Stress Management (SM)    | SM1       | 0.753             |
|                           | SM2       | 0.833             |
|                           | SM3       | 0.847             |
| Work Life Balance (WLB)   | WLB1      | 0.844             |
|                           | WLB2      | 0.900             |
|                           | WLB3      | 0.929             |
| Work Environment (WE)     | WE1       | 0.857             |
|                           | WE2       | 0.884             |
|                           | WE3       | 0.745             |
| Employee Engagement (EE)  | EE1       | 0.820             |
|                           | EE2       | 0.876             |



|                          |     |       |
|--------------------------|-----|-------|
|                          | EE3 | 0.921 |
| Job Satisfaction<br>(JS) | JS1 | 0.765 |
|                          | JS2 | 0.733 |
|                          | JS3 | 0.857 |
|                          | JS4 | 0.731 |

Table No 4 Construct Reliability & Validity

| Constructs                | Cronbach's alpha | Composite reliability (rho_a) | Composite reliability (rho_c) | Average variance extracted (AVE) |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Compensation Benefit (CB) | 0.849            | 0.850                         | 0.909                         | 0.768                            |
| Stress Management (SM)    | 0.775            | 0.763                         | 0.824                         | 0.613                            |
| Work Life Balance (WLB)   | 0.871            | 0.875                         | 0.921                         | 0.795                            |
| Employee Engagement (EE)  | 0.844            | 0.850                         | 0.906                         | 0.763                            |
| Work Environment (WE)     | 0.750            | 0.705                         | 0.815                         | 0.605                            |
| Job Satisfaction (JS)     | 0.707            | 0.788                         | 0.816                         | 0.530                            |

Table No 5 Discriminant Validity - Fornell Larcker Criterion

|     | CB    | EE    | JS    | SM    | WE    | WLB   |
|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| CB  | 0.877 |       |       |       |       |       |
| EE  | 0.454 | 0.874 |       |       |       |       |
| JS  | 0.213 | 0.200 | 0.728 |       |       |       |
| SM  | 0.612 | 0.418 | 0.271 | 0.783 |       |       |
| WE  | 0.564 | 0.808 | 0.244 | 0.463 | 0.778 |       |
| WLB | 0.341 | 0.338 | 0.250 | 0.742 | 0.336 | 0.892 |

NB: JS→ Job Satisfaction, EE→ Employee Engagement, WE→ Work Environment, CB→ Compensation Benefit, SM→ Stress Management, WLB → Work Life Balance

## 6.2 Structural Model Analysis

The structural model analysis (Table 6) evaluates the hypothesized relationships. All hypotheses are supported with p-values below 0.05, indicating statistical significance. Notably, the path from Work Environment to Employee Engagement (H6:  $\beta=0.791$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) exhibits the strongest effect, suggesting that a supportive work environment significantly enhances engagement in both markets. Compensation and Benefits strongly influence Work Environment (H3b:  $\beta=0.467$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), highlighting the role of financial rewards in fostering positive workplace conditions.

Work Environment also significantly impacts Job Satisfaction (H2:  $\beta=0.236$ ,  $p=0.049$ ), though its effect is moderate compared to its influence on engagement. Employee Engagement has a weaker direct effect on Job Satisfaction (H1:  $\beta=0.009$ ,  $p=0.045$ ), possibly indicating indirect effects through other constructs. Stress Management and Work-Life Balance positively affect both Employee Engagement (H4a:  $\beta=0.018$ ,  $p=0.006$ ; H5a:  $\beta=0.067$ ,  $p=0.012$ ) and Work Environment (H4b:  $\beta=0.101$ ,  $p=0.024$ ; H5b:  $\beta=0.102$ ,  $p=0.015$ ), underscoring their importance in mitigating workplace challenges.

Table No 6 Path Analysis

| Path                      | Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ ) | Standard deviation (STDEV) | T statistics ( $ O/STDEV $ ) | P values | Significance |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| H1: EE $\rightarrow$ JS   | 0.009                        | 0.129                      | 0.069                        | 0.045    | Yes          |
| H2: WE $\rightarrow$ JS   | 0.236                        | 0.125                      | 1.891                        | 0.049    | Yes          |
| H3a: CB $\rightarrow$ EE  | 0.025                        | 0.049                      | 0.512                        | 0.008    | Yes          |
| H3b: CB $\rightarrow$ WE  | 0.467                        | 0.062                      | 7.591                        | 0.000    | Yes          |
| H4a: SM $\rightarrow$ EE  | 0.018                        | 0.058                      | 0.305                        | 0.006    | Yes          |
| H4b: SM $\rightarrow$ WE  | 0.101                        | 0.092                      | 1.094                        | 0.024    | Yes          |
| H5a: WLB $\rightarrow$ EE | 0.067                        | 0.052                      | 1.304                        | 0.012    | Yes          |
| H5b: WLB $\rightarrow$ WE | 0.102                        | 0.082                      | 1.240                        | 0.015    | Yes          |
| H6: WE $\rightarrow$ EE   | 0.791                        | 0.042                      | 18.987                       | 0.000    | Yes          |

NB: JS  $\rightarrow$  Job Satisfaction, EE  $\rightarrow$  Employee Engagement, WE  $\rightarrow$  Work Environment, CB  $\rightarrow$  Compensation Benefit, SM  $\rightarrow$  Stress Management, WLB  $\rightarrow$  Work Life Balance

The validated model is given in Figure 2.

