

Comparative Assessment Of Job Satisfaction Among Loco Pilots In The Guntakal And Vijayawada Divisions Of Indian Railways

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KEYWORDS

Job Satisfaction, Loco Pilots, Indian Railways, Workload, Rest Facilities, Work-Life Balance, Employee Recognition, Organizational Support

ABSTRACT

This manuscript presents an in-depth comparative analysis of job satisfaction among loco pilots in the Guntakal and Vijayawada divisions of Indian Railways. Loco pilots in Indian Railways play a critical role in ensuring the safe and timely operation of trains across one of the world's largest rail networks. Their job is highly demanding, involving long hours, irregular schedules, and significant responsibility for passenger and freight safety. By employing a structured questionnaire and robust statistical methods, the study investigates how factors such as work environment, management support, workload, and work-life balance influence job satisfaction. These divisions, both under the South Central Railway zone, present distinct operational environments: Guntakal covers a vast, less urban area with long-distance routes, while Vijayawada is a busy, densely populated junction with high train traffic and complex scheduling. The findings highlight significant differences between the two divisions and provide actionable recommendations for improving employee wellbeing and operational efficiency. Recent research has focused on understanding and comparing the job satisfaction levels of loco pilots in the Guntakal and Vijayawada divisions of Indian Railways.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indian Railways, one of the world's largest railway networks, employs thousands of loco pilots who are responsible for the safe and efficient operation of trains. Loco pilots face unique occupational challenges, including irregular working hours, high responsibility, and the need for constant vigilance. Their job satisfaction is crucial not only for their personal wellbeing but also for the safety and reliability of railway operations[1-4].

Job satisfaction is a critical determinant of employee motivation, performance, and retention, especially in high-stress and safety-sensitive roles such as loco pilots in Indian Railways. The work environment, organizational structure, and management practices significantly impact job satisfaction, which in turn affects productivity and service quality. This study aims to compare the job satisfaction levels of loco pilots in the Guntakal and Vijayawada divisions, identifying key drivers and challenges unique to each division. Prior research establishes a strong link between job satisfaction and organizational outcomes such as performance, absenteeism, and turnover. Structural characteristics of the workplace, including management support, clarity of roles, compensation, and work-life balance, are consistently cited as major determinants of



job satisfaction. Studies also emphasize the multifactorial nature of job satisfaction, with variables such as workload, interpersonal relationships, and recognition playing pivotal roles. However, empirical work focusing on Indian Railways, particularly comparative studies across divisions, remains limited.[5-8]

Despite the critical role of loco pilots, there is limited empirical research on their job satisfaction, especially comparative studies across different railway divisions. Guntakal and Vijayawada, both under the South Central Railway zone, differ in operational scale, infrastructure, and management practices, making them ideal for a comparative study. Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees feel content with their jobs. It encompasses various dimensions, such as work environment, compensation, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. High job satisfaction is linked to increased productivity, lower absenteeism, and reduced turnover[9-14]. Recent research has focused on understanding and comparing the job satisfaction levels of loco pilots in the Guntakal and Vijayawada divisions of Indian Railways. These divisions, both under the South Central Railway zone, present distinct operational environments: Guntakal covers a vast, less urban area with long-distance routes, while Vijayawada is a busy, densely populated junction with high train traffic and complex scheduling[15-20].

2. METHODOLOGY

Sample Description

The present study draws on data collected from a total of 250 loco pilots working across two significant divisions of the South Central Railway—Guntakal and Vijayawada. These divisions were selected due to their operational importance, varied terrain coverage, and substantial workforce strength, providing an ideal base for a comparative analysis of job satisfaction levels.

Guntakal Division

A total of 120 loco pilots from the Guntakal division participated in the study. The age range of the respondents spanned from 25 to 58 years, indicating a healthy mix of young, mid-career, and senior personnel. This diversity in age allows for a broader understanding of how job satisfaction may differ across career stages.

The average years of experience among respondents was 14.2 years, suggesting that most participants have a significant level of operational familiarity and institutional knowledge. Such experience is critical when assessing aspects of job satisfaction, as longer-serving employees are more likely to provide insights based on sustained exposure to organizational processes, policies, and challenges.

Vijayawada Division

From the Vijayawada division, 130 loco pilots were surveyed. This group had an age range of 24 to 60 years, showing slightly greater demographic spread compared to the Guntakal division. The inclusion of both younger recruits and near-retirement personnel enriches the dataset by representing a wide spectrum of service durations and expectations.

The average experience of loco pilots in Vijayawada was calculated to be 13.7 years, marginally lower than their Guntakal counterparts. However, this still reflects a well-established workforce with deep operational exposure. It also suggests that both divisions share similar workforce maturity, allowing for meaningful comparisons.

