A qualitative investigation of cabin crews' experience of long haul travel; implications for coping style, psychological health, and personal, professional, and social relationships

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DECLARATION

I would like to declare that the writing in this thesis is my own and that any use of additional literature has been gathered from accepted sources and referenced accordingly. The raw data is original and was obtained with participants consent and undertaken by my self in accordance with the British Psychology society's guidelines for ethical research practice.

Abstract

This study used qualitative interviews and grounded theory to develop a model of how cabin crew (N=8) cope with the impact of their disrupted lifestyle on psychological wellbeing. Of special interest were the implications for personal, social and professional relationships, which taken together, is likely to lead to increased loneliness, anxiety and depression even for the most resilient crew member (Bor and Levitt, 2003; Partridge and Goodman, 2006). A model was developed to help understand the complex ways in which cabin crew members' experience of psychological disruptions were contingent on their abilities to adapt the demands of their personal lives according to work requirements. Moreover, cabin crew appeared to actively manage and moderate the extent to which the combined effects of psycho-social interruptions and sleep deprivation affected their cognitive, emotional, and physical wellbeing. It is anticipated that the model will help crew members to cope with work-life dichotomies as well as encouraging counselling psychologists to become more involved in various aspects within the provision of stress reducing interventions in the workplace. Implications for future research, crew rostering, and counselling psychology practice and training needs are discussed.

1. Introduction

As a flight attendant, during previous and current long haul travels, I have become familiar with the 'unusual' lifestyle that can challenge various obligations, both within and outside work, including disrupted personal, professional, and social relationships. This experience has made me question the current focus on physical or 'medical' health within the aviation literature and made me consider Ballard's (2006) suggestion that the complex dynamics of the cabin crew lifestyle should come with a psychological health warning.

Much like aviation itself, mental health as a field or specialty keeps evolving. It has long been accepted that definitions of psychological illness are culturally relative and have also shifted over time (Bor and Hubbard, 2006). This study seeks to present a modern, informed and comprehensive view of how cabin crew cope with the impact of their disrupted lifestyle on psychological wellbeing. Cabin crew and others employed within commercial aviation are in many ways a unique occupational group. As shift workers, they do not usually follow the same routine, and their frequent travels through changing time zones is known to cause jetlag and fatigue (Waterhouse, Edwards, Atkinson, Reilly, Spencer, and Elsey, 2006). Moreover, repeated absence from home, often for prolonged periods at a time, can disrupt aircrew relationships, thus making it difficult for an individual to maintain a healthy work-life balance (Lauria, Ballard, Corradi, Scaravelli, Sgorbissa, and Verdecchia, 2004). This implies that the cabin crew work requirements present a number of specific challenges that can exact a toll on individual workers and demand resilience and unique coping behaviours (Elliot and Williams, 2002). There is a need to implement practical guidelines to help cabin crew to manage stress with the aim of preventing emotional and physical ill health. One way of achieving this may be to implement counselling facilities for this group of workers. The practice of psychological counselling in the workplace has continued to grow, and counselling psychologists are becoming increasingly involved in this field (Gyllensten, Palmer, and Farrants, 2005). This introduction starts with a description of available literature on generic work stress

and work-life conflict before proceeding to discuss contemporary research within the field of cabin crew work requirements and their mental health.

1. 1 Generic work stress

1.1.2 Definition of work stress

Work stress has become a major concern in recent years because of the potential impact on both employee wellbeing and performance. Although stress has been defined in different ways over the years, the generally accepted definition today is one of interaction between the situation or context and the individual (Cooper and Marshall, 1976; Michie, 2002). It is the psychological and physical state that results when the resources of the individual are insufficient to cope with the demands and pressure of the situation;

> '*Stress occurs when pressure exceeds your perceived ability to cope*'
>
> (Palmer, Gyllensten, and Farrants, 2005, p. 20)

Previous research has examined several different kinds of stressors, including aspects of the employee's role, particular job demands and characteristics, and facets of the physical work environment (Judge and Colquitt, 2004). The most common detrimental outcomes include mental and physical ill health such as anxiety, depression and heart disease (Cooper and Marshall, 1976; Michie, 2002).

1.1.3 Stress management in the workplace

In light of the identified implications for the strenuous effects of work stress upon workers' wellbeing, research has focused upon prevention and intervention. There has been an increase in research into occupational health, with a particular focus on stress management in the workplace (Cox and Griffiths, 1995; Kagan, 1995; Tsutsumi and Kawakami, 2004). The prevention and management of workplace stress requires both individual approaches (training in assertiveness, time management, problem solving) and organisational approaches, ranging from structural (staffing levels, work schedule) to psychological interventions (control over work, social support) (Michie, 2002; Tsutsumi

and Kawakami, 2004). One reason for this is that there are many sources of stress that the individual is likely to perceive as outside his or her power to change, such as the structure, management style or culture of the organisation. Thus, stress management approaches that concentrate on changing the individual without changing the sources of stress may be of limited effectiveness, and may ultimately be counterproductive by masking these sources.

1.2 Work-life conflict

1.2.1 Importance of work-life conflict

The constraint of work-life conflict is deserving of attention for at least two important reasons. First, work-life conflict has been found to exert a negative influence on physical and mental wellbeing including cardiovascular illness, emotional exhaustion and depression (Siegel, Rost, and Garden, 2005; Wellens and Smith; 2006). On the organisational front, work-life conflict has been associated with absenteeism, turnover, reduced performance and lower organisational commitment (Judge et al., 2004; Siegel et al., 2005). A second reason for focusing on the importance of work-life conflict is the increasing prevalence of the phenomenon. The continuous demands for organisational growth and efficiency over the recent years have led to changes in working life with heavier work loads and increasing pressures on employees to spend a greater number of hours at work than ever before. These organisational transformations, along with recent trends of dual earning households and single parenthood, have contributed to a workforce that is increasingly experiencing work-life conflicts (Mauno, Kinnuen, and Ruoholainen, 2006).

1.2.2 Definition of work-life conflict

Work-life conflict refers to competing role pressures brought on by activities that are related versus unrelated to work, such as fulfilling one's work responsibilities, which make it difficult to attend to activities outside the work domain and vice versa (Mauno et

al., 2006). This process of negative interactions between the work and the home domain are thought to occur in three distinct ways (Van Hooff, Gerts, Kompier, and Taris, 2007). It may arise from demands that makes it physically impossible to be in two places at the same time such as, for example, when long hours in paid work prevent participation in family activities; from the spill over of strains from one domain to another including occasions when strains built up at work make it more difficult to relax at home; or when specific behaviours that are expected at work are incompatible with behaviours that are expected at home. For example, a psychologist may continue to act as a psychologist in his or her relationship with a partner or children, which may generate stress and concern among family members (Dallos and Draper, 2000)

1.2.3 Empirical research into work-life conflict

Although the results of empirical research have consistently shown that work demands negatively affect home life more than the other way around, recent research has asserted that a reciprocal relationship exists between the two realms (Baltes and Heydens-Gahir, 2003; Frone, Russel, and Cooper, 1992; Van Hoof et al., 2007). For example, if work stressors (e.g., work pressure, low autonomy, and role ambiguity) begin to interfere with personal obligations (e.g., family engagements, socialising, and domestic activities), it is reasonable to assume that these unfulfilled private responsibilities may then begin to interfere with work functions. As such, the two domains exert both direct and reciprocal influence on each other, and because of this close relationship, consideration of both types of conflict is necessary.

The literature on work and domestic living has linked several factors from both the work and the home domain to perceived levels of work-life conflict (Judge and Colquitt, 2004; Judge, Ilies, and Scott, 2006). Although much is known about the antecedents and consequences of work-life conflicts (Van Hoof et al, 2007), little is known yet about the existence and efficacy of coping strategies that may be used by individuals to reduce the amounts of stressors experienced both in the job and at home. While a number of coping strategies have been identified (social support, activities outside of work) as a buffer

against work stress (Bond and Bunce, 2003; Lightsey, 2006; Trenberth and Dewe, 2002), remarkably little attention has been paid to the processes involved in the within-person, day-to-day management of work and home demands. One reason for this is that the majority of research into work-home inferences typically measures single occasions of work-home incompatibilities, retrospectively, at times detached from the occurrence of specific activities and experiences (Van Hoof et al., 2007). Consequently, there is a need for further research to examine the use of coping strategies across both domains (i.e., work and home) at the same time before one can begin the task of helping employee's to better manage work-life conflicts. This might enable researchers to ascertain the context by, and the degree to which, individuals are thought to prioritise work goals over life at home and vice versa. The research outcome could then be documented and used to inform the practise of clinical and medical practitioners dealing with work stress including occupational health workers, GP's, counsellors, psychologists, and nurses.

1.2.4 Coping with work-life conflict

In an attempt to investigate behavioural strategies that may be used by individuals to reduce the amount of stressors experienced both on the job and at home, Baltes and Heydens-Gahir (2003) examined the effect of three types of behavioural categories on perceived levels of work-life conflict. These were a) general selection that referred to the degree to which individuals identify and set goals, b) optimisation, which incorporated the acquisition, refinements, and use of means to achieve goals, and c) compensation that included the acquisition and use of alternative means to maintain a given desired level of functioning. It was found that the use of general selection, optimisation, and compensation in both the work and the home domain were related to lower amounts of job and private stressors, and subsequently lower amounts of work-life conflict (Baltes and Heydens-Gahir, 2003).

It has to be noted that the above study specified behavioural categories (e.g., selection, optimisation, and compensation), and their decomposition are not comprehensive, which makes it difficult to ascertain the specific behaviours associated with the suggested

categories for managing work-life conflict. A second issue is whether the proposed categories are always functional. It is possible that an individual may set goals (selection) that, in the longer term, are counterproductive to stress management and wellbeing. For example, a person may sacrifice adequate sleep in order to allow sufficient time for simultaneous attention to heavy workloads and family demands. This could cause the individual to suffer from sleep deprivation, and stress associated with lack of sleep has been linked to a number of psychological problems such as anxiety and depression as well as a serious trigger for psychosis and schizophrenia (Hawton, Salkovskis, Kirk, and Clark, 1989).

1.2.5 Enhancing workers' ability to manage work-life conflict

A recent study on the moderating effect of work-home interference on reported physical and psychological wellbeing among non-shift workers suggests that some individuals, and also groups of workers, appear to achieve a higher level of work balance than others. Furthermore, a healthy work-balance was found to exert a positive influence on workers' physical and mental wellbeing (Van Hooff et al, 2007). However, it is difficult to ascertain as to what degree individual factors, such as personality styles or commitment to one's work and family life, encourages greater adjustment to both work and home life. On the contrary, it is equally possible that the coping strategies used by these workers to deal with work-life conflict produce favourable results.

One way of developing a comprehensive understanding of how one can best build the competencies needed for workers to manage both the work and the home domain might be to investigate the actions that results in healthy and positive workers despite conditions of adversity. The idea of using empirical investigations to enhance functional coping mechanisms is closely associated with positive psychology and its non-pathological approach to research activity (Snyder and Lopez, 2002). This is largely based on attempts to promote human qualities, such as psychological hardiness, resilience and adaptations, as a buffer against stress, anxiety and depression (Seligman and

Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). For example, in a study of coping and stress, hardiness[1] was identified as a psychological coping style that could modify the relationship between stress and illness (Lambert, Lambert, and Yamase, 2003). Workplace counselling is another way of ameliorating the adverse effects of stress with the expectation that it not only meets the needs of the individual employee but also demonstrate its efficacy in promoting organisational development and change (Elliot and Williams, 2002).

1.2.6 Counselling psychology in the workplace

Workplace stress is causing increased concerns within the United Kingdom (UK) and counselling psychologists are involved in tackling this problem. Within the British Psychological Society's (BPS) (2001) statement regarding counselling psychologists' areas of competence, it is stated that counselling psychologists work within the Employee Assistant Programs and Occupational Health Departments. Furthermore, the BPS explains that counselling psychologists in training should work in a wider range of modalities; one suggestion is that they work with organisations. Counselling psychologists can contribute to all areas in the working lives of clients (Orlans, 2003). In a qualitative study that sought to evaluate employee counselling in the Fire Brigade, clients identified specific areas of change including; cognitive and behavioural shifts, improvements to personal relationships, and enhanced ability to cope and work (Elliot and Williams, 2002).

It is recognised that counselling psychologists' expertise is especially relevant to issues pertaining to emotional management and work-life balance (Palmer, 2003). Research has found that CBT is effective in treating depression, anxiety (Sandler and Wills, 2005), and stress (Cartwright and Cooper, 2005). In addition, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines (Nice, 2004) for the treatment of anxiety, panic disorders and depression reported CBT psychological interventions has the strongest evidence base for both short- and long-term improvements. However, whether there is a single effective

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[1] Psychological hardiness has been defined as a personality style consisting of commitment, control, and challenge that encourages human survival and the enrichment of life through development (Lambert et al., 2003)

component that is best suited to treat workplace stress has yet to be established, though it would appear that the skills of the therapist may decide largely whether the treatment will be successful (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2005). The usefulness of the various methodologies needs to be studied further and stress reducing programmes run by organisations need to be critically assessed (Nicholson, 2006). The field of counselling psychology is an integrative approach that posits more than one research discourse, and therefore counselling psychologists may be specifically suited to the task of implementing and evaluating the usefulness of various therapeutic orientations for the management and treatment of workplace stress.

It is imperative for counselling psychologists to be aware of ethical issues within the context of organisational work as these may be different to other areas of practice (Hesketh, 2000). Confidentiality is an important issue to consider, as with certain organisations there may be a concern among employees that going to counselling will be viewed as a weakness, and will have a negative effect upon career opportunities such as promotions (Gyllensten et al., 2005). Due to the stigma, such as fear or mistrust, attached to counselling in some organisational settings certain clients may be reluctant to seek help at their workplace (Carroll, 1996). It is therefore likely that counselling psychologists working in primary care are faced with clients suffering from workplace stress who have been referred by their GP or a community mental health team (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2005). As such, practical recommendations on how to deal with the potential stigma associated with counselling in the workplace will be helpful for any counselling psychologist who seeks to promote psychological services within the organisational setting.

1. 3 Work stress in commercial aviation

The increased work demands placed on cabin crew have generated a number of concerns about the impact of work stress on the physical and psychological wellbeing of this group of workers, and the implications for aircraft and passenger safety (Ballard, Romito, Lauria, Vigilano, Caldora, Mazzanti, and Verdecchia, 2006; Eriksen, 2006; Patridge and

Goodman, 2006). The working environment of the modern commercial aircraft and the conditions in which airline cabin crew operate have been largely ignored in the industrial relations literature, and applied psychology. The apparent success stories concerning new low cost airlines such as Southwest airlines, Easy Jet and Ryanair seem to have intensified the competition within the airline industry, which in turn, has significantly increased work loads and additional stresses affecting cabin crew (Bor and Hubbard, 2006; Brown, Rushton, Schucher, Stevens, and Warren, 2001). Stress has also been triggered by the testing financial climate in which airlines operate, which in turn affect workloads and job security.

1.3.1 Health, safety and working conditions of cabin crew

In a review of existing literature on the health, safety and working conditions of airline cabin crews, a number of health and safety risks, about which workers received little, if any, information was identified (Boyd and Bain 1997; Richards, Cleland, and Zuckerman, 2006). This included exposure to poor air quality in cabins leading to increased level of airborne pollutants, recurring lethargy, headaches, and a range of influenza-type complaints. Another distinctive feature of the airline industry is that both aircraft and cabin crew are required to operate around the clock in order to maximize revenue causing sleeping difficulties and fatigue (Caldwell, 1997; Samel, Wegman, and Vejvoda, 1997; Waterhouse, Edwards, Atkinson, Reilly, Spencer, and Elsey, 2006). Moreover, cabin crew on transmedian flights, crossing different time zones have been found to suffer jetlag and significant disturbance in sleep quality after such journeys, regardless of directions of travel (Beh and McClaughlin, 1997; Richards et al., 2006; Sharma and Schrivastava, 2004). As such, the 'office' for cabin crew comprises a unique working environment, which places physiological and psychological strains upon the individual worker.

1.3.2 Psychological problems among cabin crew

In an overview of psychological problems among crew, professional counsellors working for a major UK airline set out to present a realistic picture of the lifestyle of a cabin crew member. Behind the 'plastic' smile and the groomed façade, the authors suggest a conflicting balance of home and work life; professional and personal relationships and a demanding mix of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills (Patridge and Goodman, 2006).

Initial attractions to the job were thought to include the opportunity to travel, to see the world, and to meet a range of differing peoples and cultures. However, realities such as a lack of control of lifestyle, being away from family and friends, and the difficulties in planning ahead were thought to deflate the perceived glamour associated with the opportunity to visit places and cultures that are beyond most people's reach. The physical implications of the job, such as compounded sleep deprivation, jetlag, and dehydration were also seen to take their toll, both mentally and emotionally. In addition, the constantly changing crews with a set of new colleagues on each travel abroad was thought to make it difficult to form stable and long lasting working alliances, resulting in a lack of continuity and development in work relations. The idea of brief and short-lasting relations at work has been supported by qualitative research of cabin crew work requirements and lifestyle issues (Eriksen, 2006)

A commitment to this kind of lifestyle also necessitates a consequential lack of investment in home life and often results in difficulties with establishing and maintaining personal relationships. When this is compounded by the fleeting nature of work relations, it can lead to a sense of loneliness and isolation. In particular, the sense of loneliness within a crowd, or when working closely within a team of people, was thought to be the most difficult kind to bear. It was concluded that further investigations pertaining to how cabin crew manage these psychological anomalies was needed before one can seek to understand the degree to which cabin crews' psychological wellbeing is affected by the atypical lifestyle (Partridge and Goodman, 2006).

1.4 Empirical research into cabin crews' performance and health

1.4.1 Sleep deprivation and Fatigue

Although research in commercial aviation covers a wide range of risks, the majority of studies tend to focus on negative consequences surrounding issues of sleep deprivation and fatigue. The topic has been well researched and findings from the studies have been taken into account in the development and implementation of flight time regulations (Price and Holley, 1990, Waterhouse et al., 2006). Fatigue associated with sleep loss, shift work and long duty cycles was found to cause cabin crew to become inattentive, careless and inefficient (Caldwell, 1997). One reason for this is thought to be the irregularity of the cabin crew shift pattern. The non-consistent alterations between day and night duties require rapid adjustments to forever changing sleep-cycles, and this can exert an additional toll on shift workers (Waterhouse et al., 2006). The only cure for fatigue is adequate sleep, and it has been suggested that cabin crew can improve their sleep habits and thus gain more restful sleep by using self administering relaxation therapy, and avoid certain activities or substances prior to sleep, such as heavy exercise and caffeine (Caldwell, 1997). However, gaining sufficient amounts of sleep is often difficult because of work requirements and family demands. It is thought that cabin crew relationships, when compared to other shift workers, are influenced by the added pressure of unique work requirements such as frequent, and often long periods, away from family or a partner (Eriksen, 2006). This can lead to prolonged episodes of separation from loved ones that adds to the 'traditional' everyday demands of personal relationships as experienced by the general population at large (Dallos and Draper, 2000).

1.4.2 Jetlag and accumulative sleep deprivation

Cabin crew are also prone to suffer from jetlag or disruption of the circadian rhythm caused by flying across time zones. The combined effects of shift work and long distance travel can cause a cumulative build up of sleep deprivation, and the gradual onset of reduced concentration and alertness can sometimes be difficult for the individual to pick up on (Caldwell, 1997; Price and Holley, 1990, Waterhouse et al., 2006). In a series of

surveys comprising nearly 500 cabin crew, jetlag was found to degrade attention, short-term memory, and decision making abilities (Sharma and Schrivastava, 2004). This implies that the entire cognitive system of cabin crew suffers, and impaired alertness or performance at work can have serious safety implications. These finding suggests that cabin crew need to be educated on the various aspects of jetlag and the airline has to implement a flight schedule to help them overcome the peculiar job related disorder. This may be of particular relevance to counselling psychologists in that their expertise and competence is thought to encompass the topic of sleep deprivation and cognitive and behavioural disruptions (Elliot and Williams, 2002). Cognitive behavioural therapy (e.g., Beck, Rush, Shaw, and Emery, 1979; Wells, 2000; Young, Klosko, and Weishaar, 2003) is used extensively in the treatment of cognitive impairments and is now central to the work of many counselling psychologists both within the NHS and the private sector.

1.5 Psychosocial sources of stress in commercial aviation

1.5.1 The cabin crew lifestyle

Most studies on the effect of jetlag and shift work patterns on aircrew have focused on work performance, and therefore the impact on safety of aircraft and passengers. However, there has been less focus on the impact of the combined effects of jetlag, shift work and lifestyle on the psychological health of crew. Interviews with cabin crew from major UK airlines revealed concerns over the combined effects of jetlag plus the stresses of work on their health, and respondents felt that this had not been thoroughly studied (Brown et al., 2001). Although there has been research on some of the individual aspects of employment as aircraft crew, the combination of jetlag, shift work, changes in time zones and lifestyle is unique to this particular occupational group (Eriksen, 2006).

1.5.2 Literature review on partnership, coping and mental health

In an overview of the mental health of pilots, it was found that the consequences of disruption to personal relationship upon aircrew mental health are not as yet sufficiently

understood and appreciated (Bor, Field, and Scragg, 2002). Whereas some studies demonstrate the importance of relationship support in predicting aircrew performance (Levy, Faulkner, Dixon, 1984; Rigg and Cosgrove), it may equally be that individual competency leads to a happier domestic life. It has been long recognised that stable, happy personal and social relationships can reduce the effect of stress in the workplace, while disruption to personal relationships may exacerbate stress leading to impaired performance at work and mental health risks (Dallos and Draper, 2000; Michie, 2002).

In a research on coping strategies of commercial airline pilots, it was found that overall mental health has a very close association with lack of autonomy at work, fatigue, and lack of sufficient social support (Sloan and Cooper, 1986). It appears that aircrew who lack sufficient emotional support from a significant life partner or spouse cannot cope with life events as well as aircrew who are emotionally supported by positive and meaningful relationships amongst friends, family, and partners. This suggests that family, friends, and a partner can function as an indispensable social support system, thus aiding the aircrew member in dealing effectively with psycho-social stressors.

Family issues, by way of contrast, could very well be the underlying cause for stress and emotional upsets. In an attempt to examine the level of congruence between aircrew and their partners on experiences of shift work and frequent absences from home, it was found that social/family problems were linked to a partner's ability to cope with aircrews' frequent travels abroad that often leads them to be away from home for long periods of time (Cooper and Sloan, 1985). Moreover, in a recent study of shift-working nurses and their partners, it was found that the partner's understanding of the particular lifestyle (e.g., sleep, fatigue) and own sense of personal disruption was critical to the experience of the shift worker regarding coping and work-life compatibilities (Newey and Hood, 2004).

Despite the outcome of studies suggesting that stable relationships may help mitigate the effects of work stress, a fuller appreciation of the effects of life disruptions on aircrew who frequently leave home to perform their flying duties is required before one can begin

to understand the reciprocal relationship between work demands and aircrew personal relationships. This issue could be addressed by ideally looking at how aircrew on a daily basis cope with stress and personal relationships (Karlins, Koss, and McCully, 1989). This reflects the wider literature on generic work-life conflicts in that, to date, very few studies have attempted to explore the use of everyday coping strategies across domains, such as work and at home, at the same time (Van Hooff et al., 2007).

The idea that the social support partners provide for each other has positive effects on each person's wellbeing as well as his or her satisfaction with the relationship is reflected in the practical guidelines for psychological therapy with couples (Datillio, 1998, Eipstein and Baucom, 2002). It has long been recognised that relationship difficulties, whether influenced by stress, physical separation, or other forms of conflict, are amenable to counselling (Dattilio, 1998; Eipstein and Baucom, 2002). This implies that counselling psychologists can play an important role in helping cabin crew to deal with the wider impacts of work requirements on their personal relationships. Counselling psychologists give a broad consideration to the role of stressors and their impact on the relationship when attempting to help a couple restore social support interactions and overcome relationship distress. It is thought that counselling psychologists' skills can influence the way in which cabin crew and a partner adapt to changes and problems in their lives. This can occur on three levels as follows; 1) couple therapy with cabin crew and their partner, 2) individual therapy with a specific focus on techniques for enhancing communication, satisfaction, and social support within the individual's personal relationship[2], 3) organisational involvement such as helping employees' to deal with relationship distress either through practical recommendations or by providing details on access to various forms of psychological interventions in the NHS, private setting, or other specific helping organisations. This may help to reduce emotional stress associated with relationship discord, and therefore serve as an important buffer against ill health in the workplace (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2005).

[2] Although it is recognised that couple therapy may be more effective than individual therapy for alleviating marital or partnership distress (Eipstein and Baucom, 2002), it is important to consider how the cabin crew work schedule combined with a partners hours of work may complicate their ability to attend as a couple.

1. 6 Qualitative studies of cabin crew work-life conflict

In a qualitative study of cabin crew, six female flight attendants were interviewed to identify possible work related sources of psychosocial stress and their health effects (Lauria, Ballard, Corradi, Scaravelli, Sgorbissa, and Verdecchia, 2004). The authors identified fifteen common themes, each of which was organised into five domains. In the first domain, orientating towards 'positive and negative aspects' of the job, respondents learned over time that the benefits of travel and variable schedule exacted a price in terms of stability of family and social relationships, general well-being and good health. In the second domain concerning *perception of occupational risk for serious disease*, participants expressed lack of protection by employer with respect to workplace exposure. In the third domain *compatibility of work with family roles and social relationships*, participants talked about the stress of having to adapt to home life after returning from a long tour of duty. This covered, tension between the public self and the private self, failed marriage, and guilt derived from absence at events such as marriages or birthdays. In the fourth domain *relationship with colleagues*, participants described relationships with colleagues as supportive, especially in terms of normalising job related experiences, but of short-duration due to the composition of the crew changes with each flight. In the fifth domain, *experience of work related sources of stress and their effects on health*, participants indicated that mental health was a major concern, and several work related risk factors related to adverse outcomes, such as depression and anxiety, were highlighted.

Within each domain, participants appeared to dedicate much discussion to the topic of mental health, stress, and balancing work and life outside of work (Lauria et al., 2004). In other words, stress and mental health were of concern to this category of working people and a key source of adverse effects on wellbeing seemed to be the difficulties involved in balancing work and personal life due to the frequent absence from home and little control over work schedules.

It is important to emphasise that participants in this study were all females. It is unsure whether the personal problems experienced by female cabin crew need special attention. The demands placed on cabin crew may be much less acceptable to the male partners of female aircrew than to the female partners of male aircrew (Nicholson, 2006). Thus, it is possible that the use of a mixed gender sample would produce a different outcome. The need for follow up qualitative research in order to put the findings of the current research into context is clearly indicated. In particular, it may be useful to explore the actions or strategies used by this population to deal with their experience of work-related stress. Qualitative research is particularly appropriate to answering questions such as 'How' or 'What' as opposed to 'Why', and because it is so effective in examining process, it is ideal for the understanding of the cabin crew coping process in depth (Creswell, Hanson, Plano-Clark, and Morales, 2007, Hoshmand, 2003; Morrow, 2007; Ponterotto, 2002). The research outcome could then be incorporated into organisational training procedures and/or counselling practises with the aim of educating existing crew as well as new recruits on the various coping strategies that is thought to reduce work stress. This may serve to reduce the risk of mental health problems among workers as adaptive coping is thought to enhance psychological resilience and positive wellbeing (Moos and Schaefer, 1993).

1.7 Qualitative explorations of how cabin crew deal with work stress

In a qualitative study of 8 long haul cabin crew from major UK airlines, Eriksen (2006) carried out semi-structured in-depth interviews in order to discover their views on the effects of work related stress on mental health, and how to deal with this. A thematic analysis of the interview data gave rise to three themes: a) accumulative sleep deprivation, b) constant strives to balance work with life outside of work, and c) frequent disruptions to social and personal relationships. The complexity involved in balancing work-life conflicts, often against a background of jetlag and fatigue, was found to exacerbate the risk of anxiety, depression, and loneliness among this group of workers. In particular, sleep deprivation was thought to degrade cabin crews' threshold for dealing with emotional stress during events of personal difficulties including relationship discord,

bereavement, or physical health issues. When faced with complex and seemingly incompatible issues such as sacrificing sleep in order to restore social and personal relations or minimising sleep deprivation at the expense of relationships, the degree of psychological disturbance seemed to depend upon higher order decision making processes. This included quick computations of negative consequences pertaining to one threat in comparison to another (Eriksen, 2006).

1.7.1 Managing goal conflict

Findings of emergent connections between the above stressors appeared to give rise to goal conflicts perhaps indicating the existence of an additional higher level process utilised to combat high levels of stress and emotional wellbeing (Eriksen, 2006). Future research in commercial aviation may wish to investigate the interaction between physical and psycho-social health threats, and thereby the current knowledge can be extended to include the apparent goal conflict in the management of cabin crews' emotional wellbeing. It is evident from the research outcome that medical problems may arise in cabin crew. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach may be needed to separate physical health issues that are incidental to the lifestyle from those that may arise specifically from the working conditions onboard the aircraft itself. This would ideally involve the disciplines of psychology and medicine working more closely together. It is possible that the cognitive disruptions arising from jetlag and fatigue could be managed by combining psychological interventions that seek to restore cognitive functioning with appropriate administration of sleep medication that may prevent crew from developing jetlag and fatigue in the first place.

What also emerged from the interviews was that despite strong commonalities, especially the apparent agreement of the experience of psychological distress, the process of coping with work-life related stress was a complex and perhaps idiosyncratic process (Eriksen, 2006). Although this would seem logical since each cabin crew member's experience would have been completely unique, it is uncertain whether the findings were due to individual differences in motivations to do the job and expectations beforehand, social

support network, the positional role within the company such as purser, manager or main crew, or length of service and so on, or a simple reflection of the relatively small sample utilised.

It may be useful to look at individual aspects of the unusual lifestyle in more depth in order to build up a comprehensive theoretical understanding of the process through which cabin crew deal with mental health risks. This could be achieved by using a more inductive method of investigation such as grounded theory, which is thought to be particularly suited for studying process and the task of constructing a theoretical model in areas characterised by a lack of theoretical understanding. A major strength of grounded theory resides in it's applicability across substantive areas achieved through inductive analyses that theorise connections between local worlds and larger social structures (Charmaz, 2006). Thus, grounded theory is thought to facilitate the process of transporting an analysis of the atypical work patterns experienced by cabin crew to other groups of shift workers such as, for example, medical practitioners, lorry drivers or the police. This can have important practical implications for counselling psychologists in that the research outcome could inform their clinical practise with a wide(r) range of workers who are thought to suffer from work-related illness such as stress, anxiety, and depression (Gyllensten et al., 2005, Van Hoof et al., 2007).

1.8 Quantitative research into cabin crew mental health

A small number of surveys have attempted to understand the psychological wellbeing of cabin crew. One study of female flight attendants found that job stressors such as mental and psychological demands, imbalance between job demands and outside obligations, low supervisor support, and job dissatisfaction were predictors of psychological distress (Ballard, Romito, Lauria, Vigilano, Caldora, Mazzanti, and Verdecchia, 2006). Among the findings regarding current cabin crew: 47% perceived their health as fair or poor, 17% felt psychological distress, 10% had no form of social support, 39% had a history of serious depression, 14% had suicidal thoughts and 3% had attempted suicide. Ballard et al's (2006) result suggests that four out of ten cabin crews were thought to have

experienced extended periods of low mood. According to the National Association for Mental Health (2007) the average incidence of depression in England and Wales is thought to be 10% of the population (www.mind.org.uk). This indicates that the risk of depression amongst cabin crew may be four times higher than the average British population. Ballard et al (2006) attributed the high percentage of psychological problems amongst cabin crew to conflicts arising between family and work demands, which could be a source of stress and depression. She also noted that many flight attendants described their work as '*crushing*' and '*destabilising*'.

Ballard et al's (2006) study of Italian female flight attendants has raised awareness of the soaring percentage of mental health problems amongst the cabin crew population:

> *"Although work as a flight attendant is often stressful, tiring, and disruptive, little has been written on the psychological health effects of this type of work"* (Ballard et al, 2006, p.1)

Although this has helped us to appreciate the need for further research in the specific field of the cabin crew profession, the above findings also serve to highlight the adverse impact of work stress on the psychological wellbeing of the wider working population. Whilst it is recognised that the discipline of psychology is becoming increasingly involved in the task of combating stress in the workplace, the management of emotional stress and wellbeing in the workplace is identified as an under-researched area plagued by uncertainty and complexity (Elliot and Williams, 2002; Gyllensten et al., 2005; Palmer, 2003).

1.8.1 Limitations of quantitative research

The use of a quantitative approach such as a survey, questionnaire or a structured interview could potentially limit what the respondent has to say, given the lack of flexibility, and thereby not reveal vital and enlightening information about the full dynamics of the job and its impact upon cabin crew mental health. For example, it is not clear as to what degree Ballard et al's (2006) high percentage of psychological disturbance could be attributed to stress arising from the job itself, disrupted personal

relationships, or the interplay between the two domains. This is based on a positivist conception of empirical science that seeks to discover 'objective facts' about the world largely through measurements of what is observable (Breakwell, Hammond, and Fife-Schaw, 2000). In contrast, qualitative research tends to be rooted in an ontological and epistemological perspective that emphasises a search for meaning and how meanings are constructed and experienced by individuals and societies, primarily through the medium of the language. Consequently, qualitative research is more concerned with interpretations denoting attention to complexity, process, and ambiguity rather than the discovery of objective precisions (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, and Tindall, 1994). Thus, a qualitative method could enhance the current understanding of the complexity surrounding the crew lifestyle, coping, and mental health with the intention of subsequent development of the data through further quantitative investigations.

1. 9 Research aim and question

Based upon the strong link between the influence of work requirements on aircrew relationships and their psychological wellbeing (Ballard et al., 2006; Bor et al., 2002; Eriksen, 2006; Karlins et al, 1989; Lauria et al., 2004; Partridge & Goodman, 2006; Van Hoof et al., 2007) the current research aims to explore the following;

- The various elements of professional, personal, and social relationships, both individual and organisational ones, which could be seen to exacerbate or ameliorate psychological wellbeing (e.g. Bor et al, 2002; Brown et al, 2001; Dallos and Draper, 2000; Lauria et al., 2004; Partridge and Goodman, 2006; Van Hoof et al., 2007)
- An exploration of coping process adopted by workers to deal with the impact of work requirements on professional, personal, and social relationships as coping is known to mediate outcome such as wellbeing or deterioration (e.g. Eriksen, 2006, Karlins et al., 1998, Moos and Schaefer, 1993)
- The combined influence of the various elements of the cabin crew lifestyle on both the nature and the outcome of the coping initiated to deal with professional,

social, and personal relationships (e.g. Bor et al., 2002, Calwell, 1997, Eriksen, 2006, Waterhouse et al, 2006).

1.9.1 Research question

The proposed central research question (CRQ) is:

How does long haul travel affect personal, social, and professional relationships, and what are the implications for cabin crew coping and their psychological well-being?

The CRQ will be split into three Theory Questions which forms the basis for the interview guide, which can be viewed in Appendix 6.

1. What are the elements, both individual and organisational ones that influence cabin crews' personal, social and professional relationships[3]?

2. In what ways do cabin crew deal with the influence of long haul travels on their personal, social, and professional relationships? Do these coping strategies work[4]?

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[3] It is important to begin the investigation by determining both the organisational dynamics e.g., frequent absence from home, fatigue and jetlag etc. and the personal obligations e.g., size of social network, quality of personal relationships, marital status etc. that may contribute towards degrees of stability or disruptions within cabin crew relationships. As has been suggested by the literature on work-life conflict, a reciprocal relationship exists between stress arising from work and disrupted personal living (Frone et al., 1992; Baltes & Heydens-Gahir, 2003; Van Hoof et al., 2007). The two domains exert both direct and reciprocal influence on each other, and because of this close relationship, consideration of both type of conflict is necessary.

[4] Brown et al., (2001), Laura et al., (2004), Partridge & Goodman, (2006), and Eriksen (2006) all point out that there is a need to explore the range and type of coping strategies adopted by workers in order to develop a fuller appreciation of the complexity that constitutes cabin crew work and its effect on psychological health. According to the coping literature, individual's faced by threats of physical or psychological illnesses are motivated to maintain equilibrium and the task or skills utilised to deal with the situation will determine the outcome such as wellbeing or deterioration (Moos & Schaefer, 1993). To date, the complexity of cabin crew coping is thought to exceed the capacities of any existing model or past literature in this area.

3. How does the potential stability or instability of personal, social, and professional relationships affect cabin crew psychological health[5]?

[5] In the light of previous research, it is thought that disruptions to relationships will pose the most serious threat of psychological distress amongst cabin crew (Bor et al., 2003; Lauria et al., 2004; Partridge and Goodman, 2006; Eriksen, 2006). However, it is important to note that this does not rule out the potential adverse effects of other aspects of the cabin crew lifestyle such as jetlag and fatigue, social support networks, or characteristics pertaining to physical wellbeing. As noted by Eriksen (2006), the physical and psycho-social adversity of long haul travels appears to be inter-linked, and therefore, it is possible that differing elements of the lifestyle will influence both the nature and the outcome of the coping initiated to deal with professional and personal relationships concerns.

2. Methodology

2.1 Overview and aim

The present study employed a qualitative methodology based on the grounded theory approach to explore the particular lifestyle experienced by cabin crew (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The aim was to develop a clearer understanding of the complex and ambiguous nature of the combined impacts of erratic shift patterns and frequent absence from home on cabin crews' personal, social, and professional relationships.

