

**MANAGING OCCUPATIONAL STRESS OF COMMERCIAL
AIRLINE PILOTS IN SRI LANKA**

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Occupational Safety and Health Management

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Declaration

I declare that this is my own work, and this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any other University or Institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text.

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The above candidate has carried out research for the Masters in Occupational Safety and Health Management under my supervision.

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Mrs Piumi Dissanayake
Supervisor

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Date

Abstract

Piloting an aircraft is considered a unique job that needs to manage good psychological and physical health and high workloads. Pilots are considered to be significantly more sensitive to stress level compared to other professions in aviation. Occupational Stress of Pilots affected by various stressors directly related to his job functions, work organisation, and personal life. However, less studies have been conducted to address these stressors in Sri Lanka. Thus, this study aimed to develop strategies for managing the occupational stressors of commercial airline pilots in Sri Lanka.

The mixed approach with qualitative and quantitative data analysis was used in this study. In that, a questionnaire with open and close-ended questions was distributed to the pilots in Sri Lanka who fly aircraft internationally to obtain their experience with occupational stress. Based on the questionnaire's findings, interviews were conducted with three respective managerial-level officials in the industry and with a retired senior pilot to discuss how identified stressors would be managed. The study revealed that the pilots' in Sri Lanka are facing stressors mainly under physiological, physical and psychological factors and the recommendations are given based on the identified stressors. New stress factors were also identified from the study, which can be considered as knowledge contribution to existing literature. Regular delay due to inefficiency of the airline operators, poor salary scale, salaries going below the industry standards, job insecurity, unfair rostering of pilots and incompetent mix of crew are few of them.

This study's findings significantly highlight many stressors directly or indirectly related to the current economic situation of Sri Lanka and a few airline and pilot function-related issues. While presenting the recommendations, the study emphasised the urgent need for the intervention of airline companies in Sri Lanka to take mitigate actions to minimise pilot stress with possible government interventions. The outcome of this study also significantly highlighted and justified the need for a case-by-case approach for pilot stress-related studies.

Keywords: Pilot, Stress, Physiological, Psychological, Physical or Environmental, Stress Coping, Commercial Airline Pilots, Stress Management.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF ABBRIVIATIONS.....	xii
CHAPTER 1.....	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Research Problem.....	3
1.3 Aim and Objectives.....	4
1.4 Chapter Breakdown.....	5
1.5 Limitations of the Study	6
CHAPTER 2.....	7
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
2.1 Introduction.....	7
2.2 The Concept of Stress.....	7
2.3 Types of Stresses.....	9
2.4 Concept of Occupational Stress.....	10
2.5 Occupational Stressors – General Causative Factors of Stress on Humans...10	

2.6 Occupational Stress in Aviation Industry.....	12
2.7 Occupational Stress of Pilots.....	13
2.8 Occupational Stress Factors (Stressors) of Commercial Airline Pilots.....	15
2.9 The Existing Regulations to Manage Pilot Stress in the Aviation Industry.....	21
2.9.1 ICAO DOC 9683 on Human Factors Training Manual.....	23
2.9.2 ICAO DOC 9966 on Manual for the Oversight of Fatigue Management Approaches.....	23
2.9.3 CAASL IS-6-(I)-4.10, SLCAIS: 054 on Limitations on Flight Duty Periods, Flight Time, Duty Periods and Rest Periods of Flight Crewmembers and Cabin Crewmembers for Fatigue Management.....	23
2.10 Stress Related Accidents.....	24
2.11 Management of Occupational Stress through Coping Methods.....	27
2.12 Need of Managing Occupational Stress of Commercial Airline Pilots in Sri Lanka.....	28
2.13 Chapter Summery.....	30
 CHAPTER 3.....	 31
3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	31
3.1 Introduction.....	31
3.2 Research Process.....	31
3.2.1 Background of the Study.....	33
3.2.2 Literature Review.....	33
3.2.3 Research Problem.....	33
3.2.4 Research Design.....	33
3.2.4.1 Research Approach.....	34

3.2.4.2 Research Strategy...	34
3.2.4.3 Research Techniques.....	35
3.3 Sampling Strategy.....	37
3.4 Conclusion and Recommendation.....	38
CHAPTER 4.....	39
4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS.....	39
4.1 Introduction.....	39
4.2 Overview of the Sample	39
4.3 Awareness of Pilots in Sri Lanka on the Effects of Stressors	41
4.4 Stress Causing Factors Experienced by Pilots in Sri Lanka.....	42
4.4.1 Pilots' Responses to Physiological Stressors	44
4.4.2 Pilots' Responses to Physical/ Environmental Stressors	49
4.4.3 Pilots' Responses to Psychological/ Biological Stressors	54
4.5 Most Influencing Stress Causing Factor among Commercial Airline Pilots in Sri Lanka	59
4.6 Most Stressful Phase of Piloting	60
4.7 Additional Factors that Induce High-Stress Levels to pilots	61
4.7.1 Regular delays due to the inefficiency of the operator.....	61
4.7.2 Not having adequate rest on board; the aircraft during deadheading.....	62
4.7.3 The incompetent mix of the crew (pilots).....	62
4.7.4 Peer pressure, desire to get promoted to more complex aircraft captaincy.....	63