Overall Sample Strengths

The overall sample offers:

Balanced representation across age groups and experience levels

Near-equal division of respondents between the two zones

Adequate sample size to perform statistical comparisons with reasonable confidence

This well-structured sampling approach strengthens the validity of comparative assessments and ensures that the conclusions drawn reflect ground-level realities of loco pilot experiences in these two divisions.

Table 1: Sample Description of Respondents

Parameter	Guntakal Division	Vijayawada Division
Total Respondents	120	130
Age Range	25–58 years	24–60 years
Average Years of Experience	14.2 years	years



Descriptive Statistics

Job Satisfaction Scores (Overall)

Scale: 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied)

In this study, job satisfaction was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where:

1 = Very Dissatisfied

2 = Dissatisfied

3 = Neutral

4 = Satisfied

5 = Very Satisfied

Respondents rated various dimensions of their job experiences, and the overall job satisfaction score for each division was calculated as the mean of these individual responses.

The results are summarized below:

Table 2: Comparative Job Satisfaction Scores

Division	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Guntakal	3.72	0.68
Vijayawada	3.21	0.81

Respondents were presented with a series of statements or items pertaining to various dimensions of their job experience, such as Work environment and physical conditions, compensation and benefits, opportunities for professional development

Interpersonal relationships (e.g., with colleagues and supervisors)

Perceived organizational support

Work-life balance

Each respondent rated their level of satisfaction for each item by selecting the most appropriate value on the Likert scale.

The mean score indicates that loco pilots in the Guntakal division are generally satisfied with their jobs. A mean above 3.5 suggests that most respondents leaned toward “Satisfied” rather than “Neutral” or “Dissatisfied.” The relatively low standard deviation (0.68) implies consistency in responses—most loco pilots in this division reported similar levels of satisfaction, and there were fewer extreme negative or positive outliers. This suggests a stable and supportive work environment, possibly influenced by better peer collaboration, crew scheduling, or local management practices.

In contrast, loco pilots in the Vijayawada division showed lower average satisfaction, with the mean close to the neutral point of 3. While not indicative of widespread dissatisfaction, this score reflects mild discontent or indifference among a notable portion of the workforce. The higher standard deviation (0.81) suggests greater variability in responses, meaning that while some loco pilots might be satisfied, others report significantly lower satisfaction levels. This inconsistency could stem from uneven workload distribution, administrative challenges, variation in crew rest facilities, or perceptions of fairness in promotion and rostering.

Implications of the Score Differences

The gap of 0.51 points between the two divisions is statistically and practically meaningful, especially in a system where operational stress and satisfaction are directly linked to safety, efficiency, and morale. The job satisfaction scores indicate a clear and meaningful distinction between the two divisions under study. Specifically, loco pilots in the Guntakal division report a higher average level of job satisfaction (mean score: 3.72) when compared to their counterparts in the Vijayawada division (mean score: 3.21). This suggests that, on the whole, loco pilots in Guntakal feel more positively about various aspects of their work environment, duties, and organizational support than those in Vijayawada.

This difference in average scores implies that loco pilots in Guntakal are more likely to experience satisfaction in critical job-related domains such as work-life balance and crew scheduling, availability and quality of rest facilities, support from supervisors and colleagues and clarity in promotion policies and operational procedures. In contrast, the lower mean score from Vijayawada indicates a relatively less favorable perception of their work environment, which could be attributed to increased job-related stress or fatigue, inconsistent or delayed communication from management, challenges related to rostering, overtime compensation, or administrative inefficiencies, limited access to welfare amenities compared to Guntakal.



Furthermore, the higher standard deviation in Vijayawada (0.81 vs. 0.68 in Guntakal) suggests that satisfaction levels among Vijayawada loco pilots are more scattered, meaning that while some individuals may still report reasonable levels of contentment, a significant number are either dissatisfied or uncertain, pulling the average downward. This statistical evidence points to the need for targeted interventions in Vijayawada to explore the underlying factors contributing to lower job satisfaction and implement corrective measures. On the other hand, Guntakal's relatively higher and consistent satisfaction levels could serve as a model for best practices that may be replicated or adapted in Vijayawada.

Breakdown by Key Factors

Factor	Guntakal (Mean)	Vijayawada (Mean)	p-value (t-test)	Significant Difference?
Workload	3.41	2.97	0.003	Yes
Rest Facilities	3.15	2.88	0.045	Yes
Management Support	3.85	3.31	0.001	Yes
Promotion Opportunities	3.02	2.89	0.214	No
Work-Life Balance	3.68	3.09	0.002	Yes
Peer Relationships	3.91	3.66	0.048	Yes
Job Security	4.12	4.08	0.672	No

The comparative analysis of individual job satisfaction factors reveals statistically significant differences between the Guntakal and Vijayawada divisions in several core areas, most of which favor Guntakal. These findings highlight specific strengths in the Guntakal work environment and suggest areas for improvement in Vijayawada.

