FACTORS INFLUENCING THAI FLIGHT ATTENDANTS' LONG-TERM JOB COMMITMENT

JARUWAN CHAROENRATANAPIROM

A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MANAGEMENT
COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY
2023

Thematic paper
entitled

FACTORS INFLUENCING THAI FLIGHT ATTENDANTS' LONG-TERM JOB COMMITMENT

was submitted to the College of Management, Mahidol University
for the degree of Master of Management
on
28 April 2024

....
Jaruwan   C.
Ms. Jaruwan Charoenratanapirom
Candidate

....
Assoc. Prof. Astrid Kainzbauer,
Ph.D.
Advisor

....
Assoc. Prof. Randall Shannon,
Ph.D.
Chairperson

....
Assoc. Prof. Vichita Ractham,
Ph.D.
Dean
College of Management
Mahidol University

....
Asst. Prof. Manjiri Kunte,
Ph.D.
Committee member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FACTORS INFLUENCING THAI FLIGHT ATTENDANTS' LONG-TERM JOB COMMITMENT

JARUWAN CHAROENRATANAPIROM   6549068

M.M. (ENTREPRENEURSHIP MANAGEMENT)

THEMATIC PAPER ADVISORY COMMITTEE: ASSOC. PROF. ASTRID KAINZBAUER, Ph.D., ASSOC. PROF. RANDALL SHANNON, Ph.D., ASST. PROF. MANJIRI KUNTE, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The research topic "Factors influencing flight attendants' long-term commitment" explores various factors influencing the decision-making of flight attendants in this profession over a long period of time. It highlights motivators, work challenges, factors affecting job satisfaction, and expectations towards the career of flight attendants. Research employs qualitative methods which focus on in-depth interviews with 12 flight attendants, divided into 6 persons from low-cost airlines in Thailand and 6 persons from full-service airlines.

This research has summarized the main motivating factors affecting the work of flight attendants, which in turn impact their job satisfaction. Whether it is about income, flexibility in work hours, or relationship with colleagues, dealing with pressure and unexpected situations remains a constant challenge in this profession that cannot be avoided.

This research also provides recommendations and suggestions for those who are interested in pursuing a career as a flight attendant. The challenges they may encounter in this profession is also indicated. The aim is to provide useful insights for individuals considering this career path and for those already in it who wish to further develop themselves for more efficient and effective work.

KEY WORDS: FLIGHT ATTENDANT/ MOTIVATORS/ LONG-TERM/ COMMITMENT/ THAILAND

33 pages

CONTENTS

CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Flight attendants, a profession that many in Thailand aspire to, dream of the opportunity to be chosen in this career. This is because of the allure of the job itself, the undeniable aspect is the attractive compensation and benefits offered by working in the aviation industry. Primarily, it involves the privilege of purchasing airline tickets at a lower cost than the normal fares. These are some of the advantages that captivate the interest of many who aspire to be part of this industry.

In addition to the positive aspects that outsiders see, whether it is low-cost airlines or full-service carriers, everyone who has passed the selection process and completed thorough training must adapt and learn to solve specific issues promptly and effectively when they start working. Furthermore, it is essential for those chosen to be highly focused in order to gain knowledge and pass all examinations consistently. From my own experiences, the training standards require a passing rate of 90%, meaning everyone must work diligently and be patient to successfully complete the training and undertake their desired career as a flight attendant. During flights, there are situations that are unpredictable, and there is often limited time for task completion, leading to easily arising pressure. However, it remains a profession that demands resilience and the application of skills in time management and adept problem-solving. Those who appreciate the positive aspects derived from this profession must also accept and understand the challenges that may arise during their journey in this career path.

If we talk about the perception of the profession of a flight attendant before the COVID-19 pandemic, the perspective might differ from this moment. Few would have thought that the airline industry could be so uncertain. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the perception of job security in the aviation profession.

Due to country closures during the pandemic, nearly all airlines suspended their flights, leading to almost a 100% cancellation in flight schedules. Talking about the professions of pilots and flight attendants during that period, the income was almost

reduced to zero because main income depends on the number of flight hours they have done. When it comes to post Covid-19 pandemic, the majority of individuals have been compelled by the pandemic to experience adverse emotions, including anxiety and fear. Additionally, due to limitations in growth opportunities, the difficulty in advancing, and high competition, there are limited positions for career advancement compared to other industries that often offer position adjustments as well as income increments regularly. Besides, the career path beyond that may seem less clear or may require a shift in responsibilities. This becomes evident that in the long term, the career growth for flight attendants may not be as substantial as in typical corporate positions.

As I am a student under Entrepreneurship Management who aspires to do a business, this curiosity raises questions about what aspects continue to attract many people to pursue a career in this field for an extended period. In some cases, until retirement age. It implies that the growth rate in terms of career advancement is relatively limited. Most individuals in this profession tend to stay in the same position for 10 to 20 years, which is considered normal for this occupation. Why do these people still choose to pursue this career rather than exploring other options, such as starting their own business or transitioning to positions in various companies that appear to offer more opportunities for career advancement? What significance does this profession hold for them, and what factors influence their decision to continue working in this field continuously? This includes their ability to manage their own emotional well-being or there is a significant thing that makes them feel united. I would like to incorporate this aspect as one of the factors in evaluating the decision-making process of those who choose to continue working in this position. I am interested in understanding the reasons why they choose to stay in this position for the long term, even if it may affect their well-being. Additionally, if there is no apparent benefit for them in doing so, I want to explore how they effectively manage their emotions to navigate both their work and personal lives.

This paper will be based on a qualitative research method. The interviewees consist of flight attendants from both low-cost airlines and full-service airlines. The purpose is to summarize the results based on the established observations. The set of questions below is what I will use to inquire and analyze the factors that contribute to many people seeing this profession as a stable career for them in the long run.

- What are the factors that motivate the interviewees to work as a flight attendant?

- What are the factors that keep the interviewees in this career long-term?

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

The scope of this study is to uncover the key factors that influence the decision of an individual to pursue a long-term career as a flight attendant. Despite the health-related issues and stress that may arise as well as the relatively low growth rate compared to other professions, this is to discover what are the reasons that make them choose this career as their long-term profession.