The decision to apply a qualitative framework for inquiry was influenced by a combination of philosophical, pragmatic and professional considerations (Banister, Burman, Taylor, and Tindall, 1994). This involved active engagement with the complex assumptions underlying the range of research methods available, the specific nature of the present research and the researcher's own perceptions within this context. It was hoped that creative and reflective reasoning about the above topics would inform and guide the selection of an appropriate methodology that would best enable the researcher to accomplish a systematic inquiry of the topic under investigation.

2.2 Research Methods in Psychology

As Banister et al (1994) have suggested it becomes difficult to define or explain qualitative research without counterpoising it to those methods in psychology that rests upon quantification. On a simplistic level, the quantitative approach assumes there is an objective reality to be measured. This is based on a positivist conception of empirical science that seeks to discover the world largely through measurements of what is observable. The philosophy of positivism advocates the belief that descriptions of phenomena, including human experiences and social behaviour, are reducible to observable 'facts' and the numerical relationship between those facts (Breakwell, Hammond, and Fife-Schaw, 2000). In contrast, the qualitative approach is a

methodologically stance that emphasises the way in which human events and experiences, if reduced to numerical forms, lose most of their important meaning and value. This approach, drawing on the theory of hermeneutics, is more concerned with interpretations denoting attention to complexity, process, and ambiguity as opposed to 'discovery' of generalised 'laws' thought to govern human behaviours and actions. The focus is more on hypotheses and theory generation rather than on theory verification, as is the case with most quantitative research (Ponterotto, 2002).

2.3 Defining Qualitative Methodology

There are two contrasting philosophical movements that ground qualitative research into distinctive models of the person and the social world; post-positivism (realism) and post-modernism (social constructivism, critical theory, feminism) each underpinned by specific assumptions that require different strategies of enquiry. A realist view aims to put psychology on a more secure scientific basis by insisting that there is probably a single truth waiting to be described, and that an adequate account of reality can be developed by intensive study of particular cases (idiographic study) (Harre, 1974). A constructionist, on the other hand, sees science as a form of knowledge which creates as well as describes the world; all knowledge is thought to produce images of the world that then operate as if they were true (Gergen, 1985). There is no unitary way of perceiving or explaining reality or meaning; multiple constructed realities and meanings may co-exist.

2.4 Rationale for a Qualitative Methodology

As Banister et al (1994) have proposed, choices about research methodology may be informed both by philosophical and pragmatic considerations. A pragmatic approach highlights the practical nature of research with the belief that decisions about methodology are often influenced more by professional legacy and realistic considerations about goals and available recourses than by the researcher's ideological or theoretical inclinations (Richardson, 2001). On a mechanical level, qualitative research has been identified as particularly valuable when examining areas that are characterised

by intricacy, uncertainty or a lack of prior research, understanding or knowledge. This could provide, as suggested by Murdock (2006), a foundation for more deductive forms of research that could challenge or confirm existing findings. Thus, development of knowledge, regardless of the specific methods used to gain access to reality (epistemology), are thought to incorporate cyclic endeavours whereby existing understandings are modified and extended through further research in the specific field.

When considering the context of the present research, the specific lifestyle experienced by cabin crew is identified as an under-researched area plagued by uncertainty and complexity. Moreover, the potential adverse effect of this particular way of life on cabin crews' psychological wellbeing is characterised by a lack of previous research and theory. Given the ambiguous nature of the topic and the paucity of literature, it seemed suitable to employ a research method that would enable an explorative, inductive approach with the aim of generating a foundation for future corroborative research. It is possible that further development of the literature in this area would allow the researcher in future research to extract clearly defined research questions that could then be studied using a more structured, deductive method of investigation.

At the philosophical level, choosing a research methodology may also be influenced by the way a researcher perceives and defines reality (ontology) and what he or she believes to be the most fruitful way of gaining access to that account of reality (epistemology). This in turn, brings the researcher to consider his or her views on what science is and the type of enquiry (methodology) that would appear suitable for scientific investigations. Richardson (2001) has suggested that qualitative research is rooted in a perspective of ontology that emphasizes the multiple constructions of reality and the co-existence of manifold meanings. Epistemology advocates search for meanings with particular focus on how meanings are experienced by societies, individuals, social groups, and organisations. The process of gaining access to meaningful material is primarily mediated by the medium of language, and there is more focus on interpretation and analysis of spoken or written text as opposed to numerical facts (Banister et al., 1994)

In relation to the present research, a qualitative method seemed particularly suitable for both the philosophical position and the pragmatic characteristics of the topic in question. It was important to employ a method that would be able to interact with and to capture the range of experiences, views and multiple meanings held by cabin crew who all had been involved with the long haul profession for a relatively long period of time (5-15y). The qualitative paradigm regards the researcher as someone who is actively participating in the creation of data generation rather than an impartial objective observer of facts. The researcher is believed to affect as well as being affected by those who part take in the inquiry, and therefore a qualitative approach that emphasised the researcher's engagement with reflexive aspects of the research process was appropriate (Charmaz, 2006). It was anticipated that such a method would enable the researcher to pay attention to the impact of the research on participants, and encourage reflective thoughts on her developing relationship, perception and view of the cabin crew lifestyle and its effect on psychological wellbeing.

2.5 Counselling Psychology and Qualitative Research

As Richardson (2001) points out verdicts about methodology may also be dependant on professional inheritance. Thus, appraisals concerning the relative suitability of one research method in favour of another might have been influenced by the researcher's experience of the particular philosophical and theoretical orientations underpinning the discipline of counselling psychology.

Counselling psychology is informed by a number of philosophical stances underlying issues of development and change, and the social and cultural context within which such human development occurs (McLeod, 2001). It is embedded in the discipline of psychology and concerns itself with applied areas of psychological work, which overlap with the provinces of psychotherapy, clinical psychology, generic psychology and psychiatry. The paradigmatic perspectives and underpinnings of counselling psychology as well as qualitative research are multiple. In relation to the present research, adopting a design which is based on an interpretivist – constructivist paradigm was appropriate

because of the aim of exploring the multiple realities and co-existent meanings attached to the particular lifestyle experienced by long haul cabin crew. This is consistent with the relativist ontology of counselling psychology in which there are as many realities as there are clients (participants), and in which meanings are often co-constructed by clients (participants) and therapists (researchers), implying a transactional and subjective epistemology (Morrow, 2007).

In keeping with counselling psychology's historic focus on a non-pathologising approach and using a positive coping model, a constructivist perspective acknowledges that there are multiple ways for people to resolve problems and multiple professional roles and information systems for supporting people in distress (McLeod, 2001). The idea of multiple ways of dealing with a specific phenomenon was thought to be of particular importance to the present enquiry when considering how the somewhat atypical nature of the cabin crew profession may essentially call for diverse and differing ways of coping.

Consistency is also evident between the use of pluralistic methods of enquiry, be it quantitative or qualitative, and the fact that the discipline of counselling psychology has itself been identified as being founded on a post-modern, pluralistic and integrative philosophy (Woolfe, Dryden, and Strawbridge 2003). Given the lack of prior research or existing theories that would enable the researcher to construct pre-defined research questions about the cabin crew experience of their lifestyle, a qualitative approach particularly suitable for theory building was chosen with the aim of facilitating more deductive, verifying research.

2.6 Rationale for using Grounded Theory

The qualitative approach is not itself a unitary tradition but one that is inspired by a diversity of philosophical perspectives and methods. There is no single qualitative method, and as pointed out by Banister et al., (1994), quite different aims will be accomplished by different interpretative approaches.

Grounded theory is a method of conducting qualitative research that focuses on creating conceptual frameworks or theories through building inductive analysis from the data (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The term 'inductive' implies a specific way of thinking that begins with the study of a range of individual cases, extracting, general patterns from them to then form a conceptual category. Hence, the analytic categories are thought to be directly 'grounded' in the data. Although it is a creative approach, the analytic process in grounded theory is guided by a set of systematic strategies, including constant comparison between the data and the researcher's growing conceptualisations (Charmaz, 2006). Methods of refining and expanding a data categorisation are thought to bring the researcher towards increasing levels of abstractions. These are characterised by higher intensity of integration and coherent rationales of the relationships between significant features of the data. These procedures eventually lead to the construction of a theory, which may then be tested, modified and extended through further research activity with the aim of expanding the presented knowledge of the social world.

A distinguishing feature of grounded theory, when compared to other qualitative methods, is the idea of subsequent refinement of its findings from the original context to other settings (Charmaz, 2006). This has led some writers to suggest a close affiliation with the quantitative paradigm that has gained grounded theory acceptance from quantitative researchers who sometimes adopt it in projects that use mixed methods (Creswell, et al., 2007). This indicates that grounded theory may provide a particularly appropriate choice where there is an intention to subsequently examine and develop the data generated through further quantitative investigations, as is the case with the present research.

Furthermore, a major strength of grounded theory resides in its applicability across substantive areas achieved through inductive analyses that theorise connections between local worlds and larger social structures (Charmaz, 2006). In relation to the aims of the present study, grounded theory was thought to facilitate the process of transporting an

analysis of the atypical work patterns experienced by cabin crew to other groups of shift workers such as, for example, medical practitioners, lorry drivers or the police.

However, the grounded theory approach, in its original form (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), has also been accused of illustrating a range of characteristics that indicates an underlying positivist/empirical stance, which does not fit a fundamental qualitative philosophy. Charmaz (2006) points out how earlier versions of the approach emphasised grounded theory as a method of 'discovering' theory as emerging from data separate from the scientific observer. In her constructionist revision of grounded theory, with particular emphasis on the subjective character of the research process and the nature of co-constructed meanings, Charmaz (2006) moves the method towards more contemporary post-modernist views of science and the nature of research. She assumes that neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, grounded theories are constructed through our involvement with people, perspectives and research practices. Given the post-modern philosophical position of the present research, it was thought that Charmaz's (2006) revised comprehension of grounded theory would be particularly suitable for the current study.

2.7 The selection of Grounded Theory over the Narrative Approach, Thematic Analysis and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

At a most fundamental level, various types of qualitative enquiry differ in what each is trying to accomplish and in the product that the qualitative researcher has at the end of the study (Creswell et al, 2007).The selection of a grounded theory approach for the present research was made following in- depth considerations given to the number of qualitative approaches available.

For example, a detailed picture of an individual's stories forms the basis of a narrative approach that seeks to understand and inform the problem under investigation (Chase, 2005). This approach was rejected in the present research because of its primary analytic focus on chronology, elements of a story and re-storying. Such an approach was not

considered well suited to the broader levels of analysis that would be required to enable the representation of participants' experiences, their personal and shared meanings, as well as the generation of relevant themes and hypothetical propositions to account for these.

Thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1988) is an approach to qualitative data that attempts to do right both to the elements of the specific research question and to the perceptions and beliefs held by the participants. An important part of thematic analysis is the persistent effort to identify all of the items of information which appear to relate to a set of pre-defined research questions. These are then organised under separate thematic headings. This approach was rejected because the deductive characteristics of thematic analysis were considered overly rigid with the risk of forging data into preconceived themes. It was felt that a more supple, creative and fluid approach to the generation of categories would be particularly suitable to the exploratory nature of the study as well as more consistent with the post modern constructivist epistemology of the research.

The interpretive nature of grounded theory is closely aligned to the basic assumptions underpinning the interpretative phenomenology approach (Smith, 1995). This method seeks to understand the experiences of participants using several individuals who have shared the same realities. It places great emphasis on the researcher's interpretation of the data and ultimately attempts to describe, as opposed to 'theorise', the narrative accounts of participants' subjective inner experiences about a particular topic or issue. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was rejected in favour of grounded theory because it adopts a simpler analytic method with less emphasis on an overarching theory to account for the complexity that emerges from the data. It was thought that grounded theory would provide a more direct account of participants' perceptions and views of how they experience and manage their social worlds in the wake of irregular hours and long absences from home. Given the lack of theory in existing literature on the cabin crew lifestyle, grounded theory is particularly suited to the aims of the present study.

3. Validity & Reliability

"*Criteria for evaluating research depend on who forms them and what purposes he or she invokes*" (Charmaz, 2006, p182).

Qualitative researchers recognise a complex and dynamic world. It involves the researcher's active engagement with participants and acknowledging that understanding is constructed and that multiple realities exist. The recent desirability of qualitative research requires similar emphasis in the development for assessing its quality (Mary and Pope, 2002). In an article on the development of qualitative psychology in the November edition of the 'Psychologist', Keegan (2006) highlights the many approaches used to assess the quality of qualitative studies. The article concludes that there is a further need to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the general criteria required to evaluate the value of a qualitative research. This is thought to be of specific importance when considering the risk of default verdicts arising from the use of quantitative principles (with its distinct model of science, the person, and the world) to judge qualitative research (Banister et al., 1994).

Within qualitative research it does not make sense to subject the methodology and data to the same validity and reliability criteria for quantitative research (Smith, 2001; Silverman, 2005). The search for both reliability and validity in quantitative research rests on the assumption that it is possible to replicate good research. The essential notion here is consistency, the extent to which the measurement device or test yields the same approximate results when used repeatedly under similar conditions. In contrast, qualitative research acknowledges that a replication of the research will yield different results because of the different researcher, participants and meanings of the research tool over time. As such, replication in qualitative research has more to do with reinterpreting the findings from a different standpoint or exploring the same issues in different contexts rather than expecting or desiring consistent accounts (Silverman, 2005).

Yardley (2000) has proposed a set of *useful characteristics* that can be applied to ensure that qualitative research have a set of standards to adhere to that are meaningful and different from quantitative research. She suggested the following labels; sensitivity to context, commitment and rigor, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. Although it is recognised that there are many different ways to evaluate qualitative research (Keegan, 2006; Mays and Pope, 2000; Silverman, 2005; Smith, 2001), Yardley's (2000) concepts can be thought of as general guidelines for evaluating a broad range of qualitative research. Given that the present study utilised a grounded theory approach, Yardley's (2000) recommendations will be related to the particular expectations for grounded theory studies to demonstrate how the current research can be seen to have adequate quality.

3.1 Sensitivity to context

A researcher's sensitivity to the context of the study is about thoughtfully balancing their attitude to existing theory, literature, and the data that is gained. A researcher, through professional and personal experiences as well as reading relevant literature, can come to the research situations with various degrees of knowledge, expectations and assumptions about a particular field. Although some awareness of the relevant literature and previous related empirical work is essential for the planning and implementation stage of the research, implicit understandings might colour the researcher's perception and interpretation of the material collected (Charmaz, 2006). For example, the present researcher's experience of the cabin crew profession allowed her to move into the situation and gain insight more quickly than someone who has never studied the cabin crew lifestyle. On the other hand, the particular knowledge gained from prior insight into the profession could equally well influence her ability to perceive significant issues that have become routine or 'obvious'.

In grounded theory, this is known as *theoretical sensitivity*, which refers to the researcher's ability to keep a balance between '*that which is created by the researcher and the real*' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). In the present study, a number of strategies

were used to enhance *theoretical sensitivity*. The researcher followed the research procedures advocated by grounded theory, which in turn, was thought to ensure that the proposed findings emerged from the participants' accounts as opposed to a mere reflection of the researcher's own pre-conceptions about the field. This involved 'opening up the data' by using persistent questioning (what, where, how, why, and whom), advocating constant comparisons both within data and between differing sets of data, theoretical sampling to facilitate further and deeper understandings of the emergent themes, and detailed memo-writings to keep a systematic account of the researcher's growing reflexive analyses of both the research process and the data. The use of memos[6] was perceived as a particular useful way of establishing a bridge between creative 'personal' imaginations and scientific theorising of an emergent phenomenon. For example, the exploration of the various possible meanings attached to participant's account of 'the process of stigmatisation' was thought to centralise, rather than deny, the influence of the researcher's life experience on the research and the construction of knowledge.

3.2 Commitment and rigor

The present researcher undertook all the aspects of the study, from the original research designs to the write up. The actual research aspects involved 2 years of independent study of the cabin crew lifestyle and pertaining mental health issues. Moreover, the researcher had undertaken previous MSc research on how cabin crew deal with work stress, which has been published in a book on aviation mental health (Bor & Hubbard, 2006). Thus, it is felt that this demonstrates a full immersion and particular interest in the specific area of applied counselling psychology. The procedure of the research was undertaken in a systematic manner throughout the 2 years of full-time study and full-time employment with a UK based airline, and regular consultations were carried out with the researcher's supervisor. In addition to the above engagements, the researcher's three year full-time training as a counselling psychologist with clinical practice of a diverse range of

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[6] An illustration of the researcher's developing reflective quality through the use of memo-writing is provided in Appendix 11.

psychological presentation is thought to have generated a firm foundation for a broad understanding of the diverse range of coping processes thought to regulate an individual's mental health. The unique combination of the researcher's experience of the cabin crew occupation and counselling psychology training was felt to indicate a high degree of commitment to the research and the particular topic under investigation.

In addition, it is also necessary to consider the aspect of rigor or the resulting completeness of the data collection and analysis. In grounded theory this would be demonstrated by the interplay between theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation in order to enable the researcher to transcend and go beyond commonsense (Charmaz, 2006). Thus within this study, by the progressively increasing depth of the analysis, and the considerable focus given to the researcher's reflective interpretations of the complex processes arising from the data, it was felt that this research fulfils the requirements of rigor[7].

As previously mentioned, participants were invited to comment on the analysis, on a volunteer basis. This technique contributes to the rigor of the study, as the researcher demonstrates a concern with ensuring that the analysis is directly grounded in the data. Whilst is recognised that this method, known as *member checking* (Charmaz, 2006) or *participant validation* (Silverman, 2005), can be a problematic procedure, it is also thought to be a valid strategy for checking the credibility of the research. It was hoped that participants' feedback would illuminate potential gaps in the researcher's thinking about the data and thereby reduce potential errors or misinterpretations within the analysis. A summary of emergent categories was emailed to 3 participants who had agreed to comment on the analysis[8]. Their response was brief and positive with no indications of major errors or misunderstandings. This indicates that they were satisfied with the congruence between their experiences and the researcher's interpretations of the data.

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[7] Please see section 5 for specific details on grounded theory procedures advocated by this research.

[8] Please see Appendix 7 for a copy of the letter inviting participants to provide feedback on tentative categories.

3.3 Transparency and Coherence

Transparency and coherence are important at the presentation level and therefore require the write-up of the research to be extensive in providing details as to how the research and analysis were carried out. The transparency aspects require the researcher to be open about all aspects of the research process and thus a level of reflectivity by the researcher has been utilised throughout the present research process to ensure that all aspects of the process are explicitly documented. To ensure transparency in the coding process of identifying progressively higher level analysis, various extracts from the interviews were included in the analysis section. Moreover, systematic documentation of the various products arising from the different stages of the coding procedure was provided in the analysis section along with a number of related appendices. This was thought to enable readers to develop an appreciation of how the researcher's interpretation of the outcome was ultimately grounded in the data (Charmaz, 2006).

In addition, the researcher utilised the method of '*independent auditing*' to ensure that her growing conceptualisation of the data was credible and justified in terms of the information collected (Smith, 2001). This was found to be a valuable approach that contributed to the quality of the transparency within the study. It involved the recruitment of an independent researcher to read through relevant transcripts of the interviews along with the researcher's documented analysis of the data. The aim was to check that the presented theory was produced in a systematic and transparent manner rather than seeking to reach consensus or produce a single report that represents the truth.

With regards to the coherence of the study, it was felt that the research question was answered by the methodology that was employed. The justifications of the researcher's choice of grounded theory were based on the degrees to which this particular form of enquiry was seen to match the specific nature of the research in question. The coherence of the suitability between this methodology and the specific enquiry is believed to be adequately illustrated in the methodology section.

3.4 Impact and importance

The requirement for the research to have an impact and be important is of primary importance for judging the quality of the research. This research can be considered important because it proposes new outlooks in an area where there is generally a lack of understanding, appreciation and theoretical knowledge. It is suggested that this research can have an impact in the field as the results can add to, extend, or modify existing thinking. The specific impact of the particular findings is considered more fully within the discussion section.

4. Research Procedures

4.1 Interview Design

The present research employed a qualitative methodology that would be receptive and open to its complex and controversial nature. An in-depth face-to face interview, as opposed to group discussions or computer based interviews, was chosen as the most appropriate way to generate data adaptable to qualitative analysis. Four approaches inform interviewing practice; ethnographic, 'new paradigm (action research), feminist, and postmodernist (Burman, 1994). While these traditions have their own unique language and way of conceiving the research process and relationship, they share the ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying the use of interviews in research. This includes the belief that people's experiences and perceptions are meaningful features of the social reality that is being studied and that listening to and interacting with people provides a relevant means of gaining knowledge. Furthermore, in all approaches, and in line with the research in question, the qualitative research interview is a place where knowledge is constructed from the direct interactions between the interviewer (researcher) and the interviewee (participant). Such statements were considered consistent with the philosophical post-modern standpoint of the present research (Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Arora, and Mattis, (2007).

There are a number of different styles available to the researcher when conducting interviews (Burman, 1994; Suzuki et al., 2007; Wengraf, 2001). These vary from highly structured approaches, which are similar to questionnaires in structuring the interviewees' responses, to unstructured free-form approaches, which do not have a pre-defined set of questions and are based on a wish to discuss a topic which is relevant to the interviewee.

Within the context of the present research, it was decided to use a semi-structured interview approach. This particular style of interviewing is located in-between the two extremes of highly structured and unstructured interviewing. In discussing an interview style that is appropriate to grounded theory, Charmaz (2006) suggests that semi-

structured interviewing fits grounded theory methods particularly well because it is essentially open ended yet directed, and emergent, yet shaped. The interviewer sketches a loose outline of participants' social worlds by defining the topics and drafting the questions. At the same time, the interview is a flexible, emergent technique; ideas and issues emerge during the interview and interviewers can immediately pursue these leads. Some grounded theorists (Glaser, 1978) strongly advocate against a researcher's prior knowledge or awareness of the research topic to be studied because of the risks of becoming overly directive or overly constrained by pre-formulated questions. However, some prior awareness of the literature and pre-formed ideas is not only logically inevitable but provides a starting point both for the data collection and the analytic process (Charmaz, 2006, Suzuki et al., 2007).

With regards to the present study, the combination of flexibility and control advocated for semi-structured interviews was particularly suitable to the challenge of striking a balance between directed conversations whilst not losing sight of the interesting emergent aspects that required further direct questioning. Furthermore, the present research was concerned with a particular set of critical issues relating to cabin crews' experience of their lifestyle. A highly unstructured interview approach was rejected because it would not provide the degree of direction necessary for addressing topics pertaining to the research question. At the same time, a central aim of both grounded theory and the present study was to generate ideas and theories that are faithful to the views, meanings and experiences of individuals within their social territory (Suzuki et al., 2007). These should emerge from the data without undue pressure or direction from the researcher. As such, the prescriptive and narrow format of a highly structured interview approach was rejected based on its standardised nature of questioning that could hinder a collaborative exploration of evolving topics, and the generation of analytic propositions grounded in cabin crew own actual views of their lifestyle.

4.2 Interview Preparation

Wengraf (2001) has suggested guidelines for designing a semi-structured interview that strikes a balance between direction and creative exploration. He describes a process of preparing interviews which begins with 'initial questions' designed to answer the key issues that the study intends to explore. Wengraf (2001) suggests 3-4 initial questions that are prepared in advance but sufficiently open to encourage a comparatively lengthy response but which the interviewer holds back from. The intention of the researcher is to use each initial question to develop a series of active follow-up questions, probes, prompts, and other interventions that are improvised in a careful and theorised way on the basis of the interviewees' initial responses and what the researcher wishes to know.

The interviews conducted for the present study followed Wengraf's guidelines for semi-structured interviews. The 4 research questions outlined in chapter 1 were identified as the *initial questions* (Wengraf, 2001). The initial questions were broken down into a set of subsequent questions, probes or prompts that emphasised the possible avenues of responses implied by the key question. These were derived from an amalgam of related and contextual issues in the aviation literature and extensive discussions during research supervision on possibilities of how to structure and articulate actual interview questions. An additional standard opening question designed to ease participants into the context of interviewing and the act of reflecting upon their experience was included at the start of the interview (Suzuki et al., 2007). As pointed out by Wengraf (2001), importance was placed on ensuring that the manner of questioning promoted an open ended conversational flow.

A lightly structured guide for the interview process was prepared[9]. This was divided into three main headings relating to the key concerns of the research. Within each section, subsequent questioning prompts and probes were included for the researcher to draw upon to facilitate the interview process as necessary. An opening standardised question 'What motivated you to become cabin crew in the first place' was asked of every

[9] Please see Appendix 6 for a copy of the interview guide

interviewee at the start, and a number of basic demographic questions were also asked of all cabin crew[10].

4.3 Interview Piloting

The interview was piloted with one Long haul cabin crew member from a major UK airline. This process provided positive feedback on the appropriateness of the flow, content, style and length of the interview. Therefore, no major alterations were made to the interview design, and the data generated in this interview was included in the subsequent analysis.

4.4 Selection and Recruitment of Participants

4.4.1 Theoretical Sampling

A defining feature of grounded theory, when compared to other qualitative methods, is the procedure by which participants are selected and recruited. Grounded theory employs a method called '*theoretical sampling*'. A significant feature of theoretical sampling is that the recruitment of participants is in concurrence with the analyses of data (Charmaz, 2006). This allows the researcher to seek further information on the perspectives suggested by earlier analysis, which elaborates the emerging conceptual framework. Whereas traditional quantitative research designs such as surveys or experimental studies adopt a sampling technique that aims to achieve random samples of people whose characteristics are representative of the population under study, theoretical sampling retains only to conceptual and theoretical development rather than *'representing a population'* or *'increasing the statistical generalisability of findings'* (Charmaz, 2006, p.101). An important distinction within grounded theory is that of initial sampling and theoretical sampling. Initial sampling in grounded theory is '*where the researcher starts, whereas theoretical sampling directs where the researcher goes'* (Charmaz, 2006, p.100). The initial sampling of the present study involved establishing basic sample criteria,

[10] See appendix 5 for further details on cabin crew demographics.

which were that participants should be cabin crew working for a major airline with a minimum of 5 years and not exceeding more than 15 years experience of long haul flying. Given the particular nature of the present inquiry, worldwide cabin crew was considered a suitable sample for investigation. The exclusion of short haul staff was based on the wide differences in working requirements between the two populations with long haul crew being more prone to jetlag, psycho-social phenomena and health hazards (Sharma et al., 2004). In line with theoretical sampling, the individuality of each participant was also regarded as a key factor given that the aim was to explore the variety of individual perspectives, views and experiences within the long haul cabin crew community. Although the initial sampling criteria's could be pre-specified, the selection of actual participants was not entirely pre-specified. Decisions about further selections were made as the initial analysis began. For example, the researcher noted that within one of her potential categories (cabin crew dynamics) many participants would talk about the formation of sub-groups. This prompted the recruitment of a long haul cabin crew member with previous experience of short haul with the aim of eliciting interesting comparative information between crew dynamics in a large group (long haul, 14-16) versus that of a smaller group (short haul, 3-5 crew members).

4.4.2 Recruitment Procedures

Contact with potential participants from various major airlines was made in a number of ways. Four were first encountered through a poster displayed in a local fitness club inviting cabin crew to take part in the current project[11]. Participants responded by sending an email offering to take part in the study, and telephone contact was made with these cabin crew to assess suitability and to arrange mutually convenient times, dates and location for interviews.

Through a process of 'Snow balling' (Oppenheim, 1992), 6 further cabin crew members were suggested by either fellow trainee counselling psychologists or the interviewees. An

[11] Please see Appendix 3 for full details pertaining to the gym poster inviting participants to take part in the current research.

invitation letter[12] to participate in the study was given to four of the potential participants either via the person who had recommended them or email attachments whereas the remaining two crew members contacted the researcher directly via telephone. Two of these initial participants, following several attempts to schedule a mutually convenient meeting, were disregarded from the study based on a combination of work, personal commitments and geographical distance (lived abroad) that, taken together, made it difficult for them to attend the interviews. A total of eight volunteers took part in the study.

4.4.3 Demographics

Table 4.1: A table displaying sample characteristics

	J1	**K2**	**A3**	**M4**	**S5**	**SU6**	**MI7**	**AL8**
Age	40	43	29	28	30	33	34	31
Gender	M	F	F	M	M	F	F	M
Nationality	British	Swedish	British	Chilean	British	British	South African	Dutch
Length of service	12Y	10Y	9Y	9Y	7Y	10Y	9Y	6Y
Marital Status	Boyfriend	Co-habiting	Single	Single	Girlfriend	Single	Co-habiting	Co-habiting
Dependants	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Eight participants, 7 UK based cabin crew and 1 working for a major European airline, all with 5-15 years of experience of the long haul profession, agreed to participate in the study. 4 were female and 4 male. Participants' ages ranged from 28 to 43 years averaging a total mean of 33.25.

[12] Please see Appendix 2 for a copy of the invitation letter

4.5 Ethical considerations

This study gained ethical approval from the London Metropolitan University before the researcher began the process of inviting cabin crew to partake in interviews about their lifestyle[13].

4.5.1 The researcher's dual occupational position

It would be right to acknowledge the role of subjectivity in the process of the inter-actions that occurs between the investigator and the one investigated during the course of research (Ponterotto, 2002). For example, differences between the researcher and the participants in race, gender, age, and ideologies may affect what happens during the interview. A more important phenomenon was thought to be the potential impact of the researcher's dual occupational position on both the character and the content of the interaction. As a psychologist and an active member of the cabin crew profession it became imperative for the researcher to consider relative differences in power and status. On the one hand, participants may regard the researcher's familiarity with the cabin crew lifestyle as a positive opportunity for increased understanding and sympathy towards the lived reality of their experiences. On the other hand, the added status of a second profession may have led participants to feel inadequate or intimidated. Thus, attunement to how participants perceived the researcher and reflection upon what both partners could be seen to bring to the interview was thought to be a crucial consideration for the current research (Charmaz, 2006). Several important measures were initiated to minimise the potential influence of power differences in the researcher-participant relationship and to ensure that there was no exploitation. First, the researcher adopted an open and honest approach by informing potential participants about her dual position in the invitation letter[14]. This was thought to allow participants an informed choice as to whether they found the researcher's situation difficult or welcoming before making initial contact with the researcher (Banister et al., 1994). Furthermore, two of the participants worked for the

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[13] Please see appendix 1 for a copy of the university ethics approval form.
[14] Please see Appendix 2 and 3

same airline as the researcher. Although the risk of working with these participants in the future was less than 0.01%[15], the researcher negotiated with participants how they would like to be addressed (or not) if they should be working on the same flight before the researcher leaves the cabin crew profession. Second, participants were told at the outset that they were in charge of their own degree of disclosure (e.g., 'you do not have to answer all questions or continue talking about an issue that becomes uncomfortable for you'). In addition, each participant was offered a copy of their respective transcripts to make it clear that the material they gave was owned by them (Banister et al., 1994). Third, the researcher used her counselling skills, such as active listening, empathy, warmth, paraphrasing, and frequent summaries to facilitate collaboration and democratisation throughout the interview process (McLeod, 2003).

4.5.2 Informed consent

At the beginning of each interview, informed consent was gained from each participant[16]. As suggested by Banister et al., (1994), it is only when prospective participants are fully informed in advance that they are in a position to give informed consent. The researcher adopted an open and honest interaction including details of the researcher's dual occupational position, the purpose of the research, what is involved, how it is to be conducted, the time it is likely to take, and what would happen with the material collected. The researcher explained that the present study sought to investigate cabin crews' experience of their lifestyle and the coping strategies used to deal with shift work and frequent travels abroad. An in-depth explanation of the full nature of the present study was provided at the end of the interview. Participants were advised that the raw

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[15] Over the last year, I have only worked twice with two other cabin crew members. There are over 85000 Heathrow long haul based crew within the airline I work for. Every flight I work with 11 (min)-14 (Max) different people, and I do on average about 3-4 flights a month. A rough calculation: 3.5×14=49, 49×12=588. 8500:588=14%. This means that there is a 14% chance that I will fly with any of these people twice within one year, and considering the fact that I am intending to use only 3-4 participants from this airline the chances of meeting is considerably less than 14% (it works out to be less than 0.01). I am aware that one can not predict the future but my point is that it is very unlikely that I will work with these people. Should this happen, there is unlikely to be any issues of power as I am still a junior (bottom of list) after 10 years of flying due to the long duration of service on the long haul fleet amongst staff in my company.

[16] Please see appendix 4 for an illustrative copy of the consent form signed by participants

material collected would be kept away from the public at all times in a secure location that could only be accessed by the researcher, her supervisor and the examinator(s). It was explained that the original material including the recordings and transcripts of the interviews would be destroyed once returned to the researcher after examination.

4.5.3 Confidentiality

It was explained that all possible measures would be taken to ensure confidentiality of both the participant and the respective employer, and if necessary items of the completed transcript would be altered or omitted if it was judged to lead to any parties being identifiable. The participants were also told they could withdraw from the study at any time, after which the consent form that had been prepared in line with Banister et al's., (1994) recommendations was signed by each interviewee.

4.5.4 Debriefing

Towards the end of the interview, each participant was invited to raise any issues or thoughts about the research questions, their lifestyle, or the experience of the interview process. This was followed by a debrief that included discussions surrounding participants' state of mind immediately after the interview, the researcher's contact details for further queries, and an elaborated version of the full nature of the research. Although the presentations and verbal feedback indicated that all participants left the interview setting in a positive frame of mind, information for seeking further support in the event of any later upsets or difficulties associated with the participation in the research process was provided. This included contact details of a specific counselling network[17] that is free of charge for cabin crew across differing airlines.

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[17] The counselling support network is called Help Direct and is free of charge for all UK airline employers and their partners. This service is run by a team of volunteers who are all trained counsellors. A maximum of six sessions can be offered to an individual, and guidance on how to best seek further help if needed is offered.

4.6 Interview Procedure

The interview with the cabin crew took place in either one of three premises depending on participants' preference and availability. Five of the interviews were conducted in the researcher's own home. This was deemed a mutually convenient location given that these crew members all lived in and around the London area. Two of the participants lived abroad and utilised a commuting flight into Heathrow airport to work for a UK based airline. In order to ensure adequate time for early morning reports they would rent overnight accommodation. Interviews with these participants took place in a small, quiet local guesthouse with adequate lighting and suitable seating and confidential arrangements. The remaining interview was conducted in a research room situated in the basement of London Metropolitan University. The interviews lasted between 40-60 minutes, and each were audio-taped using a Sony TCM-200DV cassette recorder.

Each interview began with a brief introduction to the nature and aims of the investigation before inviting participants to consider the opening question: 'What motivated you to become cabin crew in the first place'? During the interview, the researcher adopted a range of skills learnt during her training as a counselling psychologist. This included attentive listening, paraphrasing and seeking gentle clarification via frequent summaries as well as taking care to promote sensitivity towards disclosure of any potential emotive topics discussed. These skills helped to promote a positive collaboration with participants, thereby facilitating deeper and fuller explorations of interviewees' views and meanings (McCleod, 2003). Finally, three of the participants volunteered to partake in the later procedure of *'member checking'*, and it was arranged that the researcher would provide them with a tentative version of the emergent themes within six months of the given interview[18] (Charmaz, 2006)

[18] Please see Appendix 7 for a copy of the letter sent to participants inviting them to provide feedback on the tentative categories.

5. Grounded Theory Analysis

5.1 Overview

The goal of this study was to examine cabin crews' experience of how frequent absence from home and erratic shift patterns impact upon their personal lives. The researcher chose grounded theory as proposed originally by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and later revised by Strauss and Corbin (1998), Charmaz (2006), and Bryant and Charmaz (2007). Grounded theory is a qualitative method designed to guide the structured collection and analysis of data as well as the construction of a systematic theoretical model. This inductive methodology focuses on capturing cabin crews' experiences by systematically analysing the data in sequential stages that is thought to expand specific concepts to abstract phenomenon grounded in the reality presented in the data. The coding comprises three components; open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Although these will be presented in a sequential or linear order, it is important to note that the analysis of data is essentially an iterative process whereby the researcher is thought to switch back and forth between the coding procedures or employ each of the three stages simultaneously (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2006)

5.2 Open Coding

The coding process began with an open coding phase in which the cabin crew incidents describing specific meaningful experiences were identified and coded into concepts. The concepts were worded using language as close to the raw data as possible. Following transcription, the researcher closely examined the interview on a line-by-line basis and used the left hand side of the margin to label emerging phenomenon. The process of comparative analysis both within the specific set of data and between each of the eight sets of data was used to enable the grouping of similar ideas and events into labelled concepts. The data was opened up by asking questions such as 'What is really happening here?', 'What is the participant really saying?', and 'Who else is involved in this

particular incident?' Such questioning facilitated opportunities for interpretation of the meanings of the words, which in turn, allowed for the application of concept labels to phenomenon. A second way of coding meaningful experiences was to use the actual words in the data, known as '*in vivo codes*'. The same process of concept generation was emulated for the analysis of each of the eight interviews.