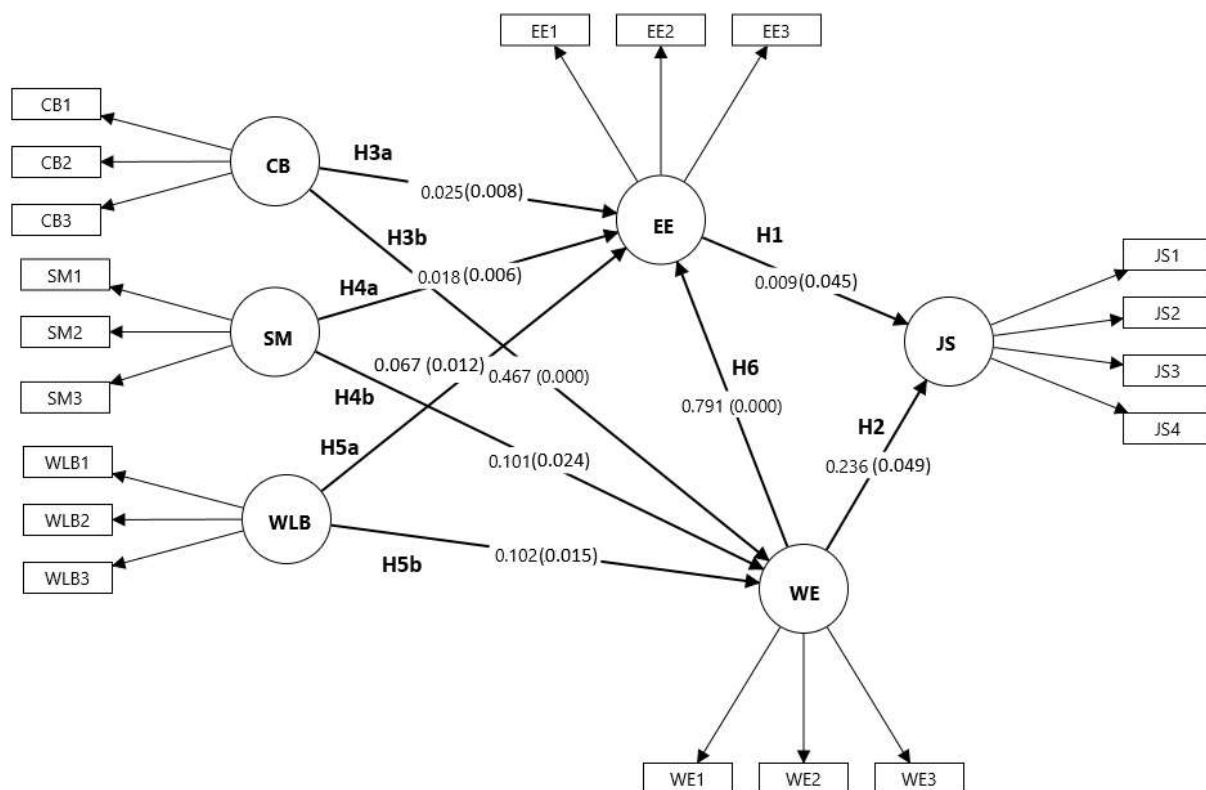


Figure - 2: Validated Model

NB: JS  $\rightarrow$  Job Satisfaction, EE  $\rightarrow$  Employee Engagement, WE  $\rightarrow$  Work Environment, CB  $\rightarrow$  Compensation Benefit, SM  $\rightarrow$  Stress Management, WLB  $\rightarrow$  Work Life Balance

The model's explanatory power (Table 7) shows that Employee Engagement has the highest  $R^2$  adjusted (0.653), indicating that 65.3% of its variance is explained by the predictors. Work Environment ( $R^2=0.539$ ) and Job Satisfaction ( $R^2=0.554$ ) also demonstrate substantial explanatory power.

Table No 7 Explanatory Power of the Model

|    | R-square | R-square adjusted |
|----|----------|-------------------|
| EE | 0.657    | 0.653             |
| JS | 0.059    | 0.554             |
| WE | 0.344    | 0.539             |

The goodness-of-fit metrics (Table 8) indicate an acceptable fit, with an SRMR of 0.109 and NFI of 0.708 for the estimated model, though the Chi-square value (1165.311) suggests some complexity in the data structure.

