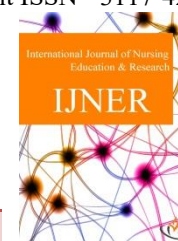




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JOB SATISFACTION IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT AMONG FEMALE FACULTY MEMBERS IN SELECTED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: A DESCRIPTIVE CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY FROM TAMIL NADU, INDIA

Chitra A. I^{1*}, Premila P², Padmavathi R³

¹Vice Principal, GRT College of Nursing, Tiruttani, Tamil Nadu, India.

²Associate Professor, GRT College of Nursing, Tiruttani, Tamil Nadu, India.

³Principal, GRT College of Nursing, Tiruttani, Tamil Nadu, India.

Article Info	ABSTRACT
<i>Received 21/07/2026</i> <i>Revised 18/08/2026</i> <i>Accepted 09/09/2026</i>	Background: Job satisfaction is a recognised determinant of teaching effectiveness, organisational commitment and faculty retention. Female academics carry the additional load of domestic and caregiving responsibilities alongside teaching, mentoring, research and administrative duties, yet the working environment of women faculty in Indian health-professions education has received limited empirical attention. Objectives: To assess the level of job satisfaction in the working environment among female faculty members in selected educational institutions, and to determine the association between job satisfaction and selected demographic variables. Methods: A quantitative, descriptive cross-sectional design was used. Fifty-five female faculty members employed at the GRT Group of Educational Institutions, Tiruttani, Tamil Nadu, India, were recruited by non-probability convenience sampling. Data were collected using a self-administered instrument comprising a demographic proforma and an investigator-developed Job Satisfaction Rating Scale of 35 items across seven domains (work environment; professional development; compensation and benefits; work-life balance; support from peers and administration; inclusivity and gender equality; recognition and job security), each item rated on a five-point Likert scale. Total scores ranged from 35 to 175 and were classified as low (<50% of maximum), moderate (50–75%) or high (>75%). Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and the Pearson chi-square test, with significance set at $p < 0.05$. Results: Thirty-six participants (65.5%) reported a high level of job satisfaction, 18 (32.7%) a moderate level and one (1.8%) a low level. Six of the seven domains fell within the high-satisfaction band, led by work environment (mean 21.96, SD 2.89; 87.8% of maximum), followed by recognition and job security (81.2%), work-life balance (80.5%), inclusivity and gender equality (79.5%), support from peers and administration (79.4%) and professional development (78.7%). Compensation and benefits was the sole domain in the moderate band (mean 16.20, SD 4.89; 64.8%) and showed the widest dispersion. No demographic variable was significantly associated with job-satisfaction level; tenure at the current institution approached significance ($\chi^2 = 15.148$, $df = 8$, $p = 0.056$). Conclusion: Female faculty members reported predominantly high job satisfaction, driven by relational and environmental features of the workplace rather than by demographic characteristics. Compensation and benefits was the single actionable deficit. Institutions should preserve the supportive climate already in place
Key word: - job satisfaction; working environment; female faculty; nurse educators; work-life balance; organisational support; higher education; india	



		while reviewing remuneration structures and monitoring the mid-tenure period, when satisfaction appears most variable.
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Keywords:

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is the affective and evaluative orientation an employee holds towards their work, classically defined by Locke as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” [1]. In educational institutions the construct carries consequences that extend well beyond the individual. Faculty members determine the quality of curriculum delivery, the calibre of student mentorship and the research productivity of the institution; their satisfaction is therefore an operational indicator of institutional health rather than a matter of personal wellbeing alone. Concept analysis of nurse faculty job satisfaction identifies its defining attributes as autonomy, collegiality, workload manageability, recognition and alignment between personal values and institutional mission, with consequences that include retention, engagement and student outcomes [3].

The theoretical architecture underlying the construct remains substantially that of Herzberg’s two-factor formulation, which distinguishes motivators intrinsic to the work itself — achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement — from hygiene factors extrinsic to it, such as salary, policy, supervision and physical conditions [2]. The framework predicts an asymmetry that recurs across the contemporary literature: intrinsic and relational features generate satisfaction, whereas deficient extrinsic features generate dissatisfaction without their adequacy generating satisfaction. This asymmetry is directly relevant to any domain-level assessment of academic job satisfaction and provides the interpretive frame adopted here.

The working environment is the most consistently implicated correlate of faculty satisfaction. It comprises physical infrastructure, workload distribution, organisational culture, leadership behaviour, communication systems, professional autonomy, collegial relationships, opportunity for advancement and the degree to which institutional arrangements accommodate life outside work. A systematic review of leadership styles and nurses’ job satisfaction found significant associations in 88% of included studies, with transformational, authentic and servant styles positively associated and passive-avoidant and laissez-faire styles negatively associated in every instance [14]. Comparable findings are reported specifically for academic nursing: transformational leadership predicted higher faculty satisfaction and lower burnout during the pandemic [15];