From researching various theories and papers related to the research topic of **"Factors influencing flight attendants' long-term job commitment"**, the obtained information and theories that are interesting for further study, as follows:

1. Flight attendant's health concerns, Emotional Influence and job stress
- Emotional labor
2. Flight attendant's workplace motivation
- Maslow's Hierarchy of needs
3. Flight attendant and job satisfaction
- Herzberg's theory

2.1 Flight attendant's health concerns, Emotional Influence, and job stress

Health issues of flight attendants are unavoidable topics for discussion, as they have long-term implications and are influenced by various factors that come with aging. These factors are mainly attributed to frequent changes in air pressure conditions, inadequate rest periods, and prolonged periods of heavy lifting. According to the research study about the health implications among flight attendants by comparing their health to that of the general people (McNeely et al., 2018), the case study categorizes types of health impacts that flight attendants have to endure. It was done with the sample group being flight attendants on U.S. flights. The study stated that there are occurrences

of particular negative health results among U.S. flight attendants in comparison to the broader population (McNeely et al., 2018). Diseases commonly found in flight attendants include various types of cancer, sleep-related disorders, urinary tract infections, and diseases related to cosmic ionizing radiation. (Sweeney. 2018)

In line with the above data, there are also specific details about Emotional labor of Thai flight attendants under full service airlines on job stress and satisfaction (Chuaychoo, 2022). This study focused on the emotions and stress that flight attendants have to bear during their work, the author emphasizes the target group of full-service airline flight attendants. The study discusses the relationship between emotions and expressions that must be presented to passengers which sometimes goes in a different direction. This is potentially leading to stress among airline staff. The article also points out that passengers' expectations for flight attendants on each flight significantly affect the mental well-being of the cabin crew. All these factors have an impact on job satisfaction as well.

This case study utilizes the emotional labor theory for evaluation, categorizing it into two subtopics: Surface acting and Deep acting (Hochschild, 1983).

2.1.1 Surface acting

Surface acting is an act of expressing a particular emotion. You simply pretend that you are experiencing the feelings you desire at that moment and carry on (The World of Work Project, 2021).

2.1.2 Deep acting

The adoption of deep acting happens when someone dedicates a time, effort, and energy commitment to modify their underlying mood to match the desired attitude at work (The World of Work Project, 2021).

The summarized results provide the following definitions, "Surface acting had a significant positive impact on job stress, while deep acting had a significant negative influence on job stress. In contrast, surface acting had a negative effect on job satisfaction, while deep acting had a positive influence on job satisfaction." (Chuaychoo, 2022). To clarify this sentence, deep acting is a key predictor of job satisfaction. The study also recommends that human resource management should prioritize deep acting

when recruiting flight attendants, potentially utilizing emotional labor screening tests to identify candidates with a high level of deep acting as it is a significant predictor for decreasing job stress and increasing job satisfaction. The summarized results highlight the significant impact of the company's practices and human resource management on flight attendants that play an important role on one's decision to either continue working with the organization for an extended period or only for a limited time.

2.2 Flight attendant's workplace motivation

Research work has discussed the ways to increase motivation among flight attendants' motivation after the COVID-19 crisis in Thailand (Ravinnipa, 2022). Providing insights into factors influencing employees' feelings, as well as various effects on the airline industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenging circumstances posed by the pandemic, the study emphasizes that working in the field of flight attendants remains intriguing for many individuals. The author has utilized the 'Maslow's hierarchy of needs' theory (Maslow, 1943) as an indicator of motivational factors affecting work. From this research, it can be summarized that the majority of employees were concerned about a decrease in compensation during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is considered a primary motivating factor in their work, arising from their connection with the organization and their liking for the flexible nature of the job. However, there is still concern about the uncertainty that may arise in the future. Therefore, the company can make employees feel safe through effective communication that benefits them, leading to greater job satisfaction and a desire to stay in the organization.

Figure 2.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

This theory originates from the psychologist Abraham Maslow, since 1943 in his work titled 'A Theory of Human Motivation' and further elaborated in the book 'Motivation and Personality.' It is a theory that discusses the hierarchy of human needs, which develop to be needs and desires. It consists of five levels, wherein each level serves as a stimulus for individuals to engage in various activities to meet those needs. The hierarchy is depicted as a pyramid, starting with the basic Physiological needs at the bottom, such as shelter and food, gradually progressing through increasingly complex stages. Until the highest level is Self-actualization. All subsequent topics will delve into each level of needs more comprehensively.

2.2.1 Physiological needs

The physiological needs are the basic physical requirements that enable humans to live life. For example; air, food, water, shelter, and clothing. Before obtaining these necessities, the case study mentioned that what would enable flight attendants to achieve goals in this stage is simply based on the money or salary they receive (Ravinnipa, 2022). Money is considered a stimulus that motivates people to work. Having sufficient financial resources allows individuals to lead a complete life and fulfill these basic needs.

2.2.2 Safety needs

When the basic physiological needs are fully met, the next level of need that arises is safety. This involves a sense of stability and security in various aspects such as employment, living environment, and financial savings. For individuals, these elements contribute to a feeling of stability, free from fear. In this stage, research suggests that everyone works and expects returns to create financial security and stability in their lives (Ravinnipa, 2022).

2.2.3 Belongingness and love needs

When we are able to create a sense of security for ourselves, the next thing we seek is acceptance from those around us. This can be in the form of various types of love or even ownership, feeling loved and accepted. Companies can create a social and

organizational culture to bring everyone together, making all flight attendants feel accepted and contributing to the development of a strong organization.

2.2.4 Esteem needs

When we have received acceptance and love from those around us, the next thing we seek is self-acceptance or building self-respect. This results from having confidence in who we are, having the opportunity to make decisions in various aspects of work, and progressing in job responsibilities, including receiving increased salaries. According to the research, "In the context of flight attendants, those who have experienced their self- esteem needs to be met would further improve job performance and satisfaction." (Ravinnipa, 2022).

2.2.5 Self-actualization

Self-actualization can be described as the highest level of need in this theory (Perera, 2024), signifying the continuous development of oneself to the fullest extent in order to achieve the predetermined goals in life. It draws inspiration from various sources that may arise during work or in everyday life.

After studying various articles related to this theory, it can be concluded that companies can motivate employees to stay in their current positions for a long time by aligning goals with the tasks they perform. Continuous performance measurement is essential to develop both the employees and the organization together. This addresses various needs discussed earlier and involves creating a desirable organizational culture and activities, as well as providing attractive rewards to enhance employee engagement in their work.

