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"Airhostesses' Job Satisfaction: An exploration into its long-term dynamics and of the « Imaginary »

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Titre : *La satisfaction au travail des hôtesses de l'air: une exploration des dynamiques à long terme et du rôle de l'imaginaire.*

Mots clés : satisfaction au travail, contrat psychologique, imaginaire, hôtesses de l'air

Résumé : La satisfaction au travail est un concept clé de la gestion des ressources humaines qui a beaucoup été étudié par des chercheurs du monde entier. Celui-ci est souvent envisagé de manière statique, c'est-à-dire qu'il est mesuré à un moment donné. En plus, ces mesures de la satisfaction au travail ont principalement été abordées de façon statistique. Cependant, peu de recherches se sont intéressées à la satisfaction continue et à long terme au travail. Qui plus est, de nombreux éléments considérés comme des antécédents de la satisfaction au travail, bien que de toute évidence de nature psychologique, ne sont pas étudiés en regard des connaissances en psychologie. Cette thèse tente d'embrasser de telles perspectives. Cette thèse soutient qu'il y a beaucoup à apprendre en dehors des approches statiques et limitées à un moment donné. Une perspective de long terme sur la satisfaction au travail apporte des compréhensions complémentaires, notamment d'un point de vue psychologique. Pour cette thèse, l'étude a été conduite auprès des hôtesses de l'air et stewards de deux grandes compagnies aériennes - Air France et Air India. L'approche a été qualitative et exploratoire. Trois séries d'entretiens approfondis ont été menées. La première série interrogeait sur la satisfaction au travail et a montré l'intérêt d'envisager cette satisfaction dans le long terme. Comme la littérature était peu diserte sur cette perspective, nous avons continué notre exploration avec des entretiens sur le cycle de vie, révélant des dynamiques inattendues, à l'exemple de l'importance des contacts avec le monde aérien avant le recrutement. La satisfaction au travail est dépendante d'attentes mutuelles des hôtesses et des compagnies, ce qu'un autre domaine de a littérature, celui sur le contrat psychologique, nous a permis de réfléchir et conceptualiser. Cependant l'existence d'un contrat psychologique entre les hôtesses et les compagnies ne permettait pas de comprendre certains mystères et points singuliers. En se fondant sur la perspective lacanienne de Zizek (tout en reconnaissant nos limites sur cette perspective), nous sommes arrivé à la conviction que la satisfaction au travail continue et à long terme dépend fortement de la capacité des hôtesses à maintenir un regard "Imaginaire" sur leur activité. Tant que les hôtesses de l'air peuvent donner sens à leur expérience à l'intérieur d'un « imaginaire » positif et enrichissant, imaginaire à la fois reçu et construit, elles peuvent conserver une satisfaction au travail durable. L'une des principales implications de cette thèse pourrait être que de nombreuses politiques actuelles des ressources humaines dans les organisations semblent ne pas prendre suffisamment soin d'un «Imaginaire» fort dans certaines professions à l'image des hôtesses de l'air qui font que les salariés attribuent du sens davantage selon le «Symbolique», et que cela peut mettre en danger, possiblement irréversiblement, leur satisfaction au travail de long terme. Les organisations gagneraient, d'une manière ou d'une autre, à prioritairement stimuler et entretenir une tel « Imaginaire ». Cette recherche exploratoire a ainsi suivi un ensemble de tournants et ajoute, nous l'espérons, une perspective supplémentaire, originale, pour penser et gérer la satisfaction au travail.

Title : *"Airhostesses' Job Satisfaction: An exploration into its long-term dynamics and of the « Imaginary »*

Keywords : Job Satisfaction, airhsotess, psychological contract, imaginary.

Abstract : Job Satisfaction is a key concept in the Human Resources Management area that is heavily researched over the past many years by numerous researchers worldwide. This important concept of job satisfaction is many a times seen in a static way - that is, it is measured at one particular point in time. Also, measures of job satisfaction have been predominantly in terms of statistical approaches. However, little research has been performed to view job satisfaction in a continuous and a long-term perspective. What is more, many elements that are seen as antecedents to job satisfaction in previous researches, although seemingly psychological in nature, often does not seem to enter in-depth into any psychological perspective. This thesis is an attempt to address such perspectives. It argues that there is much to learn outside static and limited at a given moment of time approaches. A long-term perspective on job satisfaction provides complementary understandings, especially from a psychological point of view.

For this thesis, the study was performed on air hostesses and stewards from two major airline organizations – Air France and Air India. The approach was qualitative and exploratory. Three series of in-depth interviews were conducted. The first series asked about job satisfaction and confirmed the interest in considering job satisfaction in the long run. As the literature was rare on such a perspective, we continued our exploration with life-cycle interviews, that allowed to reveal unexpected dynamics, such as the importance of contacts with the flying world before recruitment. Job satisfaction is dependent on mutual expectations of both hostesses and companies, which another field of literature, the one on psychological contract, enabled us to reflect and conceptualize. However, the existence of a psychological contract between the hostesses and the companies was not sufficient to understand certain mysteries and singular points. Based on the Lacanian perspective of Zizek (while acknowledging our limitations on this perspective), we have come to the conviction that continuous and long-term job satisfaction strongly depends on the ability of hostesses to sustain an "Imaginary" glance upon their activity As long as flight attendants can give meaning to their experience within a positive and rewarding "imaginary" - imaginary both received and constructed - they can retain a long-lasting job satisfaction. One of the main implications of this thesis may be that many current human resources policies in organizations seem to fail to take sufficient care to the strong "Imaginary" in some professions such as hostesses. Thus employees attribute meaning rather according to the "Symbolic" than the imaginary, and this can jeopardize, possibly irreversibly, their long-term job satisfaction. Organizations would benefit in taking care and in some way give a priority to boost and maintain the « imaginary ».

This exploratory research has followed a series of turning points and, we hope, adds an additional, original perspective to think and manage job satisfaction.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 5 – Tracing back to the theory again – *The role of "Psychological Contract"*

Chapter 6 – An attempt to explain "Continuous Job Satisfaction" – *A psychoanalytical perspective*

Chapter 7 – Conclusion..194

List of Figures

Chapter 1 – Introduction – *Setting up the context!*

1.1. <u>The researcher & background of this research:</u>

I'm a professional Indian classical musician and because of that, I'm a seasoned traveller. I've had an opportunity to visit innumerable number of domestic destinations within India and around ten countries worldwide. As per the demands of my travel requirement, I invariably take lot of air travel, and tend to keenly observe things around me. In the process of doing so, something unique, struck my observation – Behavior of airhostesses on flights. I would have till date taken hundreds of flights, but what impressed me in almost every flight is the "uniform" way airhostesses conduct themselves on board, irrespective of which airline it might be – Right from exhibiting a glamorous look along with a pleasant smile, dressing up in a professional attire, exhibiting an exceedingly positive body language, using perhaps the most kindest and the sweetest words available in any language of the world, acting smart and swift during cases of an emergency, trying to calm down people around them, and the list goes on!! Sometimes I feel like comparing the flight deck to that of a concert stage - Just how a musician conducts himself/herself on the stage, adjusting to the accompanying instruments, covering up mistakes if any and finally putting up a good show in front of the audience, an airhostess conducts herself/himself on board the flight, covers up any bad feelings that might be within her, puts up a pleasant appearance in front of the passengers with a beaming smile.

However during the course of time and as I became mature enough, I started to have a thought - Just like how as musicians, we tend to cover up lot of things - good or bad while performing and still manage to put up a good show in front of the audience, it might definitely be possible for airhostesses to replicate the similar "performance" while on board. Do they really do that? It seemed a mystery when I asked this question to myself for the first time and subsequently when I took to the flight again, my way of observation towards these airhostesses witnessed a change – A significant change from a lay-man's perspective to a more psychological and a managerial perspective. However, most of my naked-eye observations lead to a failure to assess the ground situation. Hence, at one point I decided that I've had enough with just observing things and decided that I should try and do something else – Maybe talk with some of the airhostesses and find out what really happens and with the hope of getting a clue to this mystery? I tried doing this during one of my long-haul flights and on a lighter note, I noticed one interesting phenomenon – Airhostesses love to talk a lot especially during long flights!! Maybe is that because they feel bored and lonely? I decided to dig in!

I managed to strike a conversation with one of them, and here's what she had got to say!!

1.2. <u>Are airhostesses really "happy"?</u>

"How is that you guys keep smiling always and for everything?" - I innocently asked her upfront, and her "prompt" answer was, *"The smile on our faces is because many a time we're "helpless"* – And she stopped there, without giving any further explanation. Her reply was funny enough that we laughed over it for a few minutes. However, after I left her once the flight was over and while going home from the airport, I was thoughtful and subsequently started to consciously ponder within myself as to what could really be the inner meaning of her answer to my innocent question. What could that word "HELPLESS" mean? In what way does she feel helpless? This created a deep interest in me to explore, and if there was one thing that sounded very interesting to explore in my life at that point of time, it was this mystery - How does an airhostess conduct herself "happily" although she feels "helpless" at some point or the other? I went on to explore certain problems and reasons that make airhostesses "fake" their external appearance. A few important ones are discussed below:

The twenty-four-hour-cycle for an airhostess can be extremely different than that of a common man. It's obvious that most of their day and/or night is spent on the flight and hence, it becomes extremely tough to manage work-life balance. It really tends to frustrate them because they cannot be part of many family get-togethers, important family events, none of their family members can plan anything with her erratic flying schedule, etc. Sometimes, it might even go to an extent of the inability to take care of her children that she has to depend on someone else for this all-important task. Perhaps, are these potential limitations pose a worry at the back of her mind during flying?

Physical tiredness is part and parcel of this job and especially if it's a long haul flight for around eleven to twelve hours or more, airhostesses are required to do most of their jobs on board by standing. Continuously standing for a long time – and that too on a flight where there's a significant pressure difference is definitely going to impact them a lot. And let's remember that this physical straining goes along with the lack of adequate sleep during the apt time of the day/night.

As a result of the physical tiredness, airhostesses sometimes might tend to exhibit bizarre tolerance for bad behavior from passengers. Of course they might have been trained to conduct themselves well during a flight, but for how long can they hold on? After all, airhostesses are also human beings, and many of them are women at that!! How long can they take up harassment from passengers? One of my airhostess friends explained this to me in great detail during a conversation – An indecent passenger once even had the guts to pull up her skirt in front of other passengers during the flight to insult her, just for the lame reason that she had denied him an extra glass of

alcohol on board!!

Adding further, most of the time, airhostesses feel that they cannot be more disorganized than ever!! One of the respondents during the interview process shares on a lighter side, how her handbag is arranged at any point of time – Erratically arranged sunglasses, passport, hair gel, plasters, toothbrush, etc. It may sound funny but she went on to explain one of her bizarre experiences of being late for a flight, just because she had to search for her misplaced passport!!

Moreover on top of all these, airhostesses are subjected to loads of sexual harassments from various sources – From pilots, passengers, ground staff, etc. Many a time, these airhostesses are successful in combating this issue, whereas some or the other time they fail and have to succumb. Hence, during the process of coping up with all this, it becomes mentally challenging for these people to continue for a long time in this profession.

Given the variety of problems they face how do they still manage to smile and what makes them do that? Of course we can simply dismiss the entire argument by saying that this smile and pleasant appearance are "pre-practiced" and "pre-trained", but I somehow felt that there's something more to this. Even if the above statement might be true, my subsequent question as a follow-up is, how on earth can you make airhostesses exhibit their "genuine" smile when they're at work? How can you make them a really satisfied lot of people? However, more precisely the question that this research will endeavor to explore is: *How is it that airhostesses, although they might be confronted with difficult working and organizational pressure, seem to continuously be intimately satisfied with their occupation?"*

Whereas, as we will see, many studies on job satisfaction are static and not profession specific, my research will concentrate on one unique profession and will adopt a longitudinal perspective. For me, airhostesses are especially interesting because despite repeated crises in this sector, we can witness among them a strong feeling of satisfaction. And studying satisfaction in the long term might reveal different and complementary insights to those often presented in the Human Resource management literature. This study is exploratory and will open up to more psychological aspects of job satisfaction. This research stems up with these aspects in the background!!

1.3. The Outline of this Research – *My research journey*:

Accordingly, as a first systematic step towards "exploring" this mystery, I decided to take this forward in the form of a "narrative", more than anything else. Accordingly I decided to go for a pilot interview with a basic set of questions addressing the primary intent of knowing what exactly happens in the life of an airhostess everyday. I was fortunate enough to approach a kind-hearted

airhostess during one of my long-haul flights and struck an informal conversation with her. She came up with really interesting answers to my questions that struck me even harder, and my thought process only expanded further from then onwards. As the lead singer of my musical team, just like how I lead the entire team with my singing and make my instrumentalists dance to my tunes on the stage, I came across more and more evidences that only strengthened my question – Do airhostesses precisely do the similar thing on board a flight, tend to cover up lot of aspects "behind the screen" and present themselves with a positive body language in front of the passenger in any situation? From my experience of being a singer for the past twenty-five odd years, this requires loads of mental stability. Hence, a much more deeper question arose from within me as to how come these airhostesses are equipped with this mental stability so as to "cover-up" their personal and professional challenges that they face everyday, and still put up a smiling face with a positive body language.

Here is where I tried adopting a slightly different strategy - Instead of choosing factors from the literature and try to confirm their relevance I made the reverse. I first interviewed people on their job satisfaction, and then compare these testimonies with existing literature on the subject. By adopting this slightly different way, I felt that I was in a more comfortable position when I looked into the vast plethora of research pertaining to job satisfaction.

Accordingly, as my second step, I tried to extend the same kind of a conversation to many other airhostesses. I tried asking all of them the same set of questions to find out what really happens everyday in the life of an airhostess and what really makes them feel satisfied in this job. And I was successful in talking with fifteen other airhostesses to get a sense of the ground reality. From this exercise I was able to detect certain "clues" that paved the way to get deeper into this mystery. These clues were collated and compared with the existing literature on job satisfaction.

There were numerous similarities that I deduced, while comparing the experiences of these fifteen airhostesses with that of the literature. Here is my third step. With the basic idea from the fifteen testimonies that I had, I entered into the literature on job satisfaction. I found it to be too huge a content and of course numerous perspectives pertaining to job satisfaction were coming through – Starting with numerous definitions of the term "job satisfaction", to some theoretical background on job satisfaction, to Various antecedents to job satisfaction such as demography, leadership, employee empowerment, reward systems, personality, working conditions, nature of the job, relationship with the supervisor/subordinates, etc. were widely spoken about, in a variety of industrial setups and situations. Particularly, the relationship between job satisfaction and leadership and personality was spoken about interestingly and in depth by many researchers. Upon looking at

all this, I was getting lost at a point of time.

However, somewhere down the line, although I was lost among the plethora of research content on job satisfaction, I had a feeling that the literature on job satisfaction is missing something – I felt that most of the existing literature pertained towards the measurement of satisfaction at a particular point of time and not on a continuous scale. Furthermore satisfaction was a kind of result to a set of factors, variables or environments, and very few studies were entering into deeper psychological or institutional aspects. Hence at this time, I had a feeling that I should do something more. *(Just to recall the basic underlying question of the mystery – How on earth can the airhostesses be satisfied at their job over a period of time? Despite numerous challenges at their job, both professionally and personally, why do they stick on to this job continuously over time?)*

Hence as the fourth step, nine out of the fifteen respondents were again touch-based and a set of three interviews was conducted amongst each of them. This process constituted the "Life-Cycle Interview" wherein, every respondent was asked to narrate their experiences right from their childhood days, the motivation behind choosing this profession, their unique experiences during their first flight, their initial days of being an airhostess, their career progression over the years and finally the present-day situation. This methodology proved to be worthy in integrating the concepts of job satisfaction that I had majorly unearthed during the literature reviewing. However, there were many other interesting elements that emerged from this exercise of life-cycle interviews pertaining to various stages of the career of an airhostess, which I hadn't expected to arise out - More specifically, important elements for satisfaction arose far before the first flights that the respondents took, these first experiences also seem to be playing an important role, some big crises that took place in their corresponding organizations "without" deteriorating the satisfaction, etc. Thus from all these mentioned points, I strongly felt that satisfaction has to be seen as a long-term trajectory and it gives out more interesting answers and explanations. With these "Life-Cycle" interviews, I was able to approach the idea of satisfaction as a long term and continuous entity, with specific dynamics and which maybe something deeply rooted in each airhostess' trajectory.

It was surprising really to come across these elements and even after this I realized that I'm still missing "something" that could be able to better explain the concept of "Continuity" in keeping airhostesses happy. Hence I decided that I should take a look-back at the theory – Perhaps with a psychological approach. Since, I did not have an adequate background on psychology to explain things in the psychological perspective, I initially used a few layman's terminologies to kick-start the discussion of long-term job satisfaction in the psychological perspective and eventually took to

the exploration of the available literature on psychology to find some relevance to my context of research.

So, as the penultimate step of my research, I went back to the literature, and keyed in some different terminologies other than "job satisfaction", "factors affecting job satisfaction", etc. that I had used during my previous exercise of literature review. I tried searching with the key words "Psychological background behind job satisfaction", "Continuous satisfaction", etc. and the attempts turned out to be futile. At this juncture, I had the opportunity to come across the term "Psychological Contract" suggested by one of my esteemed reviewers, Prof. Pesqueux Yvon, during one of my "Work in Progress" presentations; it suddenly started to give me more clarity and it threw open an entirely different dimension of literature. Primarily, the term Psychological contract refers to individual beliefs, created by the organization, that relate to the terms of an exchange agreement between employees and their organization (Richard et al., 2009; Rousseau, 1995). I undertook this approach and tried to relate the answers given by airhostesses to the idea of "Psychological Contract".

Here's where I also came across something called "Mutual Expectations", that is, the expectations that lie between both employers and employees and vice versa too. This idea of "Mutual Expectations" in a nutshell is nothing but the expectations that employees have towards their organization and the organization's expectations towards its employees. For instance, employees might expect few important things such as good pay (salary), good working conditions, adequate rest time between two flights, optimal workload, etc. (in the specific case of airhostesses). Now having mentioned the expectations of the airhostesses what about those of the organization? It is at this point, I thought I'm again missing something – Yes, I had answers from airhostesses, but I did not have the answers from the organization! In order to obtain this, I once again went back to the field, touch-based with a former Human Resources Director of Air France and also the counterpart from Air India and requested their opinions on this. With their answers, I was able to get a much clearer picture as to what was really going on! The organization's perspective was more towards business motives, that is, maintaining their market share, stepping up to sustain the fierce competition in the market, financial crisis situations (considered one of the main reasons of lack of new recruitment of airhostesses, which was stressed as a grave problem during the interviews), and so on. Now with this knowledge, I tried to explore the literature of "Psychological Contract" as mentioned before, means that an individual (human being) always expects a reciprocal for every deed of his/her. This "Psychological Contract" has two dimensions – "Transactional" and "Relational". While in the case of "Transactional Psychological Contract" employees just get

associated with their organization for their career growth, good salary and growth in their personal reputation, etc., the "Relational Psychological Contract" means much more than all these for employees – They are emotionally and psychologically attached towards their organization and feel proud to do so! Here is where I backtracked through my transcribed data of the interviews and I realized that these airhostesses whom I interviewed from Air France/Air India, tended to downplay whatever challenges that were thrown at them and still felt proud to associate themselves with their respective organizations. Hence I had a feeling at this point that the "Relational" component of their "Psychological Contract" is exceedingly high! However, I was not very satisfied with myself and I was urging to seek more explanations in the psychological perspective to answer the question on the long-term continuous job satisfaction. I had a further question in my mind: Although according to the argument of the psychological contract, there might be a disconnect between the expectations and the company management in whatever ways it maybe, and airhostesses seem to get frustrated and dissatisfied as a result, but how is that these airhostesses still continue to proudly associate themselves with Air France/Air India? In other words, given the factor of disconnect, what makes the airhostesses to continue flying? And why do they do it? I felt at this point, I need something more than the idea of "Mutual Expectations" and subsequently the concept of "Relational Psychological contract" to explain this. Of course, the idea of Psychological Contract was very useful in exposing the disconnect between the airhostesses and the management and understand it in a scientific way, however I felt that there is one more step that needs to be taken in terms of answering the above question. I wanted to continue exploring through in the psychological perspective, which interested me a lot and see if I could deduce a possible answer to the question that I had posed.

And in the meanwhile, I came across a very interesting psychoanalytical narrative of human evolution by Jacques Lacan and Slavoj Zizek and I pondered over as to why couldn't I apply this psychoanalytical perspective to shed some light upon continuous job satisfaction in airhostesses. This was the final step in my research so far and to an extent, I was able to come up with one possible way of considering airhostesses' job satisfaction that could take into account the mystery I had started my research with initially.

Zizek's psychoanalytical insights stem from those of Jacques Lacan, a famous French psychoanalyst and their theory talks about three important stages in human evolution – The "Imaginary", "Symbolic" and the "Real". The "Imaginary" is that stage wherein the ego commences to be conspired and formed within an individual and this ego remains in the mind of the person as a capricious force throughout his/her life. The "Symbolic" is the next important stage

wherein all what is seen with the two eyes are mediated by the language, the law, the societal norms, etc. In other words, the "Symbolic" is very closely associated with the "Imaginary" and the interaction between these two stages give much more sense to what happens around the individual. The third stage, "Real" is something what the psychoanalytical theory says, is a "grey area" and is not much known to the individual. There are a few points wherein this unknown "Real" intrudes into the "Symbolic" and only then it gains significance.

I was very interested in seeing how this above psychoanalytical perspective would apply to the context of airhostesses. The significance of being an airhostess can be seen through the "Imaginary" or through the "Symbolic". Airhostesses seem to have developed a strong and multilayered "Imaginary", according to which their job is about flying, saving human lives during a catastrophe, enjoying a high social status, is a dream job, etc. On the other hand, the workplace, job roles, routine procedures, glamorous appearance, formal gestures and behaviors are very strictly defined in the "Symbolic" (security procedures, career plans, hierarchical position, etc.…). Through this application of the psychoanalytical theory, I could see here that the long-term continuous job satisfaction highly depends on their ability to sustain this "Imaginary" perspective of their activity. As long as the airhostesses can make sense of their experience bathed in a positive and rewarding "Imaginary" they had received and constructed, they can sustain a durable job satisfaction. Oddly enough, many present Human Resources policies in the organizations appear not take enough care of this strong "Imaginary", which in a way enhances the "Symbolic", which in turn, can potentially endanger and irreversibly damage airhostesses' long-term continuous job satisfaction.

1.4. My Strategy and Approach:

As a researcher, I follow a systematic approach to find answers to my above-mentioned questions, however the approach in my case is going to be a little different from the normal ones. Traditionally, studies pertaining to "job satisfaction", "psychological contract", etc., are undertaken by proposing an initial a-priori theoretical framework and then developing the framework further using field data and various methodologies of computation. But my approach to this is going to be a bit unique in two distinct ways: The first uniqueness being, instead of imposing an a-priori theoretical framework straightaway at the beginning and then expanding it further, I do the opposite – I expand an idea from the scratch, subsequently learn more about it from casual conversations, much deeper conversations, theorizing the initial learning from the conversations and finally with structured/semi-structured interviews, I intend to build a possible solution. Of course, I do not discount the available theory on the context, however it's just that I intend to take a different route.

The second uniqueness is that, I intend to make this research completely based on "narratives" so as to get a deeper understanding about the issue directly from the experiences of the respondents (in this case, airhostesses). Although one might argue that this approach might result in "subjectivity" to the theoretical grounding because of the limitation in terms of number of respondents approached for the study, etc., I still stick on with this approach since my only aim is to explore the issue in a much deeper sense. Also, personally me being a keen observer by nature, I feel that studies like these that are closely related to understanding and capturing the psychological aspects of human beings should be undertaken the narrative way to entail a deeper meaning.

1.5. For the Reader:

Dear reader, as I had mentioned in the previous sections of this chapter, this is going to be a very different approach to study satisfaction in the job of an airhostess. I would try and sustain your level of interest and make you experience my travel into the research with a 'mystery-solving' approach… As a researcher, I've tried to sneak into and have a look at an airhostess' life, right from the childhood days till what it is today, and this is going to add the element of "personal touch" to this exercise. As a result, all through this research, you might be confronted with unexpected findings, incidences, experiences, situations and surprises that would take twists and turns during the several steps that are undertaken from the start till the end. Also I would like to mention in this context that my research has not followed a straight route, thus acknowledging turns, regressions, surges, and breakthroughs, which in turn led to an unexpected conclusion.

Chapter 2 – First encounter with airhostess experience

2.1. Introduction:

This chapter deals with the first step that I took towards exploring the query that arose in my mind after my first interaction with an airhostess during one of my flights. Since this interaction was so exciting and surprising, I decided to extend this interaction with a few others later on, and eventually I took this up as my research. I decided to go with the technique of *"Narratives"* in the form of in-depth semi-structured enquiries with airhostesses regarding how satisfied were they in their job. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this research begins on a slightly different note, in a way that the problematic and theoretical reflection on the research question is done after the first round of contacts and assessments with the actual airhostesses experiences. I decided to undertake this exercise in order to understand directly from the airhostess as to what's exactly happening with them every day at work, the major duties, roles and responsibilities, the variety involved in their job, decision making, factors that aid their interest towards their job everyday, factors that demotivate them, amongst others. Of course one can put forth an argument that these details might already be available in the public domain for everyone to see, but however there is a much deeper sense attached to this exercise, which we would witness in a while from now. Overall, I wanted to capture numerous "subtle" aspects of the job that are part of the day-to-day routine of an airhostess, which might not be present in the public domain. The details here are not taken in order to give a more fleshy and living picture of airhostesses job satisfaction, but o find possible news leads, insights, cues to foster reflection on satisfaction in the case of such a unique profession. Hence this step serves a precedent in setting up the tone for further exploration.

Before we enter into the encounters with the airhostesses, I would like to give a quick summary of the industry profile of the Aviation sector in both France and India and also give a brief description about the major job roles and responsibilities of the airhostesses. I feel that this would be of help as we go deeper into the subject.

2.2. Industry Profile – Aviation in France and India:

According to the website of Info.shine.com, (2014), the aviation industry is considered to be a key growth driver across the globe due to its immense contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of every country. Validating this idea, the website further reveals that this industry currently supports around 56.6 million jobs worldwide and produces over US$ 2.2 trillion of the global GDP. This section would throw light upon this vital industry under research for this study – the civil aviation industry. I shall highlight the significance of the aviation industry and it's contribution to the growth story of two countries – a developing country and a developed country

– India and France respectively. The excerpts of the aviation profile in both countries are deeply appreciable in terms of the research context.

2.2.1. Aviation Industry – The French Profile:

Air transport in France including both domestic and international creates four distinct types of economic benefit to the country, viz., a significant contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), creation of new jobs for its citizens, generation of tax revenues for the government and finally contributes to the robust supply chain. With regards to the contribution of the aviation sector to France's GDP, as per the 2009 statistics, the figures stood at € 26.2 billion directly through the output of the aviation sector (including airlines, airports, ground services and aerospace), indirectly contributing € 21.8 billion through the aviation sector's supply chain and additionally € 13.7 billion through the spending by employees of the aviation sector and also by the supply chain and to add further, € 13.4 billion contribution towards "catalytic" benefits such as tourism that raises the overall contribution to € 75.2 billion or approximately 3.9% of France's GDP (Oxford Economics, 2011). Also as mentioned above, the aviation industry in France is one of the major employers in the country and supported almost 780,000 jobs as of 2009 and it's bound to increase manifold in future. The split of job creation is as follows: 297,000 jobs directly supported by the aviation sector in France, 299,000 jobs indirectly supported through the aviation sector's supply chain activities and a further 184,000 jobs supported through the employee spending in the aviation sector and it's allied supply chain. If we take into account the "catalytic" sectors, predominantly tourism, there's an addition of 208,000 jobs to the gross tally (Oxford Economics, 2011). This clearly shows that the aviation industry is a significant one with respect to the economy of France. In addition to the discussion of the jobs that are generated in this sector, all of them are highly productive jobs and the average air transport services employee generates around € 151,566 in GVA annually which is almost 125% more productive than the average in France, according to the 2009 statistics. This sector is also a significant contributor to the country's public finances. The aviation sector pays nearly € 12.4 billion in tax. It's also estimated that an addition of € 10.6 billion of government revenue is raised from the sector's supply chain activities and a further € 6.6 billion through taxation of the activities supported by the spending of employees of both the aviation sector and its supply chain (Oxford Economics, 2011). Such is the trend and the significance of the aviation sector in France.

2.2.2. Aviation Industry – The Indian Profile:

According to the Indian Brand Equity Foundation (2015), India's civil aviation industry is on an extremely high-growth trajectory and is aiming to become the third largest civil aviation market by 2020 and the largest by 2030. The civil aviation industry in India has ushered a new era of expansion driven by numerous factors such as the evolution of "Low-cost Carriers (LCC's), modernized airports, Foreign Direct Investment (FDIs) in domestic airlines, advancements in the Information Technology (IT) infrastructure, and growing emphasis on regional connectivity. Currently, India is the ninth largest civil aviation market in the world with a market size of around US$ 16 billion (as of August 2015). It is predicted that, the domestic and international passenger traffic are expected to increase at an annual average rate of around 12 percent and 8 percent respectively, while the domestic and international cargo are estimated to rise at an average annual rate of 12 percent and 10 percent respectively (India Brand Equity Foundation, August 2015).

However, having mentioned all this, when we have a look at the road ahead for the Indian civil aviation industry, it is still largely untapped with huge growth opportunities, considering that air transport is still a "luxury" and "expensive" for a vast majority of India's population, of which nearly 40 percent of the population is the upwardly mobile middle class (India Brand Equity Foundation, August 2015).

2.3. The Cabin Crew (Airhostesses) – The most instantly recognized job in the Aviation Sector:

The population of employees under this study comprises of the Cabin crew. The cabin crew – also known as the "Air Hostess" is a very important job in modern day airline organizations around the world. According to the Federal law of the United States, there must be a team of cabin crew in every aircraft to take care of the safety of the passengers on board. Everyone knows that Airhostesses' main job is to serve food and drinks to passengers, however their job is much more than this. They are the people who're responsible for the evacuation of the plane in case of an emergency, provide pre-flight health and safety briefing, assist passengers to their respective seats along with their cabin baggage, complete reports once the journey is finished and do any other work necessary within the flight such as first aid, etc. (Aviation Job Search Blog, 2012). The job of the air hostess comes with very changeable working hours and it's not quite uncommon for them to spend anywhere between sixty-five and ninety hours in the air per month along with another fifty hours of pre and post flight work. Also, the length of the working shifts can change dramatically as some flights are "short-haul" – that is, with a limited number of flying hours, while some others might be "long-haul" – that is, the flying time may exceed even fifteen hours at

a stretch. The length of the flight primarily depends on the airline organization with which the person works (Aviation Job Search Blog, 2012).

The complex part of the job of an airhostess comes when they have to deal with medical emergencies on board, facing unruly passengers or even in worst cases, terrorism. Hence to combat all these kind of complexities, airhostesses undergo a variety of "extra" training courses. Given these complexities, it's almost certain that the job of an airhostess is not meant for everyone as they've to be quite hard working, with unpredictable working hours which might even eat into the late evenings, nights, weekends, etc. But those who hold on to all these challenges successfully, can expect to see the world and also can get an opportunity to work with people from various cultures and backgrounds (Aviation Job Search Blog, 2012).

2.3.1. A general job description of the Cabin Crew:

Primarily the job description underlines the key duties, roles and responsibilities that are required to be fulfilled as part of a job. According to a popular website titled "Careers & Education" (2013), the following is a detailed job description of a member of the cabin crew in any airline organization.

- Airhostesses are responsible to make passengers aware of the safety rules and regulations while on board.
- Before the passengers enter the flight it's the primary responsibility of an airhostess to provide a briefing about the plan and duties to the passengers and the pilot.
- The briefing given to the pilot makes him/her comfortable to coordinate with the crew and get information regarding the weather condition.
- Airhostess checks the emergency equipment including first aid kits before the commencement of the flight.
- Airhostess checks the quantity and quality of the food and beverages to be served to passengers on the board.
- Checking the tickets of every passenger and help them to be seated comfortably, is another priority for an airhostess.
- Make aware of how to use the seat belts and how to sit at the time of take off.
- It's a primary responsibility of the airhostess to convey information to passengers regarding safety measures, weather conditions, etc.

- Behaving with passengers in a pleasing and a polite manner is an integral part of an airhostess's job.

- To take care of the working conditions within the flight and also to maintain the hygiene of eatables on board.

  The following points establish the requisite qualifications (Knowledge, Skills and abilities) for an airhostess job (Careers & Education, 2013):

- She should be of age between eighteen and twenty-one and her weight should be in accordance to her height with the minimum height prescribed to be twenty-six meters and the eyesight is to be normal.

- Should have a good command of English and preferably another foreign language, in case of international flights.

- Should have passed higher secondary school. A university degree is preferable. Certifications in Tourism, Psychology and Communication might get more preferences. Some airline organizations prefer to train their fresher staff and certify them to deal with any kind of real-time situation on board.

- The certificate of training from any recognized institute atleast for a six-month period or a one year period, depending on the caliber of the student.

- The candidate should be physically fit with normal eyesight.

- The candidate should be punctual at all times and have the skill of working with a team.

- The candidate should be calm and polite at all times.

- The candidate should be flexible with respect to working hours.

2.4. The Research Approach:

Having seen a brief description about the job of an airhostess, now let us move into the exploration. There are several steps involved in this exploration exercise. Amongst various thought processes involved at this stage, I intended to take a firm step forward, but in a slightly different way. The following sub-sections would give a detailed picture of how this exercise was approached.

2.4.1. Choosing the appropriate Research Approach:

As per the main aim of this research exercise, I wanted to obtain an in-depth understanding of what happens in the life of an airhostess every passing day and despite numerous challenges they undergo both professionally and personally, how do they sustain in this profession. The above

sentence can be split into two parts – the first part is to understand the ground reality while the second part is to explore how are these people satisfied. In other words, only when one possible answer to the question "Why" is found, the fundamental question of the research problem, "How" be answered. This is why I decided to approach this problem in a "Narrative" way. In technical terms, of a wide range of approaches considered, the "Qualitative" approach was chosen to be well suited so as to move ahead in this study.

2.4.2. Why this method?

Yin, et al,. (2009) In his book on "Case Study Research" further states that one of the most of common misconceptions that social science researchers encounter and also deeply believe is that case studies are only appropriate for the exploratory phase of an investigation, and that surveys and histories are appropriate for the descriptive phase and also that, experiments are perhaps the only way of doing explanatory or causal inquiries. This hierarchical view among social science researchers also reinforces the idea that case studies are just preliminary research tools and cannot be used to describe or test propositions. However, this hierarchical view may be questioned. Experiments with a completely explorative motive have certainly always existed. Additional to this view, case studies are far from being only an exploratory strategy for research. Similarly, famous descriptive case studies are found in major disciplines such as sociology and political science.

Basically, there are three main conditions that help researchers decide which methodology to follow in their respective researches. The three conditions consist of (a). The type of research question posed, (b). The extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events and, (c). the degree of focus on contemporary events, as opposed to historic events.

When we focus on the type of research question posed, we find a basic categorization scheme for the different types of research questions, viz. "Who", "What", "Where", "How" and "Why" questions (Hedrick, Bickman & Rog, 1993). If the research question focuses on "What", there are two possibilities that may arise. The first possibility is that, the "What" questions may lead us to develop pertinent hypotheses and take us to an exploratory study and frames propositions for further inquiry. The second type of "What" question might lead us to ask further questions like "How many" or "How much". These questions would lead us to the survey method or any other archival methods of research. Hence we can infer from the above argument that the survey method is an apt one to address and enumerate the "What" question whereas the case study method would not be a good option, given this situation. Similarly, even questions like "Who" and "Where" are more likely to favor survey methods or analysis of archival data. Whereas, in contrast to the above

questions, if the research focuses on "How" and "Why" questions, the answers are intended to be more explanatory and these are the questions that are likely to lead us to the usage of case studies, histories or experiments as the preferred research methods. Hence, given the nature of this study and the research questions posed are predominantly the *"How"* and *"Why"* types, the "Qualitative" Case study approach was adopted (Yin, et al 2009).

2.4.3. The Interview process and ways of eliminating related issues:

In order to have a detailed coverage, an "In-depth" Interview is adopted as the technique to conduct this study with distinct "cases". According to Boyce & Neale (2006), "In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular area, program or a situation". In-depth interview technique comes with numerous advantages, with the main advantage being that, it gives a much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods like the surveys, and also providing a more relaxed atmosphere in which the information is collected, that is, the respondents may feel more comfortable having a conversation about a situation, as opposed to filling out a survey (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Of course the literature explaining this research technique doesn't shy away from pointing out a few disadvantages, which include the possibility of a bias, being more time-intensive and the results coming out of the study are not generalizable across other situations (Boyce & Neale, 2006). However, rather than getting myself deterred with the flip sides of going for this method, I tried my best to address all the above-mentioned issues pertaining to this research technique. Particularly, I tried to avoid and eliminate the factor of "bias" from the exercise by the following ways:

1. I tried to eliminate the *"Acquiescence bias"*, commonly known as "yes-saying" bias (wherein, the respondents may blindly tend to agree with the interviewer's view points, assuming that the interviewer is an expert in the subject of discussion), by framing my questions in a way that entailed maximum talking by the respondent and a minimal amount of talking by myself. This approach ensured that the respondent feels on par with the researcher and he/she doesn't blindly take a viewpoint, which might not actually be in reality. Also, throughout the session, I was asking my respondents for concrete examples and experiences to substantiate their views.

2. I tried to eliminate the *"Social desirability bias"* (wherein the respondents tend to answer in a way that they think would be accepted and liked, because of a "fear" factor that makes them think "What if I'm mistaken by the other person if I give an answer like this?"), by assuring every respondent about the confidentiality of this exercise and making them comfortable by

focusing on unconditional positive regard. For instance, while talking about sensitive issues like unforeseen experiences of physical misbehavior by passengers with them (especially female respondents), the possibility of the respondents shying away from expressing themselves loomed large. However, by adopting the above-mentioned technique of positive reinforcement, respondents felt much more relaxed and comfortable to express themselves freely.

3. I also tried to eliminate the problem of *"Habituation"* (wherein, during a long interview the respondent might feel bored or fatigued and might start giving uninterested responses to important questions, and this might affect the quality of the research output), by sharing some lighter moments like jokes, discussing some current-day events, some short talks about their family, hobbies, etc., in between the interview. By this, the respondents felt relaxed and due to this friendly and informal interaction, the factor of "trust" increased and it was clearly visible in the way the respondents answered critical questions without any inhibition or fear. Of course, I tried to maintain a balance here by sticking on to the topic of discussion, although there were a few lighter moments and jokes in the middle. Also, most of the interviews were conducted in restaurants over lunch or dinner, so as to maintain that informal ambience and in a way to make them feel comfortable.

4. *"Cultural Bias"* was a significant challenge while undertaking this research, since I had to interact with people from different cultures and languages – French, English and a few sub-cultures and languages within India. To eliminate this, I gave my best foot forward by trying to relate myself to their respective cultures and their languages. For instance, although I'm weak in French, I tried to strike a chord with my French respondents with a few pleasantries, words, phrases, and some broken sentences in French occasionally so that, they felt happy and comfortable to interact with me (Although all the interviews were done predominantly in English only). I found this to be extremely important to adopt in my research because, from my experience of travelling to many countries I've always observed that if I tried speaking with people in the native language of theirs, maybe even a small bit, they feel very happy and connect with me quite easily and in a more friendly way. This eliminates the cultural distance between people eliminated to a great extent.

5. Another important factor that came up as a challenge was *"Halo effect"* – A situation wherein the interviewer may take the respondent's views for granted just because he/she might sound positive and authentic. Of course initially it was tough to manage with this issue, however as I started interviewing more people, I was able to tackle and modify my mindset in approaching the respondents and viewing their narratives in a neutral manner.

6. A very important and perhaps the most rampant issue of bias during a qualitative interview are *"putting words into the respondent's mouth"*. Sometimes, the interviewer might tend to start behaving like a journalist by asking "follow-up" questions without fully understanding the respondent's thought and reaction. Interviewers tend to do this so as to capture the rapport and attention of the respondent, but sometimes the interviewer ends up in over/under-estimating the respondent's views. In some cases, the interviewer might even end up irritating the respondent and subsequently he/she might become cold in responding further to the interviewer. To avoid this, I tried to "summarize" the views of the respondent to them if the reply to a question was very long and asked them if I got it right. For certain questions wherein I got shorter replies, (in some cases, just a few words) I tried to follow up the short answers through a few "follow-up" questions. By adopting this balance between summarizing and asking a few follow-up questions, I was able to maintain the continuity in a smooth manner and also in a way by not affecting the respondent's ego. In a way, this helped me in reducing the issue of "putting unnecessary words into the respondents' mouth".

2.4.4. The Data Collection – Conducting In-depth Interviews:

The process of conducting the in-depth interviews follows the same process as that of other research techniques, viz. plan, developing the instrument, collect data, analyze the data and disseminate the findings (Boyce & Neale, 2006). As per the protocol, I decided that this study be done in the civil aviation industry, in two countries – France and India. Two companies were selected and both these companies are publicly owned national air carriers of the respective countries – Air France and Air India. I decided to go with these two companies because of the very reason that they are the largest and perhaps the oldest state-run aviation companies in their respective countries, and also because they have a long legacy with flying. Also, these two companies are facing turbulent times for the past decade or so owing to numerous reasons and this directly throws up a very interesting dimension to my entire research. As I already had an initial framework in mind with some basic informal interactions with a few airhostesses while travelling, it was easier for me to proceed with the further initial protocols. Since the main goal of this research is to deeply explore airhostesses' satisfaction in their job, their viewpoints, feelings and perspectives are predominantly listened to in the form of narratives and pondered upon. Thus, the primary and perhaps the only "stakeholders" for this study at this point are the airhostesses.

2.4.5. Selection of Respondents:

Based on my available contacts and also by touch basing with people through a few other sources, I was successful in approaching a total of ten cabin attendants from Air France and eleven from Air India. However due to various reasons like unavailability, mismatch of timings, etc., the final number came out to be eight from Air France and seven from the Indian counterpart, thus making the total number of respondents to be fifteen. The airhostesses of Air France were interviewed entirely in English (in a few cases, I took help from some of my friends who knew both French and English) and their counterparts from Air India were interviewed in a mixture of English and their respective local languages. Most importantly, a serious attempt was made to create a calm and a relaxed atmosphere for every person so that they can express their opinions freely. Issues of their privacy were also made clear.

Among the fifteen airhostesses interviewed, six were male respondents and the rest were female. The age group spanned between thirty-seven and forty-five in the case of the French organization and between twenty-nine and thirty-five in the case of the Indian counterpart. With respect to the marital status, all the stakeholders from the Indian organization were married and five out of the six stakeholders from the French organization were married. Their education background is quite similar, with all stakeholders holding a Bachelor's degree and a few of them holding a Master's degree as well. Their levels of experience ranged from ten to twenty-five years in the industry.

2.5. The Interview Structure:

The interviews with respondents from both Air France and Air India were conducted between the time period of June 2015 and December 2015. This exercise consisted of six main parts: Part one dealt with the understanding of the subtle roles and responsibilities of an airhostess, which was the starting point. Moving further, part two dealt with the unique variety in the job of an airhostess. The discussion stemmed into some intricate and untold variety that airhostesses have in their job everyday. The level of interest increased further as I moved on into the third part, which talked about how airhostesses are empowered to take critical decisions at the right time and also in a super-quick time! Here is where the conversation started to reveal some surprising answers as to what exactly happens "behind the screen". As management professionals it is understood that all these would require adequate training and practice before stepping into the shoes of an airhostess on board. Hence, part four of the conversation led me into the various training modules that airhostesses undergo, the interesting features of it, challenges faced and the important learning from every challenge faced. And now once the learning has happened, it's time to talk about some motivational factors to perform while on the job. The interview further explored into a very

important aspect called "Motivation to perform", wherein airhostesses opened up their minds with their various practical experiences that they've had during their long tenure of being in this job. From these experiences I was able to comprehend some of the most difficult problems, challenges, tough situations that the airhostesses face every day in their job, and how different airhostesses approach different problems differently. Numerous interesting and breath-taking experiences emerged during this stage of the conversation and subsequently, this stage started to pave way for my research to really chug along! Finally the conversation tended to clarify that if at any stage of their career, this motivation might also at some point become a source of de-motivation too. This stage too saw some interesting points coming out and was illustrated with some personal experiences of the airhostesses.

For this exercise, I had purposefully structured every interview with the above-mentioned framework, so as to obtain kind of a holistic view of the various dimensions of the job along with the idea of capturing happy, proud, emotional and sad moments in being an airhostess, which serves to be the crux of this entire research. From this exercise the reader would be able to observe that at each stage of the process, every respondent shared innumerable, significant and interesting personal experiences to substantiate their various points of view. These personal information and experiences served as a key in exploring new dimensions to job satisfaction.

2.6. Interesting points evolving from the interview process:

This section takes us through the interesting points that emerged from this exercise of interviews, and as mentioned above it has six different parts. The part-by-part explanation of all the fifteen interviews consolidated, is as below. It is to be noted by the reader that certain parts wherein the responses of airhostesses were similar, would entail a consolidated summary and for those parts that entailed customized responses from different airhostesses, would entail a case wise in-depth description.

Part 1: "Subtle" but major Roles & Responsibilities of being an Airhostess:

A consolidated summary of the various roles and responsibilities as described by the various respondents are as follows:

An airhostess is supposed to be at the airport at least ninety minutes before the scheduled timing of the flight. Once at the airport, the job doesn't directly commence with the flying part. There's a lot of paper work to be completed at ground before taking on to the flight. If it's a domestic flight, it's just the customs declaration, but if it's an international flight there're lot of other paper works to be

done. Once this is done, there's a session called "Briefing" wherein the captain of the flight and the first officer introduce themselves to the crew of airhostesses. Once the introduction is done, the captains take over and explain the duration of the flight, flight path, possible weather condition en-route the destination, possibility of turbulence on the way (if any) and the approximate take off and landing timing. This briefing session is very crucial and it is normally for fifteen minutes. The airhostesses are expected to make note of all the points carefully without missing any of them. Once the briefing session is done, they proceed for the security check and henceforth proceed to their corresponding aircraft. An interesting point to note here is that, as part of the mandatory security clearance test, all airhostesses, captains and first officers are supposed to undergo a breathalyzer test. This is a compulsory test to check if the person is under the influence of alcohol. Severe consequences may arise (including possibilities of a suspension/termination) if a person is found positive to the Breathalyzer test. Once inside the aircraft, the first responsibility of the airhostess crew is to make sure that all the safety equipment on the aircraft are intact. Here comes the significance of the job. Every respondent claimed that the job of the airhostess is not just about serving food and beverages to the passengers, but to ensure utmost security to them during the flight and till they land at the destination. Some of the key safety equipment that the airhostesses have to ensure is fire extinguishers, oxygen masks, life vests under the seats, water jacket, etc. Once this is done, the airhostesses decide among themselves as to which part of the aircraft to be working at (Front, middle or back). Then the passengers are welcomed on to the aircraft by the airhostesses. Every passenger is greeted with a "Welcome" and a "Smile" and the airhostesses help passengers with their luggage and get them seated. Once the flight commences, normally if the flight duration is more than ten hours, one half of the crew rests for a while and the other half of the crew would be working. The period of rest maybe for an hour or so. However, constant vigil is maintained for any unforeseen instance of a fire or smoke in the cabin. Once the flight commences and after the initial take off procedure, the serving of food and beverages begins. This is a well-known responsibility of the airhostess, wherein they serve passengers with a pleasant appearance. Constant vigil is to be maintained if there's any passenger is getting sick on board. If there's a case of medical emergency the crew is trained accordingly so as to combat any kind of catastrophic situation. Once the flight reaches the destination, the procedure for disembarkation commences. The airhostesses need to check if all passengers have disembarked from the plane along with all their baggage. Finally all the equipment of the aircraft is kept intact (including all safety equipment) so that the next set of airhostesses can take over for the next flight. The airhostesses then pass through the customs at the airport and then finally to the hotel to rest. Normally there is a twenty-four hour break in between

two flights if the flight duration is within ten hours and if it's greater than ten hours, the break extends to forty-eight hours.