authentic leadership was positively related to satisfaction among undergraduate nursing professors [13]; and qualitative work has identified the specific leader behaviours — visibility, advocacy, transparent decision-making, protection of faculty time — that faculty themselves nominate as satisfaction-determining [10]. An action guide derived from this programme of work translates these behaviours into concrete managerial practice [9]. Against this, the profession is under measurable strain. Burnout among academic nursing faculty is widespread and is driven by workload volume, role ambiguity and insufficient resourcing [12,18], and faculty fatigue is related to academic rank and to scholarship and service productivity demands [19]. Comparable burnout is documented among medical-university faculty internationally [46], and occupational stress and burnout predict disengagement behaviours among teachers [45]. Professional quality of life among nursing faculty deteriorated markedly in the period of rapid pedagogical change following the pandemic [17], and satisfaction during that period was shaped as much by institutional communication and support as by workload itself [8]. Incivility between colleagues is independently associated with reduced satisfaction and increased intent to leave [22]. The downstream consequence is attrition: burnout and turnover intention are tightly coupled [20]; multi-year analyses of academic nurse administrators show satisfaction and intent to stay moving together [23]; and structural modelling of nursing faculty intent to stay identifies work environment and organisational commitment as the principal upstream determinants [24]; bibliometric mapping confirms turnover in higher education as a rapidly expanding field of enquiry [42]. A global teacher workforce shortage estimated in the tens of millions gives these findings their policy weight [4].

The position of women within this workforce warrants specific attention. Women constitute the numerical majority of the nursing and allied-health teaching workforce yet remain under-represented in senior academic ranks, and the mechanisms producing this gradient are structural rather than dispositional. Longitudinal and multi-specialty analyses document slower advancement for women across academic health disciplines [54] and persistent barriers to leadership participation [53]. National survey data show that the pandemic disproportionately disrupted the research productivity and tenure progression of women and racialised academics [48]. Qualitative and mixed-method work in England, China and Iran converges on the same account: career progression for women academics is shaped by the interaction of societal expectation, institutional structure and life-stage timing rather than by ambition or capability

Corresponding Author

Chitra A. I

E-mail: bcaa1815@gmail.com



[49,50,52]. Within the Indian context specifically, research on women physicians describes resilience exercised within persistent inequality regimes [51]. International agencies have made the same observation at population scale, identifying continuing gaps in labour-force participation, advancement and leadership representation for women [5,6]. Work–life balance is the mechanism through which these pressures are most often transmitted. A meta-synthesis of work–life integration among nurse educators found that the boundary between professional and domestic roles is porous and that integration, rather than separation, is the strategy educators actually adopt [16]. Indian evidence indicates that work–life balance is both an antecedent and an outcome variable for women faculty, mediating the relationship between flexible work arrangements and both job satisfaction and quality of life [28,29]. Parallel findings from Pakistan describe the strategies women academics deploy to manage the competing claims of institution and household [30,31], and work-design analyses argue that sustainable academic workloads require deliberate structural provision rather than individual coping [32]. Demographic differences in satisfaction and work–life balance among prelicensure nursing faculty have been documented, though the pattern is not uniform across settings [11].

Evidence from Indian higher education is accumulating but remains thin for health-professions faculty and thinner still for women within that group. Studies of management-institute faculty show that job satisfaction reduces turnover intention through organisational commitment [33], and that commitment dimensions shape secondary-employment decisions among higher-education teachers [34]. Discipline-specific work has examined satisfaction and stress among dental faculty [36] and among physiotherapy academicians in Gujarat [35], and role overload has been shown to affect teachers' career satisfaction serially through work engagement and job satisfaction [47]. Organisational justice and perceived supervisory support have been linked to engagement and performance in Indian educational settings [37]. What is largely absent is a domain-resolved account of the working environment as experienced by women faculty in a South Indian health-professions institution — an account that identifies which specific facets of the workplace are functioning and which are not, at a granularity that permits institutional action.

The present study was undertaken to fill that gap. Its objectives were: (i) to assess the level of job satisfaction in the working environment among female faculty members in selected educational institutions, and (ii) to determine the association between the level of job satisfaction and selected demographic variables. The null hypothesis tested was that there is no significant association between the level of job satisfaction among female faculty members and their selected demographic variables at the 0.05 level of significance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study design

A quantitative research approach with a descriptive, cross-sectional design was adopted. The design was selected because the study objectives were to characterise the prevailing level of job satisfaction at a single point in time and to test its association with participant characteristics, rather than to establish causation or evaluate an intervention. Reporting follows the STROBE recommendations for cross-sectional studies.

Setting and period

The study was conducted among female faculty members employed at the GRT Group of Educational Institutions, Tiruttani, Tiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu, India. The group comprises health-professions and general higher-education colleges serving a predominantly semi-urban and rural catchment area in northern Tamil Nadu. Data were collected during June 2025. The study setting was considered appropriate as it provided access to faculty members from diverse academic disciplines and offered a suitable environment for assessing their level of job satisfaction in the working environment.

Population and sample

The target population comprised all female faculty members working in the GRT Group of Educational Institutions. The accessible population comprised those present at the institutions during the data-collection period. Fifty-five female faculty members who met the eligibility criteria were enrolled using a non-probability convenience sampling technique.

Inclusion criteria were: (i) female faculty members employed in a teaching capacity in the participating institutions, irrespective of designation, qualification, department or length of service; (ii) availability during the data-collection period; and (iii) willingness to provide informed consent. Exclusion criteria were: (i) male faculty members; (ii) faculty absent during the data-collection period; and (iii) those declining participation.