2.3 Flight attendant and job satisfaction

Research on the topic of flight attendant's job satisfaction and turnover (Baloch, 2014), it involved investigating factors influencing the work of flight attendants, such as income, job satisfaction, and coworker relationships, work and family conflicts, as well as absenteeism rates and work efficiency of the flight attendants at Peshawar base, Pakistan. This study helps us understand the impact of external factors, aiming to

improve both the organization and its personnel at Peshawar base. The results indicated that pay and promotion significantly influenced job satisfaction, turnover intention, performance. Higher pay contributed to increased job satisfaction. Timely promotions also positively affected satisfaction levels and reduced turnover. The study also accepted hypotheses related to family work conflict, work-family conflict, and high workload. Family-oriented conflicts had a negative impact on job satisfaction and performance, leading to higher absenteeism and turnover intention. Similarly, high workloads affected family life and contributed to job dissatisfaction. The quality of supervisor-subordinate relationships played a crucial role in job satisfaction, with positive transformational leadership contributing to a better work environment.

The author utilized Herzberg's theory (1968) to evaluate job satisfaction. Essentially, the theory can be divided into two primary factors that impact one's satisfaction: hygiene factors and motivation factors. "According to Herzberg, the opposite of 'Satisfaction' is 'No satisfaction' and the opposite of 'Dissatisfaction' is 'No Dissatisfaction'."(Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation, n.d.).
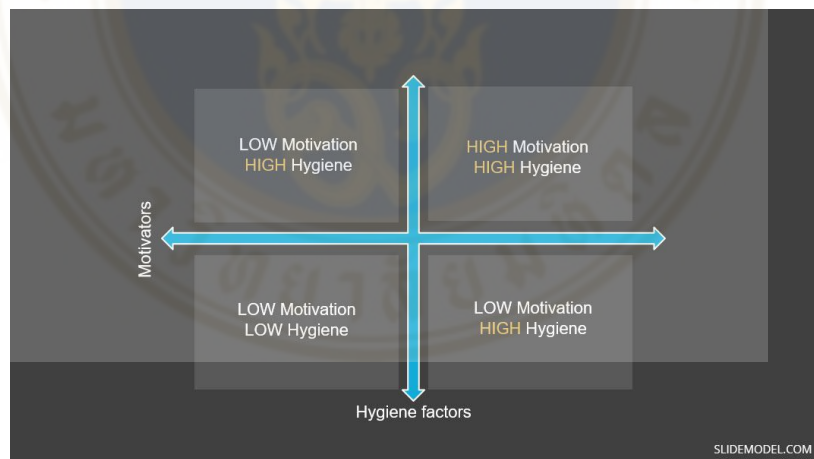
Figure 2.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation

The summarization of flight attendant's job satisfaction and turnover (Baloch, 2014), indicates factors which significantly affect the job satisfaction of flight attendants. For example; pay, promotion, security, co-worker and support. One interesting aspect of this research is the statement that "One of the points of dissatisfaction or no satisfaction (Herzberg) is related to extended flight hours." (Baloch, 2014).

However, working in an appropriate quantity is still essential for organizations. There are three major factors that play a role in job satisfaction of flight attendants.

1. Salary and timely promotions: contributing to employee satisfaction and reducing the turnover rate.

2. Work and family: conflicts that may arise between work and family also play a crucial role in employees' decisions to resign.

3. Proper company care and appropriate flight schedules: this also contributes to motivating employees and enhancing job satisfaction.

A profound understanding of employees' needs will enhance the responsiveness to those needs. All of these contribute to creating job satisfaction for employees, encouraging them to work with the organization for a longer duration.

After studying various research and articles, it is evident that the factors influencing the decision to work in the aviation industry for many flight attendants primarily stem from having a salary that is relatively satisfactory for the work performed, sufficient for daily living expenses, and the job's flexibility, allowing for a relatively good work-life-balance. These aspects serve as a motivator to continue working in this profession and contribute to job satisfaction. Additionally, creating and having a good relationship with colleagues who understand the same roles and responsibilities of the job can help create a positive working environment inside the company as well. Therefore, despite the physical and mental health challenges we face every day and with the appropriate management, the mentioned factors will naturally meet the long-term needs of flight attendants.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research on **"Factors influencing flight attendants' long-term job commitment"** has been based on using qualitative research methods to study and analyze the factors, including motivations and reasons, that contribute to the long-term aspirations of many individuals in pursuing the profession of flight attendant. Therefore, data collection and analysis plans have been outlined accordingly.

Qualitative method will be utilized to conduct this paper to collect and assess data with the goal of producing detailed and contextualized understandings of the observed phenomena (What Is Qualitative Research?, 2024), primarily using in-depth interviews based on 'why' and 'how' questions from the selected sample group for data collection. Additionally, I will share my personal experiences gained from a decade of involvement in this industry as a flight attendant of both low-cost airline and full-service airline. Therefore, the analysis obtained from selected interviewees and my personal experiences will contribute to a clearer understanding of the research.

3.1 Primary Data Collection Method

From Chapter 2, in the literature review exploring various factors influencing the decision to work as a flight attendant for an extended period, the gathered data provides insights of factors affecting different aspects such as physical and mental well-being of being a flight attendant. In addition, key external factors, including salary, time management, and promotion opportunities, play an important role which also impact job satisfaction. The study of this comprehensive information enhances understanding of key issues of being a flight attendant related to health concerns, motivations, job satisfaction. This serves as a basis for formulating focused interview questions.

3.1.1 Sample selection

The interviewee in this research includes 6 flight attendants from low-cost airlines in Thailand and 6 Thai flight attendants from full-service airlines representing various airlines in the world. All interviewees have at least 5 years of experience in the industry, providing a deep perspective and understanding of the job. It is anticipated that their insights will contribute to an interesting discussion about this profession.

3.1.2 Open-ended question

Open-ended questions will be used for the interviews, allowing the interviewees to share their experiences, information and opinions regarding the profession of flight attendants directly and openly. The questions will be categorized based on the main topics as outlined in the table below.

Table 3.1 Interview questions list

Factors to be investigated	Interview questions
Background	1. Why did you choose this profession, and what is your perception associated with this career? 2. How long have you been doing this, and what do you like about this job? 3. What kind of people do you believe this profession is suitable for?
Challenges	1. What obstacles do you encounter in your role as a flight attendant, and how have you managed to overcome them? 2. What challenges are presently part of your position? How do you deal with them?
Motivations	1. What factors make you want to continue doing this profession instead of changing fields? 2. What factors do you think would stimulate people to fully engage in their work and contribute more to the company? 3. What kind of support and benefits have you received from your company and are you satisfied with them? 4. What do you think the company can improve to secure their employees?

Table 3.1 Interview questions list (Cont.)

Factors to be investigated	Interview questions
Expectations	1. In the future do you still plan to be a flight attendant or consider moving to a new job? 2. Have you ever thought about changing the job? Why or why not?

3.1.3 Probing questions

Probing questions will be used to access more in-depth information. These questions may involve asking for further details or providing examples based on the responses received. The questions asked will continue to focus on issues that contribute to analysis and facilitate respondents in sharing information willingly.