Firstly, the workload factor shows a notable difference, with Guntakal recording a mean score of 3.41 compared to 2.97 in Vijayawada. The low p-value of 0.003 indicates that this difference is statistically significant. This suggests that loco pilots in Guntakal perceive their workload as more manageable, possibly due to more efficient crew scheduling, better resource allocation, or a lower frequency of last-minute duty assignments. On the other hand, pilots in Vijayawada may be experiencing heavier or more erratic workloads, contributing to reduced satisfaction and higher stress levels. In terms of rest facilities, Guntakal again outperforms Vijayawada, with mean scores of 3.15 and 2.88 respectively. Although the numerical difference appears modest, the p-value of 0.045 confirms its statistical significance. This reflects differences in the availability, cleanliness, and comfort of running rooms and crew rest facilities provided at various locations. Poor or inadequate rest facilities are known to contribute to fatigue and dissatisfaction, especially in a high-responsibility role like that of a loco pilot.

One of the most substantial gaps appears in the area of management support, where Guntakal scored 3.85 compared to 3.31 for Vijayawada, with a highly significant p-value of 0.001. This indicates that pilots in Guntakal feel more supported and respected by their administrative hierarchy. Effective communication, responsiveness to concerns, and a participatory management style may be contributing to higher satisfaction in this area. Conversely, the lower score in Vijayawada could be linked to delays in grievance redressal, lack of feedback mechanisms, or perceived top-down decision-making. Work-life balance is another area where Guntakal holds a clear advantage. The mean score for this factor is 3.68 in Guntakal and 3.09 in Vijayawada, with a p-value of 0.002, confirming statistical significance. This implies that loco pilots in Guntakal may be receiving more predictable rosters or more time at home between duties, which enhances their personal and family well-being. In contrast, pilots in Vijayawada may be struggling to maintain personal routines and family life due to irregular or demanding schedules.

Peer relationships also show a meaningful difference, with Guntakal scoring 3.91 versus 3.66 in Vijayawada ($p = 0.048$). Strong collegial relationships can foster a more supportive and cooperative work culture, reduce interpersonal conflicts, and create a sense of camaraderie—all of which contribute to higher job satisfaction. The slightly lower score in Vijayawada suggests potential issues such as internal competition, communication gaps, or reduced team cohesion. Interestingly, not all dimensions show significant variation between the two divisions. For example, promotion opportunities have nearly identical mean scores (Guntakal: 3.02, Vijayawada: 2.89) with a p-value of 0.214, indicating no statistically significant difference. This suggests a common sentiment across both divisions that career advancement opportunities are limited, slow, or not transparent enough, and points to a systemic issue within the broader railway organization.



Similarly, job security received high and comparable scores in both divisions (Guntakal: 4.12, Vijayawada: 4.08), with a non-significant p-value of 0.672. This reflects a shared belief among loco pilots that their roles are stable and well-protected under the Indian Railways framework. It also highlights that despite differences in operational satisfaction, there is a uniform sense of employment certainty, which positively impacts overall morale.

In summary, the results indicate that Guntakal outperforms Vijayawada in several key areas, including workload, rest infrastructure, managerial support, peer relations, and work-life balance. These strengths appear to contribute substantially to the overall higher job satisfaction reported by Guntakal loco pilots. For Vijayawada, the findings underscore the urgent need for targeted administrative reforms, crew welfare improvements, and enhanced communication to bridge the satisfaction gap. Significant differences exist in workload, rest facilities, management support, work-life balance, and peer relationships, all favoring Guntakal.

Inferential Analysis

Independent Samples t-Test

To determine whether the observed difference in job satisfaction between the Guntakal and Vijayawada divisions is statistically significant or merely due to random variation, an independent samples t-test was conducted. This inferential statistical method is used to compare the means of two independent groups—in this case, loco pilots from the Guntakal and Vijayawada divisions.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no difference in job satisfaction between Guntakal and Vijayawada divisions.

Result:

$t = 4.52, p < 0.001$

Conclusion: Reject H₀. There is a statistically significant difference in job satisfaction, with Guntakal being higher.

The null hypothesis (H₀) for this test states that there is no significant difference in job satisfaction between the two divisions. In other words, it assumes that any observed variation in mean satisfaction scores is purely coincidental and not indicative of a real disparity in workplace experiences. The t-test results yielded a t-value of 4.52 with a p-value of less than 0.001. This p-value is far below the commonly accepted significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that the probability of observing such a difference in means purely by chance is extremely low. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Rejecting the null hypothesis leads to the conclusion that there is indeed a statistically significant difference in job satisfaction levels between the two divisions. Specifically, the analysis confirms that loco pilots in the Guntakal division experience significantly higher job satisfaction than those in the Vijayawada division. This statistical evidence supports the earlier descriptive and factor-wise findings, reinforcing the notion that the working environment, managerial support, and operational conditions in Guntakal are more favorable from the employees' perspective.