The achieved sample of 55 represents a near-census of the eligible female teaching staff available during the study period. No a priori sample-size calculation was performed, as the study was designed to enumerate the accessible population rather than to detect a pre-specified effect size; the implications of this for the inferential analysis are addressed in the Limitations section.

Variables

The study variable was the level of job satisfaction in the working environment. The demographic variables examined were age in years, marital status, number of children, area of residence, highest level of education, employment status, academic rank, total years of experience in academics, years of service at the current institution, and

hours per week spent providing care to children, elderly relatives or other family members.

Instrument

Data were collected using a self-administered, two-part structured instrument.

Section A — Demographic proforma. Ten items capturing the demographic variables listed above.

Section B — Job Satisfaction Rating Scale. An investigator-developed instrument comprising 35 items distributed equally across seven domains of the working environment, with five items per domain: work environment; professional development; compensation and benefits; work–life balance; support from peers and administration; inclusivity and gender

equality; and recognition and job security. Each item is rated on a five-point Likert scale (5 = strongly satisfied, 4 = satisfied, 3 = neutral, 2 = dissatisfied, 1 = strongly dissatisfied). Domain scores therefore range from 5 to 25 and the total score from 35 to 175, with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction. The domain structure and item allocation are shown in Table 1.

Total scores were classified by percentage of the maximum attainable score: low satisfaction (<50% of maximum; total score <88), moderate satisfaction (50–75%; 88–131) and high satisfaction (>75%; >131). Domain scores were interpreted on the same percentage bands, with the five-item score equivalents shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Structure and score interpretation of the Job Satisfaction Rating Scale

S. No.	Domain	No. of items	Score range
1	Work environment	5	5–25
2	Professional development	5	5–25
3	Compensation and benefits	5	5–25
4	Work–life balance	5	5–25
5	Support from peers and administration	5	5–25
6	Inclusivity and gender equality	5	5–25
7	Recognition and job security	5	5–25
	Total	35	35–175

Interpretation	% of maximum	Total score	Domain score
High satisfaction	>75%	>131	19–25
Moderate satisfaction	50–75%	88–131	13–18
Low satisfaction	<50%	<88	<13

Each item is rated on a five-point Likert scale (5 = strongly satisfied to 1 = strongly dissatisfied). Higher scores indicate greater job satisfaction.

Content validity was established through expert review. The instrument was submitted to specialists in nursing education, educational administration, and research methodology. Based on their recommendations, the items were revised to ensure clarity, relevance, and adequacy of coverage. Reliability of the instrument was assessed during the pilot study using Cronbach's alpha method. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient obtained was $\alpha \geq 0.90$, indicating satisfactory internal consistency and reliability of the instrument for data collection.

Data collection procedure

Prior administrative permission was obtained from the heads of the participating institutions. The investigator approached eligible faculty members individually, introduced herself, explained the purpose and objectives of the study, and obtained written informed consent. Participants were assured that participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw at any stage without consequence, and that anonymity and confidentiality would be preserved. Questionnaires were completed independently in a single sitting, with a mean completion time of 15–20 minutes.

Completed instruments were collected on the same day and screened for completeness before entry.

Statistical analysis

Data were coded, entered, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. Demographic variables were summarized as frequencies and percentages. Domain and total job-satisfaction scores were summarized as means with standard deviations and expressed as percentages of the maximum attainable score. The association between the categorized level of job satisfaction and each demographic variable was tested using the Pearson chi-square test. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed). Employment status could not be tested because all participants were full-time and the variable was therefore invariant.

Demographic characteristics

The demographic profile of the 55 participants is presented in Table 2 and Figure 1. Participants were concentrated in the early- to mid-career age bands: 25 (45.5%) were aged 25–34 years and 18 (32.7%) were aged

35–44 years, so that 43 of 55 (78.2%) were under 45. Four (7.3%) were under 25 and eight (14.5%) were aged 45–54; none was older than 55.

Forty-three participants (78.2%) were married, 10 (18.2%) were single, and one each (1.8%) was divorced or separated. Thirty-five (63.6%) had at least one child, most commonly two (23; 41.8%). Twenty-four (43.6%) resided in semi-urban areas, 16 (29.1%) in rural areas and 14 (25.5%) in urban areas.

Master's-level qualification predominated (37; 67.3%), with 12 participants (21.8%) holding a doctorate and six (10.9%) a bachelor's degree. All 55 participants (100%) were employed full-time. The academic hierarchy was heavily weighted towards the entry professorial grade: 42 participants (76.4%) were Assistant Professors, with five each (9.1%) at Associate Professor and Professor level and three (5.5%) Lecturers.

Total academic experience was broadly distributed, with 16 participants (29.1%) reporting 1–5 years and 14 (25.5%) reporting 11–15 years. Tenure at the current institution was shorter and more concentrated: 24 participants (43.6%) had served 1–5 years and 12 (21.8%) less than one year, so that 36 of 55 (65.5%) had been at the institution for five years or less. The contrast between total experience and institutional tenure indicates a workforce that is professionally experienced but institutionally recent.

