We’re all in it together at 35,000 feet in an aluminium tube, again: An ethnographic study of what stress, coping and resilience looks and feels like for cabin crew.

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We’re all in it together at 35,000 feet in an aluminium tube, again: An ethnographic study of what stress, coping and resilience looks and feels like for cabin crew

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Abstract

This is an autoethnographic research project, situated within the context of the lifeworld of long-haul cabin crew in the United Kingdom, written by a retired cabin crew member of a major airline. Cabin crew work long hours in demanding physical and emotional environments and experience high volumes of stress when performing their work. However, even though crew experience these high levels of stress, many crew cope with these hardships and attain long careers suggesting they are resilient. This study aimed to perform a qualitative exploration of the lifeworld of long-haul cabin crew as to how stress, coping and resilience looks and feels like in their daily lives.

Design

Autoethnography and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

Method

Following university study ethical approval, long haul cabin crew from an international airline were asked to participate and to share their experiences of their flying careers. Autoethnography allowed for a deep contextual understanding of the crew's often hidden lifeworld and one that is often victim to stereotyping. Data was collected using diaries (n=7) and semi structured interviews (n=6) with the aim of producing knowledge that informs the understanding of how crew have coped and survived to sustain long careers.

Results

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis resulted in the development of two core themes: The first was The psychological cost of flying: Surviving work induced stress and anxiety. Within this theme there were six subordinate themes: The home space to workplace

transition: Managing the anxieties and stress of leaving home and family; A stressful journey to work: Balancing a desire for control against feelings of helplessness; Preflight briefing stress: Navigating uncertainty, unknowns and loneliness with their new crew family; Aircraft emergencies and situational stress: Denial of danger in a supportive collegiate environment; Confronting aggression from passengers: Coping with fear, isolation and powerlessness with nowhere to run; A changing and hostile work culture: Coping with a lack of trust, autonomy and relatedness and the fear of redundancy.

The second core theme was Positivity undoes negativity. Within this theme there were four subordinate themes: Seeking a world of contrast and variety: Changing the mundane day to day job into a positive experience; Social comparison emphasises the good; Travel broadens the mind: Wonderous experiences and leisure opportunities; Jump seat counselling: Actively seeking social support through shared conversations, collective experiences and emotions with colleagues.

Conclusions

The crew narrative reveals the high level of workplace stress and anxiety they experience throughout their working day from the daily hassles as a result of their work environment and a hostile organizational culture and what this feels like for them. In order to address this workplace stress, cabin crew implement self-care as they call upon a myriad number of coping strategies throughout their working day that allow them to negate the psychological stress they experience and build their resilience that sustains their long careers. Lazarus & Folkman, 1980 Transactional Theory of Stress, Hobfoll's, 1989,Conservation of Resources and Fredrickson's, 1998, Broaden and Build Theory were all evident in the numerous coping strategies embedded in the themes that cabin crew called upon to ease the many stressful situations they encountered during their working day: preparation, planning, seeking information, rationalization, social support, self-control, denial, reappraisal, distancing, social comparison, self-evaluation, acceptance, reframing, recalling positive events and experiences and benefit finding.

Whilst cabin crew bear some responsibility for their psychological wellbeing it is recommended that the organization also must accept that management practices add to the experience of workplace stress. The organization should recognise and implement the need for training in coping strategies and resilience that will better support the crew's wellbeing. Further implications for cabin crew training in safety and emergency procedures are highlighted as the maladaptive coping strategies identified in this research may impact on aircraft safety.

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This thesis is dedicated finally to the incredible female cabin crew members who gave me their time when it was short and who trusted me with their life stories about a profession that was psychologically difficult to relive, when denial of what they may face was a major coping strategy. Most of all though I thank them for their bravery in sharing their experiences as speaking up and telling their truth did not come without risk. I hope if you read this, I did your life stories proud and you see how amazing you are.

Never forgetting with love and gratitude my parents Ronald and Jean. Till we meet again.

1. Introduction

A growing area of research in occupational psychology has been the occurrence and effect of stress in the workplace, which has been shown to exist in many professions where emotional labour and people work occur (Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild's (1983) seminal work on emotional labour got "behind the eyes" of cabin crew and allowed an interpretation of their world "behind the smiles".

The working environment of cabin crew is far from the glamorous portrayal that airline marketing, through its adverts of smiling cabin crew may imply. Behind the uniform and welcoming smiles and caring individuals is a secreted life consisting of long arduous hours, increased job demands from both airlines and their customers, alongside deteriorating job resources, working conditions and financial remuneration (Bergman & Gillberg, 2015; Chen & Chen, 2012; Sheehan, 2012: Harvey & Turnbull, 2014). Add to this remoteness from familiar support networks, the added threat of terrorism and the impact of globalization and deregulation with the subsequent rise of low-cost carriers, the resultant frequent changes to work conditions and declining pay is described as "a race to the bottom" (Johnson et al., 2005; Harvey& Turnbull, 2014). It is within this multi-faceted context that cabin crew must find ways to survive that support their careers. I am conscious of this as I was just that expectant new cabin crew member in 1982. I spent the next 38 years flying on long-haul flights as a senior cabin crew member and I witnessed and experienced the demanding environment that is the airline industry and its consequent rewards and challenges. I have observed, discussed and personally experienced, through first hand engagement, the social and emotional demands that crew face and how home and work environments for cabin crew are demanding both physically and mentally and are inextricably related.

My interest in how not just myself but other cabin crew had survived for so many years in this demanding industry started many years ago when I conducted a small-scale qualitative research study for my MSc, in how burnout looked and felt like for cabin crew "on the job" (Marsh, 2014). From an autoethnographic position and through the analysis of cabin crew

interviews, this research suggested high levels of stress and burnout was indeed experienced by the cabin crew throughout their daily lives. This in the main was due to the relentless emotional aspect of coping and manging the incivility of customers through social conflict, workplace isolation, anxiety and uncertainty about social and familial relationships and their atypical shift work, which led to emotional and physical tiredness and fatigue. Further analysis found that the cabin crew suffered from excessive job demands, along with inadequate job resources that affected on their time at work, along with their home life and family relationships. Following on from my MSc autoethnographic study on stress and burnout in cabin crew I wondered how crew had survived this demanding role for so many years.

It is from this autoethnographic stance, along with research that shows that cabin crew suffer from high levels of stress, but have withstood long careers, which led me to ponder the following:

- What physical and emotional pressures do cabin crew face?
- How do these pressures manifest themselves?
- What are the origins of these pressures?
- What role does the aircraft environment play in the stress and coping process?
- Are the pressures a result of changes to working practices?
- Are the pressures experienced a result of interpretations or beliefs about events by the crew?
- How do crew cope with the stress they face?
- How have crew become resilient to survive these stresses?
- What are the implications of these pressures for cabin crew and the company?

My insider perspective of colleagues as a group of people who achieve a work-related outcome of safety, security and customer service may be quite different to the perspective of people outside of the industry. This is because whenever I am asked what I do for a living the response is very often, “Oh you’re a trolley dolly” or “just an airborne waitress” or

because of my longevity of service “oh you’re a wagon dragon” (Lovegrove, 2000; Gertel, 2014, p79). When I was made redundant after thirty-eight years a close friend said:

> *“Why are you upset about being made redundant? You were only a flying waitress”.*

This stereotyping of crew, as nothing more than a low skilled waitress, may occur as people often only observe the crew serving drinks and meals and as a result of airline management who deskilled the profession in order to manage costs (Curley & Royle, 2013). Passengers’ focus may often be on the inflight movie, the latest book or their work as they fly above the clouds in an atmosphere created and sustained by the emotional labour and performances of the crew. It may be argued that the airline world, along with my occupation and identity as a cabin crew member is one that is often misrepresented by the airlines and misunderstood by its passengers and by the general public (Bennett, 2006; Whitelegg, 2007, p151). The role of cabin crew does not appear to be a “proper job” for some and this was reflected in the diaries of two cabin crew members during the research presented in this research:

> “*My husband often refers to my job as a holiday*…” [Susan, Diary]

> *Nail technician asked for umpteenth time whether I get paid when on 24hr. Why would public think we don’t. …Guess assumption my job not taken seriously. Default considers it a zero-hour contract.* [Lyndsey, Diary]

As this research unfolded it became obvious that challenging the stereotyping of cabin crew as a flying waitress, nurse/mother type figure or as the promiscuous party girl who is unintelligent and adept at feigning an emotional performance, would be imperative in telling the stories of how crew cope and build resilience to survive. Many aspects of cabin crews’ roles are hidden, meaning passengers knowledge of their roles and responsibilities may be limited, leading to incongruent information that influences opinions that may result in stereotyping of crew. Imperceptible to the passenger is the key role of crew, that of safety and maintaining control and order in an environment where disorder may occur at

any time (Murphy, 2001). Other features invisible and unknown to the passenger are the safety training, the pre-flight briefing, pre boarding aircraft preparation, safety protocols during flight and galley preparations. Also invisible is the emotional labour that crew perform throughout the working day, which is often considered to be performed mainly by women as a result of their supposedly natural innate abilities of femininity and caring (Hochschild, 1983; Payne, 2009). Whilst some research considers emotional labour to be a worthwhile and difficult skill that should be recognised and rewarded, others argue that the innateness and ordinariness of emotional labour negates its claim to be deemed a skill (Hochschild, 1983; Bolton & Boyd, 2003; Payne, 2009).

However, within this hidden world, the uniform, the stereotyping as flying waitresses, the emotional labour and the requirement for calmness and problem solving in what may be difficult and perilous situations, their lies a living, breathing, feeling person. As mentioned earlier I had already studied what stress and burnout looked and felt like for cabin crew (Marsh, 2014). The crew in that study had on average 26 years' service as cabin crew and had been enduring and coping with their unique environment for many years. The findings of that study raised another question that became the focus and research question of this research:

"How had crew coped for so many years in such a stressful environment and what strategies had they employed to cope and become resilient?"

To answer this research question required a methodology that allowed access into the crew's inner cultural and personal worlds, in order to witness, record, analyse and explain their hypermobile and challenging lives as they were lived. I needed a method that would acknowledge the unique cultural and organizational environment that the crew inhabited and provided the opportunity to allow rich data to be collected and analysed. Most important for me though was to allow the unspoken experiences of the crew to be heard and documented. My earlier research and choice of methodology was influenced by the plaintive words of a cabin crew member:

> *"No one has ever asked us about our feelings, what we feel and how we do deal with it …no one cared so far about what the flight attendant feels during work" (Antoniadou, 2010:15).*

As I embarked on this research journey, these words still resonated along with the words of one of my participants when describing her experience of taking part in the research:

> *"I hope it can help, I hope it can help others"* (Marsh, 2014:76).

These words guided me as to what I wanted my research to achieve. Whilst acknowledging the role of quantitative methods I wanted to explore the lived experiences of crew and their embedded context at a deeper level and to pursue "live knowledge" not "dead knowledge" (Taylor, 2006).

2. Literature Review

Overview

This literature review serves to locate my qualitative research into the specific role requirements and unique working context of airline cabin crew within the wider psychological debate about workplace stress. Three key concepts that are understood to be prevalent in their world namely, stress, coping, and resilience form the foundation for this literature review. The first section will discuss theories of stress, followed by resilience. This will then be followed by a discussion around workplace stress and finally workplace stress of cabin crew.

2.1 Theories of Stress

The first part of this literature review will consider how stress research has evolved and what it entails in today's world. The use of the word stress may in today's society appear to be a well understood and pervasive state as many people talk about being "stressed". However, the presence of stress in a person's daily life is now recognized as being a crucial component in the detrimental outcome for individuals' health and well-being. Nevertheless, just over 100 years ago the concept of stress as a psychological phenomenon did not exist. The evolution of modern psychological stress research was borne out of medicine and physiology and in early research it simply described "physical pressures" (Robinson, 2018). From these early research endeavours theories emerged that considered stress to be response based and event based (Selye, 1955; Holmes & Rahe, 1967). Later research such as the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping considered psychological stress within the field of cognitive psychology (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1980). A later field of research explored how individual resources sustain well-being in the face of stressful events. The conservation of resource theory (COR) envisages that resource loss is the principal component in the stress process through its consideration of both environmental and internal processes (Hobfoll, 1989). Through their construction of a framework, these theories offer an insight that allows greater understanding of social and psychological

phenomena and subsequent individual behaviour and behavioural change in the stress and coping process. This next section explores the early research of Hans Selye and its contribution to the understanding of the stress process.

2.1.1 Early stress research of Hans Selye: A Response Based Theory of Stress

Hans Selye posited a biological link between stress and disease as a physiological response pattern where almost every bodily organ was affected by a stress response. Selye's initial description was: "…stress may be defined as a nonspecific deviation from the normal resting state; it is caused by function or damage and it stimulates repair" (Selye, 1955:626).

According to Selye's mainly animal experimentation, an acute stress episode was mediated through the body's sympathetic and central nervous system which released its neurotransmitters, along with a hormonal response through the adrenal, pituitary and endocrine glands (Selye, 1955; Tan & Yip, 2018). When a body encountered a prolonged period of stress it passed through three stages. The first was an alarm reaction where the body's physiological reaction alerts the body to the stressor. As the body adapts to the stressor the alarm wears off and the body enters the second stage, resistance. During this second stage the body attempts to preserve its equilibrium through adaptation and homeostasis. At this point adaptation is considered to be at its optimal level. The third stage occurs when the exposure time to the stressor becomes chronic and prolonged, leading to a loss of the adaptation achieved in the second stage, leaving the individual unable to draw on their physical, emotional and mental resources, resulting in exhaustion (Butto, 2019). For Selye through this general adaptation syndrome (GAS), the individual becomes more susceptible to serious disease and illness (Selye, 1955).

Selye's research influenced a burgeoning cohort of stress researchers but his findings were later contested (Krohne, 2002). Selye's theories have been criticised for their failure to explain how an objective damaging event translates into a subjective experience of stress through appraisal and interpretation or how coping mechanisms may mediate an individual's outcome within the stress experience and their environment (Lazarus, 1966;

Fink, 2010). However, the rudimentary research position of Selye in the 1930's and 1950's with its physiological stance, inspired interest in how stress affected the individual that was extended to other clinical fields, notably sociology and psychology (Viner, 1999; Szabo et al, 2012).

The understanding and conceptualization of stress as used by scientists today is far removed from the early works of Selye. Even for Selye his early physiological response pattern as a tenet for stress response was modified. In his later research his collaboration with various others such as the military with their focus on stress and its possible scientific understanding of combat neurosis and with the capitalist business of America seeking to increase worker efficiency, allowed him to expand his understanding and to explore the impact of other factors outside of the physiological supposition (Viner, 1999). This allowed a change in his stance and he posited that stress does not just happen, it is dependent on a reaction from an individual (Viner, 1999).

Following on from Selye's theory of stress as a *response* model, Holmes & Rahe, (1967) considered stress in an alternative manner, with their theory of stress as a *stimulus* model. They built upon the earlier work of Adolph Meyer, (1948) and the laboratory work of Harold G. Wolff, (1950), which examined stress from a psychobiology perspective (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). Earlier research purported that a significant clustering of changes in social status, termed the psychosocial life crisis, may lower a body's resistance to disease as the individual utilises adaptive behaviours in order to gain equilibrium and counter their feelings of insecurity (Rahe et al.,1964). The seminal work of Holmes & Rahe, 1967, developed The Social Adjustment Rating Scale, now commonly known as the Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale (Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Noone, 2017). These events, called a Life Change Unit (LCU) of which there were 43 in total, were indicative or resulted in a major change in people's lives that were associated with some adaptive or coping behaviour within the individual, their family or surroundings (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). These one-off events covered a wide range of possible life events from birth, marriages and death, work issues, vacations, change in residence, incarceration, schooling and retirement, to name a few (Holmes & Rahe, 1967).

The scale was ranked in the order of significant magnitude that a life event may be considered to have in the possible etiology of an individual's disease, as the body's steady state is perturbed. Each life event had a different "weight" for stress. The greater the number of events an individual encountered resulted in a higher score, which may make an individual more vulnerable to illness. In this early model the physiological state was dominant over any psychological meaning, emotion or desirability, making the individual a passive recipient in the stress process. In later research the notion of interpretation was introduced, allowing a cognitive and emotional response to life events that may determine whether they were viewed as positive or negative by individuals (Rahe & Arthur, 1978). This research was not without its critics due to its methodological failings such as ambiguity of descriptions on the scale, its focus on mainly negative experiences and a population sample that was unrepresentative, but overall has been found to be a useful tool for stress research (Dohrenwend et al., 1978; Scully, et al.,2000)

This early period of stress research was characterised by its closeness to a physiological position that considered stress as an important predictor and cause of physical ill health in individuals. For Selye (1955) illness was as a result of the body's response to stress, whilst for Holmes & Rahe (1967) it was as a result of the stimulus of life events. Research at this stage was governed by a positivist paradigm and a quantitative methodology through its use of questionnaires and scales. What was becoming clear and was later acknowledged by both of these theories was that it was not possible to reduce the effects of stress to a purely physiological response and to disregard the cognitive element present in the stress process and its effect on an individual's coping response. This was through the seminal work of Richard Lazarus (1966) and later in collaboration with Susan Folkman (1984) and is the focus of the next era of stress research, which took a cognitive stance by considering the person-environment interaction and individuals' appraisal as being central in the stress process.

2.1.2 The Transactional Theory of Stress

A key critique of Selye's (1955) and Holmes & Rahe's (1967) models of stress, what became clear is that what is considered harmful to an individual from a physiological stress sense, may be different to what constitutes as psychological stress (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus, 1993). A more holistic view of stress should include factors such as environment, support networks, personality, prior learning and life experiences (Butto,2019). From this position the differences between physiological stress and psychological stress differ in their levels of analysis. The shift away from behaviourism in psychology to an explanation of human and animal behaviour through cognitive mediation, personal meaning and emotions opened up further avenues to explain the stress process from a psychological perspective. From this perspective "…how a person thinks about or *appraises* an event mediates the stress reaction" (Robinson, 2018:339). This approach was taken up by Lazarus, who posited psychological stress as:

> "…a reaction to personal harms and threats of various kinds that emerged out of the person-environment relationship" (Lazarus, 1993:7).

This position included not only the biological and psychosocial heritage through personal beliefs, goals and values of an individual but also the myriad stimuli within the lived environment, along with all its demands, resources and constraints. A transactional model of stress was originally posited by Lazarus (1966) and developed more specifically by Lazarus & Folkman (1984). Through their transactional explanation of the stress and coping process, Lazarus & Folkman, (1984) consider the stress response as a cognitive-phenomenological process through cognitive appraisal and coping and remains to this day highly influential in the emotion, stress and coping literature.

For Lazarus & Folkman, (1984) cognitive appraisal is the "process of categorizing an encounter, and its various facets, with respect to its significance for well-being" (Lazarus and

Folkman, 1984:31). Within this process individuals dynamically appraise person - environmental stimuli and through these appraisals of what is happening within this relationship generate meanings and emotions, which they ascribe to events. Primary appraisals seek to ascertain if an event is of probable trouble or benefit, now or in the future and if so in what way. If this primary appraisal determines the event as *threatening*, *harmful, or challenging* that may result in a loss to an individual's personal well-being, it may incite negative emotions and the individual will experience a stressor. The individual must then address these feelings and will then enter a period of secondary appraisal, where an individual asks "what can be done?" (Dewe & Cooper, 2007). In order to answer this question coping was introduced as a mediator of stress. This allows the individual to identify and call upon coping strategies to determine what can be done to alleviate their feelings of distress and unease and lead to coping strategies to "shape, manage or resolve the event" (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Dewe & Cooper, 2007). In their first version of the Ways of Coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980) measurement tool just two scales of coping were identified, *emotion focussed coping* and *problem focussed coping* that led to the event outcome being either favourably resolved or unfavourably resolved. Both of these coping strategies are particularly contextual and resource based (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Problem focussed coping (PFC) is goal orientated as it amends the person-environment relationship. This approach is used if the appraised stressful situation can be directly managed through available resources or through defining the problem that allows an individual to engender and implement a solution. PFC is often seen in workplace contexts especially when of an interpersonal nature (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). For cabin crew a specific stressor is arriving late for work and is an area where problem focussed coping may be appropriate as they seek solutions to avert a late arrival at work. Emotion focussed coping (EFC) is more often found when an individual needs to regulate emotional distress such as fear, anger or sadness that arise as a consequence of the stressful encounter that is considered uncontrollable or when existing resources are insufficient to allow a call upon PFC (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). EFC is highly reported when health concerns are present (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980).

Following on from the research of Lazarus and Folkman, other researchers put forward a further category of coping, *avoidance orientated coping* (Billings & Moos, 1981; Endler & Parker, 1990). This form of coping allows an individual to avoid, repudiate or distance themselves from the stressful event they encounter. They may include person-orientated strategies when an individual seeks out other people, which affords a social diversion or through distraction as an individual's attention is inveigled to another task. Cabin crew often seek out support from other crew members when stressed.

In order to answer this question, Lazarus & Folkman's original transactional model of stress was revised and expanded to accommodate positive psychological states as later studies suggested that during intensely stressful situations such as a life-threatening illness, negative and positive psychological states co-existed and played a part in the coping process (Folkman,1997). Concepts of *meaning* and *meaning focussed coping* and *positive emotions* were seen as critical and significant when people endeavour to adjust to stress and to cope with unwanted or negative life events (Folkman, 1997; Park & Folkman, 1997). This was reported in seminal work with caregivers of AIDS patients in the United States in the 1990's (Folkman, 1997). In the midst of a highly stressful negative human experience involving caring for a terminally ill loved one and their subsequent death, positive psychological states that supported coping were found to exist as carers searched for and found positive meaning in the darkness of their world (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). It was posited that meaning-focussed coping allows an individual to access positive affect that replenishes the resources that shapes cognitive appraisals. This positive affect, along with reappraisal appeared to provide a restorative function that provides momentary "breathers", that facilitates further adaptive coping and adjustment, especially when enduring chronic stress (Lazarus, Kanner & Folkman, 1980; Folkman, 2008; Tugade, et al., 2004).

Meaning in this sense encompasses both the global and the situational. Global meaning incorporates enduring beliefs, valued goals, fundamental assumptions and expectations about the world, which support individual's notions about order, along with their life goals and purpose (Park & Folkman, 1997). It is built on life's experiences and has a temporal

significance as it shapes individuals' awareness of the past and the present and their expectations about the future. In the hectic milieu of life this may allow individuals to view the world with notions of predictability, comprehension and controllability. People's beliefs are ordered around different areas of their lives, ostensibly through their beliefs about *the world*, the *self* and the *self in the world* (Park & Folkman, 1997). When considering beliefs about the self, self-worth and control are frequently mentioned. People believe themselves to be principled, decent, competent and worthy of love and assume that they have control of their world. Situational meaning is the interaction between primary and secondary appraisals and a person's lived environment, which along with their global meaning informs an individual of their ability to cope with the challenges they face and the outcome of the event (Park & Folkman, 1997). To this effect five categories of meaning-based coping were identified: benefit finding, benefit reminding, adaptive goal processes, reordering priorities and infusing ordinary events with positive meaning (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2007). This multifaceted cognitive process calls upon an individual's understanding of their personal coping resources, situational variables and coping styles. Whilst many may feel that coping is called upon primarily when facing extraordinary life challenges events, it also called upon as they encounter their ordinary daily challenges or daily hassles (Kanner et al., 1981). It is clear that the concept of stress has expanded over the years from the physical to the psychological and the role of negative emotions within the stress and coping process to including meaning and positive emotions. The role of positive emotions and how they affect the coping strategies and outcomes of individuals has been posited through the influential work of Barbara Fredrickson (1998, 2001) and it is this theory that is discussed next.

2.1.3 Fredrickson: Broaden and Build theory

The case for positive emotions and the positive effect on individuals optimal functioning has been theorised through the work of Barbara Fredrickson's Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson, 1998;2001). Fredrickson's research demonstrated that specific positive emotions (joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe & love) are commonplace and central to human nature and contribute richly to people's life satisfaction now and in the future and resilience (Diener & Larson,

1993; Folkman, 1998; Fredrickson, 2013:5). Positive emotions make people feel good, whilst negative emotions are considered as threating or harming to people's lives and possible precursor to stressful events (Fredrickson, 1998; Folkman, 2008). It is known that as an individual experiences negative emotions there is an increase in sympathetic activity such as heart rate and breathing and a narrowing of attentional cognitive capacity in order to facilitate particular tendencies such as fight or flight and to increase survival chances (Fredrickson, 2001; Tugade, Fredrickson & Barrett, 2004). In contrast to this narrowed thought action repertoire, certain distinct positive emotions are considered adaptive in nature and "*broaden*" an individual's attention. The appraisal of a positive emotion grants them the opportunity to experience momentary thought- action repertoires, which though fleeting, allow for greater involvement by fostering thoughts that are optimistic. This cognitive broadening fosters instantaneous and energetic behaviour with their environment, allowing for novel experiences and subsequent building of their personal resources that may subsequently support an individual's increased chance of survival and effective coping (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh & Larkin, 2003). When experiencing the positive emotion of gratitude for example, the following appraisal may consider this as the receiving of a gift or benefit, which may promote a creative surge to be prosocial, which accrues resources through skills for displaying care, loyalty or increasing social bonds (Fredrickson, 2013 p5). These resources are enduring and remain longer than the original ephemeral emotional experience and may be called on when required on later occasions.

The broaden and build theory, with its undoing hypothesis also predicts that positive emotions play a part in regulating and negating lingering negative emotions and the subsequent physiological and psychological effects (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). As mentioned earlier, experiencing negative emotions facilitates adaptive reactions to occur such as increased heart rate and breathing and narrows thought action repertoire and may in the long run be deleterious to general health. Research by Fredrickson & Levenson, (1998:217) asserted that experiencing positive emotions may provide a *"…momentary interruption in these purported pathophysiological processes*…" that may ultimately lessen the pace of disease for individuals. The fact that positive

emotions broaden cognition and attention enabling flexible and creative thinking, it is also posited that they will aid stress and adversity through coping (Aspinwall, 1998). Utilisation of the broaden and build theory has extended to the workplace. The effect of positive events experienced by employees may afford an upward spiral of greater resources as new ideas are generated. This leads to improved problem solving that allows more creative solutions and may also foster better social relationships supporting a reduction in stress (Bono et al., 2013).

The broaden and build theory also provides a framework for psychological resilience and the coping process (Fredrickson & Tugade, 2004). The more that individuals experience positive emotions and broadened thinking in the face of adversity, the greater their effective personal resources appear, which affords a buffering both physiologically and psychologically whilst experiencing negative emotions, rendering them more resilient when facing adversity.

Whilst this theory has illuminated the role of positive emotions as building resources and the undoing of lingering negative emotions and effects that will support coping and psychological resilience, it is not without its criticisms. With its focus on positive emotions, it does not consider conflicting findings, highlighting how negative emotional states also result in flexible thinking and greater creativity than positive emotional states. Emotional states may “broaden” attention but this may also distract from the task in hand, resulting in a worse performance, as individuals faced with circumstances which are clearly not working, seek new approaches to address the problem (Taylor, Bendall & Thompson, 2017; Gasper, 2003). It can be seen that a complex picture is emerging of a multi-faceted process that supports coping with stress from physiological responses to psychological responses through appraisal of negative and positive emotions, the broadening of attention and the acquiring of personal resources. The role and acquiring of personal resources is another key concept in the stress and coping processes of individuals and has been further developed by Hobfoll in his Conservation of Resource Theory (1989), which is the focus of the next section.

2.1.4 Conservation of Resources (COR)

COR was originally posited as a theory that was prominent when understanding major or traumatic stress but was later imagined as a theory to predict work related stress and resilience as it occurs in work settings and culture. Conservation-of-resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) defines a stressor as an actual or anticipated loss of valuable resources. The fear or actual loss of these valued resources is "…disproportionally more salient than resource gain…" and resource loss is linked to emotional distress and stress, whilst a surplus of resources results in eustress (Hobfoll, 2001:343; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993; Frydenberg, 2014).

Hobfoll, (1989) suggested in his motivational theory that individuals have an evolutionary built-in behavioural bias to protect resources against loss that may impede survival (Hobfoll, et al., 2018). From this basic position Hobfoll claimed:

> "The basic tenet of COR theory is that individuals strive to obtain, retain, protect, and foster those things that they value" (Hobfoll, 2001:341).

For Hobfoll, the things that people value and strive to obtain, retain, protect and foster are "resources", which they call upon in order to survive in an intrinsically threatening world and are considered fundamental to physical and psychological health, especially in the face of stressors (Hobfoll, 1990). When resources are threatened or lost or when individuals invest a resource that does not deliver an adequate return for effort expended, stress occurs. Hobfoll &Lilly, (1993) identified seventy-four resources that were objects, personal characteristics, conditions or energies that covered many parts of life from sleep, marriage, employment, beliefs, values, health and finances to name just a few (Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993; Hobfoll, 2001). These resources are valued in their own right as they are used to counter stress or to assist in protecting or gaining further valued resources for times of future need (Hobfoll, 1988). Individuals do not wait for a stressor to occur before building their resources but are actively widening and protecting their resources at all times. Innate

personal resources are not the only resources nurtured by an individual. In order to widen the resource reservoir beyond the self, individuals mobilise social support. This social support is linked to not only to protect and preserve precious resources against loss but are also linked to individuals' identity formation and maintenance. The impact of social support is also considered a valuable resource in stress buffering for traumatic events and in supporting subsequent resilience following said trauma (Hobfoll, 1990; Schumm et al., 2006). COR theory has expanded over the years from a theory originally concerned with predicting and explaining major or traumatic stress, to one that is of interest in organizational and workplace settings in order to study work related stress and resilience within work settings and culture (Chen et al.,2015).

Following on from the loss and gain of resources principle, individuals must also augment their resources in order to protect or recover from any losses suffered. The socioeconomic status of an individual, with those who experience a low education status and poverty often suffering greater hardship, often also possess less opportunity to deal with life's problems (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). It therefore follows that individuals who already enjoy greater resources especially power and money, will suffer fewer losses and recover quicker when experiencing a depletion of resources than those who start from a lower base, who may find themselves in a "*loss spiral*" (Hobfoll, 1989). The inability of individuals to replace or offset the loss of resources due to ongoing social inadequacies or disadvantage, may result in individuals partaking in high-risk strategies that may ultimately lead to poor decision making, a reliance on impartial social support and inappropriate forms of coping. This may consequently adversely affect an individual's ability to thrive in life. The loss and gain of resources is an orchestrated lifelong process and resources aggregate into "*resource caravans"*, where resources rather than occurring singly are developed and accumulated by individuals, families, organisations and societies (Hobfoll, 2012).

Unlike Lazarus & Folkman's (1984) theory of stress which considers the role of coping as a way to diminish stress, for Hobfoll's Conservation of Resource theory it strives to state what individuals do when confronted by a stressful situation as they seek to minimize resource

loss (Hobfoll, 1989). The transactional theory of Lazarus & Folkman and the resource theory of Hobfoll acknowledge the importance of an individual's appraisal in the stress and coping process though with different emphases. For Hobfoll individual's appraisals are embedded in the social milieu rather than the ideographic as envisaged by Lazarus & Folkman (Hobfoll, 2001; Schwarzer,2001). Another facet of difference between these two approaches occurs in their understanding of resources and their value in the appraisal process. Resources are an important ingredient for both theories but are seen from a different perspective of objectivity and subjectivity (Schwarzer, 2001). For Lazarus, the subjective initial appraisal carries more weight in the stress process, whereas for Hobfoll it is the objective appraisal of resource status, which supports subsequent coping.

Stress is a phenomenon that is present in everyday life and theories of stress have provided a conceptual framework that has allowed a greater understanding into the physiological and psychological responses, along with the strategies and behavioural change that enable individuals to cope with the excessive demands within their environments. This seeking to cope in an adverse environment is prevalent in the context of the workplace, where work related stress occurs when an individual perceives the work demands and excessive pressures exceed the personal resources they possess (Cahill et al., 2023). In the highly stressful aviation world stressors were recognised as being environmental or physical stressors such as cramped workspace and engine noise, work related stressors of crew conflict and work overload and personal stressors such as family problems, which can affect work performance (SKYbrary, no date). In this research, theories of stress will allow a greater insight and elaboration into the complexities of crew coping. Following on from this understanding of how individuals cope in a stressful situation through their coping skills, it is argued that the concept of resilience, the ability to bounce back, has been associated with these coping processes in the context of adverse events (Reich, Zautra & Hall, 2010; Leipold & Grieve, 2009). The concept of resilience is discussed in the following section.

2.2 The Development of Resilience

> At the heart of human adaptation is resilience, the ability to create a positive world for ourselves, often in the face of stressful life experiences, and the ability to resist being overtaken by negative experiences when they seem to be overwhelming.
>
> (John Reich, cited in Fink-Samnick & Powell, 2012:149)

Throughout their lives people encounter adverse life events, from everyday stresses to the potentially traumatic. Some may be overwhelmed by the daily stresses, whilst others may appear to cope admirably and react positively to the most testing of experiences (Bonnano, 2004). Psychological resilience considers how individuals, families and communities, whilst confronting these different adversities from major trauma to ongoing daily life stresses, may display positive adaptation allowing them to withstand negative life events and possibly even thrive (Windle, 2011: Southwick et al, 2014). This may be particularly relevant to cabin crew who face daily adversity in an extreme environment both physically and psychologically, as they adapt and manage their environment and subsequent stress to thrive and sustain long careers.

Interest in the study of resilience has increased rapidly and raised a multitude of definitions and theories along with many contested arguments as to its etiology (Fletcher & Sarker, 2013; Reid & Botterill, 2013). Since its conception resilience has been recognised to be a dynamic process that may change over time, whilst spanning multiple domains of life from childhood to adolescence through to adulthood (Garmezy, 1971; Ong et al, 2009; Fletcher & Sarker, 2013; Hendrickson et al, 2018). It has evolved into a multi-disciplinary perspective, used in many different contexts from mental health and wellbeing in the general community, to employees in the workplace and their organizations, sports performance and to inform public policy debates (Polk, 1997; Windle, 2011; Fletcher & Sarker, 2013; Reid & Botterill, 2013).

Resilience has come a long way since its inception with its focus of childhood vulnerability and etiology (Garmezy, 1971, Rutter, 1985; Windle, 2011). Early research, described by Richardson (2002) as the first wave of resiliency research placed people's individual traits, strengths and characteristics as a locus of research, allowing them to navigate their adverse environment and subsequently build their resilience. Research had directed its focus on the psychiatric vulnerability and deficits of children who faced challenging environments such as schizophrenic parents, poverty and slum conditions (Garmezy, 1971). It was proposed that whilst some children identified as "the vulnerable" were affected by such risk factors, outcome was not invariant. Early detrimental environments were not always predictive of a negative outcome. The question posed was how some children from similar high-risk environments seem invulnerable to their adverse upbringing and exhibit positive adaptation and subsequent good outcomes? This led to change from the deficit model to one that considered healthy development in the face of adversity. This early research searched for factors that protected individuals from stressors by exploring maladaptation and adaption, along with strengths and weaknesses of high-risk groups compared to control groups (Garmezy, 1971). Importantly Garmezy viewed resilience as a process rather than just a personality trait or the genetic disposition of an individual and was interested in the meaning of experiences for individuals (Rutter, 2012). Factors identified as protective by Garmezy comprised of personality factors, a secure and harmonious family life along with external support systems that supported a child's coping process (Rutter, 1987).

2.2.1 Resilience as a process

> A focus on resilience shifts attention from the suppression or treatment of disorder to the processes that enhance wellbeing among populations under stress (Ungar, 2012:387).

In the second wave of research the focus of resilience changed from one that sought to identify enduring traits and protective factors, to one that understands the process that individuals experience to overcome adversities, namely "How are resilient qualities

acquired?" (Fletcher & Sarker, 2013; Bowers et al, 2017). Rather than seeing resilience as an attribute or capacity of the individual, to see it as a process means that resilience may be available to all people given the right conditions and resources. It is a common and achievable state that may occur through multiple factors embedded in interactions and transactions between the individual and their environment, encompassing family and community relationship networks (Masten, 2001; O'Dougherty Wright et al., 2013; Bowers et al., 2017). A progressive and contextualized approach to personal resilience, "social ecology", has been posited that considers resilience as more than a process embedded in the individual but may in fact be an ecologically complex and multi-dimensional process (Ungar, 2012). Social ecology specifically studies the social and physical environment and their interaction between the individual, to reach an ecological interpretation of resilience. This leads to four concepts that may underpin resilience. Firstly, the ability to engage in behaviours that allows individuals to navigate and negotiate their way to resources leads to opportunities. These opportunities are further related to the meaning system of individuals who then decide on which opportunities to take to a personal level. Societal influences also however influence the meaning process as it is defined collectively through family, community and governmental practice and policies and may often be based on the preferences of those in power. This approach, which concentrates not on the individual but the interplay between an individual and their ever-changing environment allows the opportunity to study how individuals can be helped to thrive and flourish in order to reduce the negative effects of adversity and promote competence and self – efficacy (Schoon & Bartley, 2008). Gillespie et al., (2014), posit that self-efficacy, hope and coping are defining attributes of resilience.

Understanding resilience has undergone changes from a position where the absence of psychopathology supported the notion of resilience, to one where maintenance of competence, whilst undergoing stressful episodes may be considered the strongest form of resilience (Windle, 2011). Yehuda (2014) alludes to people who may appear resilient whilst coping with symptoms of PTSD, by managing its negative effects and still functioning. This may support a definition of resilience that "involve a reintegration of self that includes a conscious effort to move forward in an insightful manner as a lesson learnt from an adverse

experience “(Southwick et al., 2014:11). Learning lessons and calling on experience when facing adversity may appear to be key to building resilience, certainly in the workplace. Resilience therefore is something that is a dynamic process between individuals and their environment, which develops over time and is teachable (Windle, 2011). Nurse participants describe protective self-management by anticipating stress and recognising incidents that may be challenging and taking steps to negate them (Hunter & Warren, 2014). This “resilience” can be seen in crew as they navigate their way through a flight, often anticipating difficult physical circumstances such as fatigue and so actively managing their sleep before their flight or adopting exercise as a way of coping with stress (Cahill et al, 2021). Even “time served” and seniority may be important, as taking care of younger nurses counteracted stress and more experienced cabin crew reported less stress and burnout than younger, less experienced crew (Hunter & Warren, 2014; Chen & Chen, 2012). However, for crew coping and subsequent resilience is self-managed and learnt on the job.

Within some assertions, resilience has been defined as different from coping when considered within the stress process (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). According to some, resilience is considered the process of appraisal that occurs before coping during a stressful event where the event may be viewed positively as an opportunity for individual development and recognition from peers (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Coping may be seen as a negative assessment of stressors resulting in a negative outcome such as a drop in performance at work, meaning a person needs to seek support from colleagues. An integrative model of coping challenges this outlook, where resilience is considered to be a conceptual bridge between coping and development (Leipold & Greve, 2009). It theorizes that resilience results from different coping processes of assimilation and accommodation (Leipold & Greve 2009). Assimilation is a coping process where individuals attempt to change their circumstances, behaviour and activate social resources to achieve a more balanced state between normative goals and expectation. The accommodative mode allows people to address stressors in their life by accepting the limitations that they have and revising standards and goals within these parameters. A third process also occurs, where people unconsciously but defensively deal with stressors or problems by completely denying its existence or meaning This may result in a position of paralysis with no readjustment of self

or goals and ultimately no resolution to the issues at hand (Leipold & Greve, 2009). Bereavement studies have however disputed this position by demonstrating that people who use strategies similar to denial may appear to recover quickly and fully from their loss (Mancini & Bonanno, 2009). For cabin crew, denial may be a strategy that is utilised as they constantly monitor and check toilets and cabins for fires, bombs and suspicious activities during the flight. As this threat and fear is present on all flights and often over many years, for crew to think deeply about this would be psychologically exceedingly difficult.

The research area of resilience has now moved on to a third wave that explored ways to develop resilience in at risk individuals through theory –driven intervention designs and social policies. These focussed on reducing risk and promoting protective factors through strategic timing that were culturally appropriate and aimed to support a favourable development outcome (O'Dougherty Wright et al., 2013; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). In the workplace qualitative research on palliative care staff utilized the theoretical constructs of hardiness and sense of coherence to support emerging themes of commitment, sense and purpose of their stressful work (Ablett & Jones, 2007). These themes and concepts were identified as a basis for a training package to promote resilience in palliative care staff. Resilience training interventions in the workplace has been found to develop and support mental health and well-being, along with enhanced psychosocial functioning and improved performance (Robertson et al., 2015).

Even though there are numerous definitions of resilience there are two fundamental concepts most researchers consider must be apparent for resilience to be demonstrated, adversity and positive adaptation (Fletcher & Sarker, 2013). In research literature, adversity extends from negative life events, which may underlie major trauma such as children affected by armed conflict or parental psychopathology, to daily stressors in workplace environments and daily common events that may be highly taxing to an individual, such as bereavement or illness (McDonald et al., 2016; Ong et al., 2009; Betancourt & Khan, 2008). Whilst these negative life events may proffer maladjustment to the individual, a positive life event such as work promotion and marriage, may also bring new and different stressors that require the individual to show resilience in the face of changing circumstances (Sarker

& Fletcher, 2013). The research arena has extended to include both negative and positive risk events as rich grounds for resilience to be exhibited and measured. The second concept, positive adaptation, has unsurprisingly also elicited contentious debate about how people may withstand or "bounce back" in the face of adversity and their subsequent success or not in life and how this may be measured (O'Dougherty Wright et al., 2013; Ungar,2003). Adaptation has been conceptualized as being manifested through a lack of psychopathology in an individual, success in age salient developmental tasks and subjective wellbeing.

To fully detail and explain all the concepts and theories purported to the field of resilience research is outside the scope of this research. It is clear though that the concept of resilience and its underlying theories is a wide and highly contested area of research. Each of these definitions present a variance on the other as to how resilience may be considered from and within different contexts, one of which is the workplace environment, the focus of the next section.

2.3 Stress and Resilience in the workplace

It is clear that the many years of research has moved the concept of resilience from one that initially appeared to be a feature of an extraordinary person with rare or exceptional qualities that allowed them to withstand adversity, to one that is now considered a basic human adaptive system (Winders, 2014). Research has therefore identified the presence of adversity/risk and adaptation to these adversities as being necessary for resilience to be evident (Masten, 2001). Occupational stress may well be considered as an outcome of the adverse work conditions faced by employees and a major problem for organizations and often occurs when an individual perceives a disparity between the demands of a situation and the resources, they have to meet these demands.

To address this organizations are slowly realising the advantages to building resilience in their workforce to counteract occupational stress and the negative effects this has on

employee performance and commitment. Occupational stress may be linked to employee turnover in the Royal Navy where junior ratings with fewer effective coping skills for tackling stress and who exercised less, displayed increased psychological strain and were more likely to leave within five years (Bridger et al., 2013). Shatté et al., (2017), demonstrated employees with higher resilience had a better outcome in difficult work environments compared to employees with low resilience. Resilience in this instant was deemed a protective factor when considering stress, burnout, sleep problems, likelihood of depression, job satisfaction, intent to quit, absences, and productivity. In today's tough economic environment such as the airline industry, where change and adaptation within a company may be a necessity for survival, a resilient workforce who are engaged and committed alongside being psychologically healthy, may be the difference between success and failure (Warner & April, 2012).

Research into resilience in the workplace is expanding as rapid changes through technological advances and increased commercial pressures mean employers look at how to better support psychological wellbeing in their employees through preventative programmes (King et al., 2016; Vanhove et al., 2016). A large body of research exploring resilience in the workplace, is based in the health discipline sector, synonymous with elevated levels of stress and emotional labour, with nurses, doctors, paramedics and midwives being the focus (McDermid et al., 2016; Cope et al., 2014; Hunter & Warren, 2014; Streb et al., 2014; Jensen et al., 2008). The conclusions highlighted themes that may support resilience such as positive attitudes, effective strategies through social support of families, friends and colleagues, self-efficacy, confronting challenges and adversity, pride in their work and humour and hope. These themes were considered protective factors that assisted in building resilience in these highly stressful environments. In a world with increasing job demands, employees with positive emotions were more likely to flourish and succeed in building resilience and are subsequently better able to cope with stresses and adversity (Fredrickson, 2001). This is particularly important for cabin crew who operate in an environment synonymous with high levels of stress and emotional labour but whose experiences and stressful environment are often overlooked and misunderstood, leaving them to cope with the negative effects of stress.

2.4 Work-Related Stress

Work related stress is described by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as:

> The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work (HSE, p3, 2018).

Work related stress is widely accepted to have a major impact on employees and on organisations within the UK, with stress, depression or anxiety accounting for 44% of all work-related ill health cases and 57% of all working days lost according to the Labour Force Survey and the incidence of this has shown signs of increasing in recent years (Health and Safety Executive, 2018). The cost to organisations is immense, with a total loss of 15.4 million workdays, with the average employee having 25.8 days off work per case. Activities attributed to workplace stress were workload with too much work, pressure and responsibility, along with a lack of managerial support, violence and bullying. Large organisations reported statistically higher rates of workplace stress compared to small and medium sized organisations. The occurrence of work-related stress was more prevalent in public service industries such as education and health and social care. Nursing and midwifery professionals were recorded as 2,760 cases per 100,000 workers, teaching professions at 3,020 cases and welfare professionals at 4,080 cases. Another sector that recorded higher than average case numbers was Customer Service Employees, which reported 2770 cases per 100,000, slightly higher than nursing and midwifery. All of these professions attract high numbers of female employees (Devine, Foley & Ward, 2021). It is therefore not surprising that female workers reported a higher rate of cases at 1,950 per 100,00 compared to 1,370 cases for males for work related stress. Like nursing, cabin crew is ostensibly a female and service orientated profession. Research has shown that sleep problems, fatigue, depression and anxiety in female cabin crew was twice that as reported when compared to a general population and crew exhibited higher levels of stress, exhaustion and physical malaise when contrasted to nurses (McNeely et al, 2014, 2018; Sveinsdóttir, Gunnarsdóttir & Friðriksdóttir, 2007).

