An Empirical Study On Employee's Job Satisfaction Affects Their Performance In Low-Cost Airlines

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ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction of employees is considered to be the most important aspect of HRM of any company. Every employee should achieve positive experience which ultimately improves their productivity and boosts the enterprise. If even one employee cannot attain job satisfaction in an organization, it would affect the operations of the same. In this day and age, there are hundreds and thousands of job opportunities. The methods of measuring job satisfaction and its practices are rising.

Airlines fall under hospitality industry and it ultimately depends upon customer satisfaction in terms of cost, services offered by employees, and comfort level in the aircraft. There are over five departments in an airline company just to ensure the safety and happiness of the passengers. To improve the job productivity of employees, it is important that staff should feel positive while serving the company and it can be possible only with the real job satisfaction.

Hence, this study is aimed to determine the effect of job satisfaction of employees at their productivity and performance in Indigo, Air India Express, Go-Air, SpiceJet and other low-cost airlines. This study will analyze the factors improving employee productivity in context of job satisfaction. It will show the methods to measure performance and its impact on employees and their performance in low-cost airlines.

Keywords – low-cost airlines, job satisfaction, employee productivity, job productivity, SpiceJet, Indigo, Air India Express

INTRODUCTION

Aviation industry has been very important for the growth of overall economy across the world. The fastest transport system in the world, airlines plays a very vital role in global and domestic businesses. It is hard to imagine the state of the progress the world has achieved so far without airlines. There was no existence of globalization in the way we achieved today without having this travel component. It has provided more than just amenities to mankind and it has had a great economic and social influence on the present society (Hamaad, 2021).

Aviation industry has generated over 4% of GDP across the world, employing over 65 million people globally. Aviation would have been ranked 20th for GDP growth, if it was a nation, according to Forbes. It is almost like the GDP of Argentina or Switzerland. Aviation is whopping $328 billion industry in terms of revenue in 2020, i.e. reported the rise of 40% since 2019 (Hamaad, 2021). The frontline staff plays a very vital role in airlines to provide pleasant travel experience to the passengers and handles a huge footfall of tourists as part of the day.

Hence, airline staff is the backbone of their operations. They are known to provide best services and they can handle a huge range of unexpected service issues. On the other side, there is a huge turnover rate of flight attendants and other staff as compared to other staff due to unstable working conditions, peer pressure, stressed customer service, handling errors, and lengthy shifts. All of these factors are combined to cause lack of job satisfaction at work. With such a vast expertise and service knowledge, when a flight attendant leaves the job, the airline bears the loss of priceless service expertise and knowledge of an employee, along with the cost of training, hiring, selection, and hands-on training. Airline must bear all those costs to retain its well-qualified and employed flight attendants. Hence, flight attendants' turnover has been one of the major issues as found in various studies "(Minjoo & Aeeun, 2020)".

As discussed above, workers are the most vital aspects of every service business. Hence, their gratification improves productivity and retainment of employees makes a business successful. Since there is a short time gap between creating service and delivery of the same, the concept of providing freedom, flexibility, and ability to meet customers' needs to the employees is very attractive. Hence, it goes

without saying that a lot of service firms are using initiatives for employee motivation. In terms of turnover for airline industry, a lot of constructs like organizational commitment and job satisfaction have been the great predictors.

Rationale of the Study

While working with other flight attendants, the relationship between them has not been studied that much as antecedent of the intent to quit the job. Due to the nature of profession, flight attendants must work with their team members and team leader and interact with them to perform their job roles well. There might be several stressors or conflicts between the flight attendants and team leaders which can force employees to leave their jobs "(Ma. Regina et al., 2006)". Hence, this study argues that the association between employee performance and job satisfaction favorably affects the airline.