These are predominantly the basic responsibilities and roles of an airhostess. However, for a head cabin crew, there are slightly more responsibilities than the other members of the crew. There are leadership roles to be fulfilled wherein the head cabin crew must manage around three to six other members under him/her, in case of domestic short-haul flights and around twelve to fourteen members in case of long-haul international flights. Like any other leader in any other industry, relationship management is a key here as well. But a peculiar aspect in this case is that, since the crew varies with every flight, it's both an opportunity as well as a challenge in dealing with different people every day. Additionally, the cabin crew head, along with the ground engineers has the responsibility to clear the aircraft for taking off, by checking and making sure that there's no technical snag. This should be done approximately an hour before take off and around half an hour before boarding commences. Once all passengers are on board, a whole lot of paper work begins for the leader of the cabin crew. The paper work involves tallying of the number of passengers on board along with the records available, so that no passenger is left behind at the airport. This process is called the "Passenger Manifest". The "passenger Manifest" document consists of various details such as the names of passengers, their allocated seat row and numbers and details of any special assistance required by any passenger on board. Apart from this, there's a very important document called the "General Declaration" or "Gen Dec" in short. All the details of the flight would be written on that – Right from the name of the company, the name of the owner, the flight registration number, flight number, the crew who are operating that flight, the route of the flight – All this detail would be given in this particular paper – with the declarations from the different departments below. – The airline manager would be signing in that, subsequently with the signatures of the immigration, customs, etc. This is in a way that all of them are approving that all the things are correct as per their knowledge. This paper is so important that, the airhostess can stay abroad in any country for a minimum period of seven days without a visa. – This is applicable to any country in the world, except for the USA, where a separate visa is required. Another important document is the "Load Sheet" that contains the details of the number of passengers, cargo loaded, weight of the aircraft, the dry operating weight, the weight of the fuel, etc. along with the main company details. This is to ensure that the weight is limited as per the regulations prescribed for each kind of aircraft. So all these calculations are done by the respective departments and are finally approved by the captain. These papers are to be maintained by the head of the cabin crew for any cross-reference

later on. So only if these papers are ready with the cabin crew, the flight is ready to take off. Apart from these, there are other paper works that need to be filled by the head of the crew – One is called "Flight Report" containing all the details of the flight, including the flight number, number of passengers on board, and most importantly what are all the happenings during the flight – including any untoward incident that happens on the flight – All of these are recorded in that sheet. This directly goes to the Operations department of the airline company, so that they'll come to know what all happened during the flight. It also contains the details on the time of arrival and departure. There might be some slight changes on the departure and arrival timings because of other reasons like ATC, etc. So, only the actual timings are written in this paper. So this is for the cabin. Also the cabin will have records of all the things that have been uplifted, including food and beverage items, etc. To be very precise, it's nothing but a brief description about the entire flight actually. Another record that we maintain is called the "Cabin Defect Logbook". This contains details of even the smallest of the small issues with respect to the defects in the cabin – for instance, if the recline button on a seat is not working, or if the seat belt is not proper, or if a seat is torn, or if any other equipment is not working – all these can be recorded by the head of the cabin crew in that book, so that once the aircraft lands somewhere and the crew leaves the aircraft, and when the engineer comes, he can make out what all are the problems in this aircraft, so that it could be rectified. It's not only for the engineers – Even the next set of crew that come in for the next flight will also know that these are the issues on this flight. So it's a kind of communication between you and the engineer and also the next incoming crew. So this is one important thing that is to be filled on the flight.

With this accord we see the intensity of work that is required by the airhostesses to perform for every flight. The most unique point to be observed here is that, all the above-mentioned roles and responsibilities come as an orderly sequence that cannot be altered/modified/missed at any point in time. It can also be grossly understood that the job of an airhostess is not just to serve food and beverages on the flight but more to do with the safety aspect of the passengers on board, right from the moment they're in the aircraft and till the moment they deplane at the destination.

Part 2: The unique variety in the job of an airhostess:

Every job in the world has some kind of variety or the other. However, since the job of an airhostess, is usually admired by the society as a "special" one, it's important to know what makes this job one of the most admired jobs among people. This part deals with those aspects of variety that creates an interesting but a distinct differentiation from all other jobs, as described by the

respondents of this study.

The terms "variety" and "Airhostess" are literally inseparable from each other. The variety that this job offers is enormous. Every day as an airhostess is a completely new day at office. In other words, an airhostess has to deal with an entirely different set of passengers on each flight. This is perhaps the biggest variety that this job can offer – One of my respondents emphatically remarked in this context -*"In a flight of around 180 passengers, we see 180 different characters on the plane at any point of time!!"* Thus, given this enormous variety in terms of passengers, the approach towards different passengers by an airhostess tends to be different. For instance, there might be a wide range of passengers travelling on board – Right from a seven-day-old infant till a seventy-year-old person, and obviously the approach and the ways of dealing with every type of passengers are different. Hence from this, we can sense that, one of the biggest factors that adds to the interest of airhostesses is the variety of passengers on board and for every flight they take. Having said this, the variety doesn't stop here. It also extends further to having an entirely different crew for each flight. Especially in huge and established airline companies like the ones chosen for this study where there are tens of thousands of airhostesses, the members of the crew are never going to be the same, even for two flights in a decade. An important implication at this point in time is that, airhostesses are expected to be extremely good at interpersonal relationships among colleagues, because they've to work with different people all the time. Third, the job variety comes in the form of variety in the destinations to which they fly. In established air carriers, this is possible because of a worldwide network of routes and airhostesses get to benefit out of the huge network. They have the privilege of travelling and exploring different cities around the world and this is perhaps another really interesting aspect of this job. A sarcastic, yet a unique difference in this job as pointed out by one of the respondents is that, the usage of mobile phones during the job is zero and they are completely cut off from the rest of the world for the duration of the flight. This means a lot because there's no disturbance of any sort from anybody and hence the employee enjoys his/her own private space while at work, unlike other jobs wherein employees might be under constant influence of people around through the phone. Hence, all these aspects account to the interesting and unique variety of the job of an airhostess day after day.

Part 3: Decision-Making at Crucial Times:

Normally, the head of the cabin crew does most of the decision-making and the other members tend to follow the decisions made by him/her. Sometimes, in a few cases the captain of the flight steps in and takes control of a few decisions, but apart from that the decision-making with respect to the

cabin mostly lies with the head of the cabin crew. In this part, the respondents who are heads of the cabin crew share their experiences with respect to decision-making and also to what extent they're given the power to take decisions.

According to the narratives of various respondents, the head of the cabin crew has the full power and authority on board to take crucial decisions if in case of an emergency situation on the flight. The emergency situation maybe anything right from an anticipated crash landing, mid-air evacuation or even a medical emergency on board wherein a passenger gets sick during the flight. Of course there are well-written robust procedures to combat any emergency situation on board and all the airhostesses are well trained to handle any such unforeseen situation. If it's a small aircraft with just four or five members of the crew on board, the head of the crew directly issues the instructions to act, but if it's a bigger plane with more than fifteen airhostesses, there might be cases of shared responsibility. However it is to be noted here that every airhostess, irrespective of being a junior/senior has the equal responsibility to act quickly if there's an extreme emergency on board, such as a fire or smoke, unruly passengers, etc.

More than emergency situations, the problem comes when some unruly passengers have to be handled on board. Passengers become unruly on board due to various reasons – Sometimes there might be an unexpected shortage of food and beverages on board and due to that the passenger maybe denied his/her share of food, on a few occasions the seat recline might have been broken and passengers might demand for a seat change, numerous cases wherein passengers get drunk and create unwanted ruckus on board. Normally for these kinds of issues, all the airhostesses on board have the full authority to take control of the situation. For instance, if there's a short supply of food, the airhostess can issue some vouchers or coupons or even extra miles, so as to compensate for the unexpected happening. However when things go out of hand – for instance the passenger crosses the limits and gets into physical or verbal harassment (the worst case happens when passengers try and behave wrongly with the female airhostesses), the chief purser immediately intervenes and sends out a strong message to the passenger. If further unruliness continues, the chief purser has the full authority to approach and hand over the unruly passenger to the police, after landing at the destination. Such is the nature of authority that the head of the cabin crew possesses when it comes to situations like these. Of course, the other colleagues on board such as the captain of the flight, and maybe even other co-passengers would try to extend full support to the airhostesses in case of physical or verbal harassments. Also, during the course of the narrative, I came to learn that this is one reason why a few airlines nowadays appoint a minimum of one male cabin crew for every long-haul flight. According to the respondents, this has started to be a recent practice by many airline

companies around the world so as to combat and protect the rights of women employees on board. Such is the extent of decision-making authority given to airhostesses.

Part 4: The Level & Intensity of Training undergone by Airhostesses:

This is a very interesting part of the interview process wherein the respondents recall their days when they underwent training before they actually took off to the skies. It's more interesting because, unlike previous sections here we have differences in terms of experiences and procedures for undergoing training amongst the French and the Indian Airline companies. The key aspects of difference are consolidated as follows:

When asked about the training procedure amongst the airhostesses of Air France, they came up with the following accord: Although there's not a need for a strict academic degree to become an airhostess, a certificate called *CSS – "Certificat Sécurité Sauvetage"* is required. It's like a diploma to be an airhostess. There were quite a few options during the period of 2000-01 when Air France was looking to employ lot of people and so either the person could possess this certificate already to enter Air France, or the company would train the person to get this certificate. The training period normally is for two weeks. It's not in the plane. It's in an office. There was a consensus among all the respondents here that the first week of office-training is really stressful because you've to present yourself everyday and they would check out your hair, makeup and all these kind of things. To add to it, at the end of the two weeks it's not sure whether they would retain the trainees or not. It's a preliminary training. One of the respondents recalls from her experience that this training session was the most stressful part, because if her hair wasn't tied properly, they might pull out her hair and give her a hard time with it! And most importantly, they've to behave in a well-mannered way for the whole week because everyone judges them and had to be careful about that. During the first week, on one of the days the trainee has to take the plane, but as a passenger, so that he/she understand the view of the customer. Respondents claim that this was really nice and exciting because the captain and all the hostesses were really welcoming. And after this two-week training, the trainees go for their first flights. But during the first flight, trainees are like supplements, that is, they don't have security functions. So they only serve food, welcome passengers, etc. but not the security. As a supplement, the trainees have to fly sixty hours –That would be for maybe a month or two. So once they're done with the 60 hours of supplement, they're inducted into the regular flight along with the security tasks as well. Such is the process of rigorous training with regards to Air France that I came to know from my respondents.

When asked about the training procedure amongst the airhostesses of Air India, I came across the

following accord: The training period is normally for three months. The company trains their newly recruited airhostesses on the following areas - Major services, common services, about the industry, some basic ideas, theory, history of the airline, etc. Here too, just like in the case of Air France, respondents felt that it was really tough and stressful because here they had to undergo more of theoretical training before actually getting on to the flight. One of the respondents claimed, *"We just knew the building we stayed in, and the training center. That's it!! Nothing more!!"* Respondents felt that they were hurrying into the topics because they wanted to finish it off and clear them in three months. In addition to the classroom sessions, they also had to take up exams almost every day. It was as if they had to face an exam almost every day along with a viva. Whatever they teach the previous day, they had to prepare and give the exam and viva the next day. Thus, it can be sensed to an extent that initially it was a very tough time for all of them. It was all very strict because it's monitored directly by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and all these exams and viva are conducted by the DGCA. So they've to very serious about it. And with respect to the airline company under study, they always give more importance to safety procedures basically. So they were also very strict on the entire training part. Moreover apart from all this, they would give you a practical training for all of the things – Like how to fly down from certain heights, how to jump into the water and help passengers, how to handle the jackets and secure them over the passengers, etc. They give all these kinds of practical training along with the theory part. The initial flight for them, immediately after the training period was a "Ferry flight" – A flight without any passengers. The company felt that if passengers were present, it would have been tough for us to handle the situation on their own and hence, gave them an empty flight wherein, some of the crew used to act as passengers and all the services that are to be offered during the flight, were offered and rehearsed - Few of them will serve as the cabin crew and few of the others would act like passengers. Thus, these are some ways in which the airhostesses are subjected to rigorous training procedures at Air India.

Part 5: Sources of motivation of airhostesses:

There might be numerous sources for motivation for an airhostess. In many cases it might begin from the interest to fly at a very young age and gradually the airhostess comes across many incidents during his/her career that shape up their happiness as well as their overall personality. This part focuses on the various sources through which airhostesses try to derive their motivation to perform well. The various excerpts from the respondents of this study are consolidated as follows:

One important factor that seems to contribute to the motivation of airhostesses (as unanimously

accepted by all the respondents) is interacting with various kinds of passengers on board on every flight. As mentioned in the previous section also, this factor assumes more significance since this forms the core of an airhostess's job. As remarked by one of the respondents, there would be 180 different personalities boarding a 180-seater aircraft and hence, dealing with them is both a challenge as well as a source of motivation. Moreover, different passengers react to different situations differently. This not only adds up to the variety in the job, but also seems to contribute quite significantly to the learning part wherein, as an airhostess you're tending to develop an expertise in dealing with various kinds of people, that in turn shapes your personality to a great extent. The second factor that seems to contribute to motivation of airhostesses, stem out from the first factor itself – Tokens of appreciation from passengers while on board. There's again a unanimous acceptance from all respondents on this point, wherein airhostesses feel extremely satisfied if they get positive feedbacks from passengers during the flight or while disembarking. More than the appreciation and recognition given by the organization, when it comes from passengers it intends to be a really a special feeling. The words of appreciation might not be restricted only from passengers on board – It might also come from other colleagues on board such as, the captain, or other fellow airhostess colleagues on board. One of the respondents gleefully remarks as follows: *"A simple word of appreciation from your crew or your captain – Perhaps you might not get anything in return – Or even a word of appreciation from a passenger - You get it on your face. So that gives the total satisfaction – You feel like telling ten people that someone appreciated me for this. It's not that you're getting 10 Rupees extra in my salary for that, but still… It's a total satisfaction if your senior comes and says to you that you've done a very good job. That's enough for you to work better on your next flight"*. Another respondent feels that (Quote): *"You get a feedback on almost every flight, or an appreciation occasionally from your passengers or crew or from the captain, which will make you feel good and makes you feel that 'Okay!! I'm in the right place'!!"* These accords clearly seems to indicate that getting positive feedbacks from passengers, colleagues or captain on board seems to serve as strong sources of motivation to perform well in the job. The next source of motivation for airhostesses – Perhaps stemming again from the previous source, seems to be from the happiness they derive after handling tough situations (if any) on board – Might be in many cases, a medical emergency, or any unforeseen accident situations (not always crashes and emergency landings), etc. wherein, skills and competencies of airhostesses are really at test. Here, respondents share a few experiences of theirs and illustrate how they gain immense satisfaction when they save the life of a passenger on board, in case of a medical emergency. Respondents feel that such satisfaction is unparalleled. This paints a picture that, as an

airhostess, you need to be extremely alert and well prepared to handle any kind of situation while flying.

Part 6: Motivational factors contribute to de-motivation too?

But at the same time, it also does seem to impact airhostesses badly when passengers grudge at them for various reasons – Maybe genuine or otherwise. Most of the times passengers get irked due to unscheduled delays of flights, shortage of food/beverages on board, or sometimes even because of their own personal problems. At times, passengers might argue with the cabin crew over alcoholic beverages – There's a strict restriction of providing alcoholic beverages on board the flight as prescribed the Ministry of Civil Aviation of different countries, however few passengers fail to understand all this and they resort to unruly behavior, some might even go to the extent of abusing airhostesses (especially females) both verbally and in a few cases, physically too. Respondents feel and share a few instances wherein they feel bad if passengers shout back at them and they're at the receiving end. At times, these kinds of experiences would obviously irk airhostesses. If the problem is from the organization's side, all the airhostesses can do is to just smile and receive all shouting from the passengers – Is this perhaps the reason that the airhostess whom I first touch based even before undertaking this research sarcastically remarked *"Many a time, the SMILE of the airhostess is more due to helplessness than anything else!!"* We've to wait to throw more light on to this!

2.7. Moments of Reflection:

In the Introduction chapter, I had hinted the reader that there are loads of things going behind the scene of an airhostess and subsequently so far, the reader might have had a glimpse of a few of them, just to throw some light to start with. Also, by far the reader would have realized some unheard aspects of the job of an airhostess that may have sent signals of surprise. As a researcher, there were innumerable moments that made me both surprised, taken aback and emotional; eventually these moments helped me to capture a glimpse of the ground reality in a much better way. I shall discuss the key striking points and key moments and information that kindled me to ponder further.

2.7.1. Safety first… Service next!!

As per the consensus of all the respondents, there are three main aspects in the job of an airhostess – Safety, hospitality and service. The team of five to six airhostesses on board is solely responsible

for the safety of the entire two hundred – odd passengers on board. The amount of priority that the airline companies give for safety is explained in detail from one of the respondents here… (Quote) *"As an airhostess, when I was selected to be one, I initially thought to myself that I belonged to the sky!! My dream came true!! I was pretty sure what my instructor was going to teach me.. How to walk... How to talk.. How to serve.. But nooo!!! It wasn't to be!! All they did to me was – They handed over a 600-page manual to me to read!!! And that 600-page manual had to "by-hearted" upside down within just 40 days!! Subsequently I had to give exams every week.. I had to give viva's every week.. I've seen hundreds of young girls graduating, but I've also seen 200 of them going back home disappointed!! I've been longing for a long time, just to wear that uniform!! I know how to deliver a baby on board, how to open the doors of an aircraft, how to fight a fire, how to give a CPR, how to take care of 180 passengers and attend to all of them at the same time!! Of course, I'm far off from my family and friends during the flight, but I don't care!! This is what, being an airhostess taught me!!"*

As mentioned above, there might be lot of things happening outside the plane such as turbulence, bad weather conditions, air pockets, etc. – At 40,000 feet, anything may happen at any time. Just as lot of things might keep happening outside, there might be numerous incidences that keep happening within the flight as well, such as a medical emergency, a fire, etc. Here is where, the positive attitude and the confidence of an airhostess seem to be at test and somewhere down the line, I have a feeling that this might be one good reason for the smile and the pleasant appearance of an airhostess. If airhostesses look happy and confident, this positive body language automatically tends to spill over into the passengers to also feel assured and safe. Thus, it can be witnessed here that the top most priority is given to the safety part, and as per the striking remark made by one of the respondents, *"The flight can still take off without the Hospitality and Service parts, but the flight will not be able to move an inch without the Safety part in place!!"*

For sure in terms of self-image and esteem, I have a feeling that viewing one's profession as saving lives or serving foods entails very different dynamics and social rewards.

2.7.2. An opportunity to build one's personality:

Let's look into what airhostesses opine about this: *"The first week is really stressful because you've to present yourself everyday and they would check out your hair, makeup, etc. So this is stressful because at the end of the two weeks you're not sure whether they would keep you. It's like a first training. You know.. They might pull out my hair and give me a hard time with it… And all these kind of small things.. So everyday you stand in front of the group and they would check your make*

up, etc."

After the all-important safety part, the important next striking point that came up during this exercise was the "Personality" aspect of it. It may be externally obvious to anybody who takes to a flight that, this job of an airhostess provides a perfect platform to develop oneself in a more presentable way in front of others. It grooms a person so professionally that it makes him or her unique and stands out of the crowd in terms of conducting oneself. From this round of interactions with the airhostesses, I came to know that this grooming process commences right from the initial days of training to be an airhostess and accordingly, they're taught how to conduct themselves in front of passengers at each and every situation. Moreover, airhostesses have perhaps the biggest role to play during times of catastrophic events during the flight – ranging from a fire to a crash landing – They're supposed to remain calm and composed all the time. All these key aspects contribute to the overall development of one's personality and in turn developing a strong will power and confidence in oneself that they would be able to handle any kind of an adverse situation while on board.

It seems that taking on a airhostess job, is not to exercise a function but to enter a formative trajectory, a path of individuation Here again, dynamics of motivation and satisfaction will be probably far different to monetary advantages or good social ambiance.

2.7.3. Self-Motivation – Can it be one of the best sources of Satisfaction?

"When I approach different kinds of passengers, my thought process also varies. My approach to them also varies. We have passengers right from a 7-day-old kid till the oldest person, in a flight. So we've to interact with people beginning from an infant till an aged passenger. So the way we interact with each passenger is entirely different!!"

"A simple word of appreciation from your crew or your captain – Perhaps you might not get anything in return – Or even a word of appreciation from a passenger - You get it on your face. So that gives the total satisfaction – You feel like telling ten people that someone appreciated me for this. It's not that you're getting 10 rupees/euros extra on that, but still... It's a total satisfaction if your senior comes and says to you that you've done a very good job. That's enough for you to work better on your next flight. You get a feedback on almost every flight, or an appreciation occasionally from your passengers or crew or from the captain, which will make you feel good and makes you feel that "Okay!! I'm in the right place!!" You feel motivated and you tend to work better for the company and in turn you perform well!!"

From the above subsequent quotes from the airhostesses, it paints a positive picture to the reader

that this is one job wherein self-motivation seems to drive them forward in their job every passing day.

Yes, multi-tasking and the benefitted passengers coming up and appreciating them for their phenomenal work always adds to one's satisfaction through motivation. At numerable instances like the ones mentioned above, airhostesses have illustrated at various contexts how they derive satisfaction out of their own job. Hence, this point on "Self-Motivation" becomes very significant in the process of exploring job satisfaction amongst airhostesses.

However all of us might know that self-motivation can also stem from indirect social, organizational or managerial conditions that foster motivation. Anyhow, many elements show that we probably cannot derive satisfaction from a response to external stimuli. I feel at this point that something more personal - Be it personality traits, psychological dynamics, or individual transformation is to be taken into consideration.

2.8. Directions drawn from this first "points of contact" for this research:

This round of interviews served as a perfect reality check for me, before going further into the theorization of the problem. The various moments of reflection served as the perfect launch pad for diving into the relevant management theory that would substantiate the various take-away points that have emerged from the interviewing exercise.

During this in-depth interviews phase, I was able to feel how much this profession is ruled by many procedures and entails numerous tasks, the importance of emergency situations and strict rules of training, etc. But I was also able to see how airhostesses were viewing themselves - As in-charge of saving lives in case of an emergency, how much this entails the formation and individual growth in order to face difficult situations (and passengers), and the importance of psychological dynamics associated with it. From this, I get a feeling that approaches that explain satisfaction only by external factors, in a stimulus-response fashion will not be able to capture the complexity of job satisfaction for the airhostesses.

However, from all the sections of the "Moments of Reflection" - especially the last sub-heading of the previous section that talks about "Self-Motivation", there was something that struck me very hard. There were further questions that arose at this point in time. Of course, deriving satisfaction from one's own performance is fine, but *for how long* can this be done, even though other dimensions of challenges exist? Will this sustain over a longer period of time? Can satisfaction and challenges co-exist over time? Is there something further that can be done/accomplished so as to keep airhostesses continually happy over a period of time? With these questions constantly

propping up in mind all through this time, I realized that there's more to be done!! I also subsequently realized that whatever I've been doing till now depicts the satisfaction narrative in a "static" way (Pertaining to one particular moment in time). But when I started pondering about "Self-motivation", I realized that this concept of Job Satisfaction has much more to offer in itself than just viewing it as a static variable. If it's not static, can it be "dynamic"? If yes, in what ways can Job Satisfaction be dynamic?

With these seemingly "unanswered" questions in mind, I approached the existing management literature on Job Satisfaction with a hope to find a convincing solution. Did the existing literature convince me enough to prove that job satisfaction is not just static in nature, but dynamic? The answers lie in the next chapter!!

Chapter 3 – My first contact with the "State-of-the-Art"

3.0. Introduction:

The Literature Review is aimed at instituting a strong theoretical foundation for answering the desired research questions. Just to recall the flow of the research, I had initially started off with identifying an issue related to airhostesses, developed the issue into a formal research question and entered the field to get in touch with the notion of understanding the actual experience and to exactly know what's happening with the airhostesses everyday in their job routine. In that way, the previous chapter spoke at length about the various "subtle" aspects of the job profile of an airhostess, what are some unique features of their job that make it interesting for them and a few important "Moments of Reflection". During the "Moments of Reflection" section of the previous chapter, I came to know how some kind of a passion drives them in their job despite being faced with numerous challenges and inconveniences, and also how airhostesses are highly self-motivated people. While the reader might be aware by now that 'Self-motivation" can be triggered by social, organizational and/or managerial elements, this interesting finding pushed my thinking into a very famous and also an extremely well researched concept in the domain of Human Resources Management – Job Satisfaction. The primary reasoning behind jumping into this domain of research is that, given the situation that airhostesses do face innumerable challenges (and also as we have seen a very codified and ruled activity), they still continue to do what they do. Usually we think that satisfaction is more linked with the autonomy than with prescribed activities, and with smoother working conditions that long sleepless nights and possibilities of accidents. Hence, as a researcher in management, I feel the need to take into account some psychological and social elements, into the idea of "Satisfaction" that they derive from what they do. Also, I would like to explore the ways and means through which they derive this "Satisfaction". Is it the job that makes them satisfied, or is it their passion/dream that came true in their life drives them to be what they are today? I try to find an answer for this with the help of the theory behind job satisfaction.

Through this chapter, I make an attempt in conceptualizing and exploring various fundamental aspects of "Job Satisfaction" and to check the relevance of this theoretical concept with the situation in hand. Like in every research, I've adopted a specific framework to follow while exploring the theory. This framework was built while trying to find bearings in a very large stream of literature. According to the framework, I've structured this process into six main categories, viz., Job Satisfaction and it's conceptualization, major antecedents to Job satisfaction, various

means of computation of job satisfaction, some facts about the airline sector across the world, and some customized facts from France and India, Airhostess – Job profile according to the literature, and the gaps in the existing literature that I've identified. The following sub sections would give a clear understanding of all the above-mentioned categories of investigation.

3.1. Job Satisfaction – What is all about?

Job Satisfaction is a topic of hot discussion and of a wide interest to people who are in different walks of life such as those who work in organizations and those who study them. The traditional model of job satisfaction focuses on all the related feelings that an individual can have towards his/her job (Lu, While and Barriball, 2004). Job Satisfaction has been considered in numerous ways and dimensions and is defined differently in different studies and contexts (T. Lam, et al, 2001). In this section, we learn how various Organizational behavior scientists and researchers in different contexts and different dimensions have approached Job Satisfaction. Ivancevich and Donnelly (1968) argue that almost every researcher has defined job satisfaction in their own way and perspective, although it all leads to basically one identical definition. Perhaps the most simple and straightforward way of defining Job Satisfaction – Katzell (1964) argues that if there is consensus with job satisfaction, it is the verbal expression of an incumbent's evaluation of his/her own job. A more structured and a specific definition came much later from Locke (1976) who defines the term "Job Satisfaction" as a pleasurable or a positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. However, a more contemporary definition of job satisfaction comes from Robbins and Coulter (1996), which states that job satisfaction is an employee's general attitude towards his or her own job. Hoppock (1935) explained job satisfaction as a combination of psychological and environmental circumstances that cause a person to be satisfied with his or her job. There has been considerable amount of research that gone into the approach of job satisfaction from the perspective of need fulfillment by enquiring whether the job meets the employee's psychical and psychological need (Porter, 1962; Wolf, 1970). The Job Satisfaction construct is also viewed as a match between what individuals perceive they need and what rewards they perceive they receive from their job (Conrad, et al., 1985). Based on the concept of motivation in organizational behavior sciences, the job satisfaction construct is seen as a function of satisfaction with the various elements of the job (Herzberg and Mausner, 1959). Job satisfaction is also looked upon from the dimension of cognition, and is expressed as a summation of all feelings that an individual has about his or her job (Gruneberg, 1976). However, job satisfaction has also been seen as an affective orientation that an employee has towards his or her

work (Price, 2001). However, the conceptualization of job satisfaction began to get more complicated in contemporary times as more and more research was being focused on the subject. Now we look into some of the contemporary definitions and conceptualizations of job satisfaction. Conceptually, job satisfaction is in itself a complex construct, regarding all or most of the characteristics of the job itself and the work environment, which employees find rewarding, fulfilling and satisfying, or frustrating and unsatisfying (Weiss, 2002). When job satisfaction amongst employees is achieved they develop more positive perceptions about their organization's products and services (Bontis, Richards & Serenko, 2011). Job satisfaction amongst employees can be predicted by employees' evaluation of their work climate, levels of organization support and the employment situation (Patah, Zain, Abdullah and Radzi, 2009). When employees are satisfied with their job, they tend to be more or less stable with it, productive and also focus towards accomplishment of organizational goals (Jessen, 2011).

3.1.1. Job Satisfaction – The Theory Background:

In the introductory part of this section, we had witnessed various ways in defining the idea of "Job Satisfaction". From now on, we shall witness how this idea of job satisfaction is modeled and conceptualized. There are innumerable theoretical conceptualizations made for the job satisfaction by numerous researchers and organizational behavior scientists, over so many years. In this section we shall see a few significant theories that would explain the job satisfaction facet with much more clarity.

Perhaps the more widely known and popular theory of job satisfaction is that of Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959). Herzberg et al., (1959) in their theory, proposed that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction doted on substantially different sets of work-related conditions and hence tended to be influenced by numerous factors (Furnham et al., 2001). This proposition accompanied with a set of relevant empirical evidence has been reviewed partly by Brief (1998) who noted *"I would consider job satisfaction as affect and introduce evidence suggesting that positive and negative affect likely are independent of one another. Thus, of the ideas advanced by Herzberg, I remain somewhat attached to the possibility that job satisfaction is not necessarily the opposite of job dissatisfaction"* (Furnham et al., 2001). According to the most popular Herzberg (1959) "two-factor" theory, workers have two major types of needs: Hygiene and Motivator. While the Hygiene needs are said to be satisfied by a certain set of conditions referred to as "Hygiene factors" or "dissatisfiers" (may include supervision, interpersonal relationships, physical working conditions, salary, benefits, job security, etc.) which concerns the context in which the

job or task has to be performed, motivation needs are fulfilled by what "Herzberg et al., (1959) refers to as "motivator factors" or "satisfiers" (may include sense of achievement, responsibility, career advancement, etc.). While, hygiene factors are more related to the context of the job, motivator factors are more concerned with the nature and consequences of the job. This theory further suggests that job dissatisfaction ensues in those cases where hygiene factors are completely absent from one's work environment. Conversely when hygiene factors are present, barriers to job satisfaction is removed. However, the key point to note here is that, the fulfillment of the hygiene needs cannot in itself result in job satisfaction but it acts only to reduce or eliminate job dissatisfaction, whereas the presence of the motivator factors in the job would result directly in job satisfaction. However, it has to also be noted that when the recognition, responsibility and other motivator factors are absent from the job, the resultant state would not be a dissatisfaction in the job, but rather, the same neutral state associated with the presence of the hygiene factors. The theory also underlies that if motivator factors are present and the hygiene factors are absent, the employee would still be dissatisfied (Furnham et al., 2001).

It has to be credited that the Herzberg et al., (1959) theory of job satisfaction was widely appreciated for job enrichment schemes, that is, the task designs done in such a way so as to build in the opportunity for personal achievement, recognition, challenge and individual growth. However, come 1970's and further studies on this, failed to provide ample evidence in support of the two-factor theory and subsequently, reviewers who came after this time period began feeling skeptical of the methods and conclusions proposed by Herzberg (Locke, 1969, 1976). Earlier research neither generated support for the theory nor replicate Herzberg's findings (e.g. Hulin, 1971) and it was found that both motivator and hygiene factors were able to influence both satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Wernimont, 1966). Further, Korman (1971, p. 179) argued and made a conclusion that disconfirming evidence had *"effectively laid Herzberg's theory to rest"*. More significantly numerous studies have tried to distinguish between the two factors but have found them highly correlated (Furnham et al., 2001). King (1970) also pointed out certain conceptual problems in the theory and in turn offered five slightly varied hypotheses derived from it. The author concluded that three of the five hypotheses failed to validate the original postulates of the theory. Similar is the case of the test conducted by Waters & Waters (1972) wherein, four of the five hypotheses were studied and all four of them failed to find support. Nevertheless, these studies concluded that motivator/intrinsic variables are generally more potent than hygiene/extrinsic variables and that, job satisfaction is much more predictable than job dissatisfaction (Furnham et al., 2001). Kerr, Harlan & Stogdill (1974) discovered that people

systematically differentiated motivator from hygiene factors in a hypothetical interview situation devoid of any concrete features that would warrant such a distinction.

However of course, despite all the criticisms that the Herzberg et al., (1959) theory received, it is still considered the pioneer in the job satisfaction literature and has set the stage rolling for further debates on this topic. Many researchers are still contemplating and try to differentiate between the 'intrinsic' and the 'extrinsic' aspects of the job-related attitudes and outcomes (Amabile et al., 1994; Furnham et al., 2001; Judge et al., 1999; Judge & Larsen, 2001; Pelletier et al., 1995). Knoop (1994) in his factor-analyzed measurement of job satisfaction found an evidence of five factors, which was labeled as "intrinsic work-related values" (for e.g. exercising responsibility, doing meaningful work, etc.); "intrinsic work-outcome values" (for e.g. job status, recognition, etc.); "extrinsic job-outcome values" (for e.g. benefits like vacation, pension, etc.); "extrinsic job-related values" (for e.g. convenient working hours, good working environment, etc.) and "extrinsic people-related values" (for e.g. satisfaction with the superiors, co-workers and promotion). The author argued that these resulted supported and extended the two-factor theory with the two intrinsic factors concerning the motivator variables and the other three extrinsic variables concerning the hygiene variables ((Furnham et al., 2001).

3.2. What causes Job Satisfaction?

So far we have seen the definition and a little overview of how the idea of job satisfaction is conceptualized. Now let us go into the next step in witnessing the various aspects that seem to be responsible for employees to be satisfied in their job. Job satisfaction has been observed by organizational and work psychology since it is associated with all types of behaviors that are significant with respect to any organization (For e.g. Brief, 1998; DeRue & Morgeson, 2007; Judge, Thoreson & Patton, 2001; Spector, 1997; Zalewska, 2011). Job Satisfaction also finds a place for itself in the research on well being as it is linked to health, subjective well being or satisfaction with life domains (For e.g. Brief, 1998; Judge & Ilies, 2004; Zalewska, 2004). As mentioned above, Job satisfaction refers to a "positive (or negative) evaluative judgment, one makes about one's job or job situation (Weiss, 2002, p. 175). Out of extensive research that emerged in this subject so far, Job satisfaction is widely associated with numerous organizational variables such as absenteeism, organization turnover (attrition), organizational commitment and performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono & Patton, 2001; Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb & Ahlburg, 2005; Keller & Semmer, 2013). The term "Satisfaction" can be regarded as an element of personal well being (Warr, 2007) and also is associated with physical health (Faragher, Cass &

Cooper, 2005; Keller & Semmer, 2013).

To add to this, there are innumerable longitudinal studies with respect to job satisfaction over time (for e.g. Elfering, Semmer & Kalin, 2000; Keller & Semmer, 2013; Staw, Bell & Clausen, 1986; Zapf, Dorman & Frese, 1996). These predictions, I feel however are static, which means that the levels of the predictors predict the job satisfaction construct at an earlier time. Some of the studies in job satisfaction, where it is used as a predictor showed changes in job satisfaction to predict certain outcomes such as job turnovers, etc. (Keller & Semmer, 2013). For e.g. Boswell, Boudreau & Tichy (2005) and Semmer & Schallberger (1996) agrued that job satisfaction declines before a job change and thereafter increases gradually (Boswell et al., 2009). Having conceptualized job satisfaction in the previous section, this section focuses on what are the various antecedents for the job satisfaction construct.

3.2.1. Job Satisfaction and Demographic Variables:

3.2.1.1. Age:

We shall start with the relationship between Job Satisfaction and various demographic variables, firstly "Age". A plethora of research was found in this context and I shall mention a few important ones that I came through. Lam, Zhang & Baum (2001) had performed a detailed and an exhaustive review of literature on the relationship between the various demographic variables and job satisfaction such as those of Warr (1990); Rhodes (1983); Farris (1971), which conclude that there exists a positive relationship between job satisfaction and age. De La Mare and Sergean (1961) and Cooper and Payne (1965) in their independent studies, investigated the relationship between degree of job satisfaction and age – the latter measured in terms of frequency and duration of absence. Results indicated that age among blue-collar workers were positively related to both of the variables. Gibson and Klein (1970) in their study of 2067 blue-collar employees found similar results and hence concluded that there's a positive relationship between job satisfaction and age. Gibson and Klein also suggested three main reasons for the positive relationship between these two variables. First, older employees seem to have a different relationship to authority than their younger counterparts. Secondly, they have higher needs to be directed and to accept orders and thirdly, cognitive structures of older employees are very different than those of their younger counterparts. Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson and Capwell (1957) proposed that job satisfaction has a "U" shaped relationship with age. This is due to the relative newness of the job. Initially employees may not be satisfied with their jobs since they feel that their needs are not met. However, with increasing maturity over a period of time along with work experience finally

causes employees to adjust with his/her job expectations to a more realistic level. When these new adjusted expectations are met, job satisfaction begins to rise. There are numerous studies in the job satisfaction literature that have come up with various kinds of relationships between age and job satisfaction, such as a "J" shaped relationship (e.g. Saleh & Otis, 1964), positive linear relationship (e.g. Hunt & Saul, 1975), negative linear relationship (e.g. Muchinsky, 1978) and also studies which show no significant relationship (e.g. Ronen, 1978).

3.2.1.2.Tenure of Service:

So much of research pertaining to Job Satisfaction and Age, now its time to look into the next variable – Tenure of service! Past literature shows numerous empirical studies focus on the relationship between job satisfaction and tenure of service - Commencing from the study conducted by Hulin and Smith (1965), the relationship was concluded to be positive and monatomic. However a contradictory view evolved from Gibson and Klein (1970) who, from their study reported a negative and a linear relationship between satisfaction and company tenure wherein the degree of job satisfaction decreases as the length of service with the organization increases. However as research progressed in this area, some clarity evolved. Smith, Gregory and Cannon (1996) in their extensive study in the hospitality industry concluded that there were significant differences in overall job satisfaction based on tenure in organizations. Newer employees who are less than six months old with the organization reported more satisfaction levels as they were amidst the pleasure of obtaining a new job. However as the tenure increases, the job satisfaction comes down and the highest amount of turnover happens only in this period.

3.2.1.3. Marital Status:

Now, turning towards the next variable, Marital Status - Substantial research has gone into establishing a relationship between marital status and job satisfaction. Numerous studies in the literature have come up with varied conclusions. Some of the remarkable studies include that of Shea, Paines and Spitz (1970), which conclude that marital status seems to have very little influence on job satisfaction. The study concluded with the finding that both married and non-married women in both black and white groups expressed the same degree of satisfaction with their jobs when occupational category was controlled. However, Wild (1970) in his extensive study among more than 2300 female workers and ex workers in electronics companies reported that job dissatisfaction was more prevalent amongst single workers. Subsequent researches conducted independently by Keller (1983), Federico, Ferderico & Lundquist, (1976) etc.,

demonstrated more satisfaction levels among married workers than that of their unmarried colleagues. However, it is still ambiguous if there is any impact of being divorced or being in a live-in relationship on employee performance or job satisfaction. Thus, unlike the other two variables of demographics, here I find a sense of vagueness in terms of the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Marital status of people.

3.2.1.4. Educational Background:

Considerable research has also been undertaken to establish a relationship between employees' level of education with job satisfaction. There are researches that were conducted as early as that of Vollmer and Kinney (1955) which showed that the higher the education level of employees, the more dissatisfaction results because, it was pursued that employees with higher education backgrounds would expect more financial compensation, benefits, etc. than their counterparts with relatively lower education backgrounds. However, again there was a contradictory inference in the form of the study undertook by Sinha and Sharma (1962). They studied the relationship between attitude towards the union members and job satisfaction on a sample of 100 workers from India and their results concluded that there's no significant relationship between the employee education level and job satisfaction. But even though differences exist in literature, it becomes an obvious observation in many organizations that employees with higher education levels demand more monetary packages, respect and other benefits than those with a lower education level. This high demand leads to high expectation among employees from the organization. The greater the expectations are being met, the greater is the job satisfaction. Hence from the aforementioned studies it's quite clear that there exists a relationship between job satisfaction and the various demographic variables.

3.2.1.5. Gender differences:

Perhaps, one of the most relevant variables of all, a significant amount of research has gone into establishing a steady relationship between job satisfaction and gender differences. Past research on gender differences and job satisfaction (e.g. Clark, 1997; Kaiser, 2007; Mora & Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2009; Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2003, 2007) have accomplished that, given everything else, women in some countries seemed to be more satisfied with their jobs compared to their men counterparts. However, from the findings of Clark (1997) and Kaiser (2007) established the fact that the gap between job satisfaction and gender differences saw a decline in many European Union countries specially Denmark, Finland and The Netherlands where the working

conditions are better for women. However, things are a bit different in Spain. De la Rica et al., (2008) claims from his research findings that there still exists a glass-ceiling for highly educated women in Spain. One possible explanation for this phenomenon maybe that there are still gender discriminatory practices persisting in Spain. In one such report by the United States' department of State (2000) on the human rights practices in Spain, states that "Discrimination in the workplace and in hiring practices persists". Another possible explanations for these differences are, for example, that women tend to self-select themselves into certain occupations and not for others (e.g. Macpherson & Hirsch, 1995). It is also perceived that women find it tougher to negotiate their salaries in the organization than their men counterparts (e.g. Solnick & Schweitzer, 1999). However, Mora & Ferrer-i-Carbonell, (2009) suggest a more interesting and perhaps a very valid reason of modern days that women dedicate lesser time for their jobs at the organization as they are bound to take up other important family responsibilities like taking care of their children, though this reason founds validity only in selected age groups of women.

It is also reported in the literature that women are more inclined towards the intrinsic aspects of their job such as feelings of self-determination and personal development rather than the extrinsic characteristics such as financial rewards (Kim, 2005).

3.2.2. Job Satisfaction and Reward Systems:

Now so much of research was explained about the relationship between job satisfaction and demographic variables, it is now time to focus on the next antecedent – perhaps one of the most important and much talked about ones – Reward Systems. Apart from demographic variables, further research in the area of job satisfaction has focused upon in the form of three different factors, viz. Individual, Organizational and job-related factors (Yang, 2012). Individual factors include those, which pertains to the individual level, viz. salary and benefits (Iverson and Deery, 1997), Pizam and Thornburg, 2000).

Reward systems are one of the most preferred factors in enhancing employee job satisfaction (Bustamam, Teng & Abdullah, 2014). Reward systems are often implemented within organizations as a key management tool that in turn contributes to the firm's effectiveness by influencing individual behavior and enhances employee motivation at work (Lawler & Cohen, 1992). They are also considered as significant and key components of the relationship between the employer and the employee in an organization (Armstrong, 2010; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; White & Drucker, 2000). Hence, rewards act as a tool to guide employee behavior and in turn their performance in an attempt to attract and retain the talent pool and also to keep them satisfied

and motivated (Bellenger, Wilcox & Ingram, 1984; Bratton & Gold, 2003; Rynes, Gerhart & Minette, 2004). It is only because of this above-mentioned reason that the research on this area is extremely widespread and also has a very long history (e.g. Curral, Towler, Judge & Kohn, 2005; Heneman & Judge, 2000; Williams, Brower, Ford, Williams & Carraher, 2008).

3.2.2.1. Financial Incentives and theories behind it:

Now, having had an introductory note on the relationship between job satisfaction and reward systems, I shall now go into this a bit deeper. Now, let's talk about financial incentives and their role in ensuring job satisfaction. Several studies have illustrated the significant relationship between job satisfaction and financial incentives (salary and other financial benefits). One such study was that of Lam et al. (2001), which concludes that rewards, those with direct relation to job security emerges as an influential factor pertaining to job satisfaction. Aziz et al. (2007) conducted a study among fast food restaurants and concluded that satisfaction with financial rewards minimized absenteeism and turnover rates in the organization. There exist a few theories in the literature, which pertains to the relationship between job satisfaction and financial rewards. For example, according to the equity model of Adams (1965), people compare their input/output ratio – which reflects the amount of rewards they receive with respect to the amount of work they perform – to that of a comparison person to determine whether they feel satisfied in their respective jobs. Likewise, as per the discrepancy model of Porter and Lawler (1968), employees' job satisfaction is determined by a comparison of their current job conditions including the rewards they receive to their ideal job expectations. Although there are theories like the aforementioned that support the positive relationship between job satisfaction and financial rewards, there are a few other theories that state otherwise. In particular, Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory conceptualizes "pay" more as a hygiene factor rather than a "satisfier". Hence the theory goes on to predict that satisfaction with the pay does not necessarily affect job satisfaction. A similar conclusion is drawn from the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002), postulates that satisfaction results from intrinsic motivation and is not or even negatively influenced by extrinsic rewards (for example, by providing financial rewards (Gagne and Forest, 2008)). In line with the aforementioned theories the total reward management construct has recently conceptualized rewards as any valued outcome and employee receives from his/her employer in exchange of his/her effort and contribution (Henderson, 2003). Also, however from the above two sets of theories we understand that there's a contradictory view on the relationship between job satisfaction and financial rewards. Hence, to investigate this contradiction further and

to find a solution, Hofmans, Gieter and Pepermans (2013) attempted a study and concluded that the differences in the reward-satisfaction relationship relate to work values and other important organization outcomes as well.

3.2.2.2. Non-Financial Rewards:

Having looked into the significance of financial rewards, it has also increasingly been found that many organizations tend to focus on financial rewards a bit too much and subsequently non-financial rewards are increasingly taking a back seat (Chiang & Birtch, 2008). Each employee has his/her own set of factors that would motivate him/her. Some get motivated by money whereas some others might not. They might expect good recognition, career advancement or personal growth, which are not direct material or monetary benefits. Hence it would be wrong to assume that everyone shares the same motivators and needs (Lai, 2009). Numerous researchers voice out similar opinions that job satisfaction is affected by both financial and non-financial needs (For e.g. Gerald & Dorothee 2004; Clifford, 1985; Kalleberg, 1977; and Rehman, Khan, Ziauddin & Lashari, 2010). An ineffective reward management in the organization would affect employees' satisfaction level and would lead to demotivation, which would further impact their performance outcomes (Bustamam, Teng & Abdullah, 2014).

3.2.3. Job Satisfaction and the Work Environment:

So much has been spoken about reward systems, now it is time for us to look into a very important antecedent – Work Environment. It might be recalled by the reader at this point in time that this was one factor that surfaced up during the interviews that were done before this exercise. It would now be interesting to look into the literature after hearing about this directly from the airhostesses. I have a feeling that this would be a major antecedent to take forward in my research journey from here on.

Considerable research has gone into establishing a relationship between job satisfaction and the working environment. The working environment consists of two broader dimensions namely work and context (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). Spector (1997) in his research, made an observation that most organizations tend to ignore the working environment resulting in an adverse effect on the performance of their employees. In his research, the working environment included employee safety, job security, interpersonal relationship amongst co-workers, recognition for good performance, motivating employees to perform their tasks well and the level of employee participation in key decision making processes. He further added by concluding that once

employees realize that their organization considers them as an important resource, they would have very high levels of commitment and develop a sense of ownership with their organization. Different other factors within the working environment such as working hours, wages, autonomy, organizational structure and communication between the employees and the management may affect job satisfaction (Lane, Esser, Holte & Anne, 2010).

3.2.3.1. Interaction within employees and supervisor:

Arnetz (1999) observed from his study that most employees have issues with their supervisors, with whom if the relationship is damaged the flow of innovative ideas are disrupted. Petterson (1998) argues that interaction between employees play a key role in accomplishing the goals of the organization. Schroffel, (1999) made an observation that good and effective supervision enhanced employees' satisfaction level whereas with poorer communication abilities, the level of dissatisfaction was very high.

3.2.3.2. The Working Conditions:

Sell & Cleal (2011) in their study developed a model for job satisfaction by integrating economic and work environment variables to assess the reaction of employees. They examined two categories ranging from extreme hazardous work environment and high monetary benefits and also with non-hazardous work environment and low monetary benefits. The results of the study showed that psychosocial and work environment variables such as work place ambience, social support, etc. has a direct impact on the job satisfaction and that, increase in rewards does not guarantee an improvement in employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Bakotic & Babic (2013) concluded from their study that workers under difficult working conditions, struggled to perform and hence are a dissatisfied lot. Hence from the studies aforementioned, it becomes evident that proper working conditions in an organization have become an undoubted pre-requisite for improving job satisfaction among employees. The relationship between job satisfaction and working environment specially finds itself applicable in the manufacturing sector wherein, there is lot of physical stress and strain involved in the job of employees. Kahya (2007) conducted a study amongst 154 employees in 18 teams in a mid-size Turkish metal manufacturing company to test the relationship between job satisfaction/performance and working conditions. Results from the study demonstrate that there's a substantial relationship between employee job satisfaction/performance and working conditions. Poor working conditions (Physical efforts, environmental conditions, hazards) result in decreasing employee job satisfaction, which in turn

decreases performance. Kahya (2007) also lists some of the major concerns faced by manufacturing companies in maintaining proper working conditions. Some of the common challenges faced by manufacturing companies include heavy loadings, adverse environment, poor human-machine system design, unpleasant working conditions including inclement weather conditions, working under extreme hot/cold temperatures, chemical odor, noise, poor and inadequate lighting, excessive exposure to vibrations, dust, etc. have direct or indirect effects on employee job performance. These conditions also might lead to a dip in the concentration levels of employees on their tasks which in turn lead to lower productivity, poor quality output, physical and emotional stress, and resulting in lower satisfaction levels with higher costs. There are numerous studies in the area of ergonomics (e.g. Das & Shikdar, 1999; Resnik & Zanotti, 1997; Shikdar & Sawaqued, 2003; Yeow & Sen, 2006) that have focused on some of the positive effects on quality, productivity, hazards, occupational health and their cost effectiveness of ergonomic improvements in a workstation or a workshop in a manufacturing firm.