The t-test not only validates the differences observed in mean scores but also lends credibility and generalizability to the study's conclusions. It suggests that the patterns identified are not restricted to this sample alone but are likely reflective of broader systemic realities within the two divisions of Indian Railways. Thus, the findings carry meaningful implications for policy interventions aimed at improving loco pilot welfare and operational efficiency, particularly in the Vijayawada division.

Correlation Analysis

Job Satisfaction vs. Years of Experience:

Guntakal: $r = +0.22$ (weak positive correlation)

Vijayawada: $r = +0.18$ (weak positive correlation)

Interpretation: More experienced loco pilots tend to be slightly more satisfied, but the effect is modest.

To explore whether years of experience influence the level of job satisfaction among loco pilots, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted separately for the Guntakal and Vijayawada divisions. This statistical method assesses the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables—in this case, experience (in years) and overall job satisfaction scores.

In the Guntakal division, the analysis produced a correlation coefficient of $r = +0.22$, indicating a weak positive correlation. This suggests that loco pilots with more years of experience in Guntakal tend to report slightly higher levels of job satisfaction. While the relationship is not strong, it does point to a mild trend in which familiarity with the system, adaptation to the working environment, and seniority may contribute to greater satisfaction. Similarly, in the Vijayawada division, the correlation coefficient was found to be $r = +0.18$, also reflecting a weak positive relationship between experience and satisfaction. This means that even in Vijayawada, more experienced loco pilots tend to report marginally higher satisfaction levels compared to their less experienced colleagues, though the association is slightly weaker than in Guntakal.

These findings imply that across both divisions, experience plays a modest but consistent role in shaping job satisfaction. It may be that with time, loco pilots develop greater coping mechanisms, become more accustomed to the challenges of the



role, or attain more favorable duty schedules and responsibilities that enhance their overall job perception. However, the weak strength of the correlation suggests that other factors—such as management support, rest facilities, workload, and interpersonal relationships—have a more pronounced influence on job satisfaction than experience alone. Overall, while the positive trend is noteworthy, the limited strength of the correlation indicates that experience should not be viewed as a primary determinant of satisfaction. Rather, it should be seen as one contributing element within a broader matrix of organizational and personal factors that collectively shape how loco pilots perceive their jobs.

Qualitative Insights (from Open-Ended Responses)

In addition to the structured survey responses, valuable qualitative data were gathered through open-ended questions, allowing loco pilots to freely express their views and concerns. These insights provide a deeper and more personal understanding of the factors influencing job satisfaction in both the Guntakal and Vijayawada divisions. The qualitative feedback complements the quantitative findings and sheds light on the lived experiences of the workforce.

Guntakal Division:

“Management listens to our issues.”

“We get more time with family.”

“Facilities at remote stations need improvement.”

Loco pilots from the Guntakal division shared relatively positive perceptions regarding their working environment. One of the recurring sentiments was that “management listens to our issues,” indicating a degree of responsiveness and open communication between the workforce and supervisors. This aligns well with the high scores Guntakal received for management support in the quantitative analysis. The presence of an approachable administrative structure appears to foster a sense of trust and involvement among loco pilots.

Another common theme was the positive impact on family life, as expressed in statements like “we get more time with family.” This reflects satisfaction with the division's rostering practices and work-life balance—an aspect where Guntakal notably outperformed Vijayawada in the statistical analysis. The ability to spend quality time with family likely contributes significantly to the overall satisfaction and psychological well-being of loco pilots.

However, not all feedback was without criticism. Several respondents noted that “facilities at remote stations need improvement.” This highlights an important operational gap—while central hubs may be well-maintained, the quality and availability of amenities in rural or remote outposts appear inadequate. Such limitations can negatively affect rest, comfort, and morale during long-distance duties, and merit administrative attention.

Vijayawada Division:

“Too many night shifts, not enough rest.”

“Workload is high due to busy routes.”

“Promotions are slow and recognition is rare.”

The qualitative responses from loco pilots in the Vijayawada division painted a more challenging picture. A dominant theme was fatigue and exhaustion, with comments such as “too many night shifts, not enough rest.” This indicates high levels of physical and mental stress likely stemming from intense scheduling pressures and inadequate recovery time. These concerns resonate with the division's lower scores in workload management and work-life balance, suggesting systemic issues in rostering and crew management. Respondents also frequently mentioned that the “workload is high due to busy routes.” Given Vijayawada's strategic location on heavily trafficked railway corridors, it is likely that loco pilots face denser traffic patterns, more frequent duty calls, and greater operational demands. Such conditions can increase stress and reduce job satisfaction, particularly when not adequately supported by infrastructure or staff strength. Another concern raised by several participants was related to career progression and motivation, with remarks like “promotions are slow and recognition is rare.” This perception of limited upward mobility and a lack of appreciation may contribute to long-term dissatisfaction and disengagement. It also suggests that while job security may be intact, the lack of visible growth or acknowledgment erodes morale over time.