Objectives of the study

Considering the above arguments, this study will fulfill the following objectives –

- To analyze the relationship between employee performance and job satisfaction
- To find out the way "job perks" improve "employee performance"
- To discuss the factors influencing "job satisfaction" of employees

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the paper titled "Evaluation of Employee's Job Satisfaction and Role of Gender Difference: An Empirical Study at Airline Industry in Iran", **Rast & Tourani (2012)** discovered the level of "job satisfaction in employees" and investigated the impact of "gender on job satisfaction". They found various factors responsible to influence job satisfaction, such as relations with coworkers, supervision, nature of work, existing compensation, and advancement. They gathered

data from the staff of three commercial airlines in Iran. They conducted a descriptive study to determine job satisfaction of employees. In addition, they performed an "independent sample t-test" to evaluate job satisfaction of employees. This test was conducted to determine the empirical association between gender and job satisfaction of employees. Employees seem to be somewhat satisfied but there is lack of statistically significant difference between females' and males' job satisfaction.

In the paper titled "Social Exchange approach, job satisfaction, and turnover, intention in the airline industry" **Chung & Jeon (2020)** examined the effect of connections of "social exchange on job satisfaction" and wish to pursue career in "aviation industry". They identified two connections of social exchange among flight attendants in South Korea, i.e., "team-member exchange (TMX)" and "leader-member exchange (LMX)" It is found that both TMX and LMX encourage job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover. In addition, there is no effect of TMX on "turnover intention" while LMX reduced "turnover intention". At the same time, the negative association between turnover intention and LMX is moderated by job satisfaction but there is no positive relation between turnover intention and TMX. There are managerial and academic implications to strength LMX of flight attendants and lower intention to leave in the aviation industry.

"Kurian & Muzumdar (2017)" extensively studied job fulfilment and other behavioral factor in the unit level in the "management literature". This study is vital to a vast body of literature on "organizational behavior" by determining key organizational behavioral traits in an organization in airline industry, such as sympathy, work-family conflict, "job satisfaction", networking and "job autonomy". The authors collected data from 108 employees engaged in a low-cost airline. It is observed that job autonomy, work-family conflict, and sympathy affected job satisfaction along with employee leadership. These findings may help improve work satisfaction and quantifiable results for the sector like profitability and customer satisfaction.

According to **Kalawilapathirage & Ziedan (2019)**, it has become more important than ever to retain highly skilled staff with job satisfaction for airlines due to stiff competition. The target market of budget airline has stiff competition. To differentiate the experience of passengers while traveling among airlines, it is important to guarantee that all workers like cabin crew and ground staff are very satisfied with job roles. The study determines issues affecting "employee satisfaction" at an unknown airline and conducts in-depth study of work-satisfaction of airline. The study uses primary data as part of quantitative approach from surveys conducted by airline. Apart from financial recognition and rewards, study found independent variables like development and training. Statistical models like regression analysis and correlation are used to determine results of the survey and relevance of individual factors affecting "job satisfaction".

"Sung & Sunny Hu (2021)" determines the effect of brand-specific training, internal brand communication, brand philosophy, transformational leadership and "brand communities on job outcomes and satisfaction". Work consequences and "internal branding" are discovered on job satisfaction. They conducted survey on 485 employees and found favorable influence of work happiness on philosophy, leadership, and community. Work outcomes and internal branding like brand philosophy, transformational leadership and internal brand communities are mediated by satisfaction. Effective branding can play a vital role to boost the growth of airline by improving staff satisfaction.

Suifan & Diab (2017) determined the impact of "organizational justice on intention" to leave through the lens of job satisfaction and "organizational commitment" as mediating factors. They conducted a survey on airline professionals working in Jordan and delivered 323 questionnaires to them and there was 81% response rate. They used "multiple regression analysis" to test the hypothesis. All of the hypotheses are accepted. It is found that both work satisfaction and organizational commitment played a mediating role in the association between turnover intention and organizational justice. Though here was a mediating link with work satisfaction, the association was somewhat mediated by organizational commitment.

There is a lack of study on the relevance of perception of employees over job satisfaction in airlines. Hence **Shehawy & Elbaz (2017)** tested a model to analyze the effects and factors of job satisfaction properly. They conducted a survey on frontline staff of aviation sector in Egypt. They collected 870 responses and analyzed the same with "WarpPLS 6.0 structural equation modelling". It is observed that work satisfaction is affected by employee advocacy and supervisor support. In addition, it is found that embeddedness of the work has a great impact on people' intent to leave and job commitment.