A plethora of research findings has been documented in the past with respect to the job satisfaction construct in the services sector as well. Amongst various service sectors, the hospitality sector has captured the eyes of numerous Organization behavior scientists and researchers all over the world - the reason being it is a highly intensive service oriented industry and employees are in direct contact with customers on a daily basis. An appropriate understanding of employees' expectations of their work environment is a must and a critical necessity in today's growing hotel industry in order to enhance their satisfaction level and also to retain them (Susskind et al., 2000; Hinkin & Tracey, 2000, Lee & Way, 2010). The perceptions of the work environment by employees may vary widely due to individual characteristics and these differences may in turn determine the level of satisfaction with the work environment (Franek & Vecera, 2008). Hence it becomes evident and obvious that the environment for both employees and customers become significant here. Realizing this, Lee & Way (2010) conducted an extensive study in a hotel with lodging facility that operated twenty-four properties in Arkansas and many other places in the United States among 1489 employees. This study intended to identify employment characteristics that influenced employee satisfaction with the work environment related to employee retention. Results prove that the work environment comprising of the location of the workplace, communication/language, work accomplishment and working department had a significant relationship with the overall job satisfaction.

3.2.4. Job Satisfaction and Characteristics/Nature of the job:

Here is another important antecedent of job satisfaction that needs attention. There has been a huge amount of research that has gone into establishing a relationship between the nature and characteristics of the job with employees' job satisfaction. Numerous studies have supported the validity of the Job Characteristics Model (Price & Muller, 1986) as the degree to which the job entitles the requirement of various tasks and activities in executing the job, and which also involves the usage of a variety of skills and talent of the employee.

3.2.4.1. Task Identity, Task Significance, Task Autonomy & Top Management Feedback:

When we discuss job characteristics, we also look into task identity, task significance, task autonomy and feedback from top management. Coelho & Augusto (2010) agreed from their research that task identity gives an encouraging feeling to an employee that the job is meaningful and worthwhile and hence serves as a motivation to work smart. Hackman & Oldham (1974) define task significance as the degree to which a job has substantial impact on the lives or work of other people whether in the immediate organization or in the external environment. Hackman and Oldham (1974) also gave an explanation to autonomy in a job, as the extent or degree to which the job provides freedom, independence and discretion to the employees in scheduling his/her work and also in determining procedures to be used in carrying it out. Coelho & Augusto (2010) also explained that, autonomy could help employees innovate and come up with new ideas and also learn from the consequences by themselves. It also helps in enhancing their skills in their respective domain. The concept of feedback was proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1974) as the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job results in the employee obtaining information about the effectiveness of his or her performance on the job. It is very important in an organization that the top management should give an appropriate and a timely feedback to its employees in order to facilitate improvement in their performance and also lead to a better understanding of their work nature (Coelho & Augusto, 2010).

3.2.4.2. The Various Job Dimensions:

Spagnoli, Caetano & Santos (2011) agree that measuring job satisfaction becomes a strenuous effort because it might be possible for employees to be satisfied with certain aspects of their jobs and at the same time, to be dissatisfied with certain other aspects. In this context, it would be good to recall one of the primary definitions of job satisfaction as stated by Efraty & Sirgy (1990) that describes job satisfaction as "one's effective appraisal of various job dimensions". There is a sizeable literature that has sneaked into the study of job satisfaction with respect to various job

dimensions. To note a few of them, Glission & Durick (1988) agreed that the workers and the nature of the work itself are two significant factors that affect job satisfaction. Further, Syptak et al., (1999) argued that variables selected to measure job satisfaction need to represent all aspects of the work environment: human relations, the job itself, personal feelings and the membership within the organization. Porter & Lawler (1968) in their study, made a division between influences of job satisfaction into internal satisfactory factors which relate to the work itself, such as: feeling of achievement, independence, self-esteem, feeling of control and other similar feelings obtained from the job and the external satisfactory factors not directly linked to work itself, such as: receiving praise from the boss, healthy relationship with colleagues, good working environment, high salary, good welfare and utilities.

The literature also shows two distinguished approaches to measure job satisfaction with respect to the characteristics of the job, viz. measuring the overall job satisfaction and measuring job satisfaction with respect to several aspects of the job. While the former approach takes a macro perspective and consists of enquiring the respondent directly about his/her feelings of the job (Nerkar et al., 1996), the latter involves the emphasis on the different aspects involved in the job and the extent to which an individual is satisfied with the different aspects (e.g. Herzberg et al., 1959; Smith et al., 1969). Based on this differentiation of approaches towards measurement of job satisfaction, numerous researchers stuck to the line of measuring job satisfaction with respect to the various characteristics of the job.

3.2.4.3. Role Conflict:

Belias et al., (2015) argue that in contemporary organizations around the world, employees experience several and different expectations both from within themselves and also from others in an effort to execute their roles effectively. On the way to achieve this, they might encounter certain incompatible or conflicting expectations that may in turn lead to what is called "role conflict" or "role ambiguity". Hence, role conflict in contention with role ambiguity create problems of adjustment which in turn leads to lower levels of satisfaction among employees (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn et al., 1964). Therefore we thus define role conflict as the phenomenon caused by incompatibility of requirements and expectations from a role where compatibility is judged based on a set of conditions that impact role performance (Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970). Additionally, Kopelman, Greenhaus & Connoly (1983) defined role conflict as the extent to which an employee experiences pressure within his/her own role that are incompatible with pressures that arises within another role.

There are innumerable studies in the past that have been consistent enough to reveal a negative impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on job satisfaction of employees (Belias et al., 2015). The studies conducted by Tosi & Tosi (1970) and Tosi (1971) concluded that role conflict was significantly related to overall lower job satisfaction. Further studies done two years later by Greene & Organ (1973) revealed that role accuracy and compliance have significantly positive correlation with global measures of job satisfaction. Studies conducted in much later years such as the one by Um & Harrison (1998) also stays in line with the previous findings, that role conflict was found to increase the level of job dissatisfaction among employees, while Cordes & Dougherty (1993) and Gil-Monte & Peiro, (1998) extended their findings to prove that role conflict also leads to emotional exhaustion along with job dissatisfaction. However, role ambiguity was not found to be associated with emotional exhaustion (Allard, Wortley & Stewart, 2003). Belias et al., (2015) also goes on to argue that role conflict is also considered to be responsible for increased incidents of adverse events in an organization along with negative emotions at workplace. Fisher (2002) reports that employees, who score extremely high on role conflict, tend to exhibit unconventional and morally unacceptable behavior that in turn causes anger, frustration, anxiety and fear.

However, there are some contrary views on the impact of role conflict on employee job satisfaction. Jones (1993) reports some positive effects of role conflict; in particular, employees tend to be more "open" to different ways with the daily confrontation to conflicting roles. The results of the study also show that people have developed practical and effective skills over a period of time as an "adjustment" to conflicting roles. This phenomenon, termed as "conflict resolution" was found to reinforce teamwork, building alliances and cooperation between various groups of employees. More contemporary studies especially in the banking sector have been conducted in this area to establish a relationship between role conflict/ambiguity and job satisfaction. For example, Malik, Waheed & Malik (2010) supported the argument that job satisfaction and affective commitment among bank employees is directly and negatively influenced by role overload and role conflict. Khattak, Ul-Ain & Iqbal (2013) from their study, show that role ambiguity has a negative relationship with job satisfaction and job stress is likely to play a mediating role. It was suggested from their study that in order to increase job satisfaction, role stressors should be controlled. Ling, Bahron and Boroh (2014) made a comprehensive study on the combined impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on job satisfaction and they concluded that when an employee faces role stress, they are likely to exhibit undesirable behavior such as low performance and even at the worst case, leaving the organization, which clearly indicates job

dissatisfaction. Similar results were echoed by one of the latest study on the subject by Belias et al., (2015) and the study reiterated that role conflict is negatively correlated with job satisfaction and also in addition, autonomy has a moderating role in the relation between role conflict and job satisfaction.

Hence from all the above arguments it can be said that research has consistently shown that both role conflict and role ambiguity are negatively related to job satisfaction (Behrman & Perreault, 1984; Boles & Babin, 1996; Hafer & McCuen, 1985; O'Driscoll & Beehr, 2000; Teas, 1983).

3.2.4.4. Autonomy:

Another very important aspect under characteristics of job, that affects and impacts job satisfaction is autonomy. Autonomy is defined as the extent to which an employee has significant independence and freedom of programming their work as well as the choice of implementation of their tasks. Autonomy can also be seen as a real structural feature of work, either in the form of strengthening an employee or in the form of a subjective feeling that reflects and indicates the desire of an employee to have lesser supervision and more control of each case or situation (Kiggundu, 1983). It has to be mentioned here that without an iota of doubt that autonomy is perceived by many managers as one of the most important dimensions of the work design in an organization. Davis (1994) in support of this puts forth an argument stating that autonomy is the one that tends to encourage the entrepreneurship ability within each employee, allowing them to be creative and innovative and be able to take risks by implementing their own ideas or plans. Autonomy is also considered as the only working feature that is directly linked with the perceived responsibility of employees that in turn binds with high intrinsic motivation. Realizing this, Chelladurai (1999) argues in support that for the employee to feel personally responsible to work, considerable freedom of decision-making should be given to him/her for carrying out various important tasks. Autonomy at work also reduces employee interaction at the workplace as individuals become more independent and gain greater control over the planning and implementation of their own tasks (Langfred, 2000).

According to Rossenthal (2004), autonomy is significant in an organization not only as a valued reward, but also a determinant of a series of job outcomes, predominantly job satisfaction, stress and health. Lee (1998) in her meta-analyses shows that autonomy at work is one of the most significant job characteristics that directly affect employee job satisfaction. Her results also show that perceived control and autonomy are significantly associated with high levels of job satisfaction. Relevant research has also significantly supported Lee (1998) by establishing positive

relationships and correlations between autonomy and job satisfaction (for e.g. Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Pousette & Hanse, 2002; Ross & Reskin, 1992).

3.2.4.5. Burnout:

Conceptually, a job for an individual provides him/her with a definite purpose (Morse & Weiss, 1955), gives them a sense of identity, meaning, feeling of accomplishment and a sense of connectedness with others within and outside the organization (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006; Chalofsky, 2003; Kahn, 1974). As understood from the above discussed contexts, a great deal of research has been carried out to better understand working conditions that lead to a "happy" and satisfied employee and what are the factors that inhibit this from taking place (Judge et al., 2010; Lambert, Hogan & Barton, 2002; Lee & Cummings, 2008; Lizano & Mor Barak, 2015; Loher et al., 1985).

The concept of job burnout is quite an interesting one in itself, and is referred to as the feelings of emotional depletion, cynicism and lack of efficacy in the workplace (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) and has been linked to a number of adverse affective consequences including reduced levels of job satisfaction among employees who experience it (Faragher, Cass & Cooper, 2005; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Lee, Lim, Yang & Lee, 2011, Lizano & Mor Barak, 2015), can also adversely affect work performance (Judge et al., 2001), commitment to the organization (Gunlu, Aksarayli & Percin, 2010; Jemigan, Beggs & Kohut, 2002; Landsman, 2001, 2008) and finally the employees' desire to stay with the organization for a longer tenure (Auerbach et al., 2010; DePanfilis & Zlotnik, 2008; Mor Barak et al., 2006; Lizano & Mor Barak, 2015; Mor Barak, Nissly & Levin, 2001; Strolin-Goltzman et al., 2007). Job burnout is also conceptualized as an individual stress syndrome contextualized within complex social relationships in the workplace (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998). Burnout consists of three primary dimensions viz., emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that develop in response to chronic exposure to stress at workplace (Maslach, 1993, 2003). Job burnout also results in depletion of the individual's emotional resources and personal energy (Leiter & Maslach, 2001). As a consequence of chronic stress, job burnout may lead to adverse job behaviors such as complete withdrawal of the individual from his/her tasks, which diminishes the opportunities to having satisfying work experiences, that ultimately leads to job dissatisfaction. Emotional exhaustion is considered to be the central dimension of job burnout and it refers to feelings being of being emotionally depleted due to over-extension (Lizano & Mor Barak, 2015). Maslach & Goldberg, 1998 argue that work overload and personal conflict at the workplace are the primary

sources for employees to get exhausted. Cynicism or depersonalization is the interpersonal dimension of job burnout that develops as a protection against feelings of exhaustion. When the exhaustion crosses the threshold and becomes too overwhelming for the employee, he/she gets completely detached from the job and in turn becomes cynical or disconnected from colleagues and customers (Lizano & Mor Barak, 2015). Finally, personal accomplishment is postulated and conceptualized as the self-evaluation dimension of the syndrome of burnout.

A quintessential finding that has emerged from this stream of research is that the construct of job burnout is an impending threat to job satisfaction (Bhana & Haffejee, 1996; Brewer & Clippard, 2002; Burke, Koyunco & Fiksenbaum, 2010; Hombrados-Mendieta & Cosano-Rivas, 2011; Koeske & Kelly, 1995; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Lizano & Mor Barak, 2015; Maslach & Florian, 1988; Um & Harrison, 1998).

3.2.4.6. Organizational Safety Climate:

The concept of safety climate is fast emerging as a key research area in industrial psychology and management. The perception of safety climate is conceptualized as a subjective perception of employees regarding the organizational policies and practices that are meant to ensure a safe and an out of danger organizational environment (Radzaz et al., 2013). There are different definitions for safety climate in various contexts. For example, Hoffman et al., (2003) conceives safety climate as a construct that encompasses a series of various dimensions: the management's attitude towards safety issues, proactive behavior for maintaining safety and rewarding systems for those behaviors. Watson et al., (2005) in his research findings, highlights the significance of organizational policies and practices promoted by the management within the organization. The finding suggested that the positive perception of management involvement in maintaining safety at the workplace is predominantly negatively associated with risky behaviors at work and trust in senior managers is positively associated with the perception of safety climate. Employees, who work in environments wherein safety policies and practices are hazardous, acquire a negative perception of safety climate at the workplace (Sunal et al., 2010). Consequently, employees who perceive a positive safety climate at the workplace tend to be more acquiescent when it comes to following and implementing safety procedures and practices thus avoiding occupational accidents (DeJoy et al., 2004). Hence, employees who foresee their workplace environment as a secure one, show more positive attitudes towards their supervisors and co-workers (Hoffman et al., 2003). Zohar (2002) argues that occupational safety perception is influenced by the perception of the importance that the manager gives to training courses aimed at enhancing workplace safety and

also the perceived status of the person in-charge of implementing the necessary safety systems at the workplace. Such things would contribute to the development of a positive occupational safety culture within and outside the organization.

Considerable research has concluded over a period of time that job satisfaction is influenced by the workplace conditions and safety at workplace (e.g. Avram, Ionescu & Mincu, 2014; Latham, 2007). It has also been repeatedly proven that the job environment is one of the greatest predictors of job satisfaction (e.g. Malek et al., 2009). Malek et al., 2009 continues in his proposition that a risky work environment determines the employee's negative perception of the safety climate at workplace and in turn decreases the level of job satisfaction, which was also echoed by Yoshimura & Acar (2004).

3.2.5. Job Satisfaction and Leadership:

The influence of top management leadership in an organization and its effect on employees' job satisfaction is again a heavily researched subject. A vast amount of literature has been documented over the years trying to establish a link between leadership and Job satisfaction. While examining them, we come across various sub topics such as "Leader Member Exchange" (LMX), employee empowerment, the role of supervision, various types of leadership and the emotional intelligence of a leader.

3.2.5.1. Leader – Member Exchange (LMX):

A fundamental tenet of the Leader-Member Exchange (hereafter addresses as LMX) theory is that, leaders develop different quality relationships with their employees (Hooper & Martin, 2008), and the perceived quality of LMX has been consistently linked to positive employee outcomes such as enhanced job satisfaction, employee well-being, leader satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee citizenship behavior (for e.g. Epitropaki & Martin, 1999, 2005; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Martin, Thomas, Charles, Epitropaki & McNamara, 2005; Townsend, Phillips & Elkins, 2000). With the positive effects of LMX being heavily documented over the years, Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995) had called for a much more focused investigation of the role of LMX among teams.

Although a section of the leadership literature talks about leaders being neutral to all of his/her employees, there's a considerable consensus among modern day researchers and scientists that LMX differentiation is also a functional and accepted leadership practice. There are a few frameworks that support the above argument and prove positive utility of leader differentiation. For example, the Individualized leadership model (Dansereau, 1995; Dansereau et al., 1998)

argues that successful leaders do not treat all employees the same; however, they customize their leadership style according to the needs and motivation levels of every employee. It has also been proposed in the LMX literature that successful leaders may be able to handle and manage teams that are especially huge more effectively by developing good relationships with a selected number of employees, who in turn can act as the 'lieutenant' or 'trusted assistant' either during tough times or in his/her absence (e.g. Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975). The major benefits of having a high quality LMX relationship include preferential treatment, increased job-related communication, differential allocation of formal and informal rewards, ample (and sometimes unlimited) access to supervisors and increased performance-related feedback (for e.g. Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Elicker, Levy & Hall, 2006; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Harris, Wheeler & Kacmar, 2009).

Despite the potential benefits of LMX for leaders, on an intuitive level this "differential" treatment to employees becomes problematic. Individuals in teams can be very sensitive to social comparison information (Festinger, 1954), which might influence reactions of employees by affecting their self-belief and perception of fairness (for e.g. Buunk et al., 1990; Crosby, 1976, 1984; Leventhal, 1980; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman & Taylor, 2000; Sinclair, 2003; Tyler, 1989; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler, Degoey & Smith, 1996, 2001; Tyler & Lind, 1992). A discernible reason as to why LMX differentiation may affect employee reactions is because of the undue advantage obtained by employees with high quality LMX more than those with low quality LMX (Hooper & Martin, 2008). Some other disadvantages of having a high quality LMX are that, subordinates often experience very limited emotional support and trust and also they might also end up receiving a few, if any, benefits outside the employment contract (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Gerstner & Day, 1997).

Based on the above perception, Hooper & Martin (2008) found out from their study among two separate sample sets of employed individuals and found that individuals' perceptions of LMX variability were negatively related to job satisfaction and well-being and this relationship was being mediated by reports of relational team conflict. Further to this finding, Harris, Wheeler & Kacmar (2009) in their study between two different sets of samples (244 & 158 employees in each), concluded that empowerment plays a mediating role in the relationship between job satisfaction and LMX quality.

3.2.5.2. Leadership Styles:

Leadership style is a key and an important management tool since, if used properly and effectively

it enhances positive relationships with employees, improves organization climate and also increases employee performance (Kozak & Uca, 2008). Successful managers as leaders provide ample guidance to their employees, which in turn, enhance their encouragement to take ownership of tasks, to think outside the box, to solve business problems and to make decisions that can enhance the good of the team and company (Bennett, 2009). Failure of leadership can prove to be very costly. It may lead to a number of dreadful consequences like employee turnover, absenteeism, low performance and customer dissatisfaction, which in the long run may be extremely costly to the success of the organization (Lim & Boger, 2005). Leadership style is indeed a complex construct and is related to numerous organizational variables like, personality (e.g. Brown & Reilly, 2009), organizational commitment (e.g. Avolio et al., 2004; Clark et al., 2009; Geijsel et al., 2003; Leach, 2005; Lok & Crawford, 1999), employee motivation (e.g. Mehta, 2000) and most importantly, job satisfaction (e.g. Mancheno-Smoak et al., 1996; Wu, 2009).

Management scholars and researchers have been recognizing the significant role of leadership style in deciding important job outcomes such as acceptance of innovations, work attitudes, satisfaction, perceptions, behavior, etc. (Aarons, 2006). Leadership style was once upon a time conceptualized as two main themes, viz. transactional and transformational till the 1970's and 1980's (Bennet, 2009). It was Burns (1978) who was one of the first to treat leadership style in terms of transactional and transformational characteristics (Emery & Barker, 2007). Bass (1990) came up with a measure of leadership style in terms of transactional or transformational leadership – The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which has become a famous tool in examining the type of a particular leader by various modern day organization behavior scientists and researchers. Bass & Avolio (2005) explain the difference between the two types of leadership as follows: The process of influencing people in which leaders change their associates' awareness as to what is important, and move them to see themselves and the opportunities and challenges of their surrounding environment in a new way, is termed as transformational leadership. In contrast, transactional leaders engage themselves in behaviors associated with a constructive management style (includes contingent rewards) and corrective-style management (management-by-exception). Hence its clear from the aforementioned definition that the focus of transactional leadership is to clearly articulate role expectations and to promote role performance to achieve these role expectations.

Numerous studies have consistently shown that transformational leadership – as opposed to transactional leadership has a positive relationship with work outcomes, predominantly job

satisfaction (for e.g. Emery & Barker, 2007; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006) and higher employee ratings of effectiveness & satisfaction (for e.g. Hater & Bass, 1988; Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). Based on these important findings, managers were encouraged to empower their employees and develop them into high-involvement individuals and teams by focusing on quality, cost effectiveness, service and quantity of output of production (Bass, 1999). Kara et al., (2013) perceives that in many European and Asian countries, managers especially in the hospitality sector spend time in cultivating social relationships with employees in an attempt to increase their effectiveness and satisfaction that, in a way increases employee trust and loyalty but this clearly requires strong interpersonal skills and a sound knowledge of cross-cultural differences. Nicolaides (2006) argues that essentially it is the relationships in the workplace that act as a "glue" in keeping managers and employees connected. Having said this, depending on the situation, managers employ various leadership styles in the workplace that likely has direct effects on employee outcomes. Consistently, transformational leadership style (as opposed to the transactional style) results in higher employee job satisfaction, commitment and productivity (Erkutlu, 2008).

3.2.5.3. Emotional Intelligence & Emotional Labor:

A very important offshoot discussion here is that of the relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Labor with job satisfaction. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is conceptualized as an ability of an individual to recognize his/her own feelings and those of others and to motivate and manage his/her own emotions well in relationship with others (Goleman, 2000). Various researches have consistently showed over the period of time that EI can influence how people can control their emotions and handle frustration. Emotionally intelligent people are sensitive and empathetic to the feelings and emotions of others (Cheung & Tang, 2009; Lee & Ok, 2012). The positive attributes of EI may change employees' emotional labor behaviors and thus, may contribute to reducing burnout and which in turn increasing job satisfaction (Lee & Ok, 2012).

"Emotions at workplace" has been attracting the interest of numerous researchers and practitioners alike (Cartwright & Pappas, 2007). Salovey & Mayer (1990) were the pioneers in introducing the concept of EI as something unique than the normal intelligence and their definition which evolved with further research is the most widely accepted one in the research of emotional labor (Carmeli & Josman, 2006). The definition reads as, "…. The ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thoughts, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and to reflectively regulates emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth." (Mayer &

Salovey, 1997 p. 5; (Cited by Lee & Ok, 2012)). Mayer & Salovey, (1997) conceptualized EI into four different and distinct dimensions, viz. "Appraisal of emotion in self", "Appraisal and recognition of emotions in others", "Regulation of emotion in self" and "Use of emotion to facilitate performance". Self-emotion appraisal reflects the ability to perceive accurately and appraise one's own deep emotions and to express these emotions naturally. Appraisal of others' emotions is the ability to accurately perceive and understand both the internal and external emotions of others. Regulation of emotions involve managing, controlling or altering emotions in a specific direction to facilitate and inculcate pleasant feelings, to enhance positive affective states during psychological distress. Use of emotion reflects the ability to make use of the emotion for activities that are constructive and useful for the self and for the organization and also for enhancing individual performance (Lee & Ok, 2012; Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

3.2.6. Employee Empowerment & Job Satisfaction:

Empowerment is one of the most commonly used terms in modern day organizations and it's impact on employees' performance and satisfaction has been significant over the past few years. Undoubtedly empowerment is a construct that is documented heavily in the management research arena. Different researchers look at empowerment in different perspectives depending on the context of research. The basic meaning of empowerment brought out by numerous researchers as that which provides employees with greater decision-making ability and discretionary power over how they perform their jobs and serve customers (for e.g. Spreitzer, 1995; Hancer & George, 2003). Empowerment has been the talk of the town especially in the services sector, more particularly in the hospitality sector where frontline employees act as boundary spanners and are often torn between a myriad of supervisors' and customers' demands, affording them with considerable latitude, flexibility and power over the content of their interaction between themselves and the customers and how work is accomplished can induce a sense of personal achievement and job satisfaction, subsequently reduce the potential for stress (Chiang et al., 2009; Chow et al., 2006; Hancer & George, 2003). The moment I came upon this antecedent, my eyes lit up and I was able to suddenly find so much of relevance to my context of airhostesses, since according to my basic understanding, the job of an airhostess pertains extensively towards hospitality and frontline job duties. I wanted to explore more on this and subsequently dug in deeper into the literature to find more.

The concept of empowerment was originally developed from studies conducted in western organizations and is often discussed from two main perspectives, viz. organizational and

psychological perspectives (Chang, Shih & Lin, 2010). While structural or organizational empowerment is nothing but the perceived presence or absence of key conditions of empowerment in the workplace (Kanter, 1977), psychological empowerment is the psychological perceptions or attitudes of the employees about their work and their roles in the organization (Spreitzer, 1995). Numerous studies have established a positive relationship between the two perspectives of empowerment in that; employees who had access to strategic information and perceived support from their managers are psychologically empowered (Chang, Shih & Lin, 2010). Additionally, work has been done to unearth the relationship between organizational and psychological empowerment, with special references to nurses in the healthcare industry and have investigated the mediating role of psychological empowerment between organizational empowerment and work attitudes (Manojlovich & Laschinger, 2002).

Studies in the past have consistently had drawn positive associations between empowerment, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Liu et al., 2006; Manojlovich & Laschinger, 2002). Thomas & Velthouse (1990) further built up on the cognitive empowerment model (Conger & Kanungo, 1988) described psychological empowerment as an intrinsic task motivation. Several studies based on this model have demonstrated its important mediating effect between organizational environment (input) and its subsequent behaviors (output) (Laschinger et al., 2001; Manojlovich & Laschinger, 2002).

3.2.7. Personality:

Up to this point, I've explained numerous antecedents in relationship with job satisfaction, however when it came to the context of "Personality" I was completely carried away by two things: Firstly, the exceedingly vast amount of research done in this area, and secondly the compelling relevance that I found to my context of research. Let me explain here with a deeper sense of detail.

"How do we perceive each other?" "What do we know about our own self?" " What are our goals?" – These are some of the noteworthy questions that numerous psychologists around the world tend to ask, when it comes to studies on personality (Emmons & Kings, 1988; Mayer, 2015; Vazire & Mehl, 2008; Zebrowitz, 2006). The answers to these questions have given us many intriguing findings about various aspects within the domain of "Personality" such as, how we form impressions about one another, evaluate traits and in turn form opinions of our potential for change (Anderson & Chen, 2002; Goldberg & Rosolack, 1994; Plaks, Levy & Dweck, 2009).

3.2.7.1. Definitions of Personality:

Having shed a little light on the term called "Personality", I would now like to elaborate more on this. I shall start with the various definitions of "Personality", then move on to the models and traits of personality and finally the relationship of personality with job satisfaction.

Almost all personality psychologists agree that personality is a system, particularly Wundt (1897), who was the pioneer in describing personality in this way. In his study, Wundt (1897) described personality as an organization of parts - and this idea is equally contemporary today across all areas where personality is researched (Mayer, 2007a). Larsen & Buss (2010) define personality as "the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence his or her interactions with, and adaptations to, the intra-psychic, physical and social environments". Mayer (2005, p. 296) defined personality in quite a similar way as Larsen & Buss (2010) as "The organized developing system within the individual that represents the collective action of his/her motivational, emotional, cognitive, social planning and other psychological subsystems".

3.2.7.2. Models of Personality:

There has been a wide range of research into the various components that make up the construct of personality. Among numerous models proposed, two models stand out – The first and the primary one being the "Big Five" Personality model or "Five-Factor" Model (FFM) and the second one being the HEXACO Model of personality. In the following section we would describe a few important personality models in detail and further try to establish a link between personality and job satisfaction.

3.2.7.2.1. The Eysenck's Model of Personality & The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire:

Perhaps one of the oldest researches in the field of personality, the work of Eysenck provides one of the most interesting and extensively studied architectural patterns of the human personality (Beratis et al., 2011; Eysenck, 1967, 1981; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975, 1991). Eysenck's personality schema argues that the phenotypic behavior reflects the underlying traits of three dimensions that have a biological origin, viz. *neuroticism, extraversion* and *psychoticism.* Neuroticism is looked upon as the factor that reflects the tendency to exhibit negative emotions, low self-esteem and emotional instability; Extraversion identifies itself with traits such as sociability, activeness, self-confidence and irresponsibility; psychoticism is conceptualized as an umbrella term that includes traits like anti-social behavior, emotional insensitivity, a paranoid way

of thinking, impulsiveness and non-conformity (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975, 1991). The scores obtained on the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975) are considered to reflect the above personality traits (Beratis et al., 2011).

3.2.7.2.2. The "Five Factor" Model of Personality (FFM):

Perhaps the leading model of personality, the Five Factor Model (FFM) consists of five key elements: Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism (Goldberg, 1990; John et al., 2008; Macht & Nembhard, 2015).

Extraversion refers to the extent to which a person is sociable, talkative, assertive, energetic and outgoing (Kvasova, 2015; McCrae & Costa, 1985). Initially the term extraversion was defined with different terminologies such as "sociability", "surgency" and to an extent, "gregariousness" (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Driskell et al., 1987; Goldberg, 1990; Macht & Nembhard, 2015). All these synonyms of extraversion were found to be traditionally having strong relationships to interpersonal interactions (Gill & Oberlander, 2003). Extraversion is said to be composed of twenty-one sub-components, with six of them being associated with communication-related terms (John et al., 2008). These terms are related to both extremely low levels of communication (that is, quiet and silent), dubbed as "introversion" along with extremely high levels of communication (that is, outspokenness, talkativeness, sociable and noisy). An interesting finding in this context is that how do teams with extraverted individuals function. Thorne (1987) found from his study that among homogenous extraverted teams, teams tend to discuss more topics in breadth whereas homogenous introverted teams tended to discuss just one topic but at great depth. In case of a heterogeneous team (consisting of both extraverted and introverted individuals), the individual who's an extravert normally initiates and concludes the conversation whereas an introverted individual introduces a more engaged and a comprehensive decision (Thorne et al., 2009). Similarly, Lonergan et al., (2000) advocate that, for intellectual and imaginative tasks, heterogeneity in the team composition is necessary, though not completely backed up by relevant statistical evidence. Mohammed & Angell (2003) and Chamorro-Premuzic et al., (2005) also ascertained that higher variability in extraversion related to higher overall scores on the oral component and the propensity to go for oral communication. In a similar line, Stewart (2006) argued that homogenous teams (that is, a team comprising of similar individuals) were highly uncorrelated with good team performance. Hence from the above arguments we can deduce that extraversion may be related to team effectiveness, due to the power of persuasion or influence (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003). Research also indicates consistently that the level of extraversion

positively relates to participation, eagerness and willingness to share information, in addition to increasing verbal exchanges without affecting the overall quality of the team (Barry & Stewart, 1997; de Vries et al., 2006; Graebner, 2012; Macht & Nembhard, 2015). Additionally, the so-called "talkaholics" – individuals with an excessive need to verbalize, score very high on extraversion (McCroskey & Richmond, 1995). All put together, these aspects suggest that quantity of communication may be a positive indicator (Macht & Nembhard, 2015). Whereas, an individual's unwillingness to communicate has positive correlations with introversion (MacIntrye & Charos, 1996) and hence negative correlations with compulsiveness of communication at lower levels of extraversion (McCroskey & Richmond, 1995; McCroskey et al., 2001).

Neuroticism relates to an individual's internal emotional status or stability (that is, high levels of anxiety and instability) (Gill & Oberlander, 2003; John et al., 2008; Macht & Nembhard, 2015). According to McCrae & Costa (1985), neuroticism is associated with the tendency of experiencing negative affects such as anger, over anxiety, irritability, fear, sadness and a feeling of being insecure. It is found out from subsequent research that neuroticism significantly affects interpersonal interactions (Gill & Oberlander, 2003; Mount et al., 1998). People who score high on neuroticism are less able to control impulses, find it tough to cope up with stress, and tend to respond emotionally to situations that would not influence most people (Kvasova, 2015; Mccrae & John, 1992). Thus, a highly neurotic individual tend to have an erratically varying behavior including oral communication. Higher levels of neuroticism or anxious behavior may even result in unwillingness to communicate (MacIntrye & Charos, 1996), lower positive correlations to compulsive communication or verbal aggression (McCroskey & Richmond, 1995; McCroskey et al., 2001) and apprehension to communicate (Beatty et al., 1998; McCroskey et al., 2001). Additionally, highly neurotic individuals' choice of words during a conversation tends to be more negative than positive (Gill & Oberlander, 2003). Although neuroticism has less direct communication-related aspects than extraversion, it appears to be a potentially negative trait to have within a team (Macht & Nembhard, 2015).

Agreeableness is the third personality trait within the FFM. John et al., (2008) deciphers the term "quarrelsome" which in turn relates to a lower level of agreeableness, which infers that a "disagreeable" individual would possess the propensity to verbally argue a lot for any issue within the team or within the organization (McCroskey et al., 2001). According to McCrae & John (1992), the term agreeableness refers to an individual's level of empathy, compassion, warmth and generosity. It is told that agreeable people are generally forgiving, softhearted, co-operative, trustful, sympathetic to others and also eager to help others (McCrae & Costa, 1985).

Agreeableness is also concomitant with being a 'good citizen' and also to behave in a way that is socially acceptable and to contribute to the well being of the society (Kvasova, 2015; Markowitz et al., 2012). Although both neuroticism and agreeableness have much lesser amount of a direct-communication impact, it is still seen as a potentially negative trait to have within a team or an organization (Macht & Nembhard, 2015).

Openness describes the breadth, depth and variability of one's longing for innovation and new ideas and also indicates the extent to which a person is imaginative, broad and open-minded and artistically sensitive (McCrae & Costa, 1985). Openness is also closely associated with aesthetic appreciation and intellectual curiosity that might stimulate one's interest in nature and encourage environmental protection (Hirsh & Dolderman, 2007; Kvasova, 2015; Markowitz et al., 2012). Further, Lonergan et al., (2000) and Driskell et al, (1987) evoke that variance of openness should positively relate to team performance for a given intellectual task (Macht & Nembhard, 2015).

Conscientiousness conceptualized as the tendency of an individual to be organized, responsible, thorough, and self-disciplined and adhere to rules and norms (McCrae & Costa, 1985). People who score high on conscientiousness have also been related with higher future time perspective (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999), having long-term orientations and are usually concerned with the consequences of their actions and hence, tend to plan for better future outcomes (Kvasova, 2015; Milfont & Sibley, 2012). Besides being orderly and responsible, conscientious individuals follow social guidelines carefully for any kind of action and always possess the urge to 'do the right thing' (Hirsh, 2010). On an individual perspective, conscientiousness has been related closely to exchanges between members and their superiors (Deluga, 1998). The combination of both extraversion and conscientiousness has been closely related to written performance (Macht & Nembhard, 2015; Mohammed & Angell, 2003).

3.2.7.2.3. The HEXACO Personality Model – An alternative to the Five Factor Model?

One possible alternative model to the famous Five-factor model (FFM) of personality is the HEXACO model (Ashton & Lee, 2001; Ashton, Lee, Perugini et al., 2004; McKay & Tokar, 2012). This model of personality structure comprises of six different factors of Honesty-Humility (H; honest, modest vs. dishonest, boastful), Emotionality (E; anxious, vulnerable vs. self-assured, stable), Extraversion (X; outgoing, sociable vs. shy, withdrawn), Agreeableness (A; tolerant, gentle vs. intolerant, harsh), Conscientiousness (C; organized, diligent vs. sloppy, reckless) and Openness (O; creative, unconventional vs. unimaginative, conventional) (Ashton & Lee, 2007; McKay & Tokar, 2012). The six-factor HEXACO structure that emerged from the same

investigation techniques that produced the Big five, has been shown in cross-language lexical studies of personality structure to be more replicable than the Big five model (Ashton & Lee, 2007, McKay & Tokar, 2012). This finding seems to contradict the perceived notion that personality is comprised of only five replicable factors and suggests that the HEXACO model maybe considered as a viable alternative for the FFM (McKay & Tokar, 2012).

HEXACO's Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Openness factors closely resemble the FFM factors with the same corresponding names. However, Emotionality and Agreeableness factors are variants of FFM's Neuroticism and Agreeableness respectively. Emotionality bears a resemblance to Neuroticism but lacks the façade of anger that is typically included in this domain and includes sentimentality which typically has been included in FFM's Agreeableness. Agreeableness includes several FFM Agreeableness features (e.g. tolerant vs. intolerant, gentle vs. harsh); however it also includes the (low) anger facet that is typically included in the FFM's Neuroticism and excludes the sentimentality component that is typically included in the FFM's Agreeableness. Conclusively HEXACO Honest-Humility, which is not clearly represented in the FFM, includes traits (e.g. sincerity, modesty) that typically are included into the FFM's Agreeableness (Ashton & Lee, 2007; McKay & Tokar, 2012).

Furthermore to HEXACO's cross-language replication, the model has established a predictive advantage over the traditional FFM. For instance, Ashton & Lee (2008) discovered that the former consistently predicted more variance than did the latter in diverse criteria that were conceptually relevant to the Honesty-Humility domain. The HEXACO model also accounted for more variance than the FFM in the so-mentioned "dark triad" of personality (Paulhus & Williams, 2002) that consists of psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellianism as per Ashton & Lee, (2007) (McKay & Tokar, 2012).

3.2.7.2.4. A few other significant Personality models and scales:

There are numerous researchers and organizational behavior scientists who have contributed vastly to the research and conceptualization of personality in various contexts and set ups. Apart from the famous Eysenck's, FFM and HEXACO models of personality, one other notable model of personality comes from Zuckerman and Gray which focuses in providing a biological explanation to individual differences in personality, while the traditional FFM is considered to have come from a lexical approach for the study of personality (Aluja et al., 2013; De Raad, 2000; John, 1990). Zuckerman, Kuhlman & Camac (1988), Zuckerman et al., (1991 & 1993) developed an alternative five-factor model of personality formed by Impulsive Sensation Seeking,

Aggression-Hostility, Activity, Sociability and Neuroticism-Anxiety that has been primarily addressed with the Zuckerman-Kuhlman personality questionnaire (ZKPQ; Zuckerman et al., 1993). Various cross-cultural studies have also endorsed the universality of these alternative five factors (Aluja et al., 2006; Rossier et al., 2007; Wu et al., 2000). Additionally, the ZKPQ has also been instrumental in showing strong relationships with the DSM-IV Personality disorders (Aluja et al., 2007; Wang et al, 2004). However, to overcome a few limitations of the ZKPQ, Aluja, Kuhlman & Zuckerman (2010) developed a new instrument based on the Zuckerman's personality model. The new Zuckerman-Kuhlman-Aluja Personality Questionnaire (ZKA-PQ) consists of 200 items that are based on a Likert scale answer format (Aluja et al., 2010). This new instrument has the key advantage of including four facets for each personality dimension. The five factors of personality are basically the same as that of the ZKPQ, barring a few changes produced by the facet's content. The "Factor of Impulse Sensation Seeking" (ImpSS) is now revised as "Sensation Seeking" (SS). This change is because of the fact that the four facets of this factor refer to the Sensation Seeking Scale, form V (Zuckerman, Eysenck & Eysenck, 1978) and impulsiveness is only presented in six items of the "Boredom/Sensitivity/Impulsiveness" facet. The ZKPQ Sociability factor was renamed as Extraversion in the ZKA-PQ. Hence, the factors of the revised questionnaire are: *Neuroticism, Extraversion, Activity, Aggressiveness* and *Sensation-Seeking* (Aluja et al., 2013).

3.2.8. The Personality – Job Satisfaction Relationship:

Now having discussed in-depth about the various aspects of the factor called "Personality", it is time to talk about the relationship that this personality has with job satisfaction. The job satisfaction-personality relationship has been a long studied topic over the past so many years. What features of a job do people rate as important contributors to their happiness at their workplace and how does one's personality bear upon what he or she perceives significant? Does personality influence what employees desire for, in their jobs? These are the primary questions that formed the basis of the study undertaken by Furnham et al., (2002) and also form the foothold of our study as well. We intend to examine these questions and also look into the relationship between the two variables viz., personality and job satisfaction. Although (as mentioned before) there are a number of studies that have examined this relationship (e.g. Connolly & Vishwesvaran, 2000; Hart, 1999; Judge, Higgins, Thoreson & Barrick, 1999), it still warrants further research on this topic. While most of the studies on job satisfaction focused on the dispositional nature of the construct (Arvey et al., 1989; Bouchard et al., 1992; Keller et al., 1992), further research has been

called for an examination of the psychological process underlying this construct (e.g. Brief, 1998). While we sneak into the history of studies pertaining to this subject, one of the pioneers and widely appreciated one is that of Furnham & Zacherl (1985). Now, we shall see the abstruseness of the relationship between the two variables. Furnham & Zacharel (1985) conducted their study among a group of computer employees to establish a link between job satisfaction and Eysenck's personality variables namely Psychoticism, Extraversion, Neuroticism and Lie (Adopted from Eysenck & Zuckerman, (1978)). The result of their study provides us lot of interesting and meaningful insights. Overall, two of the job satisfaction factors namely Co-workers and Pay correlated with three of the personality dimensions while two others namely Nature of work and amount of work correlated with two of the personality dimensions. Incidentally, two of the job satisfaction factors, viz., Working conditions and Future of the Organization did not correlate significantly with any of the personality factors. On the same lines, the overall job satisfaction yielded only one significant positive correlation with Extraversion (Furnham & Zacherl, 1985).

Furnham et al., (2002) from their research showed from the factor analysis of their study that job satisfaction ratings tended to cluster along hygiene/extrinsic and motivator/intrinsic lines. The results derived from the regressions of the global actual job satisfaction score showed two predominant predictors of job satisfaction, viz. Conscientiousness and age. The authors concluded that younger and more conscientious employees consistently reported higher levels of job satisfaction. This echoes the findings derived from previous researches on the subject (e.g. Judge et al., 1999). Salgado, (1997) also echoed a similar note that nearly all Meta analyses aggregating over different samples in various countries with different outcome criteria showed that conscientiousness is the best possible trait to predict work-related behavior. Even in Furnham et al.,'s (2002) study, conscientiousness was positively associated with a few intrinsic and one of the extrinsic job satisfaction factors.

But it's also quite interesting to note in Furnham et al's (2002) study results that except Conscientiousness, none of the other personality traits predicted either global or the subscale scores of actual job satisfaction. This is in complete contrast with some of the predominant previous findings on this subject (e.g. Furnham & Zacherl, 1986; Tokar & Subich, 1997), and neither Extraversion nor Neuroticism predicted levels of job satisfaction (Furnham et al., 2002). As has been evoked elsewhere (Furnham, 1994), it might be possible that the predictive validity of personality traits vary depending on the composition of the sample (For example, Extraversion might be a powerful predictor of job performance if the job requires lot of interpersonal interaction) (Furnham et al., 2002). Hence from the above argument, we shall clearly witness an

82

ambiguity in the relationship between the various personality factors put together and Job Satisfaction.

3.3. Traditional Measures and Scales for Job Satisfaction:

Now having discussed the major antecedents of job satisfaction, starting from demographic variables, to Reward systems to Leadership, to Job characteristics and all the way to Personality, let us move on to look into how these antecedents are measured against job satisfaction. All through the various researches that I had come across so far, I found various methods of measurements that were followed in each of them – Some of them quite popularly used across various researches. I shall summarize a few of them here.

I came across several measures and scales such as the famous Job Descriptive index (JDI; Smith et al., 1969), the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ; Weiss et al., 1967), the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS; Spector, 1985) and the INDSALES (Churchill, Ford & Walker, 1974) that were developed to assess satisfaction towards specific factors and characteristics of the job. While I found that the JDI developed by Smith et al., (1969) focuses on five important aspects of the job, viz. type of work, pay, and opportunities for promotion/career advancement, supervision and the nature of coworkers in the job, the INDSALES (Churchill et al., 1974) tends to assess satisfaction with respect to the customer, promotion, pay, company policy, the work supervisor and the coworker. From the above-mentioned aspects that these two scales measure, it felt evident to me that these two scales can be predominantly used to measure satisfaction of primarily sales people across industries. However the MSQ (Weiss et al., 1967) and JSS (Spector, 1985) are found to be theoretically suitable measures for all kinds of jobs.

3.4. My major "dissatisfactions" from the existing Literature on "Job "Satisfaction":

While I was going through all the above literature on the subject of Job Satisfaction, some readings were convincing, while some others were boring, and from this entire exercise, I could find many insights that resonated with my study and with the previous round of interviews. However, I could not help feeling an overwhelming and irritating dissatisfaction, for, according to me; two of my main expectations were not met. I shall summarize both of them as follows:

3.4.1. A dedicated study for Airhostesses – A unique study in itself:

First and foremost, I find a huge gap in the existing literature with respect to the job of an airhostess, or to go a step further, the airline sector as such, barring a few of them of course. Also

I'm not discounting the fact that there are innumerable studies pertaining to the hospitality sector across the world and I'm not denying them, most of them predominantly limit themselves to the hotel industry. Hence this study, although being a part of hospitality assumes lot of significance since it's particularly focused in exploring various aspects of the job of an airhostess. Perhaps from my understanding of the dynamics of research as far as the airline sector is concerned, one of the reasons behind the lack of studies undertaken here might be because of the limited access to approach employees working in this sector industry – They work under heavily "restricted" areas and it eventually makes it tough for researchers to approach them for any kind of study. However as far as this study is concerned, this limitation was overcome by establishing strong contacts with employees through various known and trustable sources and hence, access to employees was easier.

However, during the course of the study I realized that the purpose of this study was half-fulfilled. Once the dimension of happiness/satisfaction was extended with the introduction of a new factor called "Time" and "Continuity" I again felt a void even after going through the existing literature on Job Satisfaction and Personality among others. Of course, I do realize the fact that my exploration of literature has human limitations, however I strongly feel that the solution to this dimension of the problem couldn't be obtained without further investigating at "Ground zero"!!

3.4.2. *"Time and Change" – The "Continuity" factor of Job Satisfaction:*

As the reader can notice from the entire exercise of the Literature survey presented in this chapter, there has been considerable and significant research in the domain of Job Satisfaction in the "static" nature, and there's a dearth of information regarding the "dynamic" nature of job satisfaction. In other words, by the word "Dynamicity" with respect to job satisfaction, I intend to convey to the reader, the significance of the question *"For how long can an employee maintain the same/similar levels of satisfaction and happiness in his/her job?"* This question assumes much more significance with respect to this particular context of airhostesses because of the unique and distinguished facets of their job profile, along with other factors as revealed in the previous chapter. Here, the reader might be reminded that this was the question with which I started, and interestingly, this was also the question that arose most strongly with the interviews. But I could not find any satisfactorily answers to long-term job satisfaction in the case of airhostesses.

3.4.3. *No deep understanding on the dynamics of job satisfaction:*

From the plethora of research that I had gone through so far, I felt that most of the studies are

looking for factors, variables, specific contextual forms, and so on. But however, during my interviews I could see that something more subtle was on the way, about individuality, the formation and making of a person, a crystallization of many elements at different points of time, etc. Thus satisfaction does not seem to be only an outcome of set of variables, factors and environments. I feel at this stage that something more psychological, cultural and institutional seems to play a huge role, and is not present in the literature I had read so far.

3.5. Moments of reflection & the way forward:

During my initial quest for theory with the interview data in hand, I was completely overwhelmed – Numerous researchers, numerous studies, various methodologies employed, some vague results, some conclusive and convincing ones, some being way too specific to that particular context, while others being a bit haywire here and there, and so on… Ultimately I gave my best foot forward to meticulously read through almost three hundred research papers in this subject, analyze each one of them and check the applicability of each of them to my context. Of course, there were several of them that were directly pointing to the context, some had excellent theoretical descriptions but I wasn't too convinced with the methodologies and the results, etc. However, at this stage of my quest, I didn't want to reject any of the studies that I had gone through, however vague they were, because this exercise was meant to be a firm step forward to establish a strong theoretical background for the study.

3.5.1. *Relevance of the interview narratives to the theory:*

The literature that I've compiled above, as you might have read through, comprises of various sections that are directly linked to the interview data that was gathered before commencing this exercise. The two main ideas that I've talked about are job satisfaction and personality.

If we quickly trace back to the "Moments of Reflection" section of the previous chapter, the significance of being an airhostess is well explained – An opportunity for an individual to shape up and build one's own personality and confidence. Personality *(I will use this term 'personality' here, but subsequently it will be seen that I may need to be more precise and change it for other terms later, however I prefer to keep this term for the time being and in the way things were appearing to me at this stage)* can be shaped up in two ways – External and Internal. Of course, as an airhostess there're strict rules and regulations with regards to the maintenance of external personality, that is, the physical appearance and obviously they're trained to maintain themselves. But how does one build his/her personality from within inside? Here comes the relevance of the management theories

on "Personality" and this is the primary reason behind mentioning and describing the concept of personality in detail along with the various models corresponding to it. As an airhostess, I find each of the factors of personality is directly applicable – Be it extraversion (ability to interact freely and openly with people around), neuroticism (being able to maintain themselves calm and composed during tough situations), conscientiousness (ability to maintain themselves in an orderly fashion), agreeableness (ability to maintain an amicable relationship with people around) and openness (being able to keep themselves open-minded for learning and adjusting themselves to various situations that they encounter) and so on. It's very important to note from the above accord that, personality is an integral part of an airhostess and any kind of deviation from the fixed norms of personality is directly going to impact the safety and security of passengers on board. Of course, I was already aware that linking job satisfaction to personality was far too easy an answer, and that I would have to dig deeper, however I want to stress upon the impression that I had from the onset that something psychological, dynamic and in the long run was implied in what was allowing airhostesses to keep finding satisfaction in a sometimes difficult job.

