

Determinants of Employee Job Satisfaction in the Retail Sector: Evidence from Kanyakumari District

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Abstract

Job satisfaction among workers is an important determinant of organizational productivity, turnover, and service delivery in retail. The aim of this study is to study the factors influencing job satisfaction of the retail workers in Kanyakumari district, Tamilnadu. The primary data were gathered by using structured questionnaire from the selected retailers of the district. It examines the impact of compensation and benefits, working conditions, supervisory support, career development opportunities and work-life balance on general satisfaction with the job. Data were analysed using statistical methods such as correlation and regression analyses to find significant predictors. Results show that fair wage, supportive supervision, and a positive work environment are the most significant factors affecting job satisfaction, and insufficient career advancement opportunities and heavy workload are the factors affecting job dissatisfaction. The research underscores the specific socio-economic and cultural landscape of the retail commerce in Kanyakumari, as a result of the influence of the demand for retail goods arising in the context of tourism and seasonal variations. Retail management implications include emphasis on providing competitive compensation packages, employee recognition programs, and better conditions to improve employee satisfaction and decrease employee turnover. The findings help the existing literature on Human Resource Management in the retail sector of India and provide regional specific information to the policy makers and employers to enhance the employee well-being and organizational efficiency.

Keywords: Job satisfaction; Retail sector; Employee motivation; Kanyakumari District; Human resource management

Introduction

Job satisfaction has always been considered as a basic construct in organizational behavior and human resource management. It captures how favorable employees' attitudes are toward their jobs, working environment, and experiences in their jobs. Job satisfaction has always been found to have a significant correlation with employee performance, organizational commitment, absence, and turnover intentions (*Khan et al., 2021*). Conversely, when people are not happy, they tend to be less productive, more prone to leaving the organization and provide poor service. Therefore, it is important to understand the determinants of job satisfaction, which is a major issue for both researchers and practitioners interested in creating sustainable and effective work environments.

The retail sector is unique in this discourse as it is one of the most labor-dependent and highly front line dependent industries (*Hasan 2022*). The attitude and motivation of retail workers are essential to customer satisfaction and business success as they interact directly with customers and organizations. Retail work schedules often consist of evenings, weekends, and odd hours; high levels of customer contact; seasonal demands; and comparatively low

pay (*Sharma et al., 2025*). These characteristics form a distinct set of challenges which affect the way employees view their jobs and the organisations they work for.

The retail sector in India has seen a tremendous growth in the last 2 decades due to increase in consumer income, urbanization and growth of organized retail formats. The industry, however, is still grappling with a number of human resource issues, including turnover and challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled workers (*Philip et al., 2024*). Replacing employees can be challenging for many retail companies, impacting the customer experience and operational efficiency (*Shankar et al., 2021*). Under such a background, it is important to determine the factors affecting employee satisfaction as a management priority.

Previous research in the field has identified a range of well-researched determinants of job satisfaction in various occupational groups such as pay and benefits, work environment, job supervision, career growth and progression, and work/life balance. In a retail setting, these factors also frequently come with extra stressors like extended work hours, sales goals and the manual nature of retail tasks (*Kesavan et al., 2022*). Many studies have focused on variables in metropolitan or large urban areas, with a few studies focusing on smaller districts or semi-urban retail environments where it would be expected that local economic and cultural conditions would influence employee experiences differently.

The investigation in such a context is of particular interest to the Kanyakumari District at the extreme southern tip of Tamilnadu. Tourism, fishing and small-scale trade are a major economic activity in the district with a diverse retail sector, including traditional and modern retail outlets (*Roy et al., 2021*). The demand for goods and services from tourists is fluctuating, with peaks during the tourist season and valleys during off-peak periods, which impacts the number of people working, hours worked and workloads (*Rajani et al., 2023*). The patterns and levels of job satisfaction can be different from those in larger metropolitan retail markets because of these contextual factors.

Furthermore, the socio-cultural context of Kanyakumari with its blend of traditional norms and emerging commercialization trends can shape the employees' perceptions of workplace dynamics, recognition, and career advancement. The employment situation is also influenced by the local labor market, not only because of the lack of alternative jobs in part of the market, but also because of the family-run businesses (*Dayana et al., 2025*). This awareness of how these regional factors combine with traditional variables of job satisfaction could provide an insight into theoretically and practically relevant understandings.