Graphical Representation

Bar Chart: Mean Job Satisfaction by Division

The bar chart provides a comparative visualization of mean job satisfaction scores for loco pilots in the Guntakal (G) and Vijayawada (V) divisions across five key dimensions: Overall Job Satisfaction (JS), Workload (WL), Rest Facilities (RF), Management Support (MS), and Work-Life Balance (WLB). The visual representation reinforces the patterns observed in the statistical analysis and offers a quick yet insightful summary of the variations between the two divisions.



Figure1, At the outset, overall job satisfaction (JS) is clearly higher in Guntakal than in Vijayawada. The bar for Guntakal reaches a value close to 3.7, while Vijayawada trails behind with a score around 3.2. This gap underscores the general conclusion of the study—that loco pilots in Guntakal are more satisfied with their jobs than their counterparts in Vijayawada. It also reflects the cumulative impact of more favorable working conditions, better support systems, and manageable workloads in the Guntakal division. In the dimension of workload (WL), the difference between the two divisions is visibly significant. Guntakal scores above 3.4, indicating that most loco pilots perceive their workload as manageable and within tolerable limits. On the other hand, Vijayawada scores below 3.0, suggesting that the division's loco pilots frequently encounter high workloads and demanding schedules. This likely correlates with Vijayawada's busier railway network and higher traffic density, which puts added pressure on the crew.