3.1.4 Interview session

The interview will be conducted face-to-face or online, depending on the convenience of the interviewees. It will emphasize interactive conversation and sharing experiences based on the questions prepared. The familiarity between the interviewer and interviewees will create a genuine atmosphere, encouraging sincere responses and easing any apprehensions about exchanging thoughts. Data will be collected through audio recording and note taking for essential details, with an effort to keep the time for each person within 20-30 minutes.

3.1.5 Research framework

This research is an indication of the reasons that would make someone want to pursue a long-term career as a flight attendant. After collecting data from the interviewees and analyzing the received information, it provides insights into one's understanding of the job, including challenges and motivations at work. All of these factors serve as indicators of what makes them want to continue working in this profession. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation(1968) will be used to analyze and understand what individuals mostly desire from their careers and what companies can provide to capture their employee's wants and needs. All these factors lead to self-satisfaction, as well as job satisfaction, and creating a desire to continue working in the same job for a long time.
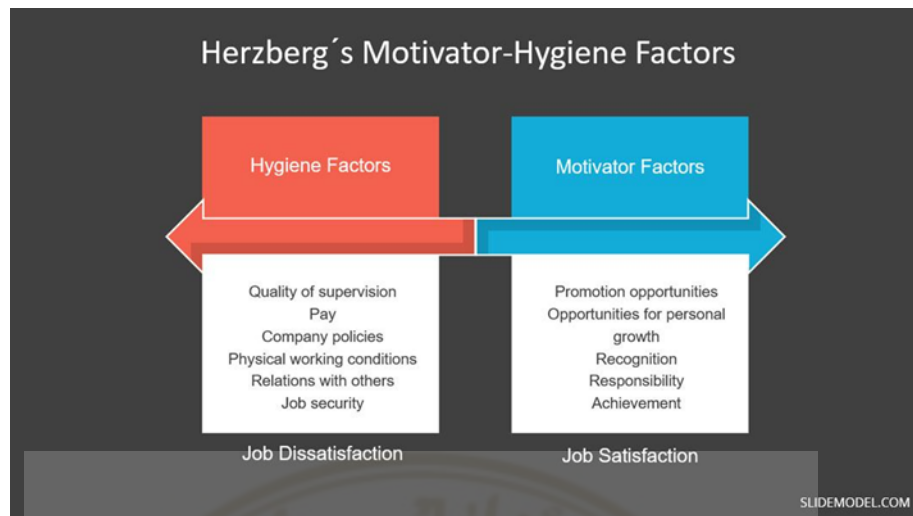
Figure 3.1 The research framework

This research not only helps an individual learn and understand the job in this area better, but also provides insights for those interested in this profession. The information gathered indicates the nature of the work, including the pros and cons, as well as the preparations required to become a flight attendant. This data can serve as valuable information for decision-making, providing a deeper understanding of the job.

Additionally, this work will help the airline better understand the needs of its employees in order to meet the needs of its flight attendants which can create job satisfaction. Moreover, it helps enhance flight attendants' motivation to work for the company in the long run.

CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH FINDINGS

The primary research approach of this research is based on a qualitative method to study the factors that make people want to pursue a career as a flight attendant in the long-term. The in-depth interviews were conducted, probing questions were utilized to provide more comprehensive information, making the data analysis more efficient. The findings from the interviews will be divided into two main parts: Background information and the interview analysis based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation.

4.1 Background Information

The study focuses on 12 flight attendants who are still active in this profession. Specifically, it includes 6 flight attendants from low-cost airlines in Thailand and 6 Thai flight attendants from different full-service airlines. The interviewees' background information is categorized as follows

Table 4.1 List of interviewees from Low-cost airlines in Thailand

Code	Age	Gender	Marital status	Position	Working experiences (years)
LC1	32	Female	Married	Flight attendant	5
LC2	35	Female	Single	Flight attendant	11
LC3	32	Female	Single	Flight attendant	9
LC4	41	Male	Single	Senior flight attendant	12
LC5	33	Male	Married	Flight attendant	11
LC6	35	Female	Married	Senior flight attendant	10

Table 4.2 List of Thai interviewees from different international Full-service airlines

Code	Age	Gender	Marital status	Position	Working experiences (years)
FS1	32	Female	Single	Flight attendant	10
FS2	35	Female	Single	Flight attendant	11
FS3	37	Female	Single	Senior flight attendant	10
FS4	28	Female	Single	Flight attendant	9
FS5	33	Female	Single	Flight attendant	11
FS6	35	Female	Single	Senior flight attendant	10

Note: LC= Low-cost airline and FS = Full-service airline

The interviewees from the low-cost airline have an average work duration of 5-12 years while the interviewees from full-service airlines have been working for approximately 9-11 years. Since all interviewees have been working in the flight attendant profession for at least 5 years, they are able to provide in-depth information and perspectives about this career effectively.

According to the table, it can be seen that there are 4 married flight attendants and 2 unmarried individuals from low-cost airlines in Thailand. This is in contrast to full-service airlines, where the entire individuals are unmarried.

4.2 Critical Factors related to Long-Term Commitment of Flight Attendants in Thailand (Based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation)

4.2.1 Hygiene factors

4.2.1.1 Income

When it comes to the issue of motivation in the work of flight attendants, interviews revealed a unanimous voice of both in low-cost airlines and full-service airlines which 12 out of 12 of the interviewees agreed that compensation and benefits are the most important motivators in this career. FS4 said that '*The income is good.*' similar to LC2 who said *'High Income but career path is not linear.'*. 4 of the

interviewees mentioned that income is crucial for maintaining a good life in today's society while LC5 especially highlighted the significantly higher cost of living these days. This includes opportunities for leisure and responding to current lifestyles, all of those activities require financial resources. Therefore, working with sufficient income to meet these needs is something that all flight attendants have to focus on. Working as a flight attendant should be a job that can meet these needs because the income is relatively high, and it is easy to allocate time for personal life. The company should focus on allocating a reasonable salary for flight attendants as it is the key aspect to create satisfaction for them.

4.2.1.2 Benefits and Welfare

The matter of benefits is as important as the income received. Working in the aviation industry allows employees to purchase airline tickets at significantly discounted prices compared to regular fares, making travel much easier without worrying about expensive ticket prices during peak seasons. All interviewees from low-cost airlines mentioned this benefit, stating that it is something the company provides and they are very satisfied with it. The perspective from LC1 was '*Staff ticket fare is reasonably satisfied*'. There is also the issue of annual leave entitlement. Normally, companies must provide a minimum of 6 days of annual leave per year according to Thai labor laws (Magna Carta law firm, n.d.). However, flight attendants are entitled to up to 30 days of annual leave per year. These benefits can attract the interviewees a lot and it is what they are satisfied with. Being said by LC4 '*I got attracted to the Annual Leave 30 days I get and the staff ticket with low fare that I can buy both in staff price and free ticket that the company gives me*'.

