

Relationships for air crews – How does the job affect the work-life balance?

Work-life balance has become a central part of interest for individuals as well as companies over the last decades. The focus lays on keeping a balance and further achieving satisfaction with the work and the life spheres. Being able to balance these dimensions becomes extremely difficult when severe job irregularities take place. This can be seen for example among flight attendants and pilots, who never have regular work hours or days and are even considered as shift-workers all over the world.

Overall, the aviation industry offers millions of jobs globally and therefore influences many daily lives. Therefore, the objective of this research is to analyze the work-life balance of flight attendants and pilots. To achieve this, work-life balance in general was assessed as well as the job of a crew member. In addition, work-life balance conflict issues in general, but also with the focus on the aviation industry are examined. In order to be able to minimize these conflicts and other work-life balance related issues, focus is put on incentives on an individual as well as company level.

For the primary data collection, a mixed method approach has been chosen. First, the qualitative data is collected through in-depth expert interviews with pilots and flight attendants. The focus of the interviews lays on getting a real-life insight into the work-life balance and relationships. Secondly, the quantitative data is collected through an online survey among the same target group and the collected data is run through tests and analysis in SPSS. The main objective of this is to get an even deeper insight to the effects of the irregular job on the work-life balance of an individual and to address a larger and therefore more representative sample size. Further, an adapted online survey is also distributed to a control group which are air traffic controllers.

The final outcome of this research shows that all factors influencing work-life balance are strongly dependent on an individual's personality and the individual perception on them. However, certain measures and incentives like planning ahead, sleeping routine, socializing and others, are relevant and essential to all individuals, but the precise extent to which it is needed and perceived as essential varies widely. Further, the results intend to raise awareness among aircrew members as well as for an airline's management itself.