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ASSESSING SKILL REQUIREMENTS AND COMPENSATION STRUCTURES FOR CREW MEMBERS IN THE INDIAN AVIATION INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This study looks into the different skills that crew members in India's aviation industry need and whether their pay really reflects the responsibilities and risks that come with their jobs. As India's aviation industry grows quickly, new duties have been added for cabin crew, such as emergency management, technical knowledge, and mental toughness. However, concerns have been raised about whether their pay is fair, and the study uses a mix of surveys and interviews with cabin crew and HR professionals from major Indian airlines to find that there is a big difference between what they are paid and what they are expected to do. This shows that we need a more skill- and risk-based pay system to make sure that employees are happy, stay with the company, and follow global standards.

Keywords: Aviation Industry, Cabin Crew, Skill Set, Compensation, India, Job Risk, Human Resource Management

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian aviation industry has witnessed unprecedented growth over the last two decades, fueled by liberalization policies, rising disposable incomes, and increased connectivity. Amid this growth, airline crew members—particularly cabin crew and flight attendants—play a critical role in ensuring passenger safety, comfort, and operational efficiency. Despite their visible role and the high demands of the job, there are growing concerns regarding whether their compensation justly reflects the skill set and occupational hazards they face.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research in the aviation domain highlights the multifaceted roles of cabin crew, which extend beyond customer service to include emergency management, first aid, cultural sensitivity, and psychological resilience (Smith, 2019; Kumar & Joshi, 2021).

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) also emphasizes ongoing training in safety procedures, conflict resolution, and technical know-how.

In India, several studies (Sharma & Thomas, 2020; Banerjee, 2022) have raised concerns regarding crew compensation. While the responsibilities have diversified, especially in post-pandemic times, pay scales have remained relatively stagnant. Comparative studies also show a wage disparity between Indian crew members and their global counterparts despite similar workloads.

3. OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Objectives

To understand various skill set required by the crew members in the Indian Aviation Industry.

To know whether crew members get pay scale commensurate to job risk and skills set required

Hypothesis

Set 1

H1: The crew members do require a specific skill set to perform their duties in Aviation Industry

H0: The crew members do not require a specific skill set to perform their duties in Aviation Industry

Set 2

H1: crew members get pay scale commensurate to job risk and skills set required.

H0: crew members do not get pay scale commensurate to job risk and skills set required.

4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Following are some of the limitations

Limitation of time - The time available for collecting data was a limitation

Respondent's biasness is beyond anyone's control

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Nature of the Study

This is a descriptive and analytical research study, using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The study uses primary data collected through structured questionnaires and is supported by relevant secondary data to enhance contextual understanding.

Primary Data Collection

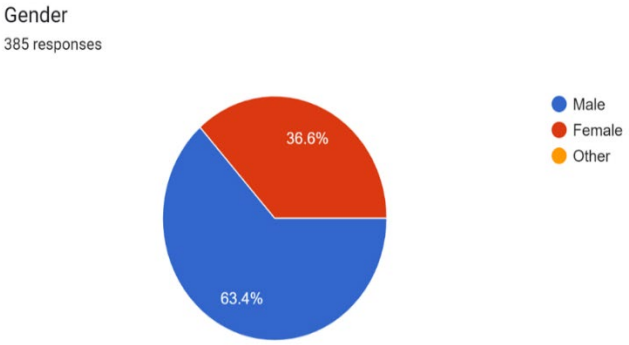
Primary data was gathered directly from the target population—aviation crew members, including cabin crew, flight attendants, and associated in-flight personnel—using a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The questions were designed to assess multiple dimensions including work environment, mental and physical stress levels, job satisfaction, career growth opportunities, operational constraints, and personal challenges.

A total of 385 respondents participated in the survey, forming the final data set for analysis.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Profile of the respondents

1) gender



A breakdown of the respondents by gender is provided below:

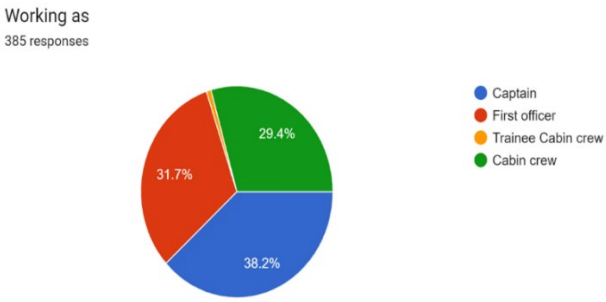
Number of Female Respondents: 142

Total Participation Rate: 36%

Male: Total Respondent Count = 243, i.e. 63.1% . of All Respondents.