Work related stress is deemed a psychosocial hazard, consisting of the demands of an employee's contextual and content work factors, along with the employee's experiences

and perceptions that may result in either psychological or physical harm (Leka, Cox & Zwetsloot, 2008). High incidences of job stress and effort -reward imbalance has shown to increase risk factors involving cardiovascular mortality, an increase in diabetes and hypertension (Schnall, Dobson & Landsbergis, 2017, in Cooper & Quick, 2017). So compelling is the evidence that this has led to parts of the United States judging that police officers who suffer cardiac incidents are deemed to have suffered a work-related injury (Kivimäki et al., 2002). For many occupations stress is built into the job, with employees not knowing when stress may arise during their daily endeavours. For cabin crew, stress is determined by specific occupational risks and work organization and their environment is described as highly stress provoking (Sveinsdóttir, Gunnarsdóttir & Friðriksdóttir, 2007; Mc Donald et al, 2003; Williams 2003). On an aircraft passengers are well aware of the secondary role of cabin crew as they provide food and drink, whilst their primary role of safety often goes unobserved. Whilst the probability of an emergency situation may be low the possibility is always there as emergencies may occur at any phase of flight and is why airlines spend copious amounts of time and money training cabin crew in safety procedures to comply with aviation law. The major safety events that crew may encounter on any day at work are emergency evacuations, passenger incivility with verbal and physical abuse, turbulence, fire on board an aircraft, terrorism and medical emergencies. The crew are the only emergency service available whilst airborne. Being on “red alert” with constant watchfulness, ready to move from the conspicuous role of customer service to a safety role that manages the critical event and maintains order and control in an emergency, is in itself stressful (Hu et al., 2016; Feijo, Luiz & Camara, 2014).

Whilst much of the stress research had centred on major life events and their effect on individuals’ well-being, it was the frequency, intensity and subjective importance of what are known as daily hassles that has a greater effect on coping processes and subsequent functioning and health outcomes (Larsson et al., 2016). Daily hassles are described as “… irritating, frustrating, distressing demands that to some degree characterise everyday transactions with the environment’ (Kanner et al., 1981:3) These daily hassles are distinct from major life events, as they are deemed closer to a person’s daily experience (Kanner, Coyne, Schaefer & Lazarus, 1981). Frequent hassles lead to stronger feelings and increased

vulnerability to physical and psychological symptoms and problems than major stressful periods, as they slowly erode coping and wellbeing (Heron et al., 2013). The realms of daily living most commonly considered where hassles are reported are interpersonal relationships between family and friends and the household environment, work, health & physical activity, time and environments (Klusmann et al., 2020; Maybery, Neale, Arantz & Jones- Ellis, 2007). Within these spheres accumulated minor events occur throughout day to day living, such as caring for loved ones, commuting to work, disagreements with colleagues and pressing deadlines, to name a few. These are considered daily hassles and as "…minor negative experiences which occur most frequently on a regular basis" (Stefanek et.al., (2012:202). These hassles are important and problematic to an individual if they are appraised as meaningful and significant within a given situation, often the transaction between the person and the environment and are known to exert an immediate negative impact on physiological and psychological health (DeLongis et al., 1982; Almeida, 2005; Almeida et al., 2002).

2.4.1 Work related stress of cabin crew

Research on stress and resilience has appeared to follow the well tested methodological route of quantitative research, through self -report checklist methods. The life-event based concept of stress led to the development of the Recent Life Events Questionnaire (RLCQ) (Rahe, 1974), along with the PERI Life Events Scale (Dohrenwend, Krasnoff, Askenasy & Dohrenwend, 1978). Folkman & Lazarus (1980) followed the same methodological route with the Ways of Coping survey, which relied on self-reports and a yes/no response to events around negative emotions. As later research emphasized the influence of positive and negative emotions within coping, a modified version was produced. The revised Ways of Coping (1985), focused on coping processes in stressful encounters and not on coping styles or traits but was still quantitative in nature with a 4-point Likert scale and quantitative analysis. Resilience has also seen a proliferation of survey type scale. With regards to resilience, Windle et al., (2011) identified nineteen such measures such as Psychological Resilience (Windle et al., 2008), The Resilience Scale for Adults (Friborg et al., 2005), Connor & Davidson, 2003) to name just a few. All of these had known methodological weaknesses

with no "…gold standard…" for measuring resilience found (Windle et al, 2011:17). These self-report methods may appear to offer reliability and external validity, an absence of interviewer effects, are relatively cheap and quick to administer and may be time convenient for respondents (Bryman, 2008:217) That said it is not without methodological concerns and debate, casting doubt on the efficacy of the stress and resilience inventories. These surveys also appeal to the natural sciences that "shape" a methodology and reduce stress and resilience to a few dimensions that does not allow the voices of individuals to be at the forefront of the research. Survey methodology does not value the contribution of an individual's embodied actions within the environment, their appraisal processes used to access the demands of an encounter and the important emotional meanings that may emerge, which may be then debated and talked about (Dewe, O'Driscoll & Cooper, 2012; Durrheim, 2012). It may now be deliberated that multiple factors related to organizational practices, individual personalities, societal influences, positive and negative experiences, along with the physical environment may all be inherent in stress and resilience in the workplace (Bhui et al., 2016; Vischer, 2007; Williams & Cooper, 1998). If this process is as multi-faceted as may be suggested, the lack of open-ended questions in a survey may not have the ability to penetrate complex issues (Vissak, 2010) and stress and resilience may be different things to different people and varied factors may affect different people in diverse ways. Different methodological approaches may reveal surprising anomalies. Whilst responses to surveys may indicate an individual suffering from depression and anxiety, an interview with the same respondent may report how well they feel within themselves (Perlesz & Lindsey, 2003). The question must be what may be missing from quantitative survey methods that qualitative interviews may allow or vice versa? It may be argued that stress and resilience survey methods are so narrow that much may be missed that occurs in the workplace- humour, innuendo, group norms and the resistance to practices, mission statements and hierarchy (Bolton & Boyd, 2003; Townsend, 2004). It may appear that participant voices may have been subsumed under the drive for methodological rigour and validity. Individuals actively participate and interpret their environment and differ in the report of stress, strain and their ways of coping. Research employing qualitative methods will allow cabin crew stories and experiences along with their appraisals and emotions the attention they merit, describing the reality of their world through their eyes, voices and interpretations (Dewe et al., 2012). The interior of an aircraft is one where behaviour,

feelings and emotions of crew and passengers are severely heightened and tested due to cramped conditions leading to claustrophobia, boredom, restlessness and fears associated with air travel (Bor, 1997). There is no escape for the crew who have to manage not only the customer emotions and behaviours but their own. Expectations of both the airline and the passenger are that crew "suspend" their normal reactions to these stressors and "manage" their emotions to present a calm, friendly, professional attitude supporting a "…safe homey atmosphere", no matter what happens and for hours on end, for many, many years (Hochschild, 2003, p107). It is in this messy, complex and demanding world of feelings and heightened emotions that may often be ignored in quantitative stress and resilience research.

Currently many studies that address well-being and stress on airline crew has been conducted with pilots, even though research has shown that flight crew and cabin crew face similar workplace pressures (Cahill, Cullen, Answer, Gaynor & Wilson, 2020; Feijo et al, 2014). Nevertheless, the concept of daily hassles is particularly relevant to cabin crew and aviation is a high risk, physically and psychologically demanding environment and stress is a daily reality for cabin crew both before they get to work and on board the aircraft. There is however a paucity of research exploring cabin crew experiences of stress, coping and resilience. It is only since the Covid pandemic of 2020, which severely affected the aviation industry, has interest in cabin crew experiences of stress emerged in the research literature. Recent submissions may also appear to focus on research that offers a focus on organizational benefit, through looking at how to improve crew performance after the Covid 19 pandemic and is often positioned around Asia airlines (Park & Hyun, 2021; Song, Choi & Hyun, 2021).

Research on stress and cabin crew is limited, but some research evidence demonstrates the stressors faced by cabin crew. Unlike pilots, cabin crew are customer facing and must address customer misbehaviour in order to protect the safety of the aircraft. Workplace social conflicts with customers such as hostility and incivility exert an exhaustive emotional toll for employees and are a severe work stressor and resource depleting experience,

especially in the service industries where the employee may have no opportunity to resolve the conflict after the incident (Hu, Hu & King, 2016; Volver, Sonnentag, Binnewies & Niessen, 2012; Fisk & Neville, 2011). Job intensification, especially for cabin crew has been problematic for many years as improved computer flight schedules and new working directives have resulted in a compressed work schedule, longer flight and working times and less lay over time down route (Gillet & Trimblay, 2021; van den Berg; Signal & Gander, 2020: Chen & Chen, 2012; Blyton, Lucio, McGurk & Turnbull, 2001). The safety and customer service workload on board has increased, along with more difficult and risky passengers and this has been compounded by a reduction in crew members leaving crew with little time to draw breath (van den Berg et al., 2020; Bergman, 2015).

Political world events and subsequent organizational economic pressures have exerted greater levels of long-term stress on crew. The constant reminder of danger, uncertainty and vivid reminders along with increased airport and onboard security measures that crew face post the 9/11 terrorist attacks, has been shown to foster anxiety and stress (North, Polli, Hong, Surís, Westerhaus, Kienstra, Smith & Pfefferbaum, 2013; Horton et al, 2011; Lating, Sherman & Peragine, 2006). The job for life that many cabin crew had enjoyed and expected has been eroded and job insecurity is now a feature and fear throughout a crew's career, along with a reduction for many of remuneration (Blyton, Lucio, McGurk & Turnbull, 2011). Crew have encountered "macho management" practices to support cost cutting in airlines that seeks to restructure pay and working conditions for older crew, as younger crew are employed on inferior contracts (Hunter, 2014; Upchurch, 2010).

Crew face stress through the emotional labour they perform. The seminal work of Hochschild (1983), highlighted the extent and impact of emotional labour that cabin crew perform and is linked to emotional dissonance that may result in alienation of personal feelings, surface acting and subsequent burnout, a job stressor for customer facing workers such as cabin crew, nurses, counsellors and debt collectors (Hochschild, 1983; Berry & Cassidy, 2013). Women's roles in industry now expose them not only to the same stressors as men but also to others that are unique to women as they constantly balance conflicting &

multiple roles (Cocchiara, 2017). Female crew in particular, experience work family conflicts due to schedule inflexibility, long hours and split shifts along with high job demands (Ren & Foster, 2011). Alongside this, women who travel for a living are accountable for a greater relative share of domestic responsibilities and have less time for their personal needs and enjoyment (Casinowsky, 2020). A common stressor for women in the workplace is gender stereotyping, a phenomenon female cabin crew are subjected to being portrayed as "bimbos", "trolley dollies", "wagon dragons" or "flying waitresses" and through the way their embodiment is used and portrayed in airline advertising leads to high incidents of sexual harassment at work (Węziak-Białowolska, Białowolski ,Mordukhovich, & McNeely, 2020; Cocchiara, 2017; Duffy, Hancock & Tyler, 2017; Ward, 2009).

It can be seen that the stressors that cabin crew face on a daily basis are immense. Previous research on cabin crew has focussed on many areas of cabin crew experiences: emotion work and customer related stressors (Dollard et al, 2003), work family conflict (Ren & Foster, 2011), co-worker support (Shin, Lee & Hur, 2022), work engagement (Chen & Kao, 2012; Chen & Chen, 2012), burnout (Cheng, Chang & Chan, 2018) cabin crew fatigue (van den Berg et al, 2020; Avers et al., 2011; Mallis et al., 2010), ageing (Bergman & Gillberg, 2015), job insecurity (Whitelegg, 2004) job satisfaction (Kim & Back, 2012), emotional labour and job performance (Okabe, 2017) and working conditions of cabin crew (Bergman & Gillberg, 2015).

However, there is to a lesser extent, research examining cabin crew and their coping strategies and subsequent resilience. Erikson, (2007), conducted a qualitative investigation of cabin crews' experiences of long-haul travel with its implications for coping style, psychological health and personal, professional and social relationships. However, there is now an increased focus and regulatory response regarding the mental health and well-being of pilots following the Germanwings 9529 accident that was a result of pilot suicide (Bureau d'Enquêtes, et d'Analyses, 2016). The physical, psychological and social health of pilots revealed the presence of depressive occurrences and the relationship between depression and coping strategies in the pilot community and whilst not all were suffering, over half

experienced mild depression (Cahill, Cullen, Answer, Wilson & Gaynor (2021). A qualitative study also highlighted that wellbeing in pilots was being negatively affected by the nature of their work, with the relationship between work related stress and pilot wellbeing mapped. Of great interest in this research was the biopsychosocial model of pilot lived experience, a conceptual framework highlighting the different ways that pilot well-being is affected by their role through biological, social and psychological challenges the workplace environment presented (Cullen, Cahill & Gaynor, 2020). Many of the factors identified by the pilots in this study are analogous to cabin crew and it is puzzling as to why cabin crew have not been considered comparable to flight crew when considering their mental health and sources of work-related stress. In a further study Cahill, Cullen, Anwer, Gaynor and Wilson, 2020, identified the utilization of phone apps for pilots to support the management of work-related stress and their wellbeing, which are integrated into the organizations crew systems along with a recommendation for training on coping strategies. The aviation industry was hit particularly hard by the Covid pandemic of 2020 with mass redundancies and many workers' contracts were changed with devasting consequences for remuneration and working conditions leading to an increase in depression, stress and anxiety in cabin crew (Cahill, Cullen & Gaynor, 2022; Gorlich & Stadelmann, 2020). Whilst flight crew have seemed to manage their work-related stress through self-care techniques, research has also highlighted the need for organizations to recognise and respond to workplace stress and subsequent mental health issues through the implementation of preventative and evidence-based strategies to manage wellbeing and mental health risks (Cahill et al., 2022).

Resilience research involving cabin crew is also scarce. Eslamlou et al., (2021) investigated job embeddedness, career satisfaction, performance and resilience in their quantitative study with Iranian cabin crew. The analogy between the nursing profession and cabin crew, is conspicuous in the fact that it is predominantly female and service –orientated, along with emotional labour and prominent levels of stress. In a study that compared occupational health and working environments between cabin crew and nurses, cabin crew reported higher stress and exhaustion levels along with less job security and more monotonous work compared to nurses (Sveinsdottir et al., 2007). A well-documented risk is the challenging economic, physiological and psychological conditions and subsequent occupational stress

and burnout that cabin crew face, which may support the assertion of a profession that operates in an “adverse” environment (Hochschild, 2003; Bergman, 2015; Chen & Kao, 2012; Kim, & Back, 2012; Bor, 2007). However, compared to cabin crew, there appears to be a plethora of qualitative studies involving personal resilience and strategies in nurses and paramedics (Shakespeare- Finch & Daley, 2017; McDonald, Jackson, Vickers & Wilkes, 2015; Cope Jones & Hendricks 2014; Hunter & Warren, 2014; McDermid, Peters, Daly & Jackson, 2011). Cabin crew work in an extreme environment and endure workplace adversity on a daily basis similar to people working in the health services and pilots, but an extensive literature search has failed to find any recent qualitative research that looks at stress, coping and resilience from the subjective perspective of cabin crew. As a cabin crew member once said in a qualitative research study:

> No one has asked us about our feelings, what we feel and how we deal with it …no one cared so far about what the flight attendant feels during work (Antoniadou, 2010:15)

The absence of research that has been highlighted in this literature review on workplace stress, coping and resilience for cabin crew makes this an important and legitimate area of research. Cabin crew suffer from high levels of work-related stress and there is a paucity of research that has explored how they call upon coping strategies to support their resilience. It is recommended that the research undertaken with pilots with regard to workplace stress and coping is extended to the cabin crew community who shoulder much responsibility for passenger safety alongside their flight crew colleagues (Cahill et al.,2022). Taking this evidence as a starting point and calling on my own experiences as a cabin crew member, along with the voices and experiences of fellow crew members, the aim of this study is to acknowledge, make sense and bring alive feelings and emotions and to reveal and understand cabin crews’ complex reality. A qualitative methodology with autoethnographic insight and contribution in order to elucidate the context in which cabin crew operate, along with diaries and semi structured interviews analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, will explore and illustrate the stress crew experience and the coping strategies crew use “on the job” in order to remain resilient. IPA has been utilized in past research on workplace stress and resilience in other occupations with high stress levels such as

emergency medical dispatchers, mental health workers, veterinarians and teachers to name just a few (Adams, Shakespeare, Finch & Armstrong, 2015; Lamb & Cogon, 2016; Whitnall & Simmonds, 2021; Azzopardi, 2022). With regards to cabin crew, Rowson & Gonzalez-White, 2019 utilised IPA in order to explore the lived experiences of older cabin crew members in an age sensitive occupation where women are expected to be young and attractive. An extensive literature search has failed to uncover research with cabin crew that explores the coping strategies and subsequent resilience that this supports.

3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methods used to produce the data and conveys an outline of the procedures and processes involved. This section begins with the ontological and epistemological positions that informed the choice of methodology of autoethnography and IPA and the subsequent data collection, realised through firstly a diary study and secondly through interviews. This is followed by a discussion on the important ethical considerations that underpinned this research. Following on from this, the process adopted in order to recruit participants, along with the difficulties that were encountered during the recruitment phase are described. The process of data collection is then discussed focussing on how diaries were designed and dispatched and interview dates were arranged and the interview process managed. Diaries and interviews were both analysed using IPA and the procedure adopted for the analysis is explained. Finally, reflexivity through the methodological journey is deliberated.

3.1 A Qualitative Approach: Selecting Autoethnography and IPA as my chosen methods.

All research starts with its ontological and epistemological foundations, which are inextricably linked to methodological choices (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). My position of constructionism led to an ontology that considered individuals as social actors, active in their interpretations that change and transform their social milieu. My epistemological stance sought to understand this reality and to obtain phenomenological insight within its natural context, through dialogue between myself as researcher and my respondents that captured meanings and explored, elaborated and organised personal experiences leading to the generation of rich, deep text-based data (Morgan & Smircich, 1980; Banister et al, 1994, p3; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Bryman, 2008, p393). These ontological and epistemological positions supported a hermeneutic approach to research, where my intention was to engage, analyse and interpret the text to allow the hidden phenomena to develop (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

The intention of this research was to explore stress, coping and the psychological resilience required and called on by crew in the performance of their multi-faceted role requirements. Their 'lived experience' is thus pivotal in the research, along with a method that would be able to "capture the experiential and qualitative…which could still dialogue with mainstream psychology" (Smith et al., 2009:4). This study, in partnership with cabin crew colleagues, was qualitative in nature and was not seeking universal generalisation. Its aim was the generation of rich, deep data with contextual understanding that would search for the hidden phenomena and understand its meaning through lived experience, which occurs in the everyday setting that cabin crew occupy (Bryman, 2008; Larkin, Shaw & Flowers, 2019). Their stories and experiences offer phenomenological validity, the research is not seeking "truth" but experience, meaning and understanding of the phenomena as professed by the respondents. This research was focussed on experience and subjectivity and taking all these positions into account, ethnography with an autoethnographic focus, along with Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) were considered appropriate methodologies.

3.1.1 Autoethnography

At the beginning of my research journey, I had discussions with my supervisors where it became clear that their knowledge of the culture, role and environment that crew experienced was limited and one that was commonly misunderstood. This was enforced when my own brother, who was privy to my personal and work life, commented that "he didn't really know what I did". My brother was aware of my hypermobile life, he knew I travelled all over the world on a weekly basis, that my presence at family occasions was not guaranteed and that I was a "manager" of crew and the aircraft cabin and often had amusing stories to tell of passengers and places I had visited. What he was unaware of was what my life was like as cabin crew and how I felt whilst I was there.

Both my supervisors and brothers' views were understandable, as much of what crew must accomplish on a daily basis is hidden from view, conceivably leaving most people with the

impression that all they do is tea, coffee and meals, hence the stereotyping as a “trolley dolly” or “flying waitress”. The “proactive” constituent of the crew’s daily life, what crew must do on a daily basis, is clearly laid out in their job specification and is performed in the challenging environment of a metal tube, where crew and passengers are imprisoned at 35,000 feet travelling at 500mph for up to sixteen hours on some flights as it crosses multiple time zones, with colleagues they have often never met before. When emergencies occur at 35,000 feet the cabin crew are the only emergency service to call on, so crew must also be “reactive” at the same time as being “proactive”. They must be ready to react to the myriad number of emergencies that they may face from emergency evacuations, fire, illness and terrorism. There are not many job specifications that require a person to be competent in firefighting, first aid, restraint techniques, crowd control, searching for, detecting and relocating explosive devices, along with delivering a restaurant standard service and looking stylish and professional all at the same time.

This extraordinary social reality of cabin crew is one that I argue is hidden by the dominant and taken for granted stereotype of cabin crew as a “flying waitress”. My first aim in this study was to challenge this stereotype and to create a representation of their role performance, sociocultural context and practices of crew and to describe and explain their everyday world, along with the “underlife”, where crew reside, but is so often hidden or lays undiscovered (Denshire, 2010; Chang, 2016). Autoethnography is an approach that allows description and analysis of cultural, social and political experiences that produces meaningful, accessible and evocative research grounded in personal experience (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). Personal experience is explored in a way that allows the researcher to develop rich and insightful descriptions of their cultural context, along with a “way of knowing” that acknowledges their feelings about their own experiences as part of the group being researched and the knowledge produced is useful to others (Winkler, 2018; O’Hara, 2018; Ellis & Bochner, 2016). As I embarked on this research, I realised that as part of the cabin crew community I have experienced this unique and demanding environment for thirty-five years and I had insights and inimitable access to its hidden world and its unique culture. These organizational and crew cultures were central to and embedded within the performance role of cabin crew. What crew must accomplish through the

organizational demands on a daily basis is “hidden” from view but is central to their living and being in the world and how they bring meaning to it (Agar, 2006). From this perspective my embeddedness and participation in their world, presented a unique opportunity to offer experiential and embodied knowledge as I moved from “being” cabin crew to reflecting on my experiences (Moors, 2017).

However, ethnographic research should do more than describe and understand a particular social world, it should also be a platform to bring about change, through research that is positioned as a political, socially just and conscious act (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2008; Adams & Holman Jones cited in Ellis et al., 2011). I had previous experience in using qualitative methods when completing my MSc, which I considered to be the pilot study for this research. In studying stress and burnout in cabin crew I had utilised semi structured interviews and the data was analysed through thematic analysis informed by grounded theory (Marsh, 2014). In this previous study I had decided to position myself outside of the research and I noted in my thesis that during my research I had to suspend my own familiar feelings and experiences of being cabin crew and immerse myself in my participant’s world and their appraisal of their own lived experience (Marsh, 2014). I asked my respondents to consider me not as a colleague but as a researcher with no knowledge of their world, an outsider in the insider-outsider dichotomy debate (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). This was challenging as I remark that my respondents often sought affirmation of what they were saying through reference to my cabin crew experience often with “you know what I mean?”. I also found that as hard as I tried, my position of neutrality to my respondent’s interviews was overridden by my first-hand experiences, opinions and biases that were similar in some respects but different in others. It became apparent that throughout the dynamic research process I was moving from insider to outsider positions and eventually realised that I could at best occupy “a space between” in the research process, a position akin to “conscious partiality” (Mies, 1979).

The issue of my research membership within this study afforded advantages and disadvantages and presented unique challenges that needed to be managed. My position

opened doors to access a community that appeared frightened to speak out, fearful of organizational retribution and when they did their authentic voices and feelings had for many years been supressed through organizational commodification, expectations, values and management practices (Hochschild, 1983; Bolton & Boyd, 2003; Upchurch, 2010; Taylor & Moore, 2014).

Whilst autoethnography is now recognised as an often-used qualitative method to study social phenomena, it has not been without its critics who have described autoethnographers as “self-absorbed narcissists”, that the knowledge produced is “unscientific”, lacks rigour and that personal stories and experiences are perceived as “dull and boring” (Wall, 2016; Campbell, 2017). I believe that the stories of the respondents were anything but dull and boring. These stories reflected struggle and anguish as they managed their hyper anxiety and fears, but also resilience, as crew assess what they call their “two lives”, their life at home and their life at work, involving days away from their families and support systems along with the intense physical and mental labour that crew have performed for many years.

Delamont, (2007), went further in criticizing autoethnography, declaring it as “essentially lazy-literally lazy and intellectually lazy” and how its use of personal introspection fails to study the social world and to augment social science knowledge that may ultimately change society. I acknowledge this criticism but I favour the approach of Denzin, (2014:78), who quotes the use of autoethnographic text that should “unsettle, criticize, and challenge taken for granted repressed meanings, invite moral and ethical dialogue, while reflexively clarifying their own moral position, engender resistance and offer utopian thoughts about how things can be different”. This is the position I started with when considering autoethnography as an appropriate methodology. Whilst some of the experiences in this research may be my own and were reflected upon at home, I can say that they were a product of thirty-six years of “fieldwork”. My autoethnography was as Crawley, (2012: 13), describes ‘a project of bodily experience that has occurred naturalistically in one’s own civilian life, if you will not, as a project that began as fieldwork’. Every day at work in “my

office in the sky" I occupied a dual role, that of Cabin Service Director and ethnographer as I recorded my experiences.

My fieldwork was conducted in multiple locations; the briefing room, aircraft, the crew bus, socializing with crew over drinks down route and during yearly safety and emergency training courses. Observations, conversations and feelings were logged in fieldnote diaries and in total two small notebooks were filled over approximately one year and twenty-five flights as I travelled around the world. These notes encompassed informal chats as we sat as colleagues on jump seats, over a cup of tea in the galley, recording critical incidents on board such as medical emergencies or safety issues but more often than not it was how crew felt about their organization and the problems they experienced and had left behind at home. These were often fleeting moments of exchange as the incessant busyness of an aircraft cabin and the demands placed upon the crew and me through our role performance leaves little time or energy to enter into long conversations or time to make notes at will. Therefore, my observations, conversations and feelings were reflected upon and recorded upon arriving at the crew hotel. Taylor, 2006, argues that ethnographies should mirror narrative writing with an emphasis on theme and illustrations that strive to elucidate patterns of events. Therefore, along with my fieldnotes I called upon various documents that I had access to, essentially with regard to the mundane, organizationally scripted cabin service and safety protocols that ensure the physical and psychological comfort of passengers. These documents expose the intensity of the environment that fellow crew and I experienced whilst at work, as we moved between the multiple roles of safety and customer service and managed our emotional labour, fears and anxieties along with our physical and mental exhaustion. They also demonstrate how the organizational requirements and culture strip the person from the individual into ensuring their role performance. Plummer, 2001, argues that even personal stories display generic properties that reflect collective and shared cultural conventions. Therefore, I utilise official documents and personal stories of other cabin crew to illustrate how contact with a threat such as terrorism or aircraft evacuation does not need to be physically experienced to cause individual symptoms of distress in the wider cabin crew community (Lating et al.2006). These personal field notes and documents are used to weave observations, experiences and

insights about crew culture and practices into the text, in order to translate my “home culture” for audiences of others to ensure a substantive contribution that contributes to a wider, deeper understanding when reading the next chapters, alongside challenging the stereotype of the flying waitress (Järventie-Thesleff et al., 2016; Robinson, 2000).

It has been said that autoethnography, by its very nature of looking at one’s own experiences, may mean that the experiences of others in the same situation may be overlooked (Moors, 2017). However, I wanted this research to be more than just a reflection on my own lifeworld, as my work context and experiences were shared by many colleagues that I have worked with over the years. Our experiences and meanings were often unacknowledged and our voices were often silenced leaving us effectively powerless. By adopting a collaborative approach and adding their voices through their diaries and interviews to my voice so as to create a larger project, my major aim in this research was to uncover, describe and explain the messy social milieu that we all experienced on a daily basis, allowing the generation and presentation of new knowledge by connecting our voices to academic theory that may foster change and a new way of conceptualizing our lives.

3.1.2 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

IPA is one of many phenomenological approaches, differing in their theoretical emphasis but with an experiential perspective at the heart of them all. The theoretical foundations of IPA are informed by three key philosophical areas, phenomenology, hermeneutics and Idiography (Smith et al., 2009).

Phenomenology is not only a research method used in qualitative research but is also a philosophical discipline and an IPA study starts with the premise of ‘…systematically and attentively reflecting on everyday lived experience’ and this draws particularly upon the philosophical phenomenological positions of Husserl and Heidegger (Wojnar & Swanson; 2007; Smith et al., 2009:33). Phenomenology is concerned with the study of phenomenon through conscious experience of events, objects and emotions as they occur in people’s everyday lives, what Husserl called the lifeworld (Brooks, 2015). By exploring conscious

experience, through a detailed study of personal viewpoints and experiences, it allows the phenomenologist a greater understanding of the essential qualities of a phenomenon and consequently human life (Becker, 1992; Smith et al*.,* 2009). Experience is a complex occurrence:

> '…with us during every waking moment; it is what we think, feel, remember, imagine, see, hear, smell, taste or touch' (Becker, 1992:8).

Thus, Husserl's phenomenology seeks the 'essence of experience', whilst IPA strives to find particular experiences as experienced by individuals, the specific within the general (Smith et al., 2009). These experiences may occur at certain times in people's lives, manifested as major decisions or major turning points or their experiences may be continuing, but all involve hot cognition in order for people to make sense of their experience (Smith, 2018). In this research with cabin crew, the respondents had many years of experience as cabin crew, but they were still searching for meaning of their experiences through cognitive and emotional activity in their daily lives.

People's experiences and meanings do not occur in isolation, but along with other people and the natural world of plants and animals and in different personal and social environments from home to work. To define the position of a person in the world Heidegger used the term 'dasein' meaning 'being there' meaning a person is a 'being in the world' and proposed that to understand people, the context they live in with its possibilities and constraints, must also be considered (Becker, 1992; Moran, 2000). To Heidegger a person's meaning making and interpretive practices occur and are influenced by historically lived experience, background and culture, leading to fore structures that cannot be eliminated or ignored (Laverty, 2003). The busyness of everyday life may often leave little time for reflection of reality or the essence of life, as the world we experience is 'taken for granted', suggesting that understanding may often be reached without a conscious response and reliant on our fore structures (Laverty, 2003; Smith et al., 2009). Moran, (2000:239) reflected that in personal lives people are:

> ‘Most of the time we are just passing information along, not too caught up in things, not dawdling on the significance of events, but living in the vague average understanding of everydayness’.

Husserl posited a shift from a *natural attitude* to a *phenomenological attitude* that contemplated objects or experiences from a deeper reflective position, not what is thought is known about them, the taken for granted, but for how they are presented to an individual (Smith et al., 2009; Willig, 2013; Eatough & Smith, 2017).

IPA is a phenomenological approach due to its focus on lived experience and its requirement to understand and ‘give voice’ to the experiences and concerns of participants through detailed description of what the participants world is like (Larkin et al., 2006: 104). Through exhaustive study, the aim is to uncover phenomenon that are often hidden within participants lived experience in their personal and social worlds and how as individuals they make sense through the meanings they ascribe to these events and experiences (Smith & Osborne, 2003; Smith, 2004). IPA though is more than simply a ‘descriptive ‘methodology that represents the participants voices by getting as close as possible to their view (Larkin et al, 2006). It further aims to offer an interpretive analysis grounded in the wider cultural, social and theoretical frameworks and make sense of these claims and concerns from a psychological perspective (Larkin et al, 2006).

Fundamental to IPA is the hermeneutic tradition, the theory of interpretation and IPA is deemed an interpretive phenomenological process (Smith et al., 2009; Shinebourne, 2011). The hermeneutic concepts and theories of Heidegger, Schleiermacher and Gadamer are closely connected with IPA (Smith et al, 2009). Initially hermeneutics was the study of biblical, literary texts and art from an interpretive stance, allowing intentions and meanings to be comprehended (Becker, 1992; Moustakas, 1994; Smith et al., 2009). Schleiermacher saw texts on a more general level and considered the interpretation of texts as an art or craft, with the interpreter’s aim being to understand not only the text but also the writer,

through employing '…a detailed, comprehensive holistic analysis, one can end up with "an understanding of the utterer better than he understands himself" (Smith, 2007:22). For Heidegger, human beings, in their everyday lives, adopt a hermeneutic stance through self-interpretation and understanding (Martin & Sugarman, 2001).

Taking its lead from the hermeneutic circle, IPA supports a detailed, dynamic and iterative analysis '…involving a constant moving between part and whole, with a mutual illumination that goes on between those two' as the researcher interprets the text (Smith, 2011:9).This process of double hermeneutic phenomenology, supports the appearance of phenomenon, whilst the researcher is considered active within the research process as they seek to make sense of the respondents who are endeavouring to make sense of their world (Smith, 2004).

IPA is also influenced by Idiography, the concern with the particular, which entails a detailed investigation and analysis of cases in a particular context as individuals deal with specific circumstances or happenings in their lives (Smith, 2004; Larkin et al, 2006). An ideographic account seeks to maintain the integrity of the participant within the research process by acknowledging that they are the "'experts' in their own lives and their stories offer the researcher an opportunity to make sense of their lives (Smith, 2004; Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005). IPA supports detailed idiographic analysis and only once a case has been thoroughly analysed and a Gestalt realised will the researcher move on to consider other cases and then look carefully for similarities and differences across the cases to allow an understanding of the bigger picture to develop (Smith, 2004; Smith et al, 2009).

The aim of this research was to get as close as possible to a hidden phenomenon, in this case how cabin crew coped in their daily lives and built their resilience, through exploring their lived experiences. The methodologies of autoethnography and IPA share many similarities; both approaches are exploratory, concerned with experience as it is lived at a level of phenomenological consciousness embedded in the social world, acknowledge that context in which these experiences occur is crucial and they support the use of multiple

sources of data from interviews, conversations, diaries, documents and field notes to name a few (Tylor, 1994; Maggs-Rapport, 2000; Smith et al, 2009). They are idiographic by their focus on in-depth studies of particular perspectives, in one or more specific situation through case studies (Smith et al., 2009; Griffiths & Bengry-Howell, 2017). Both acknowledge the active role played by the researcher throughout the research process and therefore espouse reflexivity as fundamental (Maggs-Rapport, 2000).

My aim in this research was to get as close to a personal elusive phenomenon in this case, resilience, through exploring cabin crew personal experience. As a methodology IPA informed my research question, supported the use of a diary study and interviews and provided a framework for analysis of these. Accordingly, the diaries and interviews' primary purpose was to generate data that allowed an insight into people's experiences and meaning making as it occurred in their everyday lives (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006; Morrell-Scott, 2018). The respondents lived experience and meaning making is only part of the picture, as all of this occurs and is affected by the social milieu in which they dwell (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). Hence, an autoethnographic position allowed my personal experience as a cabin crew member access to documents and personal experience that supported a descriptive narrative allowing the reader a greater understanding of the context and adding a deeper layer of understanding when considering the themes generated through the IPA analysis of the diaries and interviews. With its focus on experience and how people seek meaning of their experiences IPA was considered a suitable method to explore the world they occupy allowing access into their experiences and subsequent meanings.

3.2 Recruitment Strategy

Any sampling strategy employed to identify research partners should support the research aims and methodological approach of the study (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The gathering of data would be through a partnership between myself as a researcher and also as a colleague of the respondents My recruitment strategy was guided by Robinson (2014:26), and his framework for sampling within qualitative research:

1) Define a “sample universe” through inclusion and exclusion.
2) Decide a “sample size” through consideration of epistemological and practical concerns.
3) Select a “sample strategy”: convenience, random, stratified, cell quota or single case selection
4) Source the sample through various approaches: advertising, incentivising, avoidance of bias and ethical considerations around informed consent.

Recruiting my research participants became one of the most challenging aspects of this research. Preconceived ideas on the sample population that I wished to draw upon and the impact that this had on the development and guise of this research meant constant reviewing and alteration and finding alternative approaches to recruitment.

An often-cited criticism of qualitative research is the lack of emphasis on sampling issues and its importance in enhancing the validity of qualitative research, particularly in interview studies (Robinson, 2014). What follows is an account of how my sample was primarily identified, recruited and the problems I encountered as I sought participants.

3.2.1 Defining my research participant universe

My research for my MSc was considered to be a pilot study leading up to this dissertation and for practical reasons had focussed on one specific group of long-haul crew from the same airline. At the beginning of this research journey, I sought respondents with life history homogeneity. However, my wish this time was to reach out and include as many United Kingdom based operational cabin crew members from a variety of airlines, in order to give them the opportunity to tell their story and have their voices heard.

My second decision involved demographic homogeneity through work experience as cabin crew and longevity of service. I was looking for participants who were “experiential experts”, who could share their rich knowledge within this social setting. Participants would

require a longevity of service that allowed for significant reflection on their experiences as cabin crew that may demonstrate their resilience by being able to bounce back after stressful situations (Cope, Jones & Hendricks, 2014; Hunter & Warren, 2014). Other professions, where resilience has been studied, such as nursing, paramedics, and mental health workers, indicated that work experience criteria was broad, ranging from between 6 months and 42 years (Streb et al., 2014; McDonald, Jackson, Vickers & Wilkes, 2015; Lamb & Cogan, 2016). My earlier research on stress and burnout in cabin crew had interviewed crew who had on average 26 years' experience, and I was keen this time to seek the views and experiences of a broader time served crew member (Marsh, 2014). Taking guidance from these earlier resilience studies, I judged crew who had 15 or more years' service as a cabin crew member were suitable to be included in this study therefor extending the recruitment pool.

A further consideration was to the gender of the crew that I wished to recruit and I was keen that this research should give all gender of cabin crew the opportunity to take part. Whilst I felt this may broaden my findings, I acknowledged that in the past I had found it challenging to recruit male respondents for qualitative studies, a situation reflected by other qualitative researcher's experiences (Robinson, 2014; Kristensen & Ravn, 2015).

3.2.2 Determining my sample size

Sample size is often influenced by theoretical and practical considerations and according to Onwuegzubie & Collins, (2007:288), the number of respondents should be "…informed primarily by the research objective, research question(s) and subsequently the research design". As an idiographic approach, IPA research generates substantial amounts of detailed accounts of people's experiences, which demands intense contemplative and empathetic analysis and reporting (Smith et al, 2009; Yardley, 2000). My sample size had to be sufficient to allow a detailed exploration of the phenomenon in question, allow the voices and identities of the respondents to be heard and not subsumed, along with sufficient time for reflective analysis and reporting of the data. Smith et al., (2009), suggest that quality, not

quantity, is preferable in IPA studies and for doctoral studies propose between four and ten participants.

From an early stage in the research and because of my previous experience in recruiting respondents, I was aware that other factors alongside the research objectives, question and design would have to be considered. Managing timelines, arranging access, time for respondents to complete diaries and attend interviews were major considerations. Cabin crew live a hypermobile existence moving rapidly from place to place, were conceivably "time poor", endured fatigued conditions and were subject to company rosters over which they exerted little control, making them potentially "hard to reach" (Partridge & Goodman, 2007; Abrams, 2010; Cohen & Gosling, 2015). I was also a cabin crew member conducting the research under the same conditions as my participants and arranging mutual, convenient dates for interviews was going to prove challenging. Another potential difficulty was that cabin crew live all over the UK and travelling time to and from their place of residency must also be factored in. The time frame allocated for data collection was over a 3 to 6-month period. My initial aim therefore was to recruit between 8 and 10 for the study, this being a number considered logistically manageable both for data collection and to address practical issues of scheduling appointments and travelling. Discussions with my supervisors in the initial design stage also led to this number being considered appropriate for this study, which was twofold, a diary study and later in the research interview.

3.2.3 Selecting a sample strategy/sourcing sample

There are various strategies for data collection in qualitative research from purposive sampling, convenience sampling and single case studies (Smith et al., 2009; Robinson, 2014). My aim was to recruit cabin crew purposively, from different airlines using a mixed-gender purposive sampling frame (Robinson, 2014). Smith, Flowers & Larkin, (2009: 48-49), discuss how potential participants are often recruited through "*referral* from various kinds of gatekeepers; *opportunities* as a result of one's own contacts; or *snowballing* (which amounts to referral by participants)". From previous experience I recognised that I would

have to use all of these approaches and my recruitment strategy became one that had to be revisited and amended as the difficulty in recruiting any willing respondents became apparent.

As cabin crew were hard to reach, I decided that I should cast my net as wide as possible to attract increased interest within the wider cabin crew community. I decided to "study advertise" on an online forum for cabin crew, CabinCrew.com, under the "experienced crew" thread (Appendix 1). This post received over 1174 topic views but no offers were forthcoming to take part in the research. I also posted on the British Airline Steward and Stewardess Association (BASSA) website under Aviation General Discussion and this received 4 views but once again this proved futile with no responses to take part. At the same time, I produced a flyer that I personally distributed to cabin crew at London Heathrow as they walked through the terminal (Appendix 2). I travelled to London Heathrow on three occasions and each time spent four hours identifying "on duty" cabin crew through their uniform and insignia, introducing myself as a fellow cabin crew colleague and researcher and briefly explaining the aim of the research. I then offered them the flyer with details of the study and contact details. I ensured that my presence was not obvious to the company as I positioned myself away from the crew report centre, in an area that was frequented by crew. My research diary entry reflects on the difficulty of engaging with crew who were either on their way to work or leaving to go home, with many too busy to engage in conversation and those that did were polite but sceptical. One crew member flying to New York offered to distribute the flyers to her colleagues on the flight. This approach, the same as the online forums failed to generate any interest.

My original intention was to recruit from different airlines, but as in my previous study with cabin crew approaching the airlines directly was considered undesirable. Previous research had shown that companies may require a form of censorship and/or ownership of the study, which may result in the research aim being driven by their interests rather than the study interests (Bryman, 1989). The issue of who to approach was one that was essentially determined by ethical considerations of anonymity and confidentiality, which were

paramount in the study for myself and my respondents, along with the role conflict of researcher/employee for myself. Although all responses would be anonymised it may be of concern that the airline may seek to "approve" the final publication, which may make respondents nervous to volunteer along with compromising my own professional position. Upchurch, (2010) described how at one major UK airline, crew were already nervous about sharing their experiences and thoughts after industrial action had resulted in "macho management" practices leading to suspensions and dismissals. Crew Facebook comments were monitored, private conversations overheard and reported by management and long-standing agreements that offered protection to cabin crew, along with their much-needed travel concessions were withdrawn. This resulted in employee's behaviour being controlled through "fear and disapproval" and it is possibly not difficult to see why crew may have been unwilling to take part and let their experiences and voices be part of public record.

As approaching the airlines was not an option, I decided to approach another gatekeeper, the individual airline unions that cabin crew were members of, which were affiliated to Unite the Union. I was a member of the British Airlines Steward and Stewardess Association (BASSA), the union affiliated to my company and I contacted them by email, explaining my research and asking for any help they may be able to offer in seeking respondents. I also sent emails to the union chairpersons affiliated to Thomas Cook Airline and Virgin Atlantic. None of these avenues proved successful, as there was no reply from any of these sources, even after leaving repeated messages. My final gatekeeper was the research leader for the Civil Air Transport Division of Unite the Union. After a telephone conversation they offered to pass the details of my research to the Cabin Crew Executive Committee to see if they could assist with participant recruitment. Unfortunately, this once again proved unproductive and no reply or assistance was forthcoming.

A reconsideration of my sample universe and strategy for recruitment was now necessary if I was to succeed in completing this research. I knew that cabin crew may be hard to reach but their lack of engagement had left me with questions and concerns:

- Why were crew reluctant to participate in the research?
- Was there fear for the confidentiality of their input to the research?

- Was lack of anonymity and the risk of identification making people fearful to take part?
- Was lack of time or interest in the research a driving force for this apparent reluctance?
- What could I do differently to recruit my respondents, which may offer assurance on ethical issues and how could I present the research as something that they may possibly find stimulating and rewarding?

I knew that I was also a "gatekeeper" to my participants as I was in contact on a daily basis with my cabin crew colleagues. Taking a lead from Smith et al*.,* (2009:50), I realised pragmatism must prevail and decided to review my strategy and "change path". I decided that my sample must now be drawn from a population that I had direct access to and could recruit through "face to face" contact, predominantly at work. This would allow me to explain my research, its aims and its ethical stance of protecting anonymity and confidentiality and to hopefully allay any personal fears about their involvement. I realised though that this meant that my original aim of including crew from other airlines and short haul crew would not be feasible and I would have to recruit a homogenous sample from within my own cabin crew community who all worked on long haul intercontinental flights. Opportunities to talk about my research whilst at work were chosen carefully. When colleagues asked what I was doing on my time off overseas or when I returned home, I mentioned that I was involved in research about how cabin crew had survived in our roles for so many years. Upon return home, interested respondents were emailed a participant information sheet detailing the purpose of the study and asked to contact back by email if willing to volunteer (Appendix 3). Failure to reply to the email was taken as refusal to partake in the study.

3.2.4 Final participants

From these replies, a convenience sample was identified and for the first phase the diary study, diaries were dispatched by mail to each respondent's address. A total of 12 diaries

were dispatched and seven were completed and returned. The average age of the respondents was 55 years and the average time flying as a career was 33 years and 6 months.