Following the first interview, the researcher started the analysis by constructing tentative ideas about the data, and then examined these ideas through further empirical enquiry. A list of approximately 80 concepts was generated for the first interview, and these were used as a basic 'springboard' for the second interview, which in turn, allowed the researcher to elaborate and refine the tentative codes. Highlighted, in Table 5.1 (below), are nine examples found in text extracted from the first interview [19]

Table 5.1: Extract of text highlighting initial codes

	Yes… it can do very easily and I think we're quite unaware of it **(difficulty with noticing accumulative sleep deprivation).** It's very nice to have like a solid block of days off after trips **(emphasis on the need for days at home after trips)** and the company we work for now has actually changed our system of trip rostering so that we don't maybe go to Japan on one trip and then go on a minus 8 hour time change afterwards **(company sensitivity towards crossing large time zones)**… sort of plus 8 to minus 8, they tried to make it so that if you went to the Far East then you go to Africa next and then you go to the United States afterwards or something, actually things have become a lot better **(trip with no time difference to UK between two destinations with large time differences seen to ease process of crossing time zones)** but, for example, I… a few years ago decided to do a secondment to a European flying fleet that we have and found that I was tired **(comparisons between short and long haul)**… more tired, not fatigued, I was tired in the same way when I've done 9 to 5 work and taken a train journey before and afterwards and I'd have to have a sleep when I came home, I was tired in that respect but I recovered from it a lot

[19] Please see appendix 8 for an example of a full transcript with the tentative codes in the left hand side of the margin

quicker whereas long haul flying...**(more tiredness from short haul but a quicker recovery than long haul).** I have forgotten what the question is now... I'm sorry, I'm just rattling on so, you know, I do a lot of flying and it's hard work but it was tiredness that I get over very quickly whereas this is tiredness that **(short haul tiredness emanating from higher frequency of flights and increased work load onboard the aircraft)** ... the longer you've done it or the longer you've done long haul flying for it's... you don't realise how long it takes for you to get over trips **(longer recovery needed on long haul).** I think and you're not functioning a hundred percent even you feel as though you are **(gradual reduced functioning over time seen to make it more difficult to pick up on changes in self).**

J1; p4-5, L 106-123

(Participant, Page Number, Line number)

The researcher selected some focused codes that seemed to be the most useful initial codes and wrote detailed memos on them. These focused codes were then used to gather more data that centred on the specific category and its properties. This enabled similarities and differences that existed between the concepts to transpire, which in turn, were seen to aid the process of determining names for the emergent categories that reflected the immediate reality of the data whilst also allowing for sufficient abstractedness to enable the analysis to expand. In Table 5.2 and 5.3 (below) extracts of texts illustrating two of the emergent codes; 'Ruminating' and 'Sleep medication' are highlighted.

Table 5.2: Example of text to highlight the open code 'Ruminating'

'I think when you're by yourself, when you've got quiet times in the hotel by yourself, you think...'

Su6; p4, L 116-117

'I mean, if things are playing on your mind, thinking over and over again... you know'

M4; p5, L 179

Table 5.3: Example of text highlighting the open code 'Sleep medication'

'Almost within 20 minutes of taking it (sleeping tablets) I'll be able to get to sleep because it's quite an intensely… I feel a lot less tired than I would do if I'd been awake all night SU6; p7, L 198-199 'Yeah… there are all these sleeping pills and potions and god know what but I wonder if the human body really needs that. I don't want to be taking that which a lot of people do and I don't think it's good' S5; p5, L 152-153, 155-156

Throughout the process of open coding, the researcher compared interview data with interview data, and then interview data with codes. This was thought to allow for '*theoretical sampling*' whereby the researcher seeks and collects pertinent data to develop the emerging theory. The aim is to elaborate the meaning of tentative categories, discover '*variation*' between them, and define gaps among categories. The researcher, by being selective about which data to seek and where to find such data, focused on certain actions, experiences, events and issues to understand how, why, and to what extent theoretical categories varied. '*Negative cases*' that emerged in the data were closely examined to determine whether they indicated a need for refining the emerging theory or whether they signalled further variations within the theory. This procedure was repeated for each interview enabling a systematic and progressively abstract analysis of promising categories and their properties until no new properties emerged, known as '*saturation*'. The criteria concerning exactly when to stop gathering data is a somewhat controversial

topic in grounded theory. Such disagreement is thought to be mainly surrounding questions as to whether claims to having saturated categories are legitimate when considering the idea that the method may not be a '*teleological*' closed system. This brings on a range of concerns about foreclosing analytic possibilities and about constructing superficial analysis. The researcher followed Charmaz's (2006) loose guidelines for saturation whereby gathering new data was no longer seen to produce fresh insights or reveal new properties of theoretical categories. At the end of the process of open coding, a master list of concepts was generated for all of the participants in the study, which can be viewed in Appendix 9.1-9.5 [20]

5.3 Axial coding

The next step was to reassemble data by establishing new connections between categories. This is known as axial coding or the process of making clear the relationship among categories. Each category was written on a paper, and the data supporting the categories were examined to determine the relationship between them. This was achieved by identifying the general characteristics of each concept, their properties and the various dimensions of these properties (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This process led to the generation of key categories, which in turn, encompassed a number of categories below them. The researcher consistently returned to the transcripts to ensure that each concept fitted within a key category. This process of retrieving raw data and comparing it with the list of concepts and categories allowed the researcher to verify the relative accuracy and fit of the transcribed data within each concept and category. In some instances, the category verification step resulted in a concept being listed under more than one key category. Given the interrelationship between key categories this was expected, and through consultation with the researcher's supervisor, such concepts were revised to discuss their fit with key categories and make appropriate change.

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[20] Note that the master list of concepts has been divided into five sections corresponding to the respective categories seen to compromise each of the core themes. This is thought to aid the readers understanding of the progressive development of the analysis from open, axial to selective coding.

As suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998), the researcher used a coding paradigm to specify the precise relationship between categories and this was thought to enable a complete establishment and explanation of emerging phenomenon. Categories were connected by exploring the '*conditions'* believed to cause the category to arise, the '*intervening*' variables that could be seen to influence the category, the exact *'context'* in which it is most likely to happen, '*the strategies'* used to deal with the specific content of the particular category, and the '*consequences*' resulting from the use of pertaining coping strategies. During this process, a number of coping strategies emerged within a majority of the categories. This was not deemed inappropriate when considering how the influence of intervening variables on a specific category would essentially change or modify the category itself, which in turn, gave rise to differing strategies for dealing with the specific changes within the category. Sixteen categories were identified in the axial coding stage of the analysis, and these were grouped under four higher order headings as follows: a) Cabin Crew Dynamics, b) Difficulties with Maintaining Social Relationships, c) Experiencing Personal Relationship, and d) Dealing with Jetlag and Fatigue. In Table 5.4 (below) is an example of the process whereby the axial code 'Personal Belonging' was formed, which was a sub-theme of the main theme 'Cabin Crew Dynamics'. Appendix 9 provides a complete list of axial codes for viewing by the reader[21].

Table5. 4: An example of the coding process used to establish axial codes

Process	**Open code category**	**Axial code**
Causal condition	Experiencing brief and short lasting relationships	**Personal belonging**
Intervening condition	The good and the bad crew	
Phenomenon	Isolation	
Context	Away from home	
Strategy 1	Attending activities with the group	

[21] Note that the 16 axial codes are grouped into five themes emerging from selective coding and this is reflected in the appendices.

Consequence 1	Fellowship	
Strategy 2	Self-disclosure, compensatory strategy	
Consequence 2a	Close transient relationships	
Consequence 2b	Repetitive bonding; emotional tiredness	

5.4 Selective Coding

The final coding process involves selective coding whereby the researcher develops the relationship amongst the main categories. The integration of existing axial codes resulted in an identified core code that seemed to represent the centrality around which cabin crew experienced their particular lifestyle. To better understand cabin crews' experiences and determine whether the tentative model represented the data accurately, Charmaz (2006) suggests going back to the transcripts and constructing core stories for each participant. Based on findings in the core stories, the tentative model was modified, and a main story line emerged. Throughout this process, original transcripts were persistently re-read, which allowed the researcher to reflect upon and highlight the overall themes that were emerging. In Table 5.5 (below), a summary of the main story line which was thought to assist the development of the selective code is represented.

Table 5.5: The main story line in the selective coding process of the analysis

The eight participants described a range of adverse experiences associated with the frequent absence from home and erratic patterns of shift work. They describe instances of anxiety, loneliness, depression, homesickness, abandoning and being abandoned, and feelings of rejection. Such experiences were thought to be either directly or indirectly associated with the particular type of work. It seemed that missing out on important social events at home, absence from partners, family, and friends for long periods of time, and lack of social support during times of trouble was particularly difficult to deal with.

This was perhaps not surprising when considering how participants travelled with a set of 13-18 'strangers' each time they went to work, thereby essentially being deprived off any social support located within their home surroundings. Despite such hardship, participants appeared to be in possession of a range of creative coping strategies that were seen to regulate the degree to which adverse experiences impacted upon their mental and physical well-being. Given their experience of low work control, participants coping techniques appeared to centre on adapting the self or personal circumstances to fit in with the job. It is possible that such specific adaptations evolved with the job after repeated experiences of the strict nature of the work schedule with no facilities to make changes, modifications. Thus, participants learned how to make personal life fit work. However, personal living comprised of a range of inter-related categories such as professional, social, and personal relationships as well as ensuring adequate sleep. In the wake of serious time limitations, participants utilised complex decision making, prioritising, and juggling to achieve work/life balance. However, changes within personal living required re-negotiations of existing strategies. Thus, the cabin crew coping process was dynamic as opposed to static, and circular as opposed to linear.

The core code portrays the overall meaning presented by the data. In order to ensure that the story line and emergent theory remained grounded in the data, the researcher utilised a similar coding paradigm as in the axial coding stage. This was thought to also enable the researcher to refine the emergent theory. The following core category emerged from the data; Making Personal life fit Work with four subsequent sub-themes. These can be viewed in Appendix 9.5.

Job Motivations	Adapting personal life according to work
Making personal life fit work	
Circular Coping	Dynamic Inter-dependant relationships

6. Grounded Theory Outcome

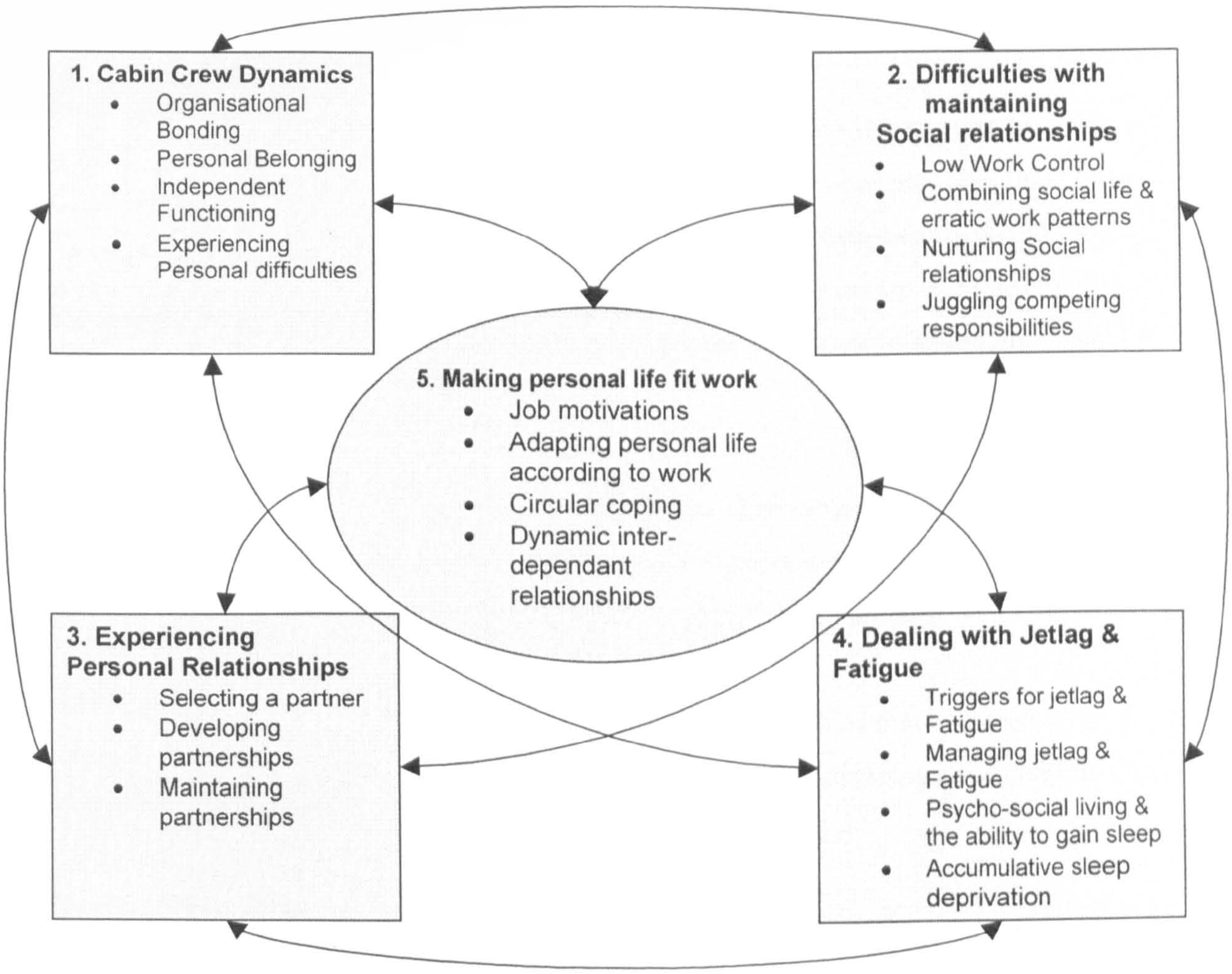
6.1 Overview

The present study produced an emergent theoretical model of cabin crews' experiences of the impact of work upon their personal lives. Figure 6.1 below provides a graphic illustration of 4 main themes and 1 core theme. The categories within them represent their hierarchical structure.

Themes 1, 2, 3, and 4 can be characterised as main themes that relate to cabin crews' overall experiences of their particular lifestyle. The arrows represent the inter-dependent relationships between psycho-social living and work specifics, which taken together, was seen to comprise the reality of cabin crews' way of life.

Theme 5 is a higher level core theme relating to the more abstract interpretations of how cabin crew deal with the simultaneous pressures of work requirements and personal living. The arrows highlight the dynamic nature of the model; each main theme is essentially affecting as well as being affected by a higher level circular coping process, which in turn, regulates cabin crews' psychological wellbeing.

Figure 6.1: A Model of the dynamic nature of the Cabin Crew coping process



6.2 Theme 1: Cabin Crew Dynamics

The constantly changing crew compositions coupled with frequent, and often lengthy, absences from home, were thought to generate feelings of uncertainty and loneliness for the individual crew member. Participants spoke in great length about their experience of the various difficulties associated with the repeated process of *forming and breaking* relationships with colleagues. The crew dynamics, both on and off the aircraft, were identified as a complex phenomenon that seemed to be influenced by four differing, yet highly related, sub-themes. These were thought to be as follows: a) organisational requirements for bonding, b) personal belonging, c) independent functioning, and d) the experience of personal difficulties.

6.2.1 Organisational bonding

The data suggests that many crew experienced uncertainty prior to reporting for a trip at work. Participants explained that they only got to meet their colleagues about one hour prior to each departure from London. The lack of familiarity with exactly whom they were going away with was thought to give rise to a range of concerns at to whether they would all get along for the specific duration of the trip, which could be ranging from 3-9 days.

> '*I know my colleagues maybe an hour longer than the passengers know of my colleagues..., there's not much you can do to guarantee things are going to work well'* (J1, participant); p2, page number, L 24-27, line number).

Participants talked about the many combinations of personalities that occurred on each new trip, and this was thought to be a product of the forever changing crew compositions with a set of 13-18 new colleagues each time they go to work

> *'On a crew you'll get up to 15 crew and then 2 or 3 flight deck on that trip... there's so many people, there's many different kinds of people'* (A3; p2-3, L 43, 61).

The shifting nature of crew groupings was thought to give rise to repeated procedures of presenting oneself to a group of unfamiliar people. Participants described the various ways of relating to strangers predominantly in the form of positive communication including use of humour, small talk, and sharing personal information.

> '*A lot of it is how do you relate with your colleagues, and you can influence a lot in atmosphere...How you're behaving with your fellow crew, how you seem to be feeling and making a joke once in a while with them or having a conversation that's not too superficial'* (A18; p1, L 15-20).

This was thought to generate the basics for a quick formation of a group, which along with professional attitudes, meaning crews' motivation to carry out designated work tasks, allowed for organisational bonding at work.

> '*I think basically because we have to bond very quickly'* (J1; p2-3, L 156-157).
>
> *'I'm just there to do a job, should be professional'* (A3; p5, 162-163).

However, given the constantly changing combinations of personalities, each with their own idiosyncratic ways of relating to strangers, level of tiredness, personal difficulties along with the senior cabin crew member's specific managerial style, participants talked of frequent negative interruptions to the bonding process.

> '*Tiredness can sometimes bring out the worst in people I think because they can be irrational'* (Mi7; p5, L 126-127).
>
> '*I had a serious problem with one of my cabin service directors, which made it very hard, not only for me but for everybody else'* (K2; p8, L 208-209).

Participants thought that managing crew conflict could sometimes be difficult especially given the confined space onboard an aircraft, which was believed to generate risks of personalising incidents of personality clashes, arguments, and negative atmospheres. They explained how this could de-motivate the group with few crew members wanting anything to do with each other once they had arrived at the particular world-wide destination in question.

> *'It's very easy to upset the whole crew, it might be just one person that upsets the balance and that might put a dampener on the rest of the crew and it just becomes a difficult time in a confined environment on an aircraft and then nobody really wants to do much with each other after... afterwards'* (M4; p4, L 149-153).

In addition, participants spoke about experiences of self-doubt such as questioning their own social abilities following incidents of conflict onboard an aircraft. They explained how lack of rapport with another colleague could often heighten tendencies for self-ruminations, especially negative contemplations such as the possibility of being unpopular or disliked by others.

> *'The danger is that if you've got a bad crew, you think... is it me, you look around and you think... is it me'* (A3; p10, L 319-320).

A second way of dealing with crew conflict was to use the '*grin and bear it*' strategy whereby crew, with increased experience of flying, come to learn that their relationship with colleagues is of temporal duration. As a consequence, they began to appreciate the minimal likelihood of having to fly with the same people again. This, in turn, was seen to generate increased tolerance towards troublesome individuals arising from the relief of knowing they only have to put up with a difficult colleague for a couple of days.

> '*When you're done working you can leave and chances of seeing them again are very small so you put up with them a few hours and then you can go your own way*' (A18; p2, L 42-45).

Perhaps with increasing experiences of the forever changing crew composition cabin crew gradually learn to also accept the reality of not being able to get on with each individual personality at all times. This could, as voiced by many participants, lead to a growing conceptual distinction between good and bad crews.

> '*Its different combinations of personalities, just isn't going to work every time*' (A3; p10, L 334).

'*I mean you do have good and bad crews*' (M4; p5, L 154).

The grouping of crew into different divisions was thought to provide a helpful framework for assessing the overall dynamics of a given crew composition or the unique presentation of a particular individual within the group. Such evaluations could then be used to direct the process of interpersonal communication with colleagues thereby allowing participants to better manage the various personalities encountered within their work. For example, sensitivity towards a colleague's behaviour on board the aircraft, whether hostile or friendly, could prime cabin crew into adopting the necessary response needed to either avoid a conflict or develop meaningful relations.

6.2.2 Personal Belonging- 'the good and the bad crew'

Participants spoke about how the constantly changing crew compositions generated repeated experiences of brief and short lasting relationships, which they believed created difficulties for developing meaningful relations at work.

> '*If you want a lot of flying with the same people all the time, it's not the company to work for'* (J1; p5, L 144-145).

> '*There's no getting to know people'* (S5; p7, L 217).

They explained how being away from home could prove to be an experience of isolation in that they essentially were seen to be deprived of their consoling environments, often for long periods of time, to join a group of strangers.

> '*There's a definite danger to being alone for the whole time'* (A18; p3, L 78-79).

> '*You're with people that aren't your friends; you don't necessarily want to be with them*' (Su6; p4, L 106-107).

If the crew were perceived to be friendly, communicative, or outgoing, participants talked of greater opportunities for developing relationships with one or more of their colleagues. This was thought to add meaning to the trip with talks of feeling better about the self whenever an individual had been successful at transforming a somewhat superficial work relation into a close encounter. One reason for this might be that a one to one relationship

with a colleague might bear a similar resemblance to personal friendships. Participants talked of their experience of 'clicking' with another person, and how this would result in the development of a *'special friendship'* for the duration of the trip.

> *'You always feel you've had a better trip with someone that's been... like a special friend to you'* (Su6; p5, L 130-131).

One way of getting to know one's colleagues outside of the immediate work environment was to engage in group activities such as sightseeing, going to a bar or a restaurant, which was thought to provide a sense of fellowships.

> '*Sometimes we'll meet for a drink in the bar, you know, it's a good way of meeting your colleagues out of that work situation and then you relax a bit more*' (A3; p2, L 50-53).

Participants were quick to make a distinction between brief relationships with colleagues and the more stable long lasting relationships with friends at home. One reason for this was thought to be difficulties with knowing whether one could trust or rely on recently met colleagues during, let's say, an unfortunate event of emergency such as being taken ill or having an accident whilst away.

> '*You never have the same level of intimacy and friendship with crew as the people you've known all your life*' (S5; p6, L 194-195).

One way to deal with the transient nature of work relations was to use self-disclosure with the aim of developing a degree of personal '*touch*'. This was thought to bypass some of the awkwardness or strangeness associated with working with a new set of colleagues on each trip. Participants described how many of their colleagues, including themselves, openly shared personal information with other crew even though they had not known them for more than a couple of hours, or at the most a couple of days. This was thought to allow participants to experience a brief sensation of feeling secure or at ease with their colleagues, which they thought of as a compensatory strategy for the forever changing crew compositions.

'We bond very quickly and know things about each other that perhaps you wouldn't share with office colleagues and open up about until maybe after 3 or 4 months so there are some very close relationships that you have with other crew members and we compensate in some respects for that... so' (J1; p5-6, L 152-155).

However, some participants explained how, over time, the act of getting to know one's colleagues became repetitive with increased feelings of emotional tiredness. One reason for this appeared to be the apparent routine of asking and being asked the same questions such as *'where do you live?'*, *'have you got a boyfriend/girlfriend?'*, *'what does he/she do for a living?*, which after years of flying might seem tedious and superficial for the experienced crew member.

> *'It's emotionally tiring to sit down and start talking... and you have to go through all the... what car do you drive, children, married... it's like, do I really care cause you know when you get back to London in 24 hours time you will never see this person again'* (K2; p2, L 42-45).

The shallow nature of cabin crews' professional relationships were thought to be a major disadvantage of the job, and many expressed a desire for a work system that allowed one to travel with the same set of colleagues on a more permanent basis.

6.2.3 Independent Functioning

Participants thought opportunities for socialising at work were largely regulated by the extent to which the crew composition was perceived as good or bad.

> *'But it all depends on your crew and who's there on your trip'* (Mi7; p3, L 74).

Participants associated a good crew with personal characteristics such as friendliness or openness as well as the overall level of sociability within the group. A crew was deemed

bad if there was a conflict onboard, particular individuals displayed negative traits such as being unfriendly or miserable, or the individual did not 'click' with anyone onboard.

> '*They were just really uncommunicative; they were miserable really*' (A3; p10, L 329-330).

Under such circumstances, participants spoke about the importance of engaging in independent activities whether going to the hotel gym, sightseeing, studying whilst away or just going for a walk, which they thought, over time, either conditioned them into *becoming independent* or reinforced their natural inclination for independent functioning

> '*I think it makes you a very independent person and you can't be scared of doing your own thing*' (A3; p10, L 338-340).

On the other hand, not all crew displayed the same capacity for independent functioning, and participants voiced concern over spending too much time by oneself, which was thought to give rise to feelings of loneliness, boredom, or anxiety. This was thought to be influenced by the duration of the trip with longer stays abroad seen to increase risks of ruminations, feelings of alienation, and difficulties with fulfilling one's time.

> '*I cannot be alone for too long because all of a sudden the smallest little problem is huge because you have got nothing else to think about*' (K2; p1-2, L 24-27).

> '*It's a lonely job, you know, really lonely*' (S5; p1, L 17).

It was within this context that participants described experiences of homesickness with the individual crew member essentially longing to be at home with his or her family and friends.

6.2.4 Experiencing personal difficulties

Participants spoke about the hardship of having to go to work during times of personal difficulties. Just like any other professionals, cabin crew and flight crew alike were thought to be prone to regular experiences of relationship discord, bereavement or other forms of domicile stress.

> '*I mean, everyone's got problems at some stage and with us as cabin crew, pilots as well, you go away sometimes and you're leaving an unresolved problem or somebody's been taken ill'* (M4; p5, L 188-189).

Participants emphasised however that unlike ground workers, who at least in theory, were thought to be in close physical approximate to their social networks, crew are essentially deprived of such supportive facilities. Once an individual leaves home to embark on travels abroad, he or she is basically also leaving friends, family, a partner, and children behind, all of which could potentially serve a supportive function during times of personal problems.

> '*It can be a sad, lonely place sometimes having to go away on a trip and having to deal with the problems that every normal person goes through but might have a support network at home to deal with that*' (M4; p10, L 398-400).

Moreover, participants spoke of the frustration of being away from home during turbulent times of relationship discord or serious illness within the family. The physical distance between the self (abroad) and the location of the problem (home) was perceived to make it difficult, if not impossible, to immediately deal with the particular issue whether caring for an ill person or trying to solve a recent conflict with a partner.

> '*I just don't want to go away because you can't sort things out, you just want to be at home to sort problems'* (A3; p4, L 127-128).

Under such circumstances, participants spoke about actively seeking support from their colleagues. It was believed that talking about one's problems was an important way of processing painful emotions such as sadness or anxiety. In addition, it was thought that the process of sharing one's difficulties with a stranger could often allow the individual to obtain a differing perspective on the specific issue in question.

> '*You find yourself telling your major problems to some complete stranger and they will give you like a different perspective on things*' (M4; p6, L 193-195).

Not all participants were equally keen on the idea of disclosing personal information to strangers. The relative ease or complications surrounding participants willingness to share personal substances with a colleague was thought to be mediated by the specific characteristics of the individual as well as the nature of the particular problem in question. In the event of reluctance to reveal delicate matters, participants spoke about the way in which socialising with colleagues could be seen to, at least on a temporal basis, distract them from thinking about pressing issues.

> *'Well, I try and make sure that I go out on the trip and that I'm doing things so that I'm not thinking about what I'm missing out on at home'* (Su6; p4, L 120-122).

For many participants, going away to work could sometimes provide an opportunity to escape, at least temporarily, any troublesome matters at home. Participants identified the way in which this could serve as a de-escalating influence on the particular problem itself. For example, it was believed that absence from home could lead a conflict to naturally 'water down' or that each partner might use the break from one and the other to reflect on the argument or the specific relationship.

> '*Sometimes it's a good thing that you'd be taken out of the equation, you have time to reflect on maybe an argument or a discussion*' (M4; p6, L 196-197).

A more pressing issue appeared to arise when the individual experienced a pressing need for talking to someone about their difficulties but there were no crew available to listen. Such experiences of inadequate support were thought to occur whenever the specific combination of personal characteristics amongst crew were deemed incompatible or troublesome. This meant that colleagues would often go directly to their individual hotel rooms with no further contact or communication with anyone else until they reported for the flight home again. Although it would be reasonable to assume that it would be easy for crew to pick up a phone and call someone at home, contact with friends and family was believed to be compounded by large time differences. For example, the 12 hour difference between Australia and the UK might mean that loved ones at home are in bed or at work when the individual was seen to need them the most.

> *'Sometimes you need someone else to talk to and maybe you haven't gelled with someone else on the crew or just too exhausted and your mind starts as it does I guess for most people'* (K2; p2, L 33-35, 38).

This was thought to leave the individual crew member with a lot of spare time alone in the hotel room, which in turn, was believed to heighten the risk of excessive ruminations.

> '*I think when you're by yourself, when you've got quiet times in the hotel by yourself, you think'* (Su6; p4, L 116-117).

> '*I mean, if things are playing on your mind, thinking over and over again... you know'* (M4; p5, L 179).

At these times, participants spoke of feeling lonely and depressed with discussions about colleagues allegedly committing suicide whilst away.

> *'It's quite sad, it's a bit depressing really*' (M4; p5, L 155).

> '*It feels very frustrating and very isolating and it seems to be a high tendency of crew to get depression and some actually commit suicide'* (J1; p7, L 205-206, 209).

As such, it seems that the experience of personal problems in the absence of emotional support could create serious mental health threats for the individual crew member.

6.3 Theme 2: Difficulties with maintaining social relationships

Throughout the interview participants expressed concern over the way in which the irregular patterns of work and the frequent absence from home impacted upon their social lives. The degree to which they managed (or not) to maintain social relationships was thought to be influenced by four sub-themes. These were identified as: a) low work control, b) combining social life with erratic work patterns, c) nurturing social relationships, and d) juggling competing responsibilities.

6.3.1 Low work control

Many participants voiced frustration over the irregular patterns of work, which they thought were often beyond the control of the individual crew member.

> '*They can have you out when they want and you don't feel in control'* (A3; p8, L 271-272).

Participants explained how, on a monthly basis, they would receive a work schedule from their respective employer comprising anything up to 5 worldwide destinations each with their individual departure date/time, duration, and allocated number of days at home following the specific trip in question[22]. Once they had been scheduled to go to work, participants felt they had very little influence over their work schedule. One reason for this was thought to be the lack of facilities to request last minute changes or alterations to

[22] A simulated version of a cabin crew member's work schedule can be viewed in Appendix 10.

their allocated monthly plan of trips. For example, if an individual was due to leave for Washington DC on the same weekend that his or her grandmother had been taken ill in hospital, participants said their respective employer would not be able to grant them any extra days off at home.

> '*It's not that easy... okay, well, last minute... okay, I'll just change my roster, because it doesn't happen like that and a lot of times you are disappointed because you don't have that flexibility to get the time off that you need*' (M17; p7, L 189-193).

The seemingly rigid nature of their work schedule with the individual experiencing limited power over when, where, and for how long they would be away for, appeared to give rise to a general consensus of low work control among participants.

> '*If you've been rostered to work, you have to go to work*' (M4; p4, L 123-124).

> '*There's nothing you can do about it but, you know, that's the* job' (A3: p8, L 272-273).

As a consequence, it was thought that the tension between the pressure of their work schedule and personal living could often be difficult to manage. Participants spoke about the way in which their work schedule would often conflict with individual preferences, desires or needs, which appeared to give rise to a range of difficult emotions including disappointment, frustration, anger, and low mood.

> '*Basically you can do nothing about, you just have to pitch up, go to work, put on uniform and ... it's at the back of your mind, you don't really want to go to work, you know, you're kind of a bit down that you're missing*' (M4; p3-4, L 111-116).

'I... it annoys me and I think... you know, why can't my employer accommodate me a bit more and I... at times like that I start thinking... well' (A18; p6, L 160-162).

Under circumstances when individual needs were suppressed in the favour of professional obligations, participants said they often felt as if work was taking over their personal lives. This was thought to be caused by an increasing sense of losing one's autonomy with some participants making references to a noticeable negative change in their abilities to govern personal living after joining the airline industry.

'Work... can sort of take over sometimes' (A3; p8, L 268).

'I feel that my work has taken away time from me' (K2; p10, L 262).

'Very frustrating... at the back of my mind there's always that element of... I used to be able to dot dot dot' (J1; p2, L 49-52).

Some participants appeared to be less conforming towards the perceived strictness of the rule bound systems operated by their employer. Such opposition might indicate a reluctance to adopt a passive position against more powerful sources such as a major airline company. One way to enhance work control was to declare one self sick, and some participants stated that this may be the only opportunity to exercise a degree of control over their personal lives.

'It's like you're forced into the situation where you maybe have to go" sick" for that specific occasion' (J1; p8, L 231-232).

However, for many participants the act of declaring themselves sick in the absence of genuine sickness appeared to make them feel guilty, and participants voiced their concerns over the wrongdoing of pretending to be sick when in reality they were fit and healthy. In addition to the moral dilemma caused by faking sickness, participants

expressed worry surrounding the employer's reaction towards their sickness level with some fearing they might be '*told off*' by their respective managers.

> '*I'd probably feel guilty up to a certain extent, the company don't like that... yeah, I don't want any reason for them to call me into the office and tell me off*' (A3, p9, L 295-300).

As has been illustrated above, irregular patterns of shift work were thought to generate a sense of low work control. Furthermore, the strict nature of the work system with limited opportunities to request specific days at home or make last minute changes to one's work schedule was believed to challenge the process of achieving work-life balance.

6.3.2 Combining social life with irregular patterns of work

In addition to the erratic nature of their work schedule, participants spoke of the lengthy duration of their trips, which meant that they often would be away for up to 20-21 days every month. The combined experience of low work control and lengthy absence from home was believed to pose a number of restrictions to the individual's ability to maintain social relationships. Participants spoke about the difficulties of keeping a social circle when work requirements often meant that they were away for up to 70% of any given month.

> '*It's difficult sometimes to keep a social circle because you're always away a lot, I think 70% of your time if you're full-time is at work so you don't have much control over days off and your life so there will be loads of times where you'll miss social events and that can have an impact on people*'(Mi7; p8, L 184-188).

In order to try and organise available time to see friends and family, participants talked about the importance of actively seeking to control the work system by requesting annual leave or asking for a specific day at home often 5-6 months prior to receiving their

monthly schedule of trips. This was thought to increase their chance of being at home for specific events such as a wedding, a funeral or someone's birthday.

> '*Maximise the flexibility to control my life as it were and ease my life so I put in the requests for specific days off that we have which are quite minimal but'* (J1; p2, L 55-57).

Participants also emphasised how their attempts to integrate work with social living appeared to be a complex, and often lengthy, learning process. This was thought to comprise the essentials of advanced procedural knowledge of the specific work formalities as well as individual organisational skills. If, for example, an individual needed to be at home for a friend's wedding, then he or she would have to request annual leave up to six months in advance. In order to do so, the friend must inform the individual no less than the required six months prior to the actual day of the wedding. Otherwise the individual could lose out on the time limited period of rights to request leave for a specific moment of the season.

> *'You can bid for your leave, you can work it out but that takes time, you taking control of the system before the system takes control over you and I think that is something that I've learned in maybe the last couple of years here'* (K2; p5, L 121-125).

Whilst it was thought that the above procedures would optimise the likelihood of being able to attend desired occasions, participants emphasised that there was no guarantee that the particular request would be granted. Instead, an application for leave or preference for a specific day at home was thought to depend upon both airline operational requirements, such as the number of departing flights set against the size of the work force, and the frequency of similar requests by other employees with a higher seniority than the individual in question.

> '*But there will be occasions where you won't be able to get the leave or those days off that you've been needing to get you off*' (M4; p3, L 107-109).

On the other hand, there seemed to be a general agreement among participants that the lack of active efforts to organise one's work schedule would increase the likelihood of missing out on a majority of significant events. It was thought that missing out on important events, over time and with repeated experiences, would cause a tremendous challenge to even the closest of friendships

> ' *If you don't put in your leave, you just don't get anything... and you do miss out cause it's actually down to you*' (Mi7; p9; L 239-241).

It was within this context that participants spoke about the sad experience of losing friends during the process of mastering their somewhat atypical lifestyle with frequent absences from home and limited scopes for planning ahead.

> '*I don't want it to get to the stage where I haven't seen them for so long, but I'll ring them, you know, used to be very good friends but now I hardly know them which can happen*' (S5; p8, L 233-235).

Despite the expressed tension between work obligations and individual desires for greater control over personal living, participants appeared to be overall accepting towards the lifestyle with frequent reference to both the perceived negatives and the positives of their profession.

> '*I mean it has its ups and downs, you know, the positives are culturally and travelling and you have a lot of spare time in the job and downsides... probably jet lag, being away from home for certain events that you'd like to be at home for, be it birthdays or a wedding or just a barbecue or something*' (M4; p1, L 23-25, 35).

The act of weighing up the pros and the cons of the profession appeared to also incorporate persistent comparisons with other occupations. Participants talked about the perceived contrasts between regular 9-5 office work and the cabin crew lifestyle, in particular the distinct hours of work with a seemingly differing frequency and duration of allocated days off from work. This was thought to allow the individual to develop a more comprehensive view of their particular type of work. This, in turn, could serve as a buffer against negative work experiences, such as instances of frustration and disappointment whenever participants were unable to achieve the specific days at home they needed for nurturing social relations. Participants also identified the way in which they thought crew had a choice between either getting miserable about their profession or accepting the realities of the somewhat atypical lifestyle.

> '*That's the job, I knew that when I started so you either get miserable about it and leave or you just get on with it and I think every job's got aspects to it that you don't like, it's just that it takes you away from home for a length of time and your personal life does suffer'* (A3; p8-9, L 273-279).

One reason for this apparent adjustment to job irregularities may be that with repeated absence from home, participants gradually accumulate a range of diverse experiences of the profession. This in turn might offer the foundation for a pragmatic knowledge base that facilitates realistic expectations, anticipations, and perceptions on exactly how their work impacts upon their personal lives.

> '*I just accept that that's the price you pay for this job... you just have to think about that you're now somewhere else, all expense paid and that although you're not at home you might be in New York'* (A18; p7, 188-191).

Many participants said that a rational outlook could aid an adaptation to the initial disappointment of having to work during social events. A helpful way of maintaining positive thoughts was to socialise with their colleagues once they had arrived at the

appointed destination. This was thought to decrease negative effects such as increased homesickness, ruminations, or annoyance towards their respective employer.

> *'Rather than sort of sitting there and dwelling on the fact that I might be missing out on stuff at home, I'll just try and have a good time with the crew and go out'* (A3; p8, L 254-256).