Caregiving load was substantial. Fifty-one participants (92.7%) reported spending some time each week providing care to children, elderly relatives or other family members; 26 (47.3%) reported 1–10 hours, 12 (21.8%) reported 11–20 hours and nine (16.4%) reported more than 30 hours per week.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables of female faculty members (n = 55)

Demographic variable	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1. Age (years)		
<25	4	7.3
25–34	25	45.5
35–44	18	32.7
45–54	8	14.5
>55	0	0.0
2. Marital status		
Single	10	18.2
Married	43	78.2
Divorced	1	1.8
Separated	1	1.8
3. Number of children		
None	19	34.5
One	10	18.2
Two	23	41.8
Three	2	3.6
Not applicable	1	1.8
4. Area of residence		
Rural	16	29.1
Semi-urban	24	43.6
Urban	14	25.5
Not reported	1	1.8
5. Highest qualification		
Bachelor's degree	6	10.9
Master's degree	37	67.3
Doctorate	12	21.8
6. Employment status		
Full-time	55	100.0
Part-time	0	0.0
7. Academic rank		
Lecturer	3	5.5
Assistant Professor	42	76.4
Associate Professor	5	9.1
Professor	5	9.1

8. Total experience in academics		
<1 year	8	14.5
1–5 years	16	29.1
6–10 years	9	16.4
11–15 years	14	25.5
16–20 years	8	14.5
9. Years at current institution		
<1 year	12	21.8
1–5 years	24	43.6
6–10 years	8	14.5
11–15 years	8	14.5
16–20 years	3	5.5
10. Weekly caregiving hours		
0 hours	4	7.3
1–10 hours	26	47.3
11–20 hours	12	21.8
21–30 hours	4	7.3
>30 hours	9	16.4

Figure 1. Demographic profile of female faculty members (n = 55)

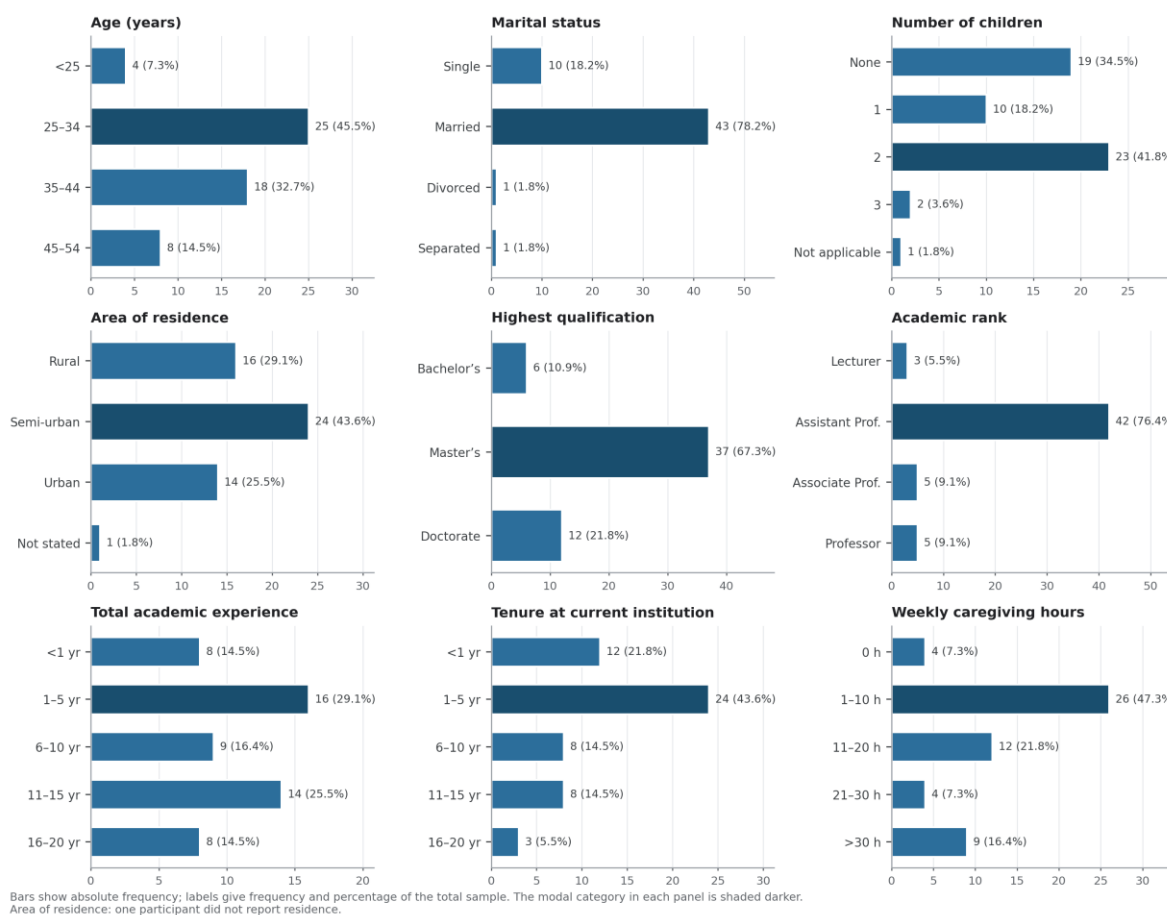


Figure 1: Demographic profile of female faculty members (n = 55).