The second phase of the research comprised semi structured interviews. Three of the respondents of the diary study agreed to take part in the interview phase. Three further respondents were recruited in the same manner as before and agreed to be interviewed. Suitable interview dates were identified and respondents were given a choice of where to meet. I suggested that if they would feel more comfortable in a neutral venue, I would arrange a room at a Premier Inn, close to their home, so that we could meet privately or I would travel to their home address if that was their preferred option. All respondents opted to meet at their home address. A total of six interviews were arranged. All participants were female with an average age of 56, with an average flying career of 30 years and 4 months.

3.3 Data Collection: A two-study approach

3.3.1 The Diary Study

The aim of this first study was to adopt a phenomenological approach to understand cabin crew's "life as it is lived", through their physical and subjective experiences and to explore a hidden phenomenon, their resilience (Bolger et al, 2003). During this study participants were immersed in their multiple natural life contexts of home, commuting to work and their organizational workplace. Cabin crew live a hypermobile life, within an industry where rapid change and challenges are commonplace, so the opportunity to stop, reflect and record their experiences and feelings may be a rare event (Ohly et al, 2010; Cohen & Gössling, 2015). Previous research within the cabin crew community also highlighted how they believed their lived experiences, along with the feelings and emotions generated had been overlooked and the opportunity to tell their stories and explore their feelings and emotions were viewed as a positive experience (Antoniadou, 2010).

It was considered that diary methods were an appropriate method as they supported the phenomenological stance of this research, which allow phenomena that unfold over time such as workplace dynamics, to become visible (Furness & Garrud, 2010; Vantilborgh, Hofmans & Judge, 2018). Distinct from surveys, a diary study also allows respondents to reflect on "real life," whether at home or at work, close to the time of its occurrence which may lead to less memory distortion, along with greater control over what they may wish to write and disclose (Bedwell et al, 2012: Morrell-Scott, 2018).

3.3.2 Procedure

The design of the diary and the subsequent procedure was guided by a protocol for paper and pencil diary studies described by Bolger et al., (2003). The diary was an A5 ring binder that would be easy for crew to pack in a cabin bag, but robust enough to sustain the rigours of a trip. The diary booklet consisted of blank pages, in order to give respondents greater autonomy as to when and on which trip, they would complete their diary. In order to uphold ethical necessities, the diary also contained a participant information sheet, a consent form for signing along with a stamped and addressed envelope for its return to the researcher and contact details of the researcher, supervisor and telephone numbers for employee assistance programmes (Appendix 4). A feedback form was also enclosed to allow respondents to report their experience of filling in their diary.

The diary was sent by post to the respondent's home address with a postage paid return envelope enclosed. The diary asked the respondent to record what life was like for them as a cabin crew member through their experiences, thoughts and feelings and each diary contained guidance to assist respondents in completing their diary (Appendix 5). As a cabin crew member, I was very aware that time constraints, along with the intense workload of the aircraft and fatigue may have an impact on crew's ability and commitment to fill in their diaries, as diary studies have been found to need greater commitment and motivation on behalf of respondents to complete and return (Radcliffe, 2013). It was considered that most respondents would complete their diary at the end of their working day or at their earliest

convenience. The decision therefore was made to limit the diary to a maximum of one week for each respondent. It was suggested that diary entries were started two days before a flight, whilst on a three-day trip of their choice and on their first day off after returning home. One week after receipt of the diary a follow up email was sent to participants confirming delivery of the diary and offering any further guidance and support if required. When the diary was returned, a further email was sent acknowledging its return and thanking the respondent for their participation.

As suggested by Bolger et al., (2003), a pilot study was conducted to test the viability of filling in the diaries, the clarity of instruction and to identify areas of concern that respondents may have. Feedback indicated that diaries were easy to complete and only one word in the instructions appeared unclear and this was altered before any further diaries were dispatched. As a researcher and a crew colleague I completed a diary to enable a better understanding of the experience of my respondents and to support my reflexivity throughout the research process.

3.3.3 The Interview study

All contact to arrange suitable dates and times for interviews were through email contact. My respondents were offered the option of meeting at their home address or in a private room that I would book and pay for in a local Premier Inn. Premier Inns were chosen as these hotels were used as crew accommodation at London Heathrow and afforded some familiarity to the crew. As with the diary studies, an introductory letter outlining the aims of the study along with informed consent forms had been sent to participants' home addresses and no interviews were conducted until these had been signed and returned This study utilised semi structure, face to face interviews.

Three of the respondents had already taken part in the diary study, whilst three others had been recruited only for the interview phase. An interview guide was available to explore research topics and questions pertinent to their experiences and feelings within their work environment (Appendix 6). However, to support my methodology of ethnography and my

position as a researcher who actively participates in the research, whilst not imposing my own structure, I considered this a “light” interview guide with a flexible approach, to allow other areas of interest to be explored as they arose during our conversation (Taylor, 1994:34; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Respondents were informed that recordings would only start when they felt comfortable to begin. When participants indicated they were ready, to ensure interview transparency, I ensured the respondent understood what the interview was about, what the research would be used for, what was expected of them and their right of withdrawal from the interview at any time. At the end of the interview respondents were asked if they had any questions about the interview and were asked how they found the process. All interviews were recorded, saved to a computer MP3 file, listened to several times and then transcribed. Recordings and transcriptions were stored separately and saved to password protected folders.

3.3.4 Data Analysis Procedure for IPA

This research was composed of two studies, a diary study and an interview study and IPA was used to analyse the data in both studies. IPA does not have a "prescriptive" approach, but adopts a flexible set of guidelines for researchers, but as I was new to IPA and following discussions with my supervisors, I decided to closely follow the steps and strategies outlined by Smith, Flowers & Larkin, (2009).

Firstly, I transcribed the diaries and interviews, which allowed me an opportunity to closely engage with the text leading to a greater familiarity. After transcription of the diaries and interviews I read them several times checking that my transcriptions were accurate and confidentiality maintained. I noted any areas within the transcripts where accuracy was difficult to ensure, often because of sound quality issues during the interviews. I then read the transcripts several times to become familiar with them and to get a "feel" for the texts and the respondent's experiences (Storey, 2011).

When I was confident that my transcriptions were accurate, I then started case by case on initial noting, exploring the text for descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments and noted these in the margins (Smith et al, 2009). At this stage it was important to try to "bracket" my own prior experiences, assumptions and preconceptions, a process I felt was essential due to my familiarity to the research environment and respondents (Smith et al., 2009:25). As new understandings developed from the analysis of the text, I also invoked my psychological, theoretical and professional knowledge to aid my own understanding and further explore the text and add to the analytic process whilst staying close to the text (Smith et al., 2009:89). When I had analysed each case, I complied a rich descriptive overview of each of the respondent's texts.

At this stage I had analysed all the cases and now had a large data set of transcripts and initial notes and some possible master themes and I moved onto the next stage of the analysis, searching for connections across the cases and among the emergent themes by

creating theme clusters. I followed the advice of Smith et al., (2009:96), by printing out all the themes and creating a theme map to identify connections and then putting like with like to create a cluster. Deciding what to include and leave out was challenging, but a decision was made to focus on themes that were recurrent within the cohort of diaries and interviews (Smith et al., 2009:107). These clusters were then organised into super-ordinate themes and a master table of themes with supporting quotes for the diaries and interviews were created. At all stages of the analysis process, I returned to the original text to ensure that the themes stayed close to the text and reflected participants' experiences.

3.4 Ethics

My ethical position was informed by my desire to be primarily a "good" qualitative researcher and Brinkmann (2007:132) describes the differences in the researcher/respondent relationship and how this should be reflected in the research process:

> *"Fundamentally, if it is true that the relation between researcher and researched is a power relation with the researcher primarily having powers and the researched primarily being vulnerable, then the participants, the subjects, have rights whereas the researchers have duties".*

I had a duty to reflect how my research aims and actions may impact on my respondents both before taking part, during and after the research was concluded. In order to satisfy an ethical position, this research conformed to the framework and guidance ethics policy of the Manchester Metropolitan University Ethics Procedure. Personal data was handled in compliance with the UK Data Protection Act, (1998). Electronic information was anonymised and password protected with a password known only to the researcher. Paper data was kept in a locked cupboard accessible only to the researcher.

Specific points of the code were identified as being relevant to this research project: informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, physical or psychological harm, withdrawal from the research and power. Relevant procedures were adopted to address and negate these ethical issues and final ethical clearance was granted by the Manchester Metropolitan University Research Ethics Committee, ethics application 1311.

3.4.1 Informed Consent

The nature, purpose and consequences of the research were laid out in an introductory letter to the respondents at recruitment stage. Participants were encouraged to ask any

questions about the study before consenting to participation. As this was a two-stage research process comprising a diary study and semi structured interviews, informed consent was obtained independently for each phase of the research.

3.4.2 Ethics and the diary study

For the diary studies a consent form and a copy of the introductory letter was included with the diary and sent to the respondent's home address for signing (Appendix 3&4). A self-addressed and stamped envelope was enclosed for return of the consent form to the researcher prior to completing the diary. The diary also contained a feedback form, which allowed respondents to comment on their experience when completing their diaries (Appendix 7).

3.4.3 Ethics and the interview study

For the study using interviews a consent form was sent to the respondent's home address for signing and a self-addressed and stamped envelope enclosed for return to the researcher (Appendix 8). No interviews were conducted until this had been received by the researcher. Recordings were only started when verbal permission was given for the recorder to be switched on at the by the respondent at the time of interview and were advised when the recorder was switched off.

For both the diary and interview studies all respondents had received, at recruitment stage, a participant information sheet regarding the nature, purposes and consequences of the research and this was once again made available before completing the diary or taking part in an interview. For both studies respondents were advised of their right to withdraw from the research at any time without detrimental consequences. They were also advised of the right not to answer any questions they preferred not to. For both studies respondents were offered a transcript copy of their diary or interview to read at a later date. Contact details of the researcher and their supervisor were provided for any follow up questions.

3.4.4 Confidentiality and anonymity

This was an area of particular concern as all the respondents were colleagues. In a previous research study, many of my respondents had verbalised their concerns that if their identity was revealed their participation may be seen as unwelcome by their employer. In order to protect anonymity all names used in the transcripts were pseudonyms. Participants were advised that only the researcher and supervisors would be privy to the full transcripts and a copy of the completed dissertation would be held by Manchester Metropolitan University. All written and recorded data was securely held by the researcher in a locked cabinet and/or on a computer that was password protected. All data was destroyed on completion of the dissertation. Any "off the record" information, for example follow up emails or telephone conversations where respondents expressed comments to add to their diaries or interviews, were only used with their expressed permission.

3.4.5 Psychological and Physical harm

Physical harm to respondents was identified as being negligible. As a lone researcher however, who would be travelling and visiting respondents' homes or meeting in a hotel room, it was contemplated that this may pose a slight risk but no more than encountered in day-to-day activities. For emergency purposes and as a record of my movements, a supervisor was informed of interview dates, times and location.

Sharing personal aspects of a life may be an emotional experience and as Lee & Renzetti, (1990:512) state, "it is possible for *any* topic, depending upon the context, to be a sensitive one". Completing a diary and taking part in an interview that leads to greater reflection on their experiences as cabin crew at home and at work may cause psychological harm or "emotional distress". However, it was considered that in this research may be no more worrying for respondents than recalling normal everyday events with family or friends (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

Before the interviews were started respondents advised that if they felt uncomfortable with a question and/or did not want to answer, they were within their rights to refuse and their wishes would be respected. Throughout the interviews I took time to let the respondent set the pace of the interview and I was ready to check on their wellbeing if a respondent appeared distressed. Whilst no respondent indicated any psychological stress either during or after the research, the Distress Protocol for Qualitative Data had been recognised as a suitable protocol to address any issues should they arise (Haigh & Witham, 2015). At the end of the interviews, I allowed participants to reflect on the interview process. Telephone numbers and email contacts for counselling services provided especially for airline staff were provided for respondents in both research phases.

3.4.6 Power

Brinkmann, (2007), contends that all human encounters, including qualitative research, may involve power asymmetry that may give rise to ethical concerns. Power asymmetry within the research arena manifests itself in the type of research methodology and then within the different stages of the research process and in different ways, moving backwards and forwards from the researcher to the participants (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). The recruitment stage of the research process may allow the researcher to exert greater power through their knowledge of the nature of the research, their professional position within an organization or personal friendship status resulting in unacknowledged pressure to participate being placed on respondents (Browne, 2003; Peel, Parry, Douglas & Lawton, 2006; Karnieli-Miller et al, 2009). Acknowledging this particular power asymmetry was a prominent issue as a colleague and manager of the respondents and I took steps to lessen any impact my actions at this stage may have on my respondents.

This intimate position of myself with the respondents and the subject being studies meant that I occupied dual roles, that of researcher and member of the flying community and these conflicting positions had to be carefully navigated. My position as an onboard manager, responsible for managing crew performance and reporting of their performance through an inflight assessment, meant that crew may feel “coerced” into agreeing to take

part in the research in order to safeguard their position (Peel, Parry, Douglas & Lawton, 2006). In order to negate this possibility, any conversations about taking part in the research were conducted at the end of an overseas trip. Similar to Browne's, 2003, experience of recruiting respondents in the field, many conversations began with a simple question, "what are you doing on your days off or whilst down route?" This led to a conversation about my research and some crew members expressed an interest in helping and offered their emails to receive an information sheet. These recruitment emails were sent only after arriving home and the trip was finished. If no reply was received to the first email, which outlined the research and asked if they wished to take part, this was considered a refusal and this position was respected and no further emails sent. Due to the nature of crew rosters, I was confident that my chances of meeting the crew personally again at work were minimal.

3.5 Reflexivity: My Methodological Journey

No research is conducted in a vacuum but always from a particular standpoint (Banister et al., 2003:13). My particular standpoint was that I was already a part of my chosen research arena through my career of 38 years as cabin crew. However, I started this research with the intention to not include myself, even though I was aware of the impact my presence and experience may have on the research and its outcomes (Taylor, 1994). I was both inside the research arena as a crew member and when considering my own experiences, but outside as a researcher when hearing and recording my participants lives. My world was familiar to me but I was looking to make that world strange through listening to other crew's voices through their stories, experiences and from meeting them away from our familiar work environment and through their diaries, interviews and home visits.

After reading their diaries and interviews, visiting their homes and seeing them in their home environment I was shocked that the image I had in my head of "a stewardess in her home", was nothing like I had imagined. I thought they all lived like I lived, that we were a homogenous group. What became apparent was, we were not. Some were struggling to survive and were dealing with their hopes, fears, disappointments, struggles, fatigue and

loneliness alone, whilst others had family and that presented different issues on other levels. All of this through their writings in the diaries and their talk in the interviews proffered an insight into their unique worlds. Putting all this together with the context of their home, seeing it and living it changed my perception. I realised context is important, there is no real understanding without context, the arena in which people function matters and in the research process is critical. The context shaped and changed people. I saw different people at home then I had met on the aircraft at work. A quantitative study with a research arena devoid of human feelings, words, personal interaction and context could not describe the uniqueness of their lifeworld. I needed a methodology that sought out and reflected this uniqueness, humanness, lived experience, context and supported my research question on how they coped and built their resilience to survive. I also needed a methodology that allowed crew to reflect on their lives, to communicate to bring alive their experiences in their unique context through their own words. What also became apparent that whilst some parts of our lives and experiences were very different there were areas of commonality. As a fellow cabin crew member, I was one of them, but as the onboard manager and a researcher I was not. I was also a great believer that to utterly understand their world I had to understand my own and if I was asking them to expose their private lives through diaries and interviews it seemed only just that I should walk the same path as I was asking them to do. My own feelings and experiences had to be acknowledged and it became clear that as much as I wanted to understand their lifeworld, I also needed to understand mine, to situate myself within the context and research. Removing my preconceptions and values whilst keeping clarity and focus may be challenging. In her own insider research on social workers, Leigh, (2013:5), found it difficult to see “the wood for the tress” during the analysis of narrative data due to the similarity of what she would have felt would have been her own responses to her questions when compared to that of her participants. To address this, I had to find a way “…to make the familiar strange, so as to *understand* it and to make the familiar strange, so as to avoid *misunderstanding* it (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007:231). It was this position that I decided to firstly complete my own diary and then was interviewed about my work experiences by Dr Christine Ovenden. This gave me valuable insight into the difficulties of completing a diary when time limited and suffering from jet lag. After my own interview, I noted in my research journal that I had difficulty in recalling a specific trip and that my replies came more naturally if the

question was generic in nature and I felt less pressurised to provide the "right and truthful" answer. This insight was reflected in the interview prompt that was employed in interviews and in the guidance for completion of diaries to my participants. Of even greater value though was I was able to gauge the "cultural baggage" that I may bring to the research process and also elucidate ethical considerations around this research. I was shocked but also enlightened when I read my diary as to how "dark" my feelings were:

"Lugging my suitcase down the stairs along with my cabin bag, laptop bag & handbag I realised my going to work was akin to "moving house" … I feel like a snail with its home on its back…I realise I am going to a job I dislike and to a difficult toxic environment. I feel sad my life is wasted" (Personal Diary, 20 Jan 2016).

My first reaction was shock and sorrow when I read my diary. I had laid bare and exposed to myself and to others my less than perfect life. But then I discovered something else, there was light in the darkness. The process was also surprisingly cathartic and I felt a sense of pride that I had survived and flourished in this role for so many years. I also had a greater awareness of my own biases, beliefs and experiences and I found this particularly important when conducting analysis of my participants diaries and interviews later in the research.

Through this exercise of self-awareness, I became conscious that I may be asking my participants through their writing and talk, to enter and make visible, as I had, their own dark places but also the light. As Van Manen, (1990:130) states:

> *Writing exercises and makes demonstrable our ability to "see". Writing shows that we can now see something and at the same time it shows the limits and boundaries of our sightedness. In writing the author puts in symbolic form what he or she is capable of seeing… Although I may try to close my eyes to ignore what I have seen, in some way my existence is now mediated by my knowledge.*

This gave me a greater awareness of the necessity to be aware of my participants feelings during and after data collection. A further consideration was that I was attentive and sensitive to the participants written and spoken words. Throughout the interviews if a "sensitive" subject was raised or I sensed hesitancy or distress in their talk I ascertained if they were comfortable to continue and affirmed their right to move on in the interview. As I

noted in my research journal after my first interview, I appeared to be focussed on my research aims and my questions were limited to “what I wanted to talk about”. I was vigilant in subsequent interviews that whilst achieving a balance between keeping control of the interview, I allowed participants “autonomy” to ensure this research described, interpreted and understood the world of cabin crew with its multiplicity of voices and experiences (Holloway & Todres, 2003). In order to achieve this, interviews included the question “was there anything they experienced about being cabin crew they wanted people to know?” I felt this allowed participants time and space to discuss what was important for them that I had not thought about to ask.

3.5.1 The insider/outsider research dilemma

This intimate position of myself both with the participants and the subject being studied, positioned myself as an insider in the insider/outsider discussion (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). At the beginning of the study, I considered myself an insider researcher, yet as the research progressed it became clear that the boundaries between us were more nuanced and it became apparent that I occupied “a space between” the insider-outsider dichotomies (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). My position would be considered an emic one and whilst I shared many experiences and opinions with the participants, there were many areas where there were differences. I am an onboard manager and only one of the participants occupied this rank alongside me, whilst others did not, so responsibilities and tasks at work were similar in some respects, whilst dissimilar in others. Whilst at work we wore the same uniform and did the same job we all came to work from a different environment than my own. When I met crew on a trip, I thought they were all like me and gave little thought to social differences and to what they had left behind at home. This became very apparent when conducting interviews at participants homes. Interviewing them in their own environment afforded me an insight into a more holistic overview of the person I was interviewing.

The “space between” position generates advantages to assessing participants but also highlights the need for greater reflexivity on behalf of the researcher to:

> …look both outward and inward, to be reflexive and self-conscious in terms of positioning, to be both self-aware and researcher self-aware and to acknowledge the intertextuality that is part of both the data gathering and writing process (Taylor, 2011:9).

Wilkinson & Kitzinger (2013), identify four strategies to address the insider researcher position; minimizing, utilizing, maximizing and incorporating and each of these positions were considered. Minimizing my experience was not an option as it was impossible to remove myself from the research environment. My own intimate experience of cabin crew allowed access to documents and experiences that are not available to someone without my access and knowledge and would add to the richness of the research through the context allowing greater understanding of the crew's diaries and interviews. Removing the researcher from the study may be deemed crucial within a quantitative paradigm to ensure objectivity. However, within a qualitative study where reflexivity is taken as an important given to attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction, it was essential and right to disclose my knowledge and experience within the cabin crew world (Malterud, 2001). Maximizing and studying my own experience as a personal case study was not considered suitable due to ethical considerations and my position within the company. However as mentioned earlier, partaking in the experience of completing a diary and an interview and "looking inward" about my role allowed me to explore and bring to the fore my own experiences as a cabin crew member, which proved vital in data collection as I was now aware of my "hobby horses" and my own interests. Incorporating myself as a research participant was not considered fitting due to the possibility of inappropriate shaping of the interview protocol and data by introducing my experiences and knowledge as data. However, participants often sought affirmation of what they were saying through reference to my own and our shared cabin crew experience. This study finally utilized my insider experience to interview others with similar work experience, acknowledging my position to participants at an early stage within the research and ensured my position was used ethically and reflexively to generate knowledge about the social world. It was considered this position engendered trust and enhanced empathy to participants and aided in data collection. This strategy, whilst useful, did not wholly acknowledge the dynamic research process and I often found myself moving from insider to outsider research positions and

back again, as I listened and analysed crew stories often occupying the “space between”. The issue of my research membership within this study afforded advantages and disadvantages and presented unique challenges that needed to be managed. This did not make…” me a better or worse researcher”, just a researcher who needed to occupy the “space between” with its costs and benefits (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009:56:). Whilst acknowledging my role was shaping my research, my research diary notes how their stories and the collaboration between myself and my participants opened up their world to me and at the same time changed my understanding of my own world.

3.5.2 From the space between to outsider

On a Sunday evening in March 2020, a Boeing 747-400 took off from the United States en route to London. I was onboard that flight as the Senior Cabin Crew Member and as I had done on hundreds of flights for the last 35 years I was hoping for an uneventful transatlantic crossing and arriving home safely. We left the United States as Covid 19 was starting to make its affects truly felt. A week previous the flight had been expected to operate at full capacity, but we left that evening not even half full. Crew and passengers were palpably nervous; on board cleaning was stringent, hand sanitiser was available in every galley and gloves were available for crew to use during the service and contact with customers was kept to a minimum. The flight left on time and once we were busy in the service crew appeared to relax and as was there way, to just get on with it. We arrived at London the next morning and I made the welcome announcement as we taxied to stand and put my door into “manual” when instructed by the flight crew. I received the checks from the crew that all doors were in “manual and cross checked” and opened the door at 1 left to let the passengers disembark. Normally as the last passenger’s foot leaves the aircraft, a posse of engineers, caterers and cleaners would push their way on board with crew rushing off in the opposite direction and in just a few hours that aircraft would be ready to greet and carry its next set of passengers and crew to its next far-flung destination.

That however was before the Covid19 pandemic and on this March morning it became apparent that the world of aviation had changed, possibly forever. There was no flurry of activity of engineers asking, “any problems in the cabin” and no cleaners or caterers rushing on to prepare the aircraft for its next flight, just the crew rushing through the door shouting “thanks for a great trip”, “enjoy your days off” as they left the aircraft without a backward glance. The flight crew were debriefing in the flight deck and as usual I waited for them to say goodbye. I was left standing in the silent, empty cabin of a Jumbo Jet affectionately known by all as the “Queen of the Skies”. As I waited at the door in the eerie silence, I had a premonition, that after 38 years my flying career was over and this was the last flight, the last time I would have the privilege to be in charge of an aircraft as a Senior Cabin Crew Member. My final door had been put into “manual and cross checked” and my wings would now be placed in a drawer, not proudly worn on my uniform jacket. My consciousness silently spoke to me “stop, look, feel this aircraft and cabin, take it in, you will never be here again” and that’s what I did. I drank in the atmosphere of this beautiful aircraft as if it was a fine wine, I savoured every moment and said a silent thank you for carrying me safely for so many years and permitting me to relish freedom and independence. My reverie was broken by the arrival of my flight crew colleagues and as I gathered my bags, I softly said goodbye and thank you to the career that I had enjoyed as well as endured for 38 years. The terminal was empty and subdued and with a heavy heart I left the crew car park for what turned out to be the last time.

As I started my journey home, I realised the Covid pandemic would probably take my wings and those of my colleagues who gave their time, thoughts and experiences through their diaries and interviews to make this research what it is. As airlines fought for survival our careers as we knew them would no longer be viable and this research would be documenting a community of cabin crew whose experiences would be considered “historical”. This indeed came to pass and after five months of furlough, I took voluntary severance in August 2020, along with many thousands of my colleagues at the airline. We had for the final time placed “doors to manual and cross checked”.

This event happened in the midst of writing this thesis. My researcher position changed in my mind from the “space between” to “outsider”. This event afforded unique challenges as I was no longer cabin crew but still a researcher. I now had to address my feelings of hurt and anger that I had lost my career so abruptly and yet still stay focussed on writing up this thesis, without allowing this to affect my objectivity as a researcher. After a period of reflection and working through my feelings, I returned to writing as an outsider but still passionately attached to the stories the crew told and a determination for their lifeworld to be communed through this thesis.

It is to this awareness of the lived life of crew that this research turns to next. The stereotyping of crew as no more than flying waitresses or trolley dollies undermines the harshness and complexity of the environment crew occupy every day of their lives, often for many years. The next section is a detailed exploration and explanation of what crew actually do, from the safety aspects to the onboard service, all whilst experiencing a turbulent work life pattern of rosters, jet lag and fatigue.

4. Cabin Crew and their work environment

4.1 The Flying Waitress? What cabin crew ACTUALLY do

The lifestyle of a cabin crew member is described as an opportunity to travel the world and experience a glamorous lifestyle as the "face" of the airline, whilst delivering exceptional customer service with a warm smile. Unlike their predecessors the lifestyle of today's cabin crew may not be considered as a glamorous as a rock star or actor, but it still promises fantastic opportunities to gain experience and develop a career and contribute to the success of the company, whilst being paid to travel the world. Add to this a plethora of benefits from a designer uniform, concessionary travel for crew and their family, free parking, pensions and numerous other enticements, it is possibly not difficult to see the attraction in becoming a cabin crew member (British Airways Careers, 2016). This attraction may show no sign of abating, with Emirates airlines reporting that it receives around 400,000 applications every year for cabin crew positions (Gulf News, 2016). Whilst many are attracted to the positive images and expectations of a flying career and its subsequent lifestyle through its glamorous representations and opportunities, what awaits the expectant new cabin crew member may be what Berlant, (2007) calls "a cruel optimism". Whilst most airlines may be transparent in their description of the demanding lifestyle, new entrants' expectations may differ from the portrayal and reality of the role of cabin crew. They may often be unaware that they are entering an industry that may severely affect their lives, careers and well-being due to its unique physiological, psychological and economic challenges (Al-Serkal, 2006; Eriksen, 2007). Despite these hardships many crew sustain long careers (Whitelegg, 2007).

But what does life for today's cabin crew encompass? It all starts for crew before they even step on the aircraft with the publication of their roster, which notifies crew of their flight schedule. Planning for their life at home and away occurs on a month-to-month basis and is no nine to five job, with hours susceptible to disruption from a myriad number of sources. Crew's lives may be described as "flexible", with the inability to plan ahead a major part of their existence (Partridge & Goodman, 2007). On top of the demands of a demanding work

hours and schedule, the cabin crew role is a combination of many facets encompassing safety, security and customer service (Damos, Boycott & Gibbs, 2013). The probability of facing an emergency situation in flight for crew are small, but the possibility is always there and therefore they must be trained and ready to respond to any likely emergency scenario, as “first responders of the skies”. They must also be able to deliver high-quality customer service to many different nationalities and cultures as they cross numerous time zones. I am aware of this as in March 1982 I was that expectant, excited new cabin crew member and thirty-eight years later I was still flying as a very senior cabin crew member, until retirement due to the Covid pandemic of 2020. Throughout these years this demanding environment, full of challenges and rewards, has influenced and shaped my life and that of my family.

My first aim in this study was to challenge the stereotype of cabin crew as a “flying waitress” and to create an account of their role performance along with the sociocultural context and practices of crew in order ‘…for the reader to understand a way of life’ (Ellis & Bochner, 2000:737). Attitudes and behaviours of cabin crew are a result of intra and extra-organizational factors and it is essential to study them in and out of work (Bennett, 2006). Consequently, from an autoethnographic position, I draw upon field notes, personal experiences and reflections, alongside technical knowledge I acquired over the years and official documents to guide, contextualize and elaborate on the crew’s gruelling day at work. It offers an insight into how organizational, social and cultural frameworks through prescribed scripts, influence the behaviours and meanings of cabin crew. Bartol and Martin (1998), define organizational culture as "... a system of shared values, assumptions, beliefs, and norms that unite the members of an organisation. Culture reflects common views about 'the way things are done around here’" (Bartol & Martin, 1998 cited in Bennet, 2006, p110). The culture and norms of cabin crew are inextricably linked around the dual performance roles of aircraft safety and cabin service (Bennet, 2006). Therefore, I draw firstly on narratives involving safety related critical incidents that I and fellow colleagues faced during our flying careers. Whilst I was not personally involved in all the critical events described, I was flying as cabin crew when all these events occurred. As a member of the worldwide cabin crew community, I argue through “contagion experience” these events left myself and my colleagues with a collective conscious comprising of fear, distress and vulnerability, that

we took to work with us every day and are significantly part of all crews' life stories (Lating et al, 2006). Secondly, I turn to a detailed account of the scripted, organizational and mandated safety and service routines that crew perform every day. These personal narratives are windows into the unique social world of cabin crew or as Plummer (2001), may call "documents of life". What is relayed in this chapter is more than just an "insider narrative". It is asserted that there is no single right way to do autoethnography as differing approaches encompass the analytical or the narrative (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008). These personal narratives portraying the experiences of cabin crew at work, display generic properties that reflect collective and shared cultural conventions. Therefore, it affords a substantive contribution to a wider, deeper understanding of the social life of cabin crew and through its impactfulness generates new questions about how cabin crew cope and build resilience to survive in their long careers, the focus of this research (Richardson, 2000).

Whilst this section is positioned as autoethnographic, section 4.3. also contains extracts from the diaries that the participants completed as part of data collection. These extracts do not form part of the themes developed through the IPA analysis and presented later. However, they have been included in this chapter as they enhance the contextual understanding of the personal impact the crew environment exerts on individuals through greater use of the participant's voice.

The next section therefore will explore what it is like to be a cabin crew member by firstly looking at their primary role, their experiences of safety and security where they are the "first responders in the sky" and the possible dangers they face every time they sign in for duty. This is followed by a detailed account of delivering first class customer service on a flight and the hidden reality and stresses this entails as crew manage their multiple roles of safety and service.

4.1.1 Cabin crew's primary role: Safety and Security

"Cabin crew member" means an appropriately qualified crew member, other than a flight crew or technical crew member, who is assigned by an operator to perform duties related to the safety of passengers and flight during operation.

(Commission Regulation (EU) No 290/2012, March 2012)

Cabin crew are a legal requirement on board all civilian aircraft and the role of cabin crew comprises many facets encompassing safety, security and customer service (Damos, Boyett & Gibbs, 2013). However, as stated by the above directive, the primary role of cabin crew is to ensure the safety of their passengers whilst on-board the aircraft in compliance with European Union requirements for the safe operation of civil aviation. Upon recruitment, crew's comprehensive training comprises many different safety scenarios, known as Safety Emergency Procedures (SEP) and their training and subsequent attestation is regulated by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) (Commission Regulation (EU) No 290/2012). To meet EASA requirements, training covers numerous Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) that crew must understand and comply with every time they operate. These SOP's involve practical drills and technical knowledge; the opening and closing of doors, emergency evacuation of aircraft on land and sea, survival techniques, fire and smoke training, decompression, passenger handling and cabin surveillance, terrorism, bomb relocation, general aviation issues and regulations, Crew Resource Management, dangerous goods along with aero medical aspects and first aid (CAA 2012, Initial training course and examination).

Training is ongoing throughout their career, as every year crew members must revalidate their attestation by attending an SEP refresher course, where under exam conditions, they must demonstrate their practical and technical knowledge in order to continue flying. Cabin crew attestations are valid for up to 4 different aircraft types. Participants who took part in this research were all long-haul cabin crew members whose attestation were valid for Boeing 747's, 777's, 787's and the Airbus A380. On each of these aircraft the locations of emergency equipment and the operation of their cabin doors are different. A Boeing 747

has 30 different pieces of emergency equipment and 3 different types of doors, each with distinctive modes of operation. Crew may be required to work in different on board positions every time they operate a flight. They must therefore be conversant with the location and operation of the myriad amount of safety equipment and operation of aircraft doors, along with the Standard Operating Procedures that crew must observe throughout their duties.

The next section looks at the safety and security role that crew are trained for and expected to respond to at any time. At 35,000 feet there is no one to call for help, they cannot open the door and get off. They and they alone, are responsible for the safety and security of their passengers and they are the ones that passengers look to when a flight turns from the expected safe one to a dangerous situation.

4.2 Not just the First emergency service-we're the only emergency service at 35,000 feet

4.2.1 An Emergency Evacuation

On the 1st of November 2018, ten British Airways cabin crew boarded what was expected to be a routine flight from Las Vegas to London Gatwick. The aircraft started its take-off role on the runway and seconds later at 16:12, one of its two engines exploded and the events that unfolded in the next four minutes emphasised the dangers that cabin crew may face and address every time they step on an aircraft. Within 15 seconds the aircraft came to a rapid stop on the runway. While the flight crew ascertained the extent of the problem, the cabin crew were sitting at their seats awaiting instructions from the flight crew, instructing customers to remain seated and offering reassurance through their calm appearances. There is by now fire and thick black smoke evident to the crews at the doors and at the back of the aircraft, passengers are out of their seats blocking aisles and shouting, "we need to get off". Cabin crew now started to initiate crowd control and to calm customers down, keeping them focussed to follow their instructions, while at the same time checking the status of the area outside of their respective doors for dangers. On the Boeing 777 aircraft

crew are sat alone at their door and may feel very isolated from fellow colleagues, along with help and support. In this rapidly deteriorating situation crew must remain calm, focussed and call on their training in safety and emergency procedures. After what must have felt a long two-minute wait, the captain initiated the command to evacuate the aircraft as the fire was now out of control and a threat to all on board. The cabin crew reacted instantly, with the first doors opened and slides deployed fourteen seconds later. At one of the doors, the charge of passengers almost resulted with the crew member being pushed out of the aircraft as she opened the door. She saved herself by grabbing the door handle and then initiated the evacuation of her passengers. Another crew member was screamed at by passengers to open her door that she had ascertained was blocked by fire. Had she done what the passengers demanded it would certainly have resulted in death for all in that area. Despite this intense onslaught she redirected passengers to usable exits. Another crew member described how a woman fell in the hurry to evacuate and was “walked over” by other passengers and how they helped her to stand up and redirected her to another door. Out of eight available exits only two were serviceable and despite intense confusion and terror, two minutes and twenty-five seconds after the initial evacuation command the last person was evacuated and the cabin crew directed their customers away from imminent danger. Out of 170 passengers and crew on board only one sustained serious injury. A cabin crew member broke her arm and suffered a compression fracture of the first lumbar vertebrae as she finally evacuated the aircraft (National Transportation Safety Board, 2018). Critical incidents, such as the engine fire and subsequent evacuation of this aircraft, may be deemed sudden and powerful events that expose people to dangerous situations that are perceived as being out of their control and may result in an acute stress response (Anderson, Litzenberger & Plecas, 2000). While incidents like the one in Las Vegas are thankfully not a regular occurrence, it is a scenario that crew are trained for and must anticipate every time they take off and land.

As can be seen from the above incident, a flight may go from being routine to catastrophic in a matter of seconds, meaning crew must be on “red alert” for such instances as there may be only seconds to save lives. Though it may seem that crew are sat on their jump seats for take-off and landing with no concern, they are alert for the possibility of danger and recalling a “silent review”, where such a scenario as above is anticipated and the drill they

follow is rehearsed in their mind. To allay customer fears and anxieties cabin crew must appear calm and controlled, supressing their own immediate fears. Frightened customers often say that when they hear strange noises or unusual vibrations, they look for the behaviour and reaction of the crew (Martinussen & Hunter, 2017).

I was a cabin crew member for thirty-eight years and I remember my first flight from Manchester to Malaga in April 1982 as if it was yesterday. I have completed thousands of flights and I have fortunately never had to evacuate a burning aircraft, but throughout my career I have encountered situations on flights that may have elicited an acute stress response and others that may be associated with chronic stress (Anderson & Plecas, 2000). My working environment is one full of danger, perceived or unperceived. Take-off and landing are considered the most perilous periods of flight and it is clear to see when considering a fully laden Boeing 747 has a maximum fuel capacity of 204,355 litres of highly combustible jet fuel and thunders down a runway reaching a take-off speed of around 184mph with up to 500 passengers and 18 crew on board. A small mistake or failure, be it human or mechanical, in any part of this complex process may become fatal.

Whilst it may be considered by airlines that passengers today expect safety to be a fundamental, the recent crashes of two 737 Max aircraft of Lion Air (2018) and Ethiopian Airlines (2019), with the subsequent deaths of 346 passengers and crew may challenge this assumption. Alongside concerns about new generation aircraft, air travel today may challenge the most resilient of individuals, with increased fear of terrorism, extra security and cramped conditions on board, all factors affecting passenger behaviour. Every flight is individual with a new set of passengers, their needs, expectations, attitudes, cultural backgrounds and the purpose of their trip, affecting their behaviour and their behaviour is extremely hard to predict (Bor, 2007). This unpredictability, along with a potent mix of stressors, in the challenging environment of an aircraft cabin, means that every time I climb on board, I never know what may happen on that day. I have encountered disruptive passengers who have threatened the security of the occupants and the aircraft, mild to severe cases of physical and mental illness, including death and fires that may have

threatened all on board. When confronted with these events at 35,000 feet there is no opportunity to escape or the ability to summon professional law enforcement, the fire brigade or the ambulance service. That's what makes my role as cabin crew and my day so capricious and problems must be anticipated before they occur to ensure the safety of all on board. Cabin crew are not the first emergency service, they are the only emergency service at 35,000 feet.

4.2.2 The Disruptive Passenger

Passengers are a constant source of surprise, with rudeness, drunkenness, illness and sometimes appreciation all being proffered to me in the course of a few minutes. The number of incidents on board European registered aircraft makes for stark reading. The European Union Aviation and Safety Agency (EASA), 2019, stated:

> '…every 3 hours the safety of a flight within the EU is threatened by passengers demonstrating unruly or disruptive behaviour. At least 70% of these incidents involve some form of aggression. At least once a month the situation escalates to such a degree forcing the plane to perform an emergency landing'

It also adds that over 1000 flights per year are affected by the behaviour of intoxicated passengers and 72% of all incidents involve physical aggression and often are a result of cabin crew issuing safety instructions, which customers refuse to follow. In these situations where crew face violence there is no police force for the crew to call upon, they can only call on their training, try to diffuse the situation, employ break away techniques if attacked and if all else fails restrain the passenger with handcuffs. Restraining a disruptive passenger who may be intoxicated in the confined space of an aircraft may be fraught with physical danger for the crew and customers.

Intoxication on an aircraft is a common problem and one that many crew, including myself, have had to address. What may appear as harmless high spirits in a public house or on the

street on a Saturday night, may quickly turn to something more serious and threatening in the confines of an aircraft at 35,000 feet, especially when customers think they have a right to demand more drinks and they cannot be asked to leave the premises. A doctor, who was used to disruptive behaviour in his accident and emergency department, described his experience of air rage as “worse than anything he had seen in A&E”, when he was head butted on a flight by an intoxicated passenger who the crew were trying to restrain (The Telegraph, 2020). Calling for the police once airborne is not an option and once again the cabin crew are called upon to address the problem.

I myself encountered what is now called “air rage” on a flight from Los Angeles to London Heathrow and I was physically, sexually and verbally abused by an intoxicated passenger. It was the February half term and the flight was full, with a high number of families and children in the Economy cabin. I had just returned from a break of one hour, with just ninety minutes till landing into London. All that remained was to serve our passengers a continental breakfast, land and go home for days off. When I returned to the galley area, I noticed a passenger who was obviously intoxicated but appeared “friendly” and was laughing and joking with the crew, asking for more drinks. This passenger was obviously the worse for wear so, I suggested that a coffee would be more appropriate and I would help him back to his seat so he could have a sleep and recover before arrival into London. This he readily agreed to do and as I left him at his seat, with a large coffee all seemed calm and the situation resolved. As I started to get the breakfast trolleys out, I heard a commotion in the cabin and looked out to see the passenger standing on his seat shouting at customers. I ran into the cabin and told him to calm down and behave and he started to thrust his hips forward simulating a sexual act and shouting, “I can get any woman I want”. The only way that he would calm down was if I sat and talked to him. The rest of the crew continued caring for our shocked and frightened passengers, whilst I tried to calm the now terribly upset passenger, who was crying and very emotional. His demeanour would then quickly change and I was subjected to a torrent of verbal and sexual abuse. This continued for about an hour and as we approached London airport, he seemed to lose all reason and punched and broke the interior cabin window, badly cutting his hand and shattering the Perspex. I had to remain in the seat trying to calm him down whilst he wiped his bloodied hand over

my legs and screaming at me. When we landed, as I tried to restrain the passenger who had now tried to force his way out of the window seat into the aisle, I begged the passenger sat next to me to go for help from fellow crew sat at their landing positions. It was at this point that he held a shard of shattered Perspex to my face and I told him to drop the Perspex now being used as a weapon. This he thankfully did and the passenger was arrested by the police upon arrival at London. I recall that passengers did not come to my aid, neither did my crew. I remember the first passengers being disembarked and the police arriving unaware of the extent of what had occurred. When the police officer saw my state and that I was restraining the customer alone, he immediately acted and removed me from danger. I remember feeling OK until the police officer told my fellow crew to take me to the galley and get me a cup of tea and to clean up my bloodied legs and scratched stockings, where the passenger had wiped his injured hands on me. It was at this stage that I started shaking and felt very frightened. Upon my return to the Crew Report Centre, I gave a witness statement to the police and the company issued me with a replacement uniform skirt to replace the soiled one I was wearing. I returned to work after my three days off. Recalling and writing about this incident of 20 years ago was quite a stressful experience and I found myself feeling emotional and at one stage “welling up”, close to tears. I believed that the passenger had been charged with the attack on myself, but when I reread the reports in the newspaper and the BA staff magazine it appears that may not be the case. The passenger, who defence counsel declared had a “severe drink problem”, pleaded guilty to being drunk and disorderly on an aircraft and two charges of criminal damage to the plane and police van. He received two years and three months for these offences but my experience and trauma were barely mentioned.

Whilst my experience was an extreme case of drunkenness, a survey involving, 4,000 UK based cabin crew, reported that 87% of the crew had witnessed drunken behaviour either in the airport or on board an aircraft (Unite, 2017). While it is illegal to be intoxicated on boarding or whilst on board an aircraft, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), reported that incidents of drunken air rage and disruptive passenger behaviour had increased by 50% in 2016, with more than 418 flights experiencing one or more disruptive passengers (CAA, 2016). This increase in disruptive behaviour was despite the introduction in 2016 of a multi-

disciplinary created UK Aviation Industry Code of Practice on Disruptive Passengers. This voluntary code provides a framework of measures that should assist in reducing incidents of disruptive behaviour. Unfortunately, another survey reported that many crew appeared unaware of the code and even if they did, may feel uncomfortable in refusing drinks to customers who “pay their wages”. Many crew rely on bar commission, raised from on-board sales of drink and food to supplement their basic wages and their role was recently described as “more one of a full- fledged salesperson” (Bergman & Gillberg, 2015). The salesperson role is one of the many performance measures used to monitor crew, with airlines reminding crew their obligation to meet certain targets for the sale of drinks, food and perfumes on every flight they operate or face “further action” (Ryanair, 2017). Crew may feel in an impossible situation having to monitor passenger’s alcohol consumption to avoid air rage, whilst having to meet customer expectations on service along with company expectations on service and performance targets.

For many years, once an aircraft had left London, there was very little opportunity for office-based managers to manage the crew. Crew were remote both physically and psychologically from the company and much of what happened on an aircraft stayed on the aircraft and was managed by the captain and senior cabin crew member. This has changed dramatically with technological advances meaning that instant communication has removed the remoteness from head office and ground-based management. Without even being on board, the company may now have the ability to micromanage crew, using iPads that were issued with the promise of increasing the crew’s ability to “provide excellent customer service”. The reality that quickly followed was far more insidious as it allowed the company to increase the senior crew members workload. Furthermore, the company had a quantitative way to analyse crew performance through the number of reports crew completed, the number of personalized messages that were delivered to high value customers and the recording of a numerous other tasks that the crew must complete on each flight. All these extra tasks were on top of the already hectic schedule of safety and emergency procedures and serving the customers with an ever-increasing offer of food, drink and duty free. Reports of workload intensification have been experienced and reported in major airlines around Europe, resulting in greater fatigue due to crews not

achieving their minimum legal rest (Curley & Ryle, 2009; Damos, Boyett & Gibbs, 2013; Bergman & Gillberg, 2015; TCXUnite.com, 2015). Meeting customer demands and crew's adherence to the correct delivery of service expected and laid down by the company, are monitored on the day through other sources. Mystery shoppers on board the aircraft evaluate the crew's performance, customers are encouraged to offer "feedback" on how crew affected their inflight experience through both text messaging and emails after their flight. These "Customer Voice" scores are used as a performance indicator, ensuring crew meet the set targets for customer satisfaction and are used in annual reviews as a way of managing the crew. Customers are asked if crew smiled enough, cared for their customers, were approachable and welcoming, cared for their needs, and offered information that made a difference to their flight. Customer opinions are often subjective, not always polite and may be upsetting to crew when they read the comments on their personal dashboards. Those who score highly are graded "high performing" whilst those who do not are considered "developmental". The developmental group are closely monitored by their managers until their performance is deemed acceptable.