Although going out with colleagues on a trip appeared to ameliorate, at least temporarily, the risk of excessive ruminations over what one is missing out on at home, participants explained how this might not always be possible owed to either the level of sociability amongst the specific crew or diverse sleeping patterns owed to the frequent crossings of differing time zones.

> *'I think when you're by yourself, awake at night and you can't sleep, you're thinking... oh, I wonder what they're doing whereas they're probably not giving you a second thought'* (Su6; P4, L 117-119).

Although some participants expressed awareness of the potential negative effects of excessive worry on their mental health, many spoke of difficulties about controlling their thinking patterns. This, in turn, was thought to disrupt their ability to monitor and manage cognitive phenomenon evident by participants' experiences of thought intrusion and rumination.

> *'I recognise that sometimes I could think about stuff maybe a little too much than what it warrants... sometimes it feels like you're just going round a roundabout, you can come to the wrong conclusion sometimes if you think about stuff too much but'* (M4; p11, L 402-405).

Participants explained how the process of dealing with worry and negative affects were further complicated by the influence of tiredness and jetlag, which was thought to reduce their natural scope for rational cognitive and emotional processing.

'It is a little hard sometimes going away on a trip, jet-lagged cause I think when you don't sleep properly as well, you can't think straight, you can't think straight what you're feeling, can't be dealt with in a manner that you would normally deal with' (M4; p11, L 426-428).

On a simplistic level, it would be easy to assume that participants' inclination towards irrational thinking during the event of jetlag could be reduced by ensuring adequate sleep, which in turn, would reduce the risk of psychological disturbances. However, the process of gaining adequate sleep might not be so straightforward when considering how the combined effects of large time differences and frequent night flights was seen to cause frequent disruptions to participant's sleeping patterns. Equally plausible is the idea that an individual's sleep hygiene could be worsened by experiences of worry in that those pressing concerns could lead the individual to wake up in the middle of the night. This was illustrated by one male participant who said:

> *'I will think about stuff and sometimes it might even wake me up in the night'* (M4; p11, L 429).

There is little doubt that psychological problems may arise in cabin crew, and as expressed by participants, these may appear against a background of fatigue and sleep disturbance. The interplay between these two factors can make it difficult to separate problems that are incidental to the lifestyle from those that may arise specifically from the stress of the work itself.

6.3.3 Nurturing social relationships

Many participants believed their reactions towards missing out on social events were also influenced by the extent to which friends and family were sympathetic towards the cabin crew lifestyle. It was generally thought that the degree of grief or upset from a friend, a

partner, or a family member could serve to either exacerbate or ameliorate the hardship of having to go to work during important occasions at home.

> *'I think if they understand the job you do, then they're not really going to give you too much grief about it'* (S5; p9, L 269-273).

One way to try and reduce the risks of disappointment or noticeable dissatisfaction from others was to teach them about the lived realities of the profession. Participants identified the way in which gaining understanding from friends and family was thought to require active efforts of educating them on the reality of the lifestyle.

> *'Educating and saying... this is how it works... I will be landing at 10 o'clock at night, chances are that I will not make it but if I can, I will be there'* (K2, p9, L 230-232).

In addition to regular, and open communications about the perceived interruptions to upcoming social arrangements, participants thought that other people's acceptance toward their frequent absence from home was mediated by the degree to which the individual crew member was seen to make efforts with loved others. One way to achieve this was to keep in touch on a regular basis by meeting up, calling, or sending an email in between trips.

> *'Keep in touch with them and you have to do that, you have to text and email and phone them... have to keep making an effort with them'* (A3; p6, L 183-184).

When considering that cabin crew may only be at home for 10 days each month, keeping in regular contact was believed to be a complex matter with talks of increasing pressure to interact, either via phone or in person, with as many people as they could on their days off. The total stress accumulated during the process of maintaining contact with closed others was thought to depend upon the specific size and nature of an individual's social network.

'Yeah, there's always so much to squeeze in, so many people to see... yeah, lot of pressure' (S5; p8, L 243-244).

Participants explained that friends would often say that it was difficult to keep track of cabin crew whereabouts, and it was sometimes felt that this was used as an excuse for not being the one who initiates contact. Consequently, many participants said they felt personally responsible for keeping a relationship afloat.

'Like when you get back, friends say... perfect excuse for... oh, didn't know that you were around so you're always phoning them in a kind of sense to arrange to meet up' (M4; p8, L 258-261).

Under circumstances whereby the individual was not seen to make an effort with friends either by failing to initiate contact or failing to inform friends about their scheduled whereabouts, participants voiced their fears over losing friends, which was thought to give rise to increased experiences of loneliness and isolation.

'If you get back from a trip you can suddenly find that you've got lots of time on your hands and you ring around and nobody's available' (Su6; p3, L 58-59).

Given the stress of the limited time available to organise one's social life whilst also ensuring adequate time for resting, paying bills or grocery shopping, participants spoke of the importance of taking care of the self to avoid the risk of 'burn out' .

'To try not to promise too much... and that is not trying to turn yourself inside out, to make everyone else around you happy, you have to look after yourself" (K2; p9, L 235-238).

Many participants found it difficult to turn down a friend's requests to meet up whenever they had a spare day at home, and this was thought to trigger feelings of guilt and concern as to whether one was being a 'bad' friend.

> *'That's when you feel a bit bad because you can't see everyone all at once... sometimes you feel as if you're making the other person feel that you've not got time for them'* (Su6; p12, L 358-360).

Participants spoke about various situations when they felt there had been a dilemma over the pressure to select one friend over another, and thereby being at risk of 'making' one person feel less valued than another. It was within this context that participants expressed concerns about losing friends, upsetting others, or 'being perceived by others as selfish'.

6.3.4 Juggling competing responsibilities

It was generally thought that the way in which participants organised their social lives was heavily influenced by both the specific nature of their social networks such as the quality of a specific friendship or geographical distance and the individual characteristics of others including friend's occupational status, marital status, and number of dependencies. Participants also spoke of how circumstantial changes such as someone getting married or moving to a different part of the country would alter the nature of any strategies or efforts used to maintain the specific relationship. For example, if an individual was part of a large group of friends, then he or she might have been able to see many friends simultaneously by organising a night out for everyone. This, in turn, would allow the individual to save time with the advantage of greater capacity to allocate spare recourses on, for example, a partner or organising one's domestic life. However, if friends were getting married, moving away, or having children, the individual might be required to schedule independent meetings with each friend, and this could leave a person little room for engaging in other activities owing to time limitations.

'But now we sort of have splinter groups... people get married, people have kids, people move away so I'm trying to see individual friends... I'm trying to do the lot in that small amount of time, there's never enough time' (S5; p7, L 228-231).

It was interesting to note participants' apparent willingness and ease with trying, whenever they were at home, to adapt own social calendars according to other people's circumstances. This might suggest a link between the experience of various limitations to one's own opportunities for socialising (frequent irregular absence from home) and a seemingly greater tolerance or sympathy towards other people's experience of restricted availability for socialising.

'*I come home; I call them, find out when they're free and try to meet up'* (A18; p8, L 229-230).

'Friends are probably working Monday to Friday, you know, other people have commitments with family, kids, all the rest of it and' (M4; p7, L 253-255).

A more complex phenomenon was thought to be the impact of changes in participants' own circumstances, such as for example, gaining a new partnership, having children, or becoming involved in an outside activity, on their ability to manage social relationships. One reason for this was perceived to be the growing volume of multiple, and often competing, demands placed on what was essentially thought of as very few days available to nurture one's child, partnership, hobby, family, or friendships.

'*I probably didn't see my friends quite as much as I should have done but then it's difficult, if you want to make it work you have to see them (new partner) every opportunity really'* A3; p6, L 196-198.

Under such circumstances, participants said they felt that they were forced to make complex decisions as to whether they would, for example, develop important activities or hobbies at the expense of social relationships or vice versa.

'You might want to do your interest and your hobbies but then you get an invite to go out with a friend on that night. Do you want to see your friends or do you want to stick to your hobby' (SU6; p11, L 333-337).

Although there did not seem to be any absolute rules about how participants should act to juggle their responsibilities, they spoke about the importance of prioritisations to help facilitate the immediate process of making subjective choices.

> *'Time, it's really valuable to you so you kind of choose carefully... planning your days off, if you really don't feel like seeing someone or going to a party, then you won't'* (A3; p7, L 225-228).

Apart from helping the individual to make constructive use of one's time, the act of prioritising was also seen as an instrumental asset for longer term solutions to issues of work-life balance. For example, participants explained how prioritising some friendships over others would eventually lead to a smaller social network, which in the wake of additional responsibilities, was seen to ease the task of keeping in regular contact with those deemed to be important or close friends.

> *'Certain friends you would never say no to and that's not being shallow, it's just trying not to keep close with everybody, you have to make up your mind a little bit, otherwise you would go maniac after a while'* (K2; p10, L 255-256, 258-259).

An opposite dilemma was when a goal setting process went awry, such as channelling all one's focus into making personal relationships work whilst ignoring family relationships, hobbies or other activities. For example, participants spoke of situations whereby a majority of their time had been devoted to their partner, and once that particular relationship broke down; they found themselves with very few friends and a lot of spare time on their hands. The experience of a separation or a divorce in the absence of a helpful network of friends and family was thought to create a serious risk of

psychological disturbance arising from lack of emotional support and increased feelings of loneliness.

> *'I got into this long term relationship, I tried to make the best of that relationship and obviously when that ended I then found myself kind of like with very few friends and lots of days off '* (J1; p2, L 42-45).

Although it would be easy to assume that the spare time would create ample opportunities for building up new social relationship, participants described the way in which the irregular patterns of work could sometimes make it difficult for an individual to meet new people.

> '*Because I'm not doing any regular social activities due to my schedule I am not making friends either, Yeah... to build new friendships I think is almost impossible'* (A18; p8-9, L 246-247, 250).

An additional difficulty with developing new friendships was thought to be the negative influence of tiredness on an individual's motivational level. Many participants stated that they would often decline invitations for social engagements due to feelings of fatigue.

> '*If you feel tired and you feel like you don't really want to go out, then perhaps you've lost the opportunity to meet new people'* (J1; p9, L 260-261).

Participants said that lack of motivation during events of fatigue could cause them to loose out on various opportunities for broadening their social networking.

6.4 Theme 3: Experiencing personal relationships

All of the participants made reference to the complexities surrounding the perceived impact of the cabin crew lifestyle on a partnership. Although it was generally believed that the total effects of the job on any given relationship would depend upon a wide range

of *couple specifics*, participants identified a partner's ability to sympathise with the cabin crew profession and occupational status to be highly important influences on a partnership. Their experience of personal relationships was thought to involve three sub themes; a) selecting a partner, b) developing a partnership, and c) maintaining a partnership.

6.4.1 Selecting a partner: dealing with stereotypes

Participants explained how, in a similar way to building up new social networks, the frequent absence from home could sometimes make it difficult to form a new partnership.

> '*Um... meeting people in the first place is hard because, you know, you might meet someone then you're away*' (A3; p6, L 201-202).

Although participants said they recognised that meeting people could be a difficult matter for a majority of people regardless of their respective profession, it was generally thought that the cabin crew lifestyle complicated an individual's ability *to get-together* with someone who does not fly.

> '*It is very difficult to meet people that don't fly*' (M4; p8, L 291-292).

One reason for this was believed to be the likelihood of conflicting work schedules with other professionals being prone to work long hours during the week and then having the weekend to themselves. In contrast, crew might be away during most weekends with whole days off during the week. Although this was thought to reduce cabin crews' reach when selecting a partner, many participants believed that by making compromises, such as going on a date on Friday night despite leaving for Singapore early hours the next day, it became possible to form an intimate relationship with a non-flying professional.

'I think making more of an effort and doing things at times that you wouldn't normally want to, because you know that might be the only time that you're going to see them especially if they're in jobs... work long hours' (Su6; p9, L 269-271)

A more serious issue appeared to be participants' experience of being subject to a range of various stereotypical beliefs about the profession. They described many situations when there seemed to be a wide discrepancy between other people's image of the crew lifestyle and the lived actualities of long haul flying.

'*They maybe get the wrong impression what happens... stereotype... what they think stewardesses... they all think we're having fun all the time'* (A3; p6, L 203-204).

Participants explained how this could, in part, be overcome by telling people about the true nature of their job, such as the perceived tiredness and loneliness. Although this appeared to reduce, at least to a degree, any initial misconceptions about the life of an international jet-setter, participants emphasised the way in which certain personality traits, such as jealousy, insecurities or a low level of independence could make it more difficult for an individual to understand and sympathise with the lived realities of the job.

6.4.2 Developing a partnership: the accelerating revolving door syndrome

Many participants, in the wake of their demanding lifestyle, voiced concerns over the lengthy times apart from their partner. This was thought to complicate the process of establishing the necessary foundations for a secure companionship that could withstand the hardship of persistent absence from one and another.

'*I think in any relationship you're building on that bond and building on that foundation... I felt like it wasn't, you know, compact enough because it was stopping and starting all the time'* (Mi7; p10, L 267, 270-271).

A possible solution to this problem would be to devote a majority of one's spare time on nurturing the specific companionship, and participants explained how this could increase the likelihood of turning a newly founded relationship into a long lasting partnership.

> '*If you want to make it work you have to see them every opportunity really otherwise there's no point*' (A3; p6, L 198-199).

On the other hand, dedicating time and efforts to one's partner was thought to come at a great cost with even less time to see friends, family or managing jetlag. It was within this context that participants spoke of feeling pressured to make complex, and often paradoxical, decisions between friends or a partner, each of which could potentially cause negative consequences such as losing friends or loneliness derived from being single.

> '*I felt like I had to see him and I learnt a lot from that because I probably didn't see my friends*' (A3; p6, L 195-196).

> '*You want to meet people and go out with them but then you still want to have time to sleep, have some time by yourself but it's*' (Su6; p8, L 247-249).

Although it was recognised that participants' scope for multi-tasking was influenced by a partner's specific profession and individual characteristics for coping with the crew lifestyle, the ongoing stress of ensuring adequate time for various and often contradictory requirements was thought to be a strenuous matter for the individual crew member.

> '*I need to find a balance when I shall actually be able to do that, even though he's around*' (K2; p10, L 244-245).

It was within this framework that participants identified '*the accelerating revolving door syndrome*', which they thought of as a common strategy used by crew to '*speed up*' the growth of their personal relationship in the wake of serious time limitations.

'*Push to try a relationship that perhaps might not work but just to speed up the process to see if it will work or not, kind of like revolving doors, kind of like let's just go through this really quickly and I can fling you out other side if it's not working so... yeah, a lot of compensation I suppose*' (J1; p10, L 307-311).

This particular approach was thought to be a direct reflection of the perceived quickened pace of the overall crew lifestyle when compared to other professions. For example, participants explained how the act of moving in with a partner shortly after the first meeting allowed one to experience the perceived conditions for 'testing out' whether a relationship could work or not.

'*The only way to do that is to promptly live together*' (Mi7; p12, L 341).

Although participants said they were aware of the link between hastening acceleration of transitional stages and potential stress within a relationship, they feared that the absence of rapid commitments might cause the relationship to 'fizzle out' owed to lengthy times apart. It was believed that the initial spark between two people would be short lasting if one did not spend time together, and time was perceived as the ultimate ingredient for building up a bond with one's partner.

'*The spark was still there that kept going but the spark I think can only go on for so long*' (Mi7; p9, L 265-266).

'B*uilding up on that bond, and the only way to do that would be to live together, the same as like what other people would do if they had normal 9 to 5 jobs and they lived separately, they have that time and we need that time*' (Mi7, p12, L 338-341).

Whilst there is no doubt that '*the accelerating revolving door syndrome*' allowed participants to perhaps bypass some of the perceived difficulties associated with the frequent absence from home, they also said it facilitated swift indications as to whether

the respective partner could cope with the lived realities of the somewhat atypical lifestyle.

> *'Yeah... it can cut short relationships definitely but if they don't understand, they don't give you the provisions that you need to do your job, then you're never going to have a future with them so it's probably a good thing'* (S5; p10, L 303-307).

This form of experiential knowledge, amongst a host of other variables such as individual desires, needs, and definition of love, could then be used to review the perceived risk-gain dichotomy attached to the particular relationship. This was thought to be of functional value when considering how participants were often forced to choose between investing in one's partnership, on the one hand, and fostering one's social circle on the other hand. For example, if the relationship was deemed inappropriate at an early stage, then participants might be less inclined to jeopardise the quality of their respective friendships. Alternatively, they might be more willing to sacrifice social events if the partnership was deemed worthy of one's attention. Consequently, an early discovery of the level of compatibility between a crew member and the partner might serve as a preventative strategy against the risk of *'double losses'*. Participants spoke of the way in which the sorrow of breaking up with a partner could be exacerbated by lack of a supportive network, which in turn, was thought to heighten the probability of grief or depression even for the most resilient crew member.

> *'I think that's when you get close to touching rock bottom and then stuff does get easy, you know, I didn't think it was going to get easier and it's the first time coming out of a serious relationship'* (M4; p11, L 419-421).

It was recognised however that *the accelerating revolving door syndrome* could equally well be of negative value to the beginning stages of a relationship, and participants spoke about their fears of being initially perceived as needy or dependant by their partner.

> '*It's not that I'm needy or I need to see him all the time*' (Mi7; p10, L 272).

Another issue to consider was thought to be the degree to which a partner was motivated or willing to participate in the process of speedy couple evolvements. The idea of making serious commitments during the beginning phase of a relationship might not be equally appealing to all people, and was thought to depend upon individual characteristics such as age, relationship history as well as a partner's personal character.

> '*We do a lot of things that are sped up at home to compensate for the time that we have away and maybe that makes some people push their partners a little bit more because you feel you're working at that speed and they're not working fast enough*' (J1; p11, L 303-305).

Given that a majority of other professionals might not be familiar with the hasty pace of the crew lifestyle, participants believed that some people might feel overwhelmed or intimidated by the prospect of fast developments.

6.4.3 Maintaining a partnership

It was generally agreed that participants' ability to maintain a partnership was highly dependant on the specific blend of individual characteristics belonging to each cohort in question. Participants identified how differing historical backgrounds and individual preferences would influence the degree to which people were single, married with children, divorced or in the process of getting divorced.

> '*Everybody comes from all different walks of life and different environment and some people are single, some people are married with children, some people aren't, some people are divorced*' (Mi7; p7, L 195-197).

Another factor was thought to be the degree to which a partner was seen to cope with the particular challenges associated with the crew lifestyle. Participants explained how

adjustment to the frequent absence from home and the inability to plan ahead could be a complex learning process for anyone who lacked direct experience of persistent long haul travels.

> '*We get used to it but people who don't fly don't get so used to it, it takes them a long time to get into the groove, into the little niche of like what flying is, and how much disruption there can be in life and how they can't plan*' (J1; p11, L 335-339).

One reason for this is that any pressures derived from the job will essentially also impact upon the particular relationship, which in turn, was thought to exert an indirect influence on the specific partner's way of life.

> '*The reality is that once I am back she starts cancelling social events... her social life also suffers because of it*' (A18; p8, L 236, 239).

There appeared to be a parallel effect whereby participants' struggle with making complex decisions between seeing friends or being with a partner also became a challenge for a spouse in that he or she might seek to organise, modify, or cancel social agendas according to the cabin crew work schedule. One way to minimise the risk of such adverse impacts would be for partners to organise their lives according to own accords, and then the respective crew member could choose to participate in any scheduled events that corresponded with his or hers allocated time at home. However, this was thought to give rise to a differing challenge in that lengthy times apart could often cause each partner to miss one and another, and participants said such longings could often generate a preference for spending exclusive time together once a crew member returned home from a trip.

> '*Both of us feel that when we are together, that there's no time for paperwork or doing this or doing that*' (K2; p10, L 246-247).

Although absence from one's partner was perceived to make the '*heart grow fonder*', participants spoke about the way in which leaving their partner could often cause a sense of distance or strangeness immediately after they returned back home again. It was identified that a partner often needed to get used to having the respective crew member at home again, during which participants often felt they were subject to a range of accusations and confrontations as to why they were always away.

> *'She needs to get used to me being back again... yeah, it takes a half a day... , for things to settle down and to catch up on and open it up, once you get confronted with that you have been away, that things have happened while you were away... why were you away'* (A18; p7, L 197-200).

This appeared to be caused by the erratic alterations between independent functioning, one the one hand, and co-dependency on the other hand. These adjustments, in turn, were thought to influence the dynamics between two partners in that the frequent, and often lengthy, separations would essentially condition an individual into self-reliance. As such, each partner might gradually start to act, think, and feel as if they really are on their own, and the contrast between autonomous executions and the requirements of affiliation can make it difficult to manage the anticipated re-union.

> *'Shouldn't he be excited to see me, I was excited to see him, I wanted to show him my pictures, got so much to tell him and he was obviously thinking'* (J1; p11, L 325-327).

It was within this context that many participants voiced their concerns over negative responses from partners such as bitterness and resentment towards the crew member's frequent absence.

> *'I've felt in the past, you know, with ex-girlfriends that they're a little bit bitter towards you for being away for that time'* (S5; p10, L 300-302).

A more challenging and perhaps inter-related issue seemed to be the way in which the experience of persistent '*stop and start*' to a relationship could develop a number of insecurities, especially for the one who as seen to be waiting at home.

> '*There was an issue at home with my partner, I'd been thinking about him a lot and I missed him, I came home and he was very... I was thinking why he is in a mood*' (J1; p11, L 322-324).

Such insecurities appeared to be compounded by circumstances where the individual was unable to devote a majority of their allocated time at home to the partner, and participants identified that this could lead others to feel rejected or, even worse, abandoned.

> '*I can tell now, at the back of his mind it's like... you're the one who's always leaving me, you're always going away and now you've had some days off... some holiday and you've left me again*' (J1; p11, L 329-331).

Whenever a partner was upset or hurt by the lack of crews' regular presence and availability, participants explained how the process of going to work seemed to become increasingly hard owed to feelings of guilt from yet again leaving one's partner. In order to try and ease the partner's pain, and perhaps also to reduce worry and guilt surrounding one's absence, participants talked about over-compensations such as excessive gift buying or organising the most expensive birthday cake if one failed to be physical present during important occasions.

> '*Overcompensating by doing extra special things so you're spending time in the shopping malls around the world, missing your partner, feeling guilty thinking what can I buy them*' (J1; p12, L 344, 347-348).

On the other hand, the act of leaving loved ones at home was thought to be equally difficult for the individual crew member to bear. Participants talked of the heartbreak

when making the journey into work at times when they essentially wanted to be at home with their partner.

> *'Bad... empty... half full, you don't feel... you feel halved in a very strange way... I find it very heartbreaking to leave my partner. I have to go away to work; I'm in tears'* (K2; p5, L 138-139, p6, L156-157).

The hardship of going to work appeared to be exacerbated during the event of relationship discord. It was interesting to note that participants often identified emotionally turbulent times to be a natural outcome of intimate living including '*differences in outlook and beliefs*' rather than a direct consequence of the job itself.

> '*You're going to have difference of opinion, you're going to have arguments and sometimes you're going to be leaving on a trip and it's going to be difficult to go away on that trip'* (M4; p10,L 376-378).

However, it was generally thought that the process of dealing with problematic situations in a relationship could be more difficult for crew than regular workers, because the physical absence could often prevent them from instantly making up with their partner. Although it was recognised that leaving immediately after an argument could allow each partner to *'calm down'*, and that a lengthy absence could be used to develop a more objective outlook on the specific difficulty in question, participants expressed frustration over the inability to immediately '*patch things up with their partners'*. It was under these circumstances that participants talked of their experience of anxiety and isolation whilst away on a trip.

> '*I have been through like a little bit of problematic situation in my relationship and it feels very isolating that you've got thoughts going through your head, I'm a very hands-on, see somebody face to face to talk to them person, I don't really like doing things just over the phone and it feels very frustrating and very isolating'* (J1; p7, L 202-205).

It would be logical to assume that the return home would facilitate ample opportunities for managing the outstanding conflict. However, the tiredness and jetlag was believed to complicate participants' abilities to cope with domestic stress. One reason for this may be that the regular fatigue derived from night flights and crossing time zones is multiplied by the experience of emotional disturbance. For example, worry and anxiety, however tiresome in itself, might make it more difficult for an individual to gain adequate rest prior to, during, or after a night flight, and sleep deprivation could equally well serve to magnify any alleged issues at home.

> '*You just don't think straight, you get so annoyed... very annoyed, I wouldn't say sensitive but you're just very irritable and it's like... don't bother me with stupid things and sometimes it's so much better to just go to bed, just say hi and then go to bed and then start talking about things that have happened or whatever*' (K2; p7, L 183-187).

This vicious cycle between relationship discord and sleep deprivation was thought to ameliorate participants' scope for rational thinking, which in turn, was believed to exacerbate the risk of escalated arguments on the day of their return. Consequently, participants emphasised the importance of going to bed prior to entering into any conversations about highly emotional topics such as intimate living.

6.5 Theme 4: Dealing with Jetlag & Fatigue

Participants identified jetlag and fatigue as a highly negative consequence of the cabin crew profession. It was believed that the combination of erratic shift work and frequent crossing of various time zones gave rise to a range of cognitive, motivational, emotional and biological *symptoms*, which in turn, was perceived to exert a negative impact on crews' performance and general level of functioning. This theme consisted of four sub-themes as follows; a) triggers for jetlag and fatigue, b) managing jetlag and fatigue, c) the

link between psycho-social living and gaining adequate sleep, and d) accumulative sleep deprivation.

6.5.1 Triggers for jetlag and fatigue: the combined effects of frequent travels through various time zones and irregular shift work

Participants talked about their experience of crossing various time zones, and it was thought that this could often exert a negative impact on their abilities to maintain a regular sleeping pattern. One reason for this was thought to be the large time differences between, for example, eastern destinations (e.g., Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Bangkok, Australia, and Malaysia) and the West coast (e.g., United States of America, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Dominican Republic) from the UK.

> '*The sleeping pattern is really difficult cause you never get into any kind of routine because you're going from east to west so you're constantly... your sleep pattern's disrupted'* (A3; p4, L 133-135).

Although going from minus 8 hours (GMT) to plus 8-12 hours (GMT) was generally perceived as a significant trigger for jetlag, some participant's emphasised the way in which their respective employer tried, whenever possible, to avoid extreme time differences by breaking up their work scheduled with, for example, a trip to some parts of Africa (plus 1 GMT) in between eastern and west coast travels. This was thought to ease the process of acclimatization to UK time in between travels, and therefore seen as an important way of reducing any sleep disruptions caused by jetlag.

> '*The company try to make it so that if you went to the Far East then you go to Africa next and then you go to the United States afterwards or something, actually things have become a lot better'* (J1; p4, L 107, 112-113).

Participants identified difficulties with both falling asleep and sudden awakenings during the night to be the main consequences of jetlag. However, it was interesting to note how

the additional requirements of night flights appeared to make it difficult for participants to distinguish between symptoms of jetlag, on the one hand, and tiredness emanating from irregular shift work on the other hand.

> *'From that additional flight of being out of bed is that you've been on a different time zone as well so... yeah, your body's all kind of messed up really and you get tired, you're lethargic'* (M4; p2, L 65-67).

> *'Apart from not sleeping well because of the problem (jetlag), you're not going to be sleeping because you've got to go to work as well, be up on the night flight'* (M4; p11, L 433-435).

One reason for this might be that the realities of the long haul profession involves the combination of two inter-dependant, yet differing, sources of sleep disruptions. For example, the sleep deprivation from a night flight might be compounded by difficulties with falling asleep and frequent awakenings during a given sleep cycle. Alternatively, large time differences might complicate an individual's ability to gain adequate rest irrespective of whether the flight departs during the day or at night time.

6.5.2. Managing jetlag and irregular shift patterns: the cognitive, emotional, and biological symptoms of sleep deprivation

The degree of jetlag was seen to largely depend upon the calculated total of time differences between UK departures and the respective country cabin crew travelled to. An additional factor was thought to be the respective alterations between day and night shifts whereby participants stated that a higher frequency of night flights within a given monthly schedule could exacerbate their experience of tiredness and fatigue. Consequently, participants explained how managing one's sleeping pattern was essentially thought to be influenced by the specific nature of the monthly trip allocation, each with a differing idiosyncratic composition of various destinations, time differences, and durations away from home. However, they appeared to agree on two common

strategies utilised by crew to aid the process of minimising sleep difficulties. These were thought to be either adjustment to the local time in question, which was believed to enhance an individual's opportunity to both engage with local facilities on longer trips and to sleep during hours of darkness, or trying to remain on European time, which was believed to ease the process of acclimatisation to UK time once they returned back home again.

> '*The danger as well, if you're away on location longer and you do get into the local time, is that once you're back in Europe you then have to adjust again*' (A18; p5, L 116-118).

It was generally agreed that managing jetlag and fatigue was a gradual learning process that involved the accumulative build up of practical experiences of wide time differences, trip durations, and the strains of flying through the night. This would allow the individual to establish the necessary knowledge for anticipating the relative risks associated with either adjusting to local time or remaining on UK time, which in turn, was seen to facilitate swift alterations according to what was essentially believed to best fit the nature of the trip in question and the time allocated for rest at home. For example, if an individual adjusted to local time when away, he or she might find it difficult to re-gain natural sleeping patterns at home and might therefore become nocturnal during valuable periods with beloved ones. Alternatively, by remaining on UK time whilst away, local days are often turned into nights and vice versa. This might, especially during longer trips, generate increased risks of loneliness and isolation in that it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to engage with both fellow colleagues and the local facilities.

> '*Once you've done a specific route a couple of times you know what to expect and you know what the routine is going to be like… try to get on local time where there's facilities available and I'm not too good in specific countries where the facilities aren't so good so I'll end up becoming a bit nocturnal*' (J1; p3, L 62-63, 64-65).

'*I stay on local time... probably worse, but if you stick to London time, its day-time wherever you are,... can't think of anything worse, sleeping the whole day, waking up and then it's night time and you never see daylight'* (Mi7; p6, L 148-152).

In addition to the generic strategies for dealing with jetlag and tiredness, participants mentioned a wide range of diverse approaches that was believed to enhance their individual abilities for gaining adequate sleep. It was suggested that exercise, reading, listening to calm music or taking sleeping medication could, at least to a degree, serve to buffer against difficulties with falling asleep. However, participants emphasised that there was no guarantee that any of these strategies would work, and some participants talked of going for long periods of up to 24 hours without sleep. There also appeared to be differing perceptions on the topic of sleep remedies with some expressing a positive view whereas others seemed to worry about the impact of sleeping pills on their physical well-being.

'*Almost within 20 minutes of taking it (sleeping medication) I'll be able to get to sleep... I feel a lot less tired than I would do if I'd been awake all night'* (Su6; p7, L 198-199).

'*There are all these sleeping pills and potions and god know what but I wonder if the human body really needs that. I don't want to be taking that which a lot of people do and I don't think it's good'* (S5; p5, L 152-153, 155-156).

Participants spoke about the process of acclimatising to UK time, and it was generally thought that this depended on the time of their arrival. As a general rule, participants said they tried to go to bed for a couple of hours if they arrived home before 14h00 local time. Although this was thought to ease participants back into regular sleeping patterns again, they voiced concerns over tendencies for over-sleeping with increased risks of becoming nocturnal for a majority of the period of time spent at home.

'I'd have more days where I turned night into day at home unfortunately, I used to think it was very good to have a little sleep because I was tired and I then used to end up waking up at 10 o'clock at night' (J1; p3, l75-77).

If they arrived later than 14h00 hours participants said they would often try and stay awake during the day and then have an early night. It was within this context that participants described clearly noticeable impacts of jetlag and fatigue on their psychological and physical wellbeing.

'You just don't think straight, you get so annoyed... very annoyed, I wouldn't say sensitive but you're just very irritable' (K2; p7, L 183-184).

'I think you definitely have a lack of motivation to do things, you just think... oh, just want to stay in and I just want to sleep' (Su6; p8, L 229-230).

These were identified as a combination of cognitive (memory loss, impaired performance, difficulties with communicating with others, speech problems, disorientations, and 'inability to think straight), biological (digestive problems, cold and flu symptoms), and emotional ill effects (irritability, annoyance, aggravated, feeling grouchy). In addition, participants talked of feeling lethargic and an overall shift in motivational level whereby a majority of tasks, even the smaller ones such as washing clothes, was suddenly perceived as a big effort to complete.

6.5.3. The influence of psycho-social living on crew's ability to gain adequate rest: an inter-dependant relationship

Although it would be easy to assume that the above symptoms would naturally decline with adequate sleep, participants explained how the influence of psycho-social issues such as seeing friends, a partner or family as well as attending to the accumulative build up of domestic tasks, were perceived to complicate the issue of gaining substantial rest. One reason for this appeared to be the pressures of multi-tasking in the wake of

significant time limitations when considering the relatively few days at home in between trips. As such, any time spent on managing jetlag would also mean less time available for social or domestic activities, which in turn, were perceived as serious sources of individual stress.

> *'I think that sometimes that can cause a little bit of stress factor for me because then I think about all the things I need to do and all the phone calls I need to do and pay the bills and'* (K2; p12, L 313-315).

Although going out with friends or spending time with a partner was believed, at least in the short term, to reduce the immediate stress arising from, for example, missing out on a party or fears of neglecting ones personal relationship, the longer term effect of choosing to engage in social activities on the first day back from a trip was believed to be the risk of subsequent ill patterns of disturbed sleep owed to over-tiredness or exhaustion.

> *'I know it sets me in a bad pattern for the rest of my days off if I'm out on the day I get back'* (Su6; p9, L 251).

A second disadvantage of failing to achieve substantial sleep was the worsening symptoms of cognitive, emotional, and biological symptoms of jetlag and fatigue, which was thought to exert a negative influence on participants' scope for inter-personal communication. This in turn was believed to generate serious risks of adverse impacts on the quality of relationships, and participants described many situations whereby difficulties with masking emotional symptoms including irritability and annoyance could cause frictions and discord with loved ones.

> '*I feel sorry for the people I'm around the most when I am tired because I'm pretty laid back but when I'm tired just like anybody else I do take it out on the person I'm nearest to... I don't want to be mean to anybody'* (S5; p5, L 137-138, L 140).

As we have seen, dealing with fatigue arising from the job itself may be further complicated by lifestyle obligations such as ensuring adequate time for a friend or a partner. On the one hand, prioritising sleep over personal relationships was thought to generate a risk of broken relations. On the other hand, negative symptoms of sleep deprivation were believed to exert adverse impacts on participants' scope for inter-personal communication, thereby also disrupting the quality of personal relationships.

6.5.4. Walking around in constant jetlag: the influence of accumulative sleep deprivation on self-identity

A more worrisome phenomenon appeared to be the gradual onset of cumulative sleep deprivation over a relatively long period of time. This was thought to be the product of repeated travels to various time zones with limited days of rest in between trips. One of the main problems with sleep deprivation was perceived to be the slow build up of negative effects of tiredness, which was often seen to make it difficult for the individual to notice cognitive, emotional and behavioural changes in the self.

> '*The longer you've done long haul flying for it's... you don't realise how long it takes for you to get over trips I think and you're not functioning a hundred percent even you feel as though you are... walking round like constant jet-lag... and I think we're quite unaware of it'* (J1; p4-5, L 104-106, 121-123).

> *'Maybe I get irritated by small things anyway in everyday life, I forget now, the lines become a bit blurred actually cause sometimes you can be a little bit jetlagged for a few days after the trip anyway so you don't know whether it's really you or not'* (J1; p4, L 99-102).

Participants said that the lack of awareness over such changes in self could often make it difficult to distinguish between symptoms of jetlag on the one hand and the perceived actualities of one's true persona on the other hand. This was thought to give rise to self

doubt with increased internal reflections on 'who am I' and 'is this me' perhaps indicating a temporal confusion over one's self-identity.

6.6 Theme 5: Making personal life fit work

Participants emphasised the inter-dependant relationship between cabin crew dynamics, difficulties with maintaining friendships, experiencing partnerships, and dealing with jetlag and fatigue. This was thought to require the need for circular coping processes that allowed the individual to deal with the simultaneous force of multiple stressors, which in turn, was seen to enhance their scope for adjusting private living to the static nature of the particular work schedule. This theme was believed to consist of four sub-themes as follows: a) motivation to do the job, b) adapting personal life to fit in with work, c) the circular coping process, and d) the dynamic relationship between the four categories above.

6.6.1. Motivation to do the job

Participants expressed many similar reasons for joining the cabin crew profession in the first place. The initial inspiration to become cabin crew was thought to be influenced by the '*opportunity to travel the world*', meeting people from various '*backgrounds*', and to explore a wide range of '*differing cultures*'. Another interesting commonality was that each participant, despite their particular circumstances, appeared to be at a transitional stage within their working lives shortly before seeking employment as cabin crew. Participants talked about redundancy, leaving university, or moving from abroad to work in the UK.

> *'Well, I'd left South Africa and I just wanted a new career, new job...'* (Mi7; p1, L 1).

> '*All of a sudden I found myself in London more or less because I love travelling, love being abroad and for me there was combining both of them in the job'* (K2; p1, L 4-6).

Seven out of eight participants expressed different views about why they initially applied to become crew to the reality 5-12 years later. Moreover, participants explained how their attention towards the possibility of joining the particular profession was thought to have occurred by chance with many highlighting the absence of a long term desire, want, or dream to '*be a stewardess/steward*' .

> '*It was not ever a dream of mine... really wanted to become or when you're a little girl and you dream about becoming a stewardess of some sort, it just happened*' (K2; p1, L 1-3).