Level of job satisfaction

Overall job satisfaction was high (Table 3, Figure 2). Thirty-six participants (65.5%) scored in the high band

(>75% of maximum; total score >131), 18 (32.7%) in the moderate band (50–75%; 88–131) and one (1.8%) in the low band (<50%; <88). Almost the entire cohort — 54 of 55

participants (98.2%) — therefore reported at least moderate satisfaction with the working environment.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of the level of job satisfaction in the working environment (n = 55)

Level of job satisfaction	% of maximum score	Total score range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
High	>75%	>131	36	65.5
Moderate	50–75%	88–131	18	32.7
Low	<50%	<88	1	1.8
Total			55	100.0

Figure 2. Level of job satisfaction in the working environment (n = 55)

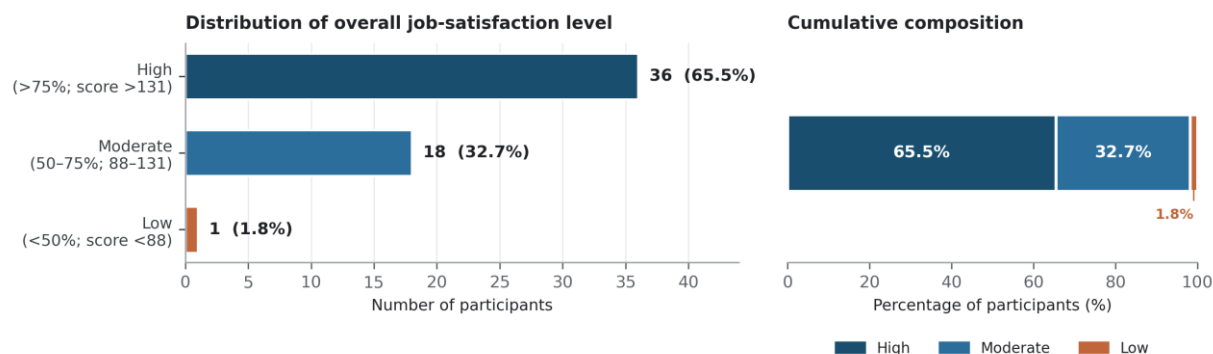


Figure 2: Level of job satisfaction in the working environment (n = 55).

Domain-wise job satisfaction

Domain-level results are presented in Table 4 and Figure 3. Six of the seven domains fell within the high-satisfaction band. Work environment recorded the highest mean score (21.96, SD 2.89; 87.8% of maximum) and, notably, the smallest standard deviation of any domain, indicating that favourable perceptions of the immediate working conditions were both high and consistently held. Recognition and job security followed (20.29, SD 4.14; 81.2%), then work–life balance (20.13, SD 3.56; 80.5%), inclusivity and gender equality (19.87, SD 3.86; 79.5%), support from peers and administration (19.84, SD 3.78;

79.4%) and professional development (19.67, SD 4.63; 78.7%). The mean total score across the seven domains was 137.96 of a possible 175, or 78.8% of maximum.

Compensation and benefits was the single exception and the only domain in the moderate band (16.20, SD 4.89; 64.8%). It sat 13.9 percentage points below the next-lowest domain and 23.0 points below the highest, and it carried the largest standard deviation of the seven, indicating that perceptions of remuneration were not merely lower on average but substantially more divergent across the cohort than perceptions of any other facet of the workplace.

Table 4: Domain-wise job satisfaction in the working environment (n = 55)

No.	Domain	Mean	SD	% of maximum	Level
1	Work environment	21.96	2.89	87.8	High
2	Recognition and job security	20.29	4.14	81.2	High
3	Work–life balance	20.13	3.56	80.5	High
4	Inclusivity and gender equality	19.87	3.86	79.5	High
5	Support from peers and administration	19.84	3.78	79.4	High
6	Professional development	19.67	4.63	78.7	High
7	Compensation and benefits	16.20	4.89	64.8	Moderate
	Total scale	137.96	—	78.8	High

Maximum attainable score per domain is 25 (5 items × 5 points) and 175 for the full scale. Domains are ordered by descending mean score.