4.7.5	Poor salary scale, the salaries are going below the industry standard, salary deduction due to high taxation and non-payment of reasonable dollar rate as contractually agreed.....	63
4.7.6	Job insecurity.....	64
4.7.7	Dishonest, indiscipline staff considerably threaten a safe flight which is beyond pilots' control.....	65
4.8	Coping Strategies for Managing Occupational Stressors of Commercial Airline Pilots in Sri Lanka	65
4.8.1	Self Management as a coping Strategy	66
4.8.2	Organizational Support and Management Commitment as a Coping Strategy	67
4.8.3	Responses of Pilots in Sri Lanka to Stress Coping Methods.....	69
4.9	Coping mechanisms against the Organizational related stress factors.....	71
4.9.1	Minimising pilot stress due to frequent delays and inefficiency of the operator.....	71
4.9.2	Minimising pilot stress due to an incompetent mix of the crew.....	71
4.9.3	Minimise the pilots' stress due to deadheading.....	72
4.9.4	Minimise the pilot stress due to financial issues.....	72
4.9.5	Minimise the pilot stress due to job insecurity.....	72
CHAPTER 5.....		76
5.0	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	76
5.1	Introduction.....	76
5.2	Conclusion of the Study.....	76
5.3	Recommendations of the Study.....	79
5.3.1	Recommendations for Future Research Studies.....	80

REFERENCES81

APPENDICES.....96

 Appendix – 01 Questionnaire.....96

 Appendix – 02 Interview Guideline.....105

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 2.1	An indication of the workload and stress during different phases.	14
Figure 2.2	Firenze Model of accident causation when Unsuccessful completion of tasks.	15
Figure 2.3	How managerial functions, directly and indirectly, Affect pilots' decision errors in the cockpit.	22
Figure 3.1	Research Process Adapted in Study	32
Figure 4.1	Type of air crafts flown by the sample population.	40
Figure 4.2	Age groups of the sample population	40
Figure 4.3	Experience of the pilots (completed flying hours)	40
Figure 4.4	Pilots' Responses to Physiological Stressors	44
Figure 4.5	Main Physiological Stress Factors Extracted After Eigen Analysis	44
Figure 4.6	Pilots' Responses to Physical/Environmental Stress Factors	49
Figure 4.7	Pilots' Responses to Psychological/ Biological Stressors	54
Figure 4.8	Most Influencing Stress-Causing Factor among Commercial Airline Pilots in Sri Lanka	59
Figure 4.9	An indication of the workload and stress during different piloting phases and the results from the study's findings.	60
Figure 4.10	Responses to the Availability of Additional Factors of Stresses.	61
Figure 4.11	Whether the pilot stress can be self-managed?	66

Figure 4.12 Pilots' responses to the assistance provided by their employing companies to manage pilot stress.....67

Figure 4.13 Pilots' experience with stress-releasing/ coping methods.....69

Figure 4.14 Strategies Proposed to Manage Occupational Stress of Pilots in Sri Lanka75

LIST OF TABLES	Page
Table 2.1. The Effects of Stressors on a Pilot.....	17
Table 2.2 Stress-Related Accidents and Proposed Safety Recommendations (Preventive Strategies)	24
Table 2.3 Main Stress Causing Factors and Coping	29
Table 3.1 The Summary of the Interviews conducted.....	36
Table 4.1 Case Processing Summary	42
Table 4.2 Reliability Statistics.....	43
Table 4.3 KMO and Bartlett's Test.....	45
Table 4.4 Communalities (Physiological Factors)	45
Table 4.5 Total Variance Explained (Physiological Factors)	46
Table 4.6 Rotated Component Matrix (Physiological Factors)	47
Table 4.7 KMO and Bartlett's Test (Physical Stressors)	50
Table 4.8 Communalities (Physical Stressors)	51
Table 4.9 Total Variance Explained (Physical Stressors)	51
Table 4.10 Rotated Component Matrixa*(Physical Stressors)	52
Table 4.11 KMO and Bartlett's Test (Psychological Stressors)	55
Table 4.12 Communalities (Psychological Stressors)	55
Table 4.13 Total Variance Explained (Psychological Stressors)	56
Table 4.14 Rotated Component Matrixa* (Psychological Stressors)	57

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAASL	-	Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka
ICAO	-	International Civil Aviation Organization
DOC	-	Document
SLCAIS	-	Sri Lanka Civil Aviation Implementing Standards
CRM	-	Crew Resource Management
ATC	-	Air Traffic Control
USD	-	United State Dollar
ALPGSL	-	Air Line Pilots Guild of Sri Lanka
WHO	-	World Health Organization
NIOSH	-	National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health
SHEL	-	Software, Hardware, Environment, Liveware
PSF	-	Performance Shaping Factors
EASA	-	European Aviation Safety Agency
SARP	-	Standards and Recommended Practices
EU	-	European Union
EC	-	European Commission
STCA	-	Special Temporal Clustering Analysis
SOP	-	Standard Operating Procedures
DG	-	Director General