> '*It was only going to be like for two years so it was only going to be like a short term thing*' (A3; p1, L 4-5).

The emphasis on the '*sudden discovery*' of the occupation along with the early anticipations of a temporary career could indicate a somewhat conventional pre-mature comprehension of the aircrew occupation prior to practical experiences of the profession. As such, it is plausible to assume that the novice cabin crew member may have began his or her new career with a range of orthodox assumptions that could be seen to overlap with the supposedly wider *stereotypical views* held by other non-flying members of the population as discussed in theme 3 (experiencing personal relationships). For example, some participants had initially expected greater opportunities for partying or socialising whilst away on a trip. Yet, after years of learning about the true nature of the profession, they voiced frustration over a partner's or a friend's initial impression of the particular lifestyle as party-fuelled, glamorous, and non-serious.

> '*Mad in a like social way, you know, permanent parties and barbecues and socialising and stuff which isn't really the case but*' (S5; p1, L10-11).

Although participants expressed a range of reasons as to why they wanted to remain in the job, including financial dependency, they seemed to agree that the experience of the

travelling lifestyle, as opposed to the actual work onboard the aircraft itself, was a highly regarded inspirational factor for continuing their careers within the airline industry.

> '*You can find yourself maybe like on a kind of deserted beach and it's 8.30 in the morning in London and everyone's starting a rat race on a Monday, it's like... yeah, that's not too bad*' (M4; p1, L 27-28, 30).

One reason for this was thought to be the limited opportunities for promotion within the cabin crew profession. Participants explained that if they wanted to *climb the ladder*, they had to firstly apply to become a *purser*, a person who supervises a respective cabin such as business class. However, this was essentially a lengthy process with some participants saying that it could take up to 11 years before they were allowed to apply for a different position due to the strict system of seniority operated by their respective airlines.

> *'There's not really a career to speak of. The promotion would be to purser... but I am still far down on the list and even if I would move into purser I don't know if it would be challenging enough'* (A18; p6, L 169, 174, 176-177).

In addition to the lengthy process of applying for promotions, participants emphasised that the difference between cabin crew and a purser was essentially no different in that both positions were seen to involve similar work duties. Consequently, many participants expressed doubts as to whether progression to the role of a purser would prove to be challenging or stimulating enough for the individual worker.

6.6.2. Adapting personal life to fit in with the requirement of work

There appeared to be a common belief amongst all of the participants that the cabin crew lifestyle had a tremendous impact upon their personal lives. This was thought to encompass a whole range of issues ranging from intra-personal ones such as psychological and physical well being, to inter-personal ones including their ability to form and maintain professional, social, and intimate relationships. It would be easy to

assume that the effects of few opportunities for promotion along with the many adverse impacts of the particular lifestyle on psycho-social living would give rise to short lived careers within the cabin crew profession.

> '*It's a real compromise and a dedication... you know, it dictates who you don't... who you go out with, it dictates who you're friends with, it dictates how you socialize and the time off and all those sort of things... yeah, it's choice'* (S5; p13, L 418-421).

Despite voiced experiences of loneliness, anxiety, homesickness, depression, abandonment, and rejection, participants said the decision to continue their careers as cabin crew was fundamentally a personal choice. Within this context, many participants appeared to retain positive outlooks evident by their emphasis on the perceived freedom to choose between remaining in the job or essentially leaving the profession to embark on a new career elsewhere.

> '*I think it's okay for me, it works well, if it was a pressing issue and it affected me that much I'd say... stop the ride, I want to get off, it's not worth it because there's more important things in life'* (J1;p10, L 274-276).

When considering the strict nature of the cabin crew work requirements, in particular the expressed difficulties with making changes to ones monthly work schedule, participants spoke about the importance of continuously seeking to adapt personal circumstances according to the job. On a simplistic level, this was thought to include constructive use of the few and often brief occasions at home with the individual essentially allocating a balanced proportion of time to the various requirements of personal living. This, in turn, was thought to bypass the risk of increased stress arising from the tension between, for example, over-due meeting with friends or the urgency of the accumulative builds up of domestic issues including reminder bills, empty refrigerators and piles of dirty laundry. One reason for this might be that maximum use of limited time recourses allows for better control over one's private circumstances in that the individual, by actively dealing

with a range of diverse phenomenon, is essentially regulating the degrees to which the specific work requirements interrupt personal living. For example, if an individual can be seen to juggle his or her time between friends, family, partners, and domestic tasks, he or she is unlikely to suffer the equally unfavourable consequences of any of the above necessities.

> *'You've got to utilise your time well I suppose but you've also got to make time for your friends and in a sense you have to keep your life in order at home, yeah, it's just juggling your time, time management'* (Mi7; p13, L 356-359).

Creative adaptation to the job was seen as an instrumental way of coping with the expressed restrictions as to when, where and for how long participants would be away from home for. In addition to creative use of one's time at home, participants explained how the ultimate aim of making personal life fit work also required constructive decisions concerning the adaptive use of one's time whilst away. For example, a married female with children might use her time away to 'pamper the self' or recuperate from the strains of looking after two young toddlers at home. By prioritising, for example, sleep instead of socialising with colleagues, a fully rested mother may not feel the necessity of immediate sleep on arrival from abroad, which in turn, would essentially allow more time for family engagements as opposed to having to go immediately to bed due to fatigue. Alternatively a single person might dedicate the time abroad to social engagements with colleagues, and thereby increase his or hers individual opportunities for meeting prospective partners.

> *'In respect of mothers, for example, like it's their own personal time when they come to work so that can be quite compatible. I think if you're single it can also be quite compatible in a kind of escapism way where, if you're single and you're looking for someone just to have sex, for example, or to find a relationship'* (J1; p5, L 127-131).

It was interesting to note participants' emphasis on the importance of '*retaining a positive frame of mind'* whenever there was seen to be a tension between work requirements and individual desires to be at home. Although they voiced initial frustration and disappointment over such occurrences, participants highlighted the need for an individual to be optimistic and *'get on with it'* in order to avoid negative affects such as increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety, or depression.

> *'Yeah... and you just get used to it as well after, you know, years of doing it. You've just got to... it's all about your frame of mind really, being positive which is an effort sometimes but most of the time it's fine, you just get on with it'* (A3; p8, L 262-265).

Whilst it is possible that constructive attitudes were already evident prior to joining the profession, participants explained how efforts of positive adaptations to adverse circumstances appeared to have gradually developed after years of practical experiences with the respective employer's lack of consideration towards personal needs. As such, it is possible that the strict nature of the cabin crew work schedule reinforces participants' scope for internal self-regulations. This, in turn, could be seen as a crucial compensatory strategy for the perceived inability to modify the external environment such as the fixed nature of the monthly schedule of work patterns.

6.6.3. The circular coping process

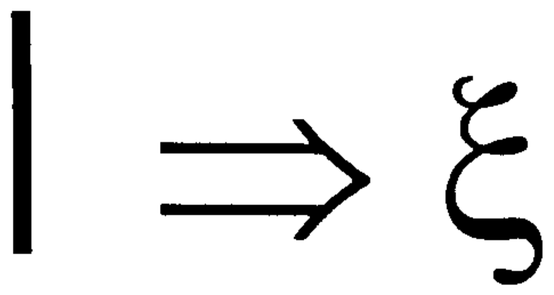
It appears that coping with erratic hours of work and frequent absences from home require flexible use of adaptive techniques that allows the individual to '*make personal life fit work'*. A pre-requisite for the process of adjusting personal circumstances according to the specific work requirements appears to be the recognition of the inability to achieve flexibility within one's work schedule as illustrated by the straight line in Figure 2 below. Once the individual learns about the regimental course of airline operational procedures, he or she gradually appears to recognise the advantages of the persistent process of '*sculpturing'* or conditioning aspects of the self around work requirements as illustrated by the spiral shaped line in Figure 3. The ultimate aim of

achieving a high level of individual fluidity, as illustrated by the progressive relationship in figure 6.2 was thought to play a major role in the constructions of work/life balances.

Figure 6.2: The static nature of the Cabin Crew work schedule

Figure 6.3: The dynamic and fluid nature of adjustments to work

Figure 6.4: The progression from static to dynamic coping



On the other hand, participants explained how changes in one's personal circumstances would often require the individual to re-negotiate his or her particular strategies for seeking and overall balance between work-life dichotomies. For example, a happily married individual may choose to allocate time on adequate rest whilst away to ensure more time for the partner whilst at home. In the wake of a divorce, such priorities may no longer be adaptive especially if an individual lacks the essential support from friends or family at home. One reason for this is that the dual influence of isolation as opposed to

socialising with colleagues and the aloneness arising from the return to an empty household may generate high risks of loneliness and depression.

> '*You can have an established life and come to flying, you can be married and then you'll end up finding a new partner and leave your husband for example, leave your wife and it turns your whole life upside down*' (J1; p10, L 293-296).

As such, the process of making personal life fit work appears to be a dynamic rather than a static phenomenon. The individual is essentially required to deal with the many transitional stages seen to comprise his or her 'private living' whilst simultaneously making sure that each new modification or change fits in with the specific requirements of work.

6.6.4. The dynamic relationship between cabin crew dynamics, difficulties with maintaining social relationships, experiencing personal relationships, and dealing with jetlag and fatigue

Given the inter-dependent relationship between the various facets of the particular lifestyle, including *crew dynamics*, *difficulties with maintaining social relationships*, *experiencing partnership*, and *dealing with jetlag and fatigue*, it was believed that mental and physical health issues were essentially regulated by a circular coping process as opposed to linear procedures of handling multiple stressors. One reason for this is the apparent *catalysing effect* whereby potential difficulties in one category would ultimately also influence the state of each of the remaining categories. Developing a newly formed partnership would in some respects require the individual to spend time with their respective partner. In order to do so, he or she might seek to spend less time with friends at home whilst also utilising the time abroad to rest instead of a night out with colleagues at the local destination. It was within this context that participants spoke about the importance of juggling the many competing pressures of personal living in the wake of serious time limitations.

'*Juggling, juggling... um... in the respect that it's like juggling, if you have gone out to like a social function, went to a party or if you've done something on your days off, that can affect how tired you are then to then go back to work*' (J1; p9; L 266-269).

There appeared to be a high level of agreement among participants about the way in which the absence of simultaneous attention to the multiple forces of personal living generated high risks of excessive stress, burn out, and psychological disturbance. For example, if a former single person, who had recently met a prospective partner, was not seen to make changes concerning the previous distributions of allocated attention to friends, colleagues, and sleep, then he or she might be at risk of accumulative sleep deprivation as well as relationship discord and deteriorating qualities of respective friendships.

'It becomes a way... it's not just a job; it's a way of life' (A3; p9; L 301).

'*I have worked in pubs, night clubs and hotels before I sold cars and they were very irregular erratic working times. I thought that was hard to get my head round but that's nothing compared to flying*' (S5; p13, L 404-407).

Thus, the art of making personal life fit work was described by participants as a *way of life* that was thought to incorporate greater adjustments than a majority of other professions.

7. Discussion

The model that emerged from the analysis will be explored further and discussed in relation to existing literature. This will be followed by an in-depth consideration of each separate category. A critical evaluation will serve to highlight the strengths and limitations of the proposed model. Implications for counselling psychology practice and training needs will also be discussed together with suggestions and considerations for future research.

7.1 The emergent model in relation to the existing literature

This study sought to understand cabin crews' experience of disruptions to professional and personal relationships, and to develop a model of the coping process seen to regulate mental health grounded in the perspective of crew. The proposed central research question (CRQ) was; how does long haul travel affect personal, social, and professional relationships, and what are the implications for cabin crew coping and their psychological wellbeing? A grounded theory analysis of interview data from 8 long haul cabin crew resulted in an emergent theoretical model[23] of cabin crews' experience of the impact of the disrupted lifestyle upon personal, professional, and social relationships. Five major categories were identified as follows; 1) cabin crew dynamics, 2) difficulties with maintaining social relationships, 3) experiencing personal relationships, 4) dealing with jetlag and fatigue, and 5) making personal life fit work. Themes 1, 2, 3, and 4 can be characterised as main themes that relate to cabin crews' experience of their lifestyle. Theme 5 is a higher level core theme, relating to the more abstract interpretations of how cabin crew deal with the simultaneous pressures of work requirements and personal living. This comprises a range of unique coping behaviours that was found to facilitate better adjustment to work-life dichotomies, resilience, and improved wellbeing. The findings of this grounded theory analysis can be helpful in gaining knowledge of this working populations' experience of dealing with disruptions to personal, professional, and social relationships, as this can be useful in informing various aspects of coping and

[23] Please see the analysis section (6) for a visual illustration of the emergent model.

psychological wellbeing in the workplace. Therefore, one needs to be able to generalise cabin crews' experience of work-life conflict, coping, and psychological health in order to understand possible implications for how to best help workers manage work-life dichotomies in clinical practise with the working population.

Previous research has focused on the extent to which cabin crew wellbeing is affected by physical or psychological disruptions arising from the working environment and the lifestyle respectively (e.g., Boyd and Bain 1997; Caldwell, 1997; Lauria et al., 2004; Richards et al., 2006; Samel, Wegman and Vejvoda, 1997; Waterhouse et al., 2006). Although these components were clearly described by many cabin crew in this study, the coping process whereby crew seek to deal with the simultaneous stressors arising from both the work and the home domain mitigated cabin crews' psychological wellbeing. This highlights the dynamic nature of the model; work requirements and home demands are essentially affecting, as well as being affected by a higher level circular coping process, which in turn, regulates cabin crews' psychological wellbeing.

This study supported the need to understand how various factors associated with the particular lifestyle of cabin crew (e.g., lack of control over work schedule, frequent absence from home, domestic and social life) may interact with jetlag and shift work to adversely affect wellbeing (Brown et al., 2001; Eriksen, 2006; Goodman and Partridge). For example, cabin crew who prioritised social relationships over sleep seemed to be at greater risk of jetlag and fatigue, which in turn, was thought to exert a negative influence on their abilities for cognitive and emotional processing. Cabin crew who spent a majority of their time on managing jetlag and fatigue, which was thought to buffer the degree of interruptions to the cognitive and the emotional processing system, appeared to be at a higher risk of social isolation and loneliness, based on difficulties with maintaining social networks. The emergence of a circular, as opposed to a linear, coping process captures the extent to which the psychological wellbeing among this group of workers is moderated by the ability to simultaneously deal with factors pertaining to both the work itself and stress associated with the home domain. These findings suggests complexities that may not have been addressed in previous research on cabin crew mental

health (e.g., Ballard et al., 2006; Bor et al., 2002; Brown et al., 2001; Lauria et al., 2004; Partridge and Goodman, 2006).

Similarly, the outcome of the present study also provides information that is useful in interpreting research which explored other professionals' experience of work-life conflicts, and its impact upon wellbeing (e.g., Van Hoof et al., 2007). It appears that much of the previous research on work-home inferences, although useful, is somewhat limited without a context. The interest of researchers has to a large extent focused on identifying, describing, and classifying coping strategies (e.g., Baltes and Heydens-Gahir, 2003) and exploring their relationship with work stress (Trenberth and Dewe, 2002). One facet of coping that has seen little research is that of the within-person, day-to-day management of work and home demands (e.g., Van Hooff et al., 2007). Comprehensive models on how workers actively seek (or not) to achieve work-life compatibilities, such as the one that emerged from the present study of cabin crew, may provide a structure within which many of these previous findings may be considered. For example, the existence and efficacy of coping strategies that are used by cabin crew to reduce the amount of stressors experienced, both in the job and at home, may be of direct relevance to other group of workers who suffer from work-life conflict. This would have important implications for counselling psychologists, both in the workplace and the primary care setting. The emergent model provides a theoretical framework that can be used to inform the assessment and treatment of work-related stress, anxiety, and depression.

7.2 The cabin crew coping process

There appeared to be a common belief amongst all of the participants that the cabin crew lifestyle had a tremendous impact upon their personal lives, as suggested by previous literature of the cabin crew work role (Brown et al., 2001, Partridge and Goodman, 2006). This was thought to encompass a whole range of issues, stretching from intra-personal ones, psychological and physical wellbeing, to inter-personal ones, including their ability to form and maintain professional, social, and intimate relationships. Participants emphasised the inter-dependant relationship between cabin crew dynamics,

difficulties with maintaining friendships, experiencing a partnership, and dealing with jetlag and fatigue. This was thought to require the need for circular coping processes that allowed the individual to deal with the simultaneous force of multiple stressors. In turn, this was seen to enhance their scope for adjusting private living to the static nature of the particular work schedule. When considering the strict nature of the cabin crew work requirements, in particular the expressed difficulties with making changes to one's monthly work schedule, participants spoke about the importance of continuously seeking to adapt personal circumstances according to the job. On a simplistic level, this was thought to include constructive use of the few, and often brief occasions at home, with the individual essentially allocating a balanced proportion of time to the various requirements of personal living. This, in turn, was thought to bypass the risk of increased stress arising from tensions; for example, between over-due meetings with friends, or the urgency of the accumulative build-up of domestic issues, including reminder bills, empty refrigerators and piles of dirty laundry.

These findings imply that cabin crew actively seek to combat low work control, by organising and managing areas of their personal lives that are perceived to be independent of work. The idea that cabin crew exercise selective power in areas that they do, as opposed to don't, perceive to have control over, is a point of originality. Although the current literature on work stress (e.g., Cox and Griffiths, 1995; Kagan, 1995; Michie, 2002; Tsutsumi and Kawakami, 2004) highlights many sources of organisational requirements, which, the individual is likely to perceive as outside his or her power to change (e.g., the work schedule, the structure, the management style or culture of the organisation), little has been done to examine how workers deal with low work control. Participants in this study explained how their efforts of positive adaptations, to adverse circumstances, appear to have gradually developed after years of practical experiences, with regard to the respective employer's lack of consideration towards personal needs. As such, it is possible that the strict nature of the cabin crew work schedule reinforces participants' scope for internal self-regulations. This, in turn, could be seen as a crucial compensatory strategy for the perceived inability to modify the external (organisational) environment, created in part by the fixed nature of the monthly schedule of work patterns.

In addition to the creative use of one's time at home, participants explained how the ultimate aim, that of making personal life fit work, also required constructive decisions concerning the adaptive use of one's time whilst away. For example, a married female with children might use her time away to 'pamper the self' or recuperate from the strains of looking after two young toddlers at home. By prioritising, for example, sleep instead of socialising with colleagues, a fully rested mother may not feel the necessity of immediate sleep on arrival from abroad, which in turn, would essentially allow more time for family engagements, as opposed to having to go immediately to bed due to fatigue.

It is possible that maximum use of limited time resources allows for better control over one's private circumstances in that the individual, by actively dealing with a range of diverse phenomenon, is essentially regulating the degrees to which the specific work requirements interrupt personal living. This highlights the central role of cabin crews' motivation to maintain emotional equilibrium when faced by multiple threats of stress and psychological adversity, as suggested by Moos and Schaefer's crisis theory (1993). It was found that cabin crews' ability to adapt aspects of their personal living with accord to the inflexible nature of their work schedule, became a crucial factor in determining the psychological consequences, including their wellbeing or deterioration. This implies that the task of achieving high levels of work-life balance involves a complex decision making process, one which facilitates constructive use of limited time resources both at work and at home. Previous literature on work-home conflict has documented the demands that make it physically impossible to be in two places at the same time, for example, when long hours in paid work prevent participation in family activities (e.g., Van Hoof et al., 2007). The idea that workers can, at least to a degree, overcome this type of conflict by seeking to improve their time management behaviours is thought to offer new insight to the existing literature on work-life conflict.

7.2.1 Cabin crew coping in relation to psychological coping theory

The complexity of the model is interesting to consider in the light of universal coping strategies, purported to represent common factors in all forms of dealing with physical

and psychological stress (e.g., Moos and Schaefer, 1993; Michie et al., 2000; Eriksen, 2006). According to Moss and Schaefer's (1993) crisis theory, which has been postulated to explain welfare, an individual faced by threats of physical or psychological illnesses will be motivated to maintain equilibrium, and the task or skills utilised to deal with the situation will determine the outcome, that of wellbeing or deterioration. Interestingly, active attempts to deal with specific situations seen to cause psychological or physical health concerns have emerged from the current data. These form a part of the present model on the existence and efficacy of crew coping as a mediator for their wellbeing. However, the current model also indicates that theories on coping (e.g., Moos and Schafer, 1993) were not sufficient to explain the experience of cabin crew, and the resulting coping process initiated by crew to deal with threats of psychological disturbance. Some of the significant differences between the model that emerged from this study and the factors proposed by Moos and Schaefer (1993) are the inter-relationship between various stressors experienced by cabin crew, and the complex choices they make within the process of dealing with simultaneous threats to ill mental health. This goes beyond the universal factors by demonstrating that coping for this group of workers gives credibility to a crew member's decision-making process, which in turn is pivotal to determining his or her wellbeing.

7.2.2 The central role of goal management capacities

The findings also supported assertions that cabin crew who demonstrate goal management abilities are perceived as more successful in achieving work-life compatibilities (Eriksen, 2006). When faced with complex and seemingly incompatible choices, such as sacrificing sleep in order to restore social and personal relations, or minimising sleep deprivation at the expense of relationships, the degree of psychological disturbance seemed to depend upon a higher order prioritisation process. This included quick computations of negative consequences pertaining to one threat in comparison to another. Whereas this finding is significant, several questions remain as to where goal management competence overlaps with general competence. Based on Baltes and Heyden-Gahir's (2003) model of proposed behavioural categories (e.g., general selection,

optimisation, and compensation) for managing goal conflict arising from work-home inferences, it appears that some factors related to the overlap of general and goal management capabilities among crew may be; a) the extent to which the individual crew member is able to identify and set goals pertaining to difficulties with 'making personal life fit work', b) the acquisition, refinement, and creative means to which the crew member seeks to achieve work-life balance, c) the acquisition and use of multiple, circular means, to maintain a given desired level of work-life compatibility.

7.2.3 Coping and individual qualities

The results also address a question raised by the discipline of positive psychology (Seligman et al, 2000; Snyder and Lopez, 2002); how influential is a crew member's individual quality on mediating the impact of potential and actual stress, on their psychological wellbeing? For many crew, a personality style with high levels of social cooperation, friendliness, and openness was pivotal to their experience of the cabin crew dynamics. This was particularly evident in their descriptions of the rapid bonding process at work, whereby social competence were thought to facilitate the skills and capacities required for adjustment to organisational procedures, demonstrating efficient team work during safety procedures and emergency situations, or the handling of difficult passengers. When considering the changing nature of the crew composition, personal qualities including social flexibility and friendliness were thought to ease the process of developing meaningful relations with colleagues for the duration of the working trip. This, in turn, could function as a buffer against loneliness and isolation. It has long been recognised that close, albeit temporal, work relations could become a supportive substitute for the absence of a social network through long periods of travels away from family and friends (Dallos & Draper, 2000; Michie, 2002; Bor et al., 2002). This is not to say that all crew arrive into the profession with exceptional inter-personal qualities. It may be more accurate to say that cabin crew are recruited, among other skills and capacities, because of their social tendencies (Partridge and Goodman, 2006). For example, many participants explained how instances of conflict among crew were thought to be triggered and perpetuated by hostility, unfriendliness, and lack of

communication from one or more individual crew member(s) within the group. This implies that those crew, who do not possess a personality style that will help in utilising social skills under the pressure of establishing brief and short lasting relationships at work, might find it difficult to fulfil the necessary criterions for 'fitting into and functioning within' a group of unknown colleagues on board an aircraft. Although the identification of who is best suited in a selection process may depend upon the specific model advocated by the individual airline, a reliable selection process should ideally strive to assess the effective competence of the applicants under simulated or actual pressures of team work. This does not automatically imply that the airline organisation should look for certain personalities, but rather dynamically evaluate the influence each candidates personality traits have on their capacities and skills for sustaining effective team work during periods of pressure and high work load.

7.3 The emergent model in relation to sleep deprivation

Participants in the present study identified sleep deprivation as a highly negative consequence of the cabin crew profession. The combination of erratic shift work and frequent crossing of various time zones was found to cause a range of adverse cognitive, motivational, emotional and physical symptoms. These in turn, were perceived to exert a negative impact on crews' performance, general level of functioning, and emotional wellbeing. These findings are similar to those offered by the existing literature on the influence of jetlag and fatigue on cabin crews' physical and psychological health (e.g., Beh & McClaughlin, 1997; Caldwell, 1997; Samel, Wegman & Vejvoda, 1997; Sharma & Schrivastava, 2004; Richards et al., 2006; Waterhouse et al., 2006).

Participants explained that managing jetlag and fatigue was a gradual learning process. They suggest is to be one which involved the accumulative build up of practical experiences of large time differences, trip durations, and the strains of flying through the night. This was thought to allow them to establish the necessary knowledge for anticipating the relative risks associated with either adjusting to local time or remaining on UK time. For example, if an individual adjusted to local time when away, he or she

might find it difficult to re-gain natural sleeping patterns at home, and might therefore become nocturnal during valuable periods with loved ones. Alternatively, by remaining on UK time whilst away, local days are often turned into nights and vice versa. This might, especially during longer trips, generate increased risks of loneliness and isolation in that it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to engage with fellow colleagues and take advantage of local facilities.

7.3.1 Goal management strategies and jetlag and fatigue

The use of risk calculation was thought to facilitate swift alterations of two different ways of coping with jetlag and fatigue. Participants expressed that preference for one type of coping over another was based on dual considerations; the nature of the trip in question, and personal responsibilities at home. This finding implies that managing disrupted sleep patterns for this particular group of workers requires the additional use of a higher order goal management strategy. Therefore, the current study provides additional insight that goes beyond the existing recommendations on how cabin crew can best manage jetlag and fatigue (Caldwell, 1997; Price and Holley, 1990; Richards et al., 2006; Waterhouse et al., 2006). One reason for this is that the present study offers a unique perspective that includes the existence, and the influence of home demands on cabin crews' ability to deal with jetlag and fatigue. When considering the dual forces of pressures arising from both home demands and the need to gain adequate rest prior to, and after long duty hours at work, the process of coping with jetlag and fatigue may be more complicated than anticipated by the existing literature (e.g., Brown et al., 2001). The degree to which cabin crew are able to deal with the simultaneous threats of negative consequences pertaining to the interactive components of jetlag and personal living appears to depend upon their ability to monitor the state of both work demands and the home domain. This, in turn, could facilitate effective decision making that allows the individual to make rational judgments as to what type of coping strategy would best facilitate healthy sleep patterns in the context of various personal and family obligations.

7.3.2 Disrupted sleep patterns and emotional distress

In relation to previous research on reported instances of depression and suicidal ideation within the cabin crew population (Ballard et al., 2006), it is possible that the negative influence of sleep deprivation on aircrews' cognitive and emotional processing capacities could explain the high number of psychological problems among this group of workers, when compared to the general UK population. A plausible explanation might be that crew are at higher risks of developing psychological illness during times of 'normal' psychosomatic disruptions that occur in the everyday population at large. One reason for this is that sleep deprivation is thought to degrade their threshold for dealing with emotional stress, as was reflected in participants' descriptions of difficulties with controlling their 'thinking patterns' and 'emotions' during events of fatigue. This, in turn, was thought to generate increased risks of excessive ruminations, sadness, and anxiety for the individual crew member. When considering the practical implication of such findings it is possible that cabin crew may benefit from psychological interventions that seek to help the individual overcome cognitive disruptions with the aim of restoring his or her functional capacities for coping with emotional problems. This is thought to have implication for counselling psychology practise[24].

A more concerning phenomenon appeared to be the gradual onset of cumulative sleep deprivation over a relatively long period of time. Participants in this study expressed that the main problem with sleep deprivation was perceived to be the slow build up of negative effects of fatigue, which was often seen to make it difficult for the individual to notice cognitive, emotional and behavioural changes in the self. This finding reflects previous studies that have identified a negative relationship between cumulative sleep deprivation and cabin crews' performance, attention, and decision making capacities at work (e.g., Caldwell, 1997; Price and Holley; Waterhouse et al., 2006). The only cure for cumulative sleep deprivation is consistent and long term adequate sleep. However, gaining sufficient amounts of sleep is often difficult because of further disruptions to sleep patterns arising from work requirements and family demands.

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[24] Please see later section on practical implications for counselling psychology for an in-depth explanation.

It is advocated that this study offers additional insight into the various sources that can further disrupt cabin crew sleep patterns, and that the management of such stressors may prevent the onset of cumulative sleep deprivation. The emergent model draws attention to a variety of strategies that can enhance an individual's ability to deal with the simultaneous stressors arising from both disrupted sleep patterns and home demands. This is an important recognition as a healthy balance between adequate rest and home obligations may prevent the individual from developing cumulative sleep deprivation. For example, participants in this study explained how problems at home, such as relationship discord, illness in the family, or guilt derived from frequent absence from loved ones, could generate worry and anxiety for the entire duration of a trip abroad. This, in turn, was thought to exacerbate existing sleep difficulties arising from the job itself because 'worry over one's home life' was thought to present an additional disruption to the act of gaining sufficient sleep.

The idea of a negative relationship between emotional distress and sleep difficulties is a well researched phenomenon that has been incorporated into a number of theories that seek to explain and treat psychological disorders (e.g., Beck et al., 1979; Hawton, et al., 1989; Wells, 2000; Young et al., 2003). It was evident that the current participants perceived this link to be a reciprocal one because active symptoms of fatigue and jetlag also appeared to aggravate emotional distress. This was illustrated by participants' accounts of how experiences of fatigue appeared to interrupt their 'ability to think straight' and 'feel their emotions', which was thought to complicate the process of coping with worry and anxiety. As such, there appeared to be a negative feedback loop between sleep disruptions arising from work (e.g., irregular shift patterns and frequent crossings of various time zones) and emotional distress stemming from personal problems with each part perpetuating as well as being perpetuated by the other component. Consequently, the development of cumulative sleep deprivation was thought to be triggered and maintained by the dynamic relationship between work requirements and home demands. This implies that the prevention and management of sleep disorders for cabin crew requires broader contextual considerations than previously anticipated by the literature on sleep

deprivation (Caldwell, 1997; Price and Holley, 1990; Richards et al., 2006; Waterhouse et al., 2006).

This is not to suggest that the emergent model provides a comprehensive solution to sleep deprivation or cabin crews' experience of stress at home. It is recognised that personal characteristics such individual sleep patterns or specific factors pertaining to the nature of a person's life at home can alter, for better or for worse, the experience of work-home interference. Instead, this study seeks to highlight the need for cabin crew to be educated on the various aspects that can affect sleep deprivation, and suggests the airline has to implement a flight schedule to help them overcome the peculiar job related disorder. There is a pressing need to develop and implement psychological standards for cabin crew, along the lines of aircrew medical categories, to prevent fatigued crew from turning up at work, either due to pressure from management or failure to notice signs and symptoms of cumulative sleep deprivation. It is advocated that counselling psychologists could play an important role in facilitating the progress of psychological standards for crew operations, as their expertise and competence is thought to encompass the topic of sleep deprivation and cognitive and behavioural disruptions[25].

7.4 The emergent model in relation to personal relationships

As suggested by the existing literature of psychological problems among cabin crew (Bor et al, 2002; Cooper and Sloan, 1985b; Eriksen 2006; Lauria et al, 2004; Partridge and Goodman, 2006; Sloan and Cooper, 1986), emotional distress may stem from disruptions to personal relationships. The outcome of this study suggests that the irregular shift patterns and frequent absence from home may present an additional challenge to aircrew relationships. On the one hand, the frequent absence from home can make it more difficult for crew to cope with 'normal' relationship problems that occur naturally in the everyday life of the population at large. The physical distance between the self (abroad) and the location of the problem (home) was perceived to make it difficult, if not

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[25] Please see section 7.10 for details on how the involvement of counselling psychology can be of benefit to the airline industry.

impossible, to immediately deal with the particular issue whether caring for an ill person or trying to solve a recent conflict with a partner. This, in turn, was thought to generate prolonged periods of emotional distress evident by participants' talk of increased worry, anxiety, and low mood prior to, during, and after travels abroad. On the other hand, long periods of physical separation can cause insecurities within a partnership. This was reflected in participants' statements of how the frequent absence from home could cause each partner to experience feelings of rejection, guilt, and abandonment within the partnership. The ideas that work related factors may exert a direct as well as an indirect disruption to personal relationships is an original finding that contributes to the existing knowledge in the field. Previous research has focused on the distinct work-related causes and consequences of disruptions to aircrew relationships (e.g., Bor et al., 2002; Levy et al., 1984; Rigg and Cosgrove, 1994). In contrast, this study demonstrates that the entire process of aircrew personal relationships is shaped, for better or for worse, by the specific characteristics of the cabin crew lifestyle.

A second issue was the perceived impact of lengthy trips abroad with only a few days rest at home on the process of forming and maintaining a partnership. Many participants expressed concern as to whether the initial spark between two people would be short lasting if one did not allocate sufficient time to one's partner. Within this context, participants identified '*the accelerating revolving door syndrome*'. This was perceived as a common strategy used by crew to '*speed up*' the growth of their personal relationship in the wake of serious time limitations. For example, some participants explained how moving in with a partner shortly after the first meeting allowed them to experience the perceived conditions for 'testing out' whether a relationship could work or not. Although it is recognised that rapid transitions within a partnership may well be of negative value (e.g., Eipstein et al., 2002), this unique coping behaviour was thought to serve a valuable function for cabin crew in two differing ways. Firstly, participants explained how rapid commitments would facilitate swift indications as to whether the respective partner could cope with the stressful realities of the cabin crew lifestyle. One reason for this is that any pressures derived from the job will essentially also impact upon the particular relationship (e.g., Baltes and Heydens-Gahir, 2003; Frone, Russel, and Cooper, 1992;

Van Hoof et al., 2007), which in turn, was thought to exert an indirect influence on the specific partner's way of life. For example, participants struggle with making complex decisions between seeing friends or being with a partner also becomes a challenge for a spouse in that he or she might seek to organise, modify, or cancel social agendas according to the cabin crew work schedule. Secondly, the experiential knowledge derived from the intimate experience of living together as a couple could then be used to review the perceived risk-gain dichotomy attached to the particular relationship. This was thought to be of purposeful value when considering how participants were often required to choose between investing in one's partnership, on the one hand, and fostering one's social circle on the other hand. For example, if the relationship was deemed inappropriate at an early stage, then participants might be less inclined to jeopardise the quality of their respective friendships. Alternatively, they might be more willing to sacrifice social events if the partnership was perceived as fulfilling the aspiring requirements of a longer term companionship. Consequently, an early discovery of the level of compatibility between a crew member and the partner might serve as a preventative strategy against the risk of *'double losses'*. For example, participants spoke of situations whereby a majority of their time had been devoted to a partner, and once that particular relationship broke down; they found themselves with very few friends and a lot of spare time on their hands. The experience of a separation or a divorce in the absence of a helpful network of friends and family was thought to heighten the risk of grief or depression even for the most resilient crew member.

7.5 Social support and cabin crew wellbeing

The emergent model suggests that aircrew relationships are influenced by a number of additional challenges when compared to other professionals. The frequent absence from home was thought to make it difficult for cabin crew to form and maintain personal and social relationships. Moreover, the changing crew composition was perceived to complicate cabin crews' ability to establish long lasting relationships at work. This implies that the entire social system of the cabin crew population suffers. It has long been recognised that social support from a partner, a friend, or a colleague can mediate the

extent to which emotional stress exert a negative influence on psychological and physical health (Bor et al., 2002; Dallos and Draper, 2000; Eipstein and Baucom, 2002).

The combined experience of low work control and lengthy absence from home was believed to pose a number of restrictions to the individual's ability to maintain social relationships. Participants spoke about the difficulties of keeping a social circle when work requirements often meant that they were away for up to 70% of any given month. It was thought that missing out on important events, over time and with repeated experiences, would cause a tremendous challenge to even the closest of friendships or family relations. When this is compounded by brief and short lasting professional relationships, there is a lack of continuity and development in social relations across both domains (e.g., Partridge and Goodman, 2006). For example, participants described situations when they had been away from home and needed to talk to someone, but there were nobody available to listen. Such experiences of inadequate support were thought to occur whenever the specific combination of personal characteristics amongst crew were deemed incompatible or troublesome. This meant that colleagues would often go directly to their individual hotel rooms with no further contact or communication until they reported for the flight home again. Although it would be reasonable to assume that it would be easy for crew to pick up a phone and call someone at home, contact with friends and family was believed to be compounded by large time differences, or even worse, a lack of social network at home. At these times, participants spoke of feeling lonely and depressed, with discussions about colleagues allegedly committing suicide whilst away.

Participants emphasised that unlike ground workers, who at least in theory, were thought to be in close physical proximity to their social networks, crew are essentially deprived of such supportive facilities. Once an individual leaves home to embark on travels abroad, he or she is basically also leaving friends, family, a partner, and professional health care facilities behind, all of which could potentially serve as a supportive function during times of personal difficulty. Although this finding supports previous research suggestions of a negative link between lack of social support and cabin crew mental health (e.g.,

Ballard et al., 2006; Lauria et al., 2004), the present research outcome offers an original understanding of the various sources (both from the work and the home domain) that complicates cabin crews' personal, social, and professional relationships.

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7.6 Research strengths

This study offers one of the first comprehensive explorations of the dynamic nature of the cabin crew coping processes used to deal with work-life conflict. A major strength of the present research is that it offers original insight into cabin crew coping, relationships, and psychological wellbeing that can add to, modify, and extend the current literature in the field. Moreover, this research highlights the need for further clarification in specific areas of aviation psychology, counselling in the workplace, and stress management[26]. Therefore, it could be argued that this research provides a 'springboard' for future research that seek to advance the existing knowledge in these areas.