Ilkhanizadeh & Karatepeb (2017) tested and proposed a research model to investigate the perceptions of flight attendants about CSR practices. They provided data at several times from leading low-cost airlines. From "structural equation modelling", it is found that job engagement is an important mechanism to link CSR to voice behavior and career happiness of flight attendants. There are ramifications for perceptions of flight attendants of their CSR efforts and outcomes.

According to **Alola & Alafeshat (2020)**, training and hiring improve psychological well-being, organizational attachment, and commitment of employees. Various investigators have considered the effect of selection and hiring on workers for years but it is still needed to overstate the influence of "HR practices on employee retention and satisfaction" as signs of "organizational performance". They studied the influence of "HR practices" on employees like recruitment, selection, development, and training. There are 277 surveys conducted on 6 employees in private airlines in Jordan. Researchers used "Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)" to determine validity, hypothesis, and reliability. "Hiring, selection, and training" had a noteworthy impact on airlines. In addition, "employee engagement (EE)" mediated relationship between variables. Cross-sectional data is collected from this study and recommended to generalize findings with caution. Policymakers and HR managers should know the effect of HR practices to attract efficient and effective workforce.

Kucukusta & Chan (2017) examined the CSR activities of airlines and their impact on "emotional commitment (AC)" of employees. These practices were gathered from Hong Kong-based low-cost airlines, prior studies, and their annual sustainability reports. The factors affecting CSR activities were classified and evaluated, such as company operations, environment, safety, community, and people. All these factors were considered significant and environmental component was ranked most critical by employees. The greatest impact was found on employee emotional commitment by the people and environment.

Okan & Bayraktar (2021) established a link between work happiness and organizational justice. They studied three important aspects of organizational justice, i.e. interactional,

distributive, and procedural justice, along with external, internal, and absolute job satisfaction. It is now called as an important phase which may be beneficial to both companies and people. There is a lot of research on the association between job satisfaction and organizational justice in a huge body of literature but there is a lack of research in India. Considering the lack of research on relation between work satisfaction and organizational justice among airline staff, they conducted a survey on 101 pilots. They conducted a statistical investigation and found a positive relation between work satisfaction and organizational justice. There was strongest link between procedural justice and "external job satisfaction".

According to "**Seung-Lee & Young-Shin (2016)"**, elements related to staff provide service quality like job happiness and internal service quality have an impact on customer satisfaction. They gathered data from the passengers using Gimpo international airport and ground staff of airline using a questionnaire. They collected data from 273 passengers and 190 ground workers in airline with SPSS 21. They found that models were ideal to demonstrate assumptions on job satisfaction, internal service quality, and customer satisfaction. The findings of this study play a vital role in "walking tours and great implications for marketers in airline".

 "**Vatankhah & Raoofi (2017)"** analyzed the operation of "perceived organizational support (POS)" due to signaling theory in the connection between "counterproductive work behavior (CWB)" and HPWPs. They estimated the same with "random sample of flight attendants in Iran". With "multiple regression analysis", it is found that variables like reward, advancement, and empowerment are associated with CWB. POS also had a mediating relation in this interaction. It is a partial mediator in CWB, reward, and empowerment. The data suggests complete

mediation role of POS to boost CWB connections. They explored the antecedents of organization level of "CWB and social mechanism" with which "employee behavior" is influenced by HPWP.

Work satisfaction is very important for a competitive economy. It is important to conduct regular assessments to improve and determine factors important for job satisfaction. **Wodajo (2019)** investigated morale of employees in aviation sector in Ethiopia. The researcher conducted study on 95 airline workers as part of explanatory and descriptive research. The data was analyzed with inferential and descriptive statistics via self-contained questionnaire and the response rate was 82.11%. There was a strong correlation with worker satisfaction. In the same way, there is a high correlation between compensation and work happiness. There is also an association between job happiness and employee progress. They recommended managers to provide development opportunities and training, improve working conditions, and terms for the employees and promote the process as per the developments in industry.