Although there are several studies available that cover employee satisfaction in the Indian retail industry, empirical studies which focus specifically on Kanyakumari District are not available in abundance. Existing studies have tended to focus on the large cities or samples at the national level, to the exclusion of smaller urban areas that are affected by tourism. This is relevant as the region-specific results can be used to create more focused human resource policies, and help to more fully understand job satisfaction in various contexts in India.

The present study thus aims to analyze the major factors affecting the job satisfaction among employees in retail industry of Kanyakumari District. The study seeks to compare the relative strength of the links between compensation, working conditions, supervisory support, career opportunities, and work-life balance as they predict satisfaction among local retail workers. The study also examines the impact of these determinants in the unique economic and social environment of the District.

The results will be of practical value to retail managers and policy makers who want to increase employee retention and workplace quality. The study also makes a significant academic contribution by offering empirical findings in a geographic area where research has been scarce. In doing so, it reaffirms the importance of regional research that takes into consideration the interaction between common elements of job satisfaction and local geographic and/or cultural conditions.

This paper continues with the following organization. The following section discusses the relevant theoretical and empirical studies of job satisfaction and its factors in the retail industry. This is followed by a description of the

research methodology, which involves sampling design, data collection procedures and data analysis. The empirical results are summarized in the next sections, followed by a discussion of the implications of the results and a conclusion with recommendations for practice and future research.

Review Of Literature

Pandey et al., (2021) explored job dissatisfaction among retail employees in India, identifying seven contextual factors—customer aggression, abusive supervision, perceived job image, unethical climate, lack of autonomy, work exhaustion, and inter-role conflicts—with quantitative validation showing all except autonomy significantly linked to dissatisfaction. *Revathy et al., (2025)* assessed the Tamil Nadu Shops and Establishments Act, revealing lapses in enforcement and awareness among contractual and part-time workers, weak trade unions, and inspection failures, thereby situating dissatisfaction within broader labour rights concerns. *Sumathi et al., (2020)* analyzed employee satisfaction in organized retail, emphasizing its strategic importance for retention and customer service, and highlighting demographic influences alongside organizational policies and practices. *Kiruthiga et al., (2025)* conceptualized satisfaction across sectors, stressing standardized survey tools, comparative analyses, and psychological dimensions as determinants of productivity and adaptability in evolving business environments. *Divya et al., (2025)* studied Pothys Retail, finding 90.6% satisfaction levels, with chi-square and correlation analyses showing weak but positive links between work-life balance and satisfaction, and recommending flexible hours, stress management, and compensation improvements. *Nirmala et al., (2026)* examined emotional intelligence in Tamil Nadu's retail textile sector, demonstrating strong positive correlations with productivity and performance, accounting for nearly one-third of variance, and advocating EI training as a driver of workplace effectiveness. *Varoodhini et al. (2025)* investigated employee engagement in Bangalore's organized retail, finding strong correlations between work environment, culture, leadership support, and engagement, with regression analysis highlighting work environment, digital readiness, and reward systems as key predictors. Collectively, these studies converge on the idea that dissatisfaction and satisfaction in retail are shaped by contextual, legal, organizational, psychological, and emotional factors. They emphasize that retention and engagement cannot be achieved without addressing workplace culture, leadership, compensation, and emotional competence. The findings also highlight sector-specific challenges, from enforcement gaps in labour laws to demographic influences and digital readiness, underscoring the need for tailored strategies. Together, this evidence base situates employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction as multidimensional constructs, requiring integrated approaches that combine managerial practices, legal frameworks, psychological insights, and technological adaptability to strengthen retention, engagement, and productivity in India's retail industry.

Statement Of The Problem

One of the most important but neglected problems in the retail industry in India is employee job satisfaction, especially in the districts of the country that differ from each other, like Kanyakumari (*Bakshi et al., 2022*). In spite of the phenomenal growth of both the organized and unorganized retail sectors in Tamil Nadu, a large number of retail outlets face employee turnover, poor employee morale, and poor service quality. The retail sector in Kanyakumari District is beset with multiple difficulties, particularly because of seasonal tourism, varying customer traffic, and the presence of both traditional and new retail formats among the numerous retailers. The hours that retail workers are required to work in this region are long, and they are also required to work in physically demanding environments; they are paid relatively little, and there is a lack of opportunity for career progression, all of which take a toll on them and leads to high turnover rates. Despite the presence of some studies at national level which have found general sources of job satisfaction to be salary, supervision and work environment, there is a lack of empirical research studies to examine these factors in the particular socio-economic and cultural context in Kanyakumari. Local factors such as fluctuations in tourist demand, low employment opportunities in some parts of the economy and conventional patterns of work relationships can create unique patterns of satisfaction that differ from those of metropolitan cities (*Hassan et al., 2022*). Lacking district-specific information, retail managers and policy makers have limited information on which factors have the greatest impact on employee attitudes in this area. As a result, HR policies tend to be standardised and may not cater for the specialized challenges of retail employees. Not being satisfied with an unsatisfying thing can impact the well