Unfortunately, these scores may not always reflect an accurate picture of a crew's performance. Customer's negative comments may be as a result of things going wrong outside of the control of a cabin crew member. The psychological and physical stress that travel exerts on even seasoned travellers may mean that they are "emotionally charged" from the beginning and less able to respond appropriately to coping with the many stressors of modern travel (Bor, 2007). Separation from loved ones, fear for their personal safety, delays to flights, the airport environment of check in and security, the cabin environment that may exacerbate hypoxia and feelings of claustrophobia, not getting the "right meal" or inflight entertainment, customers' expectations of their journey, not getting enough smiles from the crew and the behaviour of fellow passengers are just some of the many stressors that passengers must contend with (Bor, 2007). But so, must cabin crew. They experience all these stressors but must not react when customers complain or are rude, they must contain and appease the rising anger, fear or other number of emotions that they encounter from customers on a weekly, daily, hourly minute by minute basis.

4.2.3 The Turbulent Flight

Turbulence is a phenomenon often encountered whilst flying and may change from light to severe without warning and this may result in injury to passengers and crew. Cabin crews are required by aviation law to check that all customers are seated and their seat belts fastened when there are reports or occurrences of turbulence and if a Civil Aviation Authority inspector is on board, they can be severely reprimanded for failing to do so. It is often crew walking around caring for the safety of their customers who are vulnerable to injury during these turbulence events. In November 2013, a Virgin Atlantic 747 was heading from Montego Bay, Jamaica to London Gatwick when at 37,000 feet they encountered two sudden episodes of severe turbulence (AAIB Bulletin: 9/2014). This event led to several passengers being injured, one seriously with a lacerated knee, along with a crew member who suffered neck and head injuries. Two passengers and the crew member were subsequently taken to hospital upon arrival in London. Further serious injuries to crew, include in 2017, a fractured ankle on a Ryan air flight and a fractured leg on a Qantas flight, both as a result of turbulence (Boeing, 2017). On many occasions I have had to stand up during turbulence, putting myself at risk of such injuries, to ask customers to sit down and observe the fasten seat belt signs and it is a task that many crew may find challenging and frustrating. The reality for the crew is that they are often ignored and sometimes shouted at and abused for requesting customers to observe the seat belt signs. My own experience bears testimony to this on a recent flight. The seat belt sign was illuminated and a customer went to the toilet to change into his sleeper suit. I politely asked them to sit down, explaining that the captain had reports of turbulence from aircraft ahead. The customer refused to return to their seat. I am now in an uncomfortable position. If I insist that the customer sits down and they refuse he is in breach of following a cabin crew order. However, this customer also has the power to write in and complain about my “attitude”, which will then be reflected on my performance dashboard. All these thoughts are running through my head whilst attending to this. The customer reacted aggressively, swearing at me under his breath and then storming back to his seat, throwing his sleeper suit onto his seat and swearing at the customer sat next to them. These kind of incidents are regular occurrences for crew. This event left me feeling angry at being swore at and upset that I am in the problematic position of asking customers to follow Flight Crew Orders and to fasten

their seat belts to ensure their safety and that of other passengers. I am duty bound to adhere to my safety related duties and ask passengers to return to their seat, but if I do it may influence their response when they are asked about their experience of how I met their needs on their customer survey.

4.2.4 Cabin crew as paramedics

When crew or passengers are injured during events such as this it is once again the crew who must care for the injuries and become another emergency service- paramedics. Illness and deaths on board are not uncommon and crew must be ready to respond to any manner of illness, from simple faints and nausea to potentially life-threatening heart attacks, in a professional and competent manner. Crew are fully trained in First Aid and must complete a refresher course every year and pass practical and theory-based exams to demonstrate their capability to care for customers at 35,000 feet. On an aircraft only cabin crew can perform Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) on a customer. They may be assisted by health professionals to administer lifesaving drugs that are carried on board but the overall responsibility rests with the cabin crew. I was met with such a scenario when I boarded a flight from Bangladesh. I was at the back of the aircraft in Economy watching our customers board, when I noticed that as a customer was placing their bag into the hat rack they suddenly dropped to the ground. It was quickly established that the customer was not breathing and required immediate resuscitation. I shouted for help from my colleagues and I ran for the defibrillator whilst my colleague's started CPR. The box was impossible to open and eventually I used the aircraft jemmy to break into the box. My colleagues and I performed CPR for 40 minutes and administered two shocks from the defibrillator, all in the confines of the aircraft aisle, which is very narrow. We had assistance from a doctor travelling on the flight, who administered adrenalin and fluids intravenously from our on-board medical kit. Sadly, we could not resuscitate our customer who was a young man and the decision to cease CPR was taken and he was pronounced dead by the doctor. The body had to then be removed from the aircraft, which took over two hours. As crew, we were exhausted and upset. We eventually took off over three hours late and completed our duty to our home base, looking after our remaining customers, many who had witnessed this upsetting event. It was almost two months later that I received written acknowledgement

for what we had experienced that day, but it was satisfying to see that customers had appreciated our efforts.

4.2.5 Cabin crew as security staff

Aviation has long been a target for terrorist activity, with over 1.363 recorded aviation terrorist attacks on the Global Terrorist Data Base (Krull, 2016). Terrorist attacks on aircraft and its occupants are effective, powerful and symbolic, with the capability to inflict chaos, mass casualties and instil fear into the public, all on an international stage with maximum media attention (Duchesneau, 2015; Krull, 2016). Since the 1970's with the Dawson Field Hijacking of four civilian aircraft by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, terrorists have been implementing innovative ways to highjack and destroy aircraft. Those of us in the airline industry are perhaps most effected when acts of terrorism strike and fear becomes part of your everyday work environment. When most people apply to be cabin crew this aspect of the job is probably not one that they consider. However, this was brought home to me when arriving at Auckland on an overnight flight from Sydney. Upon arriving we were advised by a shocked ground crew about the terrorist bombing of New York bound PAN AM flight 103 over Lockerbie on the 21st of December 1988, with the loss of 250 people onboard and 11 on the ground (Krull, 2016). Never had I considered that my aircraft would be blown out of the sky, but it was now a reality and one I had to compartmentalise and learn to live with. The events of 9/11 with the multiple attacks on aircraft with the eventual destruction of the Twin Towers at the World Trade Centre in New York, the Pentagon and the failed aircraft that crashed into a field in Pennsylvania meant that it was possibly much harder for crews to repress their existential fears. I remember being terrified on my first flight back after the attacks to Los Angeles and remember sitting all alone at door 5 on a jumbo jet on take-off, praying silently to God that we would be safe. The aircraft was eerily quiet and the tension was palpable. How crew got into work following this event, that time would show changed the crew's world forever is a wonder and many crew, who for the first time may have allowed their existential fears to come into their awareness, may have questioned their motivation to do the job and many called the cabin crew careline Crew Care (Partridge & Goodman, 2007). From that day forward the cabin crew were alone in the cabin without the support of their Commander, who was now in a securely locked environment. Crew were told that no matter what a terrorist may threaten to do to crew and passengers, the flight deck door stays locked.

Treating customer illness is now not as straight forward as it may seem, as the terrorist events that have occurred over many years mean that crew must be alert to the fact that this illness is not a diversionary tactic to draw crew away from their security responsibilities whilst in flight. Any illness requires a minimum number of crew to attend to the casualty meaning that galleys may be unattended and toilet checks missed. Toilets must be checked at regular intervals to ensure that smoke detectors are not blocked or that terrorists are not assembling explosive devices or preparing for an attack on the flight deck door. Richard Reid, known as the “shoe bomber”, attempted to blow up American Airlines flight 63 from Paris Charles De Gaulle Airport to Miami, by detonating an improvised explosive device contained in his shoe after a visit to the restroom. An alert cabin crew member noticed the strange activity of Reid and a subsequent sulphur smell and a struggle ensued between the cabin crew member and Reid for the shoes on his feet. It took two crew, who were bitten by Reid and assistance from several passengers to subdue and restrain him and prevent an explosion that may have possibly brought down the aircraft and killed 14 crew and 184 passengers (www.investigative project.org, 2003). Every year crew must retrain the procedures that allow crew to identify and safely move potential explosive devices on an aircraft to an area known as the “least risk bomb location area”. In this area crew build a structure to limit the damage to an aircraft mainframe and its occupants.

Terrorism in the air may not be the only concern that crew face whilst on duty. Airlines operate to countries that may experience high incidents of civil unrest and terrorist activities, where crew must stay to achieve rest before flights home. In 2015, Air France crew staying in the supposedly most secure hotel in Mali, the Radisson Hotel, were actively targeted by terrorists who stormed the hotel, killing nineteen people (Freeman, 2015; Lebovich, 2016). The Air France crew were rescued by Malian and French special forces. A Russian cargo crew were not so fortunate and six Volga - Dnepr Airlines crew were killed in the attack on the Radisson Hotel (Air Cargo News, 2015) The Middle East, Pakistan, Argentina, Brazil and Nigeria are countries that I visited often and all are countries that the UK Foreign Office warn of prominent levels of terrorism, thefts and violence often against Westerners. Nigeria is a country where high levels of civil unrest, terrorism, kidnappings, muggings and car jackings are common (GOV.UK, no date). Transport to the hotel is a

dangerous time and the crew bus is locked and escorted through the city by an armed escort. Crew are advised not to leave the hotel and to be particularly vigilant whilst off duty. These type of dangers must be faced by crew when they go into work and they must be prepared to operate to all places that an airline flies to irrespective of their concerns. On the 1st of August 1990 a BA crew reported for duty to operate flight BA149 to Kuala Lumpur via Kuwait and Chennai and the Cabin Service Director, Clive Earthy questioned the political situation between Iraq and Kuwait over their dispute over oil fields on their border. He was reassured that all was well but was left uneasy at the conflicting reports he was hearing. Upon arrival it became apparent that Iraq had in fact invaded Kuwait and all the passengers and BA crew were taken hostage, some becoming human shields at key institutions and others witnessed horrific events (Baker & Bullock, 2021; Fischel, 2016). The final crew members were released on the 10th of December 1990, four months after leaving the UK.

As I write about this event that happened to my colleagues in 1990, I am aware that I shared Clive's conflicted feelings about operating to areas that I knew were politically unstable. Following the recent drone attack and killing of Qassem Soleimani in Iraq by the United States of America on the 3rd of January 2020, the Foreign Office advised Westerners in the Middle East and parts of Africa and Pakistan to be vigilant against reprisal attacks (GOV.UK). Passengers have a choice to whether they travel to this area, as a crew member it is much more difficult. After his ordeal Clive described his conflict of feelings and responsibilities as a crew member as to whether to operate the flight:

> Yes, somewhat reluctantly because when you've got the news media telling you one thing and your company telling you something different …but then again, you're there to work and to take on a company like British Airways and refuse to fly an aeroplane and inconvenience the 400 people is quite a big step (Vaughan, 2012).

This tension between feelings of fear and apprehension alongside the duty to perform my role and meeting the expectations of company and customer was a constant feature of my experience of being a cabin crew member. My fears had to be managed and often not

admitted to myself, as the psychological cost in acknowledging my fears would be too high and may make my role as cabin crew untenable.

4.2.6 Cabin crew as firefighters

In the enclosed environment of an aircraft cabin fire at 35,000 feet is one of the most serious events that crew may face and the crew must be constantly alert and they must address a fire quickly and efficiently to avoid disaster. A report by the Civil Aviation Authority in 2002 stated that the survivable time for an onboard fire to become "catastrophically uncontrollable" was less than 20 minutes (Royal Aeronautical Society, 2014). If the fire spreads to the overhead roof area the useable survival time plummets to between 8 to 10 minutes (FAA, 2004 cited in Skybrary). An onboard fire on a Swiss air flight from New York to Geneva crashed 53 minutes after take-off into Peggy's Cove Nova Scotia, killing all on board. The subsequent report stated that the fire was uncontrollable after just 16 minutes (CAA Paper 2002/1). Complex electronic systems such as Inflight Entertainment Systems (IFE), electrically operated passenger seats in First and Business Class, flammable materials in galleys and toilets and negligence when passengers smoke illegally in bathrooms are just a few of the many factors that may cause an onboard fire. Once again there is no opportunity to call the Fire Service or for assistance from flight crew. That responsibility lies with cabin crew who must be constantly vigilant to the possibility of fire and then employ their training to identify the many different types of fire and utilise the correct procedures and equipment to successfully deal with the potentially catastrophic situation (FAA, AC120-8). Crew training came to the fore on the 14th of Oct 2013, when at approximately 0628, a British Airways flight from Dallas Fort Worth to London Heathrow was 2 hours from arriving at its destination and the crew were preparing the breakfast service for 274 passengers. Flight and cabin crew noticed a "burning acrid smell" permeating the cabin and then smoke and flames were reported to be present coming out of the Inflight Entertainment Control unit and surround located in one of the galleys. The crew immediately adopted their recognised fire drill and discharged a fire extinguisher into the unit. Unfortunately, the fire reignited and was only eventually put out successfully at 0640 after using five extinguishers. After this frightening event, the crew returned to delivering

normal cabin service until they arrived in London (AAIB Bulletin:4/2014). The vigilance and training of the cabin crew meant that a fire onboard was dealt with professionally and almost certainly prevented this situation becoming catastrophic. I have had experience of an onboard fire on a flight from London to Nassau when I was advised by the crew that the wine chiller in the galley was smoking. We were over the Atlantic Ocean and the Captain calmly advised me that the cabin crew had "12 minutes to get it under control as we have nowhere close to land, we will have to ditch into the Atlantic". Once again, the training and calmness of the crew proved invaluable as we quickly dealt with the emergency, ensuring that we did not become yet another statistic of an onboard fire and then returned to caring for our passengers' welfare.

As can be seen, crew are highly trained individuals who work in a dangerous environment and must be ready to react and manage a myriad number of emergency scenarios, all that would be considered extremely stressful. They do this alone as there is no emergency service to call upon at 35,000 feet except the crew. This hidden part of their role, safety, is their primary role and the next section will explore how they integrate and manage multiple pressures whilst executing their most visible role, cabin service. The safety and service standards that crew must adhere to during the service are presented in detail and in sequence so as to demonstrate the intensity of the numerous duties they must complete.

4.3 This is what crew ACTUALLY do: Safety, Security and Cabin Service

A crew's day often starts many hours before their pre-flight briefing, as many of the crew face long commutes from their homes into their report centre either by car, bus or plane. Their journeys are stressful as the consequences of being late impacts on their lives for at least two weeks as their planned roster would be changed, which affects their future plans both at home and at work. Susan described her planning for her journey into work to ensure an on-time arrival:

> *I normally allow 3hrs from home to briefing (the drive from my house to the car park takes 1½ hrs with clear traffic) but this morning I'm leaving 4 hrs [Susan: Diary].*

4.3.1 Preparing to Depart: Reporting at London

After the crew's commute their day continues at the crew report centre where they must report, sign in and read the latest safety, security and customer service notices to ensure they are up to date and legally compliant by being fully fit, rested, and able to complete all duties and requirements. Crew report for duty one and a half hours before their scheduled departure time, but are often their earlier as they prepare for the flight and take the opportunity to settle themselves down after their journey into work:

> *I sign in and print off my Operational Manual Notice's, drop off my dirty tabard and collect the clean one, grab a coffee and pastry and sit and chat to someone I flew with a couple of months ago. Can't remember the name but can remember the conversation we had about her family, can't even remember the trip. I head to my briefing room 10 mins early [Susan; Diary].*

What follows is an insight into the day in the life of a cabin crew member on a long -haul flight, which highlights the often-unknown world with which they must cope. From the moment crew report for duty their day revolves around the duties around safety, security and customer service. The requirements for safety and security are detailed through the *Cabin Safety Checklist,* whilst the customer service aspects of the flight are specified in the *Cabin Service Checklist*. The crew have entered a world where they must now juggle the multiple demands of their roles to achieve a safe and secure flight, along with delivering a first-class service to ensure customer satisfaction. The first thing they do upon arrival is sign in for their flight at the Crew Report Centre and their day has officially begun.

Cabin Safety Checklist

This card must be carried with you when on duty. Signing in for duty is confirming you are up to date with and have read the latest Safety Notices, in possession of ID, Passport, Visa, Immunisation Certificates and are fully rested and fit to complete all duties.

After signing in the crew attend a pre-flight briefing that lasts 20 minutes. As crew enter the briefing room anxieties are high as this is often the first-time crew may have met their fellow cabin crew and flight crew colleagues, with larger aircraft having up to twenty-two cabin crew and four flight deck colleagues. Attending a pre-flight briefing is comparable to starting work in the same office every morning, but with a new set of colleagues at each desk. Bonds between the crew must be formed quickly, as these individuals become a working group and "family" for the next 3 to 7 days, supporting and assisting each other in the challenging environment of an aircraft cabin, along with fulfilling the organisational imperatives of caring for customers physical and psychological needs as they travel (Partridge & Goodman, 2007). Briefing is conducted by the Senior Cabin Crew Member (SCCM) and is fundamental in fostering teamwork and expectations as well as encompassing the roles of cabin crew of safety, security and customer service. In the first part of the briefing, crew working positions on the aircraft are determined by crew seniority, meaning the longest serving crew members may choose the cabin they work in. The airline in this research had three different cabins that crew could bid to work in First Class, Business Class and Economy class. The position crew would be working in was important to them and as there was no guarantee that their preference would be attained this affected their feelings and anxiety levels as they anticipated the challenges hey would face in the different cabins. Alongside this, feelings of unfamiliarity needed to be assuaged as they contemplated the possibility of working outside of their chosen area of ease. A crew member described her feelings at briefing as she described the affect the uncertainty of where she may be working had on her for the forthcoming flight:

> *…the first thing once I get my briefing sheet its oh where am I going to work and… depending on which aircraft there's certain positions we all prefer and if I get one of those well, I'm happy …I think that it's just once you've sorted out where you are, what position you've got, it's really bad in one respect because if I got a position, I'm not that happy about… I still might have a good flight I probably will have a good*

> *flight but it sets off not a great feeling hmm but if I get one of my choices then I'm like oh that's good, I'm happy now. I know where I'm working, I know what I'm doing, I'm very contented and that sets me off in a good footing… [Antonia: Interview]*

After their working positions have been clarified, the focus of the briefing then moves onto the safety and security aspects, comprising of questions or a discussion on aircraft security, safety and medical emergencies. It is a legal requirement by the Civil Aviation Authority that all crew must take part and demonstrate their knowledge and competency on safety and emergency procedures (SEP). Crew have no knowledge of the SEP questions they must answer and this adds to their stress and anxiety, as crew who fail to attain the expected SEP standard, may be removed from the trip and will have to attend a retraining course.

Following the safety focus the emphasis switches to cabin and customer service, highlighting commercially important customers and those who may require extra assistance such as passengers with reduced mobility, medical cases, infants and families. Flight crew colleagues brief separately, but before leaving for the aircraft introduce themselves and share information about the route, weather conditions and any special circumstances that may affect safety such as high terrain flying and the requirements for supplementary oxygen use in case of decompression. Briefing is an intense 20 minutes with a mass of significant information imparted between the SCCM, the flight crew and cabin crew and the need to satisfy the legal requirements of being competent to operate. Adding to the stress is the need to work to strict time guidelines as in the airline world timekeeping is crucial. Briefing must be completed on time to meet critical punctuality targets. Following briefing crew pass through stringent security checks and walk through the terminal to the aircraft. Upon arrival at the aircraft the stress continues and builds as they work against the clock to prepare the aircraft cabin for the flight with their pre-flight boarding checks.

4.3.2 Welcome on Board

Arriving at the Aircraft and Pre-Flight Boarding Checks

Clare, a SCCM described in her diary entry how stressful boarding is for her as she copes with the multiple demands that are placed upon her as she boards the passengers and prepares for departure:

> *It seems utter chaos at boarding with people complaining they haven't got leg room, window seats, not sitting together, sitting too close to the toilets, too hot, too cold, etc, etc. My capacity bucket is getting quite full as I try to delegate and relieve some of the pressure, whilst the Captain's calling me to ask how to say my surname and the aircraft dispatcher is talking to me and a crew member starts telling me about a passenger problem- oh joy- the pressure is enormous and it's stressful and challenging but once the aircraft door shuts it subsides a little and I can breathe, have a swig of water and take my jacket off and cool down [Clare: Diary]*

Upon arrival at the aircraft the crew are met by an aircraft that is a hive of activity, with caterers, aircraft engineers, refuellers and ground staff all playing their part in accomplishing a safe flight and an on-time departure. Crew stow their bags in the cabin they are working and before a passenger is welcomed on board, they must complete a comprehensive list of pre-flight boarding checks for the safety and emergency equipment carried in the cabin, along with checking the serviceability of evacuation alarms:

Safety Checklist (Cont.)

After boarding an aircraft but before customers board you must check:

1. Cabin Crew hand baggage stowed in approved stowage's.
2. Safety equipment and pre-flight checks.
3. Crew seat withdraws and stows automatically and remains stowed.
4. Seat belt/harness altered to fit.
5. Observation mirrors correctly adjusted.
6. Public Address / Interphone operational.
7. Evacuation alarm detector familiarisation completed.
8. Safety demonstration equipment/video ready for use.
9. Refuelling procedures followed if required.
10. Cabin dividers secured open.
11. Required security checks completed.
12. Missing or defective equipment must be reported to the Captain via the SCCM.

Each crew member has an individual area of responsibility around their seat and corresponding cabin area, where they check their pieces of equipment for serviceability. An aircraft carries numerous pieces of safety and emergency equipment from oxygen bottles and masks, fire extinguishers and personal breathing equipment, lifejackets, defibrillators and medical kits, to name just a few. Crew complete a security sweep through the cabin checking hat racks, seats, cupboards and toilets for suspect packages. As they complete theses checks they must be vigilant for announcements from the SCCM about known cabin defects, refuelling status and evacuation alarm checks. Every door has an evacuation alarm and all crew must respond to a familiarisation alert call initiated by the SCCM. They must break off whatever they are doing and check that their evacuation alarm is working correctly and report its serviceability to the SCCM following correct procedures. After completing the safety aspect of their duties, crew must quickly start to prepare the galleys and cabins to fulfil their customer service role. In each of the different cabins crew must check that the cabin is prepared and ready for boarding. The atmosphere on board is frantic

and each cabin has different requirements but one of the most intense are the galley and cabin preparations in the Business Class cabin. The following section will describe the intense labour that cabin crew must do in order to meet organisational and customer expectations.

Business Class Cabin Service Checklist

Pre-Boarding

CHECK TOILETS:

Amenities available with hand wash and label facing forward

Toilets fully stocked

CHECK CATERING

Ensure food matches the menu and confirm special meal requirements

Remove soup flask pre boarding and re-stow securely

Ensure pre take off drinks are prepared to the correct ratio by route, customer numbers and time of day

Prepare all items needed for pre-departure service: Welcome beverage • Washbags• Newspapers

CUSTOMER BOARDING

Cabin Preparation

Lights: Adjust cabin lighting to time of flight

Temperature: Cabin adjusted to 21 °C.

Sound: Boarding music to a suitable volume.

Prepare seat area and cabin

Sleep amenities neatly arranged

Overhead lockers are open for customers except on certain aircraft where they are closed

Open all window blinds

Privacy screens are down

Magazines in racks (where available)

Prepare wardrobes: Tags for jackets and coats are ready

Ensure there are no loose items on the floor/shelf

Every crew member is under pressure to complete their checks effectively but efficiently. Cabin crew must work as a choreographed team, with every member knowing, performing and communicating their undertakings and roles with their colleagues and ground staff to ensure that all legal protocols are met and the cabin is prepared to welcome their customers. The dedicated galley operators check and confirm that catering equipment and meals for the flight are correct, whilst other crew prepare drinks, newspapers and washbags. All these tasks, along with the SEP checks must be completed within 12 minutes of arriving at the aircraft as customers are then called for boarding. Workload for all crew at this time is extremely high, but none more so than for the SCCM who is liaising with cabin crew, flight crew, boarding staff, engineers and caterers to address any problems and shortfalls. It may feel that there is no time to breathe as passengers are now expectantly waiting at the aircraft doors. Often boarding commences before catering checks are completed and one crew member continues preparing the galley as passengers push past them through narrow galleys with their bags. Now short of one crew member and the boarding process underway, the crew's workload intensifies as they manage their safety and security roles and adhere to the cabin safety checklist, along with their customer service role:

Safety Check List (cont.)

During Customers Boarding
1. Check passenger boarding cards as passenger boards.
2. Ensure cross aisles and all exits free from obstructions.
3. One cabin crew member in the vicinity of each pair of doors.
4. Seat belts fastened unless refuelling
5. Issue extension seat belts for infants
6. Ensure all hand baggage in overhead lockers/under seats/approved stowage's & safety equipment stowage's are accessible
7.Ensure all overhead lockers are closed securely

As can be seen the demands on crew are many, checking boarding cards, showing customers to their seats, assisting with hand baggage, hanging jackets and suit carriers, addressing customer issues about seating allocation, along with delivering drinks, newspapers and washbags. All of this must be delivered whilst crew present an air of calmness and ease, along with the ever expected "happy face" (Murphy, 2001). During boarding the aircraft may often be refuelling so crew must be constantly alert to safety and/or security issues. For this reason, crew on the right-hand side of the aircraft must stay within the vicinity of aircraft doors, a task that is difficult to accomplish whilst trying to meet customer requests.

As soon as boarding is finished and the main doors closed, crew are preparing for pushback. Once again adherence to punctuality is vital and crew may still be stowing passenger bags, serving final pre-take-off drinks, newspapers and addressing seating problems along with completing mandatory checks as the aircraft pushes away from stand. Upon pushback they immediately move into the next phase of safety and security checks:

Safety Check List (cont.)

When aircraft first moves, check:

1. Toilets/crew rest areas unoccupied/free from messages, suspicious articles etc. Smoke detectors not blocked.

2. Place your door to automatic/armed and complete cross check (when ordered).

3. After the safety demonstration ensure cabin and galley areas are secure for take-off.

Door drills are followed as crew prepare their door for departure, toilets checked for stowaways, the safety video is played and the cabin and galleys secured for take-off. The Senior Cabin Crew Member orders "cabin crew seats for take-off" and advises the flight crew the "cabin is secure." As they take their seat, crew may take a deep breath and for a few seconds their tension may ease as they prepare for take-off.

Safety check list (cont.)

When cabin secure checks complete you must take your crew seat when ordered, then:
1. Ensure your seat belt/harness tightly fastened.
2. Complete your silent safety review.
3. Observe passenger and aircraft behaviour during taxy and take off.

This easing of tension is fleeting and as the aircraft taxis to its take-off position crew initiate their "safety focus period." In order to allay customer fears and anxieties cabin crew must appear calm and controlled, supressing their own immediate fears and though it may seem that crew are sitting there with no concern, they are in fact recalling their "silent review" (Martinussen & Hunter, 2018). This review focuses on the evacuation SOP's that crew must follow in the event of an emergency on take-off or landing. Take-off and landing phases of flight are considered the most perilous, with 77% of accidents occurring at this time (Kysel'ová, 2013). A Boeing 777 has a maximum fuel capacity of 171,175 litres of highly flammable jet fuel and a typically loaded aircraft reaches a take-off speed of around 165 miles per hour and any aircraft with fuel "…is a flying bomb" (Aerospace Technology Online, flightdeckfriend.com; Fire, 2002). A small mistake or failure, be it human or mechanical, in any part of this complex process has the potential to result in fatalities. However, on a normal day after take-off the crew will leave their seats and start the familiar service aspect of their role to care for their customers and customer service is the focus of the next section, cruising altitude.

4.3.3 Cruising Altitude

Inflight drinks, meals, entertainment and coping with anything else that may happen!

The cabin crew in this research worked for a legacy carrier, on long haul flights and the aircraft product catered for a wide range of customers, their needs and expectations from

First Class through to Business Class, Premium Economy and Economy. The crew work in a particular cabin for the whole trip and each cabin has its own particular demands with First and Business Class offering a meticulous cocktail and meal offering on a very personal level, with all elements delivered individually by hand to the customer. The sheer numbers of customers in Premium Economy and Economy make a personal service more difficult, so service is delivered by trolleys with each cabin crew member expected to deliver the product as prescribed by the company and certainly with a smile. All of this must be achieved by following any customer service standards and time targets set in place by the company to meet customer expectations. Delivering a high-quality service in the demanding environment of an aircraft presents challenges both physiologically and psychologically (Lee, 2006). Aircraft galleys are small, aisles are narrow and crew must manoeuvre heavy trolleys numerous times in a cabin whose floor is constantly vibrating and at angle of between 8 and 3 degrees depending on the phase of flight (Glitsch et al, 2007). The cabin environment has reduced air pressure as the cabin is pressurised up to 8,000 feet, leading to low grade hypoxia, low humidity, fluctuating temperatures, along with noise and vibration (Hunt & Space, 2002; Trimmel, 2008). With longer flight times it is possible that crew may suffer from low grade hypoxia that may result in headaches, fatigue and stress (Hunt & Space, 2002). In this exacting environment cabin crew average 14.04 steps per minute, which on a 10-and-a-half-hour flight equated to over 10,000 steps (Hagihara, Tarumi & Nobotumo, 2001). Add to this time limits for meeting customer demands, along with the ever-present threat of turbulence and inflight emergencies means that the job demands at any one time may be considered high and crew must be constantly alert to move from their customer service role to their safety role in an instant (Chen & Chen, 2014). Balancing the requirements of these aspects of their role with the time available on the flight, customer and company expectations, reduction in crew onboard and unforeseen problems such as turbulence and illness, means that crew often struggle to effectively perform the multiple tasks that they face on every flight. The consequence of this is that crew are often unable to complete safety and security checks in a timely or regular manner as required, as they play “catch up” to ensure that drinks, meals and duty free are completed in order to meet company and customer expectations (Damos, Boyett & Gibbs, 2013).

Crew face many different tasks whenever they board an aircraft, but the most visible and often significant to the customer is the inflight service. This next section will explore the Business Class service that crew must as they start to prepare themselves for the cabin service element of their role, providing drinks and meals to all on board. The service must be delivered to a high standard in line with customer and company expectations and starts as soon as it is safe to leave their crew seats after take-off:

Cabin Service Standards(cont.)

After Take off

All to be completed within 10 minutes of cabin crew vacating jump seats:

CUSTOMER NEEDS

Families: advise that baby cots and baby food are available

Offer seat guidance

Distribute landing documentation and ensure customers have the correct landing documentation

Distribute Lounge invites to customers on inbound flights

Offer bottle of water

HOT TOWELS

Deliver hot towels from a black tray

Ask customer if they would like a hot towel and do not pick up until they accept

Deliver hot towel unravelled

Return to cabin with a hot towel tray on a black tray and collect in using tongs where necessary

There is no let up for the cabin crew who must now ensure that their passengers' comfort and expectations are accommodated. In the highly competitive airline industry, the cabin service is a crucial factor in entertaining the passenger during the flight, along with maintaining customer satisfaction and therefore loyalty to the brand (Lovegrove, 2000, p79; Wang & Park, 2016). Passengers' perception of the service are a crucial factor and crew adherence to the service standards and its delivery, along with passenger satisfaction, are

monitored on the day through various sources. The cabin crew smile and happy face may be considered to be the main tool that crew utilise in their performance of emotional labour that may add to passengers' perception that they are cossetted and safe in the harsh cabin environment (Murphy, 2001). Mystery shoppers travel on board evaluating the crew's performance and passengers are encouraged to offer feedback on how crew affected their inflight experience through both text messaging and emails after their flight. These "Customer Voice" scores are used as a performance indicator, ensuring crew meet the set targets for customer satisfaction and are used in crew's annual reviews. Customers are asked if the crew smiled enough, cared for their needs, were approachable and welcoming and offered information that made a difference to their flight experience. The meal service may be seemingly to not only fill passengers time, but also an integral part of making the challenging environment of an aircraft cabin feel "homely" and deflect passengers' thoughts from possible danger or death (Murphy, 2001). The beginning of the flight commences with the beverage service with service standards and timings clearly indicated for the crew:

Cabin Service Standards(cont.)

Drinks Service
All customers should have their beverage no more than 35 minutes after take-off.
Set up a drinks station for each aisle comprising:
Glasses
Aperitif tray
One of each wine and champagne brand open
Cocktail napkins
Bowl of nuts
Large black lined tray
Approach first two customers and take their beverage orders and advise them you will be taking their meal order shortly:
Return to galley and prepare and deliver two beverages at a time.
Beverages should be:
Presented on the aperitif tray with nuts closest to the customer on a folded cocktail napkin
Continue drinks service with remaining customers

The difference between the atmospheres of the working galley and the homely, comfortable cabin is extreme. The workload in the galley is immense and crew communication, though vital, is often truncated to seat numbers and drink order as they speed through preparing the individual drinks. Upon leaving the galley and entering the cabin crew must present a calm, professional exterior, which may often belie the strenuous physical work and increase in heart rate exacerbated by the decrease in the efficiency of oxygen intake experienced at altitude (Yoshioka et al., 1982). With barely a pause and time to grab a drink for themselves, crew must start to prepare for the delivery of the meal service:

Cabin Service Standards(cont.)

Meal Service

Refreshing drinks and clearing the cabin

As the meal order is being taken, clear aperitif trays and refresh beverages

Offer customer a refreshment of their drink.

If a customer decides to change their order this should be accommodated.

Wine, champagne and water can be refreshed by hand in the cabin

For other drinks choices, prepare in the galley and deliver to customer from a tray presented on a coaster

Clear customer aperitif tray and nuts onto black tray two at a time and return to galley.

The aperitif tray needs to be returned back to its original stowage to serve hot beverages on later

As the meal order is being taken, clear aperitif trays and refresh beverages

Prepare the galley for service

Meal order in the galley displayed ready

Meal trays out of stowage

Bread warmed

Water glasses with water preference prepared

Organising the meal tray

Before you leave the galley, take a moment to ensure that the tray is perfect before presenting to the customer. Use two hands to support the weight.

The warm bread is in the basket on the top left

The logo on the butter sticker is the correct way up

Olive oil label correct way up

The organic plate of the starter is at an angle pointing towards the breadbasket

The cutlery pack is vertical with the logo on the band the correct way up

No drinks are to be placed in the empty space on the side plate

Customer's preference of still or sparkling water

Deliver children's meals first to ensure children eat before parents

Cabin Service Standards(cont.)

Meal Service (Cont.)

Start from the front of the cabin and work towards the rear except on the upper deck 747

Main starter preparation

Place onto the tray with the pointed end of the plate towards the breadbasket.

Soup Prepare in the galley and place bowl onto a plate with a spoon

Soup and salad: Follow individual standards for soup and salad.

Salad: Offer a choice of dressing and pour on the salad in the galley.

Offering wine

If wine is requested for first time or the customer would like to taste, please follow the wine procedure:

Return to galley to collect the wine choice and wineglass (No tray needed)

Return to cabin with wine bottle in one hand and glass in the other

Show the bottle to the customer and pour a taster (1/8 full) with label facing the customer

Starter and side salad

Offering an additional starter: If a customer asks for two main starters, politely advise that you will return to them once all the cabins have been served and offer a soup or salad if they would like to enjoy this in the meantime.

Business Seat / Suite:

Proactively open privacy divider or suite door for the next customer to be served prior to returning to the galley to collect their meal tray. This enables both hands to be used when delivering meal trays

Present meal tray using two hands to support the weight of the tray, advise the customer if crockery is warm

Offer drink to accompany starter, or refresh drink

Cabin Service Standards(cont.)

Meal Service (Cont.)

Clearing of starter and delivery of main meal

Preparation

Stack of plates with non-slip liners.

Main meal order form visible in the galley

Plate preparation

Remove main courses from the oven and place onto a charger plate. Ensure a non-slip liner is underneath. Remove foil and pour any accompanying sauces over dishes before they are delivered to the customer.

Delivery

Place two main courses onto a black lined tray.

Deliver two customers at a time and describe each dish as you are placing it down and wish enjoyment of meal. If plates are warm, please warn the customer

One crew member to pass through the cabin refreshing wine and water taking one bottle at a time

Clear In

Using a lined black tray, clear two customers at a time. Approach customer and ask enjoyment of meal and be sure to clear:

Main meal dish, along with any unwanted glasses.

If the customer advises they have finished their meal, ask the customer what they would like for dessert and an accompanying drink from the bar.

If the customer does not want dessert, offer tea/coffee and serve immediately.

All dishes should be placed in a clearing in drawer and returned to original stowage.

Cabin Service Standards(cont.)

SWEET COURSE DELIVERY

Start from the front of the cabin and work towards the rear.

When clearing in main courses, ask the customer what they would like for pudding and an accompanying drink from the bar

If customer order cheese, offer port/red wine and offer liqueurs.

If the customer does not want pudding, clear in tray offering another beverage/tea and coffee and serve immediately.

Return to galley with any debris.

Collect customer pudding choice and / or drinks.

Deliver two puddings at a time

Delivery of puddings and presentation, please follow matrix provided.

Please remember to present cold puddings on the white plate

TEA AND COFFEE DELIVERY

Approach customers ask enjoyment of their meal and if you can get them anything else.

Clear table set up one at a time, collect napkin, place onto table set up, and advise snacks are available.

Offer tea (including herbal) and coffee and immediately deliver.

Once customers have finished tea and coffee, clear mugs and offer second tea and coffee.

Remind customers that snacks are available throughout the flight and that you are there if anything is needed

Many hours have passed since reporting at base and in the 3 to 4 hours it has taken to complete the meal service the crew's workload has been immense as they not only provide the customers with drinks and meals but must deal with problems that occur throughout the flight as Clare describes:

> *The flight continues, it seems, in a manic state of the usual expected defective seat, cabin and galley issues including multiple Inflight Entertainment Resets, interrupting my cabin service duties. Normal part of the working day especially on dilapidated old aircraft! [Clare: Diary]*

Nevertheless, the end of the meal service does not mean that the crew's work is over. They must now prepare and offer duty free goods, tidy up the galleys and ensure that the cabin is fully cleared in and customers are settled, which often takes another hour. Only then may crew finally have an opportunity to eat and drink, though this is often a rushed affair, sitting on a crew seat with their meal eaten off a tray on their knees or standing up in the galley with customers walking past and still fulfilling customer requests as Clare comments in her diary:

> *I hardly have had time to have a drink, let alone eat and it's now five hours into the flight – I haven't eaten all day yet and it's 1530 hours. Half of the crew are on their rest, so we eat in shifts in Business Class as the customers coming into the galley and pressing call bells is relentless, not to mention every half hour juice rounds, toilet checks and my walking the aircraft hourly. I finally manage to eat a lukewarm meal that was cooked over 3 hours ago – but I am so hungry at this point I don't care and this is not an isolated incident -it happens regularly on day flights in particular [Clare: Diary].*

Crew often choose to forego a freshly cooked meal in order to start their rest break earlier as they are by now suffering from physical and mental fatigue due to the demands of the service and crew often eat food that has been cooked almost 2 hours previously for the passengers. Instances of workload intensification have been experienced and reported in major airlines around Europe, resulting in crews not having sufficient time to eat or drink along with increased crew fatigue as crews fail to achieve their minimum legal rest (Curley & Royle, 2009; Damos, Boyett& Gibbs, 2013; Bergman& Gillberg, 2015; TCX Unite.com, 2015; Nyberg & Wikulund, 2017).

As Clare said in her comments above, in the midst of the meal service the crew's safety role is still ongoing. They must still be alert at all times for the myriad number of emergencies that may occur at any given time and regardless of cabin service crew must perform various checks and report to their flight crew colleagues:

Safety checklist (cont.)

Throughout the flight - regardless of cabin service.

At least every 30 minutes you must:

1. Check that all toilets are free from messages, suspicious articles, smoke detectors are not blocked and waste bin flaps are closed.

Every 30 minutes you must:

2. Ensure one crew member contacts the Flight Crew by interphone.

The Senior Cabin Crew Member on board an aircraft has overall responsibility for the safety, security and service aspects of the cabin, provides effective leadership of the cabin crew, completes all necessary legal and company paperwork and also has a role in delivering the service in the business class cabin (Cabin Operations Safety Best Practices Guide, 2nd Edition, 2005).Whilst they manage their high workload in the Business cabin they must also have an awareness of what is happening in each cabin at any particular time, as they are the intermediary between the cabin environment, the cabin crew and the Captain. Following the attacks on the World Trade Centre 9/11 the flight deck door is locked throughout the flight and the flight crew are physically and psychologically separated from the cabin environment and their cabin crew colleagues. Every hour the SCCM must "walk the cabin" and contact every crew member for an update on the state of their cabin, any unusual passenger behaviour and to confirm all safety checks are completed. This information is then passed onto the flight crew every hour. The flight crew rely on this transfer of information as a minor problem in the cabin may escalate very quickly into a serious one, which may result in the diversion of the flight or the need to call for emergency services to

meet the aircraft on landing. Also, effective communication is vital between cabin crew and flight crew as it is critical in preventing accidents and preserving life on board (Krivonos, 2005; Wong & Neustaedter,2017). For this reason, the SCCM has extra safety duties that they must complete to ensure that the captain is fully cognisant with what is happening in the cabin:

Cabin Safety Checklist (cont.)

Cabin supervision
Every hour, regardless of cabin service, the SCCM must:
1.'Walk the cabin' to establish and maintain regular communications with Cabin Crew members.
2.Brief the Captain that the cabin supervision schedule has been carried out.

For crew there is a dilemma between the demands of the cabin service and fulfilling the essential safety checks (Murphy, 2001). Damos et al., (2013), has shown that the crew may often miss safety checks due to the increased need to deliver an increased cabin service offering, often with reduced crew numbers. These ongoing checks are crucial to the safety of an aircraft as in the enclosed environment of an aircraft cabin at 35,000 feet, fire is one of the most serious events that crew may face and they must be constantly alert and address a fire quickly and efficiently to avoid disaster. At 35,000 feet there is no opportunity to call the fire service, only the training and action of crew members may avert disaster.

4.3.4 Mid Flight Cruising: In-flight Entertainment and Rest

When the cabin crew have finally finished the meal service there is often still hours to go until landing and the cabin settles down for a few hours as passengers watch a movie, read or try to catch some sleep. For crew however there is no break whilst on duty and they must be constantly ready to attend to customer needs.

Cabin Service Standards (Cont.)

MID FLIGHT SERVICE
30 mins after main meal service has completed offer drinks from the bar
Once complete, clear cabin debris and offer additional drinks every 30mins
When serving ad hoc hot drinks in the cabin, place a packet of biscuits or chocolate when available on the aperitif tray to accompany
Before second break commences offer a snack basket pass

At this stage on a long-haul service crew must take a rest break to comply with EASA regulations, so half the crew will now be on a rest period. This period of flight may be perceived that the demands on the crew diminish and they can relax. This though is not the reality, as there are now only half the number of crew to manage the cabin, count and restock the beverage bars for the return flight, answer call bells and every 30 minutes offer juice and water to customers along with any ad hoc service components such as an ice cream pass mid-flight. In her diary Christina wrote about the demands she faces and the stress she is under as she manages her cabin alone whilst her colleagues are on their rest break:

> *The flight, although not full in First Class, was very busy indeed and I didn't stop during the second break. I found it difficult to prepare the next meal as I was busy running teas and coffees etc into the cabin. I considered asking other galleys for help but I felt guilty as I only had nine passengers and they (the other galleys) were all busy too [Christina: Diary].*

On a day flight when many customers are awake this means that the work demands on the crew do not abate. Neither do the security and safety checks become any less important, which crew must complete every 30 minutes along with the hourly reports to their flight crew colleagues, all whilst still satisfying passenger needs.

Safety Checklist (cont.)

Cabin Supervision
Outside normal cabin service.
At least every 30 minutes you must:
Patrol the whole cabin including empty cabins and unoccupied crew rest areas to include:
Walking all aisles
Look for any unusual passenger behaviour.
Observe for signs of smoke/fumes/fire especially from screens and other Inflight entertainment units / seat power equipment.
Check that all toilets are free from messages, suspicious articles, smoke detectors are not blocked and waste bin flaps are closed. Safety equipment stowage's accessible and free from obstruction.
Customers are not sleeping on the floor.
Customers are not using the aircraft power supply to re-charge lap top computers etc. (except for in-seat computer power sockets).
Ensure there is no debris (plastic, paper etc.) in the cabin.

Air travel today may challenge the most resilient of individuals, with increased fear of terrorism, extra security, cramped conditions and the effects of altitude on oxygen levels on board, all factors affecting passenger behaviour. Every flight is individual with a new set of passengers, their needs, expectations, attitudes, cultural backgrounds and the purpose of their trip affecting their behaviour and making their behaviour extremely hard to predict (Bor,2007). Crew must be vigilant to any behaviour that appears disruptive and may endanger the aircraft or its occupants and be ready to act and protect their passengers.