A second strength of this study is the potential transferability of the proposed theory on cabin crew coping processes to other types of work such as, for example, the nursing industry, police force, insurance brokers or any other professional who suffers from work-life imbalances[27]. On a practical level, it is felt that details of the dynamic nature of the cabin crew coping process can be useful to counselling psychologists dealing with work-related stress, anxiety, and depression both within the primary care setting, and within the workplace[28]. The research outcome is also thought to serve a valuable purpose for the airline industry in that it can encourage managers to implement new procedures for helping cabin crew to direct and manage their particular lifestyle. Counselling psychologists have an important role in helping organisations to develop policies and practices that are effective and suit this particular task[29]. This can improve employees' health and wellbeing as well as helping the organisation to reduce financial losses associated with staff absenteeism and turnover.

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[26] Please see paragraph 7.10.1 for future research suggestions.
[27] Please see paragraph 7.10 for an in-depth consideration.
[28] Please see paragraph 7.10.2 for details on implication for counselling practice.
[29] Please see paragraph 7.10.2 for further details.

7.7 Research limitations

This study provides one of the first wide-ranging explorations of cabin crews' experience of the disrupted lifestyle and its impact upon coping and psychological wellbeing based on semi-structured interviews with 8 long haul cabin crew. The size and characteristics of this sample raise questions of transferability.

First, all of the participants in this study had extensive experience of long haul flying, the majority were in their early thirties, and they were all working for major UK airlines. These factors may have influenced their experiences of the particular lifestyle, their perception and interpretations of work-life conflict, and the nature of the coping process used to regulate psychological wellbeing. It is possible that the experience of another 8 cabin crew in dealing with mental health issues may vary. Therefore, it is important to reassert that the model that emerged from this exploration is a representation of the experiences of these 8 cabin crew.

Secondly, this study sought to investigate aircrew professional, social, and personal relationships from the perspective of cabin crew only. It is possible that the inclusion of cabin crew partners or friends may have enriched and supplemented data on aircrew relationships. However, as this study was undertaken as a part of the fulfilment for a doctorate degree in counselling psychology, certain restrictions (time limitations, size of the study) made it difficult to accommodate the collection and analysis of additional interviews with cabin crew partners. Future research might wish to study aircrew relationships as experienced by both cabin crew and also their partner. A useful way to proceed may be to use interpretive phenomenological analysis of the interviews to develop themes pertaining to shared experiences of maintaining a partnership or a marriage in the context of frequent and often long periods of physical separations from one and another. Research questions should ideally be broad enough to capture the impact of irregular shift patterns on both the relationship itself, and then each partner as an individual. What are the implications of aircrews' frequent absence from home on a partner who is left at home? How does the couple deal with physical separations from

one and another? How does the frequent absence from home influence the couple's communication style?

Third, the emergent model in this study suggests that the frequent absence from home make it difficult for cabin crew to form and maintain personal and social relationships and have families. In addition, the changing crew composition was perceived to complicate cabin crews' ability to establish long lasting relationships at work. However, this study examined aircrew relationships only, and therefore it is not sure whether other occupants endure a similar or highly different experience from the cabin crew workforce. Further data is needed to establish whether professional, personal, and social relationships suffer more within the cabin crew population than in employments with greater regularity of duty hours. This could be investigated by using a cross-sectional form of inquiry that seeks to compare data on relationships from the aviation industry with other professions such as health workers, the police force, or the banking industry. The research question(s) should preferably seek to examine the characteristics of relationships across differing professions. What are the types of work requirements that influence personal, professional, and social relationships? Do work requirements in one profession differ from another? How do these work requirements ameliorate or exacerbate workers ability to maintain healthy relationships, and how does this influence psychological health? This would allow for a better understanding of what type of factors, if any, mediates the degree to which aircrew relationships may suffer more (or less) than personal relationships in other industries. The research outcome could be used to inform clinical practice dealing with work-related stress and relationship problems.

In terms of sample size, it becomes necessary to consider the aspect of rigor or the resulted completeness of the data collection and analysis. In the present research this would be demonstrated by the interplay between theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation in order to enable the researcher to transcend and go beyond commonsense[30] (Charmaz, 2006). The aim was to elaborate the meaning of tentative categories, discover

[30] Please see section 4 (validity and reliability) for further details on how this research fulfills the requirements of rigor

'*variation*' between them, and define gaps among categories. The criteria concerning exactly when to stop gathering data is a somewhat controversial topic in grounded theory. The researcher followed Charmaz's (2006) loose guidelines for saturation whereby gathering new data was no longer seen to produce fresh insights or reveal new properties of theoretical categories[31]. This was thought to minimise the risk of foreclosing analytic possibilities and constructing superficial analysis. Thus within this study, by the progressively increasing depth of the analysis, and the considerable focus given to the researcher's reflective interpretations of the complex processes arising from the data, it was felt that this research fulfils the requirements of rigor.

7.8 Implications for future research, practise and training

The model emerging from the data suggests multiple factors that interact and influence cabin crew relationships, coping, and wellbeing and suggests a variety of implications for research practice, and training. Overall, it seems that the current models on coping in the workplace (e.g., Baltes and Heydens-Gahir) and coping with psychological and physiological stress (e.g., Moos and Schaefer, 1993) need to be revisited to consider the complexities suggested by the Model of the Dynamic Nature of the Cabin Crew Coping Process. It is possible that the existing models may provide a needed foundation for training counselling psychologists in the primary care setting, or the workplace, but do not explain the experience of workers. In particular, the role of decision making processes, and a circular coping style appear to be critical for achieving and maintaining work-life balance.

7.8.1 Implications for research

This study presents a number of implications and suggestions for future research. First, the potential transferability of the current findings may be addressed in several ways. Additional interviews with other cabin crew would help to determine whether this model

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[31] Please see section 5 (Grounded theory analysis) for further details on the use of theoretical sampling and saturation within this study.

might be transferable to a greater number of aircrew employees. Interviews with cabin crew and pilots reflecting a wider range of ages, length of service, marital status, and number of dependencies would be useful. In this study, the researcher was particularly interested in the impact of cabin crew work requirements on professional, personal, and social relationships as an inclusive construct. Therefore, cabin crew who were married or had a partner discussed intimate relationships, others who were single discussed social relationships, and others who were planning a family discussed their views on having children. Although this allows for an examination of aircrew relationships in a broad sense it may be useful to obtain more data regarding each of these categories of differences to test the model that emerged from the sample used in this study. In addition, further interviews with other types of occupants would help to establish the degree to which this model might be transferable to other types of work. Interviews with occupants reflecting a wider range of professions, work requirements, and occupational settings would be constructive. The current research focused exclusively on the cabin crew profession. Therefore, a substantial proportion of the interview time was devoted to participants' experiences of irregular shift patters, frequent travels through various time zones, and long periods of physical separations from family, and friends at home. Whilst this allows for an examination of work stress in a specific sense, it may be useful to obtain broader data regarding other occupants experience of how work requirements influence their personal lives to test the model that emerged from the cabin crew sample used in this study.

Second, efforts towards developing quantitative methods for assessing various aspects of the model would be useful. Overall, instruments may be designed to measure different aspects of the cabin crew coping experience, such as the degree to which they think personal qualities influence the coping process, the degree to which they believe coping is influenced by increased learning of the cabin crew work requirements, and the degree to which they think psychological input could influence coping and cabin crew wellbeing. Individually, most of the concepts identified in the current study have not been quantified in the literature. The development of instruments that measure cabin crew characteristics such as the development of coping behaviours at work, assumptions of the

role of coping in the prevention and management of work stress, and expectations of counselling in the workplace to help cabin crew manage work-life dichotomies would provide tools that may be useful in counselling practice and cabin crew training. In addition, some modification could be made to existing instruments to assess the usefulness of psychological interventions within the workplace, including issues such as workers psychological health and absence behaviour. For example, stress counselling could be introduced to cabin crew, where the psychological health and absence behaviour of those who utilise stress management programmes could be compared with a control group, being constructed of broadly matched non-participating cabin crew. Moreover, the measurement of counselling psychologists competence in the workplace could be improved by addressing the counsellor's competence in assessing the perceptions, needs, and expectations of both employees' and the respective organisation. For example, counselling psychologists' competence may be measured at the beginning, middle, and the end of a psychological programme, from the perspective of the counselling psychologist, participating cabin crew, the airline organisation, and an outside observer.

Third, and finally, given the unique nature of the cabin crew coping process component of the model, additional qualitative research into these factors would be useful. For example, given certain aircrew relationships and coping processes, how do cabin crew manage a divorce or separation from a long term partner? How do cabin crew make decisions about how they choose to address psychological disruptions in the primary care setting? What can counselling psychologists do to facilitate access to psychological services in primary care for cabin crew who are frequently away from home, and therefore less likely to attend therapy on a regular basis? What can counselling psychologists offer the airline organisation to help them reduce financial loss associated with staff absenteeism and turnover?

7.8.2 Implications for counselling psychology training

The present research outcome suggests that cabin crew suffer from psychological disruptions such as stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness and isolation, and that these are

influenced by unique work demands. This provides support for the need for competence training of counselling psychologist students and practitioners who wish to influence, direct, and implement counselling in the workplace. The experiences of the participants suggested some specific areas that should be addressed in training. For example, training may be enhanced by a greater emphasis on accurate assessments of cabin crew needs and experience of work-life conflict, particularly as cabin crew perceived psychological illness as strongly associated with complex interactions between work requirements and their particular lifestyle. The counselling psychology training requirements may also need to be revised to include counselling as well as organisational theories/practice, so that the practitioner has an appreciation of the influence of the organisation within the counselling process. There is a greater complexity to manage in terms of the influence of the organisation. For example, a worker suffering from stress seeking support from counselling funded by the organisation, may be concerned about information being fed back to their respective manager. Likewise, the demands of the worker and the organisation may conflict with one and another, and it is the task of the counselling psychologist to manage this imbalance. Therefore, a counselling psychologist within an organisation needs to pay attention to the wider system in operation. Further training on how to draw up clear contracts not only with workers, but also with the organisation is needed. Systematic and integrative approaches can be useful here.

7.8.3 Implications for counselling psychology practise

There are particular findings that may inform counselling psychologists who are working within the workplace. As discussed in relation to implications for training, the support for competence in practice was clear. Practitioners may consider integrating specific counselling skills with organisational theories/practices as this can enhance the prevention and management of workplace stress. One reason for this is that there are many sources of stress that the individual is likely to perceive as outside his or her power to change, such as the structure, management style or culture of the organisation. Thus, stress management approaches that concentrate on changing the individual, without changing the sources of stress may be of limited effectiveness, and may ultimately be

counterproductive by masking these sources. Therefore, counselling in the workplace requires not only individual approaches such as psychological interventions for employees, but also organisational approaches that can influence structural changes and developments including issues of staff levels, work schedule, and promotion. The application of a single 'pure' model seems insufficient here. More flexible models are needed to deal with such complexities.

Second, counselling psychologists in the workplace needs to spend their time on both the workers and the organisation. Balancing the different roles can be a difficult task to accomplish. Learning the language of the organisation is really important and can significantly enhance the standard of the counselling service. Examples in relation to the aviation industry could be developing services that help the respective airline to reduce stress-related sickness absence, educating managers on how to best support workers who suffer from stress, and influence changes in the crew rostering system that will allow cabin crew better control over their work schedule. It must be appreciated that managerial styles and initiatives can influence, for better or for worse, the wellbeing of crews. Unfortunately, the interplay between management and crew does not always favour easy communication, and it is within this context that the present model has implications for crew rostering. It is thought that the implementation of greater flexibility within the cabin crew monthly allocation of trips will allow for better work control, which in turn, could enhance an individual's capacity for managing jetlag and work-life conflicts. This could be achieved by implementing a 'bidding' system that allows workers to request a series of preferred days at home each month, allowing them to attend specific engagements at home such as medical appointments, social events, or regular activities (e.g., courses, yoga classes, or social clubs).

Third, the findings of the current study may have practical implications for counselling psychologists dealing with workers suffering from stress in the primary care setting. It is important to point out that counselling can be viewed as a tertiary stress level intervention, one that only seeks to deal with the consequences of workplace stress rather than eliminating the sources. A reason for this is that there is very limited opportunity for

counselling psychologists in the primary care setting to inform an employer about work-related issues. This also raises issues with regard to confidentiality (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2005). Nevertheless, it is thought that counselling psychologist could support workers in the task of challenging unhealthy aspects of their work environment by; 1) reducing acute levels of stress, anxiety, or depression in the hope that this will enhance the individual workers ability to confront problems in the workplace, 2) facilitating problem solving skills and assertiveness training that may increase the confidence and the competence needed for an individual to influence change and development within his or her workplace.

Finally, the emergent model in the current study offers particular findings that may inform counselling psychologists who are dealing with the aircrew population. The research outcome highlights the way in which experiences of jetlag and fatigue could exert a negative influence on cabin crews' cognitive and emotional processing capacities. This was thought to make it more difficult for crew to engage in decision making processes, which was paramount to the process of adapting personal lives according to the specific work requirements. Therefore, it is important for a therapist to assess and identify workplace stressors in that these can trigger, maintain, or exacerbate the attending crew members' problem(s). Interventions or solutions that could help reduce these stressors should be considered and the therapeutic style (e.g., CBT, psychodynamic therapy, or brief solution focused therapy etc.) should be chosen accordingly.

7.9 Reflexive analysis

> *"Reflexivity is about acknowledging the central position of the researcher in the construction of knowledge; that all findings are constructions, personal views of reality, open to change and reconstruction. The knower is part of the matrix of what is known"* (Tindall, 1994, p.151)

I have aimed to be reflective throughout the research process, and have attempted to make explicit the process by which the material and the analysis are produced. Whilst

this study is concerned with the experience of participants, it needs to be acknowledged that accessing and interpreting these accounts has been shaped and directed by me.

Reflexivity is perhaps the most distinctive feature of qualitative research as critical examination on a number of levels is thought to facilitate a resonance between subjectivity and objectivity (Tindall, 1994). This is central to grounded theory due to its emphasis on the use of theoretical sensitivity and the constant comparison method to ground the emergent categories firmly in participants' accounts (Charmaz, 2006). This dual importance upon skills in reflection and scientific enquiry is congruent with the discipline of counselling psychology (McLeod, 2003).

In relation to the researcher's central role it is important to acknowledge and reflect further upon my personal experience of the research topic. I am a cabin crew member with 10 years practice of the profession, and thus I am personally familiar with the cabin crew lifestyle. This has challenged my ability to objectify, because for me, there is a certain emotionality attached to the cabin crew coping process. These emotions range from excitement over the wealth of cultural experiences I have derived from my travels abroad, frustration over the countless episodes of sleep deprivation, to feeling proud over my abilities to combine a demanding lifestyle with an undergraduate and a postgraduate degree in psychology.

A conscious effort was made to consider these interests and personal understandings during the design of the study, the interview process, the analysis, the literature review, and the write up of my research. In grounded theory this is known as theoretical sensitivity (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher followed the research procedures advocated by grounded theory, which in turn, was thought to ensure that the proposed findings emerged from the participants' accounts as opposed to a mere reflection of her own pre-conceptions about the field. In addition to the strategies used to enhance theoretical sensitivity[32], a variety of personal activities were used to increase critical awareness. These included recording my thoughts whilst on the aircraft or alone in my hotel room,

[32] Please see section 3.1; sensitivity to context for further details.

talking endlessly to my colleagues about their experiences and my own, and discussing the work in progress with a fellow doctorate student who was both supportive and challenging.

As a psychologist and an active member of the cabin crew profession it became imperative to acknowledge the ethical implications of my dual occupational position on the process of the inter-actions that occurred between me and the interviewees[33]. As stated in the research procedure section, several measurements were initiated to equalise the power relationship, and to democratise the research process to the best extent possible, and to ensure that there was no exploitation. Although these strategies were effective, it was felt that my counselling psychology training facilitated important personal qualities and values that allowed for the formation of a collaborative inter-personal relationship between 'me and my participants'.

It is also important to recognise that this study forms part of my doctorate degree in counselling psychology. My own theoretical position became a consideration as the research process provided a unique opportunity to reflect upon my developing identity as a reflective practioner and scientific practioner, a cognitive therapist and systemic therapist, an NHS psychologist and private psychotherapist. I struggled with the task of integrating counselling psychology theory and practice into the organisational setting. In part, I think the idea of reconciling humanistic values with the financial principles underpinning the airline industry made me feel uncomfortable. There was a different part of me though that had underestimated the relevance of counselling psychologist in the workplace, as this topic had not been part of my clinical or academic training. The experience of exploring organisational relevant topics, and incorporating this new knowledge into my therapeutic orientation suggests that the research process feeds back into my professional identity. I welcome this evolution; I see the continuous inter-linkage between theory development and practice as an exciting opportunity for professional growth, learning and creativity.

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[33] Please see section 4.5.1 for further details on the influence of the researcher's dual occupational role on the research process and methods for minimising power differences between the researcher and participants.

I realise that this study has, for me, also been a personal journey. There is a certain sorrow attached to the closing stage because it marks the end of an era in my life. I joined the cabin crew profession shortly after graduating from high school in Norway. I was 19 years of age and being paid for travelling around the world. I supported myself through University and sometimes my travels became a welcoming escape from clinical placements, essay writing, and lectures. I spent a third of my life as cabin crew and this experience, amongst many others, has largely shaped who I am. Yet, there is also excitement and joy as I am approaching qualified status as a counselling psychologist. Although I have arrived at my 'destination', I am eager to continue to assimilate multiple identities from a broad range of personal and professional journeys. I believe that my position as a counselling psychologist enables me to achieve this aspiration, and I hope through becoming qualified I will be able to continue the life-long journey of self-development.

7.10 Conclusion

The cabin crew in this study shared rich stories, and perceptions with meaning and emotion that characterise their experiences of coping with the impact of work demands upon their professional, personal and social relationships. Many of the participants dedicated time and efforts to participate in this study despite their hectic lifestyle. Clearly, the willingness to contribute to the study suggests that these participants were interested in helping to improve psychological counselling in the workplace and contribute to positive experiences for future and existing crew. The resilience conveyed by cabin crew who had experienced difficulties with forming and maintaining personal relationships or other 'private losses' due to the frequent absence from home was impressive. Even more striking was the tendency of many cabin crew to communicate frustration with the rigid nature of the employers' demands, whilst emphasising pride and prestige associated with being part of the cabin crew profession. A concerning factor was participants' accounts of how work requirements (e.g., prolonged absence from home, jetlag and fatigue) could often interfere with their ability to deal with 'normal' personal

problems that are thought to occur in the everyday life of the population at large (e.g., bereavement, relationship discord, physical health concerns). This was thought to be a critical source for psychological distress including anxiety, depression, loneliness, guilt and isolation. The experience of these reinforce the need for a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between work stress, employees' wellbeing and the role of counselling psychologists in the workplace.

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Appendices

London Metropolitan University, Department of Psychology

ETHICS PANEL

Counselling Project Proposals: Project sample 2005-2006

Student	Supervisor	Project topic	Cat	Ethics advisor	Recommendation
Surname, First name	Full name	Title can be shortened as long as the topic is clear	A, B or C	Your initials	Here please either simply state: "No concerns" or give a short account of your concerns and any changes you would like to recommend
Erkinsen, Carina	Gella Richards	Impact of long haul travel on cabin crew	A/C	MD	I am uncertain about what classification to give to this project. The supervisor has classified it 'A', but I wonder whether it should be 'C'. I have a concern about the researcher's 'dual roles', specifically: whether it is ethically appropriate for the researcher - herself a flight attendant - to interview other flight attendants about personal issues who may work for the same airline as her; people with whom the student may come into contact with in her work role in the future. The student does show discuss this ethical dilemma in her proposal. Her proposed solution is to simply negotiate with participants at the point of consent how they would like to manage any situation where they might meet through work in the future. However, I am not sure if this is adequate and would feel happier if recruitment were limited to flight attendants from other airlines. I would welcome the panel/chair's view on this. 2 more minor points: The agreement of the collaborating organisation/s will also be needed. However, there is no mention of this in the proposal, and thus no evidence

					that the student is aware of this requirement and/or in the process of securing agreement. The student also needs to clarify in the information given to participants that the University will not keep her raw data (i.e. interview recordings and transcripts) for 12 months and then destroy it, which is what her proposal currently states. Rather the data, if required by the doctoral assessors, would be returned to the researcher as soon as the University's assessment of the research is complete.

Appendix 1

Ethic Proposal revision[34];

This paper intends to discuss the ethical dilemmas, one major and two minor ones, as highlighted by the ethics panel. Each point will be addressed separately taking into consideration the proposed recommendations and possible solutions and consequences.

a) Agreement of the collaborating organization/s

I recognize that obtaining agreement of the collaborating organization would be ethical and advantageous. However, based on my experience within the airline organization I believe that this may be a difficult process for two reasons;
a) It is uncertain whether they would be willing to sign a collaborative form as this implies that their image or brand supports the research. This is an aspect, which, due to a highly competitive market, major airline organizations are extremely protective off. I think it is more likely that, at best, they would agree to host a venue for me, meaning that I could put up posters in the airline buildings, as long as it is made clear that I am undertaking a research that is independent of the specific company in question. However, they are still unlikely to sign the collaborative form, or any form as this means commitment from the organization itself.

b) It is anticipated that applying for organizational approval will be a time consuming process based on the size of the organization. It is my experience that any applications or requests are passed around to various departments prior to reaching any decisions. This may mean at least a 6 month delay before I may get an answer. It must also be pointed out that there is no guarantee that they will give approval as outlined above.

Based on the above points I have decided to not recruit from the airlines. No participant will be recruited on work premises, and the interview will take place in a neutral location away from organizational premises. Instead I propose two alternative techniques, invites posted in gyms and 'snowballing', for recruiting participants that meets the requirements of the intended study. This is followed by an outline of the potential contributions this study can bring to counselling psychology.

Posters in gyms:

To recruit participants via invites posted in gyms around the Heathrow area such as Woking, Hampton court, London or Weybridge where a lot of cabin crew lives. I recognize that I will need to obtain organizational collaboration agreement from the respective gyms I approach. I do not anticipate that this will be a major difficulty as the

[34] Please note that after submitting the ethic proposal attachment this study was given ethical approval by the London Metropolitan University as confirmed by the researcher's supervisor Dr. Gella Richards.

study is looking at cabin crew coping strategies. This also includes physical exercise in that a majority of cabin crew utilizes fitness centres to improve their health in the wake of jetlag and fatigue. However, the problem with this method is that there is no guarantee that crew, or anyone else, will read the invite. This means that I may get limited or no response, thereby running the risk of a long delay or inability to proceed with interviews, and thereby the research itself.

Snowballing

The other alternative is 'snowballing'. Asking fellow counselling psychologists or other acquaintances known to myself to hand out the invite to some of their cabin crew friends (during leisure time) that are unbeknown to the researcher. The potential dilemma is that these would feel pressured to take part because the invite was given by a friend. Therefore precautions will be exercised to minimize any risk of pressure by:
a) Asking participants whether they felt pressurized to take part in the research, and if so, interview will not proceed. Include a statement that this issue has been addressed in the consent form to be read and signed by participants prior to interviews (e.g., the decision to part take in this research was my own, I did not feel, in any way, pressurized to participate in the interview). The invite will also state in the beginning 'I do not know who you are', and it is hoped that this will feel less personalized for potential participants, thereby also less pressurizing.

I do believe that snowballing may be the best option for recruiting participants as it increases the chance of invites reaching cabin crew. Although this does not secure participation, it maximizes marketability, thereby increasing the likelihood of interest and contact made to the researcher.

I do believe that the intended study will make a valuable contribution to the field of counselling psychology. The research focuses on how long haul cabin crew deal with their disrupted lifestyle, compounded by organizational structures and requirements that are often beyond the control of the individual crew member, and the impact on mental health. Of special interest is the frequent disruptions to personal, social and professional relationships, which taken together, is likely to lead to loneliness, anxiety and depression even for the most resilient crew member. This focus represents an expansion from the existing literature in the field of aircrew mental health. The majority of the focus hitherto has been on the adverse medical or cognitive effects associated with repeated jet lag and non-consistent shift work. I feel that the proposed study has made a case for further research concerning the dynamics of cabin crew relationships, how they seek to develop and maintain these and the implications on psychological health. To date, there is very limited research published that attempts to address the psychological welfare of this particular group of workers. Based on the design and theory questions, I am intending to provide a useful piece of research that is relevant to all clinical practitioners (counselors, psychologists, AME'S) working with this population in addition to cabin crew and their respective employer.

In the light of the above potentials, I do think that the methods of investigations are justified.

b) The researcher's 'dual role': A flight attendant interviewing other flight attendants.

- The ethics panel has recommended that the researcher do not use participants from the same airline as she works for. The potential problem here is that I work for one of the major UK airlines that operate with a separate short haul and long haul fleet. There are currently only 2/3 (the latter has got a very small number of cabin crew that fly long haul only) UK airlines whereby cabin crew are not required to undertake a mixture of both short haul and long haul work. By not recruiting from this specific airline I am also limiting the number of organizations to sample from thereby reducing scope for anonymity, meaning increased chance of unintentional revelation of the individual organizational identity.
- The ethical proposal discussed the potential of negotiating with participants how they would like to be addressed (or not) if the researcher should meet them in the future. What I failed to outline is the small chance of this happening. Over the last year, I have only worked twice with two other cabin crew members. There is over 85000 Heathrow long haul based crew within the airline I work for. Every flight I work with 11 (min)-14 (Max) different people, and I do on average about 3-4 flights a month. A rough calculation: 3.5×14=49, 49×12=588. 8500:588=14%. This means that there is a 14% chance that I will fly with any of these people twice within one year, and considering the fact that I am intending to use only 3-4 participants from this airline the chances of meeting is considerably less than 14% (it works out to be less than 0.01). I am aware that one can not predict the future but my point is that it is very unlikely that I will work with these people. Should this happen, there is unlikely to be any issues of power as I am still a junior (bottom of list) after 9 years of flying due to the long duration of service on the long haul fleet amongst staff in my company.

An important measure will be initiated to minimise the potential influence of power differences in the researcher-participant relationship. The researcher will adopt an open and honest approach by informing potential participants about her dual position in the invitation letter[35]. This is thought to allow participants an informed choice as to whether they anticipate difficulties with the researchers' dual position before making initial contact with the researcher (Banister et al., 1984).

C) Student needs to clarify to participants that the University will not keep her raw data for 12 months and then destroy it.

According to the data protection act (1986) I believe it is my responsibility both as a professional and a researcher to inform participants where the raw data will be kept and the people whom can access it. By not doing so I am at risk of breaching the data

[35] Please see Appendix 2 and 3

protection act's procedures for confidentiality. My current understanding based on London Met's procedures is that audio-cassettes and transcripts are kept on University premises. This is based on the experience of my previous research (MSc) whereby the raw data, 7 months after final markings, is yet to be returned to the students. I have already enquired twice about this (to the staff in the resource room) Please clarify so that I can change information given to participants accordingly.

Appendix 2

Dear Crew Member,

I don't know who you are.You may have been given this letter by one of your friends/colleagues whom I have asked to pass this around to anyone that might be interested in taking part in my study.

I am 29 year old female cabin crew who is currently carrying out a research project looking at the influence of work upon cabin crew staff as part of my professional doctorate in Counselling Psychology at London Metropolitan University. My project is supervised by Dr Gella Richards (gella.richards@londonmet.ac.uk), and I have been given approval from the university to conduct this study. I am looking for volunteers who have been flying long haul for a minimum of 5 years with a length of service between 5-15 years, and are willing to talk about their experience as cabin crew including their personal, social and professional relationships. The interview will last approximately 1 hour and details of the meeting can be arranged upon your convenience.

Please be ensured that there is no right or wrong answers to any questions asked. I am interested in the subjective account of what you see as important with regards to your profession. Your decision to participate or not will have no bearing on your work status or relationship with your employer. With your consent, the interview will be audio- taped and transcribed so that every detail of your account can be attended to. I am bound by the British Psychology Society's ethical conduct of research: You have a right to withdraw from the study at any time, and your personal details including the particular airline you belong to will be kept confidential ensuring that you remain anonymous throughout the study.

Please contact me either by email or by phone should you wish to take part in this research project, and be assured that there is no pressure for you to participate. I will be happy to answer any questions should you have any further queries regarding the study.

Yours Sincerely
Carina Eriksen (Trainee Counselling Psychologist) carinaeriksen@hotmail.com

+44 796 8976 330

Appendix 3

Dear Reader

I am 29 year old female cabin crew who is currently carrying out a research project looking at the influence of long haul flying upon cabin crew's physical and psychological health as part of my professional doctorate in Counselling Psychology at London Metropolitan University. My project is supervised by Dr Gella Richards (gella.richards@londonmet.ac.uk), and I have been given approval from the university to conduct this study. I am looking for volunteers who have been flying long haul for a minimum of 5 years with a length of service between 5-15 years, and are willing to talk about their experience as cabin crew including their personal, social and professional relationships. The interview will last approximately 1 hour and details of the meeting can be arranged upon your convenience.

Please be ensured that there is no right or wrong answers to any questions asked. I am interested in the subjective account of what you see as important with regards to your health and profession. Your decision to participate or not will have no bearing on your work status or relationship with your employer. With your consent, the interview will be audio- taped and transcribed so that every detail of your account can be attended to. I am bound by the British Psychology Society's ethical conduct of research: You have a right to withdraw from the study at any time, and your personal details including the particular airline you belong to will be kept confidential ensuring that you remain anonymous throughout the study.

Please contact me either by email or by phone should you wish to take part in this research project, and be assured that there is no pressure for you to participate. I will be happy to answer any questions should you have any further queries regarding the study.

Yours Sincerely
Carina Eriksen (Trainee Counselling Psychologist) carinaeriksen@hotmail.com
+44 (0) 796 8976 330

Appendix 4

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I have read and understood the information sheet.

I agree that my interview with Carina Eriksen may be audio-taped and transcribed as part of her research project for the award of a practitioner doctorate in Counselling Psychology. The examinator(s) and her supervisor, Dr Gella Richards, will have access to the interview data. I am aware that this project may be published or used for presentational purposes.

I understand that I may stop the interview at any point and that I may also withdraw from the study should I wish to do so at any time. When the research has been marked by the appointed examinator(s) and returned to the researcher, I am aware that the raw interview data will be destroyed and appropriately disposed of.

I understand that all attempts will be made to maintain anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research process, and that the content of my interview will not have any bearing on my current relationship with colleagues or my employer. I did not feel pressurised to participate. I offer consent to take part in this research study, and I accept all the conditions detailed above.

PRINT NAME

SIGNED

Date

Appendix 5

Personal characteristic form;

Dear Participant,

This form is intended to generate brief details of your personal characteristics. The information you give will be included in the research project in the form of a table. Every effort will be made to maintain your anonymity: any identifiable information such as your name or the airline you work for will remain confidential.

There is no pressure to answer any of the questions asked, and if you do not wish to answer a particular question please feel free to leave it blank. Please be aware that question 1 and 6 requires you to circle the answer you feel applies to you,

1. Gender: Female Male

2. Age:

3. Nationality:

4. Length of long haul service:

5. Other flying service (shorthaul):

6. Marital Status: Married In a relationship Co-habiting Single

7. Number of dependencies:

Appendix 6; INTERVIEW GUIDE

TQ1

1. What motivated you to become cabin crew? What were your expectations?
   - Travelling? Experiencing different cultures/people? Attractive lifestyle? Escaping routine based work or personal issues?TQ1
2. How would you describe your experience of long haul flying?
   - Work schedule? Meeting differing people/cultures? Shift work? Lifestyle?

TQ2

3. Is there anything you find particular challenging about …. (the above)?
   - Lifestyle? Fatigue/Jetlag? Inability to plan ahead? Compatibility with life outside of work?
4. Is there any area(s) of your life that you feel is influenced by (the above)?
   - Personal/Social relationships? Missing birthdays? Anniversaries? Separations? Difficulties with planning ahead/commitment? Tensions between personal wishes and work schedule?

TQ3

5. How do you manage the described challenges arising from your profession?
   - Are there any particular strategies you use to cope with that? Do such strategies work? Does it alleviate the situation short term or long term? What factors do you think might facilitate or restrict your ways of dealing with the described issues?
6. How do you manage to develop and maintain social, personal and professional relationships?
   - How do you arrange to see your friends, beloved ones or family? How do you manage your daily activities such as washing, cleaning etc? What factors do you think might facilitate or hinder your ability to develop and maintain relationships?

TQ4

7. How do you think your psychological health is influenced by the above challenges? How does …. (E.g. potential upsets with your beloved ones) make you feel? (partner, colleagues, friends, family)
   - You said something about Loneliness? Depression? Anxiety? Guilt?
   - What do you think, if anything, influenced the way you felt?
8. Are there any other factors that shape the way you feel (or mental well-being)?
   - Individual circumstances? (mental and physical health history, personal characteristics, social network, relationship status, financial circumstances)
   - Other aspects of the aircrew occupation? (Length of service, role within the company, employment history?

9. Is there anything else that you feel is important with regards to your experience as cabin crew and would like to share?
   - We have talked about…. And….(summarizing)
   - How did you find the experience of talking about your lifestyle?

Appendix 7; Participants validation letter

Carina Eriksen
24 Hart Road
West Byfleet
Surrey, KT14 7NQ

M; 0796 8976 330

Dear……..

Thank you for your interest and valuable contribution to my study;

How does long haul travel affect personal, social, and professional relationships, and what are the implications for cabin crew coping and psychological health?

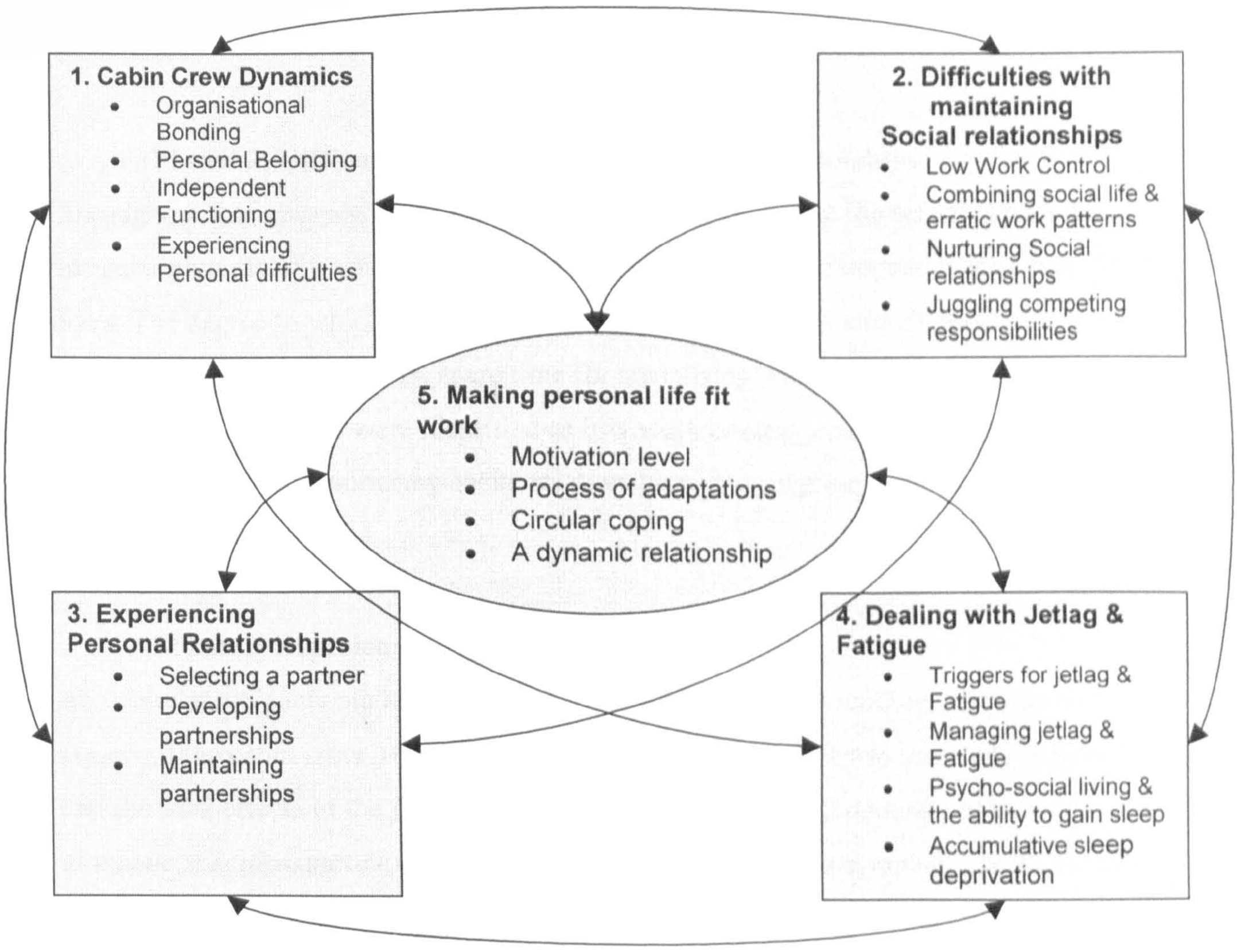
You may recall articulating an interest in commenting on the analysis. It would be very valuable to my study if you find time to communicate your thoughts and perceptions with regards to the attached summary of the research. I am seeking to ensure that my interpretations of your interview data and your experience of the cabin crew profession are corresponding, which I am hoping will avoid the possibility of misinterpretation of the data.