4.2.1.3 Mandates and Regulations

New aviation rules and regulations that everyone has to adapt to also have an impact on work. There are regulations of the number of flight hours within a day, a week, a year which is set to ensure it is neither excessive nor insufficient for flight attendants. These aviation regulations are determined and enforced by CAAT (Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand) and applied across all airlines in Thailand. This factor directly affects the salary increase or decrease of all flight attendants as the main component of flight attendant salaries mostly comes from the actual hours we work. Therefore, if the flight hours decrease, our salary will also decrease accordingly. This

requires everyone to plan their finances comprehensively and prudently in order to have the quality of life they want. Heard from LC6 that there are also sudden changes in flight schedules, sometimes happening during the time they show up at the office. There are currently no appropriate regulations regarding this gap where flight schedulers can abruptly change one's schedule. The unclear regulations may potentially increase dissatisfaction among flight attendants. 5 out of 6 interviewees from low-cost airlines said these factors affect the personal life schedules of flight attendants, as a change in flight schedule means a change in our off-duty time as well.

4.2.1.4 Interpersonal relations

There are 9 out of 12 of the interviewees unanimously agreeing that colleagues have a significant impact on work. Since the nature of the job requires constantly changing team members, encountering different individuals can vary the way we work every day. However, on days when you encounter good colleagues who work in a similar or compatible style, work proceeds smoothly and it creates motivation to work on that day. An example of opinions regarding the colleagues received is when FS2 mentioned, '*I have encountered colleagues who are difficult to get along with due to cultural and language differences. For instance, when communication is not easily understood, I try to use multiple languages, including body language, to solve the problem.*' This demonstrates that working in aviation, where collaboration with people from various countries is common, can create gaps between languages and cultures as well.

Another example from a low-cost airline interviewee is that even though there are only Thai staff, minor conflicts may arise during work, as mentioned by LC3 '*I have encountered colleagues with different attitudes who refuse to listen to others' opinions. Understanding these pressures and differences in people is crucial in this line of work.*' In this context, colleagues also include supervisors whom one encounters daily, and they are a variable that can determine whether a day's work is good or not as our supervisor has the authority to decide how the service could be done. For example, '*The leader did not support the team even when things went wrong. For instance, when someone is physically fit, expects a cabin crew to lift her luggage alone to stow in a compartment, and the leader does nothing on that issue.*', said LC2. This

highlights that working with leaders who lack responsibility and leadership skills can make our work more challenging on that day.

Besides colleagues, another significant factor affecting the work of flight attendants is the managers. LC6 expressed '*I desire for the department to genuinely listen to the feedback of flight attendants and create a cohesive organization that listens and does not divide by the position. At present, I still feel that consulting or proposing various ideas is challenging.*'

Being in an organization that understands contributes to the flight attendants feeling included. The relationship with colleagues, whether they are in the same position, supervisors, or departments responsible for overseeing the flight attendants, all have an impact on motivation at work.

4.2.1.5 Flexible time management

The flight schedule significantly impacts the lifestyle of all flight attendants as it affects their days off and free time. This is another aspect that interviewees highly prioritize. Firstly, there is discussion about the flexibility of flight schedules, as mentioned by one of the examples from the low-cost airline, '*Under company's regulations, employees can swap flight schedules with others according to their own preferences. This allows us to take days off on the day we want and fly at times that suit us best.*', LC5 said. To provide more details on this issue, some people may prefer to fly early morning flights over evening flights, while others may prefer to fly overnight flights over morning ones. In such cases, the company offers opportunities for employees to swap flight schedules, creating flexibility in the schedules of their flight attendants. Moreover, FS4 mentioned, '*The flight routes and days off are good. There might be some fatigue, but I can have a good rest and manage my life schedules well.*'. Additionally, three interviewees from low-cost airlines choose this profession because they can allocate time to do a second job. It allows them to generate multiple streams of income for themselves and their families. This factor may make office workers much more exhausted if they want to work two jobs simultaneously, or they may have to sacrifice personal time or leisure time in exchange for working two jobs at once. However, being a flight attendant allows for such flexibility, with enough remaining days off for relaxation. LC3 mentioned, '*I have thought of changing jobs during the COVID-19 pandemics. But after I tried doing different jobs during that period, I*

considered working as a cabin crew interesting and more challenging.' This emphasizes that many people who tried working in other fields ultimately chose to return to this profession again because they can manage time for their personal issues as well.

4.2.1.6 Stress-free job

Stress-free job is also mentioned in the interview which is also an interesting point. As the nature of the job typically contains no tasks to bring home after finishing each flight. FS6 stated, '*The first factor is probably the relatively high compensation. The second factor is that the job does not accumulate stress. Both factors together make me still want to continue working in this profession.*' As mentioned, the advantages of jobs in this profession outweigh those of regular office jobs, especially in terms of work-life-balance. FS2 also said '*It's a job that once you're done, it's over for the day. There is no issue to think about afterward.*' Therefore, not having to carry the burden back to work after hours gives them more freedom in their personal lives and makes this job interesting for many.

4.2.2 Motivation factors

4.2.2.1 Possibility of growth

Career path is one of the factors that influences the decisions of many interviewees. This topic may not be something that comes to mind for flight attendants initially as most of them get used to what they are doing everyday. However, when it comes to wanting to work for an extended time, 4 out of 12 interviewees mentioned that as they get older, they may not be able to continue in this line of work and may need to find other jobs. As they age, finding a new job becomes more difficult. Therefore, even though this job meets their current needs, in the long term, it may not be sustainable. FS1 mentioned, '*This job is great and I am happy with it now.. However, I am concerned about when I get older, whether I will still be able to continue in this role or if I can transfer to another department, as I may not be able to handle the physical demands of flying anymore.*' From the interviews, it was found that 2 out of 6 interviewees from low-cost airline who carry the senior flight attendant position took only 2-3 years to be promoted, which means they can take full responsibility for everything on that particular flight. Meanwhile, the information obtained from full-service airline flight attendants who are in the senior flight attendant position differs

significantly. Full-service airlines typically require a minimum of 5-6 years before a promotion is considered. Additionally, based on the experiences of the interviewees who are currently a senior flight attendant, it takes up to 6 years before they are promoted. This indicates that they can become leaders for economy class passengers but may not yet be able to manage all aspects of that flight. The career path of this profession actually has only this much, which is to become a purser or some airlines called it 'Senior flight attendant', who is the person with the most decision-making power on the flight. This makes the career path seem very short indeed. Hence, a limited career path may lead flight attendants to view this job as not meeting their long-term needs.