being of an individual and the performance of an organization by lowering productivity, increasing the recruitment expenses, and impacting customer experiences (*Naveen et al., 2025*). Addressing employee dissatisfaction in a district where retail is a major driver of the local economy and service providers cater to tourists is essential to the ongoing viability of businesses and economic activity in the area (*Samantha et al., 2025*). If the critical factors affecting job satisfaction in retail workers in Kanyakumari District are not studied systematically, the attempts to enhance the stability and service quality of the workforce will remain on a theoretical level. Hence, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive study to determine and analyze the salient factors affecting job satisfaction in this particular geographical and industrial area, which will help to fill the gap in the academic literature and human resource management practice.

Objectives Of The Study

1. To find out the main factors which affect the job satisfaction of the employees in the retail sector of Kanyakumari District.
2. To compare selected factors, including compensation, working conditions, supervisor support, career development opportunities and work-life balance with overall job satisfaction for retail employees.
3. To recommend the practical and feasible suggestions which can be taken to enhance the job satisfaction of the employees and to avoid the labor turnover in the retailers of Kanyakumari District.

Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature, which is used to explore the factors affecting employee satisfaction in the retail industry of Kanyakumari District. Primary data were gathered from a convenient sample of the districts' retail employees from a range of retail stores. The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire comprising compensation, work conditions, supervisory support, career development and work-life balance. Analysis of the collected data was done by using statistical tools namely, Percentage analysis, correlation and regression analysis. Journal articles, reports and related literature were also reviewed as a secondary data source to support the findings.

Population And Sampling

All the employees of retail shops (organized and unorganized) of Kanyakumari District are the target population of the study. Since there is no complete list of the retail workers in the district, a non-probability sampling technique known as convenience sampling was used to select the samples. A sample size of 150 retail employees was selected to ensure a good representation of the various types of retail shops including supermarkets, textile shops and small retail shops. The respondents were selected to cover geographical diversity from the centres like Nagercoil, Nagercoil town, and the surrounding areas of these centres. Only permanent and temporary employees with at least six months of work experience in the retail sector were included in the sample. This method allowed collecting the useful and accurate data without time and resources limit for the study.

Data Collection

The present study used mainly primary data which were collected using a structured questionnaire with the retail workers in Kanyakumari District. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect data related to demographic characteristics and factors affecting job satisfaction with regard to wages, working conditions, supervisory support, career opportunities, and work-life balance. The sampling technique used in this study was personal interviewing and direct distribution of questionnaires in several retail outlets in order to get more responses and clear responses. Employee job satisfaction and retail business were used as the key concepts for the secondary data that was gathered from research journals, books, government reports, and online sources. Data collection took place over a period of 2 months, encompassing various types of retail and sites across the district. Confidentiality was ensured and the participants were encouraged to give honest answers.

Analysis And Findings

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 150)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	82	54.7
	Female	68	45.3
Age	Below 25 years	41	27.3
	25–35 years	67	44.7
	36–45 years	28	18.7
	Above 45 years	14	9.3
Educational Qualification	Up to Higher Secondary	53	35.3
	Undergraduate	72	48
	Postgraduate & above	25	16.7
Work Experience	Less than 2 years	48	32
	2–5 years	61	40.7
	Above 5 years	41	27.3

The results present the demographic profile of the 150 retail employees that were surveyed in the Kanyakumari District. The data show that the gender distribution of local retail workers is fairly even with slightly more male respondents (54.7%) than female (45.3%). The age group of the employees shows that a majority of people (44.7%) are between age 25-35 indicating that the age group that is most employed in the district retail businesses is young and middle aged. Considering their educational qualification, almost half of the respondents (48%) are under-graduates, 35.3% have finished their education up to higher secondary. In terms of work experience, 40.7% of the employees have 2 to 5 years experience, followed by 32% with less than 2 years experience. The results show that the sample is predominantly composed of moderately educated, moderately experienced retail workers and relatively young. Demographic makeup gives a representative base for review of job satisfaction patterns for the district's retail sector, overall.