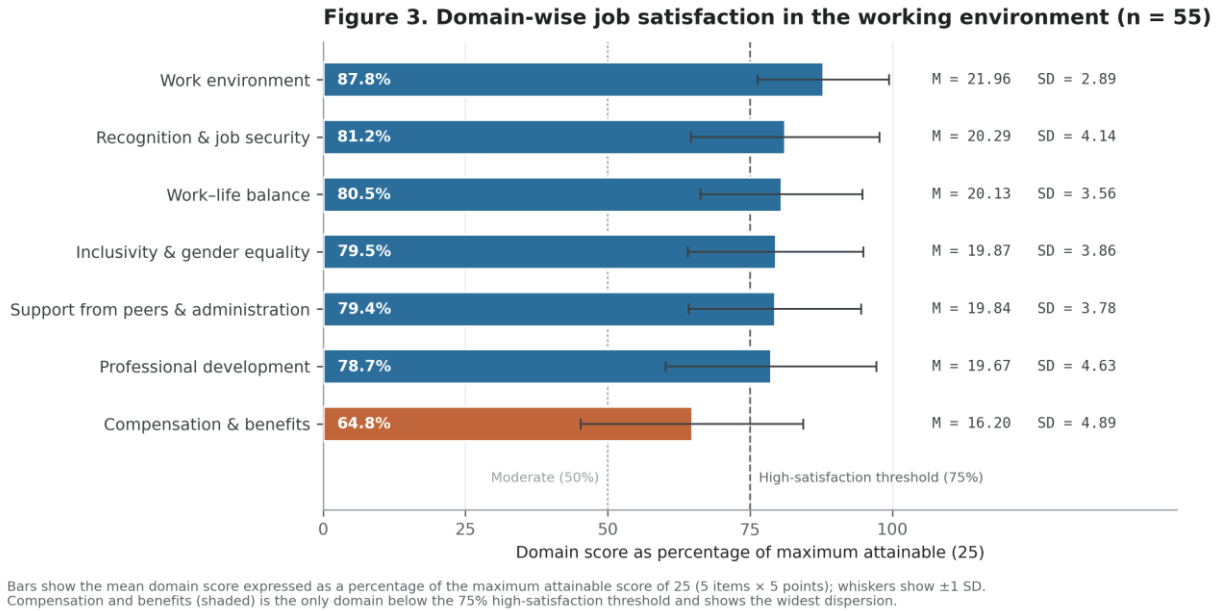


Figure 3. Domain-wise job satisfaction in the working environment (n = 55).

Association with demographic variables

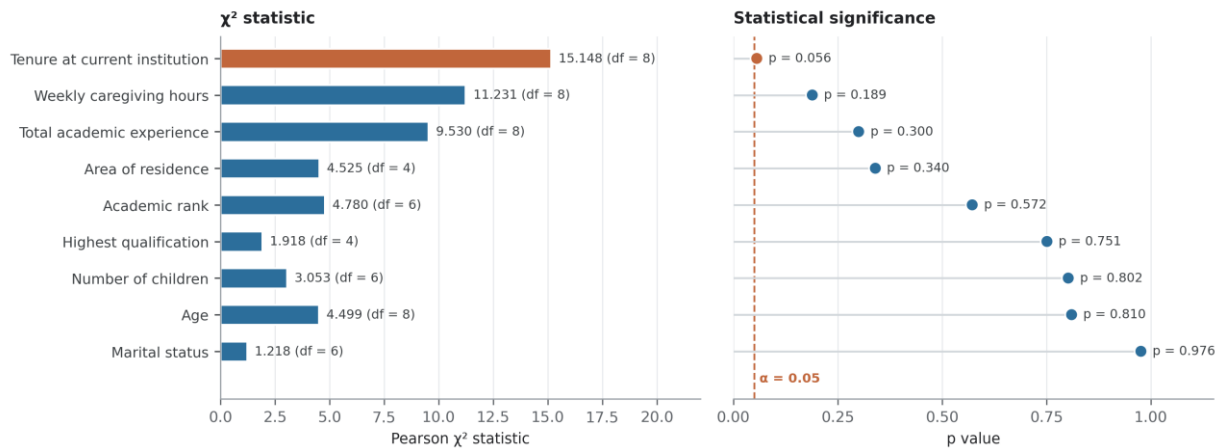
Chi-square analysis of the association between job-satisfaction level and the demographic variables is presented in Table 5 and Figure 4. None of the tested variables showed a statistically significant association at the 0.05 level. Tenure at the current institution produced the largest test statistic and approached but did not cross the conventional threshold ($\chi^2 = 15.148$, $df = 8$, $p = 0.056$). Weekly caregiving hours ($\chi^2 =$

11.231, $df = 8$, $p = 0.189$) and total academic experience ($\chi^2 = 9.530$, $df = 8$, $p = 0.300$) followed. The remaining variables — age, marital status, number of children, area of residence, highest qualification and academic rank — returned p values between 0.340 and 0.976. Employment status could not be tested, all participants being full-time. The null hypothesis was therefore retained for every demographic variable examined.

Table 5: Association between the level of job satisfaction in the working environment and selected demographic variables (n = 55)

S. No.	Demographic variable	χ^2 value	df	p value	Inference
1	Age (years)	4.499	8	0.810	Not significant
2	Marital status	1.218	6	0.976	Not significant
3	Number of children	3.053	6	0.802	Not significant
4	Area of residence	4.525	4	0.340	Not significant
5	Highest qualification	1.918	4	0.751	Not significant
6	Employment status	—	—	—	Not testable ^a
7	Academic rank	4.780	6	0.572	Not significant
8	Total experience in academics	9.530	8	0.300	Not significant
9	Years at current institution	15.148	8	0.056	Not significant; approaches threshold
10	Weekly caregiving hours	11.231	8	0.189	Not significant

Pearson chi-square test; significance set at $p < 0.05$. ^aAll participants were employed full-time, so the variable was invariant and could not be tested. Expected cell frequencies were below five in several tests; results should be interpreted as inconclusive rather than as evidence of no association.

Figure 4. Association between job-satisfaction level and demographic variables (n = 55)

Variables ordered by ascending p value. No association reached statistical significance at $\alpha = 0.05$; tenure at the current institution (shaded, $p = 0.056$) approached but did not cross the threshold. Employment status could not be tested because all participants were full-time.

Figure 4: Association between job-satisfaction level and demographic variables (n = 55).

DISCUSSION

This study assessed job satisfaction in the working environment among 55 female faculty members at a group of educational institutions in northern Tamil Nadu and examined its association with demographic characteristics. Three findings emerge: satisfaction was high overall and high in six of seven domains; compensation and benefits was the sole deficit and the most internally divergent domain; and no demographic characteristic was significantly associated with satisfaction level, with tenure at the current institution the only variable approaching significance.