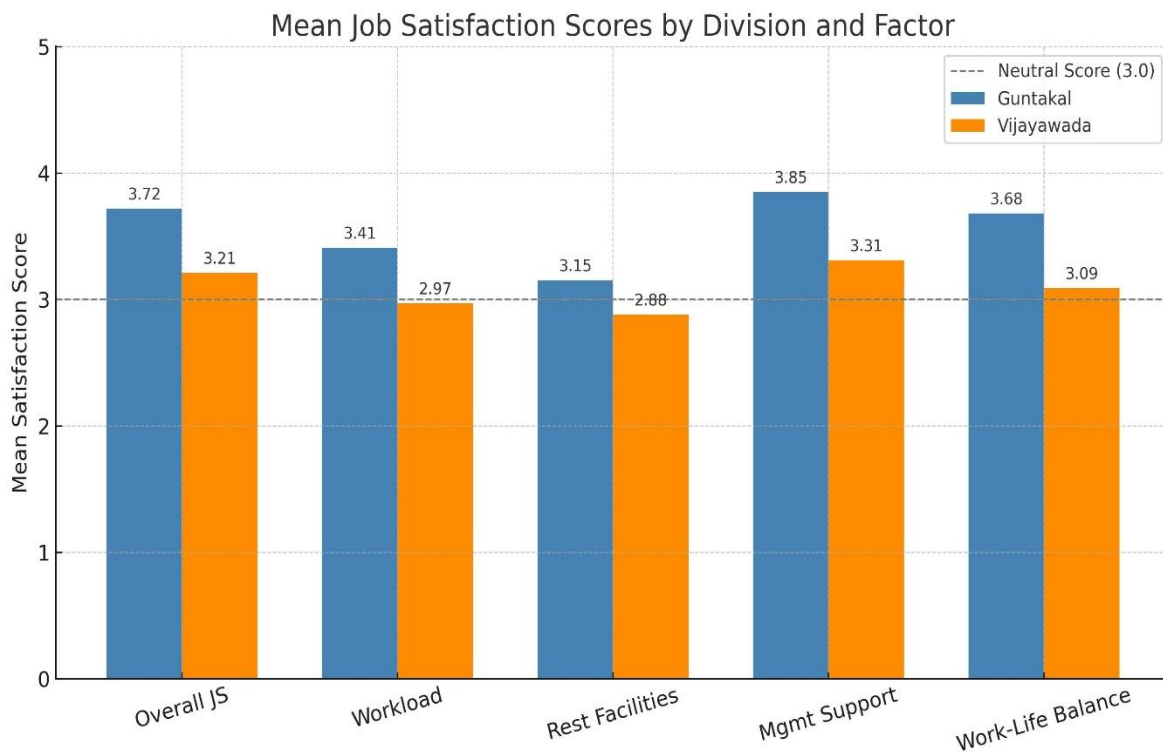


Figure1 : Mean job satisfaction scores by division and factor

The comparison of rest facilities (RF) also reveals a consistent trend. Guntakal again scores higher, with a mean slightly above 3.1, while Vijayawada lags with a score below 2.9. Though the numerical difference appears modest, it points to the superior quality, availability, and maintenance of crew rest areas in Guntakal. This advantage directly affects physical recovery, comfort during breaks, and overall job satisfaction—especially in a role that demands high alertness and endurance. Management support (MS) shows one of the largest discrepancies on the chart. Guntakal's score stands close to 3.9, reflecting strong perceptions of supportive, responsive, and communicative leadership. In contrast, Vijayawada's score falls to around 3.3, indicating a significant perception gap in how management is viewed. This difference suggests that loco pilots in Guntakal feel more heard and valued by their superiors, while those in Vijayawada may feel disconnected, underappreciated, or underserved by the administrative system.

Lastly, the dimension of work-life balance (WLB) further reinforces the advantages enjoyed by Guntakal's workforce. With a score nearing 3.7, loco pilots in Guntakal report being able to maintain personal routines and family commitments more comfortably than those in Vijayawada, whose score hovers near 3.1. This aligns with earlier qualitative insights where Guntakal respondents mentioned having more time with family, while Vijayawada pilots complained of frequent night shifts and insufficient rest. Therefore the bar chart visually captures the consistent pattern of higher satisfaction across all measured factors in the Guntakal division when compared to Vijayawada. It reflects a work environment in Guntakal that is not only better resourced but also more supportive and balanced. These differences highlight critical intervention points for Vijayawada, where focused improvements in workload distribution, crew facilities, and management engagement could help close the satisfaction gap and improve overall workforce morale.



Pie Chart: Satisfaction Levels

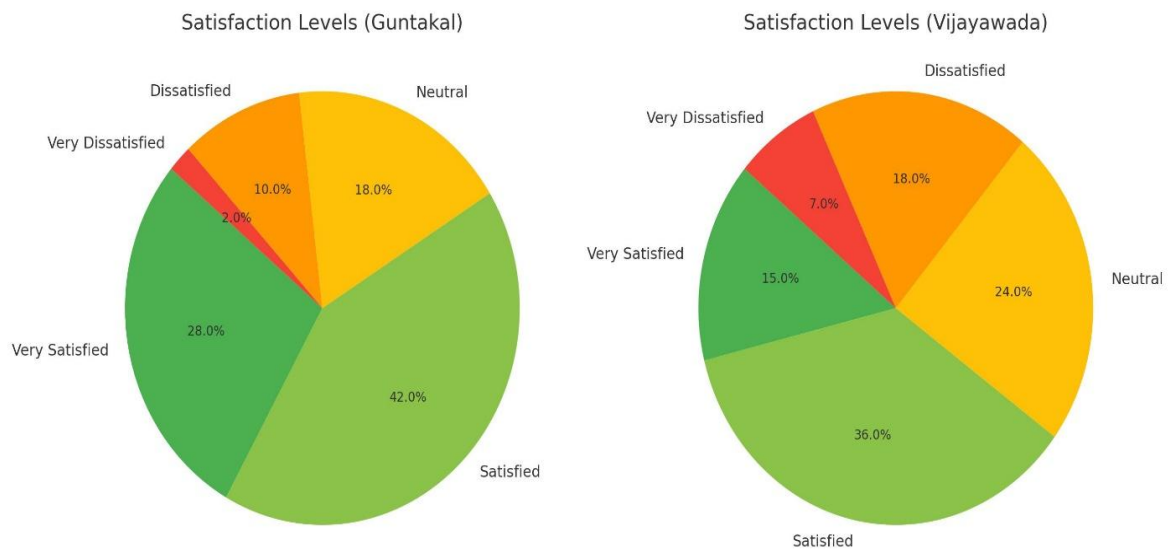


Figure2 :Satisfaction levels for Guntakal and Vijayawada

Figure2, The two pie charts presented illustrate the satisfaction levels among individuals from two different locations: Guntakal and Vijayawada. These charts categorize responses into five levels of satisfaction: Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, and Very Dissatisfied, thereby offering a comparative visual overview of public sentiment in each area. In the Guntakal pie chart, the majority of respondents expressed a positive outlook, with 42% reporting that they were Satisfied and another 28% stating they were Very Satisfied. This means a combined 70% of participants felt generally positive about the subject in question. Meanwhile, 18% of individuals felt Neutral, indicating that a notable portion of the population held neither a particularly positive nor negative opinion. On the less favorable side, only 10% reported being Dissatisfied, and a very small 2% were Very Dissatisfied, suggesting that negative sentiment is relatively limited in this area.