Table 2: Mean Scores of Determinants of Job Satisfaction

Determinants of Job Satisfaction	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Rank
Compensation and Benefits	3.82	0.74	2
Working Conditions	3.65	0.81	4
Supervisory Support	3.91	0.69	1
Career Development Opportunities	3.28	0.88	5
Work-Life Balance	3.47	0.79	3
Overall Job Satisfaction	3.68	0.72	—

The figures show the average scores and position of the most important factors that make up retail job satisfaction. The highest mean score was for supervisory support, the employees think they are relatively supported and approachable by their supervisors. Compensation and benefits was the second most popular response at a mean score of 3.82 indicating moderate satisfaction with compensation and benefits. Work-life balance achieved a mean score of 3.47 and ranked third whereas working conditions have a mean score of 3.65 and ranked fourth. Employees are least satisfied with opportunities for growth and advancement, as indicated by the lowest mean score for career development opportunities. Moderate level of satisfaction among the respondents is reflected by the overall mean score of job satisfaction (3.68). The results indicate that the interpersonal and financial dimensions are perceived relatively better while career progression is one of the major concerns in the retail sector of Kanyakumari District.

Table 3: Correlation between Determinants and Overall Job Satisfaction

Determinants	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Compensation and Benefits	0.612	0.000**
Working Conditions	0.548	0.000**
Supervisory Support	0.671	0.000**
Career Development Opportunities	0.421	0.000**
Work-Life Balance	0.503	0.000**

The findings present the correlation analysis between the determinants and overall job satisfaction. At the 0.01 level, all 5 determinants have positive statistically significant relationship with the overall job satisfaction. The correlation between supervisory support and job satisfaction is the highest ($r = 0.671$), signifying that a positive relationship between supervisory support and job satisfaction is very strong. The relationship between compensation and benefits is also strong and positive ($r = 0.612$), further indicating that compensation is an important factor in affecting employee satisfaction. There are moderate positive relationships between job satisfaction and working conditions ($r = 0.548$) and work-life balance ($r = 0.503$). Career development opportunities are significant, but have the lowest correlation ($r = 0.421$) with the factors studied. Based on these results, it is concluded that there is a scope for improvement of the job satisfaction of the retail employees in Kanyakumari District through enhancing the supervisory support and compensation.

Results And Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the overall job satisfaction of the retail employees in Kanyakumari District is moderate with the mean score of 3.68. Supervisory support was the most important determinant found with the highest mean score and the highest positive correlation with job satisfaction. Compensation and benefits was also a significant factor as it was the second most important variable in terms of mean score and key factor in terms of correlation strength, showing the need for equitable compensation in affecting employees' attitudes. Career development opportunities had the lowest mean score and weakest correlation, suggesting that it was a weak source of dissatisfaction. Moderate influence was observed in working conditions and work-life balance, due to the pressure of the district where pressures of working long hours and seasonal pressure are prevalent in the tourism driven retail industry. These findings indicate that interpersonal and financial aspects are relatively better handled, while issues pertaining to career progression are more demanding on managerial attention. The results suggest that the local retail sector should look to specific human resource measures to enhance the supervisory role, reward systems, and employee promotion.

Suggestions

From the result of the study, it is observed that there is a need to enhance the supervisory practice in retail management at Kanyakumari District by giving regular training to the managers on motivating the employees and supportive leadership. Compensatory packages should be made competitive and transparent with performance-based incentives to enhance satisfaction with compensation and benefit. There is a need to pay more attention to the development of clear career development paths through internal promotion, skill development programmes and regular performance reviews. Working conditions should also be enhanced, with adequate rest breaks, adequate store facilities and manageable working loads particularly during peak tourist periods. Support for improving work-life balance (flexible shift systems) further contributes to the well-being of the employees. By systematically implementing these measures, they hope to positively impact employee turnover, boost employee morale, and enhance the overall performance of the retail business in their area.

Conclusion

The present study focused to identify the factors affecting job satisfaction of the retail employees of the Kanyakumari District and found that employees' overall satisfaction is moderate in retail sector of Kanyakumari District. Supervisory support and compensation were the top two factors that significantly affected job

satisfaction, and career development opportunities were found to be the lowest area. The results indicate that human relationship and fair pay are significant factors in influencing local retail employees' attitudes. Meanwhile, a decreasing sense of opportunity for advancement and work-related stress persists. The study offers valuable lessons for retail managers who wish to promote more stable workforces and higher productivity by developing specific HR interventions. In general, the study helps to shed light on the issue of job satisfaction in a tourism-sensitive and regionally-specific retail environment.

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