In the process of maintaining their personality – Of course apart from the argument that they're trained to maintain themselves professionally - Airhostesses should feel a sense of satisfaction in whatever they're doing. I had spoken in the previous chapter about the ways in which airhostesses keep themselves motivated and that they receive immediate feedbacks from their job right on their face from passengers present on board. These may be small things but as the old adage says, "Small drops make a mighty ocean", from the first cycle of interviews, these small tokens of feedbacks and appreciations does seem to go a long way for an airhostess to keep their spirits high and lift their heads up and feel proud of what they are. But this phenomenon needs to be confirmed with more evidence. Of course I had spoken about the various theories and factors contributing to Job satisfaction on a wider range, however all the above-mentioned factors and theories seem to be very much relevant when it comes to the context of airhostesses. For instance, during the interview process, I came across a few of my respondents mentioning some interesting points about the inter-relationships between their colleagues and superiors while on board, and how this affects their satisfaction and happiness levels during their job. Notably, one of them came up with a very interesting explanation – As airhostesses they need to undergo a special training program called "Crew Resources Management" (CRM), in which they're trained to work with people of different nationalities and of different age groups. This is administered to them because of the very fact that people who come into this job may be from different walks of life and different backgrounds and a sense of ego might creep in when it comes to elevating oneself from

one level to the next. People might see an unreasonable competition that might make them to compromise their professionalism during the job. Hence CRM - A kind of psychological training is given to airhostesses to combat this ego and how not to get affected by seniority and allied issues. Of course this is subjective and there's always a human factor that creeps in every time unconsciously, however, at least in this context, these kinds of practical training modules do seem to go a long way in helping airhostesses maintain their satisfaction in their job. However, given all these, there were some respondents who went on to explain their personal experiences as to how they had suffered because of the ego and superiority feelings of technicians and ground staff. They came up with a very interesting point here that many a times a flight gets delayed, is because of the acts of negligence from the ground staff, and as airhostesses it's extremely a tough job to convince passengers and to make them stay calm during these troubled times. Hence, these are some of the operational challenges that surfaced out during the interactions, which are faced everyday. It is at this point that I found that the theory of the relationship between job satisfaction and the nature of colleagues, supervisors, subordinates, peers, etc. seems to be extremely relevant and this also might be one of the reasons of frustration in their job.

There is also another element that was striking, which, as personality, can seem too easy an answer. This is the role of leadership. Respondents, especially from Air India highlighted how their lives started to change for good, with the change in the top leadership of the organization. All the respondents from Air India unanimously felt that the approach of the current CEO is completely employee-oriented and is very impressive – He personally visits every destination of Air India and interacts with every employee on a one-to-one basis and this gives lot of room for employees to express themselves. Also this, respondents say, gives an assurance to them that there's someone that they can trust upon to be heard in the organization. This directly seem to correlates to the theory of the relationship between job satisfaction and leadership, that is, employees tend to feel satisfied at work when there's an assertive leadership and when the leader is people-friendly in nature.

3.5.2. *Lot of correlations and relevance! But…*

Although the review of literature revealed lot of interesting relevance with the elements of surprise derived from the previous chapter, considerable questions still remain. If you would have observed throughout the entire theoretical background that I had covered so far, everything was specific to a "static" state of time. It's a common man's understanding that airhostesses have to "live through" with whatever they face in their job, over a period of time. Now, how does the

existing literature explain the ups and downs that happen in an airhostess's career? Somewhere down the line I felt that I'm yet to get an answer for this – How do airhostesses maintain themselves despite facing these numerous ups and downs in their career? How can they keep themselves "continuously satisfied"?

I came across a few striking hints during the interview process regarding continuity that didn't reflect much during the search for theory. For instance, airhostesses had a common consensus that, when they're on the flight, they've to forget everything else that's happening around them and fully focus on the job in hand, for example, their family, children, etc. This kind of detachment from everything during the job sounded extremely unique in the case of airhostesses and is it possible that they keep doing this every time? What makes them do this every day and still have a balance between their personal and professional lives? Also, on every flight they're loaded with perhaps the biggest responsibility – Safety of two hundred to three hundred passengers at the same time. Their alertness on board is put to extreme tests. Of course, every job requires a fair bit of alertness, smartness and shrewdness to sustain, but the pressure of life-saving responsibility can never be compared to any other job. How do they sustain this over time? One can argue from the literature of job satisfaction, that airhostesses are very highly paid and compensated with lot of luxury when they're off their job, but is that merely enough to keep them going? One other important factor that's to be mentioned here is "Age". Of course, the existing literature on job satisfaction that I've covered talks about the significance of age and how does satisfaction level increases/decreases with age. But somewhere down the line, I feel that this argument needs more investigation. From the interviews I observed from airhostesses that as they progress in age, it becomes extremely difficult in managing their hectic travelling as well as taking care of themselves physically. They start developing both physical and mental problems due to continuous exposure to air travel and their ultra-heavy workload. Of course, flying might be their ultimate dream of life, but how do they sustain themselves and live up to their dreams? I felt that the existing literature doesn't have a convincing answer to these questions.

3.5.3. The Way Forward…

With the latest enquiry that has begun over the "continuity" of satisfaction of airhostesses in their job over their tenure of service till now, questions were being raised within myself as to what should be my strategy now – Given that, whatever literature search that I've done so far hasn't provided the much needed breakthrough, (of course it has given a big lead), should I explore more of theory under a different domain other than job satisfaction? Should I reflect more keenly on the

existing ground data that I already have, so as to find a meaningful answer for the "Continuity" factor? Or should I conduct further enquiries with my respondents and dig out more real-time information? I started reflecting on each of the above three questions to decide on the next course of strategy, and finally I decided that, the third option would be the most valid one to implement – Go back to the field and dig out more information!! Moreover, the literature is so huge and so multifaceted that I prefer to let the actual contact with the airhostesses guide me to where I should go as part of the next step of inquiry. My strategy is of exploration, so it is better if I don't follow the most flown routes.

Now how do I execute the third option? What kind of an approach do I undertake? Do I stick to the same methodology for this exercise? What kind of questions do I ask them and how do I structure the entire session? The answers to all the above questions lie in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 – Tracing to the field again – *The Second Phase*

4.1. The "Life-Cycle" Interview Method:

In the first three chapters I had highlighted the significance of the job of an airhostess and had given a detailed theoretical framework, trying to portray a possible explanation to the uniqueness of the job of an airhostess. The first chapter gave a brief about the uniqueness of this job as compared to other jobs, the level of responsibility under pressure every minute and the physical and mental stress and challenges that an airhostess faces. The second chapter dealt with the exercise that I had conducted on the field so as to get a hands-on understanding as to what goes on in the routine of an airhostess when he/she is on the flight. It was a really fruitful exercise and it gave me a lot of extremely interesting and thought-provoking insights that perhaps would not have been in the research domain so far. Based on these insights and inputs, the third chapter was designed to give them a theoretical background by comparing the existing management theory on "Job satisfaction" and "Personality" with the received insights. However, as the third chapter progressed, I was overwhelmed with the amount of theory available in the research domain and at one point in time, I struggled to relate the exotically researched Job Satisfaction and Personality theories to the context in hand. Eventually after a lot of reading and scrutiny I was able to pick up the relevance to a certain extent, however, there were a few important and interesting narratives from the interview exercise that remained unchallenged by the theory. Those important and interesting narratives were directly pertaining to my unanswered question from the literature – How can the airhostesses sustain themselves in their job over time, and how on earth can airhostesses be made satisfied in their job, right from day one till day last?

To explore a convincing answer for this, initially I went back to whatever theory I've scrutinized and written as part of the previous chapter, took some time to read them all over again, tried scrutinizing the content again, but in vain. Of course, I had a thought at the back of my mind that there should be some theory available behind this perspective however, I decided against exploring further theory at this point in time. I decided to go back to the field and ask my respondents again as to what do they think about the perspective of continuously being satisfied in their job, and what would make them experience the feeling that they're valued in the organization and are given the due importance for all what they keep doing day in and day out. So how do I do that? What kind of an approach do I adopt? Do I go with the same interview approach or do I modify my approach a

little bit? The answers to all these questions lie in this chapter.

4.2. Significance of the second Interview Cycle – The Life Cycle Approach:

From the excerpts of the first interview cycle, the various duties, roles and responsibilities of the job of an airhostess is clearly understood. In addition to the roles and responsibilities, the intensity at which the airhostesses are trained before taking the flight was also studied. Further, the motivational and de-motivational factors were identified separately from the narratives of the various respondents under study. All these information paint a picture to me that job satisfaction can a significant component with respect to an airhostess, as every other job, and factors such as attending and solving life-threatening crisis situations, words of appreciation derived from it, etc., contributed vastly to satisfaction of airhostesses in their job. However, I feel that all the above-mentioned points seem to occur frequently and not just once during their career. Airhostesses tend to experience all these almost every day! Hence, at this juncture, I felt that there might be something more that needs to be understood with respect to job satisfaction amongst airhostesses. Since I just had a feeling that such significant experiences keep happening on a regular basis, these might also have an affect on the satisfaction component amongst the airhostesses. Hence, I feel that there is a need to understand the "continuity" in job satisfaction, that is, in other words, I feel that the idea of "Satisfaction" cannot be explained just with a static analysis, at one moment of time by a series of factors. I would want to see this how this "Satisfaction" plays in the long run, see trajectories, find reasons to be continuously satisfied in the long term, and thus see it from a longer period of time. This is where probably I called that personality is rather a long construction of a relationship to stewardship and flying.

However, when I started thinking about the "Sustainability" aspect of the job, I concluded to myself that this wasn't enough and this led to an opening up of a new dimension in the study. Hence, I decided to undertake a second cycle of interviews to incorporate the "Sustainability" factor and to look at what kept airhostesses satisfied over a period of time. In order to achieve this "revised" goal of the study, amongst the various interview methods studied, the "Life-cycle" approach was adopted. The main idea behind selecting this relatively new approach in management research is that, I wanted to closely ponder upon the life history of an airhostess in detail, take cues right from their childhood days till today – Their dreams, their approach towards fulfilling their dreams and in turn, their past experiences, moments of happiness, sadness, emotions, excitement, personal and professional challenges at every stage of their life and try to see how does a person "evolve" over

time, as an airhostess. In this way, I felt that I might arrive at an answer to my question under research – How do airhostesses sustain over time and what makes them keep going in their job every passing day?

The theory behind the "Life-Cycle" approach as an interview technique is explained as follows.

4.3. History behind the "Life-Cycle" Approach:

Interviewing people for their life story is a qualitative research method for gathering information on the subjective essence of a person's life that's transferrable across various disciplines. This serves to be a unique methodology for research in carrying out an in-depth study of lives of individuals and the experiences that they encounter at various stages of their lives. It's unique also because it aids the researcher in understanding how individuals play various significant roles in shaping up the society (Cohler, 1993; Gergen and Gergen, 1993; Gubrium and Holstein, 2002). Freud used these narratives primarily in applying his psychoanalytic theory to lives of individuals. This "life-Story" approach was also used by Gordon Allport (1942) to study personality development among individuals. He extensively used personal archives, narratives, etc. Even before Gordon Allport (1942), this method has been in use extensively for personality development studies (eg. Murray 1938 & 1955). This concept of research has been in use in the domain of psychology and was used by Sigmund Freud (1957 and 1958). Freud used these narratives primarily in applying his psychoanalytic theory to individual lives. As a tool for extensive research, the life cycle/story interviews are gaining importance in many fields of study. According to Gubrium and Holstein, (2002), the process of life cycle/story interviews undertaken by researchers follows two primary approaches: The constructionist and the naturalistic approaches. The constructionist approach signifies that life stories are evaluated not much for how well they accord with the real-life experiences, but more in terms of how accounts of lives are used by a variety of others, in addition to the subjects whose lives are under consideration for various descriptive purposes (Gubrium and Holstein, 1998; Holstein and Gubrium, 2000a, 2000b). The naturalistic approach is more person-centric and is about getting deeper and deeper into one's own story. This process of telling and re-telling one's own life story gives more insight of experiences that an individual has undergone in his/her life in different situations and is also helpful in a way to understand and explore how cultural values and traditions influence development across the entire life cycle (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002).

Hence from all the above accords we can understand that Life Cycle/Story interviews have gained popularity and acceptance among academic circles – Psychologists using the method to understand

personality development (Runyan, 1982; McAdams, 1993), Anthropologists for understanding cultural similarities and variations (Spradley, 1979; Langness & Frank, 1981; Abu-Lughod, 1993), Sociologists for understanding and defining relationships, group interactions and memberships (Bertaux, 1981; Linde, 1993), Educationalists for understanding innovative teaching methods (Witherell & Noddings, 1991), Literary scholars to explore questions of design, style, content, literary themes and personal truth (Olney, 1980), etc.

In this context, with the above explanation and also since I'm more interested in knowing about the personal history of my respondents in detail, I felt that adopting this "Life-Cycle" approach would really make sense in adding new and meaningful dimensions in my research journey. Also indeed I felt that this would bring up to the table numerous untold insights that probably would not have surfaced when more classical interviewing techniques were adopted.

4.4. Life-Cycle Interviews – The Structure:

Ten respondents out of the fifteen were selected for the "Life cycle" interviews. The respondents were selected based on a simple manual judgment from the first interview cycle, based on their level of involvement and the kind of responses received. Out of the ten respondents, four were from Air France and the remaining from Air India. The overall interview cycle was split into three different sessions on three different days, with each respondent. Each session lasted for a minimum of forty-five minutes to a maximum of ninety minutes for a few of them. Every session was later transcribed and the transcripts were analyzed to come up with interesting facts and findings. The details covered during each of the three sessions are described as follows:

4.4.1. The First Session:

The first session dealt with the respondent narrating his/her experiences before becoming an airhostess – Their childhood days, family and education backgrounds, experiences and incidents that happened in their early lives that actively led them to choose flying as their profession, initial motivation and reactions from their immediate family members and society and some experiences of their previous jobs (if any) and whether they were satisfied/dissatisfied with them and why did they switch over to being an airhostess. This session is considered the key among all the three sessions because this paves the way to understand the beginning of the evolution process of an individual.

4.4.2. The Second Session:

The second session deals with the respondents talking about how did they realize that their dream of flying had come true. Respondents shared their experiences of their first flight as an amateur to this job and their initial days of being an airhostess. They were allowed to recollect their initial flying experiences – the fun, excitement, relationships, glamour, bitter experiences (if any), etc. during this time. This is a very interesting session wherein the respondents felt extremely happy in talking about their good old days of flying, how they initially felt nervous in handling equipment in an aircraft, excitement of exploring a new city and of course the challenges associated with their initial days of flying. The session concluded with the respondents expressing themselves with a few personal experiences as to how did they overcome their challenges to evolve as a better individual for the future.

4.4.3. The Final Session:

The final session had two sub parts. Part one dealt with the respondents talking about their years in progression of being an airhostess – Did the initial excitement sustain over time? If no, then how did things change as time progressed and how did they manage to adapt with the changes that were talking place around them? Respondents narrated interesting experiences to substantiate their points of view. When respondents spoke about "change" that happened over time, the change was both in the personal and professional fronts – The change in personal front talked about their physical challenges with respect to factors like aging, marital status and other demographic variables, while the change in the professional front talked about organizational changes (good and bad), scheduling of flights, destinations (domestic/international/inter-continental), etc. with relevant experiences to highlight their view point.

With the above accord, the session gradually travelled into the second part that dealt with the current situation and the modern day challenges and opportunities of being an airhostess. The respondents spoke about the levels of stress, enjoyment, work-life balance, current day challenges, etc. in a much more detailed manner. The Life cycle interviews concluded with the respondents explaining their individual view points on how do they adapt themselves from here on for their future – Their personality, working style, possible future organizational changes, challenges mainly pertaining to their health condition and how to maintain themselves in good physical and mental health so as to continue flying in the future.

4.5. The Way Forward:

All the sessions of interviews that I had conducted as part of this exercise were recorded and

subsequently transcribed. While going through the transcripts carefully one by one, I was again overwhelmed with the amount of data that I had received! Also, I was amazed with the various interesting facts and explanations that various respondents had shared with me. At one point of time, I even started wondering how is it possible for people to undergo such experiences in their lives! With this excitement in me, I now decided to proceed with the next big and perhaps the most important step of all – The procedure and treatment of data and the data analysis. How did I go about doing that? What was my approach? What were the implications of the analysis? The answers lie in the following sections!

4.5.1. *An important note to the reader:*

The aim of this analysis is to grasp the most important parts of each of the above-mentioned sessions, and for the interview as a whole, that our respondents were putting forward. Rather than just the facts, the story was more important along with the narrative behind the stories. What I call as "narratives" here are the logical and rationalized accounts, as recalled by each of the interviewees during each session. Ideally, I would have copied the integrality of all the stories, but I felt that this would not fit within the constraints of a thesis. So I will not give the stories exactly, but a summary of them. This summary is my summary, even though I tried to remain faithful to the stories as they were told. But because this is a reconstruction, and because these stories were produced from my questioning of the respondents, I would rather keep some of the elements of the interviews as small dialogues.

Thus, the reader will come across a rather peculiar voice. Instead of a narrator that erases himself behind the 'findings', I will keep an authorial voice. When ideas were popping up in my minds during the interviews, I add them, then and there to the stories that respondents narrated during the exercise.

In this way, I would like the reader to understand and deduce during the course of the analysis as to how something changed in my way of thinking about (continuous) job satisfaction. Initially to begin with, I tried to catch from the stories other or previous factors, as they were presented in the two previous chapters. But I felt that it did not work (especially due to the size of the sample). But then I realized that the elements of the stories that I had bracketed, were not "factors", but rather story elements - Events, circumstances, major steps that were giving lot of meaning to the stories as they were told. Indeed the stories were all different with different respondents, but I could isolate some story elements that were similar or playing a similar function during the narratives.

The analysis had thus two aims. One is to find the structure of the stories that were told; second to envisage the idea of job satisfaction in a long-term perspective, and look for new propositions or insights from the interview narratives. While listening to the life stories, my first analysis was guiding me towards an interpretation in terms of built-in passion, but I progressively realized during the course of time that this analysis would need to dig deeper in the psychological realm.

4.6. Commencing the analysis of the "Life-Cycle" Interviews – Some important points:

The analysis of the Life cycle interviews is carried out in two phases - The first phase involves the task of traversing through the various career stages of an airhostess and identifying critical points where an airhostess feels happy, proud, emotional, sad, frustrated, etc. This phase contains various life incidents, experiences and other related narratives from various respondents to substantiate their affect. At this moment of explaining the affects, signaling something important was at stake - The interviews were presenting the representations and stories as narrated by the respondent.

The second phase of analysis involves picking up unique and interesting career experiences and anecdotes that respondents shared with me as part of the interview process, and these experiences would further augment and validate the claims made at the end of the phase one of analysis.

Just to remind our readers once again about the purpose of the "Life-Cycle" interviews – The main aim being that, I wanted to take the discussion on job satisfaction from the "static" form to the "dynamic" form by closely pondering upon the life-history of an airhostess in detail, take cues right from childhood days till today – Their dreams, aspirations, approach towards fulfilling their aspirations and in turn, their initial hands-on experiences in their "dream job", moments of happiness, sadness, emotions, excitement, personal and professional challenges at every stage of their life. Through this, I try to see how does a person "evolve" over time, as an airhostess and thus, I felt that I might probably be able to figure out a possible answer to my question under research – How do airhostesses sustain over time and what makes them keep going in their job every passing day? Thus here we shall try to "evolve" possible answers to explain continuous job satisfaction through the process of "Life-Cycle interviews".

4.7. Phase 1: Traversing through the various stages of an airhostess's career:

This exercise involves the task of identifying life incidents, experiences and the rationales and the possible psychological trends behind each of them for various respondents at different stages of their careers as airhostesses. Respondents came up with innumerable practical instances and experiences that made them feel happy, sad, emotional, frustrated, etc. and were both surprising and

thought provoking. But having said that, the focus is not just on the narratives and the rationales that the respondents have given me, but in addition to that from my side, I've tried to include various forms of affects, thus adding to the wholeness of the entire experience. For better understanding, these experiences and feelings were categorized and documented according to the different stages of their career. This proved to be an extremely long and a cumbersome process, however it proved to be an effective method to analyze and to paint a different picture of job satisfaction that might be very specific to the case of airhostesses. To begin with, all the recorded interviews were decoded without missing even a single word or an expression from every respondent to prepare the initial transcript. Of course, as I had mentioned in the previous chapter, the interviews were scheduled with every respondent in three phases each, and so it wasn't very cumbersome at this stage to identify narratives describing different stages in the career of an airhostess. However, for the purpose of systematic and a pedagogic understanding, I categorized the career of an airhostess into four broad stages, and the "Continuity" factor was examined across all the four stages. The categories are described as follows:

4.7.1. ___The Pre-Air Hostess" Stage ___ – This stage describes the various views, experiences and thought processes of every respondent before becoming an airhostess and the struggles he/she encountered in entering into their respective companies - Air France or Air India. This stage provides the basement as it describes the beginning of a career and the key psychological motives behind taking the decision of being an airhostess. Also, this stage tries to capture how family members and the society reacts to people who choose this extraordinary career in life.

4.7.2. ___"First Flight" Experience & the Initial days of being an Airhostess ___ – This stage is very important as respondents narrate their personal experiences and perspectives during their first flight, and how did they cope up with the "Dream" of being an airhostess. Was it a "Dream come true" when they took to their maiden flight? What was going on in their minds during this time? How did they feel when they gradually started exploring new destinations, new aircrafts, new passengers and new colleagues? Few possible answers to these questions emerge in this stage!

4.7.3. ___Getting accustomed in being an Airhostess ___ – This stage goes on to continue from the previous one, to narrate the experiences of the respondents in continually being an airhostess for a number of years. What happens to the "initial excitement" (if any) of being an airhostess as the number of days/months/years rolls by? Does it remain the same or does it

increase or does it decrease? Does it somewhere lead to frustration? If yes, why? Few possible answers to the above questions emerge here!

4.7.4. *Being an airhostess today – Present day experiences –* This stage narrates the different points of view of each respondent regarding the current scenario, challenges and opportunities of being an airhostess. In other words, how do respondents feel about being an airhostess today? Do they have the same level of excitement and the passion for travelling today too? If yes, how have they let that passion sustain in themselves? Or, if no, what has happened to that passion over a period of time? Why has it deteriorated? And what is in it for an airhostess to sustain himself/herself for the future to come? Do they need to introspect and adapt to some changes? Possible set of answers to all these questions are brought about to the table in this stage.

Now I shall give a detailed analysis of each of the above-mentioned four stages along with key excerpts and narratives from the various interviews conducted as part of the exercise. Initially, four sets of three interviews done with two respondents each from Air France and Air India respectively were earmarked for this phase of analysis. The selection of the two respondents each from the two airline organizations had the following rationale:

It may be recalled by the reader that I had met fifteen respondents during the first interview cycle. However on a personal note, all the fifteen respondents responded in different ways – some were extremely friendly, open and interactive whereas some were in the other end of the spectrum wherein, they were closed minded for a majority part of the interview session and I really had to struggle to pull words out of their mouths. Thus, seeing these different kinds of respondents, it prompted me to have a second thought over a few of them that if it would be apt for me to approach them for a second time, because, this second interview cycle is intended to be in extreme detail and it really requires respondents to open up freely and speak up. Hence I re-visited all the fifteen interview transcripts one more time, and tried to figure out who among them would be good enough for such a detailed interview session, and in the course of this process of scrutiny, I initially shortlisted ten out of the fifteen respondents who might be good prospects for this exercise. However I wasn't fully satisfied! Hence, I again conducted a process of scrutiny by closely examining the ways in which every respondent responded to my questions in the first round and also checked for people who were proactive enough in delivering responses to issues that were allied to my questions during the first round. At the end of the second process of closer scrutiny, I was able to figure out seven people whom, from my past conversational experience with them, were

extremely proactive in their interactions and upfront in putting their views forward. Hence, for this crucial "Life-Cycle" interview process, I went along with these seven respondents – *Diandra*, *Anne* and *Fabrice* from Air France and *Anoop*, *Poornima*, *Sabarinath* and *Nisha* from Air India. I conducted three rounds of interviews with each of them and allowed them to share whatever they've got to, in a free, friendly and an informal manner. Also, I would like to mention here that this selection was also to have more chance that they will accept this more demanding exercise (in the accessibility point of view).

Having talked at length about the process of scrutiny and the positives behind this approach, the reader might be warned here about a few possible limitations to this. For instance, firstly and primarily the reader might have a feeling in due course of time that the population considered for this exercise might be a bit too less, however, the main aim of this exercise is to get an extremely in-depth understanding from each respondent (Each respondent is going to be subjected to three rounds of interviews). Secondly, the reader may also have a feeling that if the respondents are too proactive, they might actually start to take the interviewer for granted and end up bluffing (giving false content just for the reason to gain a good opinion and respect from the interviewer), and sometimes the interview might be veered off track and enter into areas that would perhaps not be desirable to consider as part of this research. Having said these, all of us know that everything might not be so perfect in this world, and this exercise might not be an exception, however, I tried to ensure that both the above-mentioned shortcomings are dealt up with proper and adequate attention to the details of the interview and with my past experience in moderating panel discussions and conducting recruitment interviews, I managed to moderate the sessions with my respondents in a way that they were completely focused on the context of the subject, barring a very few stray instances of deviations here and there. A special mention here is that, I tried to build an atmosphere of confidence and sharing, instead of role-playing.

Accordingly as part of the analysis of the Life-cycle interviews, every stage that follows would have four sub-sections – The first two sub-sections of every stage would comprise the perspectives and narratives of the two airhostesses from Air France and the last two would comprise those of their counterparts from Air India. Another important point to note for the reader here is that, for Phase 1 of the analysis, I've chosen to discuss and ponder upon the interviews conducted amongst four of my respondents – *Diandra* and *Anne* from Air France and *Anoop* and *Poornima* from Air India. The interviews with the subsequent three respondents – *Fabrice* from Air France, *Sabarinath* and *Nisha* from Air India were chosen for deeper exploration during Phase 2 of the analysis. The reason why I classified the interviews in this manner is again based on the detail of response – The

interviews with Diandra, Anne, Anoop and Poornima were so much in deeper detail, whereas, I found it to be a bit lesser in the case of the other three respondents. However, there were significant points that emerged from the interviews of the remaining three respondents, and these would be taken up during Phase 2 of the analysis. We shall now continue with the Phase 1 of the analysis. Even though I have selected specific respondents for writing their stories, I ensured that I have taken into account all the responses from all my respondents during the course of my analysis.

4.7.1. Stage 1: The "Pre - Air Hostess" Stage:

During this stage I came across three broad categories of narratives – viz. One set of individuals who accidentally landed up being an airhostess, but henceforth loved his/her job, the second set of individuals who hailed from families having a rich legacy with flying the third set of individuals who were having that "childhood dream" of taking to flying as their profession. Following sub-sections comprise of some key descriptions along with important quotes from the narratives of the respondents to validate the argument. It should be noted by the reader that each of the four sub-sections in every stage will be dealing with the four different respondents and care should be taken by the reader not to get confused while going from one sub-section to the next.

4.7.1.1. From being a Waitress at a Paris restaurant to being an Airhostess! – The experiences shared by Diandra – Air France:

I came across a very interesting narrative from one of my respondents from Air France, Diandra and it goes on like this – It was quite interesting to hear from her that initially it seemed that she never had the interest in becoming an airhostess and that, it was a combination of various incidents in her life that brought her to what she is currently – An Air Hostess with Air France. She claimed that her mother was extremely interested in flying and also in becoming an airhostess, however due to various circumstances she couldn't succeed in doing so. Diandra goes on to explain about her previous jobs before taking up flying – Notably being a waitress at a small restaurant in Paris. She went on to say that whenever she did some small jobs like this, her mother kept saying *'This is not a good job for you!!'* and it was only when she got into Air France as an airhostess, her mother was happy that her daughter has got a job that is "secure". *Although Diandra claims that her mother didn't influence her to become an airhostess, I feel at this point that somewhere and at some point in time, she must have been unconsciously influenced to enter this profession.*

And the story continues… Her childhood days – She explains that she wanted to do a long study – which however didn't materialize. She had been to a university for over two years but never liked

the course that was offered to her and finally had to give it up at the end of the second year. It was after this, she started trying out some small jobs – Starting as a waitress in a restaurant, as mentioned above, and subsequently moving from one job to the other. Thus, precisely being a school dropout, she started her quest for her liking, switching from one job to the other, coming across some job advertisements here are there to become an airhostess with a few airline companies, trying her luck unsuccessfully with Air France during her first time, and then with British Airways and at last, finally landing at Air France again an airhostess! *During the course of my interaction with her I slowly started to understand that she preferred to experiment and choose what she liked and what she wanted to be, rather than her parents influencing her. Is this a start-point to discover what you really wish to achieve in life?*

This entire episode somehow made me to have an initial first-hand impression that Diandra was one of those people who are willing to "go that extra mile" to reach her goal!! How? Let's see more into what Diandra had to say!

Continuing further, I was more surprised on hearing her narration on the way she got into Air France and I wanted to know further on this. Upon doing so, she came up with more details on how she got herself into Air France - One fine day she spotted an advertisement of Air France in a newspaper, inviting applications for being an airhostess and she went for it, just like applying for any other job. She attended an interview with Air France in the year 1999-2000, however she failed to clear it. In fact, she had even applied for British Airways by then, however, she went back to the drawing board and did a bit of research on some easier ways to enter into Air France. She did a certification called *CSS – "Certificat Securite* Sauvetage*"* – (This is a requirement to be an airhostess in France) that enabled her to have an edge over others during the interview process that she attended again later in 2001. With this certification in place, she was able to clear the interview quite easily this time and enter into Air France. *With the above narrative of hers, I started to get a somewhat blurred picture in my mind that perhaps there was "something" that pushed her to re-apply to Air France (as an airhostess of course) and not treat it like just another job.* It can be noted interestingly at this juncture that Diandra had volunteered herself to pursue this CSS certification to be an airhostess, after being rejected during the first recruitment process, and she knew that this would give her an "upper edge" amongst other candidates. She has decided to take this step, knowing very well that Air France would anyway help her to obtain this certification, once she's in. However all said and done, I wanted to explore more to get a much clearer understanding. However, let's leave the discussion on Diandra at this point and I shall pick it up again when we enter the next stage. Now, let's go into the second important sub-section wherein, I describe another

important dimension as to what leads a person into becoming an airhostess. For this, I shall describe to you what I observed from the second respondent – Anne from Air France.

Just a gentle reminder to the reader again: Each sub-section under every stage deals with the details of conversation with different respondents and care should be taken so as to not confuse between the sub-sections.

4.7.1.2. What does it mean to be amongst a "Family of Airhostesses & Pilots"? The experiences shared by Anne – Air France:

"My dad was a chief purser and so was my mom... My uncle was a pilot with Air France and my grandfather was with Airbus for many years", began Anne, my second respondent from Air France, when asked about her motive to get into flying! It was very interesting to me when she commenced with the explanation about her "heavy" family influence in "making" her an airhostess. However, in the due course of the conversation she herself went on to claim that despite such a heavy family influence into this profession, her parents never recommended her to take up this profession - Especially her father, she says, avoided talking about flights and his experiences at home.

She continued her narration that after the unfortunate sudden demise of her father (at the age of 45), her mother was offered the job of an airhostess, which she happily undertook. However, unlike her husband, she used to narrate her experiences as an airhostess to her daughter, who was also keen to listen to all of that.

Now, I'm coming to my interpretation at this moment. It is to be noted that during the time when her mother was narrating stories, Anne was still a small child and here I was able to sense something interesting that a "desire" for flying was starting to be developed within Anne, in the form of stories during childhood days. However, at this point, I still did not know if her mother did this with a purpose of influencing her daughter into taking up flying or not. *Anyhow, since the little child was also very keen in listening to her mother's experiences, I was having a feeling that this could be one of the humble beginnings in the making of a successful airhostess!*

With the inference that I was making within myself as the conversation proceeded on, I felt that I was getting absorbed into it. I wanted to know much more from her and tried to follow up the conversation with a few queries. *When I tried to steer the interaction in a way to know if at all she feels that her mother had an influence in her in becoming an airhostess, her answer was a "No" and she went on to negate by saying that although she listened a lot from her mother, at no point in her mother expressed her wish that she should take up flying!!*

It was very interesting for me to find that, similar to what Diandra had said before, she too began

her career initially with a few small jobs while being a student at a university – *A striking similarity with the previous respondent being, her first job was a waitress at a small Paris restaurant!!* As she continued further, I was again surprised to hear from her that she too had switched over a few other jobs like teaching kids, learning a few foreign languages, etc. It was during one of her summer breaks during her study that she had to do an internship and began to scout for some opportunities and finally the opportunity presented itself in the form of "Air France". She joined as an intern at the office of Air France, doing some deskwork. After a few days she, along with one of her friends at Air France spotted an advertisement of *"temporary cabin crew recruitment"* from Air France, and this excited both of them.

At this juncture while she was talking, I had a question in my mind. *How did this excitement develop all of a sudden after seeing this advertisement? Perhaps at this crucial point, the stories of her mother played a role when the opportunity presented itself before her?* I however didn't want to interrupt her here, and I said to myself that let's find out as we move further.

Anne continues her narrative: Of course, those were early days during the year 1991, wherein the cabin crew recruitment process was much simpler, thanks to the aggressive expansion plans of Air France. After applying, she happily says that she immediately got selected for the job and started flying. Initially the job contract was for a month but during this tenure, she claimed with a beaming smile that she was getting *"carried away"* by this profession, and that, this is taking her to an altogether new level in her life! *I felt that this was that crucial "make-or-break" moment in her life and she had to take an all-important decision.* I was eagerly waiting to listen to her as to what that decision was, and she continues her narration and declared that during the last few days of this one-month job as an airhostess, she had taken the extreme decision of quitting her education altogether from her school, and to take up flying as her full-time profession!!

Now, how good a decision was that? *To be very honest at this moment, this statement of hers' made me awestruck – How many people would dare to take such a decision - To quit studies abruptly and to take up the job of an airhostess full-time? I indeed felt that it was a bold decision at this stage, but however, the important point that I felt to note here is that, she acted as per her conscience and even if perhaps something goes wrong in future, she would probably neither have to put the blame on to someone else, nor she would have had anything to feel bad about!* Of course as mentioned above, since the company was in a hiring spree at that time, entry barriers weren't an issue for her, which in turn made her life much easier.

Moreover, the above narrative given by Anne surprised me all the more because, as an Indian, quitting studies for the quest of pursuing the job that "interests" you, is something that is not heard

of and hence for me, coming across people who take such drastic decisions in life was extremely astounding. Hence, what I was able to understand and figure out from the above narrative at this point is that, Anne was exposed to prior experiences of being an airhostess during her childhood and somewhere down the line I get a feeling that listening to these experiences might have in some way helped her to construct a positive thought process about becoming an airhostess. Hence, when the opportunity presented itself in front of her, it makes me feel at this point that it were those stories that contributed to pushing herself towards grabbing it.

4.7.1.3. So what if you're born in a village or a remote location? Does it matter at all? Experiences shared by Anoop – Air India:

Now let's shift geographies – From France to India. We now look into a geographical zone of South India wherein the society is seen as being ruled by "conservatism" in various ways!! However said and done, *as a south Indian myself and also hailing from almost the same locality in the vast country, it was surprising for me to note that a person who's born and brought up in a remote village in South India has risen up to the rank of a Senior Cabin Crew with Air India.* Anoop had a very interesting and a sort of different accord to share with me:

Anoop begins his narration about how he got interested into this profession - His father was an ex-Indian Air Force personnel and subsequently after retirement joined Air India and worked till his retirement. He goes on to explain that during his childhood he has seen his father in the attire of the Air Force and gradually developed interest in entering into the Air Force, like his father. He subsequently had done lot of research about flying, safety precautions, evacuation procedures, etc. out of the interest of pursuing a career with the Indian Air Force. Unfortunately, due to some constraints, he wasn't able to make it into the Indian Air Force at that time; however, he later got a chance to work as a ground staff at the airport in Cochin, India.

Here again, I was able to see a direct parental influence in pursuing a career in flying – But in a slightly different way! However it doesn't matter much. This explained to me another possible route to the development of interest for this job.

However, I allowed him to continue his narrative forward: What attracted him to take up the job of a cabin crew? Anoop further explains – He liked the service part more than anything else, because he had seen airhostesses always very happy and cheerful. They seemed to forget all their personal problems whatsoever, when they're on the board – This is one main factor, he says that struck his mind. Also, while saying this, Anoop goes on further and tries to portray his nature a little bit – That being a person of a helping nature, and perhaps this also adds to the enhancement of the

passion for being a cabin crew. (At this point during his narrative, I asked to myself: *Does the nature of an individual play a role to make the apt career choice for himself/herself?* I preferred to wait and find out if a possible answer emerges by itself!)

Anoop further explains his experience prior to and while applying for the position of a cabin crew: He started his career as a ground staff at the airport of Cochin – A major city in South India, after his under-graduation in Electronics. He loved this job a lot, due to various factors. Finally the opportunity presented itself in the year 2004 in the form of Air India, recruiting new people for the profile of a cabin crew for it's newly launched subsidiary. He applies and attends the recruitment process that consisted of the Group discussion and the Personal Interview. He went on to explain in an interesting way as to what he underwent as a person, during the selection process - He hasn't attended any such thing in the past and it was a completely new experience for him. He went on to explain how he was able to outperform other applicants, even though he lacked a command in the English language.

This accord from Anoop surprised me that *although being a graduate in Electronics, he still had it in him to pursue an entirely different career path and be successful in it.* What made him do so? Let's wait for the answer to evolve!

4.7.1.4. Is "Family Legacy" alone enough to succeed? Experiences shared by Poornima – Air India:

One possible answer to the question in the above title seems to emerge here! Like in the previous sub-sections, this fourth respondent of mine – Poornima narrates her childhood days and how she was attracted into becoming an airhostess. Here's what Poornima had to say for us:

She was born in a village area near Calicut – A city in South India – Did her schooling and graduation from the same place as well - Her grandfather being an ex-employee of Air India and her brother being a ground engineer with Air India. Adding to all this, her husband is a senior cabin crew along with her in Air India – So we see almost the entire family associated with Air India in some way or the other!

My first notable point – *I've never seen a family wherein almost all of them are into airlines and airplanes in some way!*

Poornima continues.. She explains that during her childhood days, she gets amazed by seeing aircrafts land and take off from the nearby Calicut Airport, and upon seeing this every time, she used to say within herself *"Some day I should also fly like this!!"* Also, she goes on to explain that her mother – being a frequent air traveller shared numerous flying experiences with her from the

passenger's perspective. This interested her quite a lot and in those yester years of the 1990's, air travel was considered to be one of the biggest luxuries that any human being on this earth can get!

At this point, I said to myself - Perhaps it's not enough if you have a family legacy by your way. You would also require something from somewhere else – In Poornima's case, I have a feeling that one of those factors that that would have mooted her to take up the airhostess job in future could have been her observations of aircrafts during her childhood days. Of course, Family Legacy and Listening to flying experiences from her mother would also have played crucial roles too.

Moving on further, now Poornima talks about her first job – A schoolteacher in a reputed school. Prior to that she has had a rich education background (Masters in Science) – her subjects of interest being Mathematics and Physics. *She goes on to say that she did not like her stint as a schoolteacher but somehow due to various reasons, she had to initially take up teaching.* After a couple of years as a teacher, she decides to move on with her life and give a try to pursue her "childhood interest". Also, one of the other main reasons of choosing to move on, as she says, is being not interested in doing a monotonous 9-5 job. Hence, she decided to go ahead to apply for the profile of a cabin attendant (airhostess).

At this point, I again said to myself that *perhaps the "interest" that she had developed over the years through the above-mentioned sources, triggered her to make the right decision at the right time. Her love for travel aided the decision too.*

Now as we move on, Poornima explains in an interesting detail, the immense support that she got from her parents once she expressed her wish to fly. Her father was the first person to encourage her to pursue her passion, although it was a weird choice to make after such a strong education background. Her father was a constant motivator for her when she failed to clear the interview with Air India twice. However, at this point Poornima goes on to remark that, though there were a few questions here and there from some close family members, her parents beat all the odds to allow their daughter pursue her goal and she proudly proclaims that her parents encouraged and motivated her meticulously by not letting her give up and pushing her to attend the interview for the third time, even after failing twice.

How many times do we really come across this kind of an exceptional motivational push from parents? This was one question that was constantly lingering in my mind as she was talking on! Especially, myself being from India, it's indeed very interesting to note here that despite the conservative Indian society – Wherein most of the parents expect their children to either become a doctor (medical practitioner) or an engineer, some parents do allow their daughter (especially a woman) to pursue the career of her choice. Thus, this question was repeatedly ringing in my ears

out of utter amazement - *How many parents do we see like this everyday?*

Anyway, moving further, Poornima continued further with the conversation and proudly proclaimed that she had never applied for any other private/foreign air carrier and was solely interested in Air India. I was again curious at this point and immediately shot back a question asking her the reason for such a decision in life, for which she answered that she wanted to be completely family-oriented and not go behind money by leaving back the family!

After hearing the above narration, all I could say to myself was *"Wow!"* and this answer made me feel amazed because *although she knew very well that this job entails loads of travelling, physical and mental stress, she still strived and wanted to make a conscious effort to maintain a good work-life balance, even at such a young age!!*

Poornima continues to explain that by the time she got through into Air India as a cabin attendant, she had two jobs in hand – One is a full-time job as a teacher at a reputed school and the other one being a cabin attendant at Air India – Both being reputed jobs. She explains her decision-making thoughts at that point – *A teacher's job can be done at any stage in life but flying cannot. Moreover, being an airhostess was a childhood dream and have come a long way to achieve it. Hence, she rejects the job as a teacher and took up the job of a cabin crew with Air India.*

This narrative as a whole from this particular person, Poornima, I felt, was an eye-opener! I started to think at this point that, I'm getting to witness an entirely new narrative, which might in future interactions, pave a great platform to beautifully explain the phenomenon of continuous job satisfaction!

Moments of Reflection after Stage 1:

What makes a person choose a career in flying – especially as an airhostess? What are the different factors that "induce" an individual to take up the profession of flying? How do they develop this special interest as they progress with age? These are some questions that came into my mind as a researcher while this stage of the interviews was underway. Some possible answers to these questions emerged in the form of various narratives, and I'm sure that the reader must have witnessed them while going through the four different narratives given above. Now, let me put out my perspective and understanding from Stage 1. Here I need to make a very important note. I'm hereby trying to remind the reader that what I model hereafter, are not "findings", or "explanations". I try to model these stories that you received from respondents, trying to indicate that there are some patterns, commonalities and differences in the narratives. Thus I try and link the

elements of the story with the continuous job satisfaction, but these elements are no factors, but are story elements.

To begin with, I've started to sense a feeling from the narratives is that, the interest for flying *(in general and not specific to flying as an airhostess)* is abundant in these individuals right from their early childhood days and subsequently when these kids go on and become an airhostess, and this interest might one reason why they feel really special. So, when I say that there is an interest to fly since childhood, this interest might have been induced through various sources - The sources observed from each of the four narratives primarily being, parental motivation (direct and/or indirect), family legacy, self-observation during their childhood days and in turn developing a unique thought process from the various sources that are observed. From the narratives, I also get to see an initial picture that the more a child is exposed to either or all of these sources, the more structured becomes the "childhood dream". Now, I try to depict this process with the help of a flow chart as below:
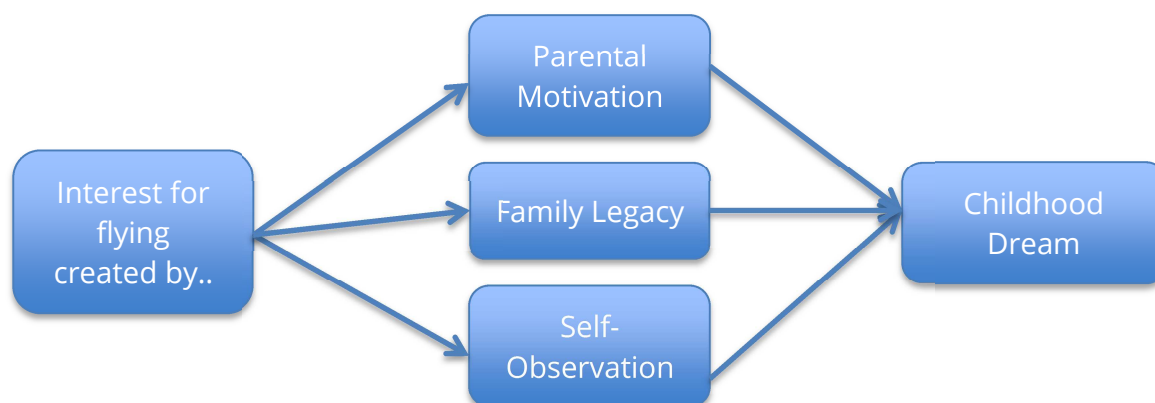
Figure 1: My inferences at the end of Stage 1 – Analysis of Life-Cycle Interviews

4.7.2. Stage 2: Initial Days of being an Air Hostess & the "Pressure of the first flight":

During this stage, there was a unanimous opinion amongst all respondents that they began to realize their "dream" coming true. I personally was able to witness lot of happy moments being shared by all the respondents during this stage and here, each respondent narrates his/her unique personal experience as to how did they realize that they're in the job that they've dreamt of for so many years. In the following four sub-sections I shall deal with the key narratives from each of the respondents one after the other, and the reader may observe here, how different people try to realize their dreams differently.

4.7.2.1. Realizing this job's significance from nowhere!! Experiences of Diandra – Air France:

To recall the narrative of Diandra during the previous stage, she was initially aiming to do a long study, however that didn't materialize, then tried out some small jobs here and there, again only to be futile in those attempts and finally, although she never had an interest in being an airhostess, she still wanted to give it a try, and subsequently she developed immense interest in being an airhostess after she joined Air France.

Now with this background in mind, let's move on to look into what Diandra has to say when she narrates her initial "Happy days" of being an airhostess. She explains that once she was inside Air France as an airhostess-trainee, she started developing immense interest towards the job. The first interesting aspect that she mentions is the people – All of them were like a family wherein the inter-relationships between colleagues were excellent, thus making the job so enjoyable. She explains further that *this inter-relationship was at its best in the short-haul flights, and not really at its best during long-haul flights.* Second, the *working atmosphere was at its best during short-haul flights.* Since she was posted for short-haul flying during her initial days, she enjoyed both the inter-relationships and the working atmosphere that in turn made her job interesting and also because of this, she exclaimed happily that *she felt proud to be part of the Air France family!*

This was a very interesting narrative for me. At this moment, I felt really lucky enough to meet a girl who had come a long way in life before becoming what she is today – From being a dropout from school, to being a waitress in a restaurant to being an airhostess with Air France. She seemed to me as the perfect example to put forward an interesting point: Many of us wish to do something in life, but unfortunately we land up doing something else!! Both interestingly and ironically, with this episode, I was able to strike similarities from my own life instances with those of this particular girl.

One important and interesting thing that I noticed is that, here we can see three steps in progression. The first one - Not being very keen to take up this job initially, the second step being the discovery of interest for the job once she was inside the organization and then the third step being the beginning of enjoyment in the job due to the reasons mentioned above!

Diandra continues narrating that one of the biggest learning's she obtained during her initial few months of being an airhostess is that; *the job at hand becomes easier if you have a good chief purser.* If that's not the case, it's going to be panic all around. She substantiates this point with a few of her good/bad experiences during her initial flights, wherein the entire crew panicked with one adverse instruction from the captain saying that the aircraft is having some problem mid-air.

Although the problem was not a major problem, she opines that her then chief purser should have communicated to the crew in a better way so that they wouldn't have panicked this much!

She further continues that, although it's extremely interesting in the beginning to be an airhostess, it becomes increasingly monotonous as time goes by. Everything works according to a set procedure and there's no much room for innovation and creativity – For instance, if there's a fire in the aircraft, you're trained in such a way that your brain knows how to instantly react to the situation. Here, she jokingly proclaims that *this job is like that of a military!!!* There's another challenge too – Waking up early in the morning! Especially while doing domestic flights within Europe she says that she had to wake up as early as 3 AM and that too, every day!! She explains how stressful and horrible she felt waking up that early every morning and doing four flights a day at that!! But even then, she still found it interesting and nice.

It's interesting to note from the above narrative of Diandra that the job of an airhostess is extremely interesting and thrilling to be in during the initial days, even though it's stressful in a few ways like that of waking up early in the morning, etc. but as days progress, I begin to have a feeling that this excitement has a tendency to taper down gradually because of it's monotonous and procedural nature and maybe, people who wish to be creative and innovative and those who are wanting to do something new every time, may not like this, moving forward!

Moving on, Diandra explains her experience of her first flight in a brief, wherein she again stresses on the fact that her colleagues were extremely supportive and helping her get used to the working conditions on board. She says that she felt very nervous and scared in handling the aircraft equipment including glasses, bottles, etc. and of course, her senior colleagues on board helped her to calm down and take things slowly as it comes by. However, as time progressed and as she took more and more flights in the coming days and months, she explains that she got used to it and now she started to really enjoy her job as an airhostess.