4.2.2.2 Passengers

Another concern for flight attendants every day is about passengers. The nature of passengers varies in each flight. Even though we may understand the nature of each type of passenger, situations differ from day to day. Some days may have unexpected events or encounters with disgruntled passengers who had unpleasant experiences before boarding the plane. This leads flight attendants to almost everyone needing to train themselves to control their emotions and mindset to cope with this kind of situation. An example from LC1 goes like this '*The worst experience I have encountered while doing this job was when one of the passengers looked down on me by using rude words to describe my role as a cabin crew. At that time, I felt very bad about myself and thought of quitting the job. However, I came home and considered that no one could hurt me without my consent. After that situation, I get stronger and have more patience.*' Another example from FS4 mentioned that, '*There have been incidents where I had to argue with passengers because we prioritize safety but they don't understand. Passengers use very strong words to me. I have to try to step back first because responding with equally strong words would escalate the situation. To control the situation, we tried to pass it on to another team member to explain. After everything gets better, we have to explain again to the passengers what we did, that we followed the company's rules.*' It shows that even regarding safety, which is crucial for everyone on the plane, if what we are asked to do conflicts with a passenger's desires, problems can arise. Passengers may forget to consider the safety of others onboard, simply focusing on their own convenience. Encountering various types of people is something

we must prepare ourselves to handle well. Meeting friendly passengers can be a great motivation for flight attendants in their work.

The occurrences and various motivating factors led many people to want to commit themselves to this job. In summary, for a company to create satisfaction among flight attendants, the key fundamental factors are Income, Benefits and welfares, Airline rules and regulations, Interpersonal relations, and Personal life concerns. On the other hand, things that enhance job satisfaction and help reduce dissatisfaction come from Possibility of growth, The nurture of stress-free work, and Work equipment and Aircraft specifications. When all these aspects combined, it makes this job responsive to the needs of flight attendants.

## 4.3 Expectations for remaining in the career of flight attendant

When it comes to the scope of envisioning oneself in the profession of flight attendants in the future, the summarized results from the interview conducted surprised me a lot. This is because 8 interviewees expressed their desire to continue working in this field, with 4 out of 8 individuals providing additional information that they wish to continue alongside pursuing other jobs to generate more income. Generating multiple income streams becomes a safeguard against unforeseen events like the COVID-19 pandemics. LC2 mentioned, '*I do want to be a flight attendant but I need to have a second job as well.*' LC4 stated, '*I will continue in this profession as long as my body allows, as it is the most fulfilling job that brings happiness and is not stressful.*'

The remaining 4 interviewees provided responses indicating that they would like to continue in this profession if their physical health allows, or foresee that in approximately 5-10 years, they may need to change jobs due to their increased age and higher responsibilities for parents and family care, which may make this job not as suitable in the long term. From this perspective, there are opinions expressed by FS4 who stated, '*In the next 5 years, I plan to change jobs because of my age and increased family responsibilities. I want to spend more time with my family and have a clearer source of income.*' Additionally, LC5 mentioned, '*Depend on my health and body. If eventually my body protests until it becomes difficult to work in this field, I may consider changing careers or starting a business. Aviation is a physically demanding job, and*

sometimes as one ages, it leads to weaker physical health and susceptibility to illness. Even though I love this job, if health and body don't align, I may switch to a different career path.'

On the other hand, FS3 stated, '*Still aiming to be a flight attendant, but I have a plan to become an instructor in the future because I believe that the best way to excel in the work we love is to pass on knowledge and positive attitudes to the next generation.*' This viewpoint indicates how this person sees a career path beyond being a flight attendant, looking towards developing new generations of flight attendants as well.

Expectations and future planning, apart from considering personal reasons and physical health, are factors that need to be taken into account. Stability and security provided by the company are also important aspects used to evaluate the desire to continue working in this field or not. When everything aligns together, decision-making in continuing in this career should not be a difficult task for the flight attendants in the long run.
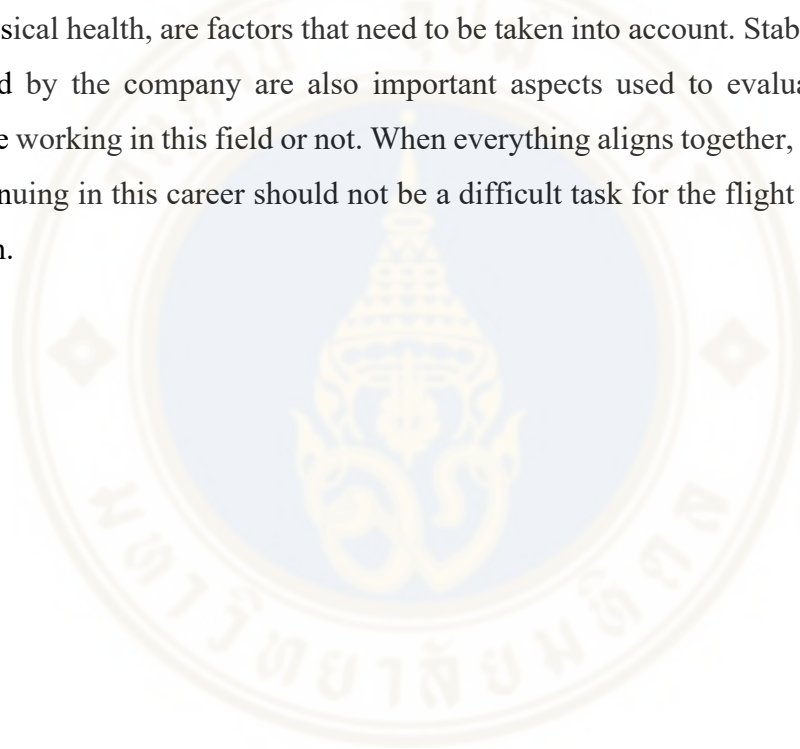
CHAPTER V
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

When it comes to perspectives on this profession, the summarized results are relatively similar. Everyone views the relatively high income as an interesting aspect of this career, followed by the nature of work that is flexible and tasks can be finished day-to-day, which makes it comforting to work each time. More than half of the interviewees mention the aspect of finishing work after each shift, which distinguishes this job from others because they do not have to bring work home and can clearly separate personal and work life, allowing for a well-balanced lifestyle. FS5 mentioned that '*changing coworkers frequently makes the job less boring and eliminates the need to tolerate unpleasant colleagues, unlike in regular office jobs where you have to deal with the same people all the time.*' These responses demonstrate the importance of fundamental factors that influence the needs of flight attendants.