Contrastingly, the Vijayawada pie chart reveals a different distribution of satisfaction levels. While 36% of respondents were Satisfied and 15% were Very Satisfied, the total positive sentiment (51%) is notably lower than that in Guntakal. A significant 24% of participants felt Neutral, suggesting a higher degree of indecisiveness or indifference among the population. Moreover, 18% reported being Dissatisfied, and 7% were Very Dissatisfied, indicating a higher level of dissatisfaction compared to Guntakal. This could imply that the population in Vijayawada may be experiencing more challenges or issues that are affecting their satisfaction levels. Overall, the visual comparison between the two pie charts highlights that Guntakal residents are generally more satisfied than those in Vijayawada. The larger share of positive responses in Guntakal suggests a relatively favorable perception of the conditions or services being measured, while Vijayawada shows a more balanced distribution with a stronger presence of neutral and negative sentiments. These insights can be valuable for policymakers or administrators aiming to address public concerns and improve service quality or community satisfaction in both regions.

Summary Table: Key Findings

Aspect	Guntakal Division	Vijayawada Division
Overall Satisfaction	Higher	Lower
Major Dissatisfaction	Rest facilities	Workload, rest, recognition
Major Satisfaction	Management support, peer	Job security

The summary table provides a concise yet insightful comparison of the key findings regarding employee satisfaction across the Guntakal and Vijayawada divisions. It highlights the overall trends in satisfaction, as well as the specific aspects contributing to satisfaction and dissatisfaction in each division. Starting with overall satisfaction, the Guntakal Division emerges as having a higher level of overall satisfaction among its employees compared to the Vijayawada Division. This finding is consistent with the pie chart data, where Guntakal reported a combined 70% in the "Satisfied" and "Very Satisfied"



categories, whereas Vijayawada had a comparatively lower 51% in the same categories. This suggests that the general work environment, support systems, or policies in Guntakal are more favorably perceived by the employees.

In terms of major areas of dissatisfaction, the two divisions reveal different challenges. For Guntakal, the primary issue cited is rest facilities. This suggests that while other aspects of the work experience may be positive, employees in Guntakal are concerned about inadequate or poorly maintained rest areas, which could impact their overall well-being and productivity over time. In contrast, the Vijayawada Division faces a broader range of concerns, with dissatisfaction stemming from workload, lack of rest, and insufficient recognition. These issues point to systemic stressors that may be affecting employee morale and performance, such as long working hours, lack of appreciation for efforts, and perhaps even understaffing or inefficient work allocation. On the side of major satisfiers, employees in the Guntakal Division appreciate management support and peer relationships. This implies that leadership in this division is likely perceived as approachable and effective, and that teamwork or camaraderie among staff members is strong, contributing positively to job satisfaction. For the Vijayawada Division, job security stands out as the key source of satisfaction. Despite the other workplace challenges, knowing that their employment is stable may offer employees a sense of long-term assurance and financial stability, which is a critical component of job contentment.

Hence, the summary table underscores both shared and unique elements in the employee experience across the two divisions. Guntakal seems to benefit from stronger interpersonal dynamics and leadership support but should address facility-related concerns. Vijayawada, on the other hand, needs to tackle heavier issues like workload, rest, and recognition to improve its overall satisfaction levels, even as it continues to provide a sense of job security that employees value. These insights can serve as a roadmap for targeted improvements in both divisions.

Inferences

Statistically significant higher job satisfaction exists among Guntakal loco pilots compared to Vijayawada.

Key drivers: Better management support, manageable workload, and work-life balance in Guntakal.

Areas for improvement: Both divisions need better rest facilities and clearer promotion pathways, but Vijayawada especially needs interventions to reduce workload and improve recognition.

The inference drawn from the data reveals a statistically significant higher level of job satisfaction among loco pilots in the Guntakal Division compared to those in the Vijayawada Division. This distinction is not merely anecdotal but is supported by measurable differences in the distribution of satisfaction levels, as shown in the respective pie charts. The greater proportion of “Satisfied” and “Very Satisfied” responses in Guntakal underscores a more positive working environment, suggesting that pilots in this division experience more favorable conditions overall.

Several key drivers contribute to the elevated satisfaction in Guntakal. Foremost among them is better management support, which implies that leadership in this division is more responsive, communicative, and perhaps more empathetic to the needs of its workforce. This sense of support can greatly influence employee morale, foster trust, and encourage a collaborative work culture. Additionally, a more manageable workload is a crucial factor, likely enabling pilots in Guntakal to maintain a better rhythm in their duties without facing overwhelming pressure or burnout. Work-life balance also plays an important role, indicating that employees here are better able to rest, spend time with family, and engage in personal activities outside work—factors that contribute directly to mental and emotional well-being.