According to **Vatankhah & Darvishi (2018),** managers should think of internal branding to promote prosocial actions. The conceptual model of this study combines corporate branding, cooperation, management commitment, role-oriented customer support, and extra-role service.

Hypotheses
Considering the above studies, this study will find out the following hypotheses –
H0: There is no "association between job satisfaction and organizational policy with age"
H1: There is an "association between job satisfaction and organizational policy with age"

H0: There is no association between a superior's team spirit and motivation

H1: There is an association between a superior's team spirit and motivation

H0: There is no "association between freedom of taking decisions and job satisfaction"
H1: There is an "association between freedom of taking decisions and job satisfaction"

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach

This study is based on qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative approach is employed to find out the effect of job satisfaction of employees on their performance in low-cost airlines. The researcher has created a systematic questionnaire to gather their opinions on the matter.

Research Method

The researcher has used convenience sampling method and gathered responses from 445 participants of the study. There are two sections of the questionnaire –
• Demographic profile of respondents

• Their viewpoint on performance and job gratification

The "questionnaire" has been kept simple to make it easy to understand for the readers and respondents and to help researcher to fulfill the goal of the research. To analyze the responses, SPSS software was used to calculate Descriptive Statistics. In addition, "Chi-square test" was performed to determine the relation between employees' job satisfaction and transparency of the organization, team spirit, freedom of taking decisions, and other variables with job satisfaction.

RESULTS

Demographics

In this study, 41% of the participants were male and rest 59% were female. In addition, majority of the respondents were aged 21 to 30 years. Hence, most of the participants were either freshers or have worked in aviation sector for a couple of years (Table 1).

Table 1 – Age of the participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21-30	197	44.3	44.3	44.3
	31-40	152	34.2	34.2	78.4
	41-50	84	18.9	18.9	97.3
	51+	12	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	445	100.0	100.0	

Majority of participants in this study were "front-line staff", while the least number of participants were employed in "Maintenance department" (Table 2).

Table 2 – Departments of the participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Front Line Personnel	214	48.1	48.1	48.1
	Operations	49	11.0	11.0	59.1
	Maintenance	8	1.8	1.8	60.9
	Sales & Marketing	61	13.7	13.7	74.6
	Reservations & Ticketing	48	10.8	10.8	85.4
	Staff Personnel	42	9.4	9.4	94.8
	Other	23	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	445	100.0	100.0	

To determine the correlation between positive performance feedback and motivation, researcher has asked participants their opinion. In Table 3, 40.2% participants (n=179) agreed that they are motivated with positive review, while only 4 participants strongly disagreed. In addition, around 21% participants were neutral.

Table 3 – "I am highly motivated when my performance review is positive"

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	166	37.3	37.3	37.3
Agree	179	40.2	40.2	77.5
Neutral	93	20.9	20.9	98.4
Disagree	3	.7	.7	99.1
Strongly Disagree	4	.9	.9	100.0
Total	445	100.0	100.0	

Majority of participants (n=324) out of 445 agreed that perks and addons provided by the employer affect their job satisfaction (Table 4).

Table 4 – "My job satisfaction highly depends on employee perks & addons provided by my organization"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	145	32.6	32.6	32.6
	Agree	179	40.2	40.2	72.8
	Neutral	109	24.5	24.5	97.3
	Disagree	7	1.6	1.6	98.9
	Strongly Disagree	5	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	445	100.0	100.0	

In this age of equality, around 77% respondents agree that all employees are treated equally without any discrimination on the basis of race,

religion, gender, or sexual orientation in their organization (Table 5).

Table 5 – "All employees in my organization are treated fairly without consideration of race, gender, religion or sexual orientation"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	180	40.4	40.4	40.4
	Agree	166	37.3	37.3	77.8
	Neutral	90	20.2	20.2	98.0
	Disagree	5	1.1	1.1	99.1
	Strongly Disagree	4	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	445	100.0	100.0	

In order to determine positive impact on motivation of performance review, job satisfaction from perks and add-ons, and impact on performance from appreciation among male and female employees, descriptive statistics is

conducted. In Table 6, the data is analyzed and found that SD of both male and female employees' responses is above 0.5, which means there is high variance or impact.