Please find attached a visual illustration of the five main themes identified during the analysis of the interview data provided by the eight participants that took part in this study. This is followed by a short explanation of each of the five themes with a particular focus on the dynamic linkage between each of the themes. Please be aware that the model provides a more generalist overview of each theme, and this is then followed by a full transcript of your individual interview data with illustration of my interpretation of your sayings in the left hand column. I am hoping this will provide an illustration of how your contribution influenced the development of these themes.

I would be grateful if you could respond to me within two-three weeks if at all possible. This would ensure enough time for me to incorporate your feedback and views within the analysis. If I don't hear from you within this period I will assume that you are satisfied with the analysis and that you do not have any particular ideas, comments, or/and adjustments to suggest.

Many thanks for your continuous engagement with the research.

Carina Eriksen
Trainee counselling psychologist



Theme 1; Cabin Crew Dynamics

The forever changing crew compositions coupled with frequent, and often lengthy, absences from home, was thought to generate feelings of uncertainty and loneliness for the individual crew member. Participants spoke in great length about their experience of the various difficulties associated with the repeated process of *forming and breaking* relationships with colleagues. The crew dynamics, both on and off the aircraft, was identified as a complex phenomenon that seemed to be influenced by four differing, yet highly related, sub-themes. These were thought to be organisational requirements for

bonding, personal belonging, independent functioning, and the experience of personal difficulties.

Theme 2; Difficulties with maintaining social relationships

Throughout the interview participants expressed concern about the way in which the irregular patterns of work and the frequent absence from home impacted upon their social lives. The degree to which they managed (or not) to maintain social relationships in the wake of serious limitations on spare time for socialising was thought to be influenced by four sub-themes. These were identified as low work control, combining social life with erratic work patterns, nurturing social relationships, and juggling competing responsibilities.

Theme 3 Experiencing personal relationships

All of the participants made reference to the complexities surrounding the perceived impact of the cabin crew lifestyle on a partnership. Although it was generally believed that the total effects of the job on any given relationship would depend upon a wide range of *couple specifics*, participants identified a partner's ability to sympathise with the cabin crew profession and occupational status to be highly important influences on a partnership. Their experience of personal relationships was thought to involve three sub themes; selecting a partner from a differing profession or within the profession, developing a partnership, and maintaining a partnership.

Theme 4 Dealing with Jetlag and Fatigue

Participants identified jetlag and fatigue as a highly negative consequence of the cabin crew profession. It was believed that the combination of erratic shift work and frequent crossing of various time zones gave rise to a range of cognitive, motivational, emotional and biological *symptoms*, which in turn, was perceived to exert a negative impact on crew's performance and general level of functioning. This theme consisted of four sub-themes as follows; Triggers for jetlag and fatigue, managing jetlag and fatigue, the link between psycho-social living and the ability to gain adequate sleep, and accumulative sleep deprivation.

5. Making personal life fit work

There appeared to be a common conviction amongst all of the participants that the cabin crew lifestyle had a tremendous impact upon their personal lives. This was thought to encompass a whole range of issues ranging from intra-personal ones such as psychological and physical well being, to inter-personal ones including their ability to form and maintain professional, social, and intimate relationships. In order to cope with the many, and often simultaneous, adverse influences on personal living, participants identified the need for persistent adaptations and circular coping processes as opposed to linear ones.

Adapting personal life to fit in with the requirement of work

It would be easy to assume that the effects of low work satisfaction along with the many adverse impacts of the particular lifestyle on psycho-social living would give rise to short lived careers within the cabin crew profession. However, participants spoke about the various ways in which it was possible to 'make the job work for the individual', and it was generally agreed that this involved continuous efforts of adapting personal circumstances according to the specific requirements of the job. For example, a married female with children might use her time away to recuperate from the strains of looking after two young toddlers at home. Alternatively, for a single person the frequent absences from home might provide additional opportunities to meet a potential partner whilst away on a trip.

Appendix 8

An illustration of a verbatim transcript with the researcher's notes in the left hand margin.
Participant 5; S5

Redundancy from previous job seen to forge move to another company within the car selling profession (s,1-4) Boredom in new job and friends working for an airline seen to influence initial thoughts of becoming cabin crew (s,5-10)	Q: So what actually motivated you to become cabin crew? 1A: Well... good question, well, I'll tell you exactly why. 2When I was about 21... yeah, 21, I was made redundant from 3the job that I actually really really loved and I went to... I was 4selling cars and I went to work for another company and it was 5just... just dealing with old people, you know, I worked with 6old people and I was only 21 so I was young so I just thought... 7god, this is absolutely phenomenally dull and boring and... and 8Kev, a friend of ours, was flying for... you know, at the time 9and yeah... I thought why not, give it a whirl and so I applied 10and no looking back... six years later really.
Initial expectation of cabin crew profession involving permanent parties and socializing (s,11-13) Distinction between actualities of the profession and stereotypical expectations (s,14) Actualities of the lifestyle seen to suit the self with less want/need for socializing and partying as one grows older (s,15-19)	Q: What were your expectations before... ? 11A: Maybe be of a... not a party but more of... you know, 12just people going mad... you know, not going mad but mad in 13a like social way, you know, permanent parties and barbecues 14and socialising and stuff which isn't really the case but, you 15know, now I'm a little bit older that's fine by me cause I don't 16want the partying and barbecuing and socialising all the time 17so I think the lifestyle actually suits me better now... sort of 18six years on than what it did when I was 23 when I first 19started.
Lifestyle perceived as carrying both positive and negative aspects (s,20) /nability to speak to friends and family due to large time differences and cost of long distance calls giving rise to feelings of loneliness (s,20-26) Limited, less, time to spend with friends and family compared to when self was doing 9-5 work (s,27-28) Loneliness and obscurity owed to irregular patterns of work (s,29-30) Going to places all over the world and meeting different cultures perceived as a positive educational experience (s,30-31)	Q: That brings me quite nicely onto the next question. What has your actual experience been of long haul flying? 20A: Um... a lot of positives, a lot of negatives. I mean 21obviously the negatives... it's a lonely job, you know, real 22lonely sometimes, you know, because your friends... you 23know, you can't really just pick up the phone cause you know 24that a phone call is very very expensive plus it might be 2 25o'clock in the morning where they are so you can't just pick 26up the phone and speak to your mum or speak to your best 27friends, plus you don't actually get the time to spend with 28your friends and your family that you did when you had a 9 to

Text cut off in original

Meeting people from all over the UK as opposed to only the self's home town seen to allow the self broadened experiences of England (s,32-37)

295 job anyway, so... yeah, it can be very lonely and very
30obscure in that respect but the plus sides you do get to see
31some amazing places, meet some... you know, until I flew I'd
32never met people from Bristol and from Scotland and from
33Wales, you know, south coast and all that sort of stuff and
34from Jersey, only ever met people from Norfolk, you know, so
35even though I've seen a lot of the world I feel like I've gained
36a lot of experience of England and the UK which is pretty
37beneficial I think... so.

Motivation to do the job rooted in experiencing different people, learning about different cultures as opposed to financial rewards (s,38-39)
Separating the self from stereotypical images of the 'average' Brit abroad based on distinction between experience of 'frequent travels' and once a year holiday (s,40-43)
The self seen as neither fitting the role of being a tourist nor a local but someone with a distinct identity across destination and cultures (s,44-47)

38It's not a job you're gonna get rich out of obviously, you don't
39do it for that but I really just think, you know, just going to
40places and seeing the different cultures like Delhi and the Far
41East, it's a real eye opening experience, you know, and I think
42you get a different view than if you're a tourist because when
43I go away I don't think of myself as a tourist, I don't think of
44myself as a local but I don't think of myself as the guy... the
45union jack teacher, you know, pasty white going bright red in
46the sun, with my tour guide... I think I'm sort of a different
47level to that... does that make sense?

Spending extensive time at a specific destination seen to allow for deeper level understanding of local custom/traditions (s,48-52)
Appreciating and understanding cultures seen as an educational process with the self as a more knowledgeable person (s,53-57)

Q: You're talking about going away quite frequently, getting to know the place perhaps?

48A: I probably spend a third of my time in the States, a third
49of my life, you know, currently in the States, so you get to
50know their mannerisms and their... you know, their way of
51life, the way they talk, the way they shop, the way they eat...
52you know, they way they tip in America as well, you know,
53and if you're just going for two weeks in Orlando you
54wouldn't experience any of that, you know, you wouldn't
55appreciate it, you wouldn't understand that so... yeah, I
56definitely think adapting to other cultures is a good thing,
57makes me a more knowledgeable person.

Q: It's almost like an educational process really?

Educational process seen as learning about different people from various backgrounds as well as going to various countries (s,58-62)

58A: Totally... yeah, yeah, yeah. Even... if I speak to
59somebody who lives in Scotland on a flight cause you get ten
60hours, you're working with that person, you get to talk to
61them and, you know, I find that educational let alone being in
62another country and... I don't know how to quite put this but

Working with a diversity of people from wealthy to poor seen to promote an understanding of an essential human same ness despite individual variance in socio-economic backgrounds and history (s,63-70)

63the different sort of classes of people because you might be
64somebody who's... you know, they've been brought up in a
65very wealthy family, you know, and been to university, got
66their first or whatever and they're just doing this job for a
67couple of years but there's also a single mother of two on a

67couple of years but there's also a single mother of two on a 68council estate in Manchester doing the job as well, they're 69doing exactly the same job to the same competencies but how 70far removed are they, so... yeah, it's very educational... 71definitely.

Q: On the other hand you said... difficulty with the job is the loneliness.

Liking one's own company seen as an important way of preventing feelings of loneliness (s,72-73)
Waking up 4oclock in the morning whilst away perceived as 'normal when flying (s,74-75)

72A: I don't think I have real... you know, I actually enjoy my 73own company. You know, you sort of... by nature you'll 74wake up at 4 o'clock in the morning when you're in the 75States, there's no... you know, you can't help that. What I 76do between 4 in the morning and 9, I never really know but 77it's sort of reading and watching TV and just trying to utilise 78that time... definitely try and make the most of it rather than 79just sit there and veg in front of the TV, I know this sounds 80crazy but, you know, you've got the history channel and 81national geographic on, all these hotel TV... you know, and 82you can watch that for a few hours and soak up loads of 83knowledge... it's great. Maybe a waste of time to some 84people I don't know but might as well utilise the time.

Using one's time constructively during the night by seeking new knowledge/learning seen to prevent feelings of wasting time/life away (s,76-82)
Awareness of preference for learning new knowledge as an individual strategy for using spare time that may not suit other individuals (s,83-84)

Q: So it's a question of trying to keep yourself occupied as opposed to sitting there doing nothing?

Choosing to engage in activities whilst away as opposed to sitting around seen as a healthy way of utilizing extensive time away (s,85-92)

85A: Yeah... yeah. You know, today I was talking to (Mark 86at Unison)... oh, you know, I don't know about the ?? 87boarding, I don't know whether I really enjoy it, it's a great 88thing to do to soak up an afternoon... I totally believe in that 89but, you know, we have so much spare time in the job we do 90that you might as well do stuff in that spare time rather than 91just sit around... you know, shopping I think is a real waste of 92time but, you know, it's all horses for courses.

Q: You said a little bit about different times... about for example 2 o'clock in the morning and you can't phone home, how does that work with the different time zones?

Inability to sleep whilst away thought to be caused by time differences (s,93-94)
Acclimatization process to UK time thought to be more difficult owed to pressure of carrying out daily tasks within limited time (s,95-97)
Inability to sleep during the night causing negative thoughts of 'feeling knackered' with growing doubts as to whether one can complete tasks at home

93A: Um... when you're down route... when you're away, 94you try and sleep but you can't. I think when you're at 95home, you're back in the UK, that's where the big problem is. 96You know, because it's 2... 3 o'clock in the morning, you're 97wide awake thinking I've gotta be up at 7, gotta do x, y and z 98and my day off... days off, and I can't do them cause I'm 99gonna be knackered, I think that's more of a problem than 100what it is when you're down route

(s,98-100)

100what it is when you're down route.

Restricted time at home compared to other professions/schooling owed to going away during weekends and long periods away (s,101-104)
Inability to carry out daily tasks whilst away seen to cause a build up of everyday tasks awaiting completion on return (s,105-108)
Pressure to make time for friends/relatives as well as everyday tasks seen as a struggle that is exacerbated by jetlag (109-114)

Q: Why do you think that is?

101A: Because by way of nature... you know, through primary
102school, high school, college, university, regular work... you
103are Monday to Friday, have two days off Saturday and
104Sunday, have every evening off and then that's... half of that
105is taken away, you know, you might be away the whole
106weekend... ok, you're not doing anything when you're away
107but you've still gotta go to the bank, you've gotta wash your
108clothes, you've gotta make your direct debits, you've gotta
109pay your bills, you've gotta see your friends, you've gotta
110see your relatives... when half your week is taken away you
111can't do that, you know, so you've gotta cram it all in that
112two or three days and if you're only getting five hours sleep
113because you're jet-lagged, can you do it?... you know, it's a
114struggle.

Pressure to cram as much as one can in on one's days off during jetlag seen to cause feelings of frustration (s,115)
Taking on extra work during days off thought to cause further time restrictions for socializing/daily task with increased pressure on self (s,116-122)

Q: How does that make you feel?

115A: Um... sometimes a bit frustrated because I actually
116work... you know, I have sort of extra curricula activity as
117far as on my days off I work and try to take up that time and
118I think... oh god, I've gotta be up in five hours for an eight
119hour day and then I've gotta do all my socialising and all my
120shopping and washing and everything and... yeah, it's
121frustrating but when you're wide awake at 3 o'clock in the
122morning, no matter what you do you're gonna fall asleep at
some point.

Discipline to get up in the morning at the expense of gaining adequate sleep used to cope with daily task/extra work and socializing (s,123-125)
Choosing to engage in daily activities/socializing at the expense of sleep thought to cause huge sleep deprivation that is hard to deal with (s,126-130)
Cutting socializing short in favour of sleep seen to cause risk of bitterness and less job satisfaction (s,131-134)
Choosing between paradoxical alternatives appears to be a complex process that involves deep level thinking weighing up one negative outcome against the other (135-136)

Q: Is there anything specific that you try and do to cope with that?

123A: No... I just... if I've gotta be up at 7 cause I've got a
124long day, I will get up at 7 regardless of what time I go to
125bed, rather than try to go to bed at 9 and just stare at the
126ceiling for six hours which is huge sleep deprivation which is
127really hard. Sometimes, you know... I mean, even like
128now it's 10 o'clock, gotta be up at sort of half six tomorrow
129but I'm not gonna cut short my socialising tonight because I
130know if I went to bed now I'm not gonna fall asleep till...so,
131I might as well enjoy my wine and, you know, enjoy the
132company I've got tonight, you know, and get on with it and
133not let... you know, I don't wanna become bitter to the job
134because I think... oh, I'm not sleeping, I don't wanna do the
135job anymore and if I do a 9 to 5 job everything will be

135job anymore and if I do a 9 to 5 job everything will be
136rosy… so.

Q: It's almost like you're facing a decision… do I actually cut short my socialising in order to gain some more sleep and feel rested before a flight?

Opportunity to sleep in seen as rare and highly dependant on daily schedule (s,137-139)
Prioritizing daily activities at the expense of adequate sleep used to balance home life with professional life (s, 140-146)

137A: Yeah… precisely, I mean the thing is there will be times
138when… you know, the odd time when I haven't gotta do
139anything and I can sleep in till 12, rare as it is… enjoy those
140times. I still manage to do everything I wanna do on the
141five or six hours sleep I get, you know, and I get, um… ,
142so… yeah, and I'm still sort of ??? so… yeah, I'm not
143looking after babies or anything like that, so… yes, I will
144continue to have my five hours sleep and do all the
145socialising and working and anything else I have to do in my
146spare time.

Q: You said something about accumulative sleep deprivation, how do you notice if your sleep is deprived?

Sleep deprivation believed to reduce one's sharpness, physical movements, motivation and concentration (s,147-155)
Restrictions placed on daily activities (gym, riding motor bike) owed to overall performance thought to be affected by tiredness (s,156-160)

147A: This'll sound absolutely awful but I sometimes notice
148myself being… not slurring my words but just not being pin-
149sharp and being a bit slurred movement as well and, you
150know, I'll go to the gym and I'll be in there half an hour and
151I'll feel like I've been in there for five hours, I just feel
152totally wiped out and just lifting a weight is like the most
153hardest thing I could ever imagine possibly doing and I
154think… oh, how's that and I've got a motor bike and I love
155going out on the bike but sometimes I think I haven't got the
156concentration to be doing this so I have to cut short my rides
157and that's something I really enjoy doing but I don't wanna
158be doing it unless I'm a hundred percent ?? to the
159surroundings cause you have to be on two wheels or in a car
160or doing anything like that… so.

Q: Are there any other signs that you get when you're sleep deprived?

Conscious efforts to ensure food intake seen as necessary due to lack of feeling hungry during times of sleep deprivation (s,161-164)
Snacks prior to night time sleep used to avoid waking up next day in agony due to hunger (s,165-170)

161A: Um… sometimes I have sort of remind myself to eat. I
162always have a little bit of good before I go to bed because if I
163end up going to bed for twelve hours which doesn't really
164happen that much especially in the summer when it's hot, but
165I'll wake up the next day in agony cause I'm hungry, you
166know, I don't really do those marathon sleeps but if I ever
167do, then it's nice to know that I've got a bit of food inside me
168to last, you know, cause you never go for twelve hours

168to last, you know, cause you never go for twelve hours
169without eating when you're awake so I can't see why the
170body can do it when you're asleep.

Q: What about emotionally, do you notice any changes?

Negative changes in self believed to be caused by tiredness (s,171-172)
Tiredness seen to cause emotional disturbances that is believed to exert a negative effect on interactions/dynamics with others (s,173-174)
Awareness of changes in self with tendency for becoming snappy, moans and mean towards close others (s,175-176)
Self resentment based on a dislike for negative traits/character with feelings of guilt/sympathy towards those at the receiving end (s,177-179)
Justification of moaning and becoming snappy based on 'normal' human tendency to vent own frustration towards others during times of tiredness (s,180-181)

171A: Yeah... I feel sorry for the people I'm around the most
172when I am tired because... I'm pretty laid back, I'm an easy-
173going guy, but when I'm tired just like anybody else I do
174take it out on the person I'm nearest to... don't want to,
175don't mean to but human nature... unfortunately you do,
176so... yeah, I don't wanna be crabby, I don't wanna be mean
177to anybody, I don't wanna be... I don't wanna snap at
178anybody but if you're tired, that's what you do and when
179you're doing it, you think... I don't wanna be a bore, I don't
180wanna be a moan but you have to vent your frustration
181somehow, that's unfortunately what happens.

Q: Is there any particular things that you do in order to deal with sleep deprivation?

Advice from experienced colleagues seen as helpful for learning how to deal with sleep deprivation (s,182-185)
Dealing with sleep deprivation involves trying to gain sleep whenever possible even if it is only short naps (s,186-188)

182A: Yeah... I mean, you know a guy said to me who was a
183captain years ago, he said... never stand when you can sit,
184never sit when you can lie down and never lie down when
185you can sleep... I know that sounds a bit crazy but if I get
186the chance to sleep, I will sleep and even if it's an hour, even
187if it's two hours... couple of hours is better than no hours...
188so.

Q: So you try and have short naps?

Keeping busy used to deal with tiredness if one can't sleep suggesting difficulties with falling asleep when one is trying (s,198-191)
Reluctance to rely on drugs/sleeping pills to fall asleep owed to concern about one's body (s,192-193)
Resisting the idea of self medication to restore sleep despite availability to buy abroad and colleagues choice of using sleep medication to restore sleep (s,194-197)

189A: Yeah... yeah, anything and, you know, on the flip side of
190that I don't wanna be tired, when I can't sleep so I just try
191and remain busy. Yeah... there are all these sleeping pills
192and potions and god knows what but I... I wonder if the
193human body really needs that. Yeah... I mean there's all
194sorts of things and all this sort of... you know, cause we can
195travel to other parts of the world, we can get this stuff you
196can't get in Britain, I don't wanna be taking that which a lot
197of people do and I don't think it's good.

Q: So it's basically sleep when you're tired and wake up when you have to?

198A: Yeah... yeah, sleep when you can, when you've got
199things to do... do them.

Q: You said something about the hardship of coming back from the trip because you've got quite a lot of other arrangements and everyday living tasks on your days off, how does that work?

The job perceived as a fantasy on good days with 12-15 people to socialize with compared to 2-3 friends to go out for a drink with on days off (s,200-204)
Wide difference between life going away and life at home with a sense of the existence of 2 different worlds (s,205-206)
Going from spending care free days of fun abroad to washing, paying bills at home thought to cause a shock to the system owed to reality of everyday living (s,207-210)

200A: Well... you know, I mean sometimes on a good day, you
201know, the job is fantasy, you know, you go in... I mean, on
202my... when I'm at home, you know, I'll be lucky to get a
203couple or three of the guys to go out for a drink but when
204I'm away it's like there's 12... 15 of us... whatever, we're
205going to theme parks, we're going water-skiing, going out
206for meals, doing this that and other and of course when you
207come home it's a bit of a shock to the system cause you can't
208do that in real life, plus you've gotta wash all your clothes,
209cook your own meals, you can't go out and... you know, you
210can't go out for meals like you do when you're away... you
211know, cause you've run out of money, so... yeah, it's a real
212shock and of course generally speaking, you know, I like
213going to sunny places... the Caribbean, Orlando, Miami,
214California and you can do that all year but when you come
215home in the winter it's raining, it's snowing, it's cold, it's
216windy... it is a shock, it is a little bit depressing, it is a bit...
217hey, this is reality, you know, half your life is a false reality I
218don't know, it's just... it's not real, this is gonna end at some
219point because... obviously you can't do this job... well, I
220don't wanna do this job when I'm 40 with two or three kids,
221so... yeah, it is a bit of a shock when you come home, you
222know, plus I think you can be... I don't mean lying to people
223but you can be more who you wanna be when you're away
224because when you're at home everybody... you know,
225everybody knows your flaws, everybody knows those little
226stories about you... you know, when you've done
227embarrassing things and to have those friends you've know
228for years is fantastic but, you know, again to be with people
229who don't really know anything about you is quite nice as
230well. I'm not talking about living a dual life or anything
231but it's...I dunno, I can't really explain it, you know, you
232can be more who you aspire... who you want to aspire to...
233does that make sense?

Returning to the UK on a cold winter day seen to cause feelings of depression (s,211-216)
Being away seen as a false reality with a growing awareness of it's short lived existence owed to wanting to be permanently home when starting a family (s,217-220)

Traveling with unbeknown colleagues seen to allow freedom to re-create the self according to who one wants to be (s,221-223)
Distinction between false sense of self and creation of a new self separate from historic view of the self through the eyes of long term friends (s,224-228)
Being with unfamiliar people thought to allow the self greater scope for transformation towards the ideal self (s,229-233)

Q: Speaking about going away ??? colleagues... how does it actually work?

Working for the same company seen as the only common ground with colleagues (s,235-237)
Distinction between self and individual colleagues with a variety of interests

234A: Well, I don't think you've always got stuff to talk about
235because you know the only one thing you have in common
236with this person is you work for the same company, that is

leading to restricted common grounds for interactions (s,234)

236with this person is you work for the same company, that is
237the only thing you have in common.

Q: You don't see them all the time?

Lack of stable and continuous working relations due to volume of work force within the company (s,238-240)
Inability to form long lasting intimate friendship with colleagues due to forever changing crew composition (s,241-247)

238A: You don't see them all the time. I mean the company I
239work for there's about five thousand crew, fifteen hundred
240flight deck... it's a lot of people so you might fly with
241someone, you might never ever see them again, you don't
242know whether they've left, whether they're still there, other
243people... yes, you bump into them, you have a chat bla bla
244bla, but I still maintain that the friends you make who you fly
245with you will never be... you never have the same level of
246intimacy and friendship with them as the people you've
247known all your life, so... yeah, it's very different.

Q: Is that where it comes in when you say that it can be very lonely?

Doubts as to whether one can rely on colleagues during times of troubles/accidents due to fragile relations based on brief interactions (s,248-250)
Comparison of colleagues and long term friends with the latter seen as reliant, secure and stable (s,251-254)
Inability to mentally depend on colleagues owed to feelings of insecurity surrounding others responsibility towards the self in need (s,255-262)

248A: Yeah, really. I suppose if you were... I don't know, for
249instance, if you were away somewhere and you had an
250accident or you were ill or something, your friends that you
251know at home you can depend on them, you know you can
252depend on them whereas these people who you've met at
253work, who you've only known for a few hours or a couple of
254days or whatever... can you depend on them, you don't
255know whether you can or you can't, it's always a bit... you
256know, there's no... there's no guarantee because you don't
257know these people, they might... you know, they might shirk
258responsibility at the drop of a hat because they think... god,
259there's something wrong with... I don't wanna get involved
260in that whereas your friends that you've known for a while
261will say... right, let's get you sorted out, let's help you, let's
262get the doctor in or whatever... yeah.

Q: So is this lack of kind of relationship with your colleagues where you can develop some sort of trust on whether you can depend on them or not?

Erratic and brief encounters with a huge diversity of colleagues seen to affect one's ability to recognize colleagues beyond surface acknowledgment of having worked together in the past (s,263-269)
Lack of stable work relations perceived as weird in comparison to working in an office with greater opportunities to get to know one's colleagues based on regular interactions (s,270-275)

263A: Yeah... I mean, you spend three days of ?? with
264someone, spent the whole day with them, you go out with
265them at night, you fly with them, then you might not see
266them again for six months, twelve months, eighteen months,
267two years... whatever, can you remember that conversation
268you had two years ago... probably not, you can't remember
269anything about them, you just know that you know them, it's
270very weird, very odd situation, especially as the likelihood

306would have seen that other friend on the Friday but I can't...
307got once chance to see people on the Saturday night, I'm
308gonna be away the next weekend so I know I can't see them
309then, so... yeah, there's always so much to squeeze in, so
310many people to see... closer to my mum as well so I spend a
311bit of time with her, so... yeah, lot of pressure plus you've
312gotta do all that socialising but also you want a bit of time to
313yourself, you know, there's a lot to be... it sounds ???,
314there's a lot to be said to chilling out on your own, a couple
315of candles, video, couple of glasses of wine, just enjoying
316your own company in the safety and security of your own
317home, that is a lot different to doing that in a hotel room, you
318know, got familiar surroundings, you can choose what you
319wanna do... when, so... yeah, there's a lot of pressure on
320squeezing a lot of stuff in, seven days of socialising and
321things in three days.

Seeing friends, spending time with family as well as making time for oneself seen to cause feelings of pressure (s,311-313)

Distinction placed on relaxing by oneself in one's own home thought to give rise to more freedom than chilling out in a hotel room with unfamiliar surroundings (s,314-319)

Q: One of the things you're saying is that you're having to organise and plan a lot.

322A: I mean, definitely the majority of my friends are Monday
323to Friday, 9 to 5 people, they will say what are you doing on
324x date which might be two months away, on a Thursday
325night, Friday night, Saturday afternoon, Sunday afternoon...
326whatever, they know they've got that time off and I can't say
327yes until two weeks before and I'll go... well, yeah, I've
328gotta book the tickets or whatever, I can't do that so it's
329frustrating.

Socializing with friends who work 9-5 seen to require efforts of the self to be organized and plan ahead (s,322-325)
Frustration arising from inability to plan more than two weeks ahead due to lack of control over work schedule (s,326-329)

Q: Is it the inability to plan ahead a long time cause you don't know what dates you're gonna be off on?

330A: Totally... yeah. I mean, I might be painting a bad
331picture of the job I do but it's not all bad, you know.

Q: Like you said earlier, you talked a lot about meeting different cultures, getting to go away to all these places. One of the things that I wanted to ask... if you have only got two weeks in advance of knowing where you've gotta go, what tends to happen if there is something that you want to attend at home and then you having to go away or you're scheduled to go away?

332A: Well, you know, I mean obviously on the rare occasion
333you can go sick for a flight and do that social event but nine
334times out of ten if you've gotta work, you've gotta work.
335It's no different to saying to your friend who works in an
336office hey Monday lunchtime do you wanna come go-

Going sick from work not seen as a strategy for accommodating one's social calendar (s,332-333)
Accepting the reality of going to work with an awareness of negative restrictions placed on working in an office (s,334-339)

336office... hey, Monday lunchtime, do you wanna come go-
337karting or ?? boarding or whatever, they're gonna say...
338well, no, obviously I can't go, you know I work on a
339Monday lunchtime and I guess that's no different to them
340saying... hey, Thursday night we're all going out for a meal,
341are you coming... no, I can't... so.

Q: How does it actually feel if you're going away and you're missing out on something important?

Missing out on social events/family gatherings perceived as hard owed to difficulties of saying no to others (s,342-345)
Understanding from closed others seen to ease the process of going away when missing out at home (s,346-348)
Job perceived as flexible when one needs a specific day off with opportunity to swap and change trips with one's colleagues (s,349-355)

342A: Yeah... it's a bummer, it's not good, you know, it's not
343nice, it's never nice saying no to anybody to do anything and
344especially sort of family occasion or it's your best friend
345having a birthday party, for instance, anything like that, it's
346never nice to say no, but I think if they understand the job
347you do, then they're not really gonna give you too much
348grief about it and I think the job can be flexible as in... you
349know, if you need a certain day off, then I'll need some ways
350to getting my day off whereas if you worked a regular type
351job, if you wanted a Monday off, you'd have to request a
352leave date. We had the option of chopping and changing
353our flights, taking a shorter trip, swapping it for days off,
354swapping it for a different trip on another date... that sort of
355thing, so... yeah, there's flexibility.

Q: ... let's say that you had an engagement on a specific day and it was really important to you, you can try and swap with some of your colleagues?

Positive appraisal of company's effort to allow flexibility whereby workers are given options to adapt their work schedule according to individual needs wants (s,358-360)
Some colleagues seen to adopt the victim position with reluctance to make efforts to adjust work schedule to personal life (s,356-357)

356A: You could... yeah, and I've gotta say the company
357does... you know, people moan but I definitely think it does
358do its fair share of giving you options, you know, adapt your
359roster to what you wanna do, it's just having the... you
360know, it's just making the effort to actually do it.

Q: So it takes some ???? on your behalf to do it?

361A: Definitely... yeah, yeah.

Q: What about your personal relationships?

362A: Um... well... in what respect?

Q: Have you got a girlfriend?

Making efforts to swap and change work schedule used as a way of creating time to see girlfriend who works for same company (s,363-365)

363A: Yeah... and my current girlfriend she works at the same
364company and we chop and change our roster to suit each

Maintaining partnership with people outside of work perceived as difficult owed to incompatible work schedules (s,366-370)

364company and we chop and change our roster to suit each
365other and I think that's working well. In the past I have
366been out with other girls who don't do the job and I wouldn't
367say it's impossible but it does make things very difficult.

Q: When you say it made things difficult going out with someone that doesn't do the job…

Perception of non-flying partners as leading a different life to the self owed to lack of understanding the job, especially tiredness and jetlag (s,371-380)

368A: I mean if I… just say hypothetically if I landed on a
369Friday morning and, you know, a girlfriend who worked a
370regular job… when I say regular I mean 9 to 5 Monday to
371Friday… she's going out Friday night, she might not
372understand why I'm knackered on a Friday night, why I'm
373tired, why when I wake up at 6 after I've been asleep for
374three hours cause I got in at 3, the thought of downing half a
375bottle of vodka and partying the night away till 3 o'clock is
376the last thing I wanna do, the build-up of the entire week has
377been for that Friday night… nightmare… absolute
378nightmare. She only gets two days… you know, I mean
379this is all hypothetical… just say she gets her Saturday and
380her Sunday off, I go to work on a Friday night, get back on a
381Monday morning, you know, and I've felt in the past, you
382know, with ex-girlfriends that they're a little bit bitter
383towards you for being away for that time and you're like…

Experience of partner becoming bitter and resentful towards frequent separations thought to influence belief of intimate partnership with non-fliers as difficult and near impossible (s,381-390)

384well, that is the job I do, that is the time I have to work, I
385can't help it. Yeah… it can cut short relationships
386definitely but if people don't understand the job you do then
387that's only a good thing I think, if they don't understand,
388they don't give you the provisions that you need to do your
389job, if they don't understand then you're never gonna have a
390future with them so probably a good thing.

Q: Talked a little bit about bitterness, bitterness about you going away, how does it manifest itself?

391A: Can I talk about particular relationships?

Q: Yeah… you can.

Bitterness from non-flying partners thought to involve a sense of jealousy/insecurity towards the self's adventures when abroad compared to everyday living that comes with regular 9-5 work (s,392-403)

392A: Okay… cool. I went out with a nurse over 3 years ago
393now… well, we broke up over 3 years ago and just say I
394went away Monday to Thursday… this is hypothetical, I can
395remember this happening on several occasions. Just say I
396went away on a Monday, came back on a Thursday in the
397winter, I remember many conversations like this, I would
398say… hey, I've been skiing, I've been to the beach and
399played volleyball and not rubbing her face in it I would just

399played volleyball and not rubbing her face in it I would just
400be saying what I'd been doing, you know, and I would say...
Perception of regular work as predictable with partner's becoming increasingly bitter about their own lack of adventure in the UK (s,404-410)
401hey, what have you done and her Monday to Thursday or
402Tuesday to Friday... whatever, had been working and
403watching Eastenders and Coronation Street... that week had
404been no different to the week before, the week before that
405and it would be no different to the week that's coming up
406whereas... hey, I've just been to LA and going off to the
Inability to share story's of adventure with partner based on fear of bitterness and jealousy (s,411-414)
407Caribbean next week... every week is different. Going out
408with someone whose every week is exactly the same they are
409bitter towards you because they're staring out the window
410thinking... wish I could be out there enjoying myself but I'm
411not, I'm pen-pushing, you know, I'm gonna have my partner
412coming home and he's gonna be telling me about what a
413great time he's had in LA, I don't wanna hear that so they
414can be bitter towards you.

Q: ... bitterness is a little bit about being left in the country while the partner is going away.

Strong preference to stay at home, change career when settling down and having kids owed to wanting to be with kids/wife (s,415-420)
415A: Totally... totally. I mean I've always sort of maintained
416that when the time comes when I get married and I have kids
417which I wanna do, this job isn't gonna be for me because I
Thoughts of future career change influenced by strong feelings of responsibility to be available for kids (s,421-426)
418don't wanna leave, you know, someone who I love for sort
419of four days and I don't wanna leave my kids for four days. I
420don't wanna be away for four days, you know, and I could
421totally understand if they were... if I did do the job and I was
422away for that time, if they were bitter towards me, definitely.
4231 don't blame them, that's not a good authoritative figure,
424you know, to have in a family that's... you know, hey where
425are they, they're not here, they're away for four days...
426that's not good.

Q: You said a little bit about your current relationship... working out quite well with getting time off together.

Current partnership perceived as care free with no financial or other dependency ties leaving both partners with freedom to decide when to meet and how to spend quality time together (s,427-434)
427A: Yeah... yeah. Yeah... Sarah and I we are pretty(
428responsibility free zone)... what I mean to that is I currently
429live at home even though I am in the process of moving out
Opportunities to travel together seen as a positive component of both working for the airline (s,434)
430but Sarah, she's also at home, so we don't have any bills to
431pay really, we don't have any dependants, any kids or
432anything like that, we don't have a mortgage, we don't have
433any financial worries so we can do whatever we want on our
434days off which is fantastic, time to take a few flights
435together, you know, I think in my experience relationships
436disintegrate a little bit because of money, you know, because
Lack of financial worries or ties seen to
437they're arguing over hey, look we haven't got any money

facilitate a positive dynamic between self and partner (s,434-439)

Awareness of potential changing dynamics when self is buying a house owed to poor pay within the company (s,440-443)

437they're arguing over... hey, look we haven't got any money
438so we can't do x, y, z... we can't do the things we wanna do
439whereas at the moment Sarah and I we don't have money
440worries, we can do what we want, maybe that'll change
441when I get a house I don't know because this industry... the
442cabin crew is notoriously poorly paid... we'll see if that's an
443issue, I don't know, we shall see.

Q: Is that one thing that worries you?

Worries arising from lack of financial security due to low salaries (s,444)
Working on days off despite lack of time used to compensate for low salary (s,445-446)
Earning extra money seen to allow self freedom to choose to go for a meal or other activities (s,447-451)

444A: Definitely... yeah. I mean, I work on my days off
445religiously to try and earn a bit of extra money. I don't do
446that because I particularly want to, I do that because I don't
447wanna be (festering) around on my days off when nobody
448else has got days off doing nothing I always like to keep
449busy and I always wanna have money in my pocket so I can
450do the things, you know, if we wanna got for a meal we can
451do that... so.

Q: What do you do...

Devoting time for extra work in order to make more money thought to sometimes exert a negative effect on personal relationship (s,452-456)
Open communication about financial worries and the need to earn extra money seen to facilitate understanding from partner (s,457-459)

452A: Cause I used to sell cars before I flew, I have a good
453knowledge of that, good background of doing that so we
454utilise that skill and experience, work at a garage and I sell
455cars from home as well and that obviously can get in the way
456of our relationship but I always say to Sarah... it's either
457doing that or working in a pub or night club or restaurant or
458something where I'd have to be working a lot more for a lot
459less money.

Q: So that substituting your living... having an extra job?