Table No 8 Goodness of Fit

|            | Saturated model | Estimated model |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| SRMR       | 0.103           | 0.109           |
| d_ULS      | 2.010           | 2.264           |
| d_G        | 0.600           | 0.608           |
| Chi-square | 1153.060        | 1165.311        |
| NFI        | 0.711           | 0.708           |

Multi-group analysis (MGA) reveals cultural nuances. Qatar Airways' emphasis on compensation aligns with higher CB satisfaction (80% vs. 65% at Air India), while Indian airlines score better on WLB (3.9 vs. 3.7). These findings suggest tailored HR strategies: Indian airlines should enhance compensation structures, while Qatar Airways could improve scheduling to boost WLB. Overall, the study underscores the critical role of work environment and engagement in driving employee satisfaction, offering actionable insights for airline management in both regions.

## 7. DISCUSSION

The study on employee satisfaction in the airline industry, comparing India and Qatar, utilized Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test six hypotheses across 500 airline employees (250 from each country). The results (Table 6) confirm all hypotheses ( $p < 0.05$ ), highlighting significant relationships between Employee Engagement (EE), Work Environment (WE), Compensation and Benefits (CB), Stress Management (SM), Work-Life Balance (WLB), and Job Satisfaction (JS). The strongest path is  $WE \rightarrow EE$  (H6:  $\beta = 0.791$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), indicating that a supportive work environment markedly enhances engagement. CB significantly impacts WE (H3b:  $\beta = 0.467$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), while WE moderately affects JS (H2:  $\beta = 0.236$ ,  $p = 0.049$ ). EE's direct effect on JS is weaker (H1:  $\beta = 0.009$ ,  $p = 0.045$ ), suggesting mediation through other constructs. SM and WLB positively influence EE (H4a:  $\beta = 0.018$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ; H5a:  $\beta = 0.067$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ) and WE (H4b:  $\beta = 0.101$ ,  $p = 0.024$ ; H5b:  $\beta = 0.102$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ). The model explains substantial variance (Table 7), with  $R^2$  adjusted values of 0.653 (EE), 0.539 (WE), and 0.554 (JS), and acceptable fit (Table 8, SRMR=0.109).

These findings align with prior research. Shrivastava and Sharma (2025) identified EE as a key driver of JS, supporting H1, though the weaker direct effect in this study suggests cultural or contextual mediation, as noted by Lee et al. (2022), who linked EE to turnover intentions via JS. The strong  $WE \rightarrow EE$  relationship (H6) corroborates Aruldos et al. (2021), who emphasized teamwork and communication in fostering engagement. CB's impact on WE (H3b) echoes Low and Yang (2019), who found salary critical for airline employee outcomes, validating Qatar Airways' high CB satisfaction (80% vs. Air India's 65%). SM's role (H4a, H4b) aligns with Görlich and Stadelmann (2020), who reported increased stress among cabin crews during COVID-19, necessitating interventions like Qatar's Employee Assistance Programs. WLB's influence (H5a, H5b) supports Han and Bi (2024), who identified WLB as a basic satisfaction factor, with Air India's higher WLB rating (3.9 vs. 3.7) reflecting cultural prioritization of scheduling flexibility.

Comparatively, Kalawilapathirage and Ziedan (2019) used regression to highlight financial rewards and work environment, similar to this study's CB and WE findings, but their focus on pilots contrasts with this study's broader employee scope. Cho (2018) found task significance mediating JS, complementing the current emphasis on EE and WE. Multi-group analysis reveals Qatar's compensation focus versus India's WLB strength, consistent with Perčević

et al. (2020) on cultural influences in Qatar Airways' communication. The study's comprehensive model, incorporating LMX and antecedent-outcome frameworks, advances Lee et al.'s (2022) work by addressing cultural gaps. These results validate the inferences, emphasizing tailored HR strategies to enhance satisfaction, retention, and service quality in both aviation markets.

## 8. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study on employee satisfaction in the airline industry, comparing India and Qatar, offers significant theoretical implications by advancing the understanding of job satisfaction (JS) through a comprehensive model integrating Employee Engagement (EE), Work Environment (WE), Compensation and Benefits (CB), Stress Management (SM), and Work-Life Balance (WLB). The strong WE→EE relationship ( $\beta=0.791$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) underscores WE as a pivotal antecedent of EE, enriching the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model by highlighting the role of supportive environments in mitigating high-pressure aviation demands. This aligns with Aruldoss et al. (2021), extending the model's applicability to diverse cultural contexts.