Table 6 – Impact of Perks, Performance Review, and Appreciation on Employees

Gender		I am highly motivated when my performance review is positive.	My job satisfaction highly depends on employee perks & addons provided by my organization.	The appreciation received by me in the work makes my performance better.
Male	Mean	1.96	2.02	1.84
	N	185	185	185
	Std. Deviation	.865	.866	.802
Female	Mean	1.82	1.96	1.80
	N	260	260	260
	Std. Deviation	.787	.853	.798
Total	Mean	1.88	1.98	1.82
	N	445	445	445
	Std. Deviation	.822	.858	.799

When it comes to awareness of mission, vision and goals of the organization, around 74.2%

participants were aware and only 3% participants were not aware (Table 7).

Table 7 – "I am aware about the objectives, vision & goals set by my organization"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	87	19.6	19.6	19.6
	Agree	243	54.6	54.6	74.2
	Neutral	110	24.7	24.7	98.9
	Disagree	2	.4	.4	99.3
	Strongly Disagree	3	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	445	100.0	100.0	

Given the Kurtosis and Skewness of equality and performance in organizations, the skewness of 0.654 is reflected in the distribution of frequency for the first component, which shows moderate skewness of the distribution. One can see similar results for the "equality at workplace" with "skewness of 0.771", which also indicates moderate skewness in distribution.

In Kurtosis, the sharpness and height of "peak, relative to that of a bell curve is 0.004 for appreciation" and equality scores 0.388. For both test components, the kurtosis shows that responses are relatively free in distribution from any abnormalities (Table 8).

Table 8 – Skewness and Kurtosis of performance and equality in organization

		The appreciation received by me in the work makes my performance better.	All employees in my organization are treated fairly without consideration of race, gender, religion or sexual orientation.
N	Valid	445	445
	Missing	0	0
Mean		1.82	1.85
Median		2.00	2.00
Std. Deviation		.799	.843
Skewness		.654	.771
Std. Error of Skewness		.116	.116
Kurtosis		.004	.388
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.231	.231
Percentiles	25	1.00	1.00
	50	2.00	2.00
	75	2.00	2.00

These statistics are more accurate than a "histogram of distribution". A rule of thumb is that if one of these values are below ± 1.0 in

Skewness or Kurtosis, the Kurtosis or Skewness is not out of the normality range and the distribution would be normal. If values are above

± 1.0, the Kurtosis or Skewness is out of normality range and distribution is not normal.

Table 9 – Kurtosis and Skewness of Motivation by Positive Review and Appreciation at work

		I am highly motivated when my performance review is positive.	The appreciation received by me in the work makes my performance better.
N	Valid	445	445
	Missing	0	0
Mean		1.88	1.82
Std. Error of Mean		.039	.038
Median		2.00	2.00
Std. Deviation		.822	.799
Skewness		.696	.654
Std. Error of Skewness		.116	.116
Kurtosis		.415	.004
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.231	.231
Percentiles	25	1.00	1.00
	50	2.00	2.00
	75	2.00	2.00

Table 9 indicates Skewness of effect of positive review on motivation and appreciation at workplace, two important components of hypothesis. Hence, Skewness of 0.696 is indicated in the distribution of frequency for first component which shows moderately skewed distribution. Similar result is achieved for appreciation at workplace for better performance with skewness of 0.654, which again shows moderate skewness.

The sharpness and height of central peak in Kurtosis, associated with "standard bell curve", comes at "0.415 for motivation and 0.004 for appreciation at work", which shows distribution is free from any abnormalities.

Table 10 – "My job satisfaction highly depends on the transparency of the organization's policies"

		Age				Total
		21-30	31-40	41-50	51+	
My job satisfaction highly depends on the transparency of the organization's policies.	Strongly Agree	91	55	25	6	177
	Agree	69	69	43	5	186
	Neutral	35	23	15	1	74
	Disagree	1	2	1	0	4
	Strongly Disagree	1	3	0	0	4
Total		197	152	84	12	445

Table 11 – "Chi-Square Test" on significance between Job satisfaction and organizational policy

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.271[a]	12	.284
Likelihood Ratio	15.024	12	.240
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.335	1	.248
N of Valid Cases	445		
a. 10 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.			