A high-satisfaction workplace with one structural deficit

The finding that 65.5% of participants reported high satisfaction and 98.2% at least moderate satisfaction places this cohort at the favourable end of the reported range for academic health-professions faculty. Comparative data from Canada and the United States report substantial variability in nursing faculty satisfaction, with dissatisfaction clustering around workload and compensation rather than around collegial or environmental factors [7]. The present pattern is consistent with that clustering: the domains reflecting the immediate lived experience of the workplace scored highest, while the domain reflecting the material terms of employment scored lowest. A review of the determinants of academic staff satisfaction and retention reaches the same conclusion at sector level: relational and developmental conditions retain staff, while remuneration sets the floor below which retention fails [41]. Qualitative work with female health-science academics in Thailand similarly locates satisfaction in collegial relationships, professional recognition and institutional support rather than in material reward [27].

The domain profile maps closely onto Herzberg's two-factor formulation [2]. The six high-scoring domains —

work environment, recognition and job security, work-life balance, inclusivity and gender equality, peer and administrative support, and professional development — correspond to motivators and to relational hygiene factors that were evidently adequate. Compensation and benefits, the classic hygiene factor, was the only domain in deficit. Herzberg's prediction is that adequate pay does not itself generate satisfaction but that inadequate pay generates dissatisfaction; the corollary for the present institution is that raising the compensation score would be expected to remove a source of dissatisfaction rather than to raise overall satisfaction proportionally. This distinction matters for how institutions allocate limited resources, and it is reinforced by evidence that compensation, workload and satisfaction interact rather than operate independently among health-professions faculty [43].

The dispersion data are as informative as the means. Work environment recorded both the highest mean and the lowest standard deviation (2.89), indicating a shared and stable perception of favourable working conditions. Compensation and benefits recorded the lowest mean and the highest standard deviation (4.89), indicating that dissatisfaction with remuneration was not uniform but concentrated in a subgroup. Because rank, qualification and experience were not significantly associated with overall satisfaction, the source of that divergence cannot be inferred from the present dataset; it is a specific and answerable question for follow-up work.

The primacy of relational and environmental factors

The high scores for peer and administrative support (79.4%), recognition and job security (81.2%) and inclusivity and gender equality (79.5%) are the substantive explanation for the overall result. This is consistent with a large body of evidence identifying leadership and collegial climate as the

dominant modifiable determinants of faculty satisfaction. Systematic review evidence links leadership style to nurses' job satisfaction in the overwhelming majority of studies examined [14]; transformational leadership predicts higher faculty satisfaction and lower burnout [15]; authentic leadership is positively associated with satisfaction among nursing professors [13]; and perceived leadership support is associated with both satisfaction and intent to remain among nurse educators [26]. Qualitative work has specified the mechanism at the level of observable behaviour — visibility, advocacy, transparent decision-making and protection of faculty time — and translated it into an implementable managerial guide [9,10]. Perceived supervisory support has likewise been shown to mediate the relationship between organisational justice and both engagement and performance in Indian educational settings [37], and scholars' perceptions of organisational support are shaped by concrete departmental practice rather than by stated policy [38]. The relationship between educator satisfaction and turnover intention is sufficiently established to have become the subject of dedicated evidence synthesis [21].

The converse literature strengthens the inference. Faculty-to-faculty incivility is independently associated with reduced satisfaction and increased intent to leave [22]; competing organisational values and adverse job demands–resources configurations depress satisfaction at departmental level [39]; and empowerment and trust are central to satisfaction among tenured faculty [40]. That the present cohort scored highly on precisely the domains these studies identify as vulnerable suggests that the institutional climate is a genuine asset rather than an artefact of measurement.

Work–life balance and caregiving load

The work–life balance score of 80.5% deserves careful reading against the caregiving data. Ninety-three per cent of participants reported weekly caregiving responsibilities and 16.4% reported more than 30 hours per week — a second working week superimposed on a full-time academic post. That a cohort carrying this load nonetheless reported high work–life balance satisfaction is a substantive finding, and it aligns with meta-synthesis evidence that nurse educators pursue work–life *integration* rather than separation, negotiating porous boundaries rather than defending rigid ones [16]. Indian evidence indicates that work–life balance mediates the relationship between flexible work arrangements and both job satisfaction and quality of life among women faculty [28,29], and work-design analyses argue that sustainable balance in higher education depends on structural provision rather than individual coping strategies [32].

Two cautions apply. First, satisfaction with work–life balance and the objective sustainability of the arrangement are distinct constructs; high satisfaction may coexist with a workload that is not sustainable over a full career, and the literature on women academics in South Asia documents precisely such accommodation [30,31]. Evidence

from other female-majority teaching workforces indicates that willingness to continue in post is shaped by the interaction of workload, support and domestic responsibility rather than by any single factor [55]. Second, that weekly caregiving hours showed no significant association with satisfaction ($p = 0.189$) should not be read as evidence that caregiving is costless. With 55 participants distributed across five caregiving bands and three satisfaction levels, the analysis had limited power to detect an association of moderate size.