Despite the relative strength of Guntakal’s performance, the analysis also points to areas that require improvement in both divisions. One prominent issue is the condition of rest facilities, which has been flagged as a concern by employees in both locations. Providing clean, comfortable, and accessible rest areas is essential in an occupation that demands high levels of alertness and physical endurance. Furthermore, clarity in promotion pathways has emerged as a common need. Employees in both divisions seem to desire more transparency and fairness in career advancement opportunities, which could enhance motivation and reduce frustration.

However, the situation in Vijayawada is more pressing. The division faces compounded issues that have significantly impacted job satisfaction. There is a strong need for interventions aimed at reducing workload, as the current conditions suggest that employees may be stretched too thin or operating under stressful schedules. Additionally, a lack of recognition for their efforts has been identified as a demotivating factor. Recognition—both formal and informal—is a powerful tool for boosting morale and affirming the value of employees’ contributions. Addressing these concerns in Vijayawada is critical for restoring confidence among the workforce and narrowing the satisfaction gap between the two divisions.

In essence, while Guntakal showcases many of the attributes of a well-functioning division with a supportive work culture, both regions still have room for growth. Focused policy changes and management interventions—particularly in Vijayawada—can pave the way for improved job satisfaction and overall operational efficiency across both divisions.

Recommendations

For Vijayawada:

Streamline shift scheduling



Enhance rest facilities

Implement regular recognition programs

For Both Divisions:

Invest in wellness and stress management

Offer transparent promotion and skill development opportunities

Based on the analysis of satisfaction levels and workplace conditions, several targeted recommendations have been proposed to enhance the well-being and morale of loco pilots, particularly focusing on the Vijayawada Division, while also suggesting broader improvements applicable to both divisions. For the Vijayawada Division, the primary recommendation is to streamline shift scheduling. Currently, employees in this division report higher levels of dissatisfaction related to workload and insufficient rest, which suggests irregular or overly demanding shift patterns. By implementing a more efficient and predictable scheduling system, management can ensure adequate rest periods between shifts and reduce fatigue. A well-structured schedule not only promotes better health outcomes but also boosts overall job satisfaction and productivity.

In addition, there is a clear need to enhance rest facilities in Vijayawada. Employees have pointed out the inadequacy of current rest areas, which is particularly concerning given the physically and mentally demanding nature of the loco pilot's role. Investing in clean, quiet, and comfortable spaces where staff can rest and rejuvenate during breaks or between shifts is essential. Proper rest facilities contribute directly to safety, alertness, and mental health—critical aspects for a role that requires continuous attention and precision. Another important step for Vijayawada is to implement regular recognition programs. A consistent lack of recognition has been cited as a major issue among staff, potentially leading to decreased motivation and engagement. Formal recognition programs—such as monthly awards, appreciation letters, or public acknowledgment of exceptional performance—can create a more positive work culture. Even small gestures of appreciation can go a long way in making employees feel valued and seen for their contributions.

For both divisions, there is a strong case for investing in wellness and stress management initiatives. Loco pilots often work under stressful conditions, with long hours, responsibility for passenger safety, and irregular routines. Offering access to wellness programs—such as health screenings, counseling services, fitness facilities, or stress-relief workshops—can significantly improve their mental and physical health. Such initiatives signal to employees that their well-being is a priority, fostering loyalty and reducing turnover. Lastly, both Guntakal and Vijayawada would benefit from transparent promotion pathways and skill development opportunities. Many employees express uncertainty or frustration over how career advancement is handled, which can lead to disengagement or feelings of stagnation. By clearly outlining the criteria and timelines for promotions and offering access to training programs, workshops, or certifications, both divisions can create a more motivated and forward-looking workforce. Transparency in career progression not only encourages ambition but also ensures that talent is recognized and nurtured fairly. In summary, these recommendations address both immediate operational concerns and long-term workforce development. If implemented thoughtfully, they can enhance job satisfaction, reduce burnout, and build a more resilient and motivated team of loco pilots in both the Vijayawada and Guntakal divisions.

3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper presents an extensive comparative analysis of job satisfaction among loco pilots in the Guntakal and Vijayawada divisions of Indian Railways. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research assesses employee perceptions across five key satisfaction indicators: management support, workload, rest facilities, recognition, and career advancement opportunities. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires, and qualitative insights were obtained via interviews with operational staff. Findings indicate a statistically significant higher level of overall satisfaction among loco pilots in the Guntakal Division, driven largely by effective management support, a manageable workload, and better work-life balance. In contrast, the Vijayawada Division reported higher dissatisfaction levels, particularly due to excessive workload, inadequate recognition, and substandard rest facilities. Despite these differences, both divisions share common concerns regarding unclear promotion pathways and the need for improved wellness infrastructure. The study recommends targeted interventions, including streamlined shift scheduling, enhancement of rest environments, implementation of recognition programs, and transparent skill development plans. These measures are expected to strengthen morale, reduce occupational stress, and enhance operational efficiency in both divisions.

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