Any new job creates some tension for an employee and this job is no exception. Especially, being in a job wherein it involves numerous safety aspects, procedures, etc. I could have a sense from Diandra's narrative that the nervousness would have been tremendously high! However, one way of combating this initial nervousness is the support the employee receives from his/her colleagues at work, so that he/she feels comfortable and can cool down a bit.

4.7.2.2. Savoring the "Spice" of travel at a young age – Experiences of Anne from Air France:

Continuing the discussion of the second interview stage, we now look into our second respondent – Anne's experiences of her initial days as an airhostess, her first flight experience, etc. Let's now

listen to what she had to say!

Anne begins this interview session by explaining how she enjoyed a lot in being an airhostess during her initial days with Air France. She exclaims that *travelling around the world at a young age is a definite spice of life and is perhaps the greatest thing associated with this job.* She goes on to narrate how relationships with peers helped her a lot during her initial days – For instance, she explains how her colleagues during her first flight from Paris to Montreal were so good that all of them roamed about the city of Montreal, had food together all three times a day, did shopping together, etc. They became so inseparable at the end when they landed back at Paris, that they felt really bad leaving each other.

At this initial stage of the career, from the narratives I'm listening so far from Diandra and Anne, I thought and pondered to myself if perhaps "Relationship with colleagues and peers" is one of the most important factors for being satisfied in the job. From the past two narratives I get a feeling that, having a family-like atmosphere at work might have the capability of changing the entire perception and the dynamics of the job – Especially during the initial days... Let's find out!

Moving on, Anne also goes on to stress another very important point – She explains how "Observation" plays a significant role during the initial days. She says that the first few days of her flying, was filled with numerous observations – Observations with respect to the passengers on board, of course her colleagues on board, various procedures involved in terms of safety and hospitality towards passengers, body language of colleagues during the times of handling any emergency situation on the board, the way communication happens, etc. She proclaims that all these observations she has made over time, helped her a lot to shape herself in a better way, moving forward in the profession.

As the adage goes on to say "First impression is the best impression", initial observations made by the newly joined employee seems to go a long way in shaping up a successful career. This might be the case, especially in this profession wherein there might be numerous "untold" and "unexplainable" features in the job, which is best learnt by observation.

Finally towards the end of this session, Anne tries to list down *the major factors that enabled her to enjoy the stint as an airhostess during the initial years of her career – Young age, sufficient time to rest between two flights, the charm of exploring new world cities and being a "single" without a family.*

From the narratives of Anne, surely there emerged several points to ponder upon, and a few initial answers propped up, which might be useful to explain the phenomenon of continuous job satisfaction. However, let's wait for more points to emerge and also confirmations for a few other

points!

4.7.2.3. The initial "Nervousness" of being an airhostess – Experiences of Anoop from Air India:

Now, let's again shift our focus to the Indian context – The Air India experience! Here, Anoop, one of our respondents from Air India goes on to give a detailed narration of his experiences of being a member of the cabin crew for the first time and most importantly, he talks about an important and perhaps the main dimension of doing any job for the first time – The initial tension and nervousness. Of course, all respondents had the same consensus with this feeling, however I was very much impressed with the way Anoop explained it and further substantiated this particular point. Here's what Anoop had to say!

It was very interesting when Anoop started narrating his experiences right from the initial training period of three months. Being born and brought up in a village setup, it's certainly a different experience altogether. He explains that it was extremely tough and stressful because he had to take up exams and interviews almost every day! At one stage, he explains that it was so stressful that he knew only the training center and his accommodation building and nothing else. The sessions were so immense and the trainers were hurrying into the subject so much that he required immense concentration, not to lose out on anything. This was the case for the initial two to three weeks, however things started to change, as friendships started developing with other trainees around him and thus gradually he started enjoying the process.

It's interesting to note time and again that, even during the initial training process, "Relationship with colleagues" is one factor that is being stressed upon a lot during this stage of the career. From this above narrative of Anoop, I'm getting a stronger feeling now that good relationships can transform stress into enjoyment, especially during the initial days.

Moving further Anoop explains in more detail about his experiences during the training period: Since he had an education background in Electronics, he feels that he was able to relate a lot easier with the machine and technical parts of the aircraft. Also with a lot of interest in knowing about the Air Force, he was able to link theoretical knowledge of aircraft safety procedures that he came across for Air Force planes, to that of the passenger aircrafts.

Further, Anoop explains in detail, his experiences during the first flight that he took. Since it was an entirely new subsidiary of Air India that was formed during 2005, he had the unique opportunity of taking the first flight of the airline itself. He explains that Air India before commencing normal flight operations of this subsidiary, had given them a "test flight" without any passengers, in order to get the "newly recruited" cabin crew, a hands-on experience of the various flight operating

procedures. *Although he found it amusing to perform the service without passengers on board, he realized while moving forward, how significant it was as part of his learning curve.* Once he took the first full-service flight with the passengers on board, he found the test-flight experience extremely helpful.

All these experiences sounded pretty different to me from what I heard from my respondents of Air France. Of course it's clear that both Air France and Air India give topmost preference to training their people on the safety aspect, but the procedure in which they're trained sounds to be different (atleast at this stage).

Anoop gives further detailed explanations about his experiences during the first full-service flight that he took. He says that for a moment, he didn't know what he was doing and he didn't realize where he was.. His hands were trembling and he was sweating a bit from within, while handling various things in the aircraft, especially the safety equipment. However Air India had ensured that there's atleast one senior-most cabin crew in every flight of the new subsidiary, since all the crewmembers were fresh from training. The presence of the senior member on board eased off his tension a great deal and was able to focus on what needs to be done - In fact it was very interesting when he said that **he had taken down notes** of various things that had to be done during the flight, and that, he was constantly referring to it every now and then. In the process, he also tried to explain the amount of tension he had while the captain did the customary briefing to the crew before the flight, and he feels that, because of the nervousness he wasn't able to grasp half of what the captain said!! *However, the senior crewmember on board ensured that he had noted all the details of the briefing done by the captain.* He also went one step further and humorously explained that the amount of nervousness during that first flight was such that he had even forgot to remove his jacket that he was supposed to remove while on board, until his senior had to remind him after the take off, that it has to be removed. *Overall, he says that for the subsequent two to three months, it was as if he was taking his first flight.* This was such a detailed and an interesting explanation given by Anoop that opened up a lot of things in my mind after listening to him. *From this point onwards I had started to have a strong feeling within myself that, in order to broaden my understanding of the process of satisfaction, it's not only the rational decision-making and taking up the opportunity at the right time, but also is about the experiences that one goes through as part of his/her job at different times.*

4.7.2.4. Cool-headed people on board make life easier during the first flight – Experiences of Poornima, Air India:

As I keep coming across this point several times, across several respondents, I'm starting to feel that this particular point of peer relationship assumes lot of significance in explaining continuous satisfaction. Here's Poornima from Air India, again highlighting this point in a very impressive manner. The accord is as follows:

Poornima begins to explain in detail, how her first flight was a dream come true for her. She smiles and explains that it felt for her as if she's living a dream and didn't exactly know what was going on around her and all she could do was to just soak into the situation. Since she was also a part of the freshly recruited cabin crew team during the commencement of the new Air India subsidiary, she had one such unique opportunity to have a first hands-on experience as an airhostess of a new airline. She too narrates that her initial days were so nervous and felt her hands trembling in handling aircraft equipment and the procedures. Of course, although the theory of handling various aircraft equipment is well known, the internal psychological pressure of doing it for the first time creeps in. However, this pressure – she narrates, eased out to a great extent due to the presence of some highly co-operative senior colleagues and captains on board and hence her life was slowly becoming comfortable. Poornima goes on to explain a very interesting point that, if the captain is cool-headed, most of the problems get solved without any panic. Whereas, if the captain is a "big head" and fails to co-operate with the cabin crew, then life could become hell. She goes on to make a comparison between captains who are from India and those from other countries. She explains that, from her experience so far, captains who are foreigners are much better to work with, than those who are Indians, because she feels that Indian captains are never level headed and they think too much about themselves, whereas the others tend to go on with their job normally and is quite easy to approach them even in cases of emergency situations. It was quite an interesting point that she put forward and of course she backed it up with a few experiences that she has had so far in her career.

Apart from the point on the relationship with the other airhostesses on board, that everyone stressed so far, here Poornima presents a very interesting point by stressing how captains can make the life of an airhostess comfortable. This is perhaps unique but I feel somehow that it's a very valid point because, in case of an emergency on board, it is the captain of the flight who plays a vital role and is to be primarily interacted with.

Moments of reflection from Stage 2:

As the reader would have been able to appreciate from the above-mentioned narratives of the second stage, this is the time when airhostesses experience their "happy days" during their career.

At this point, I have a feeling that all the above narratives tend to converge one primary point – All of them had a "childhood dream" of flying, and at this stage, the childhood dream of every respondent starts coming true! Now, the question comes as to how did they live through this phase. What was their experience when they felt that they were realizing what they wanted to be in life? Did it sink in immediately or did it take time to sink into them? What was their thought process at this stage? How did they react to this newly found excitement in life? The above narratives that we've seen from the respondents, tend to provide us the following answers:

The first story element that surfaced during this stage of excitement is "Nervousness" – Getting lost in thoughts, scrambling along to cope up with the job responsibilities, trembling hands while handling aircraft equipment for the first time, making a few funny and silly mistakes occasionally were some of the reactions airhostesses exhibited as a reaction to their feeling of excitement. Of course, the excitement is also seems to be partly due to other factors too such as getting an opportunity to explore a new city, new country, getting to see different kinds of passengers on board, etc. Also the factor of being young by age tends to contribute vastly to this excitement. But how were they able to control this feeling of the initial thrill, nervousness and excitement? Here comes the significance of other experienced colleagues on board the flight. From the various narratives, I feel that a consensus emerges here that their colleagues on board for the first few flights contributed immensely to make their life comfortable, and were very nice people to interact and move with. The above narratives also paint a picture wherein, with experienced colleagues on board, the newly recruited people tend to learn the dos and don'ts in a job quite easily along with a hands-on experience. Moreover, I also have a feeling that what inspired the respondents the most was the high level of professionalism involved in this job – Everything seemed so orderly and associated with strict and standard operating procedures and also the good and friendly working conditions. These factors are summarized below in the form of a flowchart.
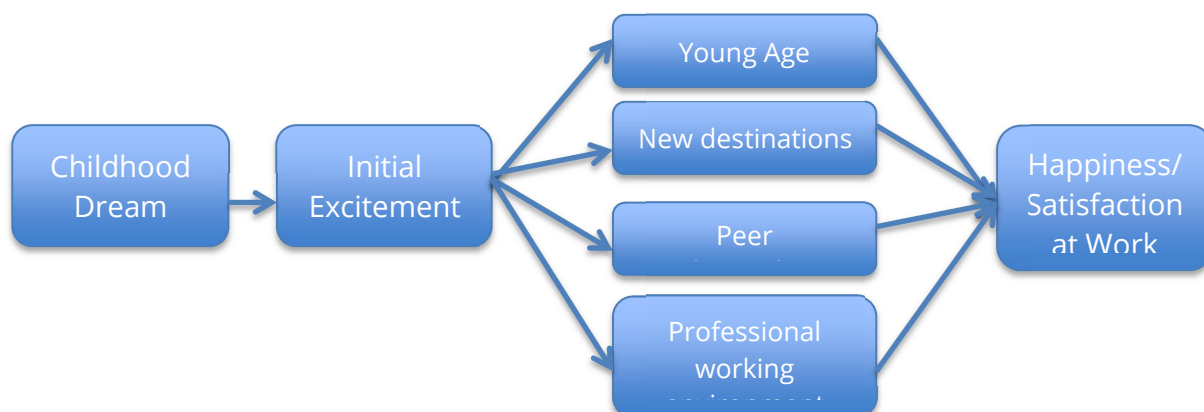
Figure 2: My inferences at the end of Stage 2 – Analysis of Life-Cycle Interviews

4.7.2.6. So.. What's that "Something else"?

In the previous two stages, we've seen how an airhostess develops an "interest" towards flying and subsequently I've tried to depict through different life stories of airhostess that this "interest" doesn't stay a constant, and it increases manifold when that childhood dream is realized. So what does this "interest" transform itself into? From a closer and a deeper look at the various narratives of our respondents, it seems to me that this "something" is what I would like to call it at this stage - "Passion". My overall inference of both stages one and two is that, there is an interest which is in-born in a few and/or developed in others through various sources and thus an "Image" of flying is pre-conceived in the young minds. Once these youngsters entered into the actual job, they encountered the "reality" of the situation and started to compare their pre-conceived image and the reality in hand. Once these two parameters matched perfectly, there's something called "Passion" that's created and I have a feeling that this passion starts to drive airhostesses in order to try and sustain their "childhood dream" and to live, enjoy and savor the happy period. Now having said this, here comes the next set of questions: What happens to this newly found "Passion" as days and years roll by? Does it remain the same or does it vary? If it varies, why does it do so? What are the causes for this variation (if any)? Let's explore more!

4.7.3. Stage 3: Getting accustomed to be an Airhostess

Now we enter the third and the most critical stage of the entire exercise that really is going to talk about the "continuity" and "sustainability" of airhostesses in their job. To give a brief about this stage for the reader once again, this stage begins with respondents expressing the pride that they received from the society when they proclaimed to be an airhostess with a reputed airline company. Subsequently it moves on with respondents expressing their views and opinions on whether those "happy days" continued on and on, or was there a change. If there was a change, what kind of a change did they undergo and how did they adapt themselves to such a change? If there were challenges all along, what made them overcome these challenges and get along? What happened to the interest that was created initially? Did it stay on, or did it get transformed? Various accords of respondents follow:

4.7.3.1. From being "proud" to being "stressed" of being an airhostess – Experiences of Diandra

from Air France:

It might be a known fact in the public domain that the job of an airhostess is perhaps one of those unique kinds, wherein it gives the person a significant status in the society. This session with Diandra also began with the similar note, and here's what she had to say:

At the beginning, Diandra continues to happily explain her initial days with Air France wherein, whenever she goes for a party or somewhere, people around her ask curious questions to her when they come to know that she's an airhostess with Air France. Gradually, when people started to look upon her differently she started realizing the significance of being an airhostess.

It's to be reminded to the reader that this particular person – Diandra, was never interested in being an airhostess in the beginning. However when she started flying, she slowly started realizing it's significance and I somewhere feel that perhaps this might have contributed to her increased satisfaction in her job during her initial years, and probably continues even till today.

She explains that her initial days were really happy and fantastic when she was doing domestic short-haul flights within Europe. Although, as she explains that it was physically tiring doing four flights a day and waking up as early as 3 AM and going to bed late, it was really very nice with respect to the working atmosphere. Also, all of them were very young and that kept them enthusiastic and also keeping the atmosphere vibrant. Also, there were more than 15,000 airhostesses with Air France during that time and the best thing was that, for every flight the crew would be entirely different. She proclaims that they've never seen each other more than once, for the first five to six years.

Some of the key factors that seem to stand out during the "happy days" in the job, that is, during the initial five to six years are young age, young people around, pretty working atmosphere and more number of airhostesses – hence lesser workload.

Diandra continues that, however, as days and years progressed the life began to change. The job started to seem way too monotonous and a routine than it used to be earlier. She says that she started feeling it especially when she was shifted to the international flight operations. They were mostly long-haul flights with more flying hours – which means she had to work more and also during the wee hours of the night. This started to show on her, by making her feel tired, although internally within herself she was still enjoying what she was doing. Gradually, she continues that, enjoyment also started to fade away due to the main reason that it was taking a heavy toll on her physical health condition and also due to the obvious reason of repetition of the same thing over and over again. At one point she felt so monotonous that after her fifth year with Air France, she desperately wanted to take a break of six months from flying and wanted to try something new. She

explains that at this point, she started to have an interest in cooking and eventually joined a cooking course!!

It was very surprising to hear this from Diandra, out of nowhere! Hence, suddenly I started to wonder and get a feeling that the job of an airhostess might not perhaps be a good option for people who are willing to be creative and innovative. It may also be seen in a different perspective that she as a person was not having a steady approach to her career – I somehow found during the course of the conversation that her interests keep fluctuating over a period of time without having a steady inclination towards one particular profession for life. However, it all appeared to be blurred at this point in time and I started to feel that, subtle points like these should be taken forward for further investigation. I decided to wait till more similar points like this surfaced up.

Anyway, let's move on now. Diandra continues to give an account on the major reasons why life became tough as an airhostess, five years down the line from since she joined Air France. The main factor according to her is that, her workload increased dramatically because of a sudden freeze on new recruitment of airhostesses in Air France. The direct consequence of this is that, the existing workforce in the system is strained more, with more working hours, lesser resting period between two flights, decreasing comfort in the working environment and excessive physical and mental fatigue.

It's important to note here that one organizational factor in the form of "Recruitment Freeze", can drastically affect job satisfaction of an airhostess – The major consequence being varying degrees of physical and mental fatigue.

In addition to the above, she claims that their salaries have not been revised according to the revised workload and thus it adds to their woes and it intensifies the fatigue factor in them. Also, political will and influence adds up to the frustration of employees. She laments that there's a clear lack of positive attitude among the staff of Air France and as a result of all this, it's slowly killing the enthusiasm of the airhostesses.

Now, as she suddenly started talking about these issues my immediate query was, how and where do they express their grievances? For this, Diandra went on to explain that there's not much scope for that too, because the top management is full of heavy internal politics. Although she says that there are unions within the organization, as of 2006-07 only around 30% of the employees were part of it. However the number has been increasing since then, and perhaps the unions are trying their best to safeguard the interests of employees.

This episode clearly shows the transformation of an airhostess from her happy days to stressful days!! Let's look at what others have to say and then talk more about it!

4.7.3.2. Everything seems "beautiful" while being young.. But what happens to that "beauty" once you get older?? Experiences of Anne from Air France:

This was one striking point of the second session of interview with my second respondent Anne, from Air France, who has almost three decades of experience as an airhostess. Let's first divulge into what she had to say and we shall make the inferences from what she says.

Similar to the previous one, this episode too began with the respondent talking about her initial stint with Air France wherein Anne shares her happy days of being an airhostess. She explains how she and her colleagues used to have fun by exploring new cities around the world, hang around together, party together, have lunch/dinner, etc. together. She exclaims with a beaming smile that it was more like a nice family for the first few years. Also she goes on to explain that her young age and also being a single without family commitments helped her to go that extra mile, and of course coupled with sufficient time to rest in between two consecutive flights.

Now for me, after listening to both the narratives of Diandra and Anne in this session carefully so far, I started to paint a picture in my mind that, the job of an airhostess is perhaps well suited when the person is young and that, he/she can really afford to go that extra mile to travel more, explore new places and enjoy different cultures. Hence, "age" in this context, seems to play a pivotal role in the "continuity" argument of satisfaction. Here, the reader may be able to recollect at this stage that we've spoken about the factor of "Age" during the literature review while talking about the various antecedents of job satisfaction.

Anne goes on with her narration: After fifteen years of full-time employment as a cabin crew, she says that she had to switch to part-time flying. At this time, I was curious as to why should she suddenly opt for such an arrangement. However, she explained that this decision of hers' was owing to the following reasons - The primary reason being, to balance work and family *(by 2006, she had her child)*. Moreover, there were a few other significant organizational reasons to justify her switching from full-time to part-time. As she goes on to explain, she was again touching upon the recruitment issue with Air France - The primary reason being heavy workload due to lack of fresh recruitments for the past few years or so. This seems to have frustrated and demotivated people a lot. Moreover it makes people physically and mentally fatigued. And subsequently almost all of them struck similar chords.

For me, certain key elements come to light at this stage. It's evident from both the above sub-sections from stage 2 that "Lack of fresh blood" in an organization is an organizational factor that seems to affect the airhostesses in a significant way. I also have a feeling that, this organizational

issue triggers lot of other allied individual issues like fatigue, physical sickness, mental disturbances that results directly in frustration, demotivation, etc.

Especially from Anne's words, it was surprising to note that this phenomenon ultimately can go to the extent of even pushing employees to either quit the job or to switch to a more convenient working pattern (in this case, switching from fulltime to part time employment).

Anne further continues to explain the repercussions of being physically tired. She says that of late, people have started being confined into their hotel rooms during the break time, rather than roaming around and exploring new places – A practice that she was used to, during her initial years. Also, people have lost interest in flying nowadays because of the complicated schedule and continuous flying without proper rest. Hence, these factors have all resulted in a deteriorated working environment and it severely affects the satisfaction part associated with this job.

Hence from this entire conversation with Anne so far, I slowly started to figure out that, *what was once considered a lucrative, exciting and a high-profile job is seemingly reducing into a stressful, fatigued, cumbersome and a monotonous job, that ultimately makes airhostesses lose that interest which they had earlier.*

4.7.3.3. Worth the Learning curve!! Experiences of Anoop from Air India:

Now let's move to the Indian Territory and see how the situation is, at Air India. Anoop's explanations threw open different windows in viewing this third stage of being an airhostess. Let's look into it now.

During this session, Anoop continues to explain his initial days of flying wherein, whatever he came across were helping him to shape his learning curve, since it was an entirely new experience of a lifetime. Being fortunate enough to be a part of an airline operation right from its inception, it was a real hands-on experience as to how to start and run an airline right from the scratch. As part of the learning curve, Anoop explains that he eventually started observing lot of things during his initial days, and also continually over a period of time. He gives an accord on the various aspects that he has observed – The various functions and working or the aircraft, different sounds that are heard during landing, takeoff, while in mid air, etc. The most important observation is the different kinds of passengers who board the flight every time – Different attitudes, behaviors, cultures, etc.

From this initial bit of the conversation I was surprised to note that, there are numerous intricate things that an airhostess tends to observe during a flight.

He further explains that as he started doing all these things over a period of one, two, three years, it became a routine and started to gradually gain an expertise in the activities. This expertise comes in

handy when some tough situations like medical emergencies, etc. occur on board – The first requirement being not to panic under any circumstance. Hence explains that these observations, many a time came in handy for him when he had to take crucial decisions at crucial times without getting panicked.

This was a new dimension of thought that came from Anoop – Keen observations for a continued period of time, being crucial for crucial decision-making without panic! This explanation also might serve, as an eye-opener for those people who say the job of an airhostess is just a glamorous looking.

Such were the initial happy days, also with respect to the learning curve of an airhostess. However, moving on, Anoop explains that after about three years since inception, things started to change for the bad. Especially from the year 2009 till 2013, it was a time when he felt totally let down because there wasn't any scope for further growth. Particularly in terms of salaries, *employees were even deferred their regular monthly salaries for months together owing to huge financial losses that were incurred by the airline.* He opines that there were hefty organizational factors that were behind this complete mess – Bureaucracy, corruption, lack of intent from the higher officials, among them. All these factors led to employees fight for their rights in various ways with the top management.

As an Indian myself, I've read quite a lot over the years about the financial mess of Air India in the news! However, this research provided me a perfect opportunity to get to know about this in a much greater detail. Hence, it was not actually a big surprise for me, to hear from Anoop about the "Organizational factors" in Air India that is a major concern for the employees – Corruption, Bureaucracy, Political will, "Don't care" attitude from higher authorities.

Anoop went on to talk in detail about the monetary mess that Air India employees had to undergo! He says that as an icing on the cake, due to the "extremely severe" financial crunch the organization went through, regular monthly salaries of employees took a severe hit and which made employees suffer monetary loss as well for several months – Here, he recalls his terrible days wherein many of his colleagues were suffering to pay even their credit card bills, owing to lack of money in their bank accounts! This monetary impact had such several cascading effects. All these series of catastrophic events led to a point wherein Anoop says that he even started to think that he had made a big mistake in his career by choosing this profession and this organization. As a post-graduate in Electronics, he started comparing his friends and classmates who were in higher positions elsewhere. Such were the implications of the problems that were faced by the airhostesses of Air India during this four-year time. Hence due to all these factors combined, Anoop says, that the morale of airhostesses in Air India was at an all time low during this period of time.

As I progressed in life as a musician, I've learnt one thing very clear: Whether it's happiness or a challenge, it's up to us as to how we perceive it. Success knocks the doors of those people who view challenges as opportunities and learning for growth! This is exactly what I was able to witness while interacting with Anoop from Air India, during this third stage. And of course, the problem that he faced as an Air Indian – Highly unfortunate, is what I can say for now!

4.7.3.4. Do feedbacks matter? The Air India experience:

Here's what Poornima from Air India got to say!! Poornima gives an account of her experience as to how she got accustomed to being an airhostess gradually. She explains that during her initial flights for the first month or so, she felt a bit nervous while handling aircraft equipment and other things, but gradually she felt comfortable as her flying experience increased. She narrates an experience of an emergency landing during her initial stage of her career, wherein she explains how she was trying to keep herself calm but started panicking within herself over a period of time. However, she declares that it was a good learning for her and later when she had to face a similar situation, she was mentally prepared to face it.

This account from Poornima makes me to have a feeling, how the job of an airhostess develops a person to be physically and mentally tough to face any catastrophic situation on board. Of course, through adequate experience, one seems to learn and become an expert in handling various emergency situations right from a medical emergency to a quick evacuation in case of any technical disaster, which is what Poornima has beautifully tried to bring out in the above narrative.

She further explains how she had seen the entire operations of the subsidiary of Air India which she's part of for the past 11 years. Fortunately, she's also one of those cabin crewmembers, along with Anoop and others who had been part of the organization right from its inception till today. She goes on to narrate various factors that contributed to her satisfaction and dissatisfaction in her job so far. One major contributor of her satisfaction remains passenger feedback. For me, this seemed quite a different way to approach this stage of discussion, and here, Poornima explains it in a bit of detail about the importance of getting feedbacks from passengers on the board. She exclaims that it would be the best moment for her, in her job whenever a passenger comes up to her and says that he/she knows her before and appreciates her service. The next one is when the captain appreciates the crew for their exemplary service. She narrates a few of her experiences wherein she had to handle extremely serious medical emergencies successfully, and the captain coming and congratulating her for her coordinated actions.

It was both surprising and interesting for me to understand from Poornima's narrative that there

might also be a few "different" and "unique" factors that would contribute to the explanation of continuous job satisfaction of airhostesses. Two of them are opened up for further exploration in this case – Positive passenger feedback and words of appreciation from the Captain of the flight deck. We shall explore more on this as we progress further.

A person's career cannot be successful if there are no bad experiences or struggles or frustrations to talk about, and Poornima is no exception. She now recollects some of her worst struggles and frustrating experiences that she had undergone during her tenure so far. The important aspects are briefed as follows: Especially from 2007-08 onwards till 2012-13, it was perhaps the most hardest time of her career, wherein she (and perhaps the entire cabin crew) had to undergo lot of troubles in terms of *professional rivalry, communication issues with the top management over various problems faced by them, "Don't care" attitude of the support staff, superiority complex of other employees on the ground, huge internal politics, corruption, amongst the few of them.* She goes on to substantiate her points in the above issues:

For instance, sometimes when the plane is grounded somewhere, there would be literally nobody to attend to the aircraft. The cabin crew has to sit within the aircraft helplessly for long hours, waiting for someone to come and attend to the aircraft for repairs. The situation becomes tougher when passengers are seated in the grounded aircraft. Many a times, even if ground engineers were present at the location, they would be so lethargic to come and attend to the aircraft – The reason simply being, lack of proper communication and co-ordination among the ground staff. It really adds to the frustration of the cabin crew.

Another reason for frustration is majorly political rivalry – Some people, she says, have a huge superiority complex and thereby refuse to come to help during crucial times. This results in situations wherein the cabin crew has to talk rudely and behave in a way that would get things done. She laments that it really becomes frustrating during these times, due to the lethargic attitude of other employees and top management.

Moreover, she opines that the top management was absolutely careless to hear all these complaints launched by employees. She also goes on explaining her experience of approaching the then Chairman & Managing Director of Air India to represent the grievances, however she was denied an appointment with him several times.

Upon hearing Poornima's narrative, it really shook me off my chair! By the time, I started to paint a blurred picture that there is lot of concern about frustration amongst airhostesses, pertaining to organizational reasons, more than personal, I suddenly came across Poornima who gave an entirely new perspective of viewing things in the positive way – Feedbacks from passengers and

how significant they are! Of course she later on, goes on to talk about her bad times and in addition, the frustration seems to peak when passengers yell at the airhostesses for no fault of theirs' and subsequently Poornima sadly opines that the "smile" that the airhostess gives most of the times is merely out of "helplessness". Now this is the second time I'm listening to such a statement – "The smile of an airhostess is most of the time due to feeling helpless at that time!" The reader might recall at this moment that this entire research idea started and blossomed with this one statement!

4.7.3.5. Moments of Reflection from Stage 3:

This stage, I felt, marks a critical transition in the career path of an airhostess – From happy days to stressful days. Why? What makes this transition happen? How do airhostesses react to such a hostile transition? Do they buckle down? What keeps them going although they're subjected to undesired experiences? These were some of the major questions that propped up in my mind at the beginning of this stage. Interestingly from the accounts of our respondents, I saw the emergence of two distinctive patterns – One pattern subjected to Air France and the other subjected to Air India. Of course, one can argue that these two patterns that have emerged are quite subjective in nature and might not be a constant over time, however given the nature and progression of both the two famed and big-time companies, these patterns hold good for a long period of time (Approximately ten years or more) and hence I feel that these patterns would assume lot of significance. I shall summarize the patterns of both companies separately for better understanding.

In Air France, the initial happy days experienced by airhostesses were categorized by exploring new destinations across the world, new colleagues on every flight, young age, professional working environment, lesser workload due to adequate resting time between two consecutive flights and of course, the unique social status associated with this job. However the situation started to take a turn for the bad as years progressed. All the respondents had a consensus that the root cause of all their problems lies with the organization's freeze on recruitment of new airhostesses. With newer and increased number of destinations and more number of flights, the workload for the existing airhostesses has exponentially increased over time. Subsequently, due to the increase in workload the break time between two consecutive long-haul flights have reduced from forty eight hours in the past to (in some cases) less then twenty-four hours, and as per the narratives of the airhostesses, this has had dire consequences on their physical and mental health– The direct symptoms of this seeming to be frustration, physical and mental fatigue, more and more employees opting for part-time employment rather than full-time. According to my experience regarding air travel, I feel to

give a special mention here regarding physical tiredness and fatigue, as it is very significant as this job involves airhostesses to be in constant pressure difference with the ground, while on the flight. Continuous exposure to this might lead to irreparable physical health problems and this very factor may pose a grave risk for people in this job on a longer term. Let's keep all these factors intact for a while, before we proceed for further pondering. Now, if we look at the pattern that emerged from the Indian counterpart, I see a very different perspective to the transformation from "happy days" to "stressful days". Especially the period from the year 2006 till 2013 was characterized by heavy financial irregularities, "don't care" attitude of people in the top management, politics within various levels of the organization, etc. All the respondents unanimously in a single voice opined that the financial situation at one stage became too fragile that even their regular monthly salaries had to be deferred by the organization for a period of around eleven months. This situation led to some employees involving themselves in corrupt practices, so as to see money in some form or the other. This situation led to cascading problems for airhostesses because they're directly responsible for the safety of passengers on board, and it becomes a tricky situation to handle. All these factors led airhostesses in Air India to experience frustration and stress during this time period. Hence, from the two companies the reader can note two different paths from happiness to stress – Both paths interestingly pertain to organizational factors. The following framework illustrates the two paths: The framework takes us through the two paths that lead to fatigue physically and mentally that ultimately leads to stress.
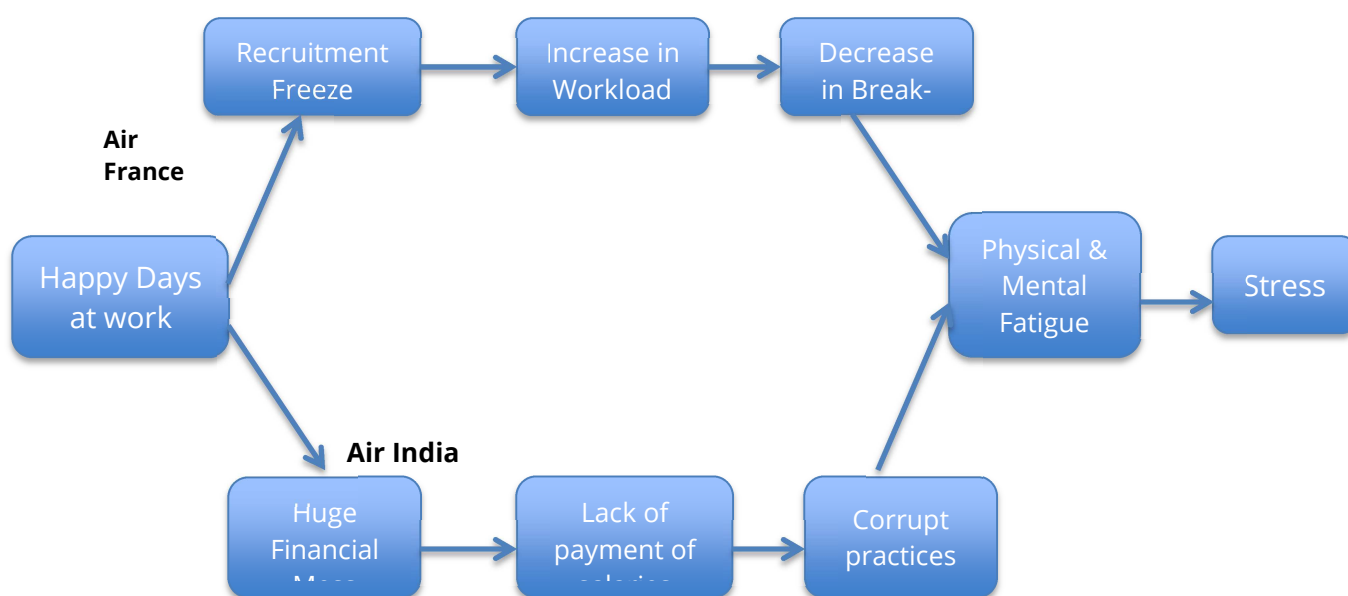
Figure 3: My inferences at the end of Stage 3 – Analysis of Life-Cycle Interviews

4.7.3.6. And… What happens to the "newly-found" passion at this "crisis" stage of Air India and due to lack of recruitment at Air France?

At this moment, the reader might recollect the set of questions that were raised at the end of the stage two, while I introduced a term called "Passion" and it's applicability to airhostesses. Out of those, one of the most important questions finds itself an answer here – The question being, "What happens to the passion as days and years roll by? Does it remain constant or does it vary?" I feel that at this stage, after looking at the various narratives from the respondents from both the companies, due to the various factors, the passion for flying seems to be affected here. Moving on, when we try to answer the question as to why did the airhostesses (especially in Air France) decide to change over from full-time employment to part-time employment, this might prove to be a good answer to explain – Due to the excessive stress and strain associated with this job in this day, the passion that initially was existing in the airhostesses for flying, had considerably come down! But the main point here is that, this passion, since it seemed to be very strong during the childhood and initial days in the job, I feel at some point of time, if things might improve, it would again regain its lost glory!

But is there a ray of hope? With the current day scenario at work and with advancing age, is there any respite for these troubled airhostesses? Let's explore the fourth and the final stage and the answers may be visible as we progress on.

4.7.4. Stage 4: How's it being an Airhostess today - The current scenario:

This is the final stage that explains what it takes to be an airhostess in today's work environment. What are the advantages and the compelling reasons that would make airhostesses stick to their job today? What are the current-day challenges in sustaining oneself in this job? What is in store for the future for these airhostesses? Let's try to explore some possible answers for the above questions.

4.7.4.1. More aircrafts, more flights, more destinations… But?? – Experiences of Diandra, Air France:

Now we are at the fourth and the final stage of the process, and with the challenges that were mentioned during the previous session, let's see what Diandra had to share with regards to her experience in the present day working scenario and how does she see her future, being an airhostess.

To begin with, Diandra opines that being an airhostess today is very tough and extremely demanding. But having said that, certain things have improved for the good cause – The business

cabins have increased, service quality has improved tremendously over the years, etc. Moreover, the company has also moved on and now they've come up with a flexibility plan for its cabin crew wherein they're given a "limited" freedom to choose the destination that they would wish to fly to. This is a very recent development – Perhaps it's there for the past two years or so.

When Diandra started like this, I was feeling happy to understand that the job of an Airhostess has considerably changed over a period of time.

However having said this, Diandra continues by saying that she feels that "*Lack of new recruitment", that sadly continues even today!* Diandra expresses that, because the staff is very less as compared to the actual requirement, it becomes tougher as the workload has increased manifold. *Although, people are very nice, she is of the opinion that this problem kills all of those good things around.*

But I was curious to know that this recruitment freeze, according to her is for too long a period. I asked to myself, how can it be possible for a company to sustain like this. I put forth a question to her that is there any kind of respite for this problem any sooner, and what seems to be the plan of the top management to deal with this shortage of people. For this, Diandra just smiled and remarked that instead of bringing in more people, according to her, the top management is just thinking of how to fire the existing people. She goes on to narrate an instance to substantiate her "strong" words on this. In Mexico city, Air France had recently fired majority of the ground staff and outsourced its ground operations to a third party organization, with the aim of "cutting costs". However, the respondent says it's a disastrous move as the quality of the outsourced staff is very poor and the worst thing is that, none of them can talk French!! Hence she questions the need of such a move if the company has to sacrifice on quality of staff.

From the above narrative, I found it to be fishy as to how does the company sustain its brand name and its historical legacy, given such bad experiences for its own people. I decided to hold on for a few more moments and let Diandra do the talking!

However, Diandra also gives an interesting note here that, whatever said and done, if we compare the long haul and short haul operations of the company, even today the short haul operations have a much better system than the long haul ones. (*For a moment here, I couldn't understand the relevance of what she was trying to say).*

She however, goes on and lists the probable reasons for it, and those might be worth to consider. The first one being the age factor – People doing long haul flights are older, tired, less happy and more bored because of the heavy work pressure. They work nowadays without any enthusiasm. Whereas on the other hand, people who are in the domestic sector are relatively younger and she

sees almost the same kind of a work atmosphere that she saw when she joined in 2001. *She says that even now whenever she takes a flight within Europe, she feels that she's ten years younger.*

Another reason she says is that, in short haul flights, the crew is smaller – just 3-4 people. So it's easier to connect and to be in a relaxed frame of mind. In long flights, it's a big aircraft and you have more than ten people, with three chiefs. It becomes tougher because most of the chiefs are *"big heads"* and it becomes erratic too. Also, since it's a big aircraft, it automatically creates a "distance" between people – Some are in the front, some in the middle and the end. So there are no much communication possibilities within the people, and that makes it boring at times. But in short flights, there is only one chief on board, and normally she feels that these people are less big heads, hence it's easier and more comfortable.

The third reason she gives is that, in long haul flights, people work at odd times in the night, and this itself makes people very tired physically and mentally and also it makes people lazy. Of course, it is enjoyable when people are young, but it gets tougher as age increases. Also, one last reason might also be the time difference while flying long haul flights – It makes the body confused and the sleep becomes more erratic. This causes lot of frustration within them too.

It's again interesting to note repeatedly, narrative after narrative, and perhaps I begin to get a clearer perspective moving forward significantly through these four stages, that there're certain unique factors that affect airhostesses in the long run. Some of them highlighted clearly by Diandra here include erratic work timings, number of colleagues working on board, advancing age, and the level of communication between colleagues during the flight.

Now, having spoken so much by Diandra and others about the "fatigue" factor, I was curious to probe more. One probing further on what effect does this fatigue have on the airhostesses, Diandra reveals that she was planning to quit Air France one day, because the fatigue had led her to face some serious health issues – affecting her nervous health particularly. However, she underwent some treatment, by taking a short break from flying and now she says that she feels fine to continue at the moment. Because of this, she says that her mindset has undergone a drastic change! What are those changes? She continues to describe:

She says that she's trying to be *"less involved"* in her work because she feels that people around her are draining her energy out. She feels that there's a strong political will that prevents employees to give their best at work. She says that she has come to that extent wherein, due to the worsening conditions at work day by day, she started feeling that *"it's not worth to be fully professional"* and to "let it go".

As a good friend of Diandra, I was moved with what she had to say about her health. But yes, as a

researcher, I feel at this stage that mental and physical fatigue leads to physical and mental illness, which further may have the power to make employees go to the extent of either quitting their job altogether or to act in a way that might lead to the downfall of the brand name of the organization. All these also made me wonder whether all these reasons combined, have led to the recent protests by the cabin crew of Air France, a few months ago.

4.7.4.2. From "full-time" flying to "part-time" flying.. Why?? – Experiences of Anne from Air France:

Here's what the second respondent from Air France got to say:

The final episode with Anne begins with her sharing of thoughts about the nature of the job in today's challenging environment. She explains that although the profile of the job hasn't changed much, except for a few minor changes here and there, the workload and pressure has tremendously increased but without increase in the salary. This has caused people to get more physically and mentally tired.

At this juncture Anne tries to picture a comparison of today's situation and the situation during her yester years to substantiate this argument. *During the 1990's and even till 2005-06, the break time between two 11-12 hour long flights used to be 48 hours. However, now it has been reduced to even less than 24 hours in some instances and* according to Anne, this is the main reason why people get tired and fatigued. As a result of this, she says that people are tending to confine themselves to the hotel rooms during the breaks desperately wanting to catch a little bit of rest. This adds lot of frustration, which further leads to a sense of loneliness, and in this way, she laments that enthusiasm and charm of roaming around new cities and countries has completely vanished. It's just that, people nowadays seem to work for their money (salary) and nothing else.

The main reason for all these issues, according to Anne is purely lack of new staff for almost 7-8 years now. She goes on to stress on the fact that *the average age of stewards at Air France today is 43-44.* This has resulted in heavy workload for existing staff, lack of rest, etc. and worst of all, affects their quality family life. In this case, the respondent claims that it was this reason (poor work-life balance) that she quit from full-time flying and opted for part-time, so as to take care of her family. She also goes on to say that the work pressure is so much that it's very difficult to even get adequate holidays and it's really a grave situation.

Moving on further, all said and done, Anne somehow feels that the best thing about Air France even today is the "Relationship" part. She accepts that *Air France has been an excellent organization in terms of its interpersonal relationship – People have been nice and are nice even today. She goes*

on to say that this is the only aspect that keeps her going with Air France even today, amidst all the other issues.

When asked finally about the future prospective, moving forward, Anne opines that the top management, to change the current situation towards betterment in the near future has done nothing. *However, she asserts here that despite all these issues, Air France is still a very good organization. These issues come and go in every organization and quitting the job is not a solution to this.*

Upon hearing this last statement, I was all the more surprised and I felt that this has opened the door to something interesting. If a person, even after facing so much of problems has to give such an assertion about her company, it forces me to have a strong feeling that these airhostesses have literally lived with Air France for so many years of their life and they wish to continue their loyalty towards their organization in any and every way possible!

These kinds of unique narratives posed several questions in my mind at this point of time. However, I just decided to hold on till I finish this exercise and then ponder deeply into them. Let's now look into the Air India story and see what our respondents Anoop and Poornima had to say!

4.7.4.3. A downturn, and then an upswing!! Experiences of Anoop from Air India:

"And now, the worst is over!!" exclaims our first respondent from Air India!! Why does he say so? Here is Anoop, trying to elaborate more on this!

Anoop explains here that post the worst period of 2009-13; things have now started to improve drastically in the right direction. He feels that the changes that are being brought out by the organization have boosted the morale of employees. He explains how:

The first and foremost and perhaps the biggest change is that, the organization has come up with dedicated teams to take care of every aspect such as passenger needs, feedbacks, etc. *In fact, Air India has come up with a robust feedback system recently - Such a system never existed before.* It has been introduced quite recently and it's an excellent system. It gives prompt responses to various kinds of issues and it's very useful.

Secondly, Anoop explains that it has become much easier to approach the top management in case of any issue. *A new system called the "Open House" is designed and introduced by the new Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) in which any employee can share any kind of grievance with any higher official.* Anoop opines at this point that it's the new CMD who has made all the difference to Air India. It seems that this new person is completely employee-friendly and even travels to all the stations and interacts personally with all employees and enquires their concerns and grievances. He also listens to new ideas given by employees for improvement. This, he feels is

perhaps a good sign of improvement.

Anoop also goes on to opine that Air India has now started to be on a complete revamp mode, wherein employees have started to work more diligently. Due to this, the customer base has also tremendously increased of late. The entire work culture has changed – What was seen as a very lethargic and a "don't care" work culture, has now changed to attain perfection in everything.

Moreover, the scenario of compensation has changed drastically. As mentioned before, there was a situation before wherein even employees' basic salaries were deferred for months together due to huge accumulated financial losses, but this has been addressed a great deal of late. In fact, more than just receiving salaries on time, employees have also started getting salary hikes, increments, etc. This, according to him has really boosted employee morale and made the employees think that they would be taken care of, if the work is done diligently.

From the literature on job satisfaction, the reader might have understood the significance of the "Monetary benefits" in influencing job satisfaction for an employee. Now here is a unique case wherein, employees have come from a situation of "Zero" salary for so many months, to a situation where they're being paid promptly along with hikes. After listening to this narrative, I have a feeling now that employees can have an even better reason to rejoice as they've seen both the extreme situations. This I think, perhaps can bring in a small extra addition to the existing literature on job satisfaction.

Anoop finally feels that the results have been quite evident now. This is the first financial year after almost 12 years that Air India has made an operating profit. He also concludes by saying with a beaming smile that, if the present good trend continues for atleast the next couple of years, Air India would be able to completely turn around and once again restore its lost legacy completely!

4.7.4.4. Even a small token of appreciation means a lot to an airhostess!! The Air India experience:

As Poornima concluded during the previous interview session, it might just take a moment for a passenger to express a word or two of appreciation to an airhostess for their service and might perhaps be insignificant for them, but for an airhostess, this moment of appreciation means a lot and it goes a long way in sustaining their happiness. In this session, she tries to substantiate this with her narratives. Let's look on!

Poornima, to begin with, being a senior cabin crew today, narrates the key positives, challenges and opportunities during the present day, as being an airhostess. Of course she agrees on the part that the responsibilities have become much more with the airline's growth and because of more and

more flights being operated.

In the personal front, she feels that an airhostess today should be prepared to work at any time of the day or the night, or even both, depending upon their respective schedules. The destinations have become more and subsequently the passengers become more and *there's a good variety in the job nowadays, and this really makes it more interesting. (At this point, I said to myself, "Here's one way to look at a challenge in a constructive way!")*

Adding on, Poornima claims proudly that she has never had a day when she felt bored of flying. She further explains that her passion for flying has only increased with every passing day due to all the above reasons. *(At this point, I just felt, "Wow!")*

She further gives an explanation as to how her passion further grows on a day-to-day basis – *The feedback from a happy passenger or from a captain on a regular basis is the greatest thing for an airhostess to keep going about her job. Even a small appreciation from someone means a lot when you're working in such a pressurized environment.*

In the organizational front, the respondent opines that things have moved forward in the positive direction for the past 2 years or so – Especially after the change in the leadership. She gives a detailed explanation as to what are the changes that have taken place:

The first change she says is that, Air India has now started to focus on "On-Time Performance" on a huge scale. It seems that the present CMD monitors this personally on a very strict manner, on a daily basis and this, she feels, has led to the decrease in unwanted and bureaucratic delays. *In turn, she believes firmly that this has made airhostesses comfortable because, being the face of the airline, passengers tend to show out their frustration on the airhostesses and that makes their lives really tough. However, with this new change things have become much better – Both for the passengers and employees.*

The second change she talks about here is that, the communication channels between employees on the ground and the airhostesses have tremendously improved – Which means that the various formalities required to be done before the flight takes off, can be done much smoother and on time.

The third and perhaps the most important change is the *difference in the mindset of the current CMD in comparison with his predecessor.* From her experience, the respondent explains how difficult it was to get an appointment to meet the previous CMD and in contrast, how easy it is to meet the current CMD at his office at any time. *This, she believes, has assured employees that someone is there to take care of their needs and grievances.*

The fourth important change that has taken place is that, the vigilance has become much more stricter than before. This is extremely important because this is the move that brings down the

corruption in the system and making it transparent to the employees. *With this change, the respondent happily explains that employees feel that all of them are at par with each other.* Moreover, in continuation with the same point, she says that severe action is being taken against miscreants who tend to steal important equipment from the aircraft. *This might be a bit bizarre to understand, but according to her, this was a grave problem as it directly impacts the safety of passengers on board and the airhostesses have had to deal with this tough situation a lot many times before.* Nowadays, as Poornima explains, these things have been completely eradicated, to the much-needed relief of the airhostesses.

The fifth and the most important welcome change among employees according to Poornima is that, *the management has made sure that all salaries would be paid by the fifth of every month. This is a huge welcome relief for all employees* – Not only the airhostesses*,* because this has been perhaps the gravest issue that had plagued all employees of Air India for a few years.

The sixth important factor of change she talks about is that, the CMD takes lot of personal interest in the employees' welfare and he personally travels across all stations to visit and hear from employees on a one-to-one basis. This move has boosted the employee morale to a great extent.

The seventh factor is that, *especially for airhostesses,* their schedules are planned in such a way that *they can operate from their respective hometown.* This according to Poornima is a positive step towards enhancing their work-life balance to a great extent. In the respondent's case, both herself and her husband are senior cabin crewmembers and they have the privilege to tweak their schedules in such a way that both of them fly on alternate days. This kind of an arrangement seems to have really worked well for them and with this arrangement; she says that they are able to devote ample time to their family life as well.