4.3.5 Almost There: A second meal service and preparing to land.

On long haul flights the first 3 to 4 hours are a flurry of activity with boarding, taxi for take-off and then after take-off, the beverage and meal service. The flights operated by the participants of this study were between 7 and 16 hours depending on destination and before arrival crew prepare and serve a second meal offering. Though shorter than the main meal service, these services still take between one and a half and two hours and crew are now beginning to feel very fatigued after their strenuous flight. In her diary Christina, who

was operating an ultra-long-haul flight to South America in business class, describes her experience and the stresses she undergoes as she completes the second meal service:

> *Breakfast. Nightmare. It just went on and on and on as customers all woke up at various times. By this time, the trollies had been dismantled so the "stragglers" had to be done and ran out by hand. Alas the stragglers actually amounted to a good third of the business class cabin!!! And then we have my particular bug bear "stuff" still going out post the 20-minute call for landing!! I find it very stressful indeed. We must have a cut off and we must enforce it. Not happening. I have recently even seen hot drinks going out in both First Class and Business Class after the landing PA. It causes me worry especially in First mainly because when it comes back in its often stuff that needs washing up and I've been told to sit down for landing. We are all whacked and quite unbelievably have a "photo finish"- despite leaving two hours for breakfast [Christina: Diary].*

The final hours of a flight are just as frenetic as the beginning and by now crew are often starting to suffer from intense fatigue and they must find the energy to prepare the cabin for another critical phase of flight, landing.

Safety Checklist (cont.)

During the descent Cabin Crew must:
1. Complete cabin service, stow equipment and secure galleys.
2. Stow baggage/blankets/headsets used during flight.
3. Vacate Crew rest areas.

At twenty minutes before landing, the flight crew announcement is regarded as an instruction to the crew to start preparing the cabin for landing ensuring everything is securely stowed and all safety protocols are observed. However, as Christina describes in her diary, the reality is that as the crew strive to meet customer demands for breakfast the crew's observance of standard operating procedures around safety are difficult to adhere to. As well as securing the cabin and galleys, crew are counting and sealing the drink and duty-free bars along with collating the required legal paperwork for the authorities on

arrival. Often, they are fulfilling last minute requests from customers who have been sleeping and now require a refreshment before leaving the flight and once again they juggle their roles of safety compliance and customer service. The multiple demands of safety, security and customer service make for a stressful and hectic environment with the crew having to make tough decisions as to what to prioritise.

The aircraft is now well into its descent to its destination and crew must finish the securing of the cabins and galleys. This is another intense period of work that must be completed thoroughly and with haste as without confirmation from that the SCCM that the cabin is secure with all passengers and crew seated the flight crew may have to abort the approach, resulting in a delayed arrival:

Safety Checklist (cont.)

At the “10 or 20 minute to landing" call from the Flight Crew and/or when the seat belt sign comes on you must ensure:

1. Toilets/crew rest areas unoccupied/free from messages, suspicious articles etc. Smoke detectors are not blocked and waste bin flaps are closed.

2. Customer seat backs in the correct position, armrests down, tables/leg rests/video monitors and footrests are stowed, seatbelts fastened

3. All hand baggage stowed in overhead lockers, under seats or in approved stowage's.

4. Overhead lockers securely shut. Galleys secured for landing.

5. All aisles and cross aisles and exits free from obstructions.

6. Moveable cabin dividers in the open position.

7. Cabin lighting set (Day/Night)

8. Check doors in 'Automatic

9. Following SCCM announcement:

Take seat for landing, seat belt/harness tightly fastened.

Complete your silent review.

Observe passenger and aircraft behaviour during approach, landing and taxy.

At this stage of the flight the crew are often fatigued but must still be alert for danger and ensure they adhere to their SOPs to ensure a safe arrival and opening of doors. Opening a door incorrectly may mean the evacuation slide inadvertently deploys, which may cause significant injury to the waiting ground staff and cause a delay to the return flight. Passengers disembark and the crew must ensure that any passengers who require wheelchair assistance are handed over to the ground staff. Crew may not leave the aircraft until all passengers have disembarked. They finally conduct a security sweep of the cabin to ensure no baggage is left behind, SEP equipment is returned to its stowage and galley electrics are turned off:

Safety Checklist (cont.)

After landing customers disembarked:
1. Required post disembarkation checks completed.
2. Ensure used safety equipment returned to correct stowage's.

Even this simple task of post flight checks has become difficult as the crews manage their considerable feelings of fatigue as Christina describes:

> *However, I also find this very challenging at the end of a shift/flight- our post flight checks are to check all the drawers at floor level in Business Class. My back soreness is seriously aggravated by this task [Christina: Diary].*

Only when all of this has been completed can the crew collect their bags, leave the aircraft and make their way to immigration and baggage collection carousels. At the end of a long shift the walk through the airport may appear a monumental task even when you have just arrived in one of the most exciting cities in the world:

> *Rio. This airport seems massive! We seem to walk what seems to be over a mile from airport to transport- maybe it just felt like over a mile though! It was certainly a never-ending walk when my back was really hurting and I felt knackered. This walk really did feel like the very last straw. I felt at the end of my tether with the seemingly non-stop physical challenges of the whole day [Christina: Diary]*

Crew clear immigration and customs, which may take over an hour and make their way to the crew bus that transports them to the hotel, where they make themselves comfortable for the journey. Fatigue and the need to be quiet after such an extended period of managing frenetic physical and psychological stress means there is normally little conversation between the crew as they switch on their phones or laptops and digitally reconnect with home life, leaving the aircraft environment behind them. Upon arrival at the hotel room keys are collected and often the only words spoken are “what time is pickup?” and “see you tomorrow, sleep well,” as crew quickly make their way to their rooms. Another day has passed for the crew and as hotel doors close, they may often not see their colleagues until pickup for their return flight home, when they will experience another hectic return journey.

What may not be apparent is the intensity of the flying schedule that long haul crew endure, which intensifies the effects of jet lag and fatigue, whilst they manage their physical and psychological stresses in the difficult environment of the aircraft. Scheduling factors were considered a major cause of fatigue with 84% of crew stating that they experienced fatigue whilst on duty (Avers et al.,2009). The next section will explore a month’s flying roster of cabin crew member Lyndsey, who describes her feelings whilst packing for a trip:

Feels like I’m on one of those wheels they put hamsters on [Lyndsey: Diary].

4.3.6. Rosters: When will I eat, sleep and see my home?

It may now seem that the world never sleeps and the model of a nine to five work pattern has for many people become the exception rather than the rule. In 2017, 4,830,669 people in the UK were recorded as working in diverse types of shift work (Office for National Statistics, 2018). These consist of a mix of days and nights, permanent nights, split shifts or a combination of early or late start double days. No more is this found than in the airline world, a 24-hour, 7 day a week operation with flights leaving and departing London Heathrow from early morning to late at night, at a rate of one aircraft every 45 seconds. To support such an intense operation and to meet the demand of customers, airlines are dependent on staff working shifts. Embedded in these statistics, cabin crew who operate

long haul intercontinental flights, may be considered to work one of the most demanding types of shift work. Their work patterns not only involve rotating schedules of days and nights, early and late starts and periods of uncertainty when rostered stand-by duty, they must also contend with multiple time changes and jet lag as they cross the globe from country to country. Along with the constant changes of shift patterns, working days are long and intense, filled with physically and emotionally draining practices, sometimes with no scheduled times for meal and comfort breaks (Bergman & Gillberg, 2015).

For their entire career, rosters are the cornerstone to crew lives and that of their families. Rosters are normally published on a given date and at a set time, an event eagerly awaited by the crew. This roster tells them when they will be working and when they may eat, sleep, organise home life and spending time with their families. Roster publication therefore may be a period of happiness or worry, depending on its outcome. Unlike their long-haul flying predecessors' who experienced trips of up to 28 days, the cabin crew who participated in this study, are now typically away overseas between 3 to 6 days. In a monthly period, crew may operate between three to five long haul trips, depending on the length of the trip and the number of days off at home that are discharged after the trip. A roster though, may be considered only as a guide as there are numerous reasons as to why trips may be disrupted. Weather, air traffic control delays, mechanical problems with aircraft and customer care issues may all play havoc with roster stability. Crew's plans for their life outside of their work are often open to disruption and planned days off may or may not happen. The cabin crew in this study originally had little control over their rosters, as trips were allocated by the airlines' scheduling department and crew could only request 2 days per month in the country. These requested days were not guaranteed to be allocated and even if their request was successful, not always achieved as trips may be disrupted. In the past year, a n crew to bid for their choice of destination, length of trips, report times and days off. However, whilst this move was welcomed by the crew because there is no guarantee of a bid being successful, it may have only created a notion of autonomy and control for the crew.

As stated earlier, rosters are the foundation of crews lives and Lyndsey's roster for the period of 03 October to the 04 December demonstrates the intense nature of Lyndsey's schedule, the atypical hours worked in a given period and her days off at home:

Roster of Flight Duties of Cabin Crew Member, Lyndsey Jones

Glossary

Title	Explanation
Early Ground Day report	**Any report before 0800 requires the previous day to be available to travel to base**
Standby	**A period during which you may be required for an allocation of duty by the company.**
QRS	**Quick Response Standby: Crew are staying at a hotel at the airport and must be ready for pick up 45 minutes after being called by scheduling and ready to operate to anywhere in the world for any period as required.**
24 Hour Standby	**After 3 days of 45-minute notice of a trip, crew revert to 24-hour notice period. Crew may be called at any time on these days again for a trip anywhere in the world and for any number of days.**
Standby Decision Day	**If crew are available on these two days after 24-hour standby, scheduling reserve the right to call the crew back to start their 3-day original standby block of QRS again.**
Flexible Trip [FLEX]	**The first two trips after any standby block are "flexible" and may be lost to fit in other trips. This means crews are unsure if they will be on the trips rostered or achieve rostered days off.**
Days Off	**Days Off at home.**
Report Time	**The time when required to report for duty. Report time is always one and a half hours before departure at London Heathrow.**
Clear at Local Time LHR	**Crew are considered off duty 45 minutes after arrival at the gate at London Heathrow.**
Total Duty Hours	**The time that crew are on duty for a flight from report to clear time.**
Special Leave Day	**Time off granted for special circumstances e.g., Jury Service.**
Requested by Crew Member	**Trip has been requested by the crew member through the bidding system**

Airport Codes

Code	Airport Name
LHR	London Heathrow
DXB	Dubai
HKG	Hong Kong
SIN	Singapore
MAA	Chennai

Roster for Lyndsey Jones 03 October to 30 November

Date	Availability	Timings
03 October	24 Hour availability	
04 October	Early Ground Day Report	
05 October	QRS Standby First Day	0700 – 1500 Local Time LHR
06 October	45 Min. Standby Day [QRS]	1500 – 2100 Local Time LHR
07 October	45 Min. Standby Day [QRS]	1100 – 1900 Local Time LHR
08 October	24 Hour Standby Day	
09 October	24 Hour Standby Day	
10 October	24 Hour Standby Day	
11 October	24 Hour Standby Day	
12 October	Standby Decision Day	
13 October	Standby Decision Day	
14 October	Flexible Trip Flex	REPORT at 1945 Local Time LHR
		LHR DXB 0915 (Duty Day)
		DXB LHR 10:00
		Clear at 1500 Local Time LHR Total Duty Hours 19.15
17 October	Days Off	
18 October	Days Off	
19 October	REQUESTED BY CREW MEMBER FLEX	REPORT at 1655 Local Time LHR
		LHR HKG 1415
21 October		HKG LHR 1440
		Clear at 0535 (23 Oct) Local Time LHR Total Duty Hours 28:55
24 October	Days Off	
25 October	Days Off	
26 October	Days Off	
27 October	Days Off	
28 October	REQUESTED BY CREW MEMBER	REPORT at 1710 Local Time LHR
		LHR SIN 15:15
31 October		SIN LHR 16:00
		Clear at 0600 (01 Nov) Local Time LHR Total Duty Hours 31:15
02 November	Days Off	
03 November	Days Off	
04th till 12th November	ANNUAL LEAVE	

13 November	**Days Off**	
14 November	**Days Off**	
14 November	**Days Off**	
15 November	**Days Off**	
16 November		**REPORT at 1240 Local Time LHR**
		LHR MAA 11:55
		MAA LHR 13:00
		Clear at 1400 Local Time LHR **Total Duty Hours** 24:55
19 November	**Days Off**	
20 November	**Days Off**	
21 November	**Days Off**	
22 November		**Special Leave Day**
30 November	**REQUESTED BY CREW MEMBER**	**REPORT at 1710 Local Time LHR**
		LHR SIN 15:15
		SIN LHR 16:00
		Clear at 0600 (Wed 04 Dec) Local Time LHR Total Duty Hours 31:15

When Lyndsey completes the five trips rostered for the period 14th October to the 18th of November, she will have been in the air for a total of 135 hours and 35 minutes and crossed several time zones on repeated occasions, with a cumulative time zone change of 59 hours. This demanding schedule is before any commuting time to work, air traffic control delays or any weather or aircraft technical problems she may encounter that may extend the working day. Crew may consider a “short” day as London to Boston, a duty day of approximately 9 hours and 30 minutes, especially compared to a London to Singapore duty day of 15 hours and 15 minutes. Lyndsey has repeated this punishing schedule month in, month out, year after year, as have many of the crew who took part in this research and this has impacted on their sleep and psychological and physical health. A field study found that on average cabin crew slept 6.3 hours on days off, but when operating a long-haul flight, they only achieved a mean average of 4.9 hours sleep (Roma et al., 2010). This falls far short of the 7 to 9 hours, which is considered the ideal amount of sleep to support optimal health (Watson et al., 2015). Sleep is a vital condition that affects the quality of life and it follows therefore that cabin crew are chronically sleep restricted and fatigued. Reports of sleep disorders,

depression and fatigue being 2 to 5.7 times higher for crew than the general population and many crew start their duty day suffering from fatigue and in a compromised neurocognitive state (McNeely et al., 2014; Roma et al., 2010).

The experience of her long hours along with the crossing of numerous time zones may become clearer when Lyndsey's trip to Singapore is appraised. To ensure she is on time for her pre-flight briefing, Lyndsey will have left home at least 3 hours before her report at 1410, sometimes more depending on traffic conditions. Lyndsey then reports for duty in 1710 at her home base of London for a departure in 1855 and finally arrives at the airport gate at Singapore's Changi Airport the next morning at 0755. Singapore is 8 hours ahead of London time so the local time in Singapore is 1355 in the afternoon. By then Lyndsey will have been on duty for more than 15 hours, but her day is still not over. Lyndsey must bid farewell to the customers, complete cabin security checks before disembarking, clearing security and customs and collecting her baggage. The duty day includes 30 minutes for these procedures, but the reality is that this often takes much longer, sometimes over an hour. Lyndsey then walks to the bus waiting to take the crew to the hotel with a journey of approximately one hour, once again depending on traffic conditions. By the time the crew arrive at the hotel it will be approximately 0955 in the morning at London, but 1755 in the evening in Singapore. By now Lyndsey will have been awake over 24 hours, from the morning of the day before.

During her flight to Singapore Lyndsey has crossed more than eight time zones in an easterly direction, which is often found to marginally augment the effects of jetlag when compared to travelling westerly (Reilly et al., 2009; Flower & Folkland, 2003). Research has shown that upon arrival Lyndsey will experience travel fatigue caused by the hypoxic environment of the cabin and will feel the effects of jet lag, due to the transient desynchrony between her body clock and her new local time in Singapore, leaving her experiencing exhaustion during the day, disorientation, increased headaches, loss of mental performance and disturbances to her sleep pattern (Reilly et al., 2009; Cingi et al., 2018). When crossing more than six time zones at any one time, it takes between 4 and 6 days to resume ordinary sleep patterns and

to recover from the feelings of lethargy during the day (Cingi et al., 2018). An aircraft cabin's environment exerts unique physiological and psychological stressors on its occupants and its effects may be long felt (Boyd & Bain, 1998; Bor, 2007). As a profession, cabin crew assess their health worse and their working environment as more demanding when compared to nurses and teachers and there are often questions asked about the effect of the cabin environment on the crew (Sveinsdottir, Gunnarsdottir & Friðriksdottir, 2007). Crew experience multiple in-flight stressors from low cabin pressure and oxygen saturation, poor air quality along with low humidity levels, noise as well as motion and vibration of the aircraft and are all implicated in crews physical and subjective appraisals of their environment and subsequent well-being (Hinninghofen & Enck, 2006; Mellert, Baumann, Freese & Weber, 2008). When considering all these challenging aircraft environmental factors and the effects of sleep deprivation, it is not surprising that cabin crew have reported multiple physiological symptoms of headaches, nausea, irritation, dizziness and hypoxia, with dryness, fainting and fatigue found to be common (Boyd & Bain, 1997; Brown, Shuker, Rushton, Warren & Stevens, 2001; Caldwell, 2012). Fatigue negatively affects attention tasks and goal directed behaviour, along with motivation and morale (Pilcher, Cullan & Posey, 2015; Krause et al, 2017). This is illustrated through Christina's' diary entry after arriving home from a long-haul flight:

> *I have good intentions and a "to do" list a mile long. It was to include deep cleaning the house and getting some semblance of control back in my garden. Paint my cattery…and my garden furniture. I also have some homework for my trading course. However, I take one look at the rampant bindweed at the bottom of the garden and my courage failed me. It seemed like an unsurmountable task and I just didn't have the energy levels to tackle it. Very little was achieved this week. In fact, I felt totally exhausted all week…It's a total and utter feeling of being wiped out- but as well as physically tired, I felt a lack of mental clarity as well; like I have cotton wool in my head. I get up at almost lunchtime every single day. What a waste of a week. [Christina: Diary]*

Samaha et al., (2017), suggested that fatigue seen in nurses was linked to anxiety and mood disturbance and Clare and Sonya wrote about similar experiences to this in their diaries:

> *I find, when I'm tired and exhausted I'm over emotional and can cry very easily at the simplest of things- like my son saying he misses me when I'm away or my husband*

saying thank you for ironing his shirts. I'm not sure why I'm so sensitive in this state, but I hate it that I can't control my tears! [Clare: Diary]

Was quite emotional when trying to sort bag-so tired-cried when a kind person helped me" [Sonya: Diary]

Along with these stressors is the lack of familial support whilst away and an enormous workload all aggravate fatigue that crew in this research have managed throughout their long careers. The stereotypical perception and marketing of the ever-smiling flying waitress, whose day consists of simply serving tea and coffee and caring for others, suddenly appears incredibly complex and demanding as they strive to manage and fulfil their multiple roles of safety, security and service and defend their psychological health through their coping strategies.

4.3.7 Standby: a time of uncertainty and anxiety

For most of the year the roster that crew receive are "fixed" meaning trips and days off broadly follow what is planned. At the beginning of Lyndsey's roster there is a period of "standby." This means Lyndsey must stay at an airport hotel and must be contactable with 45-minutes notice to operate to anywhere in the world, for as many days as required by the airline. Standby is a period of uncertainty for crew of a month as they have no idea of where they will be travelling to, for how long and when their days off at home may be. Added to this the trips rostered to Lyndsey in the weeks following standby to Dubai and Hong Kong are now "flexible" and if Lyndsey is called out from standby, she may or may not operate these flights, meaning her life becomes unpredictable, difficult to manage and may not conform and fit into normal society's routines. Lyndsey, describes the implications of a standby block on her life and the feelings that the rest of the world on "normal hours" fail to understand how difficult it is to achieve any work -life balance:

Standby causes me anxiety because one cannot organise one's life, medical appointments etc. The people, companies we have to deal with have no understanding and one gets sick and tired of repeating oneself over and over just to achieve an appointment at the Dentist. People are so regimented in the 9 to 5 lives they lead that they are unable to understand any occupation outside of the box and one is left feeling bad for not fitting into the norm when where would they all be

> *without shift workers. …Standby must be like Zero Hours Contracts. Never knowing. During Standby there is no work life balance and our colleagues in Operations all too often appear inflexible and condescending [Lyndsey: Diary].*

Chicken or beef, tea or coffee? These are probably the words most people hear from cabin crew throughout the flight. However, through this detailed description of a day in the life of crew, the stereotype of the flying waitress is one that is undeserved and fallacious as crew address and cope with multiple stressors from safety, delivering a meticulous service in extreme conditions as they speed cross time zones, work atypical shift patterns and manage their unsettled home lives. Their workplace stress is immense and the remainder of this thesis will now explore their personal experiences and testimonies through their diaries and interviews that illuminate their world, how crew survive and their coping strategies and resilience in this extreme environment.

5. Findings and Discussions

The following section will present my findings from the diaries and interviews of the cabin crew, which were analysed using IPA. By employing a qualitative approach through the use of diaries and interviews, crew wrote and articulated their experiences of a long-haul trip from leaving home, to the flight itself. The participants produced rich and moving accounts about their lives, revealing experiences and aspects of their world as cabin crew that is concealed and unknown to people outside of the cabin crew fraternity and sometimes even to themselves. From these powerful and personal accounts, the orthodox stereotype of a cabin crew member is challenged as they expose the stresses they face and the learnt coping strategies they employ to protect their psychological wellbeing, in order to build resilience.

The decision was made to incorporate both the diaries, interviews and discussion into a combined, result and discussion section. The data that the different methodological approaches produced was substantially different. In their diaries the crew ostensibly wrote about the impact on their home lives before and after a flight, with very little written about their experiences on board the flight. At the end of a long, stressful working day, filling in a diary and recounting their experiences was challenging due to fatigue, intense emotional labour and is psychologically painful to recount. It is also judged that the crew operate a clear functional split between home and work life. The safety and comfort of home is replaced with an extreme work environment, full of stress and uncertainty and the diaries offered glimpses of defence against anxiety through this. It was only in the interviews, when directly asked questions about their experiences during a flight, did they open up about their life on board and their subsequent experiences, feelings and fears. Therefore, the diaries augment the context chapters of this thesis and support some parts of the themes, whilst the interviews provided the majority of the data for the identified themes.

Smith, Flowers & Larkin, (2006:80) state:

'There is no clear right or wrong way of conducting this sort of analysis, and we encourage IPA researchers to be innovative in the ways that they approach it.'

However, the themes in this section were generated following the suggested strategies of Smith, Flowers & Larkin, (2009). Close and intensive reading of the interviews and diaries facilitated the generation of codes that allowed the elucidation of recurring themes that identified objects of concern or topics of importance that mattered to the participants. The themes are comprised from the voices of all the participants who were interviewed or wrote diaries. Some participants, such as Antonia were forceful on their views and this is indicative of the level of concern that she felt, whilst others were more reticent. However, each voice represents a lens through which the hidden world of crew is exposed. These themes are more than just a descriptive analysis of the lifeworld of the crew and the stresses they face. The analysis interprets the stresses and coping strategies that crew employ in order to become resilient and also draws upon existing theoretical concepts of stress and coping to develop and elucidate these themes and the existential meanings that this brings to their role as cabin crew (Larkin et al., 2006).

Two key superordinate themes inform the basis of this account, along with subordinate themes that acknowledge and describe what stress, coping and resilience "looks and feels" like for cabin crew. Thematic maps illustrate the themes (Appendices 9 & 10).

- ***The psychological cost of flying: Managing and surviving stress and anxiety at home and at work.***

- ***Positivity undoes negativity***

5.1 The psychological cost of flying: Managing and surviving stress and anxiety at home and in work.

5.1.1 From home to workspace: Managing the anxieties and stress of leaving home and family.

Clare described her feelings before leaving home and the challenges she faces that cause her anxiety:

> *It Isn't a pleasure anymore, preparing for a trip- it encroaches on my home time with planning and packing and constantly thinking about how best to manage the fatigue that inevitably comes from the long journey to and from work and then from the flights. It's a balancing act and preparing today for my journey tomorrow makes me feel sad, a bit anxious and not something I look forward to [Clare: Diary].*

Through her diary entry, Clare articulates how going away with its multiple challenges is something that she dreads, leaving her feeling sad and anxious, as she stresses how the realities of her work and its demands affect her life. When spending as many days overseas separated from family and friends as crew do, it feels that the preparation and demands of her work invade her personal time and space at home, which leaves Clare with feelings of resentment, sadness and anxiety. Montazer et al., (2020:19), describe overnight work travel as '…a job demand, which requires significant time and energy'. Time and energy for Clare are resources that appear to be in short supply, as Clare is always thinking ahead, planning and anticipating, which may not allow her to live "in the moment", making life difficult. In fact, Clare describes her life as *"…a balancing act*", as one where her actions of planning, preparation and imagining are a way that she tries to provide an equilibrium in her work-life family balance but is left with little joy as she contemplates her time away.

Clare is not alone in experiencing leaving home as a stressful event that must be managed and endured. Antonia described how leaving home is not an easy event. Just like in her work where her needs come after her passengers, her families come first as she ensures her families wellbeing whilst away:

> *Right, so the morning that you're leaving … I'm either up taking my husband to work, getting everybody ready for school and thinking you know what clubs, classes etc has he got what kind of childcare I've got organized for that week hmm, is there anything I haven't said to my husband or my other son that they need to do hmm… [Antonia: Interview]*

As Antonia contemplates leaving home, as a wife and mother she faces a considerable physical and emotional workload and it is clear like Clare, there is anticipatory stress present, as she thinks about the inevitable fatigue that she knows she will experience due to the long duty day. Managing her fatigue is important so plans an extra hours sleep before leaving:

> *…and I'm like have I packed my bag, where am I going, what's my report time, can I get an extra hours sleep in my bed can I jump back into bed for an hour... [Clare: Diary]*

Antonia then describes how this anticipatory stress and even the difference in a report time, early morning or later in the day, affects her emotionally. An early report for briefing may mean that she will probably leave home before her family, leaving her less time for organisation and planning, raising her anxiety levels:

> *…mmm so that's all going on before you think about work s'pose and then the work thing … the day before if it's a late report the day before is not so bad, if it's an early report it's not anxiety it's almost like A said, I'm a bit like a bear with a sore head the day before I go to work hmm. [Antonia: Interview]*

Through her words, Antonia shows the challenges that as a working mother she faces, juggling the multiple roles of wife, mother and cabin crew that place demands on her to ensure her family's needs are met before she leaves:

> *I just think it is that you're thinking about all these different things that you've got to put in place it may only be three days but then you might have a party, scouts, swimming or something and I'm like I need to make sure that that's all-in place before I go and if I forget to do it, it won't happen. I suppose it's a bit of stress I don't know hmm, how can I say anxiety hmm… I become quite irritable… [Antonia: Interview]*

Antonia shows the emotional work as a mother and wife she undertakes, by putting her children's needs at the centre of her decisions and actions (Lamar & Forbes, 2020). This responsibility rests heavily on her, through her understanding of what society constitutes as a "a good mother", with its child centric focus and constant emotional and physical availability of a mother (Maclean et al., 2021). Antonia's role as cabin crew means that she is away for lengthy periods of time, which means that meeting the ideals of being a good mother for Antonia are particularly challenging, leading to feelings of guilt that her absence may impact negatively on the family she leaves behind (Guendouzi, 2006). To assuage these feelings and because she feels that if she is not proactive her children will miss their activities, it appears that Antonia takes full responsibility for ensuring her family's life continues as normal whilst she is away.

Knowing that she may leave her family behind in a situation that may disrupt their ordered lives and expectations means that her stress and anxiety before she leaves is high. Gustafson (2006) found that women are less likely to partake in work related travel compared to men. However, in this household it is Antonia whose work requires multiple nights away on a weekly basis, leading to a possible work -life conflict that she must address. Antonia calls on an active coping strategy by controlling and organising her family's week, which allows her to ameliorate her feelings of guilt of being an absent mother. Once she has addressed and managed her feelings towards her family responsibilities, only then can she focus on her own feelings and needs as she leaves home and steps into her work role:

> *I'm not worried about the actual flight, I think it's more the leaving, the minute I'm in my car and in uniform or even getting ready for work it's absolutely fine it's the build up to that point once the uniform goes on that's it [Antonia: Interview].*

Antonia appears to set boundaries for her feelings, with the leaving of home space generating deep anxiety. By putting on her uniform she moves physically and psychologically into her workspace and she knows she must leave her anxiety and so much more in her home space. The act of wearing a uniform at work is more than it seems, it is symbolic. It signifies group membership and professional image and identity, supresses

individuality, espouses corporate values and attitudes and assists individuals to perform difficult tasks at work (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1993; Pearson et al, 2001; Adomaitis & Johnson, 2005; Shaw & Timmons, 2010). Research by Pearson et al., (2001), found that nurses separated themselves from their workday through the act of removing their uniform. It may therefore be considered that the act of putting on a uniform allows an individual to separate themselves from their other life roles at home and move into their workspace. The taking on of her corporate identity and values means that Antonia is no longer thoughtful of the agendas, values and her role of mother and wife that she occupies at home This is supported by Antonia's words:

> *…I didn't realise that I must compartmentalise things a lot more because on the way out I don't think once I get into that uniform and into that car, I don't think about home I have to move away from that completely because I know, …I have no effect on that and it's out of my control so I just leave…" [Antonia: Interview]*

In order to cope, Antonia recognises that because of her absence from home, her control over her home life and family has waned. To deal with the reality of the situation, Antonia actively disengages and distances herself and therefore eliminates the source of her stress. Like Antonia, Susan articulates that as she leaves home, she moves not only physically but psychologically into a very different place, that of her work, which appears all consuming:

> *"As I drive away from home, I'm aware I have my work head on, all thoughts are for the day ahead. Will I get there on time? Which plane is it, it's been a while since I have been on a 747, so I'm thinking of positions, safety" [Susan: Diary]*

Antonia and Clare described the stress and anxiety they faced in the pre departure phase of leaving home. Their words revealed the stressful experiences and anxieties they must manage, as they leave their family behind. Through her words Antonia states that her stress and anxiety is at the highest before she leaves home and for women who travel overseas for work, work-family conflict has been found to be higher before leaving home and after returning from their trip and at its lowest whilst away (Saarenpää, 2018).

As can be seen the accumulation of stress and anxiety has started for crew before they leave home. As they contemplate and manage the demands that overseas travel and absence from home and family places on them, they experience sadness, irritability and anxiety. They are anxious about managing their fatigue that they will inevitably experience and use active coping strategies through preparation and planning to address these anxieties. The donning of their uniform is a symbolic act that prepares them for the separation of home and work life and for the difficult task that they now face, a long-haul flight full of unknowns. As they detach themselves from their home-based anxieties, crew must now start their arduous commutes into work, with the new challenges that working in a time sensitive industry such as an airline presents, where on time performance for airlines is a critical from a financial, operational and commercial perspective (Efthymiou et al, 2019; Cook, Tanner & Lawes, 2012).

5.1.2 A stressful journey to work: Experiencing a desire for control but suffering feelings of helplessness

At many destinations cabin crew have familiar routines that make the demanding experience of being away more comforting. Often, they will have favourite shopping areas, beauty salons and leisure activities that fill their time and allow them to relax and plans are often made in advance as to what they will do whilst away, adding to a sense of control and enjoyment. Missing their pre-flight briefing severely impacts home and work plans and life in general, which adds to the stress of commuting and intensifies the need to arrive at work on time. In both the diaries and the interviews crew recorded and described how commuting and arriving at work on time has become a major area of stress and anxiety.

Many of the crew in this research were recruited from all over the United Kingdom and Europe and many endure long commutes to their home base of work, either by car or airplane. The commute with its lack of controllability over factors such as the weather and traffic conditions, security and seat availability on flights may appear to be a major source of anxiety that started even before they begin their long working day. Amanda commutes by

flying into her home base and in her diary, she wrote about the problems and anxiety she faces before even setting off for work:

> *The feeling of dread and anxious tension starts this morning. I have to book my car park and start checking my flights- I live in *** and fly out of ***, so I have to travel on standby to work. I didn't use to feel like this. Going to work was easier when there were more flights, security wasn't so prevalent and getting there wasn't such a drama. [Amanda: Diary]*

Amanda reflects and acknowledges that her commute to work has become more difficult akin to a "drama", due to a change in the environment that she now finds herself occupying, with the commuting conditions that she was familiar with having shifted. The world has changed and she must respond to it through active preparations and planning. That she arrives on time to work is critical, adding to her feelings of anxiety. Travelling on a "standby" ticket means that there is no guarantee that she will have a seat on the flight. In order to address this predicament and to manage her feelings of anxiety, Amanda's strategy is to confront the problem and search for information, which provides a greater understanding about the occupancy of the flight and the probability of getting a seat. This "active coping" allows Amanda to take direct action to find a way around the possible issues she faces that will allow her to modify her plans if necessary and ease some of her anxiety (Carver et al., 1989).

In her diary entry, Susan appears anxious that she faces adverse weather on the morning of her trip, which may disrupt her commute. She seeks information and instrumental support through social media, which will allow her to plan her commute and to cope with her stress:

> *The weather is bad this morning, there has been lots of rain in the night; the M40 is closed due to flooding. While I'm getting ready, I'm checking on the iPad and BBC for travel updates. It's saying the M40 has one lane open. [Susan: Diary]*

It may appear that crew are attempting to control uncontrollable events such as weather and traffic. This anxiety means that their working days are made even longer. Whilst it may

be considered wishful thinking to control the weather or traffic congestion, the crew become pragmatic and adopt a problem focussed coping strategy, through active coping, by taking direct action to mitigate the problem (Carver et al., 1989). To manage and alleviate their anxiety and to ensure that they are at work for their pre-flight briefing, crew overcompensate with the one thing they can, their time. They often leave home many hours before their duty day starts and some even the day before staying overnight near the airport:

> *I normal allow 3 hrs from home to briefing (the drive from my house to the car park takes 1½ hrs with clear traffic) but this morning I'm leaving 4 hrs." [Susan: Diary]*

Amanda describes how leaving home many hours before the duty starts, utilises an active coping strategy that may alleviate the stress she experiences, due to her fear of reporting late for work. Nonetheless, this strategy has its shortcomings, with the extra hours spent commuting adding to her tiredness and may appear to place Amanda in a continuous circle of addressing one form of stress her fear of lateness, to replace this with another, fatigue:

> *My check in time is 1200hrs but I'll leave the house around 630am, so set the alarm for 5. Glad it's a short flight but finding this more and more stressful. Next week I'm going to Rio, so leaving home 6 or 7 hours before starting work is catching up with me, I'm feeling more tired, more often [Amanda: Diary].*

Lyndsey articulates how she feels she has no control over events that she faces and how these affect her life and the subsequent stress that commuting into work exerts on her. As she demonstrates the impact of this through temporality in her perspective taking, knowing that her fatigue is a changing and increasingly demanding feature of her life. This temporality also influences how she feels and will react as she knows her journey to work is fraught with the possibility of disruption, resulting in a major impact on the next two weeks of her life:

> *…bit stressed because of the journey that I have to do to get to work there are so many variations of that journey that can go wrong, hmm you know you can get stuck on the motorway hmm going through security at *** Airport, flights get delayed lots and lots of things that are completely out of your control. [Lyndsey: Diary]*

The situation appears no better for crew who drive into work, as Christina talked about her commute and the tension she experiences before starting her long shift:

> *"…it's stressful Lynne because it should take an hour but I've got to leave three and I'm either there 2 hours early or I'm late there's nothing on the middle and then I 'm looking at the traffic thinking oh God it's awful it's awful … [Christina: Interview].*

For cabin crew in this research, being late by just a few minutes into work sets in motion company procedures that will impact their work and home life along with those left behind at home, adding further to their sense of lack of control and increased stress levels. Lyndsey expresses her feelings of resentment, helplessness, injustice and difficulty in living her "normal" life as she is held responsible for things that she clearly feels she has no control over:

> *…but you are held responsible for err the impact is letters emails from your manager being put into processes and systems and monitored for your attendance because of matters that were completely out of your control and that just adds to the stress also the fact that they will wipe your next roster for a couple of trips hmm and you've got appointments you've got doctor appointments you've got a life to live and again that is all out of your control yeah [Lyndsey: Interview]*

For Lyndsey, who has flown for many years and experienced the consequences of lateness to work, it may appear that balancing the obligations of her role and that of the company, along with the uncertainty of the outcome of her commute, leave her experiencing an "external locus of control", where she feels powerless and her destiny is in the hands of others with greater power (Bush, 1988). In order to manage these feelings Lyndsey uses cognitive coping through rationalisation, reappraising and acceptance, by alluding to the fact this is not just a phenomenon central to herself, but is a shared experience of many in today's workforce:

> *…you can understand the commercial side but however it seems to be unduly hard punishment for being late, which is what lots of people do, it's just part and parcel of getting to work in this day and age* [Lyndsey: Interview]

Through her reappraisal of the situation, lived intersubjectivity appears to be present as Lyndsey contemplates the relationship between her and the company and seeks to find common ground. Lyndsey accepts the need to be on time, from both a personal and commercial stance, but feels that there is a lack of understanding on their part that getting to work is now challenging. Whilst being late to work for most people may be inconvenient for a day. For crew, lateness for report will be a *"hard punishment*", as their forward roster is "wiped" and they may be placed on standby for the next few days, which will impact all areas of crew life and their family's life.[1]

The wiping of a precious roster, with its hope of some stability in the life of crew, is not the only organizational practice imposed on crew for lateness as Christina describes being put on report by her manager:

> *I was late twice in three weeks for work …so I'm she just gonna have to put me on some kinda report, I'm on report for my lateness now and they're gonna watch me for a year…but I was having a real downer on that road and I thought I spend hours and hours on that road and its trashing and that's before you've checked in [Christina: Interview].*

For most Christina and Lyndsey articulate the stressors they face just to get into work before starting their stressful day at work. Faced with the often-uncontrollable events of traffic congestion to her commute, along with the punitive procedures implemented by the company to manage lateness, Lyndsey described how she managed these stresses through emotional reasoning and by adopting practical coping strategies. The emotion focussed strategies of rationalisation and acceptance appear to be employed when Lyndsey talks about the stresses she faces and her inability to change the commute:

> *…hmm I don't know they just they will fade in time there is nothing you can do to hmm take the stress away because the journeys are there you've got them to … but it's very difficult to put it into a perspective because it's a consequence like the traffic the consequence is out of your control as well. I don't know how you just read the email and put it in your inbox and eventually they will fade, there's nothing I do as an individual*

[1] For an explanation and the i of standby on crew's life see page 122

> *hmm to get rid of those feelings hmm from a stress going to work point of view you just find yourself going to work earlier and earlier and earlier [Lyndsey: Interview].*

Lyndsey has experienced the inescapable problems that her commute to work has posed for over thirty years. She appears to display a passive response to the situation she finds herself facing, akin to a "learned helplessness", where her motivation to respond to the stressful event is seen as futile as it will not change the experience or her expectations (Maier & Seligman, 1976). This strategy of acceptance continues when talking about the consequences she experiences as a result of reporting late and the subsequent stress it produces:

> '*…there's nothing you can do to stop managers sending emails and they're unpleasant and erm there hurtful hmm especially when you're tired, which is inevitably the time when you're going to open the emails, they can be challenging to deal with and keep in perspective you know... [Lyndsey: Interview]*

Learned helplessness has been shown to be linked to motivational, cognitive and emotional deficits with a lowering of self-efficacy, hope and a perceived lack of control in one's life through one's internal perceptions (Maier & Seligman, 1976). These maladaptive perceptions view a situation as personal, pervasive and permanent, compelling individuals to give up and possibly resulting in depression (Seligman, 1991; Henkel et al, 2002). Helplessness has been shown to foster psychological effects such as depression, aggression, anger, anxiety, apathy and shame, along with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, (Tayfur, 2012). If a problem, such as commuting becomes extended it is suggested that people learn that their responses cannot affect the events that occur and become inactive as they fail to resolve even resolvable events (Güneri et al, 2019). In the testimonies and actions of the crew, high levels of stress and anxiety are apparent as they contemplate their commute into work and this has been an event they have coped with for many years. However, crew are clearly proactive in addressing and managing the stress and anxiety that befalls them whilst commuting for so many years. On their commute into work, crew appear to fear the outcome of reporting late and the impact this has on their personal and work lives. To alleviate the stress around this, crew actively cope by the judicious use of their time and the ability to carefully plan their journeys. Through planning their journeys by watching

traffic and weather reports, anticipating possible problems at airports and leaving copious hours before they report, crew endeavour to alleviate some of the stress they talk about in their diaries and interviews. Unfortunately, as they manage one source of anxiety it appears that it creates another problem by adding to their ever-present tiredness and fatigue.

Crew have actively worked to ensure that their actions may allow them to arrive on time. They cannot however control the uncontrollable, the power differential that exists between themselves and the organization and its culture and practices. It may be assumed that crew experience less social power than those who control a crew's roster and this powerlessness undermines crew's self-efficacy resulting in learned helplessness (Cortina & Magley, 2009; Rizvi & Sikand, 2020). With the best intentions and planning, leaving hours to get to work, crew have learnt that no matter what they do the punishment for lateness is punitive and cannot affect the events that occur, disruption to their lives. The many years they have experienced this has left them feeling helpless, nothing they say or do can change the outcome. Therefore, what does appear relevant, is that the crew may be suffering from helplessness that is induced by the rigid organizational practices they encounter for lateness, as their roster is wiped leading to disruption of future plans and life as described by Lyndsey and monitoring for a year as described by Christina in their interviews. Their helplessness may be described as Organizationally Induced Helplessness, where cultural and organized conditioning has been reported to lead to behaviours such passivity, withdrawal and expressed dissatisfaction, along with affective reactions of depression, anger, stress, fatigue and alienation, low job involvement and productivity to name just a few (Martinko & Gardner, 1982; Rizvi & Sikand, 2020). Features of this are seen in the crew's interviews as they talk about their commuting experiences. Their words paint a picture of passivity, defeat and resignation knowing they cannot change the experience of the commute and traffic into work, the anxiety and fear that it produces, along with the punitive actions of the company if they are late. Lyndsey appears to distance herself from the company and managers through her indifference to and avoidance of company emails, an emotion focussed strategy she adopts to cope with a management system perceived as abusive (Webster et al.,2014). However, the crew's words also describe active coping strategies of problem focussed coping through preparation, planning, seeking out information and rationalisation that allow

them to negate their feelings of resentment, fear, injustice and helplessness. These emotion and problem focussed strategies reflect the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus, 1966; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980) and through these coping strategies crew foster resilience, which allows them to weather further challenges their day presents. As they now arrive at work, they face more stress, as they prepare to meet a new set of colleagues and attend a pre-flight briefing, the next subordinate theme.

5.1.3 Pre Flight-Briefing Stress: Navigating uncertainty, unknowns and loneliness with their new crew family.

Through the analysis of the crew's diaries and interviews, they described how with every pre-flight briefing they needed to negotiate and cope with a novel milieu, which they perceived as one of unknowns and uncertainties[2]. The theme of anxiety and facing uncertainty in the pre-flight briefing occurred across several of the crew's interviews and diaries.

Feelings of uncertainty and anxiety start even before the crew have entered the crew report centre to attend their pre-flight briefing. Even after many years of flying Amanda feels anxious about flying with crew that she does not know, on her trip that she describes as a "five-day mini break". To assist with this anxiety Amanda uses her roster as a means of seeking clarity and information to prepare herself for the trip ahead and conveys how she prepares herself to cope with the uncertainty she faces:

> *The fact I don't know anyone on the crew makes me nervous still, so I print out my roster and if I meet anyone in the *** lounge I can get a bit of a low down on the names-it's better to know if you're going to be with people on a five-day mini break. Are they going to be party animals or will they stay holed up in their rooms for the whole time?" [Amanda: Interview].*

Amanda knows that she will be entering a fast moving and busy work environment where every second will be accounted for and on her commute to work, she uses the roster, her

[2] For an explanation of a pre-flight briefing see page 90

fellow colleagues and time in the departure lounge, to seek for information that may allow her to start building a mental schema as to how her trip may unfold and what she may have to do to cope on her time away. It may be considered that she is seeking to manage her expectations of the trip for one that may offer the prospect of company and fun, “are they going to be party animals?” or a trip where she may be alone for long periods, “will they stay holed up in their rooms for the whole time?” Cabin crew work together for a very limited time, so relationships are built and dismantled quickly and the levels of social support available from colleagues on the day may be unpredictable, resulting in a lack of stability and continuity (Partridge & Goodman, 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2008). Studies involving pilots have reported that working in an ever-changing landscape of crew members leads to a lack of familiarity with fellow crew and with close bonds difficult to form, a supportive work environment is difficult to foster and feelings of isolation may prevail (Cullen et al, 2021). Finding social support may therefore be difficult for crew, even though it is acknowledged that social support satisfies a basic needing for belonging and in organizations allows employees to feel respected, valued and included (Xanthopoulou et al, 2008; Rigby & Ryan, 2018). Somehow though crew appear to foster social support and participation with colleagues through leisure activities, whilst off duty overseas, which are demonstrated as an emotion orientated stress coping strategy (Cheng et al., 2018; Cahill et al., 2021; Chua et al., 2022). In her diary Clare talks about relaxing with fellow crew down route after a very busy long-haul flight and how it makes her feel:

> *Out for the evening in the warm sunshine with 2 other crew, feels relaxing and pleasurable and I momentarily think of home …We have a few drinks, moving on to a different place to eat [Clare, Diary].*

Like Amanda, Julia who had flown for 35 years, describes how her feelings of apprehension start even before she has arrived at work and contemplates the briefing she will shortly attend:

> *…even after all these years tiny bit apprehensive about briefing just in case you’ve got someone really anal in charge…some briefings can be very intense and you see I call it nit-picky; they would call it thorough but I don’t know maybe I’m because I have been flying so long that to me it seems a little bit patronising sometimes… [Julia: Interview].*

For Julia, the anxiety and uncertainty she experiences may be perceived at different levels, such as anticipatory stress and encounter stress, what will the SCCM be like, will they be "anal"? The anticipation of her encounter with her SCCM positions Julia as vulnerable, as every time Julia goes to work, she meets a new SCCM, who will bring their own style and preferences to a briefing, which leaves Julia wondering what manner of briefing she will face time and time again. As Julia enters the briefing room with its many unknown colleagues and facing the necessity to adapt to distinctive styles of presentation from a different SCCM every trip, briefings may appear to offer little certainty and familiarity, states that may offer comfort in stressful situations. On top of this Julia describes the dissonance between herself and the senior cabin crew member, where they may see their briefing as "thorough", she perceives it as "nit-picky". Pre-flight briefing lasts just twenty minutes and covers safety and customer service aspects of the flight along with input from the flight crew. The briefing is a decisive moment in shaping the next few days of a cabin crew's life, from requesting a favourite workplace on board, to their on-board break time. However, a structured briefing led by the senior cabin crew member is vital due to the lack of time to cover the mandatory legal function of a briefing, especially on the larger aircraft with up to twenty-two cabin crew members. That said, for the crew in this research, crew positions were chosen by the crew themselves according to their seniority, an approach considered more egalitarian than allocation by the senior crew member (Van De Mieroop, et al., 2023). Julia still though, experiences the briefing as "patronizing". The junior crew role positions them as "passive recipients" of information, with little opportunity to contribute their knowledge and experience unless invited to. Having flown for many years and having amassed a great deal of experience, knowledge and skills, Julia may feel that these are unrecognised in the briefing process, which may have negative consequences for her self-esteem and motivation.