Overall, we had: A total of 385 participants were surveyed for this study.

2) Working as



Working as	Frequency	Percentage
Captain	147	38.2
First Officer	122	31.7
Trainee cabin crew	3	0.70
Cabin crew	113	29.4
Total	385	100

To sum up, this table shows how the different job roles are spread out in the flight business that was studied. As you can see, the ranks are spread out, with Captains and First Officers, who are mostly pilots, standing out. Then there are the Cabin Crew, which includes flight workers and a small group of Trainee Cabin Crew. Understanding how job roles are distributed is important for understanding the structure of the workforce and can help with specific challenges or possibilities in the aircraft business that have to do with the workforce.

Objective 1: To understand various skill sets required by the crew members in the Indian Aviation Industry.

One objective of this study is to understand the skill set required by crew members in the Aviation industry in India. To be able to conclude that certain skill set is required for crew members, we need to determine whether the job performance of any crew members is influenced by the skill set acquired through training. To this effect we ask the question, is job performance independent of special training to acquire skills?

To be able to answer this question we formulate the hypothesis below:

H1 The crew members do require a specific skill set to perform their duties in the Aviation Industry

H0 The crew members do not require a specific skill set to perform their duties in the Aviation Industry

The data collected is shown below:

		Does your Job need special training?		Total
		Yes	No	
Working as	Captain	146	1	147
	First officer	121	1	122
	Trainee Cabin Crew	4	0	4
	Cabin Crew	108	4	112
Total		379	6	385

Fisher's exact test

Test Statistics		
	Working as	Does your Job need a special training?
Chi-Square	124.642[a]	361.374[b]
df	3	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000
Exact Sig.	.000	.000
Point Probability	.000	.000
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 96.3.		
b. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 192.5.		

7. DISCUSSION

A chi-square test of independence done using Fisher's exact test to determine whether job performance is independent of the need for special training in the aviation industry shows that there is a significant relationship between the job a person does and the need for training ($\chi 2(3) = 124.642$, $p < .001$). The null hypothesis is rejected suggesting that there is enough evidence to support the alternative hypothesis that crew members do require a specific skill set to perform their duties in the Aviation Industry.

Objective 2: To know whether crew members get a pay scale commensurate to job risk and skills set required.

The hypothesis below was formulated to be tested using the Chi-square test of independence:

H1: crew members get a pay scale commensurate to job risk and skills set required.

H0: crew members do not get a pay scale commensurate to the job risk and skills set required.

Do you think that you are paid enough to cover above mentioned risks and special abilities required to do the job * Your salary includes Crosstabulation						
Count						
		Your salary includes				Total
		Fixed pay	Fixed pay + flying allowance	Fixed pay + flying allowance + overtime pay	Other, stipend, variable pay/salary	
	Yes	9	81	118	0	208

Do you think that you are paid enough to cover above mentioned risks and special abilities required to do the job?	No	19	73	60	2	154
	not sure	6	4	13	0	23
Total		34	158	191	2	385

Test Statistics		
Chi-Square	141.044[a]	265.442[b]
df	2	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000
Exact Sig.	.000	.000
Point Probability	.000	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 128.3.

b. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 96.3.

8. DISCUSSION

Fisher's exact test on whether aircraft crew members get a pay scale appropriate with the work risk and skill set necessary yielded a chi-square test of independence. The test's findings demonstrated a substantial correlation between the compensation package of aviation professionals and the hazards they face and the skills they need ($\chi 2(2) = 141.044$, $p < .001$). The alternative hypothesis—that crew members get a pay scale commensurate with work risk and the necessary skill set—is supported by enough data, according to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

9. CONCLUSION

It becomes apparent that job accomplishments in the aviation business is not separate from the need for special training to learn skills. People who work in flight need to go through special training. This means that flight workers who have been trained are more likely to do a good job than workers who don't need or want training.

There is a conclusion that crew members do think they are paid enough for the risks they talked about and the special skills they need for their jobs.

The study's conclusion is that Indian crew members have a wide range of advanced skills, but their pay doesn't fully reflect the risks and demands of the job. This imbalance could make it easier for people to quit their jobs and be unhappy with their jobs in the industry.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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