With all these important enhancements that Air India has undertaken for the past two years, she is of the opinion that the morale of employees – not only the airhostesses have increased substantially and it has made them work diligently and also with a sense of pride – As she finally and happily concludes by proclaiming that *she's proud be part of the Air India family!!*

It's very important and also interesting to note, how significantly airhostesses talk about the organizational leadership in influencing their lives – Both in terms of profitability and also in terms of making employees happy. By listening to this narrative repeatedly from both Anoop and Poornima, I get a sense that, the conditions are really improving at a very quick pace at Air India, and this, I think has to be largely attributed to the top leadership of the organization.

4.7.4.5. Moments of Reflection after Stage 4:

Here again, I'm going to split this into two – The Air France experience and the Air India experience. I'm forced to devote individual attention to both companies because I feel that both companies face unique organizational issues that has affected it's employees a great deal and it's worth discussing it in depth for a better understanding. I'll first begin with Air France and then move on to Air India.

"Ten years down the line, I wonder if a company called 'Air France' would even exist.." This was a statement from Anne that struck me and gave me a picture of the extent of problems that airhostesses undergo during the current day. As a continuation from stage three, the problem of recruitment freeze at Air France continues till date. There're newer aircrafts, bigger aircrafts, new destinations opening up worldwide and even then, this issue persists, which is to me, very peculiar. For a moment I even thought sarcastically to myself whether these people were making me a fool – How can an organization chug along for almost a decade now, without fresh recruitments? However later did I realize from my own personal observations while taking flights of Air France – especially the long haul ones. My observation was very simple – Most of the airhostesses were pretty old and I hardly spotted out any youngsters among the team of cabin crew! Only then I realized the words of Anne that the average age of the stewards of Air France today is around forty-three!!

However, there's the most important question that remains unanswered till now – What makes airhostesses stay with the company irrespective of these numerous issues highlighted so far? Perhaps one straight-forward answer that comes to my mind at this stage is that, although Air France is plagued with these problems (that don't seem to end anywhere in the near future), the respondents collectively seem to convey that it's the "Relationship" factor that keeps them going. At numerous occasions during the interviews they had felt that the people working there are very nice, courteous and professional and this is perhaps one of the main elements that airhostesses are extremely happy about. As the reader would have seen from the excerpts of Stage four, respondents do have a understanding that every company in this world would face some kind of a problem somewhere, and as employees of a great and a legendary organization like Air France, they do realize that they need to stand united together and help the company tide over this crisis quickly. This shows the commitment of employees towards Air France and as respondents proclaim, they feel extremely proud to be part of Air France! However, a larger question still remains here. This answer on "Relationship" might be just one of the many answers to this question. I feel that there might be more and I'm going to explore it much deeper as we progress further.

Now, coming to the Indian counterpart, the reader would have observed the respondents pointing out to some of the most significant changes in the company's policy towards employees for the past

two to three years and these changes have been in the right direction with respect to enhancing the happiness of employees. Most importantly, respondents beautifully brought out how the new leader of the company has been trying meticulously bring about positive changes within the organization during the stage four. Of course, there are still issues that persist, however, the amount of confidence that employees possess now, can be seen as a notable and a remarkable change that can be observed between stages three and four. On a personal level, from the accords of the respondents that I went through so far, I have a feeling that a strong leadership has the potential to bring down the stress level amongst people and they look forward to work with the organization with more commitment and resolution.

4.7.4.5.1. And.. That "Passion".. What's in it now?

From the different narratives of the airhostesses, at this stage, personally I feel that the role of "passion" during the entire career journey of an airhostess is remarkable! At every stage, it seemed to me that airhostesses are getting increasingly matured and it's amazing to see at the end of the day, how do they stand with their organization during the tough times. When I talk about "maturity", I see it in my respondents that it comes with age and experience. At this point, I would like to make one more important inference from my side – When I look at airhostesses being so mature enough to understand and react positively to challenging situations, I get a feeling that the very basis of this high levels of maturity could be the underlying passion for the job and maybe this is why, although they face loads of physical and psychological problems related to continuous flying – *(Because of the ageing factor, because of the hectic flying schedules that they have in today's work scenario, because of the fatigue and erratic sleeping schedules, because of improper work-life balance, because of periodical unpleasant experiences from people around them.. the list goes on..)* these airhostesses stick to their flying routine and give their heart and soul to what they do. Hence at this stage, both as a researcher and as a person it is only feasible for me to say that airhostesses are never to be under-estimated and instead has to be appreciated and applauded for their commendable and exceptional service.

4.7.4.6. A quick wrap-up of the four stages:

At this stage, I would like to just give a brief summary of how the interviews have gone so far and a few important points that I was able to deduce from the way the interviews progressed. The first stage commenced with the respondents talking about their childhood days wherein they stressed upon how their interest of flying was triggered. Several respondents spoke of several ways – from

stories that they were listening from their parents/relatives about the experiences of flying, being a pilot, steward, etc., to observing aircrafts landing and taking off from the airport, thus inducing the desire that some day we need to take to an aircraft too! These were very important points that I noted down during the course of this stage of the interview. Moving on, the respondents spoke about how did they get into the profession of being an airhostess – The processes, procedures, etc. that they had to undergo (in some cases relentlessly). This portrayed a picture in my mind that whatever maybe the difficulty they underwent at this stage, they were keen in taking up the job as an airhostess and tried to overcome the difficulties in some way or the other.

The second stage of the interview revolved mainly around their unique experiences when they took to a flight for the first time, followed by their experiences during the initial days and years of being an airhostess – Things around them appearing to be glamorous, people around them were so nice, charming, exciting to explore different world cities, etc. were the striking points that emerged. Hence at this stage, I was able to see that the airhostesses were very excited to be what they were and they tried to savor each and every moment with utmost satisfaction. Of course, there was a brief mention about their reputation in the society – People looked up to them and eagerly enquired them during parties, get-together events, etc. and all these also added up to their excitement!

The third stage started to revolve around the context of how did they feel being an airhostess for a few years down the line – Their ways of looking at things at this stage – Was it becoming too much of a monotonous routine task? Were there any issues that were being faced? A plethora of responses emerged from this portion wherein the respondents were feeling happy with a few things and frustrated and sad with a few other. There were potential issues that were surfacing up such as lack of recruitment of new airhostesses in the organization, which in turn increases the workload of the existing people drastically, inadequate rest between two flights (as a consequence), fatigue, non-payment of salaries due to an extreme financial crunch situation, organizational politics letting them down and so on. It was very interesting for me to get to know that numerous things like these go on behind the customary smile of an airhostess.

The fourth and the final stage spoke about the present situation of their job and what would it take to sustain as an airhostess in today's working scenario. The respondents felt that it is becoming increasingly tough every passing day with increasing challenges like poor work-family life balance, erratic work schedules, progressing age, physical and mental problems, etc. However, given all these challenges at their workplace, I felt and said to myself at this point that another mystery was brewing its way through, wherein the respondents, although confronted with numerous challenges, still associated themselves proudly with their respective organizations and were willing to continue

working further with their full rigor. This mystery needs to be taken forward for further pondering and discussion.

4.7.5. Some unique and interesting experiences shared by respondents across all stages of the interview:

As I had mentioned at the end of the wrap-up, there seems a mystery that persists – What makes airhostesses feel proud to associate themselves with their respective organization? I wanted to take this mystery in my mind, forward for further discussion. But before entering into it, I felt that it would be apt to look into some specific unique and interesting experiences shared by my respondents at various stages of their career. I have a feeling that perhaps these experiences would throw up some light to find out some possible reasons as to what makes the airhostesses proud of their profession. In this section, I would be sharing some unique experiences that four of my respondents Diandra, Anne, Anoop and Poornima shared during the course of the interview sessions with each of them. Here, I'm not classifying the experiences according to the four different stages discussed above, but the aim here is to get a deeper and a personalized insight of what actually motivates the airhostesses to keep associating themselves with their organization every time. In the sub sections that would follow, I would be predominantly presenting the quotes from various respondents, and keep my inferences very brief for the moment. However, the points that are going to emerge from the following sub-sections would be taken up for further pondering in the subsequent phases of analyses.

4.7.5.1. The Social Status associated with this job – A motivation for airhostesses?

As I'm from India, over the many years I've realized that India is one place wherein social status is given prime importance and hence, I felt that it would be apt to start with the anecdotes of our respondents from Air India. So here's what Anoop had to share during the course of the life-cycle exercise, with regards to the point on social status:

"Basically since my father was here in the company, he knows the entire profile of this industry actually. My father was an Air Indian and now I'm also an Air Indian. So from my family part, with respect to my relatives they see me as in some very high level basically. And people around me realize that this job is not very easy to get into. We've to keep travelling everyday – It's not like a bus or a train. So they do think that this is something different and something huge. In fact they feel proud to say that one of their relatives is working in the airport or an airline. Some of my relatives even proudly say that one of my relatives is working as a cabin crew in Air India and he's flying

internationally every day!! It's actually good!! They're seeing me like a different kind of a person and not like a normal human being. But feedback wise, I never get any negative comments from anybody in the society. But my mother was very concerned because she knows the various risk factors involved in doing this job. Even today she's very much concerned and every time I take to the flight, she keeps saying, "Be careful", because, what she knows is the other part – and basically all mothers are concerned about it. So this is about the risk part. But for me, I never think about all these risk factors. I just love to do the job. So I'm least bothered about all these and moreover I think that it's my responsibility rather than a concern about the safety of the flight, passengers and myself. So I concentrate on the other side".

From this narrative of Anoop, I get to portray in my mind that the social status a person receives contributes to his/her commitment towards the job in hand and it enhances the above-explained passion for it as well. To understand further and to establish a healthier argument in this context, we shall look into what our respondents from Air France feel about the point of social status associated with their job. Here's what Diandra had to say!

"I first realized it when I was in a party. As you know… If you're in a party, you can start asking questions… So some people asked me what do you do. The moment I replied that I'm an airhostess, everyone started asking me lot of questions about it. I was surprised. And that was the time I realized that.. Okay… People are very interested in my job!! This situation happened many times again. Even today, if someone asks me what job do I do in life and after my reply if I don't see any reaction from him or her, I can easily infer that the person didn't understand what I said. Because, I'm used to that now and so if I don't see the spark on their face after I replied that I'm an airhostess with Air France, it implies that the person didn't understand!!! So when that person asks me again and then they react like Ooooohhhh….. Then I feel… Okay… Now they've understood!! It's like, in many places around the world you go and say that you live in Paris, there's a spark on their face!"

This narrative gave me a better feeling that the job of an airhostess entails huge societal reputation and is considered an extremely unique profession altogether.

4.7.5.2. Support of the family in pursuing this job:

Now here's the next narrative that indicates how the family members of airhostesses perceive this job and what do they think of it and how do they react. For me, it made more sense to look at the Indian perspective as I've already mentioned before that the family and society assumes an "extra" bit of significance in whatever people do in their career in India. Here's a short narration from

Poornima from Air India!

"Initially because of the various struggles that I went through during my Air India application and recruitment process, I never told any of my relatives that I'm going to go for this, except for a very few close people around. But when I got the final call to go to Mumbai, that's when everybody came to know about that I'm going to be an airhostess. The entire village of mine was proud of me at that time. It went to an extent that after I joined and I was in my initial days of flying, whenever people used to spot aircrafts landing at the airport they used to talk within themselves that maybe Poornima (the respondent) is in this flight!!! They were all in awe!! But as days and years passed by, nowadays it has become just another normal job since flying has become a necessity more than a luxury. Also, my relatives were very supportive and encouraged me to go and join the training at Air India in Mumbai. They all came to my house on the day before I left to Mumbai for training. The training period was for three months. So they were eagerly awaiting me at the end of the three-month period. So, it was like this!!"

As a researcher, my feeling after listening to this particular narrative from Poornima is that, the reader can easily understand and appreciate the significance and the respect that airhostesses receive from the society and close family. Hence at the end of this narrative, I get a feeling that one of the root causes of why airhostesses are so passionate to sustain in this job is the esteemed social status and the support that they get from the society for being what they are.

4.7.5.3. What happens during the initial days when your chief purser on board is "not that good"?

Well.. What really happens at this situation? Is it a disaster in the making or an opportunity to learn the harder lessons? Here's what Diandra from Air France got to share:

"I can remember the first instance of an emergency during a flight, when I was just about 2 months old in Air France. I was thinking that the plane would crash. It's a really bad memory because the chief of the crew was really bad. She wasn't doing her job properly. She was putting lot of tension in the crew and then... we had this problem that the way she communicates. When there's a problem in the plane, normally the pilot would communicate to the chief and then the chief would in-turn communicate to the crew. But the way she transmitted the information was really bad and stressful. Initially she didn't give clear information and instructions to the crew. Moreover, she created a panic within the crew. And even during the beginning of that day, she had put lot of tension in the crew. She neither gave us proper instructions nor support. Since it was my first incident like this, I didn't understand what was going on. I was thinking, maybe I'm going to die.

This is a typical case of things not to be done this way. So then, the captain, being a professional person, he made an announcement to all the cabin crew. He was never sounding panicked and he told us that this is what was happening, and this is what we're going to do, etc. It was just a small technical glitch. It was a problem, but the captain handled it well with a cool head. So normally, this is how we're trained - If such an emergency situation arises, this is how you react. It's quite simple. If you have a problem, you have a solution. So, the captain was saying that there was some problem with the wheel, but we could land safely without any problem. So, after hearing this, I was relieved a lot. So, yes.. This was a bad experience, but it taught me a lot.

Then, long time later I had another experience. This time, the captain made a big mistake. All of us were in danger, but luckily all the people in the crew were good and we managed it. This time, it was a long distance flight, so we had a big plane and a big crew. We had two chief pursers and under them we were a big crew. They were nice people and we didn't really get scared. They just gave the right instructions and there wasn't any panic. So, it maybe two examples – one case where it was a bad experience, and the other was a good one".

Hence, as a researcher, the basic idea that I tended to derive from this narrative is that, if you have a good chief purser, it seems to changes everything. If that person is miserable, life seems to become miserable for others around as well!!

4.7.5.4. On handling a variety of people on board – An Interesting & a unique experience:

As discussed during one of the four stages, the job of an airhostess gives an opportunity to interact with different types of people on every flight. How unique is this experience for an airhostess? Here's a very interesting and a thought provoking accord from Anoop of Air India regarding this context.

"Now I've reached a stage wherein I can make out the passenger, right at the time he/she boards. If you're really interested in this job, you can learn so many things. Observing people is a big learning as part of this job. There might be different kinds of passengers – Passengers go through so many things when they board the flight. They come from different situations in life. We normally have 186 passengers on board and we have 186 different characters basically! There are a few passengers who start with a complaint and they keep complaining till the journey ends and till they de-plane. You just say, "Welcome" and that's enough. They'll burst at you!! They start commenting immediately – "I'm already pissed off!! How stupid is this!!" Maybe perhaps, they're frustrated with many things... We might not know what happens in their day to day life – Maybe some family problems, leaving your near and dear ones after marriage, leaving your aged parents back home,

etc.... So many situations... Some might be happy situations, whereas some might be sad. So we never know. We've to handle all kinds of people like this. Also, they've to go through so many formalities at the airport – government formalities like security checks, waiting in long queues for it, baggage checks, etc. So, by the time they board the aircraft, they get frustrated. The departure from your home country is always painful for everyone. They've to leave their home, their loved ones, relatives, etc. So it's always painful. So it's like, they're covering everything within themselves, for a major part of their time till they board the aircraft. Irrespective of the flying time to your destination, you're going to sit idle in the aircraft – other than having food and going to the washroom occasionally, you're always going to be on your seat. It's the rest time basically. So if you welcome a passenger with a genuine smile, it definitely affects the passenger. I've noticed it many times. Passengers who're tired and frustrated - When you wish them with a smile, it really has an effect actually. At least their faces turn to a normal condition if you wish them with a genuine smile. But yes.. Even if all said and done, some passengers comment in a very bad way and sometimes even we get irritated with those kinds of comments. The trick comes in when we give an answer to them and the situation worsens. They'll simply find some mistake in us, the airline, the condition, the seat, etc. Everything is a mistake in the aircraft. We get lot of passengers like that".

Such is the variety in passengers that an airhostess observes during every flight and this can be one of the most unique features of an airhostess' job!

4.7.5.5. *Working with different colleagues each time – How challenging is it?*

During the four stages of analysis, there was a special mention about the different types of colleagues on board. By the term "colleague" I mean fellow airhostesses, the captain, co-pilot/s, etc. Here's a very interesting narrative from Poornima of Air India, sharing her experiences in much more depth that how pilots/captains can make life better for airhostesses. – An entirely new and a surprising perspective that I had never come across till now!

".. Yes.. Air India managed to recruit well-experienced captains for the new subsidiary. Initially most of them were foreign recruits, and gradually as years progressed, we started having Indian captains on board as well. Of course, the brand name that Air India possesses, even today and even in 2004-05, made it easier for the organization to recruit well experienced people. And now.. From my experience so far for the past twelve years or so, I've noted that, there's a marked difference in the approach of captains of foreign nationalities and those of Indians, towards their job in hand. To be very frank and upfront, I still feel that expat captains are much better than the Indian counterparts – In the sense that, foreign captains are very comfortable and relaxed to fly with.

They're very friendly and are willing to adjust to any kind of situation – They just take flying as their job and there are no frills attached to it apart from that. Whereas the Indian captains especially during the initial days, they weren't much friendly and were having heavy heads. They always had that thought that they're Gods. So it made our lives uncomfortable for many flights. This was the phenomenon during the initial days. But as years progressed, things started to change actually. Nowadays, Indian captains are also on par with the foreign counterparts and they are adjustable, relaxed and comfortable to work with. So now there's not much of an issue with them. Actually, captains do play a role in making our life easier on board. If the captains are relaxed and cool headed, that relaxation is passed on to us and we can also handle any kind of situation on board – including emergencies. I've had numerous experiences on board, wherein there were medical emergencies and the captain had been absolutely co-operative during those times".

From the above narrative it's quite evident that, not only different kinds of passengers seem to influence the life of an airhostess, but also the different kinds of captains and the crew that these people encounter on every flight. It's appropriate to be reminded to the reader at this point in time that for every flight the members of the crew and the captains keep varying and especially in big and established airline organizations like Air France and Air India, it's a rare phenomenon that two members of the crew are the same for more than one flight.

4.7.5.6. When there's a technical emergency on board, what goes on within an airhostess?

Just imagine, what would happen if an airhostess panics during a catastrophic or an unfortunate incident that happens at 40,000 feet!! What would be the state of the passengers on board? Here comes a classy and an interesting narrative from Poornima of Air India, where she narrates her experience of handling such a situation on board especially during her initial days of being an airhostess!

"Well... There were a few actually.. Not just one.. I feel that, such incidences do keep happening every now and then and the main thing is that, we should never ever panic under any situation – However worse it might turn out to be!! This is what is the challenge!! But if you really love the job, you never see it as a challenge – You just learn to see such things as an opportunity to groom yourself as a person more... I would like to share one of my personal experiences that happened somewhere in 2007. My flight route was Cochin – Trivandrum – Abu Dhabi – Cochin. So, from Cochin, we landed in Trivandrum and then from Trivandrum we landed at Abu Dhabi. After landing in Abu Dhabi, the captain found that something was wrong somewhere. Then of course, the ground engineers worked on it and after the flight was certified fit for flying, we took off. After

flying for about an hour – we were over the Muscat airspace and the captain found that one of the engines were not working. It was a brand new aircraft that Air India purchased from Boeing – Not even two months old. We four of us were the crew. The captain asked for food, and one of us went inside with the food tray and the moment he turned, he realized that one of the engines didn't work. So he immediately called back the crew and gave the food back to them. At that point in time, we never knew why he did that. So we were concerned if the food wasn't good, or it was spoilt – Something like that. After 5 minutes, the captain called the senior most person of the crew and told that one of the engines are not working and we need to go for an emergency landing. I was also on the flight and the senior most person was my husband. So we four were there and the captain passed on the information to him. This was in the initial days of my career – within just 2 years since I started flying. So, he took the briefing from the captain, he came out and informed the crew and when he told this, I was totally blank. As I told you, theory is entirely different from the practical experience. My theory says that you've to this. So I was preparing to do all those things and of course I was very much sure that I'll do all the things. I was discussing and trying to coordinate with my other colleagues on board. After a certain period of time, we were keeping silence for five minutes and actually I had a feeling within myself that I was panicking, since I didn't have much experience that time. But still I knew what I should do theoretically. But the captain was an experienced person and was directly from Boeing Company itself. He said to all of us, not to inform about this to any of the passengers. He assured confidence that he can take the aircraft safe on the ground. But he made it clear that if anything happens, be ready to perform. That confidence in the captain boosted all of us. That was when I realized that if I become weak, my energy level would drop. So at that point in time, my colleague and myself decided that we also should be confident. If the captain gives us the positive assurance, then we can trust him. At the end, we had a safe landing at the airport. After landing, we met the captain and he never spoke for the first 5-10 minutes. We successfully landed and deplaned all the passengers and they were sent to other airlines and subsequently the ground engineers checked the aircraft. While they were checking, we came to know that had we taken off a little bit later than we did, the engine would have blasted!!"

Such was the seriousness of the issue, but however, after listening to her, I felt within myself that it all boils down to these airhostesses as to how to keep the situation calm and control it without panic. It's indeed not very surprising for me that such incidents pose tough questions regarding the mental stability of a person and this is one major reason why the job of an airhostess can be way too challenging than it might be normally perceived.

The same Poornima narrates another experience that she encountered very recently and in turn tries to5 her point as to how her past experience helped her to maintain her mental stability and to be prepared to handle any catastrophic emergency on board.

"... Two months back on one of my flights, the captain told me, "Expect a failure of one of the engines!!"- It didn't fail, but we were expecting a failure. So this time, I was the senior in the flight. There was some problem with the filter in the fuel tank and the indicator shows it. So if at any point in time, there's a contamination of the fuel that reaches the engine, it's bound to fail. If it fails, we've to go in for an emergency landing. I was pretty calm as I came out. I briefed my crew about it – They were doing the tea/coffee service at that time. I told them to keep everything as it is and come up to me. I just told them that this is the situation, but nothing to worry, but keep all the safety equipment ready and be updated with all those things. I told them to go back and continue the normal servicing, but asked them to keep this situation in mind and keep planning for the procedure within you and never show it out to the passengers. After sometime, the captain came out and asked me whether I'm okay. I said to him that I'm okay.. No problem.. And his next question was "How do you keep your cool like this?" I replied to him saying that, "Captain.. From my experience I've realized that if we're at 40,000 feet there's no use of getting panicked. SO I was mentally preparing myself in the way as to how to deal with the situation and get out of it, instead of thinking too much about the consequences. You're there in the cockpit to take care of the things and we're here in the cabin to take care of the passengers. If I panic, I'll just be doing my job only at 10% of my efficiency. But if I keep my cool, at least I can work up to 70% of my efficiency. The most important thing is that, if I lose my cool, the other three members of the crew will also lose their cool. So in that way I'll be losing my manpower. So I thought that whatever happens to me, let it be inside and I'll show my cool at least on my face, so that my colleagues wouldn't panic". So, every time I follow this same policy. The captain really appreciated me for this and of course we had a safe landing... But God's grace there wasn't an emergency landing. So, the lesson here is that, if we start panicking and showing faces, others will also start panicking around".

This accord adds to the argument that, mental toughness is a key component in sustaining as an airhostess successfully over the years. And at this stage, personally I opined within myself that handling such emergency situations on board successfully can be one huge booster of the satisfaction level in the job for an airhostess, just for the simple reason that he/she can take pride in himself/herself that they've saved the lives of numerous people on board!!

4.7.6. Conclusion of Phase 1:

As part of this phase, the entire career of an airhostess right from the initial days till the present day was analyzed stage by stage. It was surprising and amazing to understand different views and experiences at different stages of the career. As a summary, it can be inferred that the interest was at the peak during the childhood days, however it seems to decrease in many cases due to a variety of reasons. Few of the reasons that were highlighted here were - The monotonous nature of the job and various organizational factors that are pertaining to the individual organization. A slew of factors pertaining to Air France came up during the exercise, such as a drastic increase in workload because of lack of new recruitment of airhostesses and this problem has had cascading effects in the lives of the existing set of employees – Physical and mental fatigue, poor work-life balance leading airhostesses to switch from full-time to part-time flying, etc. and in the case of Air India, it was more towards the financial mess over the years, resulting in mounting losses. As a result, employees were deferred their monthly salaries for more than a year or so, leading to frustration and demotivation – Some employees even going a step further to resort in unethical practices such as corruption and stealing. Opinions from the respondents of Air India surfaced up that, this issue had cascading effects on employees, particularly airhostesses because they're the face of the airline organization in front of the customers. However, things seem to have started improving gradually and employees seemed to be pulled back into the line of discipline, perhaps by the presence of a strong and an employee-friendly leadership and the organization is currently on the revamp mode. This has enhanced the faith employees have with the company and in turn their satisfaction has also seemed to increase once again and it looks to me as if airhostesses with Air India are once again starting to live their passion. However, one thing that stood out amongst all the respondents in both the organizations is their unending commitment to their respective organizations, and that's one major factor that makes them continue with their job although they face numerous turbulences all along their career path.

4.8. Phase 2: Supplementary significant experiences from the other three respondents that may augment the explanation of continuous job satisfaction:

Following are excerpts from the other three respondents – *Fabrice* from Air France, *Nisha* and *Sabarinath* from Air India, narrating their unique experiences during their numerous years of flying till now. These life experiences would serve to augment the various points that have emerged from phase 1. Like in the first phase, the reader will again be able to appreciate that every experience will have an element of surprise and amazement and also will prove to us that the job of an airhostess is unique and incomparable. Just to remind the reader once more: Depending on the amount of detail

that emerged from every respondent during the interview, I had split the seven sets of interviews into four for Phase 1 of the analysis and the remaining three for the Phase 2 of analysis.

In Phase 2, I intended to go more with the quotes directly from the interview excerpts, right from the beginning till the end. My inferences would follow every quote and thus the points that emerge from every quote would be explained and commented by me accordingly. The following sub-sections would give a clearer understanding:

4.8.1. How to handle "tricky" passengers on board during your initial days of flying?

Definitely this is perhaps one of the trickiest part of an airhostess's job, and surely this is going to go a long way in shaping the learning curve of an airhostess. In the previous phase I discussed in detail about coming across and handling different kinds of passengers on board and this section might serve as an augment to it. Here the reader can practically get an actual glimpse of how do airhostesses handle different kinds of passengers every day. Here's what **Sabarinath**, from **Air India** shared with me regarding this context, especially during his first flight experience:

"There were some passengers who wanted more liquor during that flight. Since it's an international flight, we do have liquor sale on board. The passenger can buy it and have to pay. I was new to it and didn't know how to do it and was trying to manage it. But we're given a limitation of three pegs per passenger. If it's beer, I can give up to maximum 4 cans. So this limitation has been given to us – just to control the passengers and to avoid unruly behavior during the flight. Since it's a regulation we've to follow it. But the passengers... They're not happy with the regulation. But we don't have a choice. For a four-hour flight we're supposed to restrict the liquor sale. Since we're flying at a higher altitude and at a lower pressure level, a study says that the liquor will take its effect more quickly in the blood than when you're on the ground. This is because of the difference in pressure. This is the reason why they restrict the liquor on board. But passengers... They want to have more and more. They argue that they have the fear of flying and to come out of that, they want to have more liquor. They will create some reason to drink. So this is the complain which we usually have every time. During the first flight when I came across this situation I didn't know how to handle it. So I had to ask my senior. I told the passenger politely that I'd come back to you after consulting my senior. I told the passenger that if she permits, then I don't have any problem with it. So she went to that passenger and told him very firmly. She didn't shout at the passenger but she was very firm. Once the senior crew stepped in, the passenger became quiet and hence there was no problem. So that was it. She managed it very easily".

Hence, from the above narrative, I was able to sense that airhostesses are not only meant to be

pleasant and smiling all the time, but they can be really tough people too!

This issue can come to the fore when airhostesses have to encounter with certain people on board who try to take advantage of the female airhostesses and tend to misbehave with them in any form. Here's what Nisha from Air India got to say about this, to highlight this better:

"Well... Actually I've not faced anything like an unforeseen circumstance during my days so far, but yes. I've had some really bad experiences with a few passengers. I've faced numerous instances wherein we get some unruly passengers who behave very awkward on the flight. So the cabin crew is not always there to speak sweet and polite. It's just a give and take procedure – If the passengers are polite to us and when they give respect to us, we can also reciprocate it in a good manner. But if a point of time comes when the passenger behaves awkwardly, then we have the complete freedom to speak to that passenger in a way that it would warn the passenger as well and with my experience so far, the captain also supports the crew in every way possible, especially in situations wherein they feel that the crew is right. So with the permission of the captain, the authority is given to the cabin crew to act accordingly. Sometimes I've even restrained the passenger who had been behaving awkwardly in the flight. There were incidents like that. And even after we land on the ground, the captain had told us that if we feel that this person has to be handed over to the authority, we could do that. After all, we are also human beings and we also need some respect from the people around us. I don't know how it is abroad, but in India, as female cabin crew, we've got the respect from the authorities in such situations. They also deal the situation in that way as well. For instance, some men after boozing they don't speak properly and their actions are not so appropriate to which the cabin crew can react and if there is a complaint on these lines from the junior crew to the senior, the senior can take action against that passenger, in the sense like, filing a complaint with the local authority or with the police, with the help of the captain. So in this way, people around us are very cooperative when it comes to handling passengers who are unruly".

Such is the freedom airhostesses seem to have in handling these kind of unruly people who try to take undue advantage on board. As a frequent traveller myself, I've also seen over the years that rules have become much more stricter and most importantly it's important to note that the colleagues are co-operative to a great extent so as to ensure the safety and dignity of the airhostesses on board.

4.8.2. On handling a critical medical emergency on board:

This can easily be one of the most critical aspects in the job profile of an airhostess, and perhaps another major part of the job that can give immense satisfaction to an airhostess on successful

implementation. Here's Sabarinath from Air India sharing one of his major experiences with respect to successfully handling a medical emergency on board. At the end of the accord, the reader would be able to realize the amount of happiness and satisfaction the airhostess derives after handling these kinds of emergency situations successfully.

"So.. In case of a medical emergency, the main aim here is to preserve the life of the person at least for a few hours. We're trained as to how to keep the person conscious for a few hours. The situation worsens if the person loses conscience. This is beyond our limits. They've provided us with some limited items in the first aid kit. Some crucial medicines are there in it. If the person falls unconscious, we still have some basic parameters to sustain. Basically we've to maintain the heartbeat and the breathing. That's it. Whether the passenger is conscious or not is the next question. If he's breathing and if the pulse rate is okay, then you're safe till you land. If any of these parameters go down, then you're in trouble. Of course we do take help from doctors or nurses who travel on board as passengers. So we immediately take a back up if we see someone not well and struggling. So, as per my experience, if I had any medical emergency on board, 80% of the time I've had a doctor or a nurse on board who can take care and handle the situation. Only a small percentage of situations I've had to handle all by myself. One such situation was a major one: A passenger had a massive heart attack and there wasn't any doctor on board. And the passenger was an asthma patient too... So it worsened the condition. Even after giving oxygen, the person can't breathe fully. So we had to divert the flight. After flying almost 2.5 hours from Dubai, we had to divert to Salalah in Oman and we landed there. The passenger recovered finally – he was in the cardiac unit for almost 30-35 days. But he survived. When I came to know later that he passenger had survived, it gave me immense happiness. The passenger had requested me when he was conscious, not to take him anywhere else, except his home. But I couldn't. I cannot take a chance to take him all the way to India that was almost 4 hours away at that time. I was the only decision maker at that time and I had to take the decision then and there. The captain also left it to me. He just said, "You decide and we do accordingly!!" So it was ultimately my call!!! So these are the things that you need to assess and take decisions. So with all these years in service, my decision-making capability has improved a lot".

4.8.3. Those stressful and frustrating days and years of being an airhostess!!

As I had mentioned during the phase one of this chapter, everything seems glamorous and sounds very interesting from outside, but there seems to be a painful side to an airhostess as well. Here's Sabarinath from Air India, with his experience of what he underwent within himself during those

tough times.

"There was a time when I was totally down because there was no scope of growth... There's no salary hike... Nobody is listening to you.. You wanted to do something but there's nobody to back you up... There was such a time in between.. During the first two years you're just a junior and you're in the learning phase. But then when you start moving up the levels in the company, suddenly there was nobody to listen to you. If you wanted to voice out something, there was nobody to listen to you. But if there's a mistake from your side, there's always someone to question and pinpoint fingers at you. It was really like that for sometime. You can never reach your authorities and even when you get to say something to them, that's it. You won't even know whether they've heard you or not. There was a situation like this. That time I was thinking that there's no point working here anymore and also there wasn't any growth in my salary in between.. Nothing was really going up and it was idle for a few years. Of course we're all working for money at the end of the day... When other airline companies started paying their employees more, we felt bad about it. It was like that for about 4-5 years and we had to fight for everything. Basically the problem was that, there was nobody to take care... Nobody to listen.. But the airline was running without any problem... We still had customers.. We were flying with full loads.. Money flow was always there. Since there was no problem with the airline as such, there was nothing to care about. So people never really cared. Also it's a public limited company, many employees are on a contract basis... They had the confidence that they won't do anything – If employees did something bad, you simply terminate the contract. That's it!!"

4.8.4. Is there professional rivalry here too?

The answer seems to be yes!! Here's a narration from Nisha of Air India to make us understand how deep is this problem of professional rivalry and how frustrating it is to deal with it and come out of it.

"Especially when we're with a subsidiary of a big airline company, these kind of professional rivalries always keep taking place. They always had this superiority complex – "Oh we're Air India people, not of Air India Express". In some places like Chennai, all the staff is of erstwhile Indian Airlines. And they always feel overburdened to handle Air India Express flights. So if it were Air India, they would have extracted your mobile number from any source and would have sent passengers the message of delay. As cabin crew, we suffered a lot because of this superiority problem and we complained to the higher levels. We've launched so many complaints that these people do not act appropriately – Sometimes as you said before, if the plane is grounded

somewhere, there is nobody to attend the aircraft. We would be sitting in the aircraft and we're helpless – We can't do anything and we can't even go out especially when there are passengers in the cabin. We need someone from outside to come and attend to the aircraft and these people simply do not come and attend. It was mainly due to the lack of communication between the parent Air India and Air India Express.

The main problem is that, the commercial wings and other higher positions are handled only by Air India. The duty manager is from Air India – not from Air India express. The junior most people who work on the ground are all outsourced from another company that gives the labor force to Air India. So, in places like Chennai and Hyderabad, the staff is mainly Indian Airlines people. But in places like Mumbai, Delhi etc. its all Air India staff. So, that difference you can always feel. Even we feel it. For instance I carry a company ID ticket and if I go to any airport like Chennai, they will not allow me on the flight sometimes, saying that the flight is full. They always keep saying this even if there are seats on the flight. This is purely professional rivalry. Because these people feel that we're not on par with Air India. Air India, even today is in a higher position – Even, salary-wise, Air India employees are paid higher compared to Indian airlines and Air India Express. So these kinds of things do keep happening. Sometimes even I had to speak very rudely to them when I saw their lethargic action. I've also complained to higher officials saying that these people are not handling us properly. Since the cabin crew is the face of the airline, every feedback – good or bad, comes to us only".

4.8.5. On continuous flying with progressive age:

Just as I had mentioned during phase one, age seems to play a vital role in the sustainability of an airhostess over time. However, here's Fabrice from Air France who narrates from his vast experience as to what's happening to his body condition as he gets older, given his hectic flying schedule, and how does he cope up with the challenge.

"… This has become one weakness for me now. Constant flying has induced a loss of memory for me over the past few years, because the body gets tired a lot. It seriously affects your physical condition because we are always on a pressure difference. So, proper exercise and adequate rest is the only solution to this problem. Nothing else can really help you out. So this pressure difference will make all your body parts enter into some kind of spasm and coming back. So, combating this is very difficult. All your inner body parts experience this kind of a problem. Especially when we climb up and down, there's a drastic change in the pressure levels. So it's very tough for the body to adapt to this every time. At times it also affects your memory – I wouldn't say that it exactly

"affects" the memory, but you tend to start forgetting things. Also the lack of proper sleep – It becomes a disorder basically. Your rest time, food habits, etc. everything gets affected and it becomes a complete disorder. That's one of the main reason they pay you very high for this job. So this impact is sometimes – or in most of the cases, irreparable.

There's no other solution than taking minimum sleep and doing exercises. You've to find your time to sleep for six hours minimum – Irrespective of if it's a disorder or not, you have to sleep for six hours minimum and also exercise. The problem is that, constant flying agitates your body parts – the veins are one of the most important body parts – The lower periphery in the leg will be very badly affected by this. You have a gravitational pull all the time. So if you keep standing for a long time, it starts affecting your legs. Because of the gravity effect, the heavier blood particles start accumulating on the lower periphery. This is one reason why many people end this career very early in their lives. It's difficult to keep flying beyond 15-20 years continuously. So that's one major drawback in this profession. If you've to keep passengers happy, you should be very fresh and conscious every time. The real test comes if there arises an emergency situation on board. If you're not fresh and conscious, then it's a huge problem".

Different people have different ways to maintain themselves fit. As mentioned above, some people do exercises; some others hit the gym regularly for a workout, etc. So the ultimate aim here is to maintain adequate physical fitness to combat the hectic and demanding flying schedules of the modern day. Here's another narrative from Fabrice of Air France to add more on maintaining physical fitness:

"We're getting older and we've to make sure that we get adequate rest in between two flights. Of course, I do lot of sports. I love swimming a lot. Even now before we met, I just came from my swimming session. So it helps to relax myself both physically and mentally. And of course, I drink less of alcohol and that is also good in a way. It doesn't make you tired much. So with respect to physical fitness, yes, I've changed quite a lot in these years. Hence, as I'm advancing in my age, I focus more on keeping myself fit".

4.9. Phase 3: Despite numerous challenges/issues, why are airhostesses still airhostesses? – *A Psychological Perspective:*

Thus by this stage, the reader would have experienced so far, various narratives and accords from all the seven airhostesses from both Air France and Air India. As a reader, you may observe that certain points/issues that are highlighted in both phases of the analysis part seem to pertain to airhostesses universally around the world, whereas certain issues seem to lie specific to an

individual or to the organization with which they are associated. In other words, issues pertaining to physical and mental fatigue, certain physical and health disorders such as lack of sleep, loss of memory, etc. maybe seen as those pertaining to all airhostesses universally. However, the amount of workload, breaks in between two flights, monetary issues, etc. are those that pertain to the organizational front. Now, having said this, what are those reasons that seem to make airhostesses continue in their job despite all these issues? Here comes the most important point of discussion and the way to move forward.

I feel here that it's worth re-visiting a quote of one of our respondents, Anne from Air France, at this stage as we move on:

"…The current situation in Air France shows no signs of recovery as of now. But still, I would vouch to say that Air France is a good organization. It has been good and I'm sure that it would be the same in the future too. Maybe these kinds of situations come and go in every organization. But we've to be prepared to face it. I don't think that quitting the job is a good solution (except if you have lot of money with you). So… It's like this!! I'm happy with what I am right now, and I shall take the future as it comes. But I'm sure things will be better in future!!"

It sounded interesting for me when I heard this from her that although they face so many issues, they still feel proud to work with their respective organization. From this narrative, I have a feeling that one of the major reasons could be that, *over the years airhostesses are psychologically attached so much to flying and also to their respective organization*. The causes for this deep psychological attachment could be plenty, but at this stage, I wanted to understand in depth, the psychology behind such an important statement from Anne. I take the above statement as very important to move forward because, over the course of these numerous interviews that I had done with the airhostesses, I have a strong feeling that more or less all the respondents had the same intent in them that in some way or the other they felt proud to be associated with Air France/Air India. Before we go into the discussion on the psychology behind being attached to flying, I would like to recall a few instances that we had encountered during the two previous phases of analysis.

Now, if we trace back to the initial parts in both phases 1 & 2 of the analysis, we have seen and discussed how happy they felt when people in parties, bars and even in their own families come and curiously ask them questions about their job and in some cases airhostesses had explained that they are seen in a very high level amongst the society because of this job in hand.

Also, since airhostesses deal with a very important aspect called "safety" during the flight they've to perform some "life-saving" duties towards passengers if the need arises. During the phase 2 of the analysis, I had mentioned the significance of handling "medical emergencies" on board wherein;

airhostesses substantiated the point with their experiences. For instance, I would again like to re-visit one narrative of Poornima from Air India, where she has shared how she felt after handling a big medical emergency situation during one of her flights:

"… Only a few particular medical problems occur on the flight. Not all kinds of diseases. We call it as "Aviation sickness". So our mind is prepared for all these things. So with experience of seeing so many people like this in your career, it's easier to identify and attend to that particular person. Once when there was a critical medical emergency, and after handling it successfully, the captain of the flight appreciated us a lot and we all felt really good. The captain went on to say "I never realized that this many things happen in the cabin and when I sit in the cockpit, I never come to know all this. Whenever you guys come and brief me, I never took it that seriously till now. But when I saw it personally, I couldn't stop appreciating you guys.. You're like doctors on board!!" So these are some small things that make you happy in your job. It's not that somebody is going to give you a black-and-white certificate saying, I'm the best. It's like, you get a feedback on almost every flight, or an appreciation occasionally from your passengers or crew or from the captain, which will make you feel good and makes you feel that "Okay!! I'm in the right place!!"

From this episode, the reader can infer that if the medical emergency mission is successful, the airhostess derives an immense amount of happiness and subsequently an immense satisfaction that perhaps maybe unmatched. Also, when it is coupled with a word or two of appreciation from the captain of the flight or from any other higher authority, the amount of satisfaction seems to rise exponentially.

With these couple of key narratives and keeping in mind the four main stages of my analysis so far, somewhere down the line I started to feel that there were numerous elements emerging from the interview that for a moment, appear to be just small and unimportant but these so-called "small elements" might have a major role to play in explaining job satisfaction on the long run. I was concerned and at this stage, wanted to ponder on these elements a bit more. These small elements, I said to myself are more personal, but have something deeper within them that can perhaps paint a very different picture to continuous job satisfaction. It was at this point that I wanted to take a different direction in my research journey. I wanted to explore this discussion a psychological perspective of these small and personal elements of the narratives given by the airhostesses. While I wanted to go deeper psychologically, I was afraid of a potential limitation - At this stage I felt that my knowledge in psychology is insufficient, and for this particular moment, to make things look a bit simpler, I present my insights with my (somehow awkward) vocabulary. However this important psychological side of my study will be enhanced and gradually deepen in the following chapters.

To get an enhanced picture, I'm going to split the discussion that follows, into four different sections in order to arrive at a possible psychological explanation to the issue of continuous job satisfaction. Here, I would like to introduce the reader to three important terms that I intend to use in the following description: *"Original Image"*, *"Experience"* and *"Sustainability of the original image"*. I coin these three terminologies so as to try and distinguish between the three psychological stages that an airhostess passes through during the course of his/her career. Accordingly, I begin with what I mean by "Original Image", moving on to "Experience", then moving on further to see how the original image and the experience matches, as described in the section "Sustainability of the original image".

Brief descriptions to these three sections are given below for the benefit of the reader.

4.9.1. The Original "Image":

This section deals with the initial perception that the people seem to be having in their minds before entering into being an airhostess. In this section I would share my views and understanding on how an "image" is being built in the minds of the airhostesses during their younger days and subsequently, how strong can that image be in the mind of an airhostess!

"Since my school was situated very close to the airport at Calicut, I used to see aircrafts landing and taking off. I'm talking about those days in the 1990's.. In those days as you know, air travel was a luxury and there weren't many flights as it is today.. So whenever I see aircrafts moving at the airport, (those days there were hardly 3-4 flights per day) I used to think that some day I should also fly like this!!" quoted Poornima from Air India with regards to her early days.

We are now in the process of seeing how this so-called "Image" is built in the minds of the little ones! This above narrative might be familiar to the reader, however, if we look at it in a psychological perspective, we can see something interesting here – The way in which the initial "image" is being formed in the childhood days. From my basic day-to-day observation, I personally have an opinion that the image that a child perceives is way too stronger than those perceived by an adult. Of course, it needs to be backed up with proper research. While continuing this exercise, I have a feeling that we can get some kind of a confirmation for the above statement too, in due course!

Let's look at more instances as to how this image develops further:

"... It's not really a fantasy part about the airhostess that attracted me to this job, but it's the service part – And I could see that people are very happy over here – I do not know whatever is

their personal things and basic things might be, but they're very happy. The way, in which they introduce themselves, wish others, etc. gives lot of happiness and cheer to others. All your personal problems and other worries are kept aside once you're into this environment." Quoted Anoop!

This can again be an example of how the image is built around this job by children and this is what I refer to as the *"Image"*. As we've seen in the previous sections and chapters, this image may be built through various sources, out of which we have spoken about one in this section so far. However, other important sources through which the initial image is possible to be built, comes by re-visiting the narrative of Anne from Air France. She says,

"My father was a purser and my mother was also a purser with Air France, as early as in the 1970's. However, my mother stopped working when my sister and myself were very young. My father passed away when I was eleven years old. He was 45 by then. Also, my uncle was a pilot with Air France for a long time. My grandfather was into aircraft building. He worked with Airbus for a number of years (I don't remember how many years). So I had the influence in my family. It was a really strong influence!! My father – He never even used to talk about flights and his experiences at home. He literally didn't give me any idea of flying. There were two reasons for it – One is that he was too bored with the job and he was away from all of us for almost 3 weeks, every time he took a flight. So that hurt him a lot. Secondly, he didn't have that thought of influencing his children into what he was interested in. I would say that it's a noble thought that any father can have. But after my father had passed away, my mother got the same job as my father in Air France and she liked the job very well. My mother used to share lot of her experiences while taking flights. I was interested to listen to all of them, but somehow I didn't want to take it up as my career at that point of time."

Again, this narrative has already been spoken about during Phase 1, however, in the psychological perspective it may appear to be interesting to look here, with respect to the various sources through which the image can possibly be built - Another possible source is through the stories that we listen during childhood.

Hence from this section I was able to hold on to a feeling that it all starts with building an "Image" in the young minds and this so-called image can be possibly built through various sources. Through this section, I also feel that this would be one good way to start the explanation of continuous job satisfaction through the lens of the psychological perspective. We shall carry forward this explanation into the next two stages and try to arrive at a reasonable answer.

4.9.2. The "Experience" in comparison with the "Image":

Here, the term *"Reality"* literally means *"The practical ground situation"*. In this section, we try to see the various kinds of situations that airhostesses face on the ground – Right from day one till today. Does the situation on ground remains constant, or it keeps changing? Let's have a deeper look.

We shall begin with the question, how do airhostesses feel when they're exposed to the reality for the first time in their life. Here's Nisha from Air India narrating her experience regarding her first few moments of taking charge as an airhostess officially:

"The first few minutes of me being in a flight as an airhostess... In fact, I do not know and remember what exactly happened within me at that time. It was like a dream – a dream coming true for me. So, I was not in my senses actually... Everything just kept happening around me and I was trying to just soak into the situation. It was as if I was floating in the atmosphere! Initially, as every other person on the job for his or her first time, I was not confident – My hands were trembling when I started to handle the equipment on board. Then gradually as I started doing 3-4 flights I became comfortable".

Here, Nisha talks about her first-hand experience of being an airhostess. We can of course see the excitement part of it, but more than that, it's interesting to see how she reacted when she underwent the "Experience" – Walking through an aircraft aisle, handling on-board equipment, glasses, trays, trolleys, etc. Thus, by re-visiting this narrative for a few times, I'm now framing an opinion that the nervousness, tension, etc. that come up initially is because of the interaction between the "Image" that the airhostesses have in their mind and the "Experience" that they see in front of them at that moment!

Now let's move on and look into a few other situations that might be good enough to sense the "Experience" on ground.

When I continued asking Nisha as to how did her life change after becoming what she wanted to become in her life? Here is Nisha's reply for the question.

"Yes.. Life changes a lot when you're an airhostess.. First, You've to be ready to work at any time of the day or night – depending on the schedules of the flight – It could be a day flight or a night flight – sometimes it could be both – so it depends on the schedule of the flight and the schedule that you've got in hand. And since you have so many different destinations you have a good variety in this job – it's not like a normal typical 9 to 5 job wherein you always sit and do the same thing. Here, even though you do the same service every time, your customers, your passengers and destinations keep changing – So every day is a new day for you. As far as I'm concerned, I don't think anybody would get bored with such a job. If you're in a 9-5 job, you sometimes might start

feeling that you're doing the same thing continuously every day".

Here we get to see one face of the "Experience" on ground – Variety in terms of flight schedules, destinations, passengers, colleagues, etc. It's very interesting to note here that the airhostesses are welcoming this "Experience" during their initial days with a lot of happiness.

Thus, To extend the explanation of continuous job satisfaction that I started above, I opine here that the airhostesses are seeing this "Experience" during the initial days of their career to be completely in sink with the "Original Image" that they have perceived for all these years before becoming an airhostess and because of this sink, the airhostesses seem to be satisfied.