Having attended hundreds of meetings with its familiar format and calling on her experience and knowledge, Julia may appear to demonstrate minimal anxiety around the practicalities of the pre-flight briefing and its requirements to inform crew about the flight. The anxiety she experiences is on a more personal level, concerns around the disposition of the SCCM

and the lack of acknowledgement of her many years flying. Sonya, who was also a long serving crew member echoes a similar narrative about the SCCM and describes how she seeks familiarity in her uncertain world, along with why her colleagues are critical in her life for the next few days and her expectations of them:

> *…but you have a look at that and look around see if you recognise anybody just for a bit of familiarity usually you don't err but when you see faces you might recognise a face, wondering what the CSD's like are they going to be a pain in the arse, are they going to be easy going, are they going to be supportive, you do wonder all those things in the briefing because you know you're getting this new family around you for however many days your relying on them to not let you down and not let the company down and behave themselves and be nice to each other…[Sonya: Interview].*

Sonya is experiencing a maelstrom of emotions which are unnerving. She has left behind her home life along with the familiarity, comfort and support that she experiences there and has entered her workspace where she faces many unknowns. In this personal account Sonya articulates how the briefing is far more than an information sharing process about the upcoming flight. It is a space where in a room of strangers, Sonya seeks information about her "new family" and wonders how this new family through its interactions with each other may impact on her experience of the trip. In the sea of faces that greets her in the briefing room, Sonya searches for familiarity, even though it may just be an imprecise recognition of a colleague she has flown with before and not a name. Like Julia, Sonya expresses her concern around not knowing the nature of the SCCM and even her other colleagues in will they "not let you down". Her description of the crew as "a new family" brings with it the expectation that these are more than just colleagues, they will be people that she must be able to trust to offer support and companionship in the demanding environment of an aircraft cabin with its intense job demands and the ever-present possibility of inherent danger. Emergency routines, such as fire drills, medical emergencies and evacuations rely heavily on teamwork and knowledge, with crew members certain that the person next to them is there to support them. For the next few days Sonya's wellbeing is inextricably linked to her colleagues, for very good reasons. Pollnac et al., (1995) found the supportive presence of a family member on board fishing boats proffered a false sense of security, along with an unrealistic assessment of danger amongst crew members. Close ties with a family member increases the potential for deep feelings of personal loss, leaving some

fishermen presenting psychological denial of the dangers they face. Therefore, supportive social contacts at work are an important resource in the workplace, especially in occupations where job demands are high and self-efficacy is low by providing positive affective reactions, improving performance and lowering job induced psychological stress and are integral to health and wellbeing (Hobfoll,1989; 2001; Taylor, 2008; Jolly et al., 2020). Social support has been shown to contribute to the maintenance of strong resource reservoirs, which in turn supports greater resistance to stress (Hobfoll, 2001). Emotional support from cabin crew colleagues has been shown to recharge emotional resources depleted by uncivil senior cabin crew and co-worker social support is enormously beneficial in providing safety, especially in demanding working conditions, where empathy and friendship contribute to the desire that harm does not befall another (Turner et al., 2010; Shin et al, 2022). Co-worker support has also been shown to encourage others to speak out about safety related issues at work, a vital requirement in the airline world where danger is constantly present (Tucker, 2018).

Sonya, Julia and Amanda describe their experiences and feelings as they contemplate their pre-flight briefing and their thoughts on the CSD and how they will affect their lives over the next few days. Clare a SCCM with many years' experience wrote about her own feelings of anxiety before briefing and how she puts on a performance to disguise her feelings and help her to cope:

> *I arrive at the crew briefing with a smile on my face and a jovial demeanour- would any of the crew guess how I am feeling inside- longing to be home, working in a regular job and getting home the same day and being involved with my family and their daily activities. I hope no one guesses -, because after all my years of flying I hope I'm professional enough to disguise my private feelings, an art we've probably all mastered as crew. I always feel nervous before a briefing, my hands shake slightly and become sweaty (mmm-lovely!) and my mouth becomes dry. However, once I start the briefing those symptoms subside (not completely)." [Clare: Diary]*

Clare is obviously experiencing elevated levels of anxiety both psychologically and from a physical aspect as she arrives at the briefing room. She expresses feelings of wishful thinking that her life was different as she appears to be struggling with the demands crew face over

and above the trip itself. Crew life is hugely different from the normal nine to five routine or as Clare states “a regular job”, with extra pressures added to what crew will face on board. They are separated for days at a time from their familiar home surroundings, familial support networks and the day-to-day existence of their families. Clare may appear to be mourning the loss of this everyday life as she contemplates uncertainty and loneliness as she prepares for briefing.

As Clare enters the briefing room, not as a junior crew member, but as the SCCM with all the expectations and responsibilities that her role entails, these private thoughts and emotions must be regulated and supressed. Her feelings of loneliness may be as a result of her role as the SCCM. The SCCM can be a lonely job, one of the crew but also a manger, who must ensure that company expectations are met and they are answerable for all occurrences on the trip. Once on the aircraft the SCCM may be considered “the head of the family” to the crew, responsible for the care and wellbeing of their crew both on and off the aircraft, along with their passengers. As the SCCM, Clare must display leadership qualities, be accomplished in the execution of her role and display composure under pressure. Clare draws on her understanding of professionalism, her experience of many years of flying and positions herself with her fellow crew as she supresses the private feelings fuelling her inner turmoil. As she enters the briefing room, the masking and repression of her private feelings implies Clare has “mastered” the art of “surface acting”. As Hochschild (2003:33) declares; ‘In surface acting we deceive others about what we really feel, but we do not deceive ourselves’. With her command of this surface acting performance, she may feel she is fulfilling the social norms expected of the company and the crew, of a SCCM who is calm, controlled and offers reassuring leadership. Clare’s outward manner of “a smile on my face and a jovial manner” may be thought of as ‘…the main tool of their trade’ as the cabin crew must fulfil the requirements of a service industry by maintaining a friendly and happy outward demeanour (Murphy, 2010). Clare’s public face belies her inner feelings of sadness and longing, along with the physical effect of shaking, sweaty hands and dry mouth that she experiences before briefing. This emotional suppression, whilst resulting in a calm, outward demeanour, appears paradoxical to the intense physical reactions she experiences. Through hiding her feelings from her fellow crew Clare is utilising a self-control coping mechanism

(Folkman et al, 1986). As Clare becomes immersed in the task of delivering an effective briefing with its multiple components and time restraints, she experiences an attentional shift away from the internal turmoil of her psychological feelings, therefore diminishing her physical symptoms.

Jenny also found briefings stressful but for her it was around the uncertainty and tension that arose as the working positions were allocated. These positions depend on the seniority of the crew and those who have flown the longest enjoy greater seniority and choice of working position. All crew have their "favourite" cabin to work in and Jenny describes the anxiety she experiences as the briefing progresses:

> *…I find briefings I'm quite anxious in the briefing often hmm I think a lot of people feel that way because it's silly really and I don't actually know what I'm anxious about, I worry about working positions err, which again is stupid really, but we all know where we like to work and if you suddenly see that you're not as senior as you like to be then you're anxious for those positions to get done and I think if a CSD leaves that till later on in the briefing I don't think anybody has listened to what they're saying, I think until they've done the working positions people don't relax and listen to the rest of it because actually that's what they really care about that's where they're going to be working but I don't think I'm alone in that hmm yeah…"[Jenny: Interview]*

Jenny's anxiety may appear to be rooted in the fact that every time she arrives at work, the position she will work on board is unknown to her until the briefing. As Jenny says, most crew have a favourite cabin in which they like to work and research has shown that when facing under pressure situations people view familiarity as safety (Litt et al., 2011). This positioning relates to relationality in IPA, as the favourite cabin situates them in their "comfort zone", where they may find some reassurance and safety in a familiar environment and routine, lowering their levels of anxiety and stress and aiding in the coping process. Even if she is not working in a favourite place, once Jenny confirms where she will be working, she can prepare herself by re-counting past experiences of working in that cabin, offering an insight into her day ahead. Jenny acknowledges the increased stress from the need to know where she will work overrides the briefing message, as what may appear important is controlling her stress and anxiety.

Whilst Jenny is obviously anxious during the briefing about where she will be working and feels it is what is important to most of the crew, once again Jenny appears to be seeking information in the briefing about her colleagues:

> *"… you're looking at crew and checking them out wondering if it's going to be a nice trip" [Jenny: Interview]*.

The information Jenny has garnered about the crew, along with the knowledge of where she will be working may be conceived as pieces in a jigsaw that allow Jenny to begin to construct a mental schema, slowly reducing her experience of uncertainty on the first part of her trip.

These cabin crew members have attended countless briefings but even with the passing of time and build-up of experience, they articulate how stressful this part of their working day is. Every briefing is a novel environment where they encounter and manage unknowns and uncertainties about their colleagues who will be instrumental in their lives for at least three days, sometimes more. As Folkman, (2010:904) states "Uncertainty can provide a fertile milieu for doubts based on what one hears, sees, reads, or imagines". Crew have event and outcome uncertainties that need to be answered, which for each crew member appears different but salient to them as an individual. What will their colleagues be like, where will they be working, will they be able to fulfil the expected norms of leadership, will their needs for emotional support to manage their stress and build resilience be met? As a result of these unpredictable situations, crew experience an acute stressor of anticipatory stress, a phenomenon noted with police officers at the start of their shift (Anderson et al., 2002). Anticipating an uncertain future event such as their briefing, leads to the production of intense emotions, as seen in the crew's experiences (VanBoven & Ashworth, 2007). The crew here drew upon different forms of coping, which appear dependent on what is at stake or the options available for coping (Folkman et al., 1986). Crew in this section display emotion focussed and problem focussed coping as they search for information about crew from rosters, seek out a familiar face or "check out" other crew in the briefing room or hide their distressed feelings from others, all in order to regulate their stressful emotions. As crew face the stressful circumstance of event uncertainty and a possible threat to their well-being they call upon "hope" that their seniority allows them to work in the cabin where they

feel comfortable. Hope has been found to be essential when people face prolonged psychological stress and supports the coping process (Folkman, 2010). It may be inferred that if crew do not achieve their preferred working position, the hope they have fostered may then allow them to deal with the demands of their new reality in their non favoured working position.

According to Hobfoll (1989, 2001), the building and maintaining of resources is fundamental in the coping process, one such being the seeking of social support. Social support for crew appears an important resource and one that crew keenly feel the loss of, as they leave family and friends behind at home. The anxiety the crew display as they anticipate who their crew will be, the seeking of information about their crew both overtly and covertly and Clare's positioning of the crew as a "new family" supports this premise, as they look for support from colleagues, which is fundamental to the cabin crews' well-being in their harsh environment. Loudoun et al., (2021) declares social support is vital following exposure to critical incidents and it is to these that the next subordinate theme examines, aircraft emergencies and situational stress.

5.1.4 Aircraft Emergencies and Situational Stress: Denial of danger in the supportive collegiate environment.

Cabin crew are the "first responders of the sky", with responsibilities akin to other emergency response workers such as the police, the fire service and health care professionals (Corey et al., 2005). Unlike these ground-based emergency service workers who can call for backup when needed, for crew there is no back up at 35,000 feet. As explained earlier crew must manage onboard fires, bomb threats, disruptive passenger incidents, medical emergencies, evacuations and terrorism[3]. All of these events whilst rare are always a possibility and the primary role of cabin crew is to be the first responder to all these events. During the interviews it became apparent that this was an aspect of their work that they did not actively or willingly contemplate. Only when directly asked the question

[3] For an explanation of the cabin crew safety role refer to Ch4:4.2; Page 75 - 85

about this aspect of their role did they reflect on their experiences and feelings. Antonia had operated as cabin crew for many years with various airlines and described some of the incidents that she had experienced when asked in her interview "did she think about anything going wrong whilst flying?":

> *…No because I said the day that I worry about something like that the day I think I stop that's me I've had enough if I was to worry about everything that could possibly go wrong hmm, I don't think I would do what I do…err so I think safety must be a big thing in my mind err I have confidence in my flight crew I have to have confidence in my engineers and have confidence in my crew around me that they will all keep me safe and then because I feel that I then can pass that on to my customers that I want to make them feel safe… [Antonia :Interview]*

Antonia articulated how thinking about something going wrong in flight was not an option, as it would make it impossible to continue with her career as cabin crew but acknowledged that during her flying career, she had faced dangerous situations:

> "*I haven't really had any major incidents with ***, previous company I had a bird strike on take- off and had to make the decision to turn back, we've had engines blow on take-off and going into not quite pre-planned but had things going there… [Antonia: Interview].*

These incidents are all serious in nature, with the potential to become catastrophic. The demands on the cabin crew are immense as they face this unplanned emergency. The flight crew are fully focussed on addressing the emergency situation, stabilising the aircraft and contacting the necessary authorities for assistance. During this time, which may be many minutes, they will not contact the Senior Cabin Crew Member to brief them on the exact nature of the problem and what the cabin crew may be required to do. During this uncertain and frightening time, crew must manage their own anxieties and stay calm and focussed, remaining alert to information updates and commands from the flight crew and SCCM, whilst reassuring their frightened passengers who look to their cabin crew for reassurance. Antonia has faced all of this whilst sitting on her jump seat and may appear to cope with this by denying and then reappraising and playing down the scenario that she faces as she describes her physical reaction during the emergency:

> *"…but never have I felt…that I was in serious danger. I think the adrenaline kicked in but I never felt oh my God" [Antonia: Interview]*.

Antonia then talks about her belief in her colleagues:

> "*…I have confidence in my flight crew, I have to have confidence in my engineers and have confidence in my crew around me that they will all keep me safe…" [Antonia: Interview].*

Antonia seeks reassurance in her stressful situation by deriving instrumental support through her understanding of the knowledge, experience and professionalism she has experienced and witnessed from her colleagues, supported through the positive safety culture of her company. The comfort of being surrounded by fellow professionals who can be trusted, along with confidence in their training is a strategy seen in submariners when talking about their fears (Kimhi, 2011). It may be inferred she then actively sees how this reframing of her psychological and physical position of "unsafe" to "safe" can be used positively to support her role as cabin crew. There is a feeling that Antonia draws strength and comfort from the group relationship she has with her fellow colleagues and in this aircraft space she can transfer this to changing the aircraft space to one of unsafe to safe for her customers:

> "*… feel that I then can pass that on to my customers that I want to make them feel safe …" [Antonia: Interview].*

Through Antonia's talk about how she faces up to the possibility of danger, it may be understood that she employs several coping strategies of rationalisation, reappraisal, denial and instrumental support that allow her to cope in this highly stressful environment of uncertainty and possibility.

Antonia's feelings about how she avoids thinking about possible danger at work are echoed by Julia:

> *I don't know if you worry about flying you know maybe something going wrong in flight or take-off and landing or whatever or a medical emergency I don't know if I would be able to continue doing the job if these thoughts occupied my mind a lot, I think I would actually start to get a bit frightened going to work before you even think about ooh I might crash, someone might have a heart attack… No, I don't I certainly don't but I don't think you could do the job if you did. [Julia: Interview]*

In her interview Julia shares the fact that she is aware that she may face emergency situations at work and that may result in feelings of fear, "…*I think I would start to get a bit frightened*", which may impact on her ability to do her job *"…I don't think you could do the job if you did*". In order to assuage these feelings and to help her cope and to continue in her chosen career, Julia chooses to actively deny the possibility of emergency situations occurring whilst she is at work. Like Antonia, it may be surmised that Julia may appear to draw upon the coping strategy of denial to ensure that she contains her feelings of fear and to perform her role as cabin crew.

Julia's position of denial may assist in helping her to cope with her anxiety about flying and the possibility of inflight emergencies. For Antonia it appears that she favours an alternative approach, that of active coping by thinking positively and focussing on situations "…one step at a time" (Carver et al, 1989:272):

> *…it's almost coming back to the aircraft do you think about things going wrong no I don't cause I don't think that's who I am, I don't think of the negative things as much as possible erm my husband says I'm a pessimist but I say I'm a realist, I just think of I deal with situations that are coming up as they come up I don't I don't think what could happen next…" [Antonia: Interview]*

Even though flying can be considered safe and fatalities are rare, crew know the possibility of an emergency is always present. The cabin crew in this research had flown between 20 and 36 years and know that at some stage in their career will encounter an emergency situation as Jenny describes in her interview:

> *All the time, I say all the time but not all the time …we've all had incidents where stuffs happened and you've kind of thought oh my goodness that could have been a lot worse you know aborted take offs or erm having to having taken off and having to dump fuel and land again because somethings wrong with the aircraft, you know all those situations make you when they're happening you think I don't know how this is going to end so you're trying to prep yourself for the worst case scenario…but just on a normal day it's in the back of my mind" [Jenny: Interview]*

When facing an uncertain and frightening situation Jenny may experience a lack of control over events and the outcome "…*you know all these situations make you when they're happening you think I don't know how this is going to end…".* To address these stressful thoughts about how this possibly dangerous situation may evolve, Jenny calls on a coping strategy of problem focussed planning, possibly by calling on her training, to think how to best handle the problem as she prepares herself for "…*the worst-case scenario…*".

Jenny admits that she has experienced safety related incidents and acknowledges that she became more aware and reflective about possible dangers and their outcomes after the event:

"…*we've all had incidents where stuffs happened and you've kind of thought oh my goodness that could have been a lot worse" [Jenny: Interview].*

It may appear that after the event has passed Jenny rationalizes and reappraises the dangerous situation that she faced and appearing grateful that this time things turned out well. Jenny then goes on to describe her experiences on a "normal day" when there have been no emergencies to cope with but expresses how fear and apprehension may always be present in her preconscious *"…at the back of my mind"*. Jenny describes her experience of leaving the busy aircraft cabin and moving into the very dissimilar space of the crew bunk area. Crew bunk areas have no windows, meaning they are dark and cramped spaces, with bunks often described by the crew as "coffins", with their location on the aircraft making them susceptible to increased effects of turbulence and noise. In the use of the word coffins, it may be inferred that crew experience thoughts of entombment with its connotations of death, rendering the bunk area as a distressing environment. Jenny

describes how feeling removed from her crew role and the demands of the cabin service may appear to exacerbate her situational stress:

> *…erm but just on a normal day it's at the back of my mind and it's extenuated if there's anything like bad turbulence erm, which is usually if you're gonna have bad turbulence when you're in the bunks and then you know it seems worse somehow when you're up in the bunks erm I think because you don't know what's going on you don't feel like you're part of the aircraft quite so much when you're up in the bunks it's a confined space it's dark you know and it tends to be very bumpy if it's gonna get bumpy up there obviously you know maybe there's a sense of having control not that you can have control in situations but actually having less control cause you're not actually on duty [Jenny: Interview]*

The cabin service performance serves more than just the filling of time and the need to provide sustenance to passengers. The rituals of a flight, through the tendering of drinks, a meal and the provision of inflight entertainment, all delivered in a friendly and accommodating manner by the cabin crew, create in the cabin a "…*relaxed homey coziness*…" that distracts passengers from the actual reality of flying, that it may be hazardous and may even result in death (Murphy, 2001; Hochschild, 2003:106). The care and professionalism of the crew and their adherence to the everyday routines of the cabin service, are a powerful way to promote "…*a ritualistic denial of death*" (Murphy, 1998a, cited in Murphy, 2001:38). Whilst it may be considered that the crew's performance of inflight service may negate anxiety over the possibility of death is only relevant to passengers, crew themselves may appear to buy into the illusion they have created of a safe and homely environment. When engaged in the everyday busyness of the cabin and her crew role, Jenny may find it easier to repress and deny her anxieties[4]. A realigning of Jenny's reality, from busyness and companionship in the cabin with fellow crew and her desire to care for her passengers, to the solitude of the dark and claustrophobic crew bunk area, may allow Jenny time and space for her "…*it's at the back of the mind*…" anxieties, to move from her preconscious to her conscious. These back of the mind anxieties took on a common theme when asking crew about their feelings in the crew bunk space. Crew, including myself, reflected the reality of our perilous position that was impossible to escape through a reality check. My thoughts and those of colleagues appear to centre on the realisation that

[4] For an explanation of the intensity of cabin service and routines see Ch4: 4.3.3 P

we were at 40,000 feet, travelling at over 500 miles per hour with only a thin piece of metal between ourselves and death. These frightening thoughts of danger have to be denied. This is a strategy employed by deep sea fisherman, who trivialize or totally deny the inherent dangers they face on a daily basis (Pollnac et al., 1995). As a coping strategy Lazarus and Folkman (1991, 2000), consider denial as a refusal to accept the reality of the situation and an adaptive process, especially when nothing constructive can be done to overcome the harm or threat. Denial therefore must be considered as beneficial in alleviating stressful feelings in certain circumstances, such as those experienced here by the crew in the bunks, as Kimhi's, (2011: 966), research on submariners found as their perception of dangers were "diminished" through "optimal denial" that supported coping.

Jenny also experiences a feeling of isolation and a sudden lack of control now that she is not on duty. Though she denies her fear she is aware of a stark physical reminder of her perilous position as she notices the wind as it passes over the cold airframe, which is now just inches above her head:

"*…you can hear the wind if you're on a jumbo you can hear it outside of the aircraft and I find that quite I don't know disconcerting" [Jenny: Interview]*.

In this crew rest space, a time when existential fears and anxieties emerge, it is clear that Jenny initially used denial to cope with the overwhelming change she experienced as she moves from the busy cabin to the bunk area. Having supressed these fears, she moves into active coping and envisages how long it would take to escape from the dark, confined space of the bunks to the homely, secure cabin environment and the social support of her colleagues where she feels safer:

> *…you're how long would it take you to get downstairs and erm be strapped in by your door if anything went wrong you know I suppose those kind of things go through my mind… [Jenny: Interview]*

Further to this Jenny rationalizes why she now experiences these heightened fears, not as a physical experience of the possible danger she faces when flying, but because of her change in home circumstances and added responsibility as a parent:

> *"I probably worry a bit more now because I have children and want to get home safely so yeah, I think these things are always at the back of your mind…" [Jenny: Interview].*

Jenny appears to acknowledge that her profession may be dangerous and accepts responsibility for her actions as she accepts and manage her fears by justifying her agency in her choice of profession and how she would miss her flying career:

> *…I go to work primarily because I want to and I think I'd miss flying if I didn't go to work erm… [Jenny: Interview]*.

Lyndsey, preferred not to dwell on safety concerns and talked about how she coped with her fears about flying and safety through cognitive disbelief and her faith in working for an airline with a proven safety record:

> *hmm I think you know it's there but if you we're to dwell on it I think it would just very challenging to cope with if you dwell on it [Lyndsey: Interview]*

Lyndsey articulates how the only way she can fulfil her role as crew, which involves being responsible for the safety and wellbeing of her passengers is by denying that her work environment is dangerous, even though through her training Lyndsey knows that statistically take off and landings are the most dangerous phase of flight. As she sits on her jump seat waiting to land, Lyndsey acknowledges that if she succumbs to her anxiety about the possible danger, she may be incapable of fulfilling her responsibilities to care for her customers and protect herself:

> *…but if you we're to dwell on it I think it would just very challenging to cope with if you dwell on it so you have like hmm something in your brain that flips a disbelief switch and hmm because you know if you were to think this aircraft might crash, you'd be no use to anyone else or yourself… [Lyndsey: Interview].*

Lyndsey has faced the possibility of danger every time she flies for many years and this repeated exposure of heightened concern would be psychologically draining to maintain

(Freud, 1901). This constant exposure to danger may lead to habituation and denial of danger as seen in deep sea fishermen (Pollnac et al., 1995). However, whilst waiting for landing Lyndsey actively decides to reappraise the landing as one with a positive outcome so as to manage her anxiety and to protect her sanity:

> "…*so, you sit there and you think you have your default position is this landing will be OK otherwise you'd drive yourself nuts…* [Lyndsey: Interview]

To further help her ameliorate her stressful emotions of fear that she experiences and to help her stay in the role she has occupied for over 30 years, Lyndsey also draws upon her positive beliefs about the company and her flight crew colleagues, a silver lining in her dark, stressful thoughts:

> …*I think you'd get to a stage where you really couldn't get on an airplane anymore for fear of that happening hmm you know you work for a decent company very skilled pilots and you just that's the default for me personally… [Lyndsey: Interview].*

Lyndsey talks openly about how she manages her fears and how she experiences challenging emotional thoughts around her safety and how she has sustained a long career through becoming resilient. For Fisher et al., (2019:592):

> Resilience is the process by which individuals are able to positively adapt to substantial difficulties, adversity, or hardship.

For resilience to develop Fisher et al., (2019:594), identify variables of interest, adversity triggers, resilience outcomes, resilience mechanisms and resilience prompting factors, through their framework for resilience related variables. Inflight emergencies may occur at any time during the flight and crew must be ready to respond to an emergency call and are clearly an adversity trigger as job demands soar and role conflict arises as they face an extremely challenging situation. Julia described such an emergency call during her flight that allows an insight into how she copes with the situation and that demonstrates her resilience in action:

> *…there was potentially a problem with the undercarriage that was partly why they went into Prestwick...hmm because they didn't want to risk having to reject the landing into Heathrow with the undercarriage down because they would not then be able to retract the undercarriage, which obviously has implications if you're doing a go around for fuel consumption and diverting then hmm... [Julia: Interview].*

Suddenly, Julia realises she faces what may potentially be a catastrophic emergency event:

> *"…but of course, you hear the words hydraulics failure and you start thinking crikey you know are the flaps going to be all right and there was…: potentially an issue with the undercarriage… it did wake me up rather… I think I was sort of mentally more alert for maybe strange sounds or just to be more aware there was a potential for problems on landing" [Julia: Interview].*

With the alert call from the flight crew Julia's world has in an instant transformed from one of the mundane, everyday routine of cabin service, to being on "red alert" to cope with a demanding emergency situation. Her role and focus as cabin crew has changed from one of "hospitality" to "safety officer" and she must effectively manage the conflicting demands between these two duties. Julia's senses and anxieties are intensified as she begins to realise the implications of what this emergency may mean for landing. Through her training Julia knows any problem such as a hydraulic or an aircraft undercarriage failure is an extremely serious event and she must be planning and prepare herself to manage many different possible scenarios. The undercarriage may collapse on landing causing structural damage, fire or explosion, which may require Julia to initiate and manage an emergency evacuation. Along with this passenger panic and injury to passengers and crew may add to Julia's chaotic scene. The aircraft however may land normally, taxi to stand and passengers disembark. All of this will be entering into Julia's thoughts as she grapples with the unknown that is unfolding before her.

Through her initial appraisal and reaction of this adverse circumstance, Julia shows her resilience mechanisms as she actively addresses the problem by becoming mentally alert and moving quickly into suppressing her fears and planning for a potential problem on landing. Whilst Julia waits for more information, her stress levels will be high as she contains

and manages her emotional feelings of fear, anxiety and uncertainty. Throughout this time, Julia exhibits another resilience mechanism, emotion regulation (Fisher et al., 2019). Julia must continue caring for her passengers, whilst ensuring that her inner emotions are not portrayed through her facial expressions to the passengers, who will be looking to her for calmness, professionalism and reassurance. This self-controlling, surface acting allows Julia to shield her passengers from the reality of danger. In order to cope and fulfil this duty as expected of a cabin crew member, Julia appears to reappraise the situation as positive, something to not worry about until necessary and whilst staying focussed subsequently manages to supress her fears through distancing and not letting it get to her:

> *I knew it was unlikely but hmm I think maybe a bit more focussed because I certainly wasn't scared, it's like before, don't waste time being scared when nothing's going wrong wait till it happens and then be scared… [Julia: Interview]*

Whilst waiting to land, Julia is seated on a jump seat at her designated door of responsibility, often alone with her thoughts and preparing through her "silent review", for the possibility of an emergency. For Julia sitting there waiting to land, her thoughts are occupied with all the possible outcomes she may have to manage, controlling frightened passengers, waiting for commands from the pilots or having to assess, initiate and control an evacuation from her door. Julia must now prepare in her mind for a possible evacuation on landing, with the potential of passenger panic, fear and chaos[5]

As Julia considers the things that may go wrong and what the next few minutes many bring, it may be inferred that her awareness and stress levels are raised. In order to cope during this extremely stressful time, Julia calls upon another resilience mechanism as she seeks emotional social support from her colleague, across the aisle:

> *I wasn't just more alert I think really and hmm Muriel sitting on the other side, she was lovely, we just exchanged glances you know and It's kind of this unsaid thing I knew she'd be looking out for me and I'd look out for her without even saying it [Julia: Interview]*

[5] Further explanation of an aircraft evacuation see Ch.4:4.2.1 Page 75

Whilst in this red alert mode Julia must override her anxieties and deal with it. In order to reassure her passengers Julia is unable to own and externally express her feelings of anxiety, either verbally or facially, she must sit and wait with her silent thoughts. She does however experience comfort and support from her colleague Muriel, who is sitting at the opposite door, through a silent but collective understanding of what they are facing. Through their training and the relational ties fostered through working together in flight, crew experience an implicit awareness that they will support each other through the mutual raising of morale, especially in times of peril (Hochschild, 2003).

This emergency for Julia ended well with a "normal" landing, even if not at her final destination. However, Julia must be ready to encounter and manage an emergency, an adversity trigger, every time she goes into work, year in, year out and Julia's retelling of this emergency event clearly reveals her resilience. Her demonstration of resilience mechanisms and resilience promoting factors of appraisal, initial reactions and reactivity, planning, emotional support and emotional regulation allow her to handle her adversity. As Fisher et al., (2019:602) assert:

> Employees who show a resilient response to adversity may demonstrate a temporary decline in functioning in the form of an initial disruption (or slight perturbations) but are ultimately able to return to (or maintain) their pre-adversity level of functioning.

In this passage Julia demonstrates all the hallmarks of resilience. Though initially perturbed at the start of the emergency, her resilience allowed her to function to a high professional level as she managed her cabin, her passengers and herself through a traumatic experience. After this stressful experience Julia returned to work for her next trip, just another one in a very long career.

Cabin crew do not worry only about their safety on the aircraft, but also when resting in hotels around the world, specifically from terrorist attacks. Just as the probability of crew

experiencing critical incidents on board may be few, the possibility is always present. Crew are obliged to operate to a wide range of countries, some which experience political and social instability and therefore they must once again be on "red alert" to react and protect themselves. The traumatic events described earlier in this thesis involving the imprisonment of British Airways crew in Kuwait during the Gulf War, occurred during the flying careers of many of the participants who were interviewed and completed diaries[6]. The targeting of foreigners in luxury hotels in order to draw world attention to terrorist aims is acknowledged and during one attack in Mali, it was reported that an Air France crew were specifically targeted (Lebovich, 2016). It is therefore not surprising that crew may have reason to feel vulnerable, adding to their anxieties as they are separated from their familial support system. Tina expresses how she worries about terrorist activity, especially in places she has frequently visited like Mumbai and how events she has read about and discussed in training change her awareness about the dangers of her job and how she subsequently manages her fears. Due to world events, Tina now understands that as airline cabin crew she is vulnerable to terrorism and finds this a stressful event that she must face:

> *…I do worry about terrorism. I just looked at that Bombay, it was a Bombay hotel that was attacked and it could have been anyone of us and that really rattled me cause it could be any hotel in any part of the world at any given time and that really rattled me that God you know we do a really dangerous job…I still worry about it…Sometimes when I'm in my room and it could be anywhere, I could be in Boston I could be in New York I could be in Nairobi…[Tina: Interview]*

Just as the probability of being involved in an incident on board her aircraft may be rare, the possibility is forever present. Tina was not personally involved in the Mumbai attacks but may identify with these attacks as inherently personal due to an emotional and organizational connection with the wider cabin crew community. Through these connections, along with the fact that she had been involved in the aviation industry for so many years meant that she has been exposed to numerous events and subsequent media messages surrounding terrorism, adding to her sense of vulnerability. As Lating et al., (2006:) states:

[6]For more information on terrorism see CH4:4.2.5 page 84-87

> The personal impact of this type of immediate, profound vulnerability, coupled in part with the rapid generalizability of constant media exposure, appears to have left flight attendants particularly ‘‘at risk’’ for psychological distress. The genuine perception that ‘‘I might be next’’ may serve as the medium by which terrorism spreads its virulent effects and may be the mechanism that allows a psychological contagion effect to occur.

The crew in this research stay overnight or longer in hotels around the world and like Tina may experience upsetting thoughts about her safety and mortality every time she goes to work. In order to stay in her role and alleviate her anticipatory anxiety, Tina utilises the defensive coping strategy of anticipation, which allows her to, ‘…perceive future danger affectively as well as cognitively and by this means to master conflict in small steps.’ (Vaillant, 2000:94). This allows her to imagine and plan for such a scenario:

> *I think if I was attacked now what would I do what would I do and actually I don’t know what I would do, would you hide under the bed would they find you [Tina: Interview]*

Tina, then employs a problem-solving coping strategy as she draws on informational social support by recalling what colleagues say they would do to protect themselves (Carver et al., 1989). This has led to a change in her behaviours in the hotel but it may be inferred that this has not completely alleviated her anxiety about terrorism:

…then people say don’t put the do not disturb sign on your door because it makes it advertises that you’re in there but if they knock on the door and you don’t answer they think the rooms empty so now I don’t put the do not disturb sign on my door now but I do worry about terrorism... err a lot [Tina: Interview]

In this sub theme of aircraft emergencies and situational stress, it is apparent that this is a challenging area of crew life and subsequently one that they find difficult to talk about and acknowledge. This is not surprising given the dangers that crew face every day of their working lives, which is reinforced as they perform the relentless safety routines on the aircraft as described in this research.[7] They are living on “red alert” in an environment of danger, uncertainty and possibility that harbours feelings of fear. Crew cannot change this reality but develop psychological strategies to cope with it and become resilient. It is clear

[7] For full explanation of cabin safety routines see CH4:4.3.1-4.3.5. Pages 89-113

that once again crew call upon active coping strategies of problem focussed planning, rationalisation, reappraisal and physical and emotional support from colleagues as professed in Lazarus & Folkman's, (1985) Ways of Coping. Most salient is their use of the functional defence mechanism of denial, a coping process often considered maladaptive, but which Lazarus, (2000), considers adaptive in certain circumstances. The denial crew perform here is adaptive, as it allows them to alleviate their distress without altering function or producing harm. Whilst they deny the seriousness of the emergency situation, they vigilantly attend to the necessity of the care and survival of their passengers and themselves that affords the best chance of a favourable outcome. The crew here use a myriad number of coping strategies, resilience mechanisms and resilience promoting factors that allow them to adapt successfully to the demanding physical, mental and emotional nature of their profession that create and maintain their resilience.

Aircraft emergencies are not the only stressor crew face and the next subtheme considers the hostility in the workplace that crew encounter and must contend with in their working lives.

5.1.5 Confronting aggression from passengers: Coping with fear, isolation and loneliness with nowhere to run.

Working in the confines of an aircraft cabin with hundreds of passengers, with no means of escape, makes for an extremely challenging and stressful environment for crew, especially when passenger behaviour becomes disruptive[8]. The only responders available to deal with hostile behaviour inflight is not the police, but once again the cabin crew. It is their job to manage any kind of threatening behaviours that may place the aircraft and its occupants in danger. This phenomenon is one that is increasing in nature as reported by The European Union Aviation and Safety Agency, (2019). Workplace social conflicts with customers (SCC'S), exert an exhausting emotional toll on employees and are a severe work stressor and resource depleting experiences, especially when the employee may have limited opportunity to resolve the conflict after the incident (Volmer, Sonnentag, Binnewies &

[8] For further information on disruptive passenger incidents see Ch4:4.2.2 p:77.

Niessen, 2012; Fisk & Neville, 2011). The cumulative effects of SCC'S may result in long term psychological effects with employees experiencing feelings of worthlessness and humiliation, along with a negative effect on an employee's self-esteem (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Harris & Reynolds, 2003). The subtheme of hostility in the workplace reveals the experiences of crew as they encounter problematic and threatening behaviour from their passengers.

In her interview Antonia openly talked about an incident on boarding with an angry passenger that had stuck in her mind. Antonia was alone in the mid-section of a Boeing 747 guarding her door during boarding and she describes the very personal, threatening and racist behaviour she was subjected to, leaving her feeling shocked and very isolated:

> *Just standing at door 3 on a Jumbo, a customer came down a guy, it was on boarding and he just came down and the finger was straight in the face and everything about his seat was wrong and he went on and on… and then I spoke to him and "you Scots, Scottish everything and your all the same and your just a bunch of whatever" and I was just so upset and shocked at this guy and it was that he was being personal he seemed to be picking at me and I just felt that I'm standing there passengers are walking past sort of trying to ignore it, other crew members are kinda of disappearing…[Antonia: Interview]*

Antonia describes this incident as one that left her feeling angry or fearful as the passenger violated her personal space and feelings of security (Dudenhöffer & Dormann, 2013). The grievance about the passengers' seat allocation becomes a personal attack on Antonia's racial identity leaving her shaken. Passengers with their feeling of entitlement and power differential over the crew, can as Hochschild, (2003:110) states "…assumes a right to unsuppressed anger at irritations, having purchased that tacit right with the ticket". Facing such an incident or even the prospect of one is demanding physically, psychologically and emotionally and for Antonia is in addition to the anticipatory stress that she experienced before leaving home, through her commute into work and the briefing she has just participated in. These events whilst perceived individually as low intensity daily stressors, are more likely to be viewed as adverse when the frequency, duration and predictability of

each event is considered (Fisher et al.,2019; Almeida, 2005). It must be considered that as Antonia's day unfolds it is one where she experiences and appraises an environment of unpredictable events that accumulate to become chronic, which may lead to psychological and physical stress (Larssen et al, 2016; Almeida, 2005).

Even though there are passengers walking past and she alludes to the presence of other crew, Antonia's reality is one where suddenly she is alone and left facing a very personal onslaught. On the larger aircraft crew are alone at their doors for boarding and are separated by large distances from their already over worked colleagues, hindering their ability to call for help. Her workspace has become threatening, one where she experiences situational stress through fear and isolation, in order to fulfil her safety and security responsibilities:

> *It's the on things like boarding you're stuck in the middle of the cabin and you cannot get out… [your]role because of safety and security and everything and things happen you are your quite alone because there's fewer and fewer crew now… [Antonia: Interview]*

Antonia does not know at this stage what may be the further escalation of this encounter, will the passenger become violent or are they a danger to the safety of the aircraft and its occupants? All she knows is that she is alone and her role as welcoming cabin crew member has in an instant been transformed to that of a "security personnel" as she must evaluate and choose her response carefully. This experience left Antonia with feelings of loneliness and vulnerability that are acerbated by the requirement to remain in her cabin crew role, where she must manage the situation whilst exercising self-control over her own feelings:

> *…it's just your perception and you do feel alone and I just thought just cause I'm standing here in uniform he's attacking me and you do feel quite alone but when let's see that was difficult it wasn't as I said they [fellow crew members] didn't really know anything was going on you know… [Antonia: Interview]*

At the beginning of the encounter Antonia experiences the passenger's discourse as intensely personal. In order to cope with this attack Antonia reappraised the situation by rationalising that it was not "personal", that the motivation for the attack lay in the fact she was in uniform, a technique reinforced through cabin crew training (Hochschild, 2003). For Joseph & Alex, (1972:719):

> The uniform is a device to resolve certain dilemmas of complex organisations – namely, to define their boundaries, to assure that members will conform to their goals, and to eliminate conflicts in the status sets of their members.

The uniform becomes a resource that Antonia called upon in order to endure the attack and conform to the goal of 'pecuniary emotion management', which crew perform as part of their job to placate irate customers and support customer satisfaction (Bolton & Boyd, 2003:300). Antonia spoke about how she reacted when this happened and the loneliness and fear she experienced, whilst conforming to her understanding of the requirement as crew to address and placate the irate customer:

> *…but it's just because you feel you've been attacked and you want to shout "excuse me can somebody help me" but you can't… but at the time I just felt really alone and hmm really, I was being personally attacked and I didn't I didn't know what to do and you sort of almost go defensive… [Antonia: Interview]*

Her words expressed how isolated and powerless she felt and her inability to fight back due to her subservient role as crew, where the perceived perception is that the customer is sovereign in the customer -employee relationship and the customer is king (Harris & Reynolds, 2003). Knowing there was no means of escape or assistance, Antonia felt overwhelmed by the situation and emotionally diminished as she fights an "inner war" with herself. She now has to find a way of coping with this incident in order to placate the irate customer, diffuse the situation and manage her own battered feelings. To negate these feelings, which will stay with her throughout the long flight and beyond, Antonia calls upon her perception of a "good stewardess" and the surface and deep acting that they are trained to perform in the face of an irate passenger and adapts her behaviour (Hochschild, 2003, Dudenhöffer & Dormann, 2013). Through this passive -aggressive "acting", Antonia self-monitors her affective reaction and performance, by appearing to become over positive

in her dealings with customers and to effectively "kill them with kindness," in order to ensure there is no premise to reignite the passenger's ire and inflame an already tense situation (Berkowitz, 1989; Simillidou, Christofi, Glyptis, Papatheodorou & Vrontis, 2020):

> *…so, I was always very careful in the words that I was using towards this gentleman and his wife hmm but possibly being overly nice to them because I thought I'm not going to let you win here and I'm not going to be nasty now, now that I know the situation, I can now deal with it hmm and you're almost a bit hmm you almost go into act mode and people around you your very gracious and very big and you make yourself quite big…[Antonia: Interview]*

Antonia's account of this hostile interaction offers an insight into the coping strategies Antonia uses. After the initial onslaught and realisation that she has no available support from fellow crew, Antonia rapidly appraises the situation and utilises self-control by keeping her distressed feelings to herself. This initial appraisal which supports her subsequent actions allow her to take a "breather" from the situation and reappraise. Her reappraisal of the situation has now changed from "threat" to her well-being to seeing the situation now as a challenge (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This reappraisal from threat to challenge, allows her through confrontive coping, to stand her ground by deciding the passenger was not going to win and she called upon her training as a resource to manage the event (Hobfoll, 2001; Lazarus & Folkman, 1985). Antonia has flown for over thirty years and whilst she only described this one incident will most probably have encountered this kind of interaction many times. Once again, like Julia's demonstration of resilience when facing an aircraft emergency, Antonia's experience here demonstrates resilience that allows her to function to a high professional level as she manages her cabin, her passengers and herself (Fisher et al., 2019).

Antonia was not the only participant to talk about passenger conflict as Julia talked about how she coped with rudeness and abusiveness from passengers and sometimes even fellow crew. Like Antonia she perceived these incidents as an "attack" and acknowledged that they have an emotional effect on her:

> *Yeah, if you're feeling that whether it's a crew member or passenger if they're being rude or unkind or critical or you start to feel a bit under attack as it were that can get me down pretty quickly… [Julia: Interview]*

Julia then describes how she copes with this on a day-to-day basis:

> *…hmm well with a customer I just remind myself it is my job to just suck it up largely you know that is what I'm paid for 98% of our customers are absolutely lovely so once in a while someone being unpleasant, I'm not going to take it with me… [Julia: Interview]*

In order to cope with these negative feelings, Julia rationalises that dealing with these SCC's as being the price she must pay as a cabin crew member, where customer aggression is considered as a normal part of her role and must be accepted as "*…that is what I'm paid for*…". Crew muster social support from fellow crew when facing a stressful situation at work, but in this instance Julia by recalling her experiences and looking for the positive in her passengers, appears to be using her experience of good passenger behaviour as a social support and resource. Once again Julia appears to cope through actively distancing herself from the abusive passenger by refusing to think about it and not letting it affect her (Lazarus & Folkman, 1985). It may also be considered, that by focussing on the many positive experiences she encounters, Julia may enhance the personal affect and undo any lingering negative emotions she feels (Fredrickson et al., 2000). This is an effective psychological resource to help Julia cope and support psychological resilience (Fredrickson, 2004; Zimmermann et al. 2011).