The moderate WE→JS effect ( $\beta=0.236$ ,  $p=0.049$ ) and weaker EE→JS link ( $\beta=0.009$ ,  $p=0.045$ ) suggest mediated pathways, supporting Lee et al.'s (2022) framework where EE influences JS indirectly through organizational factors. This challenges traditional linear models, advocating for multifaceted frameworks that account for cultural nuances, as evidenced by Qatar's CB focus versus India's WLB emphasis. CB's impact on WE ( $\beta=0.467$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) reinforces Low and Yang's (2019) findings, integrating Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory by positioning compensation as a hygiene factor critical to environmental satisfaction.

SM and WLB's effects on EE and WE ( $\beta=0.018-0.102$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) validate Görlich and Stadelmann's (2020) stress-related findings, extending the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory by demonstrating how stress mitigation and WLB preserve employee resources, enhancing engagement. The study's use of PLS-SEM and multi-group analysis addresses research gaps noted by Han and Bi (2024), offering a robust methodological advancement for cross-cultural comparisons. By incorporating leader-member exchange (LMX) concepts, it enriches theoretical models, emphasizing leadership's role in satisfaction. These insights call for integrated, culturally sensitive frameworks to better understand employee satisfaction dynamics in global industries.

## 9. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings from this comparative study on employee satisfaction in the airline industry between India and Qatar offer actionable insights for airline management. The strong influence of Work Environment (WE) on Employee Engagement (EE) ( $\beta=0.791$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) suggests that airlines should prioritize fostering supportive workplaces. For Qatar Airways, addressing reported high-pressure conditions and unfair rosters through flexible scheduling and team-building initiatives could enhance engagement. Indian airlines like Air India, with a higher work-life balance (WLB) rating (3.9 vs. 3.7), should maintain supportive communication and teamwork to sustain engagement.

Compensation and Benefits (CB) significantly impact WE ( $\beta=0.467$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), with Qatar Airways' employees reporting higher satisfaction (80% vs. Air India's 65%). Indian carriers should adopt competitive, performance-based pay structures, like Air India's Rise.AI system, to boost morale and retention. Conversely, Qatar Airways could complement its robust CB packages with non-financial benefits, such as wellness programs, to address WLB challenges. Stress Management (SM) and WLB positively affect EE and WE ( $\beta=0.018-0.102$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), indicating the need for comprehensive interventions. Qatar's Employee Assistance Programs and mindfulness training are exemplary, while Indian airlines should invest in counseling and stress reduction workshops to mitigate irregular schedule impacts.

The moderate WE→Job Satisfaction (JS) effect ( $\beta=0.236$ ,  $p=0.049$ ) and weaker EE→JS link ( $\beta=0.009$ ,  $p=0.045$ ) highlight the need for tailored strategies. Airlines should leverage multi-group analysis insights to address cultural differences, such as Qatar's compensation focus versus India's WLB strengths. Implementing emotionally intelligent leadership training, as practiced by Qatar Airways, can foster positive manager-employee relationships, reducing turnover. These strategies can enhance service quality, customer satisfaction, and organizational performance, ensuring competitiveness in the global aviation market while addressing region-specific employee needs.

## 10. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This study on employee satisfaction in the airline industry, comparing India and Qatar, has notable limitations that guide future research directions. First, the literature reveals a predominance of cross-sectional studies rather than longitudinal research. Most studies capture employee satisfaction at a single point in time, failing to track how

satisfaction evolves over employees' careers or in response to organizational changes. This limitation prevents understanding of how satisfaction dynamics shift over time, especially in the rapidly evolving airline industry where market conditions and organizational structures frequently change. Longitudinal studies could track changes in employee satisfaction over time,

Second, the purposive sampling of 500 employees, while balanced (250 per country), may not fully represent diverse airline roles, particularly ground staff and maintenance crews, as noted in the literature gap. Future research should employ stratified sampling to include all employee categories for a holistic view.

Third, the study's focus on six constructs—Employee Engagement, Work Environment, Compensation and Benefits, Stress Management, Work-Life Balance, and Job Satisfaction—may overlook other factors like digital transformation's impact, which the literature identifies as understudied. Incorporating technology-related variables, such as automation's effect on job roles, could enrich models. Fourth, while Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) suits smaller samples, its generalizability is limited compared to covariance-based SEM. Larger, probability-based samples could enhance robustness.

Cultural differences between India and Qatar were addressed via multi-group analysis, but the study lacks depth in exploring specific cultural influences, such as leadership expectations or communication styles, as highlighted by Perčević et al. (2020). Future studies should integrate qualitative methods, like interviews, to capture nuanced cultural impacts. Finally, the study does not evaluate intervention effectiveness, a gap noted in the literature. Experimental designs testing specific HR interventions, such as tailored stress management programs, could provide practical insights. Expanding to other regions, like Southeast Asia, and incorporating emerging frameworks, such as digital workplace theories, would further advance comparative employee satisfaction research in global aviation.

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