But there is a deeper question here: Does this "Experience" that airhostesses undergo, remains a constant or does it change? Let's re-visit the narrative of Diandra from Air France:

"The situation gradually started to change as days progressed. After two years I was transferred to the international flights. At that time, I was very happy and excited about that. But gradually, I started feeling that things are starting to be more routine... But it was still very exciting.. But after five years, I made a break and I started to have interest in cooking. So I stopped flying for about six months and I did a cooking training at a school. So I wanted to do something creative. The main thing about this job is that, it's more like a military. It's not exactly military but at some point, you really don't have the liberty or freedom to do something creative. It's a huge company and everything is very settled. Of late, there are no new recruitments, there are no salary increases, they're asking us to work more, and also not so good working conditions nowadays, they're trying to catch the budget for people in the plane, etc. So we've to work more and the working conditions are getting harder. But of late, over the period of the last one-year, Air France is starting to give some power to employees with respect to our life and also with our job. This is relatively new. I somehow feel, giving some power and flexibility to employees on the other side of all these problems, is a way to control the anger of employees. But it's good. Now we have some options of flexibility, that is, we can exchange a flight with someone else. This is something good. But the most frustrating part of the job in Air France is that, if there's a solution that would make everyone happy, they wouldn't do it. And also there's a lack of positive attitude amongst the staff. But now, of late, they've started to work on it, maybe a year ago. Many other airline companies around the world have a lot of freedom of this kind. There's a computer system that enables you to choose where you want to go.. For instance, I want to work on a Sunday and to go on a long flight, etc. and the computer system enables you to do that. This kind of a system is present in many airline companies across the world. So what Air France is trying to give us for the past one-year or so, other Airline companies like Delta Airlines have this same system for the past 30 years. Also in Air

France, there's a strong political will and influence. This is also one of the main things that give lot of frustration to the staff in the job. It's killing the enthusiasm of people little by little."

This might perhaps be a long narrative from her, but it can be seen from above as to how the experience changes over time – Especially in these two organizations, Air France/Air India, the reality seems to have gone from good to bad to worse. Now, what happens to the argument on continuous job satisfaction? How do we explain it, given that the practical ground situation turns bad?

Now, let's go into the third section and from that, we shall try and extend the explanation on continuous job satisfaction even more.

4.9.3: The "Sustainability of the positive Image" with respect to the "Changing Experience":

Here, this phrase signifies the sustainability of the "Image" with respect to the changing "Experience". In this section, I'm going to narrate an interesting perspective of linking the "Original image" with the changing "Experience" ground. In simpler terms, this section could possibly complete one probable answer to the question on continuous job satisfaction, which I was trying to explain during the two previous sub-sections.

4.9.3.1 One possible way of explaining the phenomenon of "Continuous Job Satisfaction" – The Psychological perspective:

To take Diandra's narrative that we visited in the previous section forward, I would like to extend the explanation on continuous job satisfaction. Till the previous two sub-sections on "Original Image" and "Experience", I had explained that the airhostesses have an initial (mostly positive) "Image" portrayed in their mind during the childhood days, and when they come on board as an airhostess, they seem to think within themselves that they're seeing the reality around them, and once they see the professional and the glamorous part of it during the initial days, they somehow see a match between the "Original Image" in their mind and the "Experience" that they undergo in reality. This is why perhaps they are very happy at this stage and feel as if they're on top of the world! However, as we saw above, this so-called "Experience" unfortunately seems to have the potential of changing rather upside down over the passage of time. *Now when these airhostesses see the dark side of the "Experience" before them, there seems to be a sudden mismatch between the perceived positive and "Original" image and this "New face of Experience" and subsequently, they seem to be unable to digest what is going on around them, thus leading them to unhappiness and eventually they feel that they aren't satisfied with their job anymore.*

At this point, a question may arise: *If this is the case, then how do we explain the narrative that says "We are proud to associate ourselves with Air France/Air India"?*

For this question, my initial response at this stage would be that, the "Original Image" that is perceived during the childhood days about flying, aircrafts, parents' experiences, etc. seems to be prevailing so strongly in the minds of the airhostesses that, although they do face lot of challenges practically, they still like to move on with it and attach themselves to flying so much. Of course, this needs to be backed up further, and this triggers the further steps that I take from here.

4.10. Conclusion and the way forward:

Thus the reader would have been able to observe that, we had three phases of analyses of the Life-Cycle interviews that were done with seven respondents, in three sessions with each. In these various sessions of interviews, there emerges a picture that all airhostesses have had a "special" experience or a relationship with flying/planes/travelling during their early childhood and youth and this might serve as a very important point to commence the study on job satisfaction, that usually in many cases, is not taken into consideration in theories about motivation, or job satisfaction. To continue further, in the due course of the interviews and also the analysis, several striking points, observations, narratives have emerged, which had prompted me to take a different route in trying to explain the phenomenon of continuous job satisfaction – The psychological perspective. Since, I do not have a deeper background into this domain of psychology, for the moment in this chapter, I was limiting myself to making personal observations and comments while explaining the psychological perspective through the different narratives. Moving on, since these personal observations and comments that I had made earlier during this chapter, started to make much more sense to me as time went by, I decided to channelize my exploration in this direction and at this point in time, I felt that there's a dire need to go back to the literature and ponder over if there exists any psychological explanations and dimensions to job satisfaction.

What kind of approach did I take to analyze further literature? What is that I found new from the literature again? How do I link the newly found literature to the actual experiences of the airhostesses? The answers lie in the next chapter!

Chapter 5 – Tracing back to the theory again – *The role of "Psychological Contract"*

5.1. Introduction:

As highlighted in the previous chapter in detail, the explanation of job satisfaction seemed to have a much deeper context than I anticipated during the beginning of this research. Towards the end of the previous chapter, I had started to view the entire idea of continuous job satisfaction in the psychological perspective, wherein I had talked about the "Original Image" perceived by the airhostesses, the subsequent "Experience" that they encounter when they are actually in the job and the "Sustainability of the positive Image" wherein their "Original Image" and their practical "Experience" meet. As I had mentioned before already, I do not have much of a background in psychological research and at this point in time, I thought that it would be wise enough if I looked into some literature on organizational psychology, so as to move forward with the intent of explaining continuous job satisfaction in the psychological perspective. With this intent, thus I started to trace back into the literature.

Normally, when I used the key phrase "job satisfaction" to extract the content of literature from the existing theory, I got to see innumerable works done by innumerable researchers pertaining to measuring satisfaction at that particular point in time, most probably with a numerical index or a value assigned to it. However, what I feel is that, so far during the research of job satisfaction we are yet to look at a different dimension to it – How does satisfaction originates in an individual, how and why does it grow/decrease over a considerable time frame and how does it look during the present day and how would it probably shape up during the future course of an individual's career, till the end. At this point, I have a feeling that even if I can shed a few lights on this subject, this might probably add a much deeper understanding on the satisfaction part of an individual with his/her job, and this is what I observed during my entire exercise of this research so far. After my initial skimming of a few available literature works on "Psychological Contract", I felt that this idea could well augment to the explanation of the phenomenon of continuous job satisfaction – In a way that, this idea of "Psychological Contract" specifically talks about beliefs and trust that an employee has with his/her organization and perhaps this would throw open a new dimension to explain the idea of continuous job satisfaction. In other words, this chapter talks about a very interesting idea that might throw light upon some important dimensions like the role of trust, expectations and beliefs that airhostesses might be having towards their respective airline organization and vice versa too. Also a special focus would be given in this chapter, about the expectations that might exist

from the organization's perspective towards the airhostesses and to further make an analysis if there exists a consensus between the expectations from both the sides. From the psychological perspective, I feel that this exercise would be able to give a much deeper reflection into continuous job satisfaction.

But apart from all this, before diving into the exploration of further literature, taking cue from the concluding remarks of the previous chapter, I found something interesting to add! I shall traverse in a step-by-step manner so that the reader would be able to understand the flow of my procedure. As a first step, taking cue from the conclusion of the previous chapter, I explain something important briefly in the following sub-section.

5.1.1. Introducing the idea of "Mutual Expectations":

When I spoke about "Sustainability of the Positive Image" during the last chapter, I had opined that whenever the "Original Image" of the airhostesses' matches with the "Experience" that they face during their work, they seemed to be very happy about it. However, when the "Experience" turns adverse over time (due to various reasons explained), many a time, this "New Experience" doesn't seem to match with the "Original Image". This might be one reason why airhostesses tend to become frustrated and dissatisfied. I also mentioned during the course of that discussion that this "Reality" doesn't seem to be a constant, but it keeps changing over time.

At this moment, I wanted to explore on this "Mismatch" between the "Original Image" and the "Experience" on many occasions. I asked within myself as to why is this mismatch happening? Is there a way that I can capture and explain this phenomenon of "Mismatch" in a better way? Here at this juncture, I introduce the term called "Expectation" for the first time - The reason being, from all the above mentioned explanations and anecdotes from my respondents, it gives me a clue that maybe this so-called "dream" and subsequently the "Positive Image" that airhostesses have developed within themselves right from the beginning, leads them to "expect" something out of what they do when they're actually in the hot seat. And in turn, their colleagues and also the organization as a whole might also have certain expectations from them. This collectively led me to a slightly different direction of thought process that this "Expectation" should at some point be "Mutual". Hence, this section introduces the reader to this interesting dimension of "Mutual Expectations" and explores its significance in evaluating continuous job satisfaction.

At this point of pursuing a direction towards "Mutual Expectations", I felt that I'm missing something very important. But before I dwell into that deeper, I wanted to understand the theoretical background behind this direction. How do I find out if there really exists something on

the similar lines of my modified research direction in the existing literature? I decided to use different key words, and here's what I arrived at. Although this exploration might not be the end of the long travel, however I feel that this would pave a possible way en-route proving the much needed clarity.

5.2. The concept of "Psychological Contract" – An Overview:

With the basic idea of "Mutual Expectations", I began my pursuit of exploration into the theory again. I also remembered at this point that during the interviewing processes with the airhostesses, I had begun to see a pattern of responses that were emerging, and as explained in detail in various contexts and situations before, I had found that all the airhostesses whom I had touch based, irrespective of whether they're happy or frustrated in their job over different periods of time, continue to stick to their job and felt proud of it. To add more to this point, I also observed that airhostesses, although they face innumerable challenges every passing day, they still continue to do what best they could do to the organization. It is to be noted here importantly that most of the challenges that airhostesses claim to face were mostly pertaining to the organizational aspect and not to their own self. Of course, there is by and large, a claim from the airhostesses that they are affected personally by all these organizational issues that are going on currently. However, the interesting part of the mystery is to me that, they do not want to give up! More interestingly, they seem to downplay most parts of the challenges and continue with their job despite the amount of fatigue they have in them. I was surprised as to how can they do this. I felt at this stage that there is some missing link in the thread! However, with the basic idea of whatever I know about "Mutual Expectations" so far, it led me in an interesting direction to find an ample relevance with whatever I've been talking about till now with what is perhaps researched heavily too in the organizational context called "Psychological Contract". A short and a brief overview of the term "Psychological contract" and its relevance with the context in hand are discussed below.

According to Rousseau, (1990), "Psychological contract" is a term that reflects an individual's beliefs with regards to reciprocal obligations… An individual believes that he/she owes the employer certain contributions (maybe in the form of hard work, loyalty and sacrifice) in return to certain inducements (maybe in the form of adequate pay, job security, etc.). Robinson and Rousseau (1994) and Rousseau (1990) further added to this explanation by saying that psychological contract is subjective, promissory and reciprocal in nature. It was interesting to find many contemporary researchers stressing that this idea of "Psychological Contract" is the one that majorly governs the employer-employee relationship by serveing as a powerful determinant of employee behavior in

organizations (For example, Hui et al., 2004; Millward & Hopkins, 1998; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Rousseau, 1989 and Rosseau, 1990, Lu, Capezio, Restubog, Garcia & Wang, 2016).

5.2.1. A major turnaround point in my research journey!

It is to be recollected at this stage by the reader that, in my first exercise of exploring available literature (Chapter 3), I had come across numerous instances wherein the idea of job satisfaction was viewed in a static form. However, I had an important concern arising in my mind that, the explanation of job satisfaction might not be complete by exploring just the momentous and the static nature of it, but with further structured research it should be viewed from the dimension of "continuity". Now when I again took to the field, I came across different narratives that might well be able to explain the continuity factor of job satisfaction in different possible ways. Of course, I had a small bit of clarity towards the end of the previous chapter that it might make sense for me to look into the continuity factor through the lens of a psychological perspective. But here was a major obstacle - Since I have very little knowledge and understanding about organizational psychology, it was difficult for me to interpret my findings from the interviews in the psychological perspective. Trying to overcome this limitation, I initially started with an explanation based on my personal observations from my interviews, (banking on my limited knowledge of organizational psychology) in the previous chapter. But to take this personal explanation structurally forward, I was confused as to which direction to take. However, when I came across this idea called the "Psychological Contract", that explains the expectations, beliefs, reciprocal obligations, etc. between the employer and the employee in an organization, I had a feeling that these ideas were not spoken about in the previous literature on job satisfaction and it sounded an entirely new dimension to me. At this point I said to myself that perhaps by exploring through this dimension, I could make out some sense of connection between the "Life-Cycle" interviews that I had done and the continuity factor that I am trying to explore with respect to the satisfaction part. Hence, this exploration of "Psychological Contract" I felt, is a big turnaround step in the exploration of the continuity factor of job satisfaction amongst airhostesses and this moment marked a huge change in the way I reflected upon continuous job satisfaction.

5.2.2. The "Transactional" and "Relational" dimensions of Psychological Contract:

Adding further, the theory of Psychological Contract seemed to be having two distinctive forms in terms of employee relations namely the "Transactional" and the "Relational" Psychological Contracts (Restubog et al., 2008; Zagenczyk et al., 2014 and Zhao et al., 2007). The key differences

between the two types of psychological contracts include the duration of the employment arrangement (short-term *vs*. open-ended), degree of specificity (highly *vs*. loosely specified), exchange of resources (tangible *vs*. intangible), and performance-reward contingencies (highly contingent *vs*. low or non-contingent) according to Rousseau, (1990). A transactional psychological contract is typically narrow-focused and has a purely economic, monetary and materialistic emphasis (Millward & Hopkins, 1998; Raja et al., 2004). In other words, employees oriented towards transactional psychological contracts perceive their organization primarily as a source of income (monetary) and a place to work (Millward & Hopkins, 1998). Their contributions are also limited, because of their low levels of attachment towards their organization. As such, employees with a transactional-oriented psychological contract are more likely to quit their jobs because they tend to use their current position as a stepping-stone to gain better opportunities (Raja et al., 2004; Rousseau, 1990). Recently, psychological contract scholars have begun to pay attention to explain the relationship between the two types of psychological contracts and their corresponding work outcomes. For instance, Raja et al., (2004) propagated that relational psychological contract was negatively associated with an employee's turnover intentions and is positively related with job satisfaction and affective commitment. Conversely, transactional psychological contracts were positively related to turnover intentions and negatively associated with job satisfaction and affective commitment. Zagenczyk et al., (2014) found out that transactional psychological contracts were positively related to workplace deviance, whereas relational psychological contracts were positively associated with organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) and negatively related to workplace deviance. Collectively, these studies suggest that the different types of psychological contracts elicit different work reactions (Lu, Capezio, Restubog, Garcia & Wang, 2016).

Summarizing the above points in a nutshell, my understanding about the "Transactional" Psychological contract is that, it is more pertaining to a business-like relationship between the employer and the employee, in other words, the relationship is more commercial in terms of expectation of good performance in exchange with rewards for it. Putting it further simply, employees view their organization as just a source of income and other benefits attached to it. However, the "Relational" Psychological contract pertains more towards the emotional relationship that employees tend to possess towards their organizations, more than just the monetary and the opportunistic relationship. In other words, as per the literature, employees who possess this "Relational" psychological contract, tend to stay longer with the organization, strive towards the betterment of their organization more than the betterment of their personal careers and also tend to stand by the organization in case of any adverse situations.

Now having discussed the definition of Psychological contract and it's two dimensions – Transactional and Relational, I started to compare this basic idea from the literature to the explanations that I have proposed in the previous chapter. With the interactions I have had with airhostesses till now, I get a feeling at this juncture that these airhostesses tend to stick to their job despite the various challenges because of the fact that the "Relational" component of the "Psychological contract" with their respective organizations is extremely on the higher side. This is perhaps one reason why we were able to observe from the words of airhostesses that they feel extremely proud to be a part of Air France/Air India although faced with a dearth of problems. Hence at this point, I had a strong intuition in my mind that it would perhaps make sense to explore the "Relational" component of Psychological contract in a bit more detail, so as to understand the context in a much more deeper sense. I wanted to follow this "intuitive lead" and see where this is going to lead me to, and if it is also relevant to my research.

5.3. Relational Psychological Contract:

Relational psychological contracts, according to Hui et al., (2004) and Millward & Hopkins, (1998) are based on a long-term employment relationship that is grounded in socio-emotional and relational exchanges. The non-monetary nature that is inherent and pertaining to the relational psychological contract mainly focuses on employee loyalty, support, trust, job security, coupled with career growth and development (Hui et al., 2004 & Rousseau, 1990). Thus, the core idea behind the relational psychological contract is that, employees who are bound by this phenomenon highly value their relationship with their organization and are also interested in working for a long tenure with the organization (Chang et al., 2013). Further research undertaken by Millward & Hopkins (1998) revealed that employees bound by the relational psychological contract tend to put in extra hours of working, even without pay. Also, they're more likely to persevere and are less likely to quit the organization (Raja et al., 2004; Lu, Capezio, Restubog, Garcia & Wang, 2016).

5.3.1. *Relational Psychological Contract and Organizational Identification:*

The existing literature on the relational psychological contracts specify at a certain point that this phenomenon may not only be able to regulate the in-role and extra-role performance in a direct manner (as seen in the previous section) but also indirectly through various other mechanisms – However, the extent to which relational psychological contracts "indirectly" influence the in-role and extra-role performance is not well understood and documented yet (Hui et al., 2004; Lu, Capezio, Restubog, Garcia & Wang, 2016). One such indirect mechanism may perhaps be

"Organizational Identification" – Wherein employees tend to think beyond their own self and extend their ideologies to include their organization into it. In other words, employees are said to identify themselves with their organization when they completely act according to the interests of the organization only, rather than acting according to their individual interests (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). To expand this further, Rousseau, (1995) came out with a finding that individuals with relational psychological contracts are likely to identify themselves with their organization for two reasons – The first reason is that, having a relational psychological contract with the organization implies that the organization has met the employee's expectations in terms of providing socio-emotional rewards by engendering trust, loyalty, providing support and fostering fairness along with economic and monetary rewards. Hence, in a due exchange for such benefits, employees tend to invest their full time into the welfare and the success of the organization. Hence, the idea of "Mutual Expectations" that I spoke about in the last chapter comes handy here, to relate to our context. The second reason being that, relational psychological contracts create a need for employees to foster a longer-term relationship with the organization that has important implications for identification.

It is also found that when employees identify themselves with their organization, their self-interests and organizational interests become enmeshed in such a way that organizational accomplishments become personal accomplishments. Also because of the high level of identification, there is an enhancement of the genuine concern for the success and the overall effectiveness of the organization (Dutton et al., 1994). It's also found that these employees with greater levels of organizational identification are less restricted in the definition of their job roles and engage in activities that benefit the organization (Christ et al., 2003; Van der Vegt et al., 2003; Lu, Capezio, Restubog, Garcia & Wang, 2016). Is this perhaps the reason why airhostesses tend to continue working with their respective organizations (in this specific context, Air France & Air India) irrespective of various challenges that they face every passing day? Let's find out!

5.4. Applying the concept of "Relational Psychological Contract" specific to airhostesses:

From the interview data and it's inferences derived so far, I had proposed the idea that employees have a "original positive image" of their job and their organization even before they actually rein the responsibility, and they try and see if this perceived image confronts with their experience when they actually dawn the responsibility. If this confrontation is positive, it can be inferred that the employees are happy and satisfied. If it's vice versa, it implies that employees have a problem. Now I shall try and relate this proposition with the relational psychological contract to our context of

airhostesses.

At this point in time, I have another proposal from my side - It can be seen from our day-to-day life that whenever there is an image portrayed in our mind about something, we naturally tend to associate lot of things around that image. One of those things might perhaps be "Expectations". This expectation may be the byproduct of curiosity that arises in our minds whenever we think something interesting. But, this expectation doesn't seem to stop with just an individual – It might be there amidst everyone. Hence, it might be easy for us to infer with this proposition that when an employee steps into the organization for the first time, there would perhaps be expectations from both the employee towards the employer and also the employer towards the employee. Thus we see that the "Expectation" is a "Mutual" phenomenon.

Whereas this explanation might make things a bit clearer, it can be misleading too. Hence I wish to add something more to this: An important question of course might be from where does this so-called "image" arise. In the literature of the Psychological contract, my guess would be that this "image" is supposed to come mainly from the institutions; that is, it might not be an individually formed image. The mutual expectations come from questions on various things such as legitimacy, of perceived dignity, of imitations of other settings, of various situations, etc. Thus, this "Contract" between the employer and employee is indeed psychological, in that it is unwritten and it has numerous effects on motivation, employee behavior, willingness of an employee to participate actively with the organization, and so on. But it is not psychological in terms of individual desires, traumas, neurosis, fatigue, etc.

Perhaps, we can combine these propositions of mine together and apply the idea of "Psychological Contract" to try and explain the phenomenon of continuous job satisfaction. In the following sub-section I put forth further interesting points on this "Mutual Expectation" and enhance it's applicability with the idea of Relational Psychological contract and in turn try to give a possible explanation for continuous job satisfaction.

5.4.1. Extending the argument on Mutual Expectations to the context in hand – Am I missing something still?

During the discussion at Chapter 5, I had tried to portray a picture to the reader regarding the process by which the dream of flying is created within a person even during early childhood days, how this dream is subsequently nurtured through various ways and means when the person transforms into a youth and by the time this person steps into the shoes of an airhostess, that

"Original image" is the strongest at this point. I had also illustrated various aspects of expectations airhostesses seem to possess, with quotes during the second phase of the life cycle interview analysis.

At this point, I would like to elaborate a little bit on something that I felt I'm missing here. Of course, till now, we've heard and analyzed in depth, the various views and expectations from the airhostesses' perspective, however we've never heard what the airline organizations Air France and Air India had to say on this. I felt that, only by knowing both the perspectives we shall be able to extend the explanation of "Mutual Expectations" further. Hence, I decided to go back to the field and collect some more data. The next sub-section would give a description on how did I go about in doing it.

5.4.2. Interviews one more time - Meeting two important people:

At this point, I had the unique opportunity to talk to two important people – One of them being a prominent member of the Human Resources panel of Air India and the other being a former Human Resources Director in charge of pilots and airhostesses in Air France. It was more of an informal conversation with these two people but I felt that it was very important for the conversations to be this way and I also strongly feel that this would be an intended asset. Moreover, I kept the conversations this way because I wanted to avoid a too formal and prescribed discourse and to create the chance of having cues pertaining to more personal opinions, experiences and deeper convictions. In the same way, I also wish to underline the fact that these people are the exact ones who could add something extremely relevant at this point of your research. Also, I needed to view the perspectives of the managerial sides in both the organizations - Especially the Human Resources (HR) domain to better understand how they take into account, the mutual expectations, and above all, if the expectations are found to be mutual, this would be a significant portion that needs to be added to my data collection.

What are the specific and rooted expectations of the airline organizations from its airhostesses? How does the organization want an airhostess to shape up herself so as to live up to its expectations? Let's look into a detailed accord from the former director – Human Resources from Air France. Here's what she had to say! Following is the complete quote from the former HR director of Air France:

"With respect to the current situation in Air France, as far as the organizational perspective is concerned, as a director of HR for airhostesses, I would view this in the following ways:

1. *Firstly it's more to do with coping up of the demands of the modern day airline sector across the world – The competition in the market is enormous with the advent and domination of Gulf and Asian air carriers, we're fast losing our market share in many sectors around the world. In fact from my understanding, Air France was forced to go in for buying new aircrafts like the A-380 and now recently the B-787 just to ensure that the company survives the competition and to stay afloat! There was a time in the middle of the year 2009 when there were absolutely no funds to run the airline and it was at the verge to be shut down but then the state pumped in money and saved us! So, the employees (here airhostesses) who were working with Air France at that time would know the pinch and they would realize and appreciate what we are today! As a company we've come a long way since then and we've ensured that we safeguard our own employees in whatever way possible, although people may complain that they feel fatigued, etc. Yes.. We weren't able to recruit newer and younger people owing to the huge expense associated with the process – The Company wasn't in a position to pay! So, yes... This was a problem and this continues to be a problem today also.*

2. *Another reason for the recruitment freeze is partly because of the French labor law. As it might be a known fact that the labor laws in France are very strong and according to those laws, Air France finds itself in a tricky situation as compared to other Asian and Gulf airline companies, because those companies aren't bound by this strict a law! It's very difficult to give a permanent job contract (CDI) nowadays and that's why you can even see lot of young French people opting to work with those airline companies. It's because of the simple reason that it's much easier to hire and fire people in those companies more than here. If we recruit someone today, we need to calculate the expenditure that the company would incur starting from his inception till his pension benefits after he retires. It turns out to be extremely expensive and Air France doesn't terminate its employees just like that. We treat our employees as a family, once they're inside!*

3. *However to combat this problem mentioned above, we at Air France have a policy of posting people who work at the office/ground as airhostesses – For instance, if there might be some redundant positions on the ground due to various technological advancements, instead of firing the associated people, we give them an option to fly as an airhostess in our flights. So there would be an influx of people who become airhostesses, but yes.. The number is very less.*

4. *Another major problem that I personally see especially for people who fly constantly (both pilots and airhostesses) is that, they are away from their families continuously for longer time periods and because of that they tend to feel lonely and over a period of time they feel depressed and psychologically sick. To combat this, Air France has dedicated counseling sessions for these people and we appoint a committee to look into it if any pilot or airhostess reports sick for a longer time period.*

5. *Also, the society has it's share of problems too – Now you can see so many people getting divorced, having lot of different personal problems in their lives.. These things also contribute to their mental stress and fatigue. So even if the company is doing good, these kinds of problems would ruin their happiness. Perhaps this is one dark area wherein I think Air France should work on and check to see if something can be done to help them come out of their problems in a way.*

6. *Finally, as I had mentioned in the beginning about the intense competition in the market, every employee including airhostesses are expected to put in that extra mile and be ready for facing challenges. I think, this is how every company in the world is – It's all changing every time. You really cannot keep saying that "Oh, in 1995 I had a 48-hour break in between two subsequent flights and today I have very less time".. I feel that this argument doesn't fit to the present situation. We all have to realize that if we do not put in extra effort today, the company would be doomed in no time!! So, when I talk about the expectation from the company towards the airhostesses, all I can say from the HR perspective is that, their jobs are safe, but they should be ready to put in more work according to the demand of the current situation!*

From the above narrative, it's seemingly very clear that in the current day, the organization's top management expects its employees to be on their toes and should be willing to go that extra mile.

Before going on to make an analysis out of it, let's now shift focus towards our Indian counterpart and also see what they've got to say on this. Following is a quick response given by the top management person from Air India and here's what he got to tell us!

"Yes. I do endorse the view that airhostesses undergo a slew of issues while at work. There are numerous problems that are to be addressed. However, I shall talk about mainly the remedial measures taken or planned by us to make the life of airhostesses easier. Recently from the part of our management in Air India, we've come up with this idea and of late we're taking it up a bit more

seriously. As part of our employee-centric measures and to improve the work-life balance, at main destination stations within India we're currently in the process of looking out for a common place to get all employees together under one roof so as to relax, do some exercises, gym, etc. Apart from this, we're also planning to start some counseling sessions, especially for airhostesses and pilots, for the main reason that they're away from their families most of the time and they might encounter loneliness and allied problems. Of course we have an in-house counseling system in place and a dedicated Air India staff quarters at Delhi and a few other metro cities, we're planning to open a few more in other cities too. Also since they're constantly exposed to a pressure difference most of the time, they're bound to get physical emotional problems too. But it's yet to take shape. With respect to our subsidiary Air India Express, presently we have some problems with the location of the management – Some of them are in New Delhi and the rest are in other major locations like Mumbai, Chennai, etc. We have our main admin part at Mumbai and the operating parts are in different stations. So currently it's all spread in different areas. We're meticulously trying to accumulate everything under one roof, and once this is successfully implemented, these things would come up. In fact, at least at our major stations we're also trying to find apartments wherein pilots and the crew can stay together, so that we can arrange a common pick up and drop facility from that point. It's still on paper, and I hope we would be able to implement all this very soon."

5.4.3. Implications from the above explanations – Is there a "Disconnect" between airhostesses and the airline management?

From the above accord, I get a picture that the airline organizations' dynamics are subjected to drastic changes over the time period owing to various factors like competition, loss of market share, increase in workload, tougher financials over the years, etc. I also portray with this accord that with these drastic changes that organizations undergo, the expectations that they have towards their employees also seem to only keep increasing with the passage of time. In similar lines, from the inputs given by the top management people of both Air France and Air India I feel that their expectations towards airhostesses are drastically changing in the current day scenario, given all the challenges that were mentioned above. This phenomenal change in expectations as can be observed from above, tends to pose a definitive contradiction to the "perceived image" that airhostesses have traditionally possessed over the years.

Let me give a small pause to this brewing discussion. I shall now try and relate the "Relational Psychological Contract" here. What does the concept of "Relational Psychological Contract"

explain? It explains that the employees would tend to be proud in associating themselves with their organization, more than their individual interests, when the organization also acts in a way so as to fulfill their employees' expectations in terms of providing socio-emotional rewards by engendering trust, loyalty, providing support and fostering fairness along with economic and monetary rewards. Applying this to what airhostesses and the top management say, airhostesses put forth the argument saying that they are extremely fatigued because of heavy working schedules, lack of rest, lesser or no salary increases, etc. Whereas, the top management feels otherwise – They put forth the argument that because of various factors like competition, market share, etc., such situations are bound to happen and airhostesses cannot really complain and they need to cope themselves up to the current trend and not sit and brood over past legacy!

At this point, I would like to put forth an opinion that the organizations have the feeling they are fulfilling their part of the Psychological Contract. Yes, they asking more from the airhostesses due to the hard economic and business situations prevailing today. But they do try and compensate this by providing counseling sessions, preferable housing options, etc. by taking into account specific cases (risk of poor family life resulting in divorce, health issues – both physical and mental etc.). I have a feeling that the organizations see these things as a family and they try to act as chief of the family.

Having said this, it is now time to check whether these above-mentioned elements by the organizations are aligned with the expectations from the airhostesses. Let me provide here, a quick summary of the expectations from both the sides – the airhostesses as well as the organization, so as to have a better clarity. In a nutshell, from the airhostesses' perspective, their point of view is that, they work a lot more than the stipulated working period and because of their extra working hours, they tend to lose out on their resting time, especially between two successive flights. They are of the opinion that the organization (specifically pertaining to Air France) has to in some way or the other, induct new people into the workforce of airhostesses so that the existing people can get a breather by reducing their working hours. Also, when it comes to the case of Air India, airhostesses expect the organization to reduce unwanted politics within the different sections of employees, improve their working conditions drastically and so on. Finally, they tend to face lot of frustration because they claim lack of intent amidst the top management to sit down with them and address their specific issues. Whereas from the organization's perspective, specifically Air France, it is said that that the organization is trying their best to combat the problems of fatigue among airhostesses by organizing counseling sessions, etc. however, both the organizations are of the common opinion that airhostesses need to look at the bigger picture – Heavy competition, decrease in market share,

fight for business sustainability, etc. and hence, they expect their airhostesses to rise up to the occasion and put in more effort despite facing the fatigue, illness, etc. This the point where I get a feeling that the expectations of both the parties do not go at tandem and there seems to be a mismatch. But however, it should be noted that these airhostesses continue in their job relentlessly even though the above-mentioned expectations of theirs are yet to be realized. And this is why I feel the mystery is still unsolved. Because, in spite of many specific complaints, and feeling that what they are entitled to expect is not fully fulfilled, they are still quite continually satisfied with their activity. So I feel that I need to go further.

However, with all the above points, I feel that with this, we've reached a significant milestone in this research and this important point is to be established further with the addition of some more meaningful inputs to support its cause.

5.5. The Way forward – *One more crucial question:*

At a point when the entire discussion on job satisfaction is taking twists and turns and also with the integration of the idea of "Psychological Contract", I was overwhelmed at this moment that I have in my hand, one possible way to explain the phenomenon of continuous job satisfaction. However, I felt that, one particular question was remaining unanswered at this point, so as to make the explanation of continuous job satisfaction look complete. This question actually arose in my mind while I was analyzing the application of the "Relational Psychological Contract" with the context of airhostesses. It goes like this: Although according to the argument of the psychological contract, there might be a disconnect between the expectations and the company management in whatever ways it maybe, and airhostesses seem to get frustrated and dissatisfied as a result, but how is that these airhostesses still continue to proudly associate themselves with Air France/Air India? In other words, given the factor of disconnect, what makes the airhostesses to continue flying? And why do they do it? I felt at this point, that this idea of "Mutual Expectations" and subsequently the concept of "Relational Psychological contract" could not provide an answer for this question. Of course, the idea of Psychological Contract was very useful in exposing the disconnect between the airhostesses and the management and understand it in a scientific way, however I felt that there is one more step that needs to be taken in terms of answering the above question. I wanted to continue exploring through in the psychological perspective, which interested me a lot and see if I could deduce a possible answer to the question that I had posed. Moreover, I felt at this stage that the "image" the airhostesses tend to have within themselves, both before and during their work tenure might have a very peculiar role to play in the mystery of why these people are still satisfied even though they face

numerous challenges in their job everyday. Talking further about this "image", I also feel that this part is not yet fully addressed with the discussion on Psychological Contract and I think this mystery would be completed only with further introspection of this "image" and its role in explaining continuous job satisfaction.

At this crucial juncture, I came across a very interesting philosophy of Slavoj Zizek a Slovenian psychoanalyst, wherein I found a similar approach towards explaining the "mental functioning" of a human being. Inspired by one of the most famous but (in many ways) controversial French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, in one of his very famous works, he has tried classifying various "orders" of the functioning of the human brain into categories very similar to what I had done till now – *the imaginary, symbolic and the real.* It was very interesting for me to go through his works and also to try and relate this entire explanation of continuous job satisfaction. With this idea, I wondered within myself that I'm now inching closer to also integrate a little bit of a psychoanalytic perspective into my work. In other words, I feel that I'm now arriving slowly at a point wherein I can assert to the reader that job satisfaction may not be possibly fully explained with variables like monetary benefits, demographic variables, etc. alone, and it has more psychological and psychoanalytical elements attached to it, which are difficult to quantify.

The primary reason of moving forward in this approach is that, I have a feeling that my inquiry at this point has been enlarged with questions of images and of psychological expectations, and with the solid foundation made by the discussion on the psychological contract and the mutual expectations, I now intend go further, from "images" to "imaginary" and from "expectations" to deeper layers of subjectivity. One of the more important points is that of course as explained above, the expectations come from institutions, but when I looked deeper into my interview data, I have a feeling that they also might arise from imagination, from personal experience and their corresponding life trajectories. In other words, these expectations are not only institutional, social and pre-individual but however, they are not entirely formed by these prescribed meaning, they are also, and complementarily, coming from the "Imaginary". The "Imaginary" is also influenced by institutions, society and pre-individuality, but follows a very different dynamics to the symbolic.

Upon reading through the philosophy of Slavoj Zizek, I had a feeling that I would be able to give a new dimension to the entire discussion on "Continuous Job Satisfaction" and thus, as a final step of my thesis, I propose to compare this philosophy of human evolution of Zizek with my proposed explanations on job satisfaction and psychological contract and intend to arrive at a meaningful contribution to conclude.

What does the philosophy of Slavoj Zizek convey to us? How does this make sense to my current

research context? What can be inferred as a meaningful contribution by applying Zizek's philosophy into this management research? The answers to this final set of questions evolve from the next chapter.

Chapter 6 –An attempt to explain "Continuous Job Satisfaction" – *A psychoanalytical perspective*

6.1. Setting up the context for further discussion:

So far I had been trying to put on the table, a possible answer to explain the phenomenon of continuous job satisfaction through various means. In the previous chapter I had digressed a little bit into the idea of "Psychological Contract" and checked the relevance of this idea, so as to give a possibly clear explanation about continuous job satisfaction. Yes, there was ample scope of explanation and I had tried my best to bring out the significance of the "Psychological Contract" and thus, the explanation to continuous job satisfaction took a turn towards the related domain of organizational psychology. However, at the end of the detailed explanation in the last chapter, I felt that there's still a grey area to be explored. It was in the form of a question that I had asked at the end: *Although according to the argument of the psychological contract, there might be a disconnect between the expectations and the company management in whatever ways it maybe, and airhostesses seem to get frustrated and dissatisfied as a result, but how is that these airhostesses still continue to proudly associate themselves with Air France/Air India?* In other words, *given the factor of disconnect, what makes the airhostesses to continue flying? And why do they do it?* At this juncture, I felt that the answer for continuous job satisfaction might not be convincingly complete without addressing this grey area. Thus, I wanted to do something more than the "Psychological Contract" and the "Mutual Expectations" and it is at this time, I started to think and explore what to do! During this exploration phase, I came across an interesting "Psychoanalytical" theory of human evolution by Slavoj Zizek, based on the principles of Jacques Lacan, a very famous French psychoanalyst. Of course, the theory proposed by both the great psychoanalysts of the modern time, was extensive in nature and I tried to check if at least a miniscule part of this extensive theory of human evolution could be used to explain the above mystery that still exists. Thus, in this chapter, I shall outline a glimpse the psychoanalytical theory of Zizek and Lacan and in turn try and relate this theoretical glimpse to continuous job satisfaction.

Here, the reader must be reminded that I have a very little background and understanding on Psychoanalytical principles. The reader must also understand at this point that, I am not giving a psychoanalytical explanation of job satisfaction, however, I try to use some psychoanalytical insights to propose a way of understanding the phenomenon of continuous job satisfaction and along with that, try to overcome some paradoxes that are remaining.

Following is a brief explanation about Zizek and his work on psychoanalytical research:

6.2. The philosophy of Zizek pertaining to the "Psychoanalysis" of an individual:

Inspired by Jacques Lacan, Slavoj Zizek, a Slovenian psychoanalytic philosopher took cues from the ideas of the founder of psychoanalysis, those of Sigmund Freud, etc. In doing so, Zizek has worked a lot in popularizing the particular brand of psychoanalysis practiced by Lacan. I was curious to go through this brand of Lacanian psychoanalytical principles and while going through it I found quite a bit of relevance in what I was talking about in my research. Basically, what Jacques Lacan talks about, are the three "Orders" by which he says that, all the mental functioning of a human being may be classified into – The Imaginary order, the Symbolic order and the order of the Real. Now let's see a brief description of each of these three orders, according to Lacan.

The following is an extract from the book authored by Tony Myers (2004) on the philosophies of Zizek, inspired by Lacan. In the following sub sections I shall quote a few important points from this book of Myers (2004) and subsequently explain the relevance of these points with the context of airhostesses and continuous job satisfaction.

6.2.1. The Imaginary:

The "Imaginary" designates the process by which the ego in a human being is conceived and born and this is what Zizek calls, the "Mirror stage" – It begins when human beings are still infants of about six months old. Zizek continues to put forward the point here that human beings are born prematurely in such a way that they are unable to co-ordinate their movements until they are several years old. Infants overcome this by identifying themselves with the help of a "mirror". This "mirror" can be a real mirror made of glass, or it might also signify another human being that the child sees in front of him/her. It's interesting to note from Zizek's explanation that these infants, once they see a fully well built adult human being in front of them, they start to compare this "image" of the human being with himself or herself. In Zziek's own words which quote, *"As compared to the awkward, almost drunken sensations of dislocation the infants feel within their own body, this image of the human being in front of them, offers them a sober picture of themselves as a fully synchronized and a united body"* (Myers, 2004). Thus, Zizek continues to put forth the point that the infant conceives and forms an ego within its mind in a way that, it benchmarks this human being as the ideal structure, and anticipates that he/she also would also grow up and become like this human being.

However, as per Zizek's proposition, this process of identification that the child develops during

infancy actually resides within the child as an extremely strong and a capricious force and this force constantly undermines the very rectitude and unity it seeks to impart. In other words, this particular image of the "ideal human being" resides in the child's mind desperately for so many years as it grows, and whatever growth this child would undergo over the years, it would tend to compare and benchmark with it. Zizek further adds on to the above point that, the more discrepancy the child sees between its growth and that of the "ideal human being", the more the ego within the child remains and grows and this ego does not change or diminish even once child becomes an adult. It is this ego that always makes the child question within itself and continues to search for the wholeness of everything and thus in a way, trying to boost this ego further.

Hence as a quick summary of this very important stage *(I shall explain why and how is this stage very important when we relate this with the context of airhostesses)*, I can understand from this explanation given by Zizek that, during the initial days after taking birth, the infant develops a "mirror image" of how a person (Male/female) should look like, by viewing another person in front of it, and thus the ego is born. This "mirror image" resides in the child for a very long time, and as it gradually grows up, it tends to compare its body shape and growth to that of its benchmark "mirror image" and tries to seek unity. Here is where the ego is developed further – The ego develops in the child so as to seek a unity between the "image" and its actual self.

Now let's have this idea in mind for a few moments and we shall continue with the explanation of the second stage – The "Symbolic".

6.2.2. The Symbolic:

Now we move on from the infancy stage of the child and progress as the child grows up and starts going to the school and begins to learn lot of things. Here is where, the "Symbolic" stage starts to take shape. The reader may be reminded here that the ego that the child conceived in the "Imaginary" stage still exists. According to Zizek, the "Symbolic" is perhaps the most ambitious of all the orders because he opines that its purview includes almost everything – Right from language to the law and all the social structures for a human being in between. Interestingly, Zizek adds that this so-called "Symbolic" constitutes a good part of what we usually call the "reality" in our daily life. This is where Myers (2004) in his book quotes Zizek saying, *"It's the impersonal framework of society, the arena in which we take our place as part of a community of other fellow human beings"*. For instance, almost all people in this world are inscribed in the Symbolic before even they are born or soon after they are born, because they're assigned a name; belong to a family, a caste, a socio-economic group, a gender, race, etc. This is exactly what Lacan, in his psychoanalytical

perspective indicates that all of us are in some sense imprisoned by the Symbolic when he argues that there is something that binds this order together and it is called the "Signifying Chain" or what Lacan terms to be the "Law of the Signifier".

Thus from this argument, it becomes evident that all whatever a human being is associated with, that is, his/her family, caste, society, gender, race, nationality, etc. constitute to the symbolic. In other words, whatever we see and observe around us with our two eyes, and whatever we think that is the real around us, is all the "Symbolic". Hence I inferred from this argument that, most of the time in our lives, we all live in the symbolic and not in the "Real", as per Zizek and Lacan.

We shall reserve this thought too at this point and ponder further about it once we look into the explanation of the "Real" as per the psychoanalytic explanations given by Lacan and Zizek.

6.2.3. The Real:

Now we come to the third stage of the Lacanian psychoanalytical explanation – The "Real". Interestingly, the psychoanalytical theory puts forth the point that the order of "Real" signifies those areas of life that is unknown or cannot be known. To be precise and simple, it means everything, as it was just discovered, and that, all our knowledge of the world is mediated through something called "language". We never know anything directly. In other words, the Real is the world before it is carved up by language. Lacan gives a beautiful example here: We call a "mountain" a mountain because the word "mountain" is enmeshed in the English language and culture, for ages now. And now, if we can see the world in a state wherein it is impossible to differentiate between, for example, a tree, the ground in which it has its roots, the squirrel in its leaves and the sky surrounding it, then that is the "Real". As it can be seen, it's not something that can be described, because by default these words have to be used to identify each separate element of this world. This is why Lacan argues that *the Real resists Symbolization* (Myers, 2004). To reiterate the point, the trick here is to remember that the "Symbolic" and the "Real" are intimately bound up with each other. Subsequently the psychoanalytical theory puts forth another interesting point here: *Anything that is interpreted differently indicates and discloses the presence of the real* (Myers, 2004). The fatal disease of AIDS can be considered as a good example here. It is interesting how different people interpret the phenomenon of AIDS - some may interpret it as a punishment for homosexuals, a divine retribution for carrying on a non-Christian way of life, some others might see it as part of a plot by the Central Intelligence Agency, (CIA) to stem population growth in Africa, while other people might consider it the result of human's interference with the nature. All these explanations circle around the same brutal fact of the disease that carries on regardless of the reasons attributed

to it – This is the nature of the "Real" – It continues to exist even though there are lot of interpretations describing it. It's meaningless in itself, but all these interpretations of it are attempts to "Symbolize" it. But all in all, the important point to be re-iterated here is that, irrespective of how much ever we try to "Symbolize" the "Real" or even if we do not want to symbolize it, the "Real" is continuing to exist and it has been existing for thousands of years.

6.2.4. The Interaction between the "Real" and the "Symbolic":

When it comes to the relationship and the interaction between the Real and the Symbolic, Zizek puts forth an interesting argument. Here, I'm quoting from the book of Myers (2004), the philosophy of Zizek in this regard: *"If the Symbolic wasn't an incomplete or an insufficient account of the Real, if that is, we could apprehend the Real directly, then we as subjects would disappear. The reason for this, according to Zizek is that if everything was exactly happening as it was meant to be, if everything could be grasped in its fullness and if there was no discrepancy between the way all of us see the world, there would be no signifying chain at all - All there would be is the Symbolic order in perfect correspondence with the Real"*. From the above quote, we can understand that the aspect that makes us subjects is the signifying chain are the decisions that we take with regard to the signifying chain and that would have disappeared if there was a perfect sink between the "Symbolic" and the "Real". Hence, we can extend the same example of AIDS that, if we all agree together that the AIDS crisis is a CIA plot, that all human beings are just a bunch of apes and nothing else - We would no longer be human beings with a reasonable thinking power at all and we would just be automatons or robots, blindly obeying the dictates of the Symbolic. This is not to say that we would physically de-materialize, but as thinking beings who take decisions and make choices, we would have evaporated.

Let's take another example: This is the example, which Zizek takes to explain this interaction between the Symbolic and the Real. Assuming that you've been driving a car for an hour or so - You suddenly realize that you cannot remember the journey at all. This is because, as per Lacan, you were in a state of automaton, automatically and unthinkingly obeying the traffic rules which in this case a stand as an instance of the Symbolic Order. In simpler explanation, during the drive, you became merely a part of the Symbolic and you as a subject (thinking human being) disappeared. However, had a truck coming in the opposite direction accidentally veers off onto your side of the road, this could be considered an *"Intrusion of the Real"* (Myers, 2004). At this crucial point in time, you as a "thinking human being" (subject) would have to decide what to do - Perhaps applying the brakes or swerving across to the other side of the road! In this moment of decision, in

choosing how to deal with this intrusion of the Real, you again reappear as a subject – the thinking human being. In this sense, Zizek argues that the subject exists at the interface or on the border between the Symbolic and the Real. In simple terms, if there weren't any interaction between the two orders, the subject would never exist at all.

6.2.5. The interaction between the "Imaginary" and the "Symbolic":

Now having discussed in brief as to how the "Symbolic" and the "Real" interact with each other, even more important is the interaction between the "Imaginary" and the "Symbolic". It is to be noted here primarily that the "Imaginary" and the "Symbolic" are the two important modes of attributing signification. They are both competing and complementary with each other and are used to form a meaning to whatever is done. Whereas the "Imaginary" bases its signifying process in the form of "images", personal and creative links, personal experience and interactions, the "Symbolic" is a prescribed leaning given by a language, law, manual, all sorts of orders built from the outside. Any happening or situation can be given meaning by the combination of the "Imaginary" and the "Symbolic". These meanings may sometimes be conflicting, but usually one takes precedence over the other for certain types of situations. For example, a professor can envisage his/her activity according to his/her imaginary conception of professorship. His/her lectures and researches will be given meaning according to an interlinked set of images and affects based on experience, encounters with professor-models, a vision of the role of transmission and critical mind in the society. Alternatively, they can be viewed as fulfilling a job description, number of hours or research publications that are to be made, or a function in society that is assigned by specific codes or theories. Living one's activity bathed in the "Imaginary" or "Symbolic" entails very different sources of motivation, job satisfaction and mutual expectations.

6.3. Applying Zizek's psychoanalysis to Dynamic Job Satisfaction & Relational Psychological Contract:

So far in this chapter we've seen a grid proposed by Zizek with his influence from Jacques Lacan that talks about three elements or "Orders" – The Imaginary, Symbolic and the Real. Now I am going to try and capture the essence of this grid on The Imaginary, Symbolic and the Real and apply this to my explanation on continuous job satisfaction, by figuring out a good possible answer to my "unanswerable" question that I had at the end of the previous chapter.

As a quick reminder to the reader, so far I've explained through various instances, narratives, experiences, etc. pertaining to the context of airhostesses that the phenomenon of job satisfaction

cannot be limited only through variables and it's far more personal and psychological. Of course, certain variables that explain job satisfaction in previous researches are psychological in nature, but I somehow feel that lot of researchers seem to have avoided exploring them in this perspective just to be more objective in approach. To add the psychological perspective to my explanation, I brought to the table, the explanation of the "Psychological Contract" and I had put forth the argument that the psychological contract pertaining to this specific case of airhostesses of Air France and Air India is "Relational" in nature, rather than "Transactional". In that, when we spoke about "Mutual Expectations", I had put forth my explanation that there seems to be a "disconnect" between the expectations of the airhostesses and that of the top management of their organization. However, even though there is this "disconnect", we've seen through the course of the interviews that these airhostesses still continue to fly and more than that, they proudly associate themselves with their respective organizations of Air France/Air India. How is this possible? What makes them to associate with their company and their profession so deeply? Let's try to find answers here.