All of the crew in this research had been flying for many years and had experienced unpleasant incidences. For security reasons the flight deck door remains locked throughout the flight and the flight crew are unable to assist the crew in the cabin. The crew, in their role of security personnel are once again alone and must manage any incident that occurs. Sonya reflected on how in her early days of flying she experienced disruptive behaviours from passengers, particularly on certain routes that attracted a younger group of passengers, intent on partying throughout the flight. She related her experience on these flights, how they made her feel and how crew managed the situation when help from their flight crew colleagues was absent:

> *…I've been on charter flights and people had their hands up my skirt … they used to lock the flight deck door on the Club Eighteen to Thirties flight and we had to get on with it… [Sonya: Interview]*

Sonya then describes the personal affect this had on her, the fear and helplessness that must have occurred in the confined space of the cabin with no opportunity to escape:

> *…what we used to put up with was scary and we were, we would only use our wits to get through those flights you know finding the ringleader and taking them to the back and giving them a Bacardi and Coke and making them think you fancied them and you were a friend, so they would go and control their own friends… [Sonya: Interview].*

Interactions such as the one Sonya faced on this flight with the passengers are judged a significant source of social stress (Dudenhöffer & Dorrman, 2013). When faced with a stressor such as this personal assault, once again rather than inflame the situation crew must put their own feelings to one side and find a strategy to manage and de-escalate what could become a profoundly serious incident. Crew here appeared to use a problem-solving coping strategy by identifying and bargaining with the ringleader to control the behaviour of the group (Vitaliano et al, 1985). Crew utilised their feminine emotional intelligence and training to make "friends" with the passenger to ensure they achieved de-escalation of the incident and safety for all on the aircraft and to offer the crew a way of managing their own stress.

The issue of hostile and disruptive passengers is one that Julia, Antonia and Sonya openly talk about as being frightening and stressful, but one they must address. Through their talk it is clear that they employ various coping strategies from problem solving to confrontive coping and distancing (Lazarus & Folkman, 1985). What is apparent is that this is a problem they will encounter throughout their long careers and their emotive accounts all demonstrate coping and resilience in action. Once again, the crew demonstrate resilience mechanisms (e.g., appraisal of adverse circumstances, emotion regulation), resilience

promoting factors (e.g., problem solving skills, hardiness of personality), that result in the resilience outcome of job performance and career longevity (Fisher, et al.,2019). Antonia's, Julia's and Sonya's resilience is a result of their experience, skills and intense training garnered over the years to manage a crisis situation.

5.1.6 A changing and hostile work culture: Coping with a lack of trust, autonomy and relatedness and the fear of redundancy.

The cabin crew in this research had worked for their airline for many years and in their interviews and diaries articulated their feelings towards their employer and the way that they feel they were regarded by them. For the crew, their relationship with the company appeared to be defined through their perception of their age as all were "older" workers, their long employment history and the financial cost to the company of their wages. Their tenure of service meant that many crew were at the top end of their pay scale and were well paid and benefitted from a favourable scheduling agreement compared to other UK airlines. The crew had experienced long-drawn-out disputes with the company that wished to realign the cabin crew's pay and working conditions.

In her interview Julia talked about her relationship with the company and how the relationship appeared to be one based on an unequal, confusing and dehumanising position:

> *Oh don't get me started {clears throat} …hmm I 'm just a staff number, a work horse…cannon fodder… well work horse you know they need the work to be done and it can't be done by a computer or a robot so hmm but I despite all things they say they're kind of trying to say that you're an asset to the company they actually treat you like a liability hmm you know this whole thing that we're paid too much hmm, which I take a great exception to hmm…suggesting that I'm overpaid is kind of offensive really and I 'm not, I've just been doing this silly job for a very long time…[Julia: Interview]*

Julia's description of herself as a "staff number" and a "work horse" positions herself as feeling undervalued and devaluing her humanness, to one of an inferior being, an animal

that is used for work and does not afford the respect of a human. This is further supported by her assertion that her work cannot be done by other inanimate objects such as a computer or robot. Julia struggles with the mixed messages she appears to get from the company about her worth to the company with her skill and expertise seen as an asset, whilst at the same time hearing the discourse of her being overpaid, leaving her feeling a liability. It is clear that Julia is suffering from a lack of relatedness with the company as she does not feel valued, respected or supported. For Deci & Ryan (1985), relatedness is a basic need to feel people belong and matter to others and is one of three fundamental psychological needs that support an individual's growth and personal development. In this passage it is clear that Julia's workspace experience is stressful and may be considered maladaptive as Julia's psychological need of relatedness is unmet.

Deci & Ryan (1985), through their Self Determination Theory, consider a person's social environment influences the extent to which their psychological needs are satisfied. They identified three fundamental psychological needs that support positive growth and personal development: autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). These psychological needs influence different types of engagement and motivation: intrinsic motivation, (involves activities that support learning, enjoyment), extrinsic motivation (e.g., to gain rewards or avoid punishment) or amotivation (e.g., people lack the intention to behave), (Deci & Ryan 1985; 2002). The Self Determination Theory framework has been extended to include workplace situations and has shown that the interaction of the individual, along with management style and work context may support or frustrate motivation and well-being in an individual (Rigby & Ryan, 2018).

Julia finds it troubling that she is being treated unfairly by being considered to be overpaid and defends her stance by justifying her pay due to her long tenure of service, whilst at the same time seeing her job as silly. For Julia, the job may be described as "silly" as she experiences the demanding hours, the challenging environment of an aircraft and the tiredness and offers little reward apart from the remuneration that supports her lifestyle. Julia's reflections on remuneration and relatedness is reflected through Lyndsey's words:

> *The money I earn compensates me for tiredness and nastiness from **. Take that away and no reason to be here…Accept your just an employee, a number and life is a heck of a lot easier [Lyndsey: Diary].*

Both Julia and Lyndsey appear to experience an antagonistic relational relationship with "others" in the airline who are outside of the cabin crew world. Their basic need for relatedness is being unmet and is driving their behaviour and motivation (Rigby and Ryan, 2018). For Lyndsey, her remuneration is a resource that helps her to cope, as well as a positive external pressure that controls and motivates her short-term behaviour (Hobfoll, 2001; Rigby & Ryan, 2018). However, it is suggested that the extrinsic goal of a material award such as remuneration does not satisfy an individual's psychological need and SDT theory suggests may lead to more stress, reduced well-being (Weinstein & Ryan, 2011).

In her interview Lyndsey was asked about how she viewed her relationship and feelings towards the company. Through her response it appears crew are fighting an inner war, often struggling to balance their negative feelings towards the company they work for and their desire to deliver to their customers the best possible service and experience, often in exceedingly difficult circumstances:

> *I'm detached from the company hmm not in a negative way, I do care what I do at work because there are innocent people who are the customers and I have no right to take my issues out on them it's not nice and it's mean if I do that so erm not detached from them… [Lyndsey: Interview]*

The war she fights is between her personal understanding of "a good stewardess" and her motivation to fulfil her role, against her perception of how poorly she is treated by the company. Lyndsey demonstrates low quality motivation, which according to Rigby & Ryan, (2018), is a result of internal pressures that affect image management and maintenance of self-esteem. This low motivation position has been associated with less loyalty and trust,

along with a decrease in commitment to an organizational values and this is evident in Lyndsey's words:

> *but as far as the company's concerned hmm just detached from it I think it's just not best to get involved and think about it cause there's nothing you can do about any of this yes you can write an email you can write an email to your union but at the end of the day all these issues are bigger than me and there's nothing I can do [Lyndsey: Interview]*

Through her words Lyndsey articulates that she suffers a lack of autonomy, competence and relatedness from her organization, resulting in low quality motivation (Rigby & Ryan, 2018). Lyndsey acknowledges that she is "detached" emotionally from the company but still feels that she has a moral duty to do her utmost at work to offer a good service to her customers by calling on her values of professionalism and role norms of cabin crew. Lyndsey appears overwhelmed, lost and disheartened by the vastness of the issues that she experiences every day in her workspace. Individuals like Lyndsey who feel a lack of autonomy and relatedness, not only demonstrate low quality motivation but are more likely to resort to defensive responses in order to avoid and minimize the stresses they feel (Weinstein & Ryan, 2011). This is defensive response through distancing is reflected in her next passage. but acknowledges that the different space away from the company and aircraft allows time to forget the anxiety and stress that she feels about the organization.

Lyndsey clearly identifies resources in her work that allow for positivity and a feeling of control, which counteracts the stressful negativity of her relationship with the company:

> *…. I'm here for the money and pension, I'd rather it wasn't but it's easier to handle because you're not office bound so when you're in a hotel room or you're with colleagues down route or you're sitting by a pool in Singapore it doesn't really matter at that stage hmm I will take from it what I want to take from it…. [Lyndsey: Interview]*

Sonya also keeps the company at a distance. Through her temporal reflection Sonya reinterprets who she once was and how her relationship and feelings towards the organization has changed:

> *My relationship with the company erm, erm I feel I still feel lucky that I'm still able to do what I do erm I'm quite loyal to the company but I'm very happy to be persona non grata I've no great desire to like, when I was younger, I was on the promotions team and customer first team and all this business and I wouldn't be doing all that now… I don't know I just I go to work do the job to the very best of my ability and the very best in every way the best I can present myself the best I can do workwise erm but when I come away that's it* [Sonya: Interview].

It is not clear what has changed for Sonya, but it would appear that from being a crew member who was fully involved in the airline business, with advancing age and experience Sonya has now moved into one where though she is physically present, she is no longer emotionally present. Her personal pride and professionalism are evident as she talks about doing and looking the best she can, but this is internal pressure that supports the maintenance of her self-esteem (Rigby & Ryan, 2018).

The crews' experiences and relationship with the company are continued through Jenny's interview. She reflects from a temporal perspective, "on the good old days" and the organizational cultural change over the years and how it has affected her feelings towards the company she has worked for, for so many years:

> *I think that it's changed a lot since I first started, when I first started it was a different company it may as well be a completely different company… [Jenny: Interview]*

Jenny then adds that it wasn't always easy but she felt part of a nurturing environment and though it wasn't without its problems the overall culture was welcoming:

> *I think we were welcomed we were nurtured we were congratulated, encouraged you know it was a positive environment and I joined in ** and I was one of the new contracts that weren't welcome erm with other crew but I still felt that erm it was an airline I was proud to work for I was really proud that I worked for **… [Jenny: Interview]*

From Jenny's present perspective the "good old days" appear to be a distant memory and her world has changed:

> ***and I don't feel like that so much now, the company's not what it was they certainly don't treat us the way that they used to erm there's just a different world… [Jenny: Interview]*

Jenny is struggling with the change that she has experienced over the years from a positive work environment that she was proud to work in, to one where she feels undervalued, badly treated and no longer proud, which leaves her cynical and sad and struggling to understand these changes. In order to cope with these difficult feelings Jenny draws on her wider understanding of the world today and finds solace in the fact she is not alone in this unsettling position. Comparing her experience to her husband's similar experience allows it to feel less personal. However, feelings of sadness and cynicism are unresolved:

> *…I think the same is true probably for most big companies I see it at my husband's company he's been there for a long time as well and it's similar, but it makes me sad and it makes me quite cynical erm [Jenny: Interview].*

Jenny appears to be dealing with feelings of sadness, isolation and lack of support even though she considers herself a good employee.

> *…I think the experiences I've had with the company over the years whilst not many, I've never been someone whose been in trouble at work I've never got myself into erm situations where I've had to go into (attendance management) particularly but I've had a couple of incidents where I've had to just be really dismayed how when I have asked for help how that's been handled [Jenny: Interview]*

In this passage Jenny seeks to understand why she has felt a lack of support:

> *and erm I think because of the size of the company and because you are just a number, there's no compassion really, I don't think and then you talk to other people and hear their stories and hear how they've been treated by the company and it's a shame that were not treated in a more personal way than we are erm and it makes me feel cool towards the company… [Jenny: Interview]*

In this passage her experience of a vast company with so many employees, is an intimidating workplace to inhabit and one where she feels her humanness is diminished. Like Lyndsey and Julia earlier there are issues around relatedness with the organization and

its culture. This is supported through other colleague's experiences, reinforcing her beliefs and experiences around her understanding of the breaking of the psychological contract of "good employee" and "good organization" and duty of care. This leaves her feeling unable to trust the company and she feels alone and insecure and deals with this by keeping the company at arm's length (Stapely, 2006).

To diminish her negative feelings and experiences that arise from her workspace, she distances herself from the company and from managerial support:

> *I don't even know who my manger is, well I know his name but I've never really had anything much to do with him and that's the way I like it I think that's a good thing and I think it's a company if where you do know your manager it's probably not for a good reason… [Jenny: Interview]*

Crew may be considered "virtual employees in a virtual office", far removed from physical managerial support (Marshall, Michaels & Mulki, 2007). This is reflected in Jenny's feelings about her distant relationship with her manager, which she sees as a positive. Through keeping this distance and not allowing herself to know her manager it may seem to Jenny she has done nothing wrong, which may support Jenny's idea of a good employee as well as allowing her to negate her stress inducing feelings.

All of the crew who participated in this study had flown for many years and were older than the stereotypical image of the young stewardess. The passing of time had changed how they reflected and felt about their position within the company and the lack of relatedness that generated these negative feelings and experiences. Earlier in this theme, Lyndsey and Julia commented on how they felt that the remuneration they received was a reason to stay and not unreasonable for such a physically, psychologically and socially demanding career, other crew members experienced this differently. Amanda explains how her long tenure and remuneration led to feelings of fear of redundancy:

> *"The feelings of anxiety are also due to 33 years with the company- I'm too expensive for them and they are desperate to get rid of us Oldies" [Amanda: Diary:].*

> *"… I sometimes think that the company that I work for is determined… to diminish and eventually extinguish older and more expensive people" [Amanda: Diary].*

Reflecting on the future for Julia is ominous, unsettling and ultimately highly stressful. The environment she inhabits appears to be time limited and toxicity seeps into her everyday experiences as she talks about her position within the company:

> *We've had ten years on ** and ** with this idea that we don't want you, your expensive we'd like you to replace you we'd love to get rid of you we could pay four ** for what we pay you and I don't feel valued* [Julia: Interview].

For Julia, her workspace is a stress provoking arena that induces fear and a sense of vulnerability as she counts down the time to when her contract will end and her life will change:

> *Aha and it's a kind of anxiety it's a kind of terrorism it's a kind of anxiety it's like not if the axe will fall it's when and then you have people saying oh we've only got five years left 2020 is going to be critical we're all going their going to get rid of us all in 2020 and I flew with Len McCluskey last weekend and he said in *** they've got all our new contracts written up hmm like ** sort of contracts and it stresses me out, it really does cause me some serious stress* [Julia: Interview]

For Julia, the talk about her demise within the company obviously causes her serious anxiety and stress and positions her as a victim of a sustained and damaging attack on her wellbeing. This Julia describes as akin to terrorism, a method known to inflict fear, uncertainty and vulnerability on its victims (Yehuda & Hyman, 2005). Julia is experiencing a maladaptive space that brings with it uncertainty as she waits but does not know when her present contract will be terminated. The fear of losing her job presents her with a bleak vision for the future as she contemplates the loss of valuable resources of stable employment, income hope and feelings of loss of autonomy (Hobfoll, 2001). Through her words she perceives herself as a casualty of a war between the Trade Union and the organization, which leaves her vulnerable to extreme never-ending anxiety, all whilst she manages the stressful day to day life as a cabin crew member. As other crew appear to talk

about their loss of contract and conditions, Julia is not alone but is experiencing a collective psychological suffering of fear, uncertainty and vulnerability. This sharing of her suffering, through seeking social support of other crew aids her coping as she lives with this terrifying fear of redundancy (Lazarus & Folkman, 1985).

Through this subordinate theme, the crew reflect from a position of temporality and embodiment the difficult relationship they experience with the organization. Drawing upon the Self Determination Theory of Deci & Ryan, (1985), it can be seen that the crew's psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence are unmet by the organization leaving the crew low in motivation, lacking in trust, unsure of their future employment and this leaves them highly stressed. In order to cope with this maladaptive environment, the crew distance themselves from the organization and subsequent managerial support. As the resources of stable employment and understanding from their organization are considered lost by the crew, Hobfoll, (2011) reasons that crew will strive to replace them. Lyndsey in particular speaks strongly about how remuneration and pension is her motivation for staying and Hobfoll, (2011) considers remuneration and retirement security as significant resources in the coping process. It is also clear that crew seek social support another strategy to support their emotion focussed coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1985).

As can be seen in the superordinate theme of negative experiences of flying, the crew talk about the negative daily hassles and subsequent emotions they face in their daily work situation, along with the stress that they experience as a result of this. The accumulation of daily hassles that crew experience result in a highly stressed environment, which the crew have experienced for many years and they utilise a range of coping strategies both emotion and problem focussed that allow them to foster their resilience. However, as Folkman, (2008) concludes, there is robust evidence that in intensely stressful situations, there is a place for positive emotions that have an important function in the stress process. The crew also talked about how they experienced positivity in the midst of stressful situations and it is

these positive emotions and experiences that inform the next superordinate theme, how the positive experience of flying undoes the negativity that crew face.

5.2 Positivity undoes negativity

Through their interviews and diaries, the cabin crew in this research laid bare the difficulties they experienced as cabin crew. As one crew member described her life as being ‘a hamster on a wheel’. as their day progressed, the daily hassles they faced brought incessant stresses and anxieties. All the crew in this research had been cabin crew for over twenty years and whilst acknowledging that their role was demanding on so many fronts, they also talked about the positives that the role brought to their lives. The themes that were developed from the diaries and interviews in this section were shorter than the themes that demonstrated the negative experiences of flying. The reason for this was the crew reflections focussed predominantly on the negative experiences of flying and the stressors they faced. This may not be surprising as the negatives they talked about had a far greater impact on their lives resulting in greater stressful events that are more salient in nature. Fredrickson, (1998) talks about the neglect of positive emotions in empirical studies due to the dearth of positive emotions compared to negative emotions and the fact that negative emotions are more salient in ensuring survival. Psychology itself is also more focussed on solving the many more problems that arise for individuals and society from negative emotions than from positive emotions. It is clear that this position is reflected in the diaries and interviews of the crew that for them the stressors outweigh the positives in their careers. This superordinate theme of the positives of flying contains four subordinate themes (Appendix 10)

5.2.1 Seeking a world of contrast and variety: Changing the mundane day to day job into a positive experience.

The role of cabin crew is one that does not afford them great autonomy as the service routine on board that crew must adhere to tightly scripted. Whilst the task that Antonia must fulfil appears mundane, the environment that she works in appears anything but where every day may be filled with surprises.

Antonia talked openly about the positives of her role and conveyed how she believed she had survived as crew for so many years. Though there are many challenging negative aspects of being crew that Antonia had talked about earlier, she also recognised the positives of her role as cabin crew that helped her get through the day.

> *"…I enjoy giving a good service and it's lovely to have people saying that it's fantastic I really enjoyed your flight, erm I mean that's all that we ask for really erm just a verbal thank you or just showing some sort of appreciation of what of what you're doing for someone … [Antonia: Interview]*

Antonia's comments are echoed through Lyndsey's words:

> *I'd say they were very hard work passengers are very demanding they take a lot from you not just physically but mentally and emotionally as well it's like they kinda suck it all out and then they get off and after they've sucked it all out there like "thank you very much that was really nice" and it is nice to get that feedback you know you think yeah well I've been nice to you and I'm glad… Hmm I think it means a lot it's even the words it's just the fact that they've cared to be nice to you is important maybe the words are not that important but the fact that they care that they want to be pleasant to you that means a lot [Lyndsey: Interview]*

Antonia and Lyndsey describe how a routine everyday part of her job, the giving of good service, can be transformed into a positive event through passengers' expressed gratitude that supports her social and emotional well-being through feeling acknowledged and encouraged, with increased confidence about her role performance and subsequently greater job satisfaction (Howells & Cummings, 2012; Wilkes et al., 2015; Nasr et al., 2018). In the demanding arena of cabin service Antonia and Lyndsey perform intense emotional

labour and constant discreet safety checks, all in a confined space with nowhere to escape. It may be considered that in this highly stressful environment, Antonia and Lyndsey's coping resources are challenged and may be depleted as they remain on "red alert" throughout the flight and respond to the never-ending demands of passengers and managing their own emotions (Hobfoll, 2001; Hochschild, 2003). As Antonia and Lyndsey undergo this salient resource loss, they actively set about to replace their depleted resources. The positive appreciation of their service that passengers share with Antonia and Lyndsey allow them to feel that they are accomplishing their goal of giving a good service and support personal feelings of pride and success all identified as valued resources that support coping (Hobfoll, 2001).

Antonia then described how flying offers her a world of anticipatory excitement and variety, as every trip she experiences will be with different crew and passengers and bestows an emotional value to her love of meeting people:

> *I do love meeting I love meeting people it's people that make it and that's what makes my job… [Antonia: Interview]*

The prospect of meeting people at work fills Antonia with as her words say, "love", which tenders her a positive emotional experience, which broaden her thought action repertoire (Fredrickson, 2013). When positive emotions are considered within an organizational setting such as Antonia's, Fredrickson (2013:34) states:

> Positive emotions, by contrast, trigger broadened, curious, and optimistic patterns of thought together with more spontaneous and energetic behaviour. These thought–action tendencies increase the odds that people find positive meaning in their future circumstances in ways that seed further positive emotions that decrease stress, provide emotional uplift, and support resilience.

For Antonia meeting people is fundamental to her being and this is a source of job satisfaction as her expectations and values are met and also provides her with enjoyment in her role as she navigates her way through what is a stressful environment on board (Wilkes et al., 2015).

Antonia talks about how as an individual she struggles with monotony and confinement of spirit in “ordinary” jobs. For Antonia, every flight is like entering a “new” world, full of possibilities, variety and excitement:

> *I didn’t enjoy Monday to Friday 9 till 5 although I like structure, I didn’t like being dictated to in that way and that I had to come back into doing the same thing every single day… everything else is different the crew that I’m working with the passengers that I’m serving the cabins that I’m working in there’s enough variety in that erm that you never have two flights the same ever so…that still gives me a little bit of an excitement and enjoyment as well… “…I wonder who’s going to be on today, I wonder if there is anyone famous or if there’s anyone just really lovely” [Antonia: Interview]*

Through her words it appears that Antonia is infusing an ordinary event, a day at work with its mundane service task, into something positive and exciting. This is a coping strategy that is employed when facing a stressful situation (Folkman & Moscowitz, 2000). It may also be considered that in this most stressful of environments, the novelty and variety of every flight, through meeting new people and visiting different places, is an aspect of her role that has its own reward making it interesting and engaging (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Through this intrinsic motivation Antonia experiences work as enjoyable and satisfying, which supports her job satisfaction and increases her resilience.

5.2.2 Utilising social comparison with other professions undoes negative thoughts and emotions.

Jenny articulated how challenging her role was with shift work and the effect it has on home life and how sometimes she feels she has reached the end of her flying career and acknowledges that she has thought about leaving her job as she appears stressed and burnout:

> *…there’s times I ‘ve thought I really don’t want to do this anymore I think you get to a point where I think you’ve just had enough and you need a break and you need a change erm and I’ve had times like that where I’ve thought I really don’t want to do this anymore… [Jenny: Interview]*

Whilst it appears Jenny had reached the end of her flying career, she then went on to explain her reasons for staying as she talked about the benefits and the challenges of her job, when compared to comparable jobs in the hospitality sector:

> *…but I still I think that I feel I know that I'm part time but even as a full timer I work less than if I had a normal job erm I think it's a much nicer way of life…than having a normal job and I'm talking in terms of comparable jobs on the ground so I'm talking hotel industry erm you know customer service is a really tough gig, it's badly paid and it's hard work and never more so than now I think…and I've looked at alternative jobs to see what's out there and the reality is I would have to work full time to earn what I'm earning on a 50% contract in the hospitality industry erm and it makes me realise that what we actually do whilst I have to have nights out of bed, whilst I have to be super organised and while there might be some anxiety about where I'm going and who I'm going away with for me it's preferable to other options out there… I really enjoy is still I think it's a really nice way of …I feel we have enough time off after a trip to recover erm I don't think the same is true of our *** colleagues but I think we're quite lucky I feel I have enough time to recover and erm I think you know not comparing us to other airlines but comparing us to other jobs in hospitality industry we're paid well for what we do and you know I like the lifestyle…" [Jenny: Interview].*

In the earlier passage Jenny acknowledges that she would like to leave flying and in order to make her work situation appear more positive she compares her job demands and benefits to one she considers comparable, the hotel industry. Festinger's (1954) seminal paper, stresses that individuals possess an innate necessity for self-evaluation that is based on an evaluation of other's abilities through upward social comparison or opinions through downward social comparison. Social comparison allows an individual to use information that allows an understanding of one's position in the social world, allows an individual to feel better about themselves and supports learning about how to adapt to challenging situations (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007:16). Comparing one's situation, with others in a less fortunate situation, a downward social comparison has been shown to have the capacity to produce either positive or negative feelings about oneself (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007; Greenberg et al., 2007). As Jenny contemplates leaving it appears she then engages in a "passive downward comparison", where she responds to information gathered through her job search around the hospitality industry (Wills, 1981). Jenny contrasts and evaluates her position favourably and through this social comparison uses emotion focussed coping that eases her negative emotions about flying and allows her to feel better about herself and her situation (Tennen

et al., 2000). This action appears to make Jenny's own challenging situation more appealing, as she reminds herself of the benefits she reaps from her job; more time off at home with her family, greater remuneration and a much nicer way of life than if she may enjoy in other comparable jobs. In organizational settings the use of downward social comparisons and contrast effects are positively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment and this may be seen here in Jenny's talk (Brown et al., 2007).

Like Jenny, Lyndsey who has flown for over 30 years, may appear to be remind herself of the benefits that her job affords, as she describes the positive aspects of her job and how they affect her life and emotions:

> *I just take from it what I need. I appreciate coming from the North of England, I know that there's a lot of jobs out there that pay really crap and I've managed to acquire a nice lifestyle from what they have paid me in the past and I will take that and I also enjoy the days off and erm that's what I take from it and that is obviously important to me… [Lyndsey: Interview]*

Lyndsey appears to display minimal emotional connection to her work but is pragmatic as she talks about what she considers to be the significant positive benefits that the job provides for her. Lyndsey is based at a London airport and due to this has the advantage of a London based salary, whilst still living in a less expensive part of England. Like Jenny previously, she uses a downward social comparison approach to almost give a sense that the stresses of the job are negated by the positives and the realisation that her position could be far worse without the job. She then goes on further to rationalise why she stays as she once again talks about the positive aspects of her job:

> *… so to pack it in and go elsewhere I'd just be cutting my throat to spite my face because you can go to work for a company with a reputation for treating its' employees very well not being mean to them but however if they don't pay me the same, why are we going to work at the end of the day and also the fact I'm not office bound and I'm not seeing these mean managers day in and day out does help you cope with it [Lyndsey: Interview]*

It would appear that Lyndsey sees the positives as the remuneration package and the remoteness of her role. Her "office" at 35,000 feet allows for a physical and mental separation from the politics and stress that she appraises as being stressful from company

managers. In their interviews, other crew talked about the capacity to employ a physical and psychological barrier that they called upon as a coping strategy to manage the difficulties they faced from the company and its employment policies.

5.2.3 Travel broadens the mind: Wonderous experiences and leisure opportunities.

All the crew in this study benefitted from an employment contract that had been negotiated by their Trade Union representatives over many years. The result of this meant they enjoyed adequate days off for recovery before their next sector or trip, compared to other airlines from around the world and always in a comfortable and sometimes luxurious hotel. Both Lyndsey and Jenny talked about their time off, but Antonia elaborated on the benefits she perceived as she enjoyed her time off down route:

> *…like that it's just it's just my time now and it's amazing to have… you know people say you know it must be really hard what you do, but when the kids were little it was just fantastic cause it was just all about me, all about me and the next 24 hours, before I got back on that flight it was I could do what I wanted to do, could watch any programme I wanted, I could lie in the bath for hours, go shopping, go out clubbing {laughs} erm…and that was just fabulous…it allows you to be very selfish actually which is quite nice cause you've spent the last eight to twelve hours being selfless and giving everything, so it then becomes all about you… and my feelings what I want to do…[Antonia: Interview]*

In her interview Antonia articulates how free time down route allowed her to address the stress of the flight, where she had engaged in selfless intense emotional labour as she cared for passengers physical and psychological needs, whilst supressing her own feelings and needs. Even though people perceived the job as difficult for Antonia that seems inconsequential as she appeared to savour the opportunity to enjoy escapism from her everyday life at home as a wife and mother and to recharge her batteries as she indulged herself in her favourite past times.

This time down route appears to be a space where crew can socially withdraw from the pressures of the flight that they have endured as well as an escape from the day-to-day mundane tasks of home. When away on a trip Clare misses her family, possibly leaving her with her negative emotions. Instead of self-pity, Clare positively reframes how she can spend her time away by achieving a better outcome for herself as she uses her time for personal care:

> *I miss my family when I'm away, though the break from the routine of washing, ironing, cooking, cleaning, food shopping etc. is always good and I do get time down route to enjoy and indulge in some luxuries I wouldn't necessarily find time for at home, such as foot reflexology, back massage, bikini wax, manicure and pedicure so, I can't grumble too much! [Clare: Diary]*

At airline interviews the most frequent words interviewers would hear from would be cabin crew was, "*I want to work as part of a team and travel the world"* (Partridge & Goodman, 2007:6). All the crew in this research worked long haul routes, where they flew to most major continents and capital cities, where they spent time off to rest and recuperate. During these times crew would take the opportunity to explore and visit many places on a weekly basis that most people may only dream of as Christina explained:

> *…it's a job, it's work but then you'd get your old camera your photos developed and here's me on the beach, here's me on the boat trip, here's me at the managers cocktail party, here's me at the Dunn's River Falls, here's me at the Taj Mahal… [Christina: Interview]*

In her interview, Christina talks about the places she had visited throughout her career and from her words the ordinary world of work has been infused with meaning as she recalls her experiences. This recalling of positive events and emotions such as wonder and joy, may undo the aftereffects of the negative emotions she may experience about her work and therefore lower her stress and allow for upward spiral mechanisms to bolster psychological resilience and wellbeing (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson, 1998).

It may appear for Antonia that it is a job with excessive physical and psychological demands that she struggles with, but at the same time there are positive occasions that override

these struggles and bring her back to appreciating why she flies for a living with the experiences she has enjoyed:

> *…I don't know what it is but it gets under your skin, I do love the travelling and sometimes you forget but every so often you get that wee pinch when you go I'd never be here if I didn't do this I would never have been to half these countries never, especially if you go out and you do something or you've gone to see even if it's Niagara Falls in Toronto wow this is what it's all about this is life experience erm going down to Africa going on safaris just wow… [Antonia: Interview]*

From her words it is clear how grateful she is that her job has allowed her to partake in life experiences that may not have been so easily available to her if she had she not joined the airline. Although Antonia's stopover is not leisure travel, which has been shown to be important as a means of coping with stress, Antonia may be using this time away as a "mini holiday" (Iwasaki et al.,2005). This mini holiday allows her to create a personal space and an opportunity to escape from her home and work environments with their high demands. Her leisure time down route and the opening up of novel experiences allows her space and time to rejuvenate and recharge, a function of leisure travel often expressed by female travellers and a positive source of well-being and a facilitator of resilience (Iwasaki et al., 2005). Antonia's words speak of awe at the beauty and adventures she has encountered and these positive events broaden the mind and world outlook of Antonia, which facilitates the building of physical, intellectual and social resources as she shares these experiences with others (Fredrickson, 2013; Fredrickson, 2008). Recalling these positive events, may allow Antonia and Christina to experience changes in their thoughts, actions and physiological responses and the subsequent undoing of the negative emotions that may have long term consequences, allowing them to foster resilience (Fredrickson, 2013; Fredrickson, 2008; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005).

5.2.4 Jump seat counselling: Actively seeking social support through shared conversations, collective experiences and emotions with colleagues.

When crew arrive at work for their trip overseas, they leave behind their familial and familiar support systems that they rely on at home for their feelings of comfort and security and must walk away from whatever issues, good or bad, they face at home. For the next few days home life must be left behind as their lives evolve around the flight, the hotel and their crew colleagues. Within this demanding environment Antonia reflected on the support that crew offer when dealing with passengers and how she finds solace in crew support as she returns to the galley, a safe space and an area of limited comfort where she can share her experiences in the cabin, along with her inner feelings:

> *…it just lifts you again takes you away from that in your face, whether it's another crew member can even be flight crew, could be yourself the CSD come up and say you all right is everything OK…*
>
> *…[the] galleys the best place in the world we vent everything…phew you know flying well but we all got to be really aware now on some of these aircraft cause you can hear everything but galley is just like this its …you feel safe you feel comfortable you feel you can let of something if somebody's really had a go at you in the cabin you come into the galley {whispers inaudible word} him or her in such or such a seat oh yes I know and there's also that if someone else has said yes they've not been very nice it makes you feel well it's not just me [Antonia; Interview]*

In this passage Antonia describes experiencing stress in the cabin and how she feels she is moving from the cabin, a space of high workload and emotional labour demands where feelings must be repressed, into the safe space of the galley where she may now carefully express her distress as she addresses her encounter with adversity. The galley is separated from the cabin by a curtain and even in this "safe" galley space, Antonia considers how she must be "*really aware*" of passengers overhearing crew conversations. Even though this space is not an area where Antonia may be fully unguarded, it is an area where crew colleagues' words of kindness and concern about Antonia's personal distress and wellbeing are welcomed and acknowledge as a shared experience that many crew can relate to. This

relatedness continues as Antonia unburdens herself about a particular passenger with fellow crew in the hope that they have also experienced difficulties with the same passenger.

In her interview, Antonia discussed how much satisfaction she derived from delivering a good service to her customers ensuring they had an enjoyable flight. When a passenger is obviously upset or difficult and clearly not enjoying their flight, Antonia may feel personal responsibility. If she has tried to solve the tension between herself and the passenger to no avail, this may leave Antonia anxious and stressful. For Antonia, it may be inferred that the sharing of this information and the harnessing of social support of other crew moves this incident from a personal experience to a collective experience, which makes it easier for Antonia to cognitively and emotionally acknowledge, allowing her to accept the situation and alleviate her stress, facilitating her ability to cope and go back out into the cabin.

Later in her interview Antonia reiterated how important a resource social support from the crew is when faced with challenging situations on board:

> *It is your crew it comes down to your crew even if you've got the worst passengers or whatever if you've got your crew to come back into the galley, I mean honestly that's what it must come down too you don't realise it until you've been asked a direct question like that… [Antonia: Interview]*

Antonia acknowledges that fellow crew help her to cope when facing challenging situations in the cabin and make her day easier to cope with. Compared to the cabin where Antonia puts on her performance for the passengers, the galley and the crew are an area where authentic feelings may be voiced and support from others garnered. The importance of the crew in offering support and making her day easier was not immediately apparent to her and Antonia appears surprised that she has not realised before the impact of her fellow colleagues on her day and suggests that it was only when she was asked a direct question about her fellow crew that she appreciated their importance. The busyness of the cabin

service, where job demands are high in the execution of a meal service and the meeting of expectations of passengers, along with low resources in the number of crew to meet these demands, may not allow Antonia time to move beyond a pre-reflective reflexivity to realise exactly what she endures on a day-to-day basis and what supports her coping (Smith et al, 2009).

Crew must be ready to face danger or a stressful incidents either on board or down route and crew may often have no one turn to for support except their fellow colleagues. Julia endorses this view as she talks about her experience of crew support when things go wrong on an aircraft and how it aids the coping process:

> *…aah yes, I think that's when the crew thing really steps up hmm, I think crew are naturally supportive of each other particularly in terms of the job hmm yes, I don't know I think I definitely look to them for reassurance probably hmm support, touch wood things don't go too badly wrong [Julia: Interview].*

In times of perceived danger and stress, Julia seeks emotional comfort and reassurance and turns to her colleagues for social support. Lin et al., (1979:109), defines social support:

> Social support may be defined as support accessible to an individual through social ties to other individuals, groups, and the larger community.

Social support may provide Julia with a resource that is protective during times of stress, by diminishing the relevant physiological stress responses, assisting in the coping process and as a significant buffer to mental health (Eisenberger, 2013; Kokko & Hänninen, 2021). All crew endure high job demands and adverse working conditions and seeking social support to voice upsetting emotions may offer an opportunity to cope with their environments (van Emmerik et al., 2007). The importance of social support in coping is reflected through empirical evidence of Lazarus & Folkman, (1985), and Hobfoll (1998), who both consider social support as a significant emotional and practical resource in the coping process.

In her diary Isla described a very stressful few days before her trip. During a school holiday period she was due to start standby which resulted in her having no indication as to where or how long she would be away. Organising childcare arrangements with her husband, who also works away from home was challenging and an unexpected urgent hospital appointment for a biopsy was at home on her return from her previous trip. After applying for unpaid leave, which she failed to achieve and receiving no help from the company, her husband managed to change his work schedule. Isla describes how she feels arriving at work:

> *I've had to cancel my hospital appointment and I am awaiting a new one, not knowing if the results are good or bad, come to work feeling quite rundown while on anti-viral medication, leave my children for 6 days when i really felt that I wanted to be home with them and leave P*** trying to do a full-time job around looking after the children* [Isla: Diary].

Isla arrives at work in a very stressed state for her six-day trip Stateside. In her diary the flight itself is not mentioned at all apart from the dates and destination. Upon returning home she does however comment how the support of the crew has been pivotal in helping her survive this trip:

> *The trip was fine in the end and I'm so grateful for such a lovely crew. It makes such a difference when you are feeling a bit wobbly and emotional if you are with people you can talk to and have a laugh with. It would have been a very different 6 days if they hadn't been so nice [Isla: Diary].*

On an aircraft at 35,000 feet the cabin crew have left their earth-bound social support system behind, but as can be seen with Isla their home problems often travel with them, along with their feelings. Having a laugh with colleagues and the use of humour has been shown as an emotion focussed strategy to assist in coping and unwinding from stress, especially in extreme environments such as hospitals (Burgess et al, 2010, Mathias et al, 2016). In groups, the use of humour enhances personal relationships as it promotes group membership, identity and norms, along with a sense of enjoyment and may foster positive emotions (Martineau, 1972 cited in Martin et al., 2003; Simpson, 2014). This defusing of

stress and enhanced colleague support has been shown to enhance resilience and improve wellbeing in the workplace (Cameron & Brownie, 2010). Humour and emotional support may allow crew a "breather" from the stresses they experience that allows further adaptive coping and the ability to foster resilience (Lazarus, Kanner & Folkman, 1980; Folkman, 2008; Tugade, Fredrickson & Barrett, 2004). At emotionally unsettling times such as Isla describes, fellow crew are a resource to be called upon, supporting the alleviation of emotionality, loneliness and work stress and facilitating their coping as Julia explains:

> *…you need a connection with your fellow crew and sometimes you might have to work at that a little bit, sometimes it comes very naturally hmm but you do need that because when the chips are down, they are all you've got hmm and most crew are great anyway you know [Julia: Interview].*

On the aircraft, in the event of an emergency or challenging situation, the responsibility to address these issues and overcome adversity lies solely with the crew and Julia refers to this dependency as "…*they are all you've got*". For Hobfoll (2001), the loss of a resource is more keenly felt than the gain of a resource, as this may be inferred from Julia's words. In order to address the resource loss of family and friends at home and in order to cope with the hostile environment of the aircraft, Julia must invest in her fellow crew even if it means reaching out and nurturing the connection. This may be considered proactive coping as Julia has actively evaluated the environment she is occupying as harmful and acts to limit her resource losses of family and friends, through enhancing her resources through nurturing social support of colleagues (Hobfoll, 2001). The reward is the assurance and comfort that a supportive working climate provides, meaning that Julia may appraise stressful events in a more positive light, knowing that she has further resources to call upon to support her through a stressful event at work.

Prior to take off crew have experienced an intense physical period of high work demands and as they take their seats for take-off, they are also entering what is considered one of the most dangerous phases of flight. Their stress levels are increasing as the day progresses. On top of this crew come to work and may physically leave behind their personal problems at

home but it is may be far more difficult to psychologically detach themselves from their problems whilst they are away from their social support at home. Julia reflects on how the closeness and paradoxically the fact that crew are strangers assists in affording a safe, supportive space in which to talk, akin to a peer counselling service:

> *…I don't know really it's a feeling of camaraderie it lifts your spirit hmm...I don't know it's just nice talking to people there confiding in you hmm, the guy I was sitting with on the jump seat for landing he's ex-military and he'd been having I didn't realise he had PTSD so we were talking about that and I tell you crew just do that, the stuff I've talked about on a jump seat intensely personal stuff sometimes hm I don't know how sometimes it just all comes out hmm and I think that can be really helpful…*
>
> *…yes it is because it's so specific to that time and place you probably won't ever see that crew member again hmm {clears throat} and even if you do the chances are they've forgotten about the conversation because you're not part of their life hmm, it gives you if you worked in an office and you're seeing the same people day in day out and you talked about something really personal and painful even I think you might well regret that in the weeks and months later oh shoot I wish I hadn't told her about that, but that doesn't happen with crew and crew generally are kind enough to listen hmm but not close enough to you to really {laughs} take it away with them. [Julia: Interview]*

Julia articulates in this account how through the intensely personal conversations crew share in moments on board are akin to an informal peer counselling resource. Talking is helpful and these conversations on the jump seat, which often occur on night flights where crew may have more time to converse, display a naturalistic response and an intimacy of a shared experience of what crew face daily in the demanding confines of the aircraft cabin and the separation from their familial support systems. Julia sees this as a source of camaraderie and welcomes the fact that they are confiding in her, as a fellow crew member offloads about a period of their life that was obviously very traumatic. As they sit together on the cabin crew jump seat for landing with the flight almost over, Julia and her colleagues have experienced similar workplace stress and it is now they find a space to share intimate details about their lifeworld experiences. As colleagues they are part of a collegiate network, where shared insider knowledge may offer a greater empathetic understanding of their feelings and circumstances of issues, even over their partners or close friends (Mc Donald et al., 2015). Group membership has been shown to be important in supporting

reciprocity in the seeking, giving and receiving of social support to alleviate stress (Haslam et al., 2005) This sharing of personal information between Julia and her colleague may also appear to move what would be a work relationship with a stranger, into one of working with a friend, "*it's a feeling of camaraderie"*. It may also appear to affect Julia on an emotional level by adding brightness to her day, "*it lifts your spirit*". Julia talks about sharing emotional experiences with her fellow crew, essentially a stranger who she may never meet again. This may allow trust and reciprocity to be fostered amongst the crew, along with the lowering of job demands in the hazardous work environment of an aircraft cabin (Bakker et al, 2007; van Emmert et al, 2007; Turner et al., 2010). For Julia this sharing of affectively orientated functional communication is helpful but comes with the knowledge that the communication openness she shares with her colleague is temporary and short lived. Myers at al., (1999), describe collegial peer relationships in the workplace, where friendships that develop over time allow for the emotional sharing of job related and family concerns, along with work related feedback. What may appear unique in the cabin crew environment, is that friendships that may allow this intimate sharing of emotional experiences do not develop over time, but in a noticeably short period of a few days. Crew trips last anything from three to nine days and even in the course of a trip there may be changes of crew members within the team, so the relationships formed on a trip tend to be fleeting and intense. When her trip is over the chances of meeting this colleague again is remote and even so there is little chance that the conversation will be remembered:

> *…you probably won't ever see that crew member again hmm {clears throat} and even if you do the chances are, they've forgotten about the conversation because you're not part of their life hmm…. [Julia: Interview]*

The giving and receiving of social support within the cabin crew community may appear to function through the willingness to openly share their confidences due to the identification of shared experiences and understandings and a genuine need to vent their emotions to relieve their stress. Their willingness to share is tempered with the knowledge that when they have unburdened themselves within this "counselling space", it will be forgotten and not revisited or remembered by their colleague. The negatives of the work life of cabin crew with its lack of closeness and familiarity with known colleagues, along with the short-lived nature of crew's relationships, may on this occasion be a positive that may negate the

undesirable dimensions of social support, where well-meaning support may be perceived as excessive and pressurised and may ultimately lead to a greater dependence on the provider of support (Gray et al., 2020; Kokko & Hänninen, 2021).

For Julia and her colleague their discussion took part on the jump seat, where crew sit for take-off and landing. Tucker et al., (2008) discussed how workers shared meaningful communication at various locations and times, at places of work, during scheduled breaks and shift changes. Crew not only interact on board an aircraft but also on the bus to the hotel for their stop over and sometimes over breakfast the next day. Sonya discussed how socialising and sharing personal information with fellow crew was a social support resource and allowed her to draw some perspective on her own situation:

> *Ooh bit of fun bit of I just like to chat I just like you know even if it's just breakfast it's just getting the together I just think it's part of it was were supposed to be a family, a little family aren't we when were away help each other look after each other and you get to chat and it's lovely and you find out that your shit that your having is nothing like as bad as that person's shit that you sitting next to and I think it's really helpful it's really helpful to talk you know you find out people terrible circumstances their coming to work with flying with and you know caring for horrendously dementia with parents…[Sonya: Interview].*

Through her positioning of fellow crew as "a little family" Sonya may be seeking to substitute the resource of family that she has left behind at home. There may appear to be expectations of support and assistance *"…when we're away help each other look after each other",* along with the opportunity to compare her own life stresses with others *"…you find out that your shit your having is nothing like as bad as that person's shit you are sitting next to".* The social interaction and sharing of experiences that Sonya enjoys with crew, may assist in her coping process while away overseas, through replacing the lost resource of familial support, along with an opportunity for cognitive reappraisal of her own life when compared to others. Sonya, through her discussion and sharing of experiences with crew who are understanding of the social environment and the challenges she faces, may allow her to cognitively compare, reappraise and reframe stressful situations (Rimé et al., 1992). Whilst Sonya's reality may stay the same, this reappraisal process may assist modification

on a perceptual level, that may be effective in reducing its emotional impact as Sonya experiences a more positive emotional state (Gross & John, 2003).