Inclusivity, gender equality and career structure

Inclusivity and gender equality scored 79.5%, placing perceived equity within the high band. This sits against a wider literature documenting persistent structural disadvantage for women in academic careers: slower advancement across academic health specialties [54], barriers to leadership participation [53], disproportionate disruption of research productivity and tenure progression [48], and progression shaped by the interaction of societal expectation, institutional structure and life-stage timing [49,50,52]. Work on women physicians in India describes resilience exercised within inequality regimes that remain in place [51].

The rank distribution in the present cohort illustrates the tension. Although 21.8% held a doctorate, 76.4% occupied the Assistant Professor grade and only 18.2% held Associate Professor or Professor rank. Perceived equity was high, yet the career structure remained bottom-heavy. These observations are not contradictory: perceived inclusivity concerns interpersonal and procedural fairness in daily working life, whereas rank distribution reflects institutional demography, promotion cycles and the short institutional tenure documented in Section 3.1. They are, however, a reminder that favourable climate perceptions do not by themselves demonstrate structural equity, and that the two require separate monitoring.

Absence of demographic associations and the tenure signal

That no demographic variable reached significance is itself informative: within this cohort, satisfaction was not patterned by age, marital status, parenthood, residence, qualification or rank. The implication is that satisfaction is being determined by organisational and environmental factors held broadly in common rather than by individual attributes — an interpretation consistent with the domain results and with evidence that organisational commitment and work environment, rather than demographic profile, drive faculty intent to stay [24,33]. It should be noted that demographic differences in satisfaction and work–life balance have been reported among prelicensure nursing faculty elsewhere [11], so the absence of such differences here may reflect the homogeneity and size of this cohort as much as a genuine null effect.

The one signal worth pursuing is tenure at the current institution ($p = 0.056$). Given the sample size, a p

value of this magnitude is better treated as a hypothesis-generating observation than as a negative result. Its plausibility is supported by the tenure distribution: 65.5% of participants had five years or less of service at the institution, the interval during which organisational socialisation, promotion expectation and person–organisation fit are typically resolved. Person–organisation fit has been shown to predict turnover intention through need–supply and demand–ability fit [44], and job satisfaction reduces turnover intention through organisational commitment among Indian faculty [33]. A larger study specifically powered to examine the tenure gradient would be the logical next step.

Implications for practice

Four implications follow. First, the institution should identify and protect the specific leadership and collegial practices producing the high environmental and support scores; these are the mechanisms the wider literature identifies as most vulnerable to erosion [22,39] and most consequential for retention [23,26]. Second, compensation and benefits require structured review — not only of quantum but of transparency, of the non-salary benefit package, and of the equity of its distribution, given the wide dispersion observed. Third, the mid-tenure window suggested by the tenure signal warrants active management through structured mentorship, transparent promotion pathways and periodic review, particularly given the bottom-heavy rank distribution. Fourth, given the caregiving load documented here, formal flexibility provisions should be treated as institutional infrastructure rather than as discretionary concession [16,29,32]. Periodic, anonymous, domain-resolved satisfaction monitoring would allow each of these to be tracked over time. Where institutions choose to add individual-level wellbeing provision, it should complement rather than substitute for these structural measures; trials of such programmes among nurse academicians report measurable but modest effects on satisfaction and burnout [25].

Limitations

Several limitations qualify these findings. The sample of 55 was drawn from a single institutional group by non-probability convenience sampling, which restricts generalisability to other institutions, states and sectors, and admits the possibility that more satisfied faculty were more available or more willing to participate. All measures were self-reported and collected by an investigator internal to the institution, so social desirability may have inflated satisfaction scores despite assurances of anonymity. The instrument was investigator-developed with content validity established by expert review, but internal-consistency and construct-validity evidence is not reported here, and

comparison with studies using established instruments should therefore be made cautiously. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference and cannot capture change over the academic year. With 55 participants distributed across three satisfaction levels and up to five demographic categories, expected cell frequencies in several chi-square tests were below the conventional threshold of five, so those tests were underpowered and the non-significant results should be read as inconclusive rather than as evidence of no association; exact or likelihood-ratio methods would be preferable in a replication. Male faculty were excluded by design, so no gender comparison is possible. Finally, one participant did not report area of residence, and the study did not measure workload volume, salary level, promotion history or turnover intention, which limits the depth of interpretation available for the compensation and tenure findings.

CONCLUSION

The majority of female faculty members in this study reported a high level of job satisfaction with their working environment, and almost the entire cohort reported at least moderate satisfaction. Satisfaction was highest for the immediate work environment, recognition and job security, and work–life balance, and was high for inclusivity and gender equality, peer and administrative support, and professional development. Compensation and benefits was the only domain in the moderate band and the only clear deficit, and it was also the domain on which perceptions diverged most widely. No demographic characteristic was significantly associated with satisfaction level, indicating that satisfaction in this setting is shaped by organisational and environmental conditions held in common rather than by individual attributes; tenure at the current institution approached significance and merits dedicated investigation. For practice, the findings support a dual strategy: deliberately preserving the supportive climate, leadership behaviours and collegial relationships that are producing the high domain scores, while undertaking a structured review of compensation and benefits and instituting mentorship and promotion support across the first five years of institutional service. For research, the priorities are replication in larger, multi-institutional and probability-sampled cohorts using validated instruments; comparison across institutional types and between male and female faculty; longitudinal designs capable of testing the tenure gradient; and qualitative enquiry into the sources of the wide divergence in compensation perceptions.

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