Now I propose this grid of Zizek's psychoanalysis of the imaginary, symbolic and the real to address the above questions and this would perhaps be able to complete my explanation on the phenomenon of continuous job satisfaction with regards to the airhostesses. To begin with, I shall try to put forth an explanation by comparing the psychological perspective of continuous job satisfaction that I had associated, with that of the psychoanalytical philosophy of Zizek and will try to answer my above-mentioned question based on the inferences that evolve out of the comparison. In other words, I shall try to propose an explanation of the case of airhostesses with respect to all the three elements of the Psychoanalytical grid.

6.3.1. The "IMAGINARY":

To remind the reader in brief, as the psychoanalytical explanation goes, the "Imaginary" is the stage wherein the ego in a human being is conceived and born when he/she is at the infant stage, by creating a "mirror image" within oneself. This ego tends to be boosted all the time, while the comparison is made between this mirror image and the actual growth that the child undergoes over time. With this basic idea of this stage of the psychoanalytical grid, I now try to make an application of this into the case of the lives of the airhostesses. I propose the following explanation:

I had brought to the table during the analysis of the "Life-Cycle Interview" data that, airhostesses, during their childhood days have developed this interest for flying through various sources – Some have heard stories from their parents, some have had the opportunity to watch aircrafts landing and taking off from the nearby airport, etc. All these incidences during the childhood, according to the

psychoanalytical explanation, may have created a "mirror image" or a "benchmark" of being an airhostess within them. Hence, in a way, I feel that an ego gets constructed within their minds, with the help of this mirror image and this ego grows along with them as they advance in their age, and eventually this ego pushes them to choose this profession. This is perhaps why these people say that they immediately applied for the job of an airhostess, the moment the opportunity presented itself before them. To add more to this explanation, I also feel that even after joining Air France/Air India, these airhostesses have the sense of ego in them, as a capricious force and every time they try and benchmark their everyday work practices with their mirror image.

I would like to expand a few above-mentioned points in a bit more detail. Now I shall explain how this "Imaginary" is built in an airhostess, as per my observations from the interviews. I just spoke about the childhood days of my respondents. As the reader would have also witnessed all throughout the analysis of the "Life-Cycle interviews", I feel that, this "Imaginary" part in the airhostesses is extremely strongly built. It might be quite a prominent understanding amongst all of us that whatever we observe and grasp during our childhood days tend to stay on for our entire lifetime! How true is this point here! Here we can see that a few of them had the opportunity to make their initial childhood observation via listening to stories about airhostesses, different aspects of being a steward, witnessing aircrafts landing and taking off from an airport, etc. Some people might have built up this imaginary in the form of a "Desire" – What I mean by the term "Desire" is that, these children would have heard during their childhood days that as an airhostess, they can travel across the world, explore different places, cities, etc. and a variety of adventures associated with it. Of course, the very context of "flying" seems to excite lot of them (at least I had heard it numerous times from several of my respondents during the interview process).

Also, the "Social Status" that is attached to it seems to be a huge driving force for the formation of the "Imaginary" – I observed this especially when one of my respondents, Diandra said – *"I first realized it when I was in a party. As you know... If you're in a party, you can start asking questions... So some people asked me what do you do. The moment I replied that I'm an airhostess, everyone started asking me lot of questions about it. I was surprised. And that was the time I realized that.. Okay... People are very interested in my job!! This situation happened many times again. Even today, if someone asks me what job do I do in life and after my reply if I don't see any reaction from him or her, the person didn't understand what I said. Because, I'm used to that now and so if I don't see the spark on their face after I replied this question, it implies that the person didn't understand!!!! (Laughing).. So that person asks me again and then they react like Ooooohhhh..... Then I feel... Okay... Now they've understood!! (Laughing). It's like, in many*

places around the world you go and say that you live in Paris, there's a spark on their face." I was impressed by the way she explained this phenomenon at length. The way, in which she narrated, itself can be evidence as to how strong is this "Social Status" being built into the "Imaginary" of the airhostesses.

All in all, I was able to understand and decipher from the above narrative of Diandra, and of course through numerous narratives of several other respondents *(I'm not mentioning too many narratives at this stage because it might be a repetition here)* that the "Imaginary" of the airhostesses is extremely strong and as per the Lacanian terms, the airhostesses build all this during their childhood as the "mirror image", which persistently and relentlessly remains in them till whatever age they work as an airhostess in their career.

With this idea of the "Imaginary" stage, let's go into the next important stage – "Symbolic".

6.3.2. The "SYMBOLIC":

Here, I shall continue with the explanation that I commenced in the previous "Imaginary" stage. In this context as we move on, it would be effective to recall what Diandra from Air France remarked during the Life-cycle interviews, *"This job is like a military – In the sense that it is monotonous and you keep doing the same thing every day!"*

When I compared the psychoanalytical explanation behind the stage of "Symbolic" to the case of airhostesses, I felt that the everyday aspects of the airhostess's job – Welcoming passengers with a smile, serving them food and beverages, handling aircraft safety equipment, etc. together collectively constitute the "Symbolic". To extend it a bit further, my understanding at this stage is that, most of the time airhostesses live in the "Symbolic" wherein, they keep doing the same thing every day and for every flight. The job profile changes very little over time. Thus, strict adherence to procedures as part of this job, makes the airhostesses be in the "Symbolic" stage most of the time. Just as airhostesses live in the "Symbolic", I also feel that the organization's management also tends to live in the "Symbolic", that is, when they talk about competition, market share, etc. it maybe seen that all these phenomena exists at any point of time irrespective of what is the current situation of the organization. In other words, just like welcoming passengers with a smile, serving them food and beverages, handling aircraft safety equipment, etc. are the "Symbolic" of airhostesses; competition, market share, etc. are the "Symbolic" of the organization's management. Hence I can sense a feeling here that both the organization and the airhostesses live in the "Symbolic" at any given point of time.

However, it is very important for the reader to be reminded that at this stage, there is not much of a

freedom and a very little room for doing something creative. Everything is just set to order and strict procedures and an airhostess just needs to abide by it. The reader would have seen numerous quotes and narratives from several of our respondents; however, one quote from Fabrice of Air France, according to me stands out amongst every other quote is this: To set up the context quickly, I had asked a question, *"In case of an emergency, how do you react without getting panicked as human beings?"* Here's Fabrice's reply: *"During an emergency time or during a big problem during the flight, we're trained for that every year. Normally we have everything written and we have some procedures and have to communicate a lot. We've to exchange lot of information with the pilots or altogether with the attendants as well, so as to fix the positions for all of them to have the information they need. I have to pass on information to the passengers as well. But… Somebody else can take over me at that situation if I'm unwell. But normally it's my responsibility to maintain good communication with everyone during the emergency situation".* From the above quote, the amount of emphasis laid on the set rules and procedures as part of this job can be witnessed. Hence, according to Lacanian terms, it can be inferred that the airhostesses during most of their working time, live in the "Symbolic", that is, they are bound always by the set rules, regulations and procedures. Thus we can see here that, as I had explained a while back, during the "Symbolic", there is no room for creativity and innovation and for some people it might be difficult for their passion to build up in this job at this stage.

6.3.3. The "REAL"

As per the explanation of the psychoanalytical philosophy, the "Real" is something that cannot be known or expected and the "Real" is often mediated by the "Symbolic" to give it some meaning and relevance. If we try and apply this to our context of research, I have a feeling that, whatever adversities and challenges that both airhostesses and their organization often have to face, will fit into the stage of "Real". In fact, to be more precise, the adversity that comes across is formless and cannot be explained in only one way. It might have different ways of interpretations by different people, but the adversity remains an adversity! With respect to the airhostesses, there might be an adversity in the form of a medical emergency on board, a fire, or any catastrophic problem that the aircraft might undergo in the mid-air and airhostesses have to react to it as "thinking human beings" – They've to follow the set procedures or sometimes go out of their way to do something on the spot to combat that emergency situation. Especially if it is the chief purser, he/she has to make a decision on the spot.

Let's take another instance: When there is an adversity of a huge financial trouble in the company,

the management of the organization might view it in a way of cutting costs and freezing new recruitments to combat the adversity. However, the airhostesses might view the same adverse situation in a way of extra working hours, heavy load of flying schedules but without an increase in their salary, physical and mental fatigue associated with it, etc. It is to be noted here that both the parties view the same adverse situation with different lenses.

This view can be extended further with much more clarity when we explain how the "Symbolic" and the "Real" interact.

6.3.4. Interaction between the "Symbolic" and the "Real":

It might be recalled by the reader that according to Lacan, the "Real" and the "Symbolic" are closely twined with each other and they co-exist very closely. Also, when there is no discrepancy between the "Symbolic" and the "Real", then we as subjects would disappear from the context. It's only when the "Real" intrudes into the "Symbolic" at any time, then we as subjects would reappear again in the context. This was the most fascinating and interesting explanation that I came across and I tried to relate this to the context of airhostesses. My proposition regarding the context of airhostesses with respect to the interaction between the "Symbolic" and the "Real" goes like this: At this point in time, I feel that this following explanation would add lot of meaning to how airhostesses react to various situations during their job and how they are forced to make critical decisions at the right time.

For an airhostess, as far as everything goes as per the set procedure of the "Symbolic" every passing day, the subject called "Airhostess" vanishes, because the "Symbolic" in which the airhostess like to be and the "Real" in which the airhostesses are currently in, matches perfectly! In other words, as we saw till now, airhostesses normally tend to adhere to the strict procedures of their on-board operations every day without even a small deviation, also for a fixed number of hours every day, and this is the "Symbolic". When I say that "Airhostesses vanish from the context", it doesn't mean that airhostesses physically vanish from that place, but it just means that the airhostesses just go into an "Automation" mode and they just keep going by their "Symbolic" every time. In other words, the human decision-making is nil and the airhostesses in this context can be compared to mere robots that just keep executing orders. However, when there is an intrusion of the "Real" wherein there is a problem in the aircraft like a sudden fire or a medical emergency on board, or a situation of crash/water landing etc. It is at this point, that this "Real" clashes with the "Symbolic". And in this situation, the context of the "Airhostess" re-appears again because, the "Automation" mode in which the airhostesses were in previously, has gone and they have to take a decision by themselves

and react to the situation. *(The reaction might anything but that's not the point here.)* However, what I understand from this is that, when the "Real" intrudes into the "Symbolic", the subjects (human beings) are back in the context, wherein their decision-making skills are at test and I have a feeling that this idea perfectly applies to that of the airhostesses.

6.3.5. Interaction between the "Imaginary" and the "Symbolic:

Before we actually go into the interaction between the "Imaginary" and the "Symbolic" in the case of the airhostesses, let me remind the reader with a glimpse of what is the "Imaginary" and the "Symbolic" with respect to the context of airhostesses. As we saw earlier during this chapter, the "Imaginary" of the airhostesses comprises of the various stories, narrations, and experiences that they come across through various sources when they are at their childhood days. We also saw that this "Imaginary" according to the Lacanian principle remains and persists very strongly in the minds of the human being right from the stage of infancy, and airhostesses seem no exception here – The "Imaginary" is heavily built around all these narratives during childhood and it only expands and grows as they advance in their age. As they get the opportunity to fly as airhostesses, this "Imaginary" that they had developed over time, gets deeply rooted and imbibed within them, that it is extremely hard to erase or change as they progress in their career over the years. In fact at this point, I would go one step further and say that as they progress in their career, I feel that it is this "Imaginary" that they had developed over the years that gives them an absolute meaning to what they are in their life currently and why are they here in this particular job. Now when these airhostesses enter into the aircraft, they try to make sense of whatever "Imaginary" they already have in their mind. They tend to observe lot of things around them, the various processes, procedures, etc. as they take more and more flights during their initial days. At this juncture, I see a clear thread between the "Imaginary" and the "Symbolic". The reader might, by now be familiar with the contextual meaning of "Symbolic" pertaining to the job of airhostesses - The set rules and regulations, coded procedures, strict adherence to various modes of operations during emergency situations, etc. What I find very interesting in this situation is the interaction between this "Symbolic" and the "Imaginary" that we just saw. How does these two interact? How can we explain continuous job satisfaction from this interaction?

I feel that, airhostesses, as long as they are able to make some real sense out of what they are doing and what they experience every passing day, they feel satisfied. To explain this point in much more detail, let's go back to what Lacan said: Airhostesses have this strong "Imaginary" within them and in due course of time, this "Imaginary" drives them to be what they want to be in life. Thanks to this

"Imaginary", a positive significance is attributed to whatever experiences they might undergo as part of the job every day. Thus, wherever there is this positive attribution, airhostesses seem to be contented and satisfied continuously at all these points. In other words, as long as they can still make sense of their present experience that they undergo everyday in the aircraft, with that of their strong imaginary, this gives them a positive meaning and a complete depiction of what they currently live and what they want to live and at this point, they will probably maintain a very high morale, satisfaction becomes continuous, and in turn, they would also be able to and be ready to accept difficult working conditions.

Besides this "Imaginary", their activity can also be seen deeply organized by the "Symbolic". In other words, as I had mentioned in the previous paragraph, everything is codified, every event has a predetermined meaning, every actions falls into a set procedure. This could be seen as hell for someone who likes to be creative. We had already seen about this during the interviews, wherein one of the respondents openly said that this is like a military job and becomes monotonous over a period of time, after the initial excitement period. However given this thought, almost all the airhostesses whom I met, seemed to be downplaying this important aspect of the symbolic, and they also seemed to be talking and thinking about their job far more according the "Imaginary" side of it. That is, I feel that, although their job is more towards the "Symbolic" with all the strict coded procedures, the interesting "Imaginary" that they have in them drives them to be what they are! This might be a possible explanation as to when some unforeseen situations pass through during their career, a larger sense seems to be attributed through their established "Imaginary" and the "Symbolic". However, in the case of the airhostesses, I strongly feel here that they go on envisaging their activity amid the imaginary realm that they strongly possess.

6.3.6. *A possible explanation to "Continuous Job Satisfaction" – Role of the Organization:*

Let us keep this context of airhostesses that we just discussed in mind and now compare with what the management personnel had to say on the issues pertaining to the current day situation of the airhostesses. As I had explained in the previous chapter about my interview with the Human Resources Directors of both Air France/Air India, they are of the opinion that airhostesses have to face the present turbulent situation and there is no other option - There needs to be more amount of working hours, accordingly lesser resting periods, more prescriptions, and so on – All these are more towards the "Symbolic".

Upon listening to the HR directors' opinions, one might very easily and immediately have the feeling that this might be the right thing to do, but as a researcher, I felt that somewhere down the

line, if organization does not give the airhostesses enough space for still living in their "Imaginary" and *if this "Imaginary" of theirs gets severely damaged by the managerial policies, then job satisfaction would dramatically decrease and possibly in many of the cases, irremediably and irreparably.* Of course, it can be understood that the imaginary is very strong, and to an extent is prepared to endure difficult situations during the course of the career, however, I strongly feel that when it comes to the satisfaction part of the airhostesses, *the HR policy of the organization has to somewhere down the line, take care of this strong "Imaginary" of the airhostesses.* Of course there might be a rebutting argument here that the organization cannot at every time take care of the "Imaginary" of the airhostesses, given the challenging and turbulent business and financial conditions, but all I am proposing here is that, it would be great if at least some management element can give more space and the possibility for the "Imaginary" to thrive, rather than letting it shrink. Thus, this could be one main implication from this entire research pertaining to continuous job satisfaction, with respect to the psychoanalytical perspective.

6.4. My overall explanation of Continuous Job Satisfaction through the Psychoanalytical Perspective:

With the propositions that I had given in the previous sections of this chapter, I feel that I'm now at a stage wherein I can give a definitive shape and a structure to my overall explanation about continuous job satisfaction, pertaining to the case of airhostesses. It may be recollected by the reader that so far as part of this thesis I had tabled various view points of job satisfaction from various researchers who followed various ways in putting forward their findings, of which I found some of them to be objective in their viewpoint, some were subjective, some saw job satisfaction as an "effect" and attached various "causes" that influence it, etc. After going through all such literature on the subject and of course, aided with my data and interpretation till now from the data, I strongly feel that the job satisfaction could be far more personal and psychological than it was perceived so far. I would like to put forth on the table, a possible substantiation for my above statement with the following explanation. Here I shall take reader once again through every stage of the life of an airhostess, linking each stage to the psychoanalytical perspective.

Of course, every person who is an airhostess might have different trajectories in their own lives, however what I present here is a kind of shared and an overall pattern for the ease of understanding. It is also important to mention here that I have not psychoanalyzed each of my respondents and I do not know anything about the ego, imaginary, etc. of any of my respondents, however, I try to use some psychoanalytical concepts to propose a possible (and I hope convincing) representation of the

development of the airhostesses' continuous job satisfaction.

- During the "pre-airhostess" stage, from my initial observation during the process of interviewing various people pertaining to this profession, I felt that these airhostesses have already within them, a strong "Imaginary" of what would it be to be an airhostess, as early as in their childhood days. This "Imaginary" is built within them through various sources – Childhood stories, observations of aircraft landings and takeoffs, exploring related content from various sources as they grow up, etc. and during this stage, these children tend to associate lot of thought processes within themselves with respect to whatever they listen to and observe. Thus we can see here that this "Imaginary" has many ramifications, more virtual than actual. As they progress in their life from being a child to the youth, this "Imaginary" seems to grow along with them and it serves as a benchmark for what is going to come in the future.

- As they progress to the youth stage and when there arises an opportunity for them to become an airhostess, they grab the opportunity at once and step into the job immediately! Why does it happen? I feel at this stage, that this happens in them primarily because they are so much driven by their "Imaginary" and it is this ultra-strong "Imaginary" that pushes them to take up the opportunity to enter into the job of an airhostess.

- Now what happens when these people are into the job? They witness in front of them, the strict rules and regulations, coded procedures for every aspect of the job, a clear sequence of all the routine activities of whatever they need to do! All these fall into the stage of "Symbolic". Now, we can witness that the airhostesses have now moved into the "Symbolic" through their strong "Imaginary". It is to be importantly noted here that although they are now living in the "Symbolic" every passing day, their "Imaginary" is still very strong and is growing stronger!

- As the airhostesses live in the state of the "Symbolic" more and more, the interaction between this "Symbolic" with that of their "Imaginary" becomes extremely prominent right from day one! Once they take to the aircraft right from the starting day, they tend to observe numerous aspects around them at every moment and all this goes into their learning curve. However, the main rider to this point is that, as long as their "Symbolic" would give them a sense of meaning in comparison with their strong "Imaginary", the airhostesses feel that they are satisfied, and they are even ready to take up challenging working conditions. So, ultimately I feel that it all depends on the strong "Imaginary" and it is this "Imaginary" that boosts up their morale and gives the airhostesses a sense of positive meaning to their job every passing day and thus these airhostesses are continuously satisfied.

- However, we should also note here that the actual job of an airhostess is extremely pertaining to the "Symbolic" - I had mentioned this in the above point as well, however, this might require a bit more clarity. Because of the extremely strict and codified procedures that involved in their jobs, these people might feel bored at one point of time and this might not go down well with those people who like to be creative. However, what I found here was something on the contrary – I expected these airhostesses to talk more about the "Symbolic" and express more about their boredom with respect to this monotonous procedure, but to my amazement, I found a trend that these airhostesses tended to downplay the monotony part of it and repeatedly revolve around their "Imaginary"! This was the most striking part! In simpler terms, I felt strongly during the entire course of all the interviews that these airhostesses are living predominantly in the "Imaginary"!

- Now what about the issues being faced? When I spoke to the HR directors of both Air France/Air India, all what they spoke about are the current business trends today, market shares, competition, etc. and thus they collectively opined that the airhostesses can no longer live in the luxury of resting more and working less, rather, it should be the contrary! But this is not what the "Imaginary" of the airhostesses say – This is in direct contradiction to what airhostesses have in their "Imaginary", that is, exploring new cities, adequate rest, having fun, etc. Now here is the problem!

- The management of the organization might proclaim that they talk and do the right thing, however, I feel that little do they realize that they are ending up hurting that too familiar "Imaginary" that is built within the airhostesses for years and years! Little do they realize that they are slowly and steadily degrading that "imaginary" within the airhostesses; Little do they realize that the "Imaginary", once killed, can be an irreparable damage to the continuous satisfaction of the airhostesses in their job and this can lead to various other serious implications!

- Of course, I'm not saying that profits, bottom lines, market shares, competition, etc. are not important. Yes, they are of prime importance to any company for that matter, irrespective of whether it is an airline company or an automobile company. And one can argue that every time this "Imaginary" so called, cannot be justified and taken care of. However, having said that, all I am trying to emphasize at this point in time is that, the organization at some point down under, should give a try to take care of this "Imaginary" amongst the airhostesses. I emphasize this point once more because the job of an airhostess is an extremely critical and a crucial one

because it directly corresponds to the safety of the organization's customers (passengers). Of course, also, you cannot manage the "Imaginary" every time, because of the reason I had mentioned before that, this "Imaginary" has been deeply rooted right from the infancy days and has developed in the long run. However, there needs to be some management element that can take care of this "Imaginary" in some specific ways, give it more space and possibilities to thrive, and not letting it shrink.

Thus, I would like to conclude this chapter by summarizing the entire discussion, so as to propose a concrete answer to the research question that I had started with. If the reader could recall the question: Despite all the challenges that airhostesses face every day, how do they sustain in their job over a period of time? One possible answer to this question might be that, the airhostesses are so obsessed with flying that most of the time they tend to revolve so much around their strong "Imaginary". They thus try to downplay any kind of challenge that is thrown at them and are managing to stonewall all of them somehow, with the help of their "Imaginary". Thus, it is up to their respective organizations to ensure that the job of the airhostess is made to revolve more and more around the "Imaginary" and try to minimize the damage that might potentially be caused to this "Imaginary". By proposing this answer, I genuinely feel that the condition of the airhostesses would certainly see a positive improvement if this could be implemented through some element in the management's thinking.

Hence with these key substantiations from my research, I would assert at this point of time that job satisfaction is far more psychological than it is perceived and it's a concept that also encapsulates various perspectives like the psychological contract and also various other forms of psychoanalytical points of view. From this research, I also understood that the main elements of the "Mutual Expectations" come from psychological roots, and to understand this, I proposed the grid of the psychoanalytical work done by Zizek – (The Imaginary, Symbolic and the Real), to explain the situation of the airhostesses in Air France and Air India.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

7.1. An executive summary of my entire work:

As part of concluding my thesis, I hereby present an entire summary of what I had done so far. This would be helpful for the reader to get a strong hold on the entire topic under discussion.

7.1.1. Unfolding the "Mystery":

To put it in a nutshell, even before I had this quest for research, with a sense of keen observation I was able to observe one unique characteristic amongst all airhostesses, irrespective of whichever airline company they might be from: They project themselves to be very happy, smiling all the time, with a professional conduct and talking in the most pleasant and sweetest way possible. My basic question was, is this all real? Or is this being faked? This sounded to me as a mystery and this mystery gave me the thrust to move forward in taking up this question as a proper research. Accordingly, before I stepped into the shoes of a researcher, I had a talk with a few of the airhostesses informally while taking to flights and came across some interesting and occasionally sarcastic remarks from them. These remarks struck me even more and thus the interest in me developed only in one direction – northwards!

As I stepped into the shoes of a researcher, I came across various methodologies how to address a research question. However, I wanted to do something different and make a mark for myself! I decided to take a different approach altogether. As against the traditional research protocol of exploring the theory behind the research idea and then going into the field to collect data, I decided to follow an "exploratory" approach, by following the contrary – Going to the field first, getting a sense of the people and then come and develop the theory.

7.1.2. Beginning of the exploration – Phase 1 (First round of interviews):

Commencing my research, I decided to extend the informal interaction that I already had, with fifteen more airhostesses inclusive of those from both Air France and Air India – Two major state-owned air carriers. I preferred to go with state-owned carriers more than the private ones because I felt somehow that the stakes were high for people to have a prolonged career as an airhostess. I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the aim of finding out from them as to what's

going on during the flight and also about their life on and off the flight.

This exercise consisted of six main parts: Part one dealt with the understanding of the "subtle" roles and responsibilities of an airhostess, which was the starting point of the entire exercise. Moving further, part two dealt with the unique variety in the job of an airhostess. The discussion stemmed into some intricate and "untold" variety that airhostesses have in their job everyday in their professional life. The level of interest increased further as I moved on into the third part, which talked about how airhostesses are empowered to take critical decisions at the right time and also in a super-quick time! Here is where the conversation started to reveal some surprising answers as to what exactly happens in the background of the external "smile" that an airhostess exhibits. As management professionals it is understood that all these would require adequate training and practice before stepping into the shoes of an airhostess on board. Hence, part four of the conversation led me into the various training modules that airhostesses undergo, the interesting features of it, challenges faced and the important learning from every challenge faced. And now once the learning has happened, it's time to talk about some motivational factors to perform while on the job. The interview further explored into a very important aspect called "Motivation to perform", wherein airhostesses opened up their minds with their various practical experiences that they've had during their long tenure of being in this job. From these experiences I was able to comprehend some of the most different problems, challenges, tough situations that the airhostesses face every day in their job, and how different airhostesses approach different problems differently. Numerous interesting and breath-taking experiences emerged during this stage of the conversation and subsequently, this stage started to pave way for my research to really chug along! Finally the conversation tended to clarify that if at any stage of their career, this motivation might also at some point become a source of de-motivation too. This stage too saw some interesting points coming out and was illustrated with some personal experiences of the airhostesses. Also during the course of this first round of interviews I came across a few important points being stressed by airhostesses in terms of their job every day – Top priority for safety, a hint of passion for their job and building one's own personality in due course of the job.

This round of interviews served as a perfect reality check for me, before going further into the theorization of the problem. However, there were further questions that arose at this point in time. Of course, deriving satisfaction from one's own performance is fine, but *__for how long__* can this be done, even though other dimensions of challenges co-exist? Will this sustain over a longer period of time? Can satisfaction and challenges co-exist over time? Is there something further that can be done/accomplished so as to keep airhostesses continually happy over time? With these questions

propping up, I realized that there's more to be done!! I also subsequently realized to an extent that whatever I've been doing till now depicts the satisfaction narrative in a "momentous" way (Pertaining to one particular moment in time). But when I started pondering about "Self-motivation", I thought to myself that this concept of Job Satisfaction would have much more to offer in itself, more than just viewing it as a static variable. If it's not static, can it be "dynamic"? If yes, in what ways can Job Satisfaction be dynamic? I started to search the existing literature on Job Satisfaction to find out possible perspectives that may answer my above questions.

7.1.3. Review of the literature on Job Satisfaction:

Keeping the above questions in mind, I commenced my exploration of the theory behind "Job Satisfaction". I wanted to see how the existing research talks about this idea. Here I came across a plethora of research that numerous great scholars and researchers have given us over a vast time period of about twenty-five to thirty years. I used some keywords like "Job", "Job Satisfaction", "Job Satisfaction definitions", "Antecedents to job satisfaction", and the likes. From these channelized explorations of the literature, I came across some important definitions of the term "Job Satisfaction", some important perspectives of it, antecedents to job satisfaction including demographic variables such as age, tenure of service, educational background, etc., reward systems, working conditions, characteristics of the job, nature of the job, leadership of the company and to a great extent about personality. Particularly, I was amazed at the plethora of research that existed in the domain of Personality and Job satisfaction in relation with personality. For a moment, I was carried away in a different direction of exploration as I found the various models of personality in perfect sink to what I had initially observed in the airhostesses. For a moment I felt lost and confused! However, while going through this plethora of content I suddenly remembered my basic question at the end of the first round of interviews and I found that there wasn't much that spoke about being "continuously satisfied" in a job over time, and that too pertaining to the specific case of an airhostess. I was feeling that I'm hitting the gap in the literature and this is where I decided to go back to the field to find an answer by myself – How can airhostesses be satisfied continuously over time, despite whatever challenges they undergo?

7.1.4. Moving ahead – The "Life-Cycle" Approach:

I decided to again talk to my respondents to find out if they're really happy over a continuous time period, despite numerous challenges they outlined in the previous round of talking. I wanted to adopt the same "Interview" strategy, however, I decided to adopt a relatively different methodology

of conducting interviews, which is called *"Life-Cycle Interviews"*. By adopting this strategy, I had the unique opportunity of studying the entire life of an airhostess, right from their childhood days till their present day at office. Numerous interesting instances, thought-provoking explanations, ideas, viewpoints, etc. emerged from this exercise.

7.1.4.1. Selecting the respondents for this detailed exercise:

It may be recalled by the reader that I had met fifteen respondents during the first interview cycle. However on a personal note, all the fifteen respondents responded in different ways – some were extremely friendly, open and interactive whereas some were in the other end of the spectrum wherein, they were closed minded for a majority part of the interview session and I really had to struggle to pull words out of their mouths. Thus, seeing these different kinds of respondents, it prompted me to have a second thought over a few of them that if it would be apt for me to approach them for a second time, because, this second interview cycle is intended to be in extreme detail and it really requires respondents to open up freely and speak up. Hence I re-visited all the fifteen interview transcripts one more time, and tried to figure out who among them would be good enough for such a detailed interview session, and in the course of this process of scrutiny, I initially shortlisted ten out of the fifteen respondents who might be good prospects for this exercise. However I wasn't fully satisfied! Hence, I again conducted a process of scrutiny by closely examining the ways in which every respondent responded to my questions in the first round and also checked for people who were proactive enough in delivering responses to issues that were allied to my questions during the first round. At the end of the second process of closer scrutiny, I was able to figure out seven people whom, from my past conversational experience with them, were extremely proactive in their interactions and upfront in putting their views forward. Hence, for this crucial "Life-Cycle" interview process, I went along with these seven respondents – *Diandra*, *Anne* and *Fabrice* from Air France and *Anoop*, *Poornima*, *Sabarinath* and *Nisha* from Air India. I conducted three rounds of interviews with each of them and allowed them to share whatever they've got to, in a free, friendly and an informal manner.

7.1.4.2. The Approach:

Now to talk about the way in which I undertook this all-important exercise – I approached each of the seven respondents thrice, with an average interval of about a week in between two sessions with the same respondent. The first session was focused on their childhood days – How did they get that interest to fly and what are those factors that motivated them to take a decision of entering into this

profession. We also went on to talk about their pre-airhostess days, that is, the other jobs that they were into, before they opted for the job of an airhostess and subsequently what pulled them into this profession. The discussion during the second session revolved around their initial days of being an airhostess – starting from their experiences during their first flight, carrying it forward with subsequent flights, getting used to being an airhostess, etc. The discussion also covered subsequently their experiences and viewpoints of their different ups and downs that they faced during their initial five to seven years of being an airhostess. The third and the final session dealt with the current day scenario of being an airhostess – What are the challenges that they face currently, and do they see it as a potential threat to their job anywhere in the near future? How do they sustain in their job with the same demeanor even with all the challenges at their back? Again, interesting answers evolved from this session and from all the three sessions put together, it seemed to open up a somewhat different perspective to this entire concept of Job Satisfaction.

7.1.5. Analysis of the "Life-Cycle Interviews":

As the reader might remember, that the analysis of the "Life-cycle interviews" was carried out under *three different phases*. Phase one dealt with the in-depth analysis of the excerpts from four of our respondents in elaborate detail, under *four different stages – "The Pre-Airhostess stage", "First flight experience & initial days of being an airhostess", "Getting accustomed to being an airhostess" and "Being an airhostess today – present day experiences"*. Phase two dealt with the supplementary significant experiences of the remaining three respondents that may augment to the explanation of continuous job satisfaction. In both these phases, respondents spoke about various things – Starting from their initial days of being an airhostess, and even before that, the amount of childhood influence that they had before taking up the job of an airhostess, their experiences as they progressed in their career and also the experiences that they have today being an airhostess. Of course, the respondents came up with numerous challenges, complaints, etc. right through the entire process, and correspondingly, I had quoted various narratives to highlight the various points that all the seven respondents had come up with. Finally, phase three spoke about the interesting issue – *Despite facing numerous challenges, why airhostesses are still airhostesses?* I tried to find an answer from the interview narratives that I had in hand, however I was not able to figure out one good answer to this question. This is where I began to think in a different dimension – Why not to look into the psychological perspective of the entire issue? It is at this point, I had spoken about three main terminologies that I had coined, so as to classify and give a meaning to the various "psychological" stages that airhostesses undergo during their entire career – The "Original Image",

"Experience" and the "Sustainability of the Original Image". The "Original Image" pertained to the collection of all the pre-conceived ideas and notions of how the job of an airhostess would be and this develops during the childhood days. The "Experience" pertained to what these people see in front of their eyes when they actually adorn the shoes of an airhostess. Finally, the "Sustainability of the Original Image" implied how does this "Experience" and "Original Image" match with each other. I had a feeling at this stage that if the "Original Image" and the "Experience" perfectly matches, then the airhostesses are satisfied. However, one question still remained: What if the so-called "Experience" and the "Original Image" doesn't match? Unsurprisingly, this situation is the ground reality – Airhostesses do complain a lot! How do these airhostesses continue to work even though there is a mismatch here? How do they still continue to excel in their job despite complaining about numerous problems? How do they still tend to proudly associate themselves with Air France/Air India, despite all these challenges thrown at them?

Here is where I felt a need to explore the literature on psychology and explore if I could find some related ideas that could probably be useful to explain the phenomenon of continuous job satisfaction in a more psychological way.

7.1.6. Tracing back to the literature – The idea of "Mutual Expectations" and "Psychological Contract":

By now we've had the three phases of analyses of the Life-Cycle interviews that were done with seven respondents, in three sessions with each. In these various sessions of interviews, there emerges a picture that all airhostesses have had a "special" experience or a relationship with flying/planes/travelling during their early childhood and youth and this might serve as a very important point to commence the study on job satisfaction, that usually in many cases, is not taken into consideration in theories about motivation, or job satisfaction. To continue further, in the due course of the interviews and also the analysis, several striking points, observations, narratives have emerged, which had prompted me to take a different route in trying to explain the phenomenon of continuous job satisfaction – The psychological perspective. Since, I do not have a deeper background into this domain of psychology, so far I was limiting myself to making personal observations and comments while explaining the psychological perspective through the different narratives. Moving on, since these personal observations and comments that I had made earlier during this chapter, started to make much more sense to me as time went by, I decided to channelize my exploration in this direction and at this point in time, I felt that there's a dire need to go back to the literature and ponder over if there exists any psychological explanations and dimensions to job

satisfaction.

Hence I went back to the literature and came across an interesting terminology called "Psychological Contract". As a pre-requisite to invoke the concept of Psychological contract, I did a small study on "Mutual expectations" wherein it simply means that both the employer and the employees would have expectations from each other, so as to make both parties satisfied. With this basic idea, I went on to learn what is "Psychological Contract". According to Rousseau, (1990), "Psychological contract" is a term that reflects an individual's beliefs with regards to reciprocal obligations… When an individual believes that he/she owes the employer certain contributions (maybe in the form of hard work, loyalty and sacrifice) in return to certain inducements (maybe in the form of adequate pay, job security, etc.). There are two dimensions to "Psychological contract", viz. Transactional and Relational. Employees oriented towards "Transactional psychological contract" perceive their organization primarily as a source of income (monetary) and a place to work (Millward & Hopkins, 1998). Their contributions are also limited, because of their low levels of attachment towards their organization. To explain this "Relational Psychological contract" in a bit more detail, the core idea is that, employees who are bound by this phenomenon highly value their relationship with their organization and are also interested in working for a long tenure with the organization (Chang et al., 2013).

7.1.6.1. My interviews with the HR Directors of Air France/Air India:

At this crucial juncture of exploring the idea of "Mutual Expectations" and "Relational Psychological Contract", I felt that I'm missing something – So far I had been hearing only one side of the story. What about the other side? What does the organization think about the problems that airhostesses claim to be facing? Here is where I got the opportunity to meet two important people from the top managements of Air France and Air India. Their opinions threw light upon various things that I hadn't even thought about so far! They opined that airhostesses cannot keep complaining in today's challenging business environment that they're not getting sufficient rest time between two flights, excessive workload, etc. They were of the opinion that the organization is going through turbulent times like hectic competition, dwindling market share, financial problems, etc. Thus, they were of the strong opinion that given these many challenges, airhostesses have no business to complain, but to put up their hand for their company and work harder!

7.1.6.2. Does "Psychological Contract" answer the question on airhostesses' continuous job satisfaction?

Now having discussed the definition of Psychological contract and it's two dimensions – Transactional and Relational, I compared this literature to the answers from the airhostesses that I have in my hand. With whatever interactions that I've had with airhostesses and the top management, I had a feeling at this juncture that these airhostesses tend to stick to their job despite the various challenges because it seems to me that the "Relational" component of psychological contract with their respective organizations is high. This is perhaps one of the main reasons we were able to observe from the words of airhostesses that they feel extremely proud to be a part of Air France/Air India although faced with a dearth of problems. But somehow I had a feeling at this stage that this might not be the only way to convincingly explain the phenomenon of continuous job satisfaction. There could be more to it! I was very sure that I could find more convincing answers if I explore deeper into this channel of research. To get an even more in-depth psychological understanding of continuous job satisfaction, I adopted another strategy here.

7.1.7. *Moving on to the psychoanalytical way of explaining "Continuous job satisfaction":*

From the interview data and it's inferences derived so far, I had a strong feeling within myself that airhostesses have a "perceived & a preconceived image" of their job and their organization even before they actually rein the responsibility, and they seem to try and see if this perceived image confronts with the reality when they actually dawn the responsibility. If this confrontation becomes positive, it can be one of the important reasons for airhostesses to be satisfied in their job. If it's vice versa, it seems that these airhostesses have a problem. This seemed a very interesting idea that propped up while looking into the different dimensions of Psychological contract. At this point in time, I came across some psychoanalytical studies, and more particularly the works of the very famous French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan and the Slovenian psychoanalyst Slavoj Zizek. I was very interested in their findings and interpretations about human evolution and at this point in time I thought to myself if I can apply these interpretations to that of the airhostesses to more convincingly explain "Continuous Job Satisfaction". Thus, as a final step of my thesis, I proposed to compare this philosophy of human evolution to the philosophy of job satisfaction and psychological contract and intend to arrive at a meaningful contribution from whatever I've found from my data and literature till now.

7.1.7.1. *A nutshell on the idea of "Imaginary", "Symbolic" and the "Real":*

While exploring into Zizek and Lacan's work, I found three interesting "stages" through which human evolution happens – The "Imaginary", "Symbolic" and the "Real" – In a nutshell, the

"Imaginary" pertains to the "mirror image" that an infant has about a human being during it's early days and this mirror image tends to transform itself into something called ego even during the early childhood days. With this ego the child tries to benchmark its own growth with the "ideal" human being that it has in its mind. The "Symbolic" is the world in which all of us exist, or even pre-exist. We see numerous things around us and all of it adds to the "Symbolic", with different interpretations according to various languages, beliefs, religions, etc. The "Real" is something that exists in this world even before we as human beings tried "Symbolizing" it. In other words, we try to "Symbolize" the "Real" in different ways, and sometimes this leads us to even think that the "Symbolic" and the "Real" are one and the same, but they are not! Zizek and Lacan also point out at numerous occasions how does the three "stages" interact with each other and this is something that struck my interest deeply and pushed me towards exploring this idea to further explain "Continuous job satisfaction".

7.1.8. The interaction between the "Imaginary" and the "Symbolic" – My answer to "Continuous Job Satisfaction":

We had seen that the "Imaginary" had started developing right from the infant stage, and then it carries on developing and growing along with age. Here, "Imaginary" pertaining to the airhostesses is the summation of all the stories, experiences of flying that they listened from their parents/relatives/friends, when they were children. Also, some people have the "Imaginary" being built in the form of observing aircrafts land and take off from an airport. This "Imaginary" is deeply rooted within the airhostesses and is hard to change and also serves as the main meaning-providing element for them. The main point here is that, as long as they are still able to make sense of what they actually experience in comparison with the strong "Imaginary", this gives a positive meaning to their job, and in turn they will probably maintain a high morale, continuous satisfaction, and also will be able and prepared to accept difficult working conditions.

Besides this "Imaginary", their every day job is deeply organized by the "Symbolic" - Everything is codified, every event has a predetermined meaning, every actions falls in a set procedure, etc. This could be seen as hell for some people who would like to be creative in their work every day, however, these airhostesses seemingly downplay the importance of this monotonous "Symbolic", and are still talking about their job far more in accordance to the "Imaginary" side of it. Thus at this stage, it became evident for me that the airhostesses tend to and continue to live in their deeply rooted "Imaginary" and thus they try to "insulate" themselves in a way from all the challenges that are being thrown at them.

7.1.9. What can the organization possibly do now?

As mentioned, during my interview with the HR directors, they opined that, airhostesses need to face the present situation there needs to be more effort with lesser rest, etc., which is again more of the "Symbolic". One may immediately tend to think here that this might be the right way for airhostesses to proceed forward, but I think at this point that, if the organization does not give airhostesses the enough space for still living in the "Imaginary", and/or if this "Imaginary" of the airhostesses gets damaged because of aggressive managerial policies, then there is a huge risk that the job satisfaction of the airhostesses might decrease rapidly, and possibly irreparably. Of course, the "Imaginary" is extremely strong and has already endured very tough and difficult situations all this while, but I feel that somewhere down the line, the Human Resources policy of the organization when it comes to ensuring job satisfaction, has to take care of the "Imaginary". Of course, one can argue that it might be very difficult at this stage for the organization to manage the "Imaginary" perfectly, but all I am suggesting here is that there can be at least some element of management that can give more space and possibilities for this "Imaginary" of the airhostesses to thrive, rather than allowing it to shrink and diminish completely.

7.2. My implication from this entire thesis:

Through this thesis, I have tried to explain continuous job satisfaction by extending the psychological contract approach a little bit by drawing on the literature of psychoanalytics. However, one question that may arise at this stage is that, from where did the idea of mutual expectation come. Here, I feel that by taking into account seriously, the idea of "Relational Psychological Contract" and also the psychoanalytical explanation of Lacan and Zizek, the idea of "Mutual expectations" comes from the "Imaginary" (on both sides – airhostesses as well as the management), and also from the interaction between the "Imaginary" and the "Symbolic". The implication of my thesis is however not to 'manage' the "Imaginary" of both sides so as to make it fit with the managerial needs, but to take into account the "Imaginary" that is at the origin of "Mutual Expectations". I feel that, by understanding this very phenomenon, the management of the organization could in a way, think of shaping their expectations from the airhostesses in line with their "Imaginary", so that, both of them can co-exist without any problem and thus, it might be one possible way for the airhostesses to be continually satisfied in their job!

7.3. Limitations and further scope for this research:

Any research is subjected to certain limitations and this work is no exception to it. There are a few main limitations for this particular study and they're listed out as follows:

- This study is predominantly focused on an specific set of employees – the airhostesses, and that too in two major airline companies, Air France and Air India. Of course, the focus might be narrow in nature; however, I feel that this study could be interesting if it is replicated elsewhere too. Also, I am of the opinion that this study on continuous job satisfaction could find applicability in various other settings too, apart from just the context of airhostesses.

- The findings that have evolved from this study may not be consistent for other target markets in low-cost airline companies. For instance, since the low-cost airline companies mainly seem to focus on the financial profitability and with a naked observation that the average age of the airhostesses here is much lesser compared to Air India/Air France (further research required to confirm), the Psychological contract in this case might be more "transactional" rather than "relational".

- Again, the findings evolved from this study may not be consistent if this same study would have been conducted for a different job profile other than the airhostess. For instance, we could get different and contrasting results if this study is conducted amongst pilots, given the fact that their job profile is very different and they're bound by different requirements, demands and challenges in their jobs.

- Also, the findings evolved from this study may not be consistent with different sectors other than the airline, just for the simple reason that different sectors have different operational dynamics and different set of challenges and opportunities that can never be compared amongst each other.

- Moreover, this study is based out of companies from two culturally and ethnically different countries of the world. The challenges and opportunities faced by people in both the countries are entirely different and it's quite a complex task in bringing them on the same table. This might be a scope for further research by including another component called "Cultural variation" into the study.

- Also, when I was exploring the literature on organizational psychology I came across numerous psychological models and frameworks. If I had applied any other psychological framework other than the "Psychological Contract"' or the Lacanian psychoanalytical framework, perhaps there might have been different conclusions to this study! This might in this way, provide a

perfect platform for further research into the application of the psychological perspectives into the explanation of job satisfaction.

- From all the above said points as limitations, every point has a wide scope for further research. For instance, this same research can be replicated to the setting of low-cost airline companies and perhaps also be replicated to other industries as well, and also to other specific groups of people similar to that of airhostesses in the airline sector. The results emerging from this might be extremely different and highly interesting.

- Moreover, last but not the least, this study when replicated to different country settings, might have entirely different implications – people from different cultures might come out with extremely different responses to the same context and the situation and it might be interesting to pursue such researches, keeping this as a platform or a launch pad.

7.4. My final concluding remarks – How do I look at airhostesses after this research?

So far, we've been talking a lot about airhostesses, their entire life cycle and how to keep them satisfied continually. Now, let me trace back my life a bit: Till around three years back, before I started to research extensively on the airhostesses, I was under the general impression like every other passenger on board an aircraft, that airhostesses are very happy people on earth and their job is so glamorous and of a very high social status. Today, after this extensive research, I do feel and realize that the job of an airhostess is not as easy as I thought – It involves facing numerous challenges, both inside and outside the aircraft. Perhaps, the challenges that these people face seem to be far more than those faced by people in other professions. Of course I'm not undermining the fact that every human being has his/her own set of problems and challenges in his/her profession, but the point here is that, after performing this extensive research on airhostesses, I came to understand that these people face unique challenges and problems that cannot be easily understood by a common man – a passenger, or an outsider during a party. They might all exclaim in awe the moment they hear that someone is an airhostess, but little do they realize that this job is extremely challenging to be in! Finally, I would conclude by saying that, at this present day when I take to flights and observe airhostesses, my way of looking at them has entirely changed and also the respect for them has increased manifold!

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Titre : *La satisfaction au travail des hôtesses de l'air: une exploration des dynamiques à long terme et du rôle de l'imaginaire.*

Mots clés : satisfaction au travail, contrat psychologique, imaginaire, hôtesses de l'air

Résumé : La satisfaction au travail est un concept clé de la gestion des ressources humaines qui a beaucoup été étudié par des chercheurs du monde entier. Celui-ci est souvent envisagé de manière statique, c'est-à-dire qu'il est mesuré à un moment donné. En plus, ces mesures de la satisfaction au travail ont principalement été abordées de façon statistique. Cependant, peu de recherches se sont intéressées à la satisfaction continue et à long terme au travail. Qui plus est, de nombreux éléments considérés comme des antécédents de la satisfaction au travail, bien que de toute évidence de nature psychologique, ne sont pas étudiés en regard des connaissances en psychologie. Cette thèse tente d'embrasser de telles perspectives. Cette thèse soutient qu'il y a beaucoup à apprendre en dehors des approches statiques et limitées à un moment donné. Une perspective de long terme sur la satisfaction au travail apporte des compréhensions complémentaires, notamment d'un point de vue psychologique. Pour cette thèse, l'étude a été conduite auprès des hôtesses de l'air et stewards de deux grandes compagnies aériennes - Air France et Air India. L'approche a été qualitative et exploratoire. Trois séries d'entretiens approfondis ont été menées. La première série interrogeait sur la satisfaction au travail et a montré l'intérêt d'envisager cette satisfaction dans le long terme. Comme la littérature était peu diserte sur cette perspective, nous avons continué notre exploration avec des entretiens sur le cycle de vie, révélant des dynamiques inattendues, à l'exemple de l'importance des contacts avec le monde aérien avant le recrutement. La satisfaction au travail est dépendante d'attentes mutuelles des hôtesses et des compagnies, ce qu'un autre domaine de a littérature, celui sur le contrat psychologique, nous a permis de réfléchir et conceptualiser. Cependant l'existence d'un contrat psychologique entre les hôtesses et les compagnies ne permettait pas de comprendre certains mystères et points singuliers. En se fondant sur la perspective lacanienne de Zizek (tout en reconnaissant nos limites sur cette perspective), nous sommes arrivé à la conviction que la satisfaction au travail continue et à long terme dépend fortement de la capacité des hôtesses à maintenir un regard "Imaginaire" sur leur activité. Tant que les hôtesses de l'air peuvent donner sens à leur expérience à l'intérieur d'un « imaginaire » positif et enrichissant, imaginaire à la fois reçu et construit, elles peuvent conserver une satisfaction au travail durable. L'une des principales implications de cette thèse pourrait être que de nombreuses politiques actuelles des ressources humaines dans les organisations semblent ne pas prendre suffisamment soin d'un «Imaginaire» fort dans certaines professions à l'image des hôtesses de l'air qui font que les salariés attribuent du sens davantage selon le «Symbolique», et que cela peut mettre en danger, possiblement irréversiblement, leur satisfaction au travail de long terme. Les organisations gagneraient, d'une manière ou d'une autre, à prioritairement stimuler et entretenir une tel « Imaginaire ». Cette recherche exploratoire a ainsi suivi un ensemble de tournants et ajoute, nous l'espérons, une perspective supplémentaire, originale, pour penser et gérer la satisfaction au travail.