The flight, with its many challenges, has subjected the crew to an emotionally charged experience that they must manage through the coping strategies they must employ to negate their stressful environment and its many demands. It may be understood that through soliciting social support and the sharing of experiences and emotions between colleagues, coping moves from an individual level of coping to one of community coping, which may aid in overcoming adversity together and build community resilience (Lyons, Mickelson, Sullivan & Coyne, 1998). What is clear, is that crew recognise that in order to cope with the stressful environment they work in, they actively seek and provide social support to discharge their inner emotions through their sharing of conversations and collective experiences.

The crew in this research have talked openly about their lifeworld, from leaving home to their day at work, it is one where they must face and address daily challenges that they appraise as harmful, threatening and challenging. Through the crew's experiences and talk this thesis has highlighted the negatives of their career: leaving their home and family, then a stressful commute to work followed by an enormously demanding work environment, along with a fractious relationship with their employer. Interspersed in this demanding environment are positive moments of light. The negatives of flying for these women are many, but the positives whilst appearing few, gives these women something that makes the challenges endurable. The support of colleagues helps them through the hardships of the trip and life itself, the leisure time down route allows them space and time for recovery and affirmation of the self, the generous remuneration package gives them independence. What these women get today from this career has changed very little from when the first stewardesses took to the air, the chance to be free and relevant. The positive emotions and experiences that they feel resonate stronger and longer than the negative emotions and experiences they endure and that keeps them aloft in long flying careers.

6 Implications for research and practice

My research provides an insight into what coping and resilience looks and feels like for cabin crew. The crew reveal their experiences of negative and positive aspects of their role and from this their coping strategies were extracted, which supported their resilience. The findings indicate that that crew experience elevated levels of stress and emotional exhaustion, from leaving home for prolonged periods, stressful commutes, pre-flight briefing stress, frequent passenger hostility to cabin crew, along with job insecurity and disengagement from the organization (Chapter 5). The context of all of this is the ever-present threat to airlines because of international conflict and economic turmoil as airlines cut costs through the renegotiation of pay and conditions of the cabin crew. All of these are harmful for the employee's well-being in work and non-work experiences. The challenges of their role were evident throughout their diaries and interviews, but they did indicate the positive experiences that aided in the coping process and supports their resilience. Given the stressful environment that crew work in organisations need to be constantly appraising and developing support for their employees.

6.1 The necessity of organizational support.

The impact of mental health issues in organisations such as airlines where psychological robustness is pivotal within its rules and operational practices for aircrew, must not be ignored as they are especially linked to safety and security (Bor, 2007). The stress level on crew increased after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and many crew began to "open up" about their anxieties after these incidents (Partridge & Goodman, 2007). The crew stress is not only experienced because of critical incidents such as 9/11 but occur throughout the whole working day of crew. One area that crew spoke movingly about in this research was their day-to-day experience of their relationship with their organisation. The subordinate theme in chapter 5, "A changing and hostile work culture: Coping with a lack of trust, autonomy and relatedness and the fear of redundancy", revealed the crews experience of a hostile organizational climate, where organizational support, care, trust and respect was considered

lacking and power relationships keenly experienced. Crew viewed their organization through their experience of breaking of the psychological contract, where they moved from a position of a good employee to bad employee along with suffering ageism, as the company sought to renegotiate long held and generous employment contracts in an increasingly deregulated and competitive airline market. At the same time cabin crew experienced a change in management strategy and organisational culture from one of collaboration to management through fear and disapproval, described as “macho management” (Upchurch, 2010). The crew struggled with this organizational culture change with its inherent threats and the numerous changes to their status. Through their interviews they reflected that over time they experienced a positive organizational environment transformed into a hostile one where the crews’ psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence were unmet (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This resulted in a demanding relationship for the crew with their organisation and line managers, resulting in crew experiencing a collective psychological suffering of fear, uncertainty and vulnerability that failed to support their positive growth and personal development. This manifested itself as organizational induced helplessness and led to a withdrawal of the crew from their organization in a psychological and physical manner. This disconnection from the organization along with a perceived lack of managerial input or support whether positive or developmental, intensified crew stress and burnout. These findings support the earlier research with cabin crew and the degradation of working conditions and their status (Bergman & Gillberg, 2015). What this present research has uniquely and importantly contributed to the existing body of knowledge, is that cabin crew were drawing upon personal resources and coping strategies that supported their resilience in order to manage their stress, which had intensified as a result of the organizational practices and culture that was the lifeworld of crew. This is not only seen in cabin crew but also in the stressful world of journalism, where it was recognised that individuals were also drawing upon personal resources to alleviate the effects of their emotional labour and elevated levels of stress (Lilja et al, 2022). It is therefore recommended that in order to support the crew’s personal endeavours, the organization and its managers could do much more to support the crew’s coping and resilience. Perceived organisational support provided through a supportive organisational environment has been positively linked to well-being in humanitarian front-line workers and ambulance personnel is fundamental in strengthening

personal resources of individuals in order to deal with challenges in their lives (Aldamann et al., 2019; Roemer& Harris, 2018; Soh et al., 2016).

It is suggested that “an organisation fulfils its mission if its community feels completely cared for” (Butler, 1999, cited in Partridge & Goodman, 2007). In this research crew did not feel cared for at all by their organisation and were highly stressed, so it may be inferred that the organisation is failing in its mission to care for its employees. Firstly, instead of making crew feel that their position is vulnerable and their role in the organisation problematic, the organization should recognize and communicate with all functional heads that employees are an asset to the company through a cultural and linguistic shift.

As crew work remotely from their ground-based office this research highlighted that the narratives, support and reassurance of other crew members were often the only assistance and social support they experienced. However, crew’s onboard talk of negative experiences at work confirmed their beliefs that the organization and its managers were remote, unempathetic and untrustworthy, so the ground office and managers were best avoided (Rasool et al., 2021). Crew articulated in the research and through my field notes the difficulties they faced when personal issues, especially with implications for their home life arose and they often moved heaven and earth to solve these issues themselves often unsuccessfully. This would result in the crew feeling forced to declare themselves sick as the only way to solve their problems, which meant they unnecessarily and punitively entered the attendance management programme adding to their stress and being counterproductive for the company. Though acknowledging the importance of the onboard crew support system, it was unlikely to assist crew with issues that require time off work due to family commitments or personal illness, all which must be managed through the human resource departments on the ground. Through these distancing tactics, crew are missing an important social support network as mangers are a conduit to facilitating connectedness to the organisation and also employees recognise their managers as responsible for making important decisions affecting their lives through their HR responsibilities (Taylor, 2008). In order to address this managers must recognise that they are viewed negatively and their

support in these circumstances are often under used by the crew as they sought their own solutions. It is imperative that managers strive to provide and nurture a supportive organizational climate, through encouraging a relaxed, friendly and supportive work environment, which encourages crew to get to know them on a more personal level (Viitala et al., 201). Social support especially from supervisors has been shown to be a key factor for employee health and wellbeing (Hämmig, 2017). Whilst acknowledging this may be challenging in the hypermobile world of cabin crew there are initiatives that would be effective. Positive daily experiences at work such as socializing, and positive feedback relate to reduced stress and better health for employees (Bono et al, 2013). A regular, scheduled email "check in" with crew by their manager would allow cabin crew an opportunity to discuss any problems they are experiencing and allow managers to share positive feedback at the same time, a practice seen as beneficial by employees (Brooks et al., 2019). Spending time on flights and socializing down route with crew in hotels would provide an opportunity to explain how managers are not just there for when crew have transgressed but are also accessible in a supportive capacity when crew face personal issues that affect their lives. Therefore, it is vital that managers employ empathetic, reciprocal and most importantly consistent management approaches that exhibit fairness, trust and integrity in their daily management of crew. These approaches and behaviours provide greater support and organizational back up for crew when they face accumulative daily challenges as well as critical life events that cause disruption to their lives (Eisenberger et al.,2002; Fisk & Neville, 2011). The availability of consistent help and support may build up trusting relationships leading to employees feeling less vulnerable and creating a feeling of mutual support, a win-win situation for both crews and organisation (Mulki et al., 2008). This research also raised important and unique findings that has implications for the safety training of cabin crew and it is this that is next addressed.

6.2 Implications and recommendations for cabin crew safety training.

This research emphasised that the crew were aware of the dangers they faced every time they flew and called upon the coping strategies of denial and repression in order to manage

their fears. Crew training is based on a cognitive behavioural model that primes them to be "…prepared for the unprepared," through the following of Standard Operating Procedures. One of the SOP's is called the "silent review," which crew must perform on every take-off and landing. This demands crew mentally practice evacuation drills and commands and physically prepare themselves by adopting the semi brace position. This is a crucially important SOP as take-off and landing is one of the most dangerous phases of flight (Kysel'ová, 2013). However, as a Senior Cabin Crew member, I observed and recorded in my field notes that this silent review was rarely practiced as crew talked to their colleague on the jump seat or to passengers sat in front of them and demonstrated non-compliance with the semi brace position. This novel finding has highlighted why crew may not adhere to this SOP and this has implications for the SEP training of crew members. Cabin crew training focusses on technical knowledge and skills, along with Crew Resource Management, where cognitive and interpersonal skills are taught in order to shape crew's behaviour to promote safety and support the efficiency of flight operations. Through the IPA analysis of the crew's interviews and personal professional observations over many years, this research has uniquely exposed how inherently psychologically difficult it is for crew to acknowledge the danger they face every day. Therefore, in order to manage their stress, aid their coping and fulfil their demanding role, crew actively employ the psychodynamic coping strategies of repression, denial and distraction, all of which are considered part of everyday normal functioning (Cramer, 1998). These psychodynamic processes, which are ever present for the crew, also shape their behaviour but this is not reflected in cabin crew training. The complex environment that crew inhabit and in which they perform their very demanding role as first responders of the sky is unacknowledged by the organization and stripped back to one of purely "hospitality" and their legal necessity for safety. This is clearly reflected in the training that crew focus on the receive and its focus on the technical side of the crew role. This lack of emphasis on the psychological aspects of training and a concentration on the technical role is seen in other professions who face challenging situations at work (Brooks et al., 2109). Crew training must be modified in order to address the personal element of the crew and the complexity of the crew role though the cognitive *and* psychodynamic aspects of the crew's world through their unconscious denial of the dangers they face. It is recommended that educating and effectively communicating to crew about the psychological structures that support defense mechanisms such as denial and its effect on their safety role is crucial

(Salone et al., 2021). Only then may crew benefit from a greater feeling of well-being, through reduced stress and greater resilience, along with an increased adherence to safety procedures. However, wellbeing and resilience training is lacking in the organisation that the crew worked for in this research and it is this that is next addressed.

6.3 Resilience training for cabin crew.

The training of crew, through their initial and then yearly refresher courses, prepares the crew member to address on board incidents such as fire, evacuations, bomb threats, unruly passengers and passenger medical incidents, making them invaluable first responders of the sky. It is evident from my research in chapter 3 that crew are well trained in these role performance tasks as defined by the company and EASA. Uniquely this research has also highlighted that the context along with the stress and the cost of having to move quickly from their prepared role of hospitality to one of first responder and its importance in shaping their behaviours and subsequent coping strategies was not acknowledged. It is accepted that the crew in this thesis did have access to tertiary level interventions, with support and counselling available after critical incidents. This was provided by the organization, along with a further day to day counselling service manned by qualified counsellors who were also cabin crew. However, the stresses encountered in this research were not always as a result of a critical incident but were often the result of the accumulation of daily challenges that occur as a result of their role as cabin crew and the organisational practices they encounter. These daily challenges have been shown to accumulate over time and turn into chronic stressors, which may impact on health and well-being just as much as a critical life event (Diehl, Hay & Choi, 2012). Ensuring that employees have the training and tools to recognise and cope with these daily challenges and build their resilience is just as important as training a crew member to evacuate an aircraft. Lester et al., (2018:201) comment about the need for a focus on resilience since the beginning of the millennium:

> Quite simply scholars and practitioners alike needed to better understand resilience because the uncertain global conditions demanded it; leaders needed to know how

> to hire for it, train it, and leverage it. Likewise, the instability and uncertainty of the first turbulent decade of the century required employees to embrace the concept of resilience if they were to succeed despite factors outside of their control working against them.

In conjunction with my thirty-eight years' experience of cabin crew and the content and crew's comments in their diaries and interviews what cabin crew have not been offered is training to cope with the daily challenges they encounter in flight that they appraise as harmful and threatening. This finding is supported by other research evidence on pilots that states that there is no current training for the building of resilience and coping skills (Cahill et al., 2021). Therefore, considering my personal experiences as described in chapter 3, along with the compelling narratives of the participants and the resultant novel findings, it is evident that additional personal support for cabin crew is essential to address the challenges identified in this research. Mandatory safety and emergency refresher courses were often the only time throughout the year that cabin crew received any face-to-face advice on mental health in the workplace. This well-being advice comprised a thirty-minute session concerning the provision of counselling and Employee Assistance Programmes (EPA), which were available through the organisation. This short presentation covered overall statistics on stress and mental health, followed by a recap of the telephone numbers for crew to call for Employee Assistance Programmes. My field notes record that the statistics on stress were 10 years old. I do not recall any practical training or guidance in recognising and managing cabin crew stress through coping strategies that build and support resilience.

Whilst the importance of employee wellbeing and health may be considered fundamental to an organisation, this well-being session was held during one of the most stressful two days of work a crew member experiences during their year. Every year crew must attend the training centre where for two intensive days their practical skills and knowledge were tested for safety and medical attestations. Failure resulted once again in the disruption of their forward roster and therefore their lives for the next two weeks, along with a performance

discussion with a manager and further retraining. In order to avoid this disruptive and stressful scenario, crew's attention was focussed on the upcoming practical assessments for door drills, emergency evacuations and Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation, which were scheduled to happen after the wellbeing presentation. In the session about stress the space the crew were experiencing was itself a highly stressful one as they contemplated the disruption to their lives if they failed their practical assessments, which diluted the efficacy of the session. This is supported through my fieldnotes where I noted how ineffective this wellbeing session appeared to be. In crew briefings I always asked the crew if they were aware of the Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) and how to contact them if they needed help. My notes recall that rarely if ever did the crew recall the EAP and its role and the organization must ensure this imperative source of help for its employees is well publicised. The lack of training in coping and resilience leads one to assume therefore that the crew in this thesis were self-actuating in their coping and resilience. Whilst it is laudable that the organisation in this thesis provides counselling for its employees, this intervention often follows a critical event episode or the occurrence of symptoms. It is suggested that a more proactive approach that furnishes individuals with the necessary skills and resources to cope with the accumulative daily stresses should be implemented by the airlines. These skills would be relevant at both work and in the home environment to support employee's well-being. This is particularly important for crew who reported elevated levels of stress and anxiety before they even left home for work. In the demanding environment they occupy and as "first responders of the sky", it is suggested that crew receive coaching on stress, coping and resilience development as is advocated to other first responder professions such as paramedics, nursing, police and the military (Rosen et al., 2022; Hesketh et al, 2019; Thomas & Asselin, 2018; Papazoglou & Andersen, 2014; Cornum et al.,2011). Workplace stress management programmes have been shown to demonstrate significant improvements in stress, anxiety and coping that support better health outcomes, with mindfulness showing promising results (Hesketh et al, 2019; Rupprecht et al., 2019; Rahe et al., 2002). An internet-based mindfulness resilience programme such as Resilience at Work (RAW) may provide greater resilience and psychological flexibility especially for shift workers and those who work remotely like cabin crew (Joyce et al, 2018). The effectiveness of this approach has been demonstrated with first responders who displayed a moderate to large effect size to their resilience score and firefighters who reported greater resilience and

psychological flexibility (Joyce et al., 2019; Joyce et al, 2018). The Resilience Coaching Programme (Rosen et al.,2022), coached health workers in improving collegiate support, attending to their personal wellbeing and practical tips to help with coping. The Sustaining Resilience at Work Intervention (StRaW) programme is also a two-day peer support programme that seeks to improve employee's well-being and relationships between employees by recognising stress in fellow colleagues (Agarwal et al, 2019). This course would be particularly effective for Senior Cabin Crew Members as it builds on skills of recognition of distress in colleagues. As senior crew members spend more time with junior crew than ground-based managers, they are best placed to recognise crew who are struggling and require more support. A course such as this would improve the skill set of the onboard manager and would be extremely beneficial to cabin crew and is something that at the moment is unfortunately lacking.

In this thesis crew talked openly about their difficult relationship and lack of trust that they had towards their organisation (Chapter 5, 5.1.6). Cabin crew felt under attack as the organisation was looking for any excuse to terminate their contracts. The stigma of mental health, along with the fear of persecution felt by the crew, means it is essential to provide a safe space for crew to participate in any course such as this. In light of this it is recommended that any course on stress, coping and resilience be delivered by facilitators with no connection to the company and away from company property.

Interventions that support robust mental health must also occur at organisational levels through their structures and cultures. Using the crew's personal experiences this research has uniquely highlighted how crews arrive at work in an already highly stressed state due to their leaving home, their commute into work and fear of lateness and the effect this will have on their future rosters and the fact that they are entering a psychologically challenging pre-flight briefing, with unknown people and how this will affect their trip for the coming days (Chapter 5, 5.1.1., 5.1.2., 5.1.3). Even though it is clear that crew are highly stressed upon arrival, Cahill et al., 2021, observed that the flight crew briefing process failed to address the current wellbeing of crew as they reported for duty. It is acknowledged that the

notice boards of the report centre did publicise the employee wellbeing and counselling services provided. However, this may not be an effective way of promoting these services as crew were often short of time and in no fit psychological state to read these notices before their preflight briefing. Further evidence from this research also supports the need for the organization to consider the stress crew encounter at their refresher training days and how this rendered the wellbeing training provided as ineffective. It is recommended that the organization implement other ways of providing EAP information to the cabin crew. Therefore, it is recommended that information about EAP's with the numbers should be clearly printed on the back of the pre-flight briefing sheet that crew have with them throughout their trip.

7 Conclusion

I think people will never understand flying …the reality is I don't think anyone really knows how hard it is [Christina: Interview].

These are the words of a participant whose performance role is misunderstood and disparaged through the trope of the stereotype. Christina has over thirty years of everyday lived experience as cabin crew and knew how problematic this role was and she along with the other women who took part in this research clearly demonstrated the hardship and difficulties of their role through their diaries and interviews. The fact that this stereotype continues is a tribute to the cabin crew who through their role performance, normalise the challenging environment of an aircraft cabin so passengers feel safe and secure. However, it is also argued that this stereotype also rendered cabin crew as a not very interesting group with little to add to the academic literature. Yet, this research identified and revealed the real but hidden working life of cabin crew that is very different to the taken for granted stereotype of flying waitresses doing little more than serving tea or coffee, chicken or beef and travelling around the world with an ever-ready smile. Instead, it gives prominence to the hidden lifeworld of crew not as trolley dollies, but as what they really are first responders of the sky with immense responsibility for passenger safety. Their role on board an aircraft is every bit as important as the pilots and as this research shows cabin crew face the same social, physical and psychological challenges as their flight deck colleagues. The wellbeing of cabin crew is being negatively affected by certain sources of work-related stress. Whilst the flight deck are behind a locked door separate from the passengers, cabin crew must manage not only their own emotions and feelings but also those of their passengers.

A comprehensive autoethnographic account of the safety and cabin service roles of crew performed in the unique environment of an aircraft cabin, challenges the stereotypic understanding of the crew role to reveal the problematic and accumulative nature of the

dangers they face, alongside the daily hassles they encounter every time they go to work. This detailed account adds to the academic knowledge of cabin crew as there is a paucity of academic focus on the day-to-day activities of cabin crew in the demanding context of an aircraft cabin, with its profound effect both physically and psychologically. It uniquely highlights how the scripted roles that crew must adhere to in their role performance is problematic as in order to accomplish these roles feelings and emotions must be supressed. Further evidence of the psychological cost to crew as they perform their misunderstood role became evident as crew talked openly about the challenging aspects of their careers through their diaries and interviews. Their extreme stress and coping is evident as they prepare to be away from home for days at a time, followed by a worrying commute to work with its inherent fear of arriving late for their pre-flight briefing and the negative consequences to their lives if they are late. The crew's stresses and anxieties build further as they contemplate the intensive pre-flight briefing, where every time they fly, they face a new set of work colleagues and the uncertainty and anxiety this causes. This research exposes the psychological consequences of dealing with difficult, threatening passengers along with a distant and troubled relationship with their organisation. This research also exposed one of the most challenging aspects of flying for crew, the ever-present possibility of an aircraft emergency.

Cabin crew must self-manage their intense work-related stress and deny their feelings of loneliness, fear, anxiety, uncertainty, vulnerability, powerlessness, alienation and even fear of death, to do the job they are required to do as they put passengers ahead of themselves both physically and psychologically. The extraordinary psychological cost of thinking about the possibility of injury or death means it is pushed to the backs of their mind and denial is a principal form of coping. These intense workplace demands are not ones that are short lived. They are present day in day out, week in week out for all the years that the crew fly. The accumulative nature of these stresses cannot be underplayed and every time crew board an aircraft they hide and suppress these fears. It was their hidden secret, which is now visible through the telling of their experiences in this research and adds to the greater knowledge of stress and coping literature.

Whilst this presents a bleak picture of crew life, this research also exposed a positive side of flying where crew talked about the positive aspects of their flying career and how that seemed to undo the negative aspects of their role and build their resilience. For the cabin crew in this research who were all female, flying was an opportunity to travel the world and meet interesting people, experience wonderous sights and enjoy leisure activities with time off away from home and the opportunity to be more than just a wife, mother or daughter, along with a generous remuneration package that offered the opportunity for independence and enjoyment.

Cabin crew took the opportunity to infuse meaning into the mundane aspects of their role by recalling positive events and moments with emotions such as wonder and joy as they cared for their passengers and travelled the world to experience different cultures. They praised and appreciated the social support readily supplied by cabin crew colleagues as they experienced the positives of jump seat counselling and the sharing of conversations and collective experiences, which moved them from individual coping to collective coping. They no longer felt the loneliness, anxiety and helplessness they experienced as cabin crew quite so keenly. This seeking of positivity in their work environment allowed cabin crew to negate some of their negative feelings that allowed them to build and support their resilience.

This unique research into the workplace stress, coping and resilience in cabin crew adds to the academic knowledge of workplace stress and to the various theories of coping and resilience. It is acknowledged that all stress cannot be removed from the lives of cabin crew but a greater understanding of these stresses with how people utilise self-help through their coping strategies that aid their resilience is an important start, especially when that group of people such as cabin crew have been so unjustly under researched. This research compellingly shows how much their life experiences as cabin crew add to the academic literature of workplace stress, coping and resilience.

Finally, this research and its findings must be a wakeup call to airline organizations to increase their support for preventative mental health treatment. This research highlights cabin crew were principally relying on self-help coping strategies and colleague support to

overcome work related stress and to build their resilience. A fundamental change to the organizational view of cabin crew as hospitality workers and to reclassify them correctly as first responders along with a more empathetic management culture and human resource practices must be adopted along with training that supports their psychological wellbeing. Further academic research must be undertaken that seeks further understanding of the cabin crew's unique demanding life world.

8 Limitations and suggestions for future research

This research has limitations that need to be considered and I am aware of these. The choice of qualitative research methods through diaries and semi structured interviews I consider appropriate and generated data, which captured the subjective experience of the cabin crew. It is acknowledged that the diary studies supported the phenomenological position of this research and allowed participants to reflect on their lives at home and work, along with greater autonomy over what they choose to disclose. However, out of twelve diaries dispatched, seven were returned and the diary entries on the whole very short and often appeared devoid of emotions. Two reasons may be pertinent to this outcome: As my research has shown cabin crew rosters are unrelenting and crew start their shift fatigued, due to accumulative jet lag and sleep deprivation. They face unremitting job demands on the aircraft that leaves them physically and emotionally exhausted and struggle with organisational demands that leaves them disengaged. As part of this research process, I completed a diary and found it was very difficult to find the time and energy to fill in a diary, due to the physical and psychological demands placed upon me at home and work. I had no time on the aircraft and upon arrival I was too exhausted to fill in a diary. It may be inferred that these were factors pertinent to participants who took part in the diary study and is reflected through their diary entries.

The crew rarely speak about their lives outside of the crew community, one which they feel really understands how they feel. Away from the aircraft their work life is not thought about as they alluded to in their interviews. Although not included in this thesis as a theme, crew mentioned that once they have left the aircraft the flight is over and finished both physically and psychologically for them. To dwell on what has or might have happened may be too psychologically exhausting. Writing about this after the event may have been challenging for them so it is considered the writing process itself may also have been a barrier for crew expression in the diaries. The natural communication channel for crew is face to face conversation, which they engage in every day on an aircraft and one where with colleagues

in particular, they discuss their life events and emotions. Compared to the diaries the interviews generated more valuable data. During their interviews the crew appeared to enjoy to query and explore their conversation. Overall, the diaries were useful for adding greater contextual insight into crew life in the context section, with very little used in the development of the two core themes. The demands of the environment that the participants inhabit must be carefully considered before partaking of a diary study such as the one undertaken here as diaries studies require commitment and dedication to complete.

What has finally been presented in this research has tried to answer a question of what stress, coping and resilience looks and feels like for cabin crew. I am aware that the though the words reported in the themes are a result of the interaction of colleagues and myself, how they have been recorded, understood and presented with regard to theories is my own interpretation. I tried hard to acknowledge any potential personal bias and constantly talked to crew involved in this research on an informal basis about their narrative around stress, coping and resilience to ensure their consensus with my data and interpretation.

Generalisation of the findings to other populations within cabin crew is difficult as the sample was made up of female, long haul cabin crew all based in the UK working for one airline. The original intention was to interview short and long-haul cabin crew from different airlines but gaining access to crew from any airline proved extremely difficult, so any conclusions drawn from this research is limited to long haul cabin crew from this particular airline. Another limitation is that all participants were female. Male cabin crew were approached and were keen and willing to participate when the research was first discussed. However, when receiving the participant information sheet and learning more about the research methods, they failed to reply to emails inviting them to take part in this study. This limits the generalisation once again of this study as research females report more workplace stress and higher anxiety levels than men (Matud, 2004; Efinger et al., 2019). Women also appear to differ in certain aspects of coping styles compared to men by seeking social

support, an emotion focussed strategy (Patton & Goddard, 2006). These differences should be deliberated when reading my research.

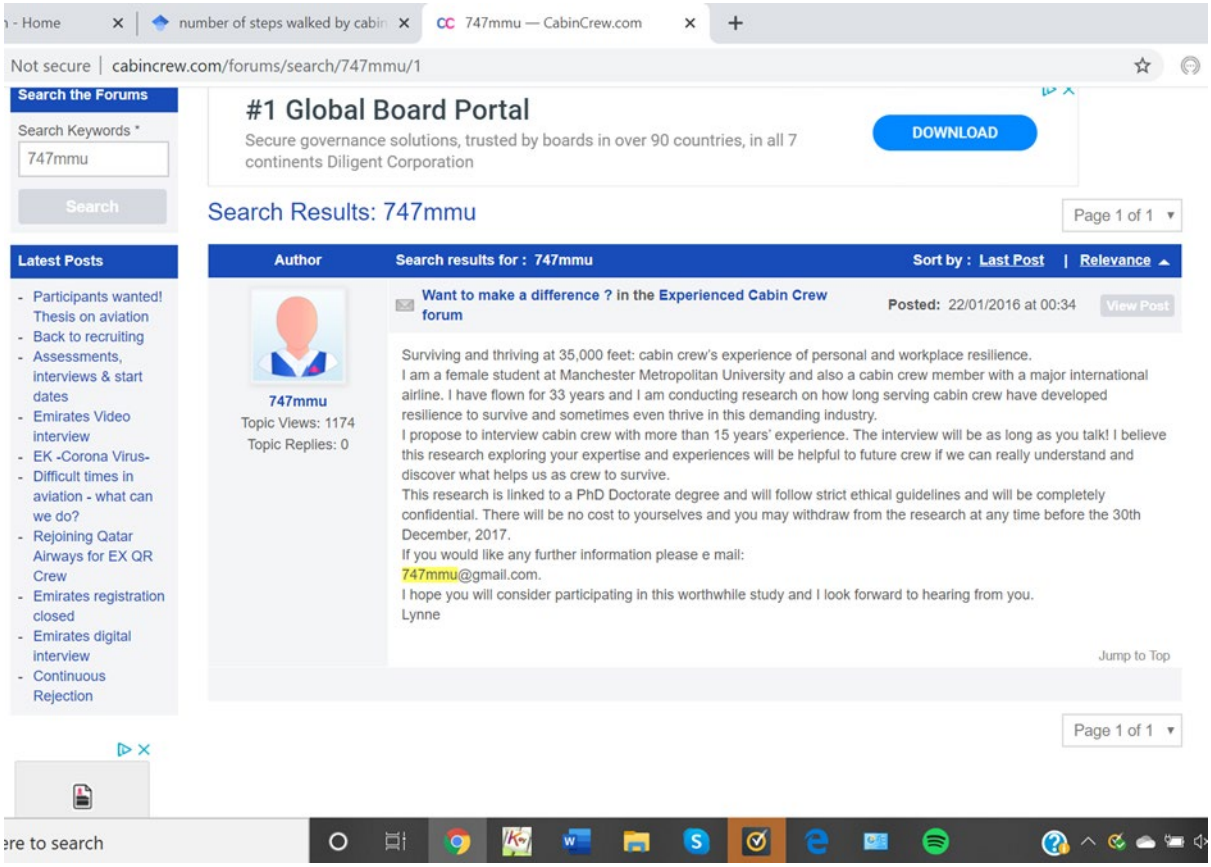
Finally, this research involved crew at a specific moment and on specific contracts. The average age of the crew in this research 55 years with an average career of 33 years and 6 months as cabin crew members. The Covid pandemic of 2020 had a devastating effect on the airline industry as world travel was brought to a halt. The crew in this research were placed on furlough and were obliged to reapply for their positions on new contracts and many took the decision to leave. Following on from conversations with remaining cabin crew and from crew social Facebook pages it is clear that the stresses crew face are now even more extreme. This is supported by survey feedback that indicates that post pandemic aviation workers are experiencing considerable challenges in relation to their health and wellbeing and these are still not being adequately addressed at organizational level (Cahill et al., 2022). The contracts that afforded so any of the benefits that the crew talk about in this research are no longer available to the cabin crew of 2023. The hours worked by these cabin crew are more extreme than the crew interviewed in this study, they must now fly a mix of long and short haul routes, remuneration has decreased markedly and the age and experience of crew is less. Calling upon more experienced crew for social support may be more difficult for these new crew members. For those crew members who stayed with the airlines during the pandemic they not only had to adjust to new working practices, but they also suffered increased rates of stress, depression and anxiety (Görlich & Stadelmann, 2020). A focus for further research would be an extension of this ethnographic study, which considers what stress, coping and resilience looks and feels like for this new generation of cabin crew.

This research also uniquely highlighted the safety and security training of cabin crew. Airline training with its Standard Operating Procedures is entirely focussed on cabin crew technical knowledge and skills, which along with Crew Resource Management where cognitive and interpersonal skills are taught, shape the crew's behaviour that promotes safety and supports the efficiency of flight operations. Further research into the novel finding that emphasised the complexity of the crew's coping strategies from a cognitive *and*

psychodynamic aspect, where the defence mechanism of denial was utilised to cope with the dangers they inevitably face should be urgently addressed.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1 Post for cabin crew online forum



Appendix 2 Flyer distributed to cabin crew

Surviving and thriving at 35,000 feet: cabin crew's experience of personal and workplace resilience.

I am a female student at Manchester Metropolitan University and also a cabin crew member with a major international airline. I have flown for 33 years and I am conducting research on how long serving cabin crew have developed resilience to survive and sometimes even thrive in this demanding industry.

I propose to interview cabin crew with more than 15 years' experience. The interview will be as long as you talk! I believe this research exploring your expertise and experiences will be helpful to future crew if we can really understand and discover what helps us as crew to survive.

This research is linked to a PhD Doctorate degree and will follow strict ethical guidelines and will be completely confidential. There will be no cost to yourselves and you may withdraw from the research at any time before the 30th of December 2017.

If you would like any further information, please e mail:

747mmu@gmail.com

I hope you will consider participating in this worthwhile study and I look forward to hearing from you.

Lynne

Appendix 3 Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Surviving and thriving at 35,000 feet: cabin crew's experience of personal and workplace resilience.

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

Purpose of the study:

As I do not know who you are I would like first to introduce myself. My name is Lynne Marsh and I am a Senior Cabin Crew Member for a major international airline and I have flown as cabin crew for 33 years on both short and long-haul fleets. I am also a PhD research student at Manchester Metropolitan University with an interest in stress and burnout in cabin crew and a strong desire to improve the emotional and physical aspects of well-being for cabin crew. I am also committed to the actual world of cabin crew that exists "behind the smiles" being brought to a wider audience and hopefully a greater understanding of the often-exacting reality of being cabin crew. This research and the subsequent dissertation are being carried out as partial submission for the degree of Doctor of Psychology.

As you are aware the work environment and lives of cabin crew are exceptional. The work and the environment are both physically and emotionally demanding and as crew a lot of time is spent with people that you have never met before and stress and burnout may often be a consequence of this. That said many crew have had long careers as cabin crew and I am interested in how you as individuals have survived and often thrived in this exacting work environment. My study will explore the personal lives of cabin crew by looking at your experiences, behaviours, and coping strategies that you use every day of your working lives, which have supported your resilience and subsequent well-being. I am also interested in how your experiences and strategies may be applied to support and assist other cabin crew, who are just starting their careers or others who are struggling, to build their resilience against the stress and burnout that is prevalent in our industry.

Why have I been invited?

My research is about the lives and experiences of long serving cabin crew and this is why as a cabin crew member yourself, I would like to invite you to take part in my study. My study will consist of an interview, a voluntary one-week diary study and a focus group. I will be recruiting between 10 to 12 crew members, who have all been cabin crew for more than 15

years and identify as being resilient, with the ability to bounce back after a stressful day at work.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary and it is up to you to decide. I will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which I will give to you. I will then ask you to sign a consent form to show you agreed to take part. Please be aware that you are free to withdraw at any time during the research, without giving a reason and any information you have given will be removed from the study and destroyed.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Throughout the study you will have the opportunity to tell your story about being cabin crew. The total research period is around 4 years, but your participation will only require between 1 and 6 hours of your time. If you do decide to take part the voluntary diary study will require you to record your thoughts, feelings or actions on days off before or after your trip and during the trip itself. Interviews will be arranged at a date and time of your choice and it is envisaged our interview will last anything from an hour to an hour and a half or as long as you wish to talk! The focus group will be an online discussion that explores your thoughts on the results. All interviews will be recorded for future analysis. The recordings and any notes will be held securely in compliance with the Data Protection Act of 1998. All data will be anonymous with all names withheld and participants identified only by numbers.

Are there any costs involved?

It is not envisaged that there will be any expenses occurred by yourselves as I will travel to you and will meet any costs incurred personally.

What will I have to do if I choose to participate in the study?

1. Contact me by email 747mmu@gmail.com. Please leave your contact details.
2. Read the participant information and Consent Forms carefully.
3. Arrange a convenient time to be contacted by telephone in order to arrange a time and place to meet at your convenience.
4. Meet and talk about your experiences of being cabin crew.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Talking about our lives may stir up unpleasant or emotional feelings and all participants should consider this before taking part. If negative emotions or feelings become apparent at any time during the research process a counselling support number will be provided so support may be sought.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

I cannot promise this study will help you personally, but the information I get from the study will help to increase the understanding of how cabin crew build up their resilience, which helps them to survive and thrive in the exacting working environment of cabin crew. It is envisaged this research will ultimately be a starting point to develop a framework to support resilience in cabin crew.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and any information about you will have your name and address removed so that you cannot be recognised. All of the interview information you give will be anonymised and given a research/ number code known only to the researcher, so that those reading the reports from the research will not know who has contributed to it. Only authorised persons such as my supervisory team and members of the University involved in monitoring the quality of my research and any regulatory authorities will have access to the data. Data will be stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Electronic data will be held on a password protected computer and hard paper data will be stored in a locked cabinet and office, both which can be assessed only by the researcher. Data will be stored separately from consent forms. I will not use the sample for any other purpose without your full consent and you can withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice and data collected from you to date, will be destroyed and your name removed from all the study files. Data will be held for a minimum of 3 years and will be disposed of securely.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

This research and results are part of a dissertation being completed as partial submission for the degree of Doctor of Psychology. The thesis will be published but you will not be identified in the report or subsequent publication unless you have given your consent. The results of the research will be made available to you if so desired.

What if there is a problem?

I hope you will find your participation in this research positive and gratifying, but if you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researcher who will do their best to answer your questions:

Lynne Marsh

Email: 747mmu@gmail.com

Mobile: 07710 968823

If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally you can do this through:

Director of Studies:

Professor Rebecca Lawthom

Email: r.lawthom@mmu.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0)161 247 2559

Appendix 4 Consent Form

Lynne Marsh

Faculty of Health, Psychology & Social Care
Manchester Metropolitan University

Birley Building
Tel 07710968823

Consent Form

Title of Project: Surviving and thriving at 35,000 feet: cabin crew's experiences of personal and workplace resilience.

Name of Researcher: Lynne Marsh

Participant Identification Code for this project: CC

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated …. for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the diary study procedure. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withd at any time before 31st Dec 2017 without giving any reason to the named researcher. ☐

3. I understand that my responses will be transcribed and used for analysis for this research project. ☐

4. I give/do not give permission for my diary study data to be archived as par research project, making it available to future researchers. ☐

5. I understand that my responses will remain anonymous. ☐

6. I agree to take part in the above research project. ☐

7. I understand that at my request a transcript of my diary can be made available to me. ☐

_____ _____

Name of Participant Date Signature

_____ _____ _____

Researcher Date Signature

Once this has been signed, you will receive a copy of your signed and dated consent form and information sheet by post.

Appendix 5 Guidance for Diary completion

How to complete your diary

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this important study.

Before your next trip on your days off and then during your trip, please take time to write in this diary what life is like for you as a cabin crew member. I would suggest the two days before your trip, your 3 day trip and your first day back after your trip. I am interested in finding out as much as possible about how your role as cabin crew and your environment affects your life, both positively and negatively. I would like to learn about any experiences, feelings and thoughts that you have before and during your trip. Also tell me what helps you to get through this week and what doesn't help you, both on and off the aircraft. No matter how minor it seems it will be of interest to me, so please write it down. Please remember this is your diary, there is no right or wrong way to fill it in and do not worry about spelling or grammar- that is not important to me.

As you complete your diary, think about the following that may help to guide you:

- What were the good things for you about this week at home and work?
- What were the not so good things for you at home and work?
- How did these things make you feel or what thoughts came to you about them?
- What did you do to manage any difficult or stressful situations?
- What resources did you use to help you through the trip?

Appendix 6 Interview Guide

Interview Guide

CC06 [I]

Years flying:

Age:

No why or how did you questions

What is important is their experience

The purpose of this interview is to talk about your experience of being cabin crew and how it affects your life, your feelings and thoughts.

If there is anything that you really want to talk about that I maybe don't mention, please do tell me about it.

What do you consider to be a good day at work?

What do you consider to be a bad day at work?

How does being a cabin crew member make you feel?

What thoughts come to you about being crew/your role?

What helps you on a trip?

What do you do to manage any difficult stressful situations?

Could you tell me about **leaving home** on the morning of your trip?

Prompts: How do you feel? What thoughts are going through your mind? How do you feel physically and mentally?

Arriving at work in the **car park** and at **CRC.**

What is arriving at work like for you? What are you thinking about the next few days? How does being away make you feel? What are you experiencing before you get in the briefing room?

Briefing

Can you tell me how you feel in briefing?

Arriving at the aircraft

In Flight

Sitting on the Jump seat waiting for take off

Going on your break and lying/sitting in the crew rest area- What is it like for you?

Could you tell me about your experiences on the aircraft? What do you find challenging? What do you find enjoyable?

What are you feeling/ thinking?

Landing and getting onto transport

Can you tell me about your journey to the hotel?

Arriving at hotel room and rest

Morning at Hotel

Flight home

Arriving home

Notes:

Appendix 7 Diary Feedback Form

Feedback form

Please complete and return with diary, thank you.

1) Were the instructions on how to complete the diary instructions clear and/or useful for guiding your thoughts?

2) Approximately how much time did it take to complete a day's entry?

3) Please describe any problems or difficulties in filling in your diary.

4) Any other comments.

Appendix 8 Consent Form

Lynne Marsh
Faculty of Health, Psychology & Social Care
Manchester Metropolitan University
Birley Building
Tel 07710968823

Title of Project: Surviving and thriving at 35,000 feet: cabin crew's experiences of personal and workplace resilience.

Name of Researcher: Lynne Marsh

Participant Identification Code for this project: CC06 (I)

Please initial box

8. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated …….. for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the interview procedure. ☐
9. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time before 31st Dec 2019 without giving any reason to the named researcher. ☐
10. I understand that my responses will be transcribed and used for analysis for this research project. ☐
11. I give/do not give permission for my interview data to be archived as part of this research project, making it available to future researchers. ☐
12. I understand that my responses will remain anonymous. ☐
13. I agree to take part in the above research project. ☐
14. I understand that at my request a transcript of my interview can be made available to me. ☐

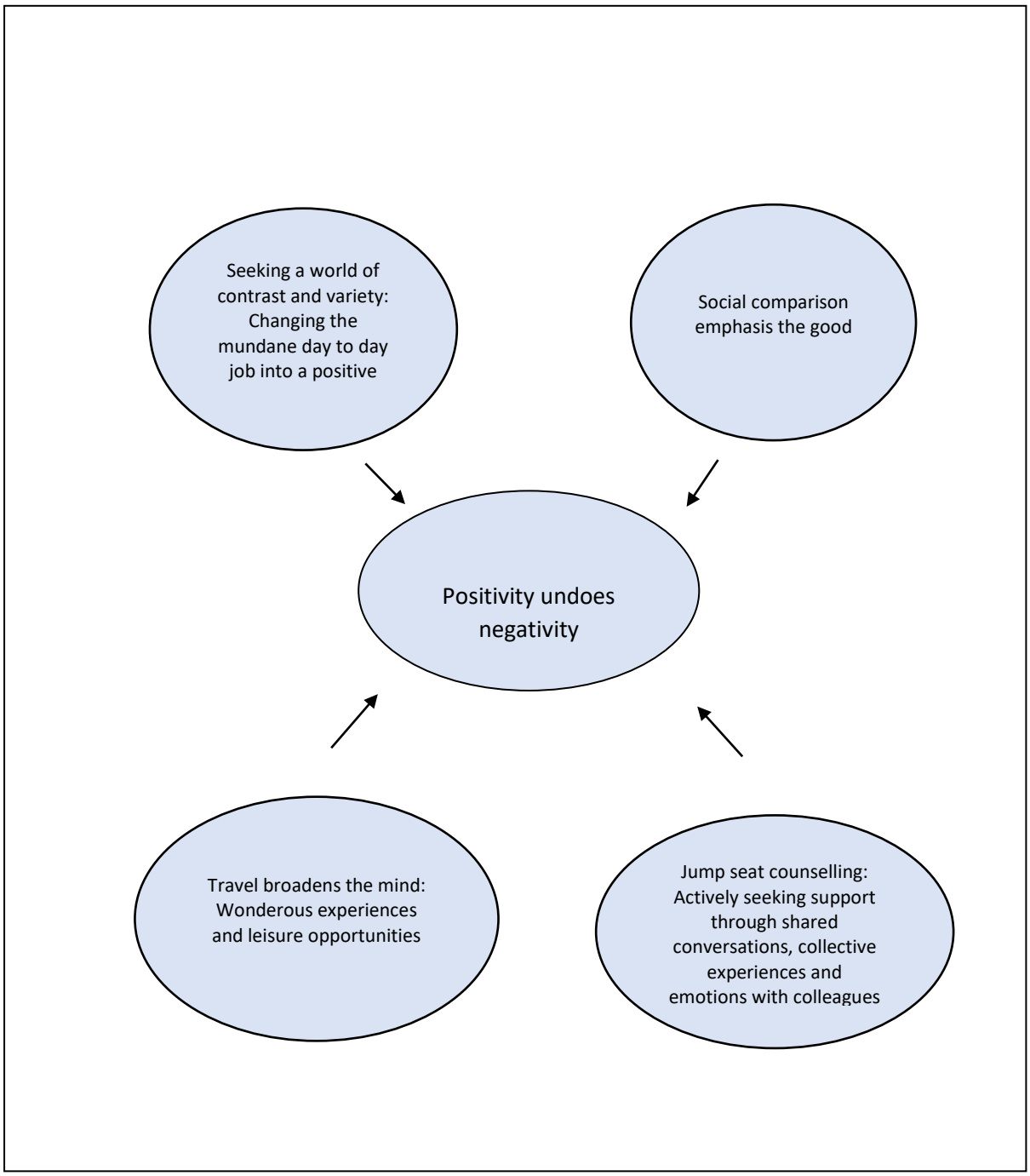
_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Once this has been signed, you will receive a copy of your signed and dated consent form and information sheet by post.

Appendix 9 Thematic map of the negative experiences of flying

Appendix 10 Thematic map of the positive experiences of flying



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