To determine the association between job satisfaction and organizational policy on the basis of age, the p value of test statistic is 0.284 and "value of test statistic $(X^2(2)>)$ is 14.271" (Table 11).

"Since p-value is higher than the significance level of alpha ($\alpha = 0.05$), null hypothesis is not rejected. It means there is lack of evidence that there is an association between job satisfaction and organizational policy with age".

Table 12 – "The team spirit shown by my superior is satisfactory and motivational"

		Age				Total
		21-30	31-40	41-50	51+	
The team spirit shown by my superior is satisfactory and motivational.	Strongly Agree	79	58	31	8	176
	Agree	77	64	31	3	175
	Neutral	38	24	21	1	84
	Disagree	2	3	1	0	6
	Strongly Disagree	1	3	0	0	4
Total		197	152	84	12	445

Table 13 – "Chi-Square test" on association between superior's team spirit and motivation

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.615[a]	12	.562
Likelihood Ratio	10.948	12	.533
Linear-by-Linear Association	.012	1	.914
N of Valid Cases	445		
a. 11 cells (55.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.			

Here, p-value is higher than $\alpha = 0.05$ "level of significance". Hence, null hypothesis is not rejected. It means there is still lack of evidence that there is an association between superior's team spirit and motivation (Table 13).

Table 14 – "I am provided the liberty of taking decisions in my organization"

		Age				Total
		21-30	31-40	41-50	51+	
I am provided the liberacy of taking decisions in my organization.	Strongly Agree	89	52	30	5	176
	Agree	68	61	30	4	163
	Neutral	37	34	24	2	97
	Disagree	3	4	0	0	7
	Strongly Disagree	0	1	0	1	2
Total		197	152	84	12	445

Table 15 – "Chi-square tests on association between liberty of taking decisions and job satisfaction"

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.162[a]	12	.007
Likelihood Ratio	16.963	12	.151
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.646	1	.056
N of Valid Cases	445		

a. 11 cells (55.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

"Here, p-value is higher than level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$". Hence, null hypothesis is not rejected and it is found that there is not enough evidence that suggests that there is an "association between freedom of taking decisions and job satisfaction" (Table 15).

DISCUSSIONS

With the above study, it is found that majority of respondents are aged 21 to 30 years, most of them were female and most respondents were front-line staff. Majority of participants knew about the vision and objectives of the organizations as per industry standards. A lot of participants are highly motivated with positive performance review and those reviews are fair and unbiased by their respective organizations. With proper incentives and perks, job satisfaction was relatively high among the employees.

Appreciation of work also plays a vital role in job satisfaction and to encourage employees to take more initiatives. There is also a direct relation between employees' performance and commitment towards employees, support from team members and superiors, and fair treatment. When it comes to chi-square tests, the researchers compared transparency of policies with age of respondents and it is found that transparent organizational policies affect everyone irrespective of age. When analyzing the association between superior's team spirit and motivation and age, it was found that every employee is motivated and satisfied with positive team spirit shown by their superior, irrespective of age. However, there is a lack of evidence that freedom for decision-making affects differently to participants of different age groups.

CONCLUSION

Finally, it is concluded that there are multiple factors playing a vital role in job satisfaction of employees and directly improve their

performance in low-cost airlines. Various factors like department or age group vary differently but satisfaction is the key factor to drive positive performance. Overall job satisfaction is affected by several factors like transparency, superior's team spirit, financial and non-financial benefits, team and peer motivation, goals, vision, and environment among employees which directly impact job performance.

In this day and age, it is worth noting that employees are the prime factor for a successful business, especially in "hospitality industry". "Employee satisfaction" is very much significant to device performance. Hence, job satisfaction of an employee is directly related to their "performance in low-cost airlines".

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