This raises the question of what kind of person is suitable for the role of flight attendant, and the answers are quite consistent: they must be able to work well as part of a team and be adaptable because they have to change coworkers frequently. Moreover, they need to have a positive outlook and a service-minded attitude to help smooth operations and reduce problems. Being able to address job-specific issues with awareness is also important. Additionally, FS4 mentioned '*the importance of high responsibility, as punctuality is crucial and time management at every step of the job is necessary*'. On the other hand, LC6 talked about the need for calmness, resilience to pressure, and enthusiasm, as this job involves multitasking under time constraints and sometimes facing pressure from various parties, including passengers. These qualities are essential for someone who wants to be a part of this job.

This research is prepared to explore what makes the profession of flight attendants appealing to many individuals and answer why people who are currently working in the airline industry tend to stay in this field for a long time. According to

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation, creating job satisfaction and preventing job dissatisfaction are things that companies must do together. When both Hygiene factors and Motivation factors are properly allocated, flight attendants will be motivated to work. Whether one desires to continue in this profession for an extended period is not solely determined by only personal motivations, but organization management also plays a part in this decision-making.

Based on my interview with 12 flight attendants from both low-cost airline and full-service airlines, everyone views the relatively high income as a basic aspect of this career, followed by benefits and welfare that can attract their interest. Airline rules and regulations which appear to be a challenge for them are also one of the factors that affect the job. Supervisors and colleagues are another significant factor that greatly influences everyday work. The ultimate fundamental factor that is crucial for every flight attendant is a job that meets their lifestyle needs. This is because having enough time for themselves alongside work is essential. In addition to these factors, fostering motivation in the workplace is something that the company cannot overlook in order to create motivation factors to their flight attendants. Especially concerning career advancement opportunities that have been discussed, many interviewees still cannot envision their growth in this field in the next 5 years due to the relatively limited career paths available. However, a thing that encourages them to work in this field come from the aspect of finishing work after each shift, which distinguishes this job from others because they don't have to bring work home and can clearly separate personal and work life, allowing for a well-balanced lifestyle. Hence, when employees are satisfied with their work, the work tends to improve significantly.

After the challenging times during the Covid-19 pandemic which switched the attitude about being a flight attendant a lot, the most clear factor in boosting motivation for flight attendants is increasing salaries and benefits. Together with an inclusive organizational culture, leads to job satisfaction among flight attendants. Moreover, other factors such as family dynamics, work conflict in the workplace, or even workload that might contribute to health problems, can affect flight attendant's job satisfaction as well. Understanding the underlying factors that influence the decision-making of flight attendants is important in driving their continued commitment with the company. Ultimately, both employees and the company could gain from the development.

Therefore, by integrating findings from various research studies and my interview results, it can be concluded that when key factors are well managed, it strengthens confidence and serves as a motivating factor for flight attendants to continue working in this field. In the end, when all these factors are appropriately balanced, they affirmatively contribute to creating job satisfaction and make flight attendants perceive this profession as something they can pursue for a long-time.

5.2 Recommendations

After analyzing the data obtained from the in-depth interview, it can be concluded that the most significant factor influencing the desire to work for flight attendants is salary. Therefore, the company should prioritize this aspect greatly. Furthermore, various perspectives were gained from the interview which could help improve the organization, including insights from flight attendants themselves who can also grow alongside these developments. Furthermore, according to my literature review about Emotional labor, deep-acting (Hochschild, 1983) is a crucial part in providing services. With a genuine understanding of the job, their service demeanor will come naturally and not lead to work-related stress, fostering a more authentic approach to their work. A company's ability to develop and cultivate understanding and a passion for service among flight attendants will enhance work efficiency and reduce stress. These factors significantly contribute to job satisfaction. However, due to the limited sample size of only 12 interviewees, the research perspectives are confined to a specific group. Nonetheless, the data collected from the interviews and in-depth questioning have been analyzed to the fullest extent possible. The following recommendations will provide advance understanding, which is the essence of work through deep acting (Hochschild, 1983). It will also promote teamwork in the workplace, leading to smoother work environments. Additionally, flight attendants should develop themselves to reduce work-related stress and anxieties in various aspects, all of which contribute to making deep acting at work easier. The topics are divided into two main areas: organizational development and personal development of employees.

5.2.1 For organization

Since typically every company regularly updates and sets new guidelines or procedures to make it more convenient for employees to work, along with providing opportunities for employees to learn soft skills or various self-development courses to gain knowledge, all of these significantly contribute to the company's growth and stability. When a company can develop the organization and ensure employees understand their roles correctly, as well as prioritize employee importance sufficiently, employees no longer need to worry about potential problems or personal concerns. They will also have confidence in the company's direction for employees, which will make everyone more prepared to work more effectively from their true-self. Therefore, the following topics are what the company should pay attention to and adjust to further enhance the creation of a good organizational culture.

5.21.1   Providing activities for employees to participate in together

Because being a flight attendant involves constantly rotating with different colleagues, there are days when we have to work with people we have never met before. Sometimes, this can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, as each person may handle tasks differently. Organizing various activities for employees to do together opens up opportunities for them to get to know each other better. These activities help fill the gaps in teamwork, allowing for improved communication and understanding of each other's work. As a result, relaying information and consulting on problem-solving become easier. It will create a conducive work environment and contribute to improving employees' perspectives on their work so flight attendants will be able to provide assistance based on their genuine understanding.

5.2.1.2 Identifying clear career paths

It is well known that the career path for flight attendants is not as extensive as in other professions. Besides moving up to become a supervisor, the career trajectory might involve transitioning to management roles, becoming an instructor, or even switching to ground operations. Many employees still want to work in this field, but with an increase in their age, they may not be able to transition to another job in the future. Consequently, they choose to stick with their current roles because they cannot envision opportunities for growth and expansion within the profession.

Therefore, providing a clear career path for flight attendants is something the company should make explicit.

5.2.1.3 Adjusting salary bases and bonuses appropriately

From the interviews, the primary focus for all interviewees was obviously income. The base salary for flight attendants across all airlines is equivalent to the minimum wage, which results in relatively minimal salary adjustment rates compared to the general positions. This also includes bonuses, some of which may exist, while others may not, depending on performance. Improvements in this area involve adjusting the salary base on a scale or providing bonuses for flight attendants who work for more flight hours than the average. This plays a part in boosting employee motivation and increasing interest in working for the company.

5.2.1.4 Separating work equipment from personal device

This is a recommendation from low-cost airline flight attendants, who provided information that the company mandates the use of work-related applications on their personal smartphone, which must be shown before every flight. This differs from some full-service airlines that provide devices for downloading various work-related data, which is considered essential to bring along for every flight. From this point, it leads to the thought that if the company could consider allocating a budget to provide equipment to employees, it would clearly delineate work-related matters from personal ones. This would make employees feel valued and helps eliminate the issue of phone memory usage, as almost half of it is consumed by the company's data downloads.

5.2.1.5 Being open-minded for feedback

When a company listens to problems and shows genuine interest in employees' feedback, it encourages employees to think and aspire to grow with the company. Therefore, a company with open-minded leaders and willing to learn alongside employees will enable everyone to move forward safely and securely. Additionally, the company may gain new perspectives from the suggestions of employees working on the ground. These aspects demonstrate that the company is a cohesive team, growing together and aiding each other in creating a desirable organization without divisions.

5.2.2 For individuals

When it comes to this point, it may be seen that being a flight attendant is not just about beautiful perspectives or simply traveling to various places for enjoyment. There are many other aspects that need attention, including self-development to adapt to the environment and the requirement for everyone to be mindful at all times while working. It is not just about learning from what the company provides, but building belief in what you are doing and having genuine understanding is crucial for good work. Additionally, it helps reduce conditions that lead to stress. Therefore, whether one is already in this profession or if anyone is interested in it, the following advice will help enhance suitability for being a flight attendant effectively.

5.2.2.1 Being ready to embrace new things at all time

Working as a flight attendant constantly involves encountering situations that need immediate responses, whether it is interacting with colleagues, hundreds of passengers on any given day, or dealing with various emergency scenarios that might happen. Therefore, having an open mind allows us to perceive everything as manageable. Furthermore, the experiences we encounter daily contribute to our personal growth and understanding of the things around us. As seen in Chapter 3 regarding conflicts related to language and culture with colleagues, these challenges can be overcome by making an effort to understand the situations we face and being receptive to new things we encounter.

5.2.2.2 Be flexible

Adaptability is essential for this job, not just in tasks but also in the working period some might have to work during early mornings or late nights. Flight attendants also have to interact with colleagues from diverse backgrounds and deal with various attitudes, some of which are easy to understand while many of them are more challenging. It requires constant adjustment. Many people struggle to adapt to these aspects and eventually leave the job as a result.

5.2.2.3 Stay calm and be patient

Developing patience is essential in service-oriented work because every customer expects satisfactory service. Despite facing various challenges that may lead to frustration, it is crucial to handle them without letting emotions interfere. Emotions preceding reasoning can gradually diminish our work efficiency.

Apart from the training received, maintaining composure and resilience enables us to navigate through different situations effectively.

5.2.2.4 Handling pressure well

Maintaining composure at all times and using mindfulness to solve problems enable us to adapt to unexpected situations. Managing pressure is something we should constantly train ourselves in because it helps us address immediate issues and situations promptly and not be overwhelmed by events that occur unexpectedly.

5.2.2.5 Be well-organized for yourself

Flight attendants get their income from flying, which results in an unstable income. We cannot predict when unexpected situations like Covid-19 pandemics will occur that might lead to a reduction in our flight hours or even a loss of wages. To make it more obvious whenever we fall ill, it directly impacts our earnings. Therefore, effective life planning and management should be the first considerations for those working or aspiring to become flight attendants.

In conclusion, When the organization and the flight attendants have a genuine understanding of the job itself and develop together, service delivery and work efficiency will increase. This, in turn, has a positive impact on the company's reputation and how customers perceive the company. Therefore, it helps create sustainable stability for the company in the long-term which affects flight attendants to consider maintaining their position in the long run as well.

REFERENCES

Baloch, Q. B., Zaman, G., & Jamshed, J. (2014). Determinants of Job satisfaction and Employees Turnover Intentions. *Abasyn University Journal of Social Sciences, 7*(1), 118–136.

Hecker, J., & Kalpokas, N. (n.d.). *What is Qualitative Research? | Overview, Types, Pros & Cons. ATLAS.ti.* Retrieved from https://atlasti.com/guides/qualitative-research-guide-part-1/qualitative-research

Juneja, P. (n.d.). *Herzbergs Two-Factor Theory of Motivation.* Retrieved from https://managementstudyguide.com/herzbergs-theory-motivation.htm#

Karkala, A. , Moschonas, S. , Sykas, G. , Karagianni, M. , Gilou, S. , Papaefthymiou, O. & Kourtidou-Papadeli, C. (2022). Sleep Quality and Mental Health Consequences of COVID-19 Pandemic in the Aviation Community in Greece. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 64* (9), e567-e574. doi: 10.1097/JOM.0000000000002616.

Magna Carta law firm. (n.d.). *Thailand Labor and Employment Thailand Labor and Employment.* Retrieved from https://magnacarta.co.th/home/faq-section-2/thailand-labor-and-employment/

McNeely, E., Mordukhovich, I., Tideman, S., et al. (2018). Estimating the health consequences of flight attendant work: comparing flight attendant health to the general population in a cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health, 18*(1), 346. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5221-3

Quality Gurus. (n.d.). *Motivational Theories*. Retrieved from https://www.qualitygurus.com/motivational-theories/

Sweeney, C. (2018, June 25). *U.S. flight attendants at elevated risk of several forms of cancer*. Retrieved from https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/flight-attendants-cancer-risk/

SlideModel. (2019, November 7). *How to Use Two Factor Theory to Improve Employee Engagement*. Retrieved from https://slidemodel.com/how-to-use-two-factor-theory-to-improve-employee-engagement/

REFERENCES (Cont.)

The World of Work Project. (2021, July 26). *Emotional Labor: A Simple Summary.* Retrieved from https://worldofwork.io/2019/05/emotional-labor/

Chuaychoo, I. (2022, January 31). *The Influence of Emotional Labor on Job Stress and Satisfaction Among Flight Attendants in Full-Service Airlines Based in Thailand.* Retrieved from www.assumptionjournal.au.edu.

Jain, S. (2023, April 10). *Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation.* Retrieved from https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/herzbergs-two-factor-theory-of-motivation/

Perera, A. (2024, January 24). *Self-Actualization in Psychology: Theory & Examples.* Retrieved from https://www.simplypsychology.org/self-actualization.html

Cherry, K. (2024, April 2). *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Verywell Mind.* Retrieved from https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-4136760