Positive perception of lifestyle of flying seen to influence decision to work on days off as opposed to gaining financial rewards by working in an office (s,460-469)

460A: Yeah... yeah, because everybody I think in any job will
461say... I can go and earn more money doing something but I
462definitely think, you know, I could go out and earn more
463money if I wanted to doing another job but I would be
464dedicated to that job, working a lot more than what I do now
465but... yes, I would have a little bit more money but would I
466really want that extra money... not if it ruins my social roller
467coaster that I'm having at... you know, flying... which I do,
468I love it... so... yeah, the prospect of earning forty grand or I
469don't know what... I don't really want the money in that
470respect, I want a little bit of extra money in my pocket so I
471can go out for a nice meal or treat myself to a new DVD or
472something stupid like that, you know, and I think that small
473disposable income, you know, that additional increment does
474help in this job we do because the sort of basic wage is

Basic wage in company seen to facilitate survival of basic need with the intentions of extra work to allow self small luxuries (s,470-475)

Perception of own company as poor paid compared to other airline companies (s,476-477)
Decision to stay despite low salary based on other positive benefits such as only doing long haul flights, attractive destinations and the flexibility of being able to change and swap one's work schedule (s,478-479)

474help in this job we do because the sort of basic wage is
475enough to survive. I mean, obviously that differs from
476company to company, the company I work for is pretty
477poorly paid but you get the flip side of, you know, it's
478good... it's all long haul, you get good trips, there's
479flexibility within those trips as well... so.

Q: It's kind of like going around... the industry... pros and cons... some of them might pay better money, might have less flexibility like you said.

Current employer seen to expand business at fast rate allowing self to experience new destinations thought to give rise to feelings of excitement and work satisfaction (s,480-489)
Excitement of going to new places associated with learning about a new culture and being able to contribute during conversations with well traveled friends (s,490-498)

480A: Precisely... yeah. I like going to LA, you know, so
481they said you should work for this certain airline cause all
482they do is Heathrow LA, you know. I said... well, that'd
483be great and especially for the extra money but you don't
484wanna go to the Caribbean, I wanna go to the Far East, I
485wanna go to Delhi and I wanna go to... maybe not Nigeria,
486but there's definitely a lot of places that I like going and my
487current employer is expanding at a good rate thus they are
488going to new destinations all the time and I wouldn't lie to
489you, I get all excited when I'm going somewhere new, you
490know, but it's fun, you know, because I think... oh great I'm
491gonna see a totally new culture, you know, it's another tick
492of the box... yeah, another new place, another sort of stamp
493in the passport, another conversation that will come up and

Appreciation and gratefulness towards the company based on greater opportunity to travel compared to office workers (s,499-501)

494I'll be able to contribute to that conversation because I've
495been to that country, you know, a lot of my friends out of
496work are well travelled, you know, and it's nice to be able to
497have an opinion and have a bit of experience with all these
498amazing places that are around the world. If I worked for
499an insurance company with a headset on and doing insurance
500quotes I would never get to... so gotta be thankful for that
501along with a lot of other things.

Q: Like you said earlier on, one of your positive experience... a lot of different cultures, going to see all these destinations that you might not have been able to integrate so much with cause you keep on going to the same destinations, you keep on seeing the same places and therefore you learn a bit about the culture and...

Feelings of greater integration with other cultures based on experiences of deeper level discoveries behind the glossy surface of a specific country (s,502-506)

Interactions with locals as opposed to other tourists, holiday makers seen to

502A: I definitely think because you spend more time there...
503you know, this probably applies to America more than
504anywhere else, you just don't see the glossy sort of top
505coat... do you know what I mean, you get to see a bit behind
506the scenes... I don't know if that makes sense, you get to
507actually meet people who live there rather than just talking to

allow for proper experiences of a particular culture (s,507-514)

507actually meet people who live there rather than just talking to
508waiters and bar staff and shop workers, you actually get to
509speak to people who live there and work there and breathe
510those places... ok, admittedly you're probably meeting those
511people when you go out socialising but yeah... definitely,
512proper slice or taste of that place more than what you would
513if you were a holiday maker just going to restaurants and
514shops.

Distinction between long haul flying patterns and other shift work based on experience of erratic shift patterns on the ground (s,515-520)
Other shift work perceived as hard but nothing compared to the hardship of adjusting to the erratic shift work and forever changing time zones with flying (s,521)
Working as cabin crew perceived as psychologically demanding with having to constantly adjust to the two differing worlds of going away and being at home (s,522-526)

Q: Is there anything else you want to add?

515A: Um... well, I would... you know, I have worked in pubs,
516night clubs and hotels before I sold cars and they were very
517irregular erratic working times, you know, you might work
518till midnight... later than that, then you've gotta be in at 6
519o'clock again and I thought that was strange, I thought that
520was hard to get my head round but that's nothing compared
521to flying, you know, it's a real odd... you know, and
522sometimes I'm on the beach, I'm on Venice beach playing
523frisbee with a load of people, I think this absolutely ??, this
524is not a job, this is like a dream and I definitely think from a
525psychological point of view that is hard to cope with but
526totally fantastic as well. My six years of flying working
527for two companies, I would never ever ever look back and
528wish I'd done anything else and certainly if I fly for the next
529six years I can't see me regretting it... so. I would
530definitely, if a friend of mine said... hey, I'm thinking of
531joining an airline, I would definitely spend a good amount of
532time rationalising, telling them exactly how it is before they
533got into it cause it's not like saying... hey, I'm gonna sell
534mobile phones on the high street, it's very very different.
535It's a real compromise and a dedication and as much as
536people will not want to admit that, it is and it's from the...
537you know, it dictates who you don't... who you go out with,
538it dictates who you're friends with, it dictates how you
539socialise because of the money and the time off and all those
540sort of things... yeah, it's choice.

Positive experience of flying rooted in discovering amazing places thought to exert a positive outlook on one's career within the airline (s,527-534)

Working as cabin crew perceived as distinct from any other profession with greater need for dedication and compromise owed to lack of control over one's personal life (s,535-537)
Feelings of company dictating whom, when and how one socializes owed to company power over salary and allocation of time off at home (s,538-540)

Despite attempts to combat company control over one's personal life the airline is essentially seen to dictate part of one's life (s,541-542)

Q: It takes over your life... part of it?

541A: Definitely... and as much as people think they can
542combat that, ??????????

Q: Thank you so much for this interview.

543A: No problem at all.

END OF INTERVIEW.

Appendix 9

Appendix 9.1

Theme 1: Cabin crew dynamics
List of open codes followed by axial coding on the topic of cabin crew dynamics:

Please note that the **source** is an illustration only and a higher number of participants than actually indicated talked about the same topic.

Open codes	**Source**
Experiencing rapid bonding	**J1**: p6,157-160, **A3**: p4,112
Recruitment 'selection' perceived to facilitate rapid bonding	**M4**: p4, 129, AL8: p2, 27-28, **J1**: p5 151-152
The influence of managerial styles on bonding process	**AL8**: p2, 33-33, **K2**, p8, 197-200, 205-211,
The influence of personal characteristics on bonding process	**MI7**, p15, 407-411,
The impact of adverse job conditions on the bonding process	**MI7**: p5, 125-135, **A3**: p5, 150-152)
Managing work conflict	**MI7**: p4, 99-101, **A3**, p10, 326-331
Questioning the self	**A3**: p10, 320-323,
Accepting diverse personalities at work	**A3**:p10, 333-337
Experiencing relief when ending relationships with difficult crew	**AL8**; p2, 42-45, **MI7**: p3, 70-72
Developing trust in colleagues	**J1**: p6, 166-168, **S5**: p7,196-207)
Difficulties with getting to know one's colleagues beyond transient nature of brief encounters	**S5**; p7, 217, **M4**: p10, 274

Isolation/loneliness	**AL8**: p3, 78-80, S5: p1, 16-17. **M4**, p5, 178, **MI7**; p7, 198
Establishing meaningful crew relationships	**M4**; p4, 140-148, **A3**: p4 112-121, **J1**;p6, 156, 161, **SU6**: p5, 128-132)
The Good and the Bad crew	**M4**; p6, 154, **S5**: p6, 185-187, **SU6**: p6, 183-185
Atmosphere onboard believed to influence opportunities for socializing 'down route'	**AL8:** p2, 46-47. **M4**: p4, 159-153, **A3**; p2-57-59
Crew Therapist	**J1**:p6,162-165, **K2**; p4, 87, **A3**: p4,112-116
Going away with personal problems	**M4**: p5-6,188-193, p5, **A3**: p4,104-108
Level of crew support seen to shape degree of emotional difficulties	**A3**: p4,109-111, **M4**: p6, 155-160, 185-187, **K2**; p2 , 22-29, **SU6**; p4-5, 120-125
Crew composition	**K2**:p2-3, 52-60, S5: p7, 209-217, **A3**: p2, 43-48, **MI7**; p4, 106-113
Educational experiences	**S5**: p2, 46-56, **M4**: p4,125-128,

Emotional exhaustion	**K2**; p2, 41-50,
Re-inventing the self	**S5:** p6,177-184
Confused self-identity	**J1**: p5,133-137
Transient relationships	**J1**:P5, 139-140
Compensations	**A3**; P4, L113-115, J1; P5-6, L152-155
Entertaining the self	SU6: p5, 168-170, AL8;. P4, 86-88, MI7: p1, 14-15)
The independent crew	A3: p10-11, 338-346, A3: p10-11, 338-346,

Axial coding

Organisational bonding 1: Uncertainty

Process	**Open code category**	**Axial code**
Causal condition	Uncertainty	**Organizational bonding**
Intervening condition	Changing combinations of personalities	
Phenomenon	Crew composition	
Context	Relating to strangers	
Strategies 1	Positive communication	
Consequence 1a	Group formation	
Strategies 2	Professional attitudes	
Consequence 2	Positive work atmosphere	

Organisational bonding 2; Interrupted Bonding

Process	**Open code category**	**Axial code**
Causal condition	Interrupted bonding	**Organizational bonding**
Intervening condition	Tiredness, idiosyncratic ways of relating to strangers, personal problems, Managerial styles	
Phenomenon	Crew composition	
Context	Crew conflict	
Strategies 1	Personalizing	
Consequence 1	De-motivation, doubting the self	
Strategies 2	'bear it and grin it'	
Consequence 2a	Adapting to the reality of Crew compositions	
Consequence 2b	Distinction between good and bad crew	

Personal belonging

Process	Open code category	Axial code
Causal condition	Experiencing brief and short lasting relationships	**Personal belonging**
Intervening condition	The good and the bad crew	
Phenomenon	Isolation	
Context	Away from home	
Strategy 1	Attending activities with the group	
Consequence 1	Fellowship	
Strategy 2	Self-disclosure, compensatory strategy	
Consequence 1a	Close transient relationships	
Consequence 1b	Repetitive bonding; emotional tiredness	

Independent functioning

Process	Open code category	Axial code
Causal condition	Experiencing brief and short lasting relationships	**Independent functioning**
Intervening condition	The good and the bad crew	
Phenomenon	Isolation	
Context	Away from home	
Strategies 1	Independent activities	
Consequence 1a	Independence	
Consequence 1b	Decreased feelings of 'obligations' towards colleagues, increased autonomy	
Strategies 2	'Moping around'	
Consequence 2	Feeling bored, feeling lonely	

Experiencing personal difficulties 1; seeking support from colleagues

Process	Open code category	Axial code
Causal condition	Seeking support from colleagues	**Experiencing personal difficulties**
Intervening condition	The good and the bad crew	
Phenomenon	Isolation	
Context	Away from supportive facilities at home	
Strategies 1	Talking to colleagues about problem (Crew therapists)	
Consequence 1a	Feeling supported	
Consequence 1b	Obtaining a differing perspective of the particular problem	
Strategies 2	Socializing with group colleagues	
Consequence 2	Cognitive distractions	

Experiencing personal difficulties 2; lack of support from colleagues

Process	Open code category	Axial code
Causal condition	Lack of support from colleagues	**Experiencing personal difficulties**
Intervening condition	The good and the bad crew	
Phenomenon	Isolation	
Context	Away from supportive facilities at home	
Strategies 1	Independent activities	
Consequence 1	Self- healing	
Strategies 2	Ruminations	
Consequence 2	Feeling lonely, feeling depressed, feeling anxious	

Appendix 9.2

Theme 2: Difficulties with maintaining social relationships

List of open codes followed by tables of axial coding

Please note that the **source** is an illustration only and a higher number of participants than actually indicated talked about the same topic

Open codes; Difficulties with maintaining social relationships	**Source**
Work schedule seen to create difficulties with keeping a social circle	**MI7**: p7, 184-189
Juggling responsibilities	**SU6**; P11, L333-337, **A3**; P7, L225-229
Frequent absence from home	**MI7**, p5, 185, **A3**, p8, 278-279
Low control over work schedule	**MI7**, p5,186-189, **J1**: p6,171-174, **A3**; p8, 271-272
Learning to play the work system as a way of enhancing control over days off	**SU6**; p3,84-86,
Wanting more flexibility to choose days off to spend with friends	**MI7**,p5;190-192, **J1**: p9 257-262
Missing out on social events (Christmas, birthdays, New year etc)	**SU6**: p3,74-77, **M4**, p1, 32-34, 122-124, **A3**: p7,243-244,
Feeling disappointed	**K2**:p4, 94-97, **MI7**; p7, 203-204
Work Control	**A3**;P8, L271-273, **J1**; P2, L49-52, **S5**; P13, L420-421
Homesickness	**MI7**: P8, 224
Feeling depressed	**SU6**, p3, 101-102
Ruminating about what one is missing out on	**SU6**; p 4, 116-119

Accepting the reality of having to go to work during social occurrences at home	**AI8**: p5, 141, **M4**; p3, 121-124,
Educating friends about work	**SU6**; p9,261-262, **K2**; p8,216-220
Patience and understanding from friends/family	**K2**: p8, 214-215, **A3**; p5,c165-169
Pressure to take responsibility for initiating contact with friends	**AL8**; p6, 144-149, **M4**; p7,257-260, **A3**,p6,236-238
Loosing friendships	**S5**: p8 232-236, **SU6**, p12,360-362
Prioritizing	**K2**; p10, 257-260, **SU6**; p12, 354-349
Keeping in touch	**SU6;** p3,54-55, **A3**: p6, 182-185, **M4**: p7, 238-243
Difficulties with forming new relationships	**J1**:, p1, 36-47, **A3**; p6, 183-190
Irregular working hours seen to complicate crew's ability to commit to outside activities (evening classes, group meetings etc)	**A3**: p9,280-283, **M4**; p12, 468-472, **SU6**:p 11, 328-321
The impact of tiredness on opportunities to meet new people	**J1**: p9, 260-263
Low compatibility with regular 9-5 workers perceived to create difficulties for maintaining contact	**A3**, p7-8,245-248, **M4**; p7, 252-257
Long periods of incompatible work rosters with friends who flies perceived to complicate the act of 'keeping in touch'.	**SU6**,p12, 339-342, **A3**; p6,189-190
Planning ahead	**SU6**; p,11,320-

	323, **K2**: p4,111-112
Inability to commit to spontaneous arrangements by friends	**K2**: p4, 113-114, **SU6**; p13, 367-369
Being organized	**K3:** p4, 88-94, **Mi7**; p7,200-202
Sacrifice sleep to enhance time for socializing	**S5:** p4,103-109, **J1**: p9, 266-269,
Managing jet-lag at the expense of nurturing friendships	**S5**; p8,237-239,**SU6**; p7-8, 216-218
Decision making/prioritizing	**K2**; P10, L255-256, 258-259, **A3**; P6, L196-198

Axial coding
Low work control 1; lack of control over the work schedule

Process	**Open code category**	**Axial code**
Causal condition	Lack of control over work schedule	**Low work control**
Intervening condition	Individual needs, preferences, desires	
Phenomenon	Frustration	
Context	Work control	
Strategies 1	Going to work when wanting to be at home	
Consequence 1a	Disappointment, anger, frustration, low mood	
Consequence 1b	Feels controlled by work	
Strategies 2	Declares oneself sick to be at home	
Consequence 2a	Temporarily enhances control over one's personal life	
Consequence 2b	Feels guilty, worried about consequences	

Low work control 2; restrictions to crews' ability to maintain a social circle

Process	Open code category	Axial code
Causal condition	Restrictions to one's ability to maintain a social circle	
Intervening condition	Individual needs, social calendar, specific characteristics of social network	**Low work control**
Phenomenon	Atypical lifestyle	
Context	Combined frequent absence from home and irregular patterns of work	
Strategies 1	Learning to utilize the work system; planning ahead	
Consequence 1a	Gradual integration of specific work orientated skills and individual organizational strategies	
Consequence 1b	Increased abilities to attend social events	
Consequence 1c	Enhanced feelings of control	
Strategy 2	Lack of active efforts to utilize the work system; inability to plan ahead	
Consequence 2a	Increased risk of missing out on important social events	
Consequence 2b	Challenging firm friendships, loosing friends	

Combining social life with irregular patterns of work; missing out on social events

Process	Open code category	Axial code
Causal condition	Missing out on social events	**Combining social life with irregular patterns of work**
Intervening condition	Significance of event	
Phenomenon	Disappointments	
Context	Planned absence from home or interruptions to work schedule (delays)	
Strategies 1	Ruminating about what one is missing out on	
Consequence 1	Feeling guilty, feeling anxious	
Consequence 1b	Withdrawal from colleagues, feeling lonely, resenting work	
Strategy 2	Adapting to the situation (working through the initial disappointment)	
Consequence 2a	Positive thinking	
Consequence 2b	Feels better	

Nurturing social relationships 1; keeping in touch

Process	Open code category	Axial code
Causal condition	Keeping in touch	**Nurturing social relationships**
Intervening condition	Social network specific	
Phenomenon	Frequent absence from home	
Context	Communication	
Strategies 1	Educating friends on work schedule	
Consequence 1a	Gaining understanding	
Consequence 1b	Avoiding disappointment, avoiding misunderstandings	
Strategies 2	Making an effort	
Consequence 2a	Regular contact	
Consequence 2b	Feeling valued	

Nurturing social relationships 2; time pressure

Process	Open code category	Axial code
Causal condition	Time pressure	**Nurturing social relationships**
Intervening condition	Social circle specifics	
Phenomenon	Frequent absence from home	
Context	Lifestyle	
Strategies 1a	Recognizing time limits	
Strategies 1b	Decision making	
Consequence 1	Self-care v socializing	
Consequence 1	Feeling rested, feeling calm	
Strategies 2	Prioritizing some friends over others	
Consequence 1a	Hierarchical chain of friendships	
Consequence 1b	Loosing friendships	
Strategies 2	Stable relationships	

Building social relationships 1; Meeting new people

Process	Open code category	Axial code
Causal condition	Meeting new people	**Building social relationships**
Intervening condition	Individual level of motivation, Individual personality, nature of existing social circle	
Phenomenon	Irregular patterns of work	
Context	Forming social relationships	
Strategies 1	Attending social events when one is at home	
Consequence 1	The networking effect	
Strategies 2	Decision making	
Consequence 2a	Networking at the expense of tiredness	
Consequence 2b	Managing jetlag at the expense of gaining opportunities for networking	

Building social relationships 2: Developing new social relationships

Process	Open code category	Axial code
Causal condition	Developing new social relationships (establishing a bond)	
Intervening condition	Nature of the other people's work, social commitments	**Building social relationships**
Phenomenon	Irregular work patterns	
Context	Forming social relationships	
Strategies 1	Breaking down stereotypical view of the profession	
Consequence 1	Others become more sympathetic, understanding	
Strategies 2	Maintaining regular contact	
Consequence 2a	Firm basis for friendships	
Consequence 2b	Avoids risk of 'loosing touch'	

Appendix 9.3

Theme 3: Experiencing Personal Relationships

List of open codes followed by tables of axial coding

Please note that the **source** is an illustration only and a higher number of participants than actually indicated talked about the same topic.

Open codes	**Source**
The accelerating revolving door syndrome	**MI7**; P10, L267, 270-271,273, **J1;** P10, L307-311, **MI7**; P12, L341, **MI7**; P9, L265-266, S5; P10, L302-307, **M4**; P11, L419-421, **MI7**; P10, L272, **J1**; P11, L303-305
Dealing with stereotypes	**A3**; P6, L203-204, **A3**; P6, L205-206
Establishing a stable bond	**MI7**; P10, L267, 270-271,273
Knock on effects (partner's social calendar)	**AL8**; P8, L236, 239
Individual differences	MI7; P7, L195-197
Making time for partners	**A3**; P6, L198-199
Meeting partners	**A3**; P6, L201-202, **M4**; P8, L291-292
Partner's ability to deal with the cabin crew lifestyle	**J1**; P11, L332-340, **S5**; P10, 300-302
Feeling abandoned, rejected	**J1**; P11, L322-324, **J1**; P11, L329-331).
Difficulties with leaving partner	**K2**; P5, L138-139, P6, L156-

	157
Dealing with relationship discord	**M4**; P10, 376-378,
The passing ships phenomenon	**M4**; P9, L326-330, **MI7**; P9, L257-258
Going away after heated arguments	**J1**; P7, L202-205, **M4**; P10, 376-378
Compensations for frequent absence from home	**J1**; P12, L344-349
Gaining understanding/sympathy on topic of tiredness	**K2**; P7, L183-188
Selection of partners	**SU6**; P9, 253, **SU6**; P9, L269-271, **M4**, P8, L 277-278
Risk calculations	**A3;** P6, L195-196, **S5**; P10, L303-307.
Dealing with erratic alterations of self reliance and co-habiting	**AL8**; P7, 197-200, **J1**; P11, L325-327
Double loss	**SU6**; P8, **M4**; P11, L419 L247-249

Axial coding

Selection of partners; from a differing profession or within the profession

Process	Open Code	Axial Code
Causal condition	Selecting partners	Selection of partners
Intervening condition	Other person's profession and individual characteristics	
Phenomenon	Meeting new partners	
Context	Conflicting schedules	
Strategies 1	Compromise	
Consequence 1	Opportunity to select partner with a differing profession	
Strategy 2	Educating others on the true nature of the profession	
Consequence 2a	Reduced likelihood of stereotypical images, jealousy and other false illusions	
Strategy 3	Intimate involvement with work colleagues	
Consequence 3a	Passing ships	
Consequence 3b	Increased understanding about the profession from partner	
Strategy 4	Trying to organize corresponding work schedules	
Consequence 4	Reduced likelihood of weeks and moths before seeing each other	

Developing partnerships

Process	Open Code	Axial Code
Causal condition	Investing in a partnership	**Developing partnerships**
Intervening condition	Partner's profession, individual characteristics	
Phenomenon	Paradoxical choices in the wake of time limitations	
Context	Building foundations for partnerships	
Strategies 1	Devoting a majority of one's time to the partnership	
Consequence 1a	Opportunities for building a bond with partner	
Consequence 1b	Risk of ignoring one's social circle	
Strategy 2	The revolving door syndrome, speeding up the development of the relationship	
Consequence 2a	Greater opportunities for seeing partner	
Consequence 2b	Partner might feel overwhelmed by fast evolvement, partner might perceive crew as needy, dependant	
Strategy 3	Using experience of quick developments to review the true nature of the partnership	
Consequence 3a	Less inclined to invest more time in partnership	
Consequence 3b	More inclined to invest in partnership	
Strategy 4	Risk calculations	
Consequence 4a	Caution against 'double loss'/loneliness	
Consequence 4b	Reduced severity of grief, heartache, and depression	

Maintaining a partnership

Process	Open code	Axial Code
Causal condition	Erratic alterations between self reliance and co-habiting	**Maintaining a partnership**
Intervening condition	Specific combination of individual characteristics	
Phenomenon	Couple dynamics	
Context	Intimate living	
Strategy 1	Partner adjusting to frequent absence apart and crew's inability to plan ahead	
Consequence 1	Partner's own way of life suffering	
Strategy 2	Partner living according to own accords	
Consequence 2a	Reduced negative impacts on partner's way of life	
Consequence 2b	Less exclusive time together	
Consequence 2c	Greater risk of relationship fizzling out	
Strategy 3	Managing stop start to the relationship	
Consequence 3a	Learning to alternate between self-reliance and joint affiliations	
Consequence 3b	Difficulties with adjusting to alternations	
Strategy 4	Acts, thinks, and feels as if they are on their own	
Consequence 4	Troublesome re-union	
Strategy 5	Becomes bitter or resentful towards the frequent absence from home	
Consequence 5a	Partner feels rejected, abandoned	
Consequence 5b	Crew feels guilty, increasingly hard to go to work-de-motivation at work	
Strategy 6	Over-compensations (excessive gift buying)	
Consequence 6a	Minimizes partner's pain	
Consequence 6b	Rids crew of guilt derived from leaving partner	

Strategy 7	Going away after heated argument
Consequence 7a	Opportunity for both partners to calm down, and to use time apart to develop rational outlook on situation
Consequence 7b	Physical absence prevents crew from trying to patch up with partner
Strategy 8	Ruminations over troubles at home
Consequence 8a	Worried, feels anxious and isolated
Consequence 8b	Unable to sleep
Strategy 9	Confronts problem on immediate return after night flight
Consequence 9a	Impaired cognitive and emotional processing capacity creates high risk for exacerbated arguments
Strategy 10	Goes to bed before attempting to enter into conversation concerning emotional topic of discord
Consequence 10	Rational thinking, reduced risk of repeated arguments

Appendix 9.4

Theme 4: Dealing with Jetlag & Fatigue

List of open codes followed by tables of axial coding

Please note that the **source** is an illustration only and a higher number of participants than actually indicated talked about the same topic.

Open codes	**Source**
Triggers for jetlag and fatigue	**A3;** P4, L133-135, **M4**; P2, L65-67
Company actions towards jetlag and fatigue	**J1**; P4, L107, 111-113 '
Gaining adequate rest	**M4**; P11, L433-435
Coping with jetlag and fatigue	**AL8**; P5, L116-120, **J1**; P3, L62-63, 64-65, **MI7**; P6, L148-152 '
Diverse attitudes towards sleep medication	**SU6**; P7, L198-199, **S5**; P5, L152-153, 155-156
Accumulative sleep deprivation (walking around in permanent jetlag In vivo code)	**J1,** P4-5, L104-106, 121-123
Complex inter-linkage between psycho-social living and gaining adequate sleep	**K2**; P12, L313-315
Cognitive, emotional, motivational and biological symptoms of fatigue and sleep deprivation	**K2**; P7, L183-184, SU6; P8, L229-230, SU6; P9, L251
The influence of accumulative sleep derivation on self identity	**J1**;P4, L99-102 '
The wider impacts of changes in self on quality of relationships	**S5**; P5, L137-138, L140-142 '
Becoming nocturnal	**J1**; P3, L75-78

Axial coding

Process	Open codes	Axial code
Causal condition	Crossing different time zones and night flights	**Experiencing jetlag, fatigue, and accumulative sleep deprivation**
Intervening condition	Individual sleep hygiene, employer sensitivity towards sleep disruptions	
Phenomenon	Jetlag and fatigue	
Context	Gaining adequate rest	
Strategy 1	Remaining on UK time	
Consequence 1	Becomes nocturnal whilst away, does not see daylight	
Strategy 2	Adjusts to local time	
Consequence 2a	Greater opportunities for engaging in local facilities	
Consequence 2b	Increased risk of becoming nocturnal whilst at home	
Strategy 3	Going to bed when comes back from trip	
Consequence 3a	High risk of over-sleeping but if manages to get up seen to ameliorate level of tiredness	
Consequence 3b	'Loosing' valuable time with friends, partner, family	
Strategy 4	Engages in activities immediately on return	
Consequence 4a	Risk of the onset of sleep deprivation, might feel 'tired' for remaining days off	
Consequence 4b	Reduced risk of social problems, relationship discord	
Strategy 5	Repeated inadequate abilities to gain rest over a long period of time	
Consequence 5a	Gradual onset of accumulative sleep deprivation	
Consequence 5b	Difficulties to notice slow paced cognitive, emotional, and behavioural changes in self	

Consequence 5c	Temporal self doubt, confused self identity	

Appendix 9.5

Theme 5: Making personal life fit work

List of open codes followed by tables of axial coding

Please note that the **source** is an illustration only and a higher number of participants than actually indicated talked about the same topic.

Open codes	**Source**
Lack of opportunities for promotions	**AL8**; P6, L169-171, 174, 176-177
Discrepancy between initial anticipations of a short lived career and the actual duration of participants careers	**A3**; P1; L4-5
Sudden discovery of the profession versus long term focused choice of becoming crew	**K2**; P1; L 1-3
Adapting personal circumstances and the self to fit in with work requirements owed to strict nature of work requirements	**AL8**; P7, L208, **J1**; P10, L274-276, **MI7**; P13, L356-360, **J1**; P5, L127-131
Inspirations from the opportunity to travel the work and discover other cultures	**K2**; P1, L 4-6, **M4** P1, L27-28, 30
Shared transitions within careers or within personal living prior to joining the profession	**MI7**; P1, L1
'Stereotypical assumptions' of a party fuelled lifestyle prior to practical experiences of the profession	**S5**; P1, L10-13
The overall impacts of the lifestyle on personal living	**S5**; P13, L418-421
The circular coping process	**J1**; P10, L293-296
The dynamic relationships between the four themes and the higher order central theme	**J1**; P9; L266-269, **A3**; P9; L301-302, **S5**; P13, L 404-410

Axial codes

1. Making personal life fit work; Motivation to do the job

Process	Open code	Axial Code
Causal condition	Continuing the career as cabin crew	**Motivation to do the job**
Intervening condition	Initial anticipations, External motivators for joining the profession	
Phenomenon	Job Motivation	
Context	Inspirations to be cabin crew	
Strategy	Sudden discovery of the profession	
Consequence 1a	Limited knowledge of the actual realities of the profession	
Consequence 1b	Stereotypical expectations of a party fuelled lifestyle	
Consequence 1c	Initial anticipations of a short lived career	
Strategy 2	A Focused career choice	
Consequence 2a	Realistic expectations of the profession	
Consequence 2b	Anticipating a long term career	
Consequence 2c	Might be quickly when learning about the lack of opportunities for promotion	
Strategy 3	Accumulating experience of the profession	
Consequence 3a	Increased satisfactions from the privilege of discovering differing cultures	
Consequence 3b	Gradually de-motivated by lack of opportunities for promotion,	

2. Making personal life fit work; adapting personal living to fit in with work requirements

Process	Axial code	Core code
Causal condition	The adverse impacts of the profession on personal living	**Adapting personal living to fit in with work requirements**
Intervening condition	Individual coping repertoire, motivations to achieve work/life balance, individual circumstances	
Phenomenon	Making personal life fit work	
Context	Adapting to the job	
Strategy 1	Actively seeking to persistently adapt the self and personal circumstances to the job	
Consequence 1a	Increased likelihood of achieving work-life balance	
Consequence 1b	Gradually develops a flexible and fluid self with high resilience towards the adverse impacts of the job	
Strategy 2	Does not seek to adapt self and personal circumstances according to the job or does so on an inconsistent basis	
Consequence 2a	Reduced motivation to do the job	
Consequence 2b	Overwhelmed by the adverse impacts of the job, high risks of mental health problems	

3. Making personal life fit work; the circular coping process

Process	Axial code	Core code
Causal condition	The dynamic inter-dependency between the various aspects of the job and its impact on personal living	**The circular coping process**
Intervening condition	Individual coping repertoire, motivations to achieve work/life balance, individual circumstances	
Phenomenon	The coping process	
Context	Dealing with the simultaneous pressures of equally adverse influences on personal living- 'the catalyser effect'	
Strategy 1	Linear coping- dealing with each stressor one by one	
Consequence 1a	Dealing with one problem could create difficulties in a differing area if not dealt with simultaneously.	
Consequence 1b	Increased risk of cyclic occurrences of incompatible work-life balances	
Strategy 2	Circular coping- dealing with a high number of stressors simultaneously	
Consequence 2a	Avoids the risk of the overwhelming impacts associated with the knock on effect of problems in one area exerting a negative affect of a differing area	
Consequence 2b	Increased likelihood of work-life balances and therefore also a healthy psychological well-being	

4. Making personal life fit work; the dynamic nature of the cabin crew coping model

Process	Axial code	Core code
Causal condition	Changes in personal circumstances (or changes of the respective work requirements)	**The dynamic nature of cabin crew coping model**
Intervening condition	Individual coping repertoire, motivations to achieve work/life balance, individual circumstances	
Phenomenon	Monitoring the implementations of coping strategies	
Context	Flexibility and fluidity within the existing ways of making personal life fit work	
Strategy 1	Re-negotiating coping to make necessary amendments in the wake of transitional stages within personal living	
Consequence 1	Maintains an overall work-life balance; equilibrium	
Strategy 2	Resistant towards changes-unable to re-negotiate coping to fit in with transitional life stages	
Consequence 2	Work-life imbalances, unable to self regulate with increased risk of stress, relationship discord, and psychological dis-equilibrium	

Appendix 10

A simulated version of a monthly cabin crew work schedule
Work schedule for Janice Robertson;

Mo 01 May Report at 09.25 Local time
Trip length 4 days
09.55 KX 012 LHR- JFK (New York)
We 03 May 23.20 KX 013 JFK- LHR
Clear time 07.00 (Th 04 May) Local time London
----------Total duty hours 20.20----------

Watson	James
Smith	Sophie
Murphy	Clive
O'Neill	Jason
Robertson	**Janice**
Jones	Tom
Viera	Jorge
Svensson	Klara
Langford	Alexander
Bexter	Victoria
Lota	Vivian
Snowden	Lisa
Savi	Sara
Richards	Fernando
Masseili	Marco

Fr 05 May Day off
Sa 06 May Day off
Su 07 May Day off
Mo 08 May Report at 14.45 Local time
Trip length 7 days
15.15 KX 059 LHR- MAA (Madras)
Sa 13May 22.15 KX 058 MAA- LHR
Clear time 06.15 (Su 14 May) Local Time London
----------Total Duty Hours 23.20----------

Smith	Wilma
Wilkinson	Patricia
Viera	Luke
Jones	Ellie
Albertson	Hank
Robertson	**Janice**
Granger	Sara
Westwood	Vivian
Rose	Albert

	Patel	Nisha
	Erikson	Sofia
	Casey	Martin
	Oberto	Ravi
	Hannah	Sean
	Clark	Rose

Mo15 May Day Off
Tu 16 May Day Off
We17 May Report at 08.20 Local time London
Trip Length 3 Days
08.50 KX 038 LHR- MIA (Miami)
Th 18 May 22.10 KX 039 MIA- LHR
Clear time 11.15 (Fr 19 May) Local Time London

----------Total Duty Hours 21.15----------

Hood	Claire
Rose	Michelle
Alba	Gonzales
O'neill	Ellie
Smith	Michael
Hannah	Roger
Brindley	Max
Robertson	**Janice**
Snowden	Louise
Ross	Paris
Smith	*Jonathan*
Hayes	Patricia
Shue	Charlotte
Garden	Elvis

Sa 20 May Day off
Su 21 May Day off
Mo22 May Day off
Tu 23 May Report at 13.20 Local time London
Trip Length 5 Days
13.50 KX 043 LHR-LOS (Lagos)
23.20 KX 042 LOS- LHR
Clear time 05.50 (Sa 28 May) Local Time London

----------Total duty hours 18.10----------

Watson	James
Smith	Sophie
Murphy	Clive
O'Neill	Jason
Robertson	**Janice**
Jones	Tom
Viera	Jorge
Svensson	Klara
Langford	Alexander

Bexter Victoria
Lota Nita

Appendix 11

28.01.2007

Memo on stereotypical views/being stigmatised.

'Being stigmatised'
There are several levels of being stigmatised;

Society; How has the history of being a flight attendant shaped the current views of the profession? What are these views; in their accounts participants talk about lack of understanding from others **(relationships)** with misconceptions such as having fun all the time, permanent socializing and so on. They blame such misconceptions on lack of knowledge of the downsides of the job including jetlag, going away when one wants to be at home and so on. **Is the lack of knowledge owed to lack of research in the area?** Is the lack of knowledge owed to the power of the media in portraying a stereotypical view of the profession through the many recent fictional drama series (Mile High, 2003). An airline that runs out of Stanstead with cabin crew portrayed as hard core partygoers who are addicted to drug, sex and alcohol. Despite long alcohol infused nights they readily turn up for work the morning after bitching their way through the flight 'catching' up on last nights 'news' of who slept with whom and who drank the most.

Traditionally, the view of being cabin crew as a glamorous occupation for single beautiful women may have gone only to be replaced by horrifying publicity on episodes of drunkenness and party going→ labelling crew as an irresponsible group of individuals who do not take their profession or their lives serious enough to merit 'professional status'. I note an interesting TV series of a comedy called 'high life' (1994) a sitcom that depicted a cabin crew for air Scotia, an airline flying out of Glasgow International Airport. The crew consisted of an effete steward, his sex-obsessed colleague, a Hitler style chief stewardess and a semi-demented pilot. The programme, despite not setting out to portray the real nature of the cabin crew profession, communicated an image of crew as nothing but irresponsible, childish, and party going.

In a recent series from Japan, there was a total different image of cabin crew called 'attention please' (2006).... This series, unlike the British ones, depicted crew as responsible beings and the job as a serious profession with high criteria's for selection and a relatively long and difficult training process. What does this signal? Is there a cultural difference with regards to perception and views of airlines and its cabin crew?

Experience; What happens to crew's expectations once they start flying? Is the reality of the job far removed from their initial anticipations? Their initial anticipation of travel, of staying in the job for a short time, and their justifications of why they applied and why

they are still there suggests an underlying fear of being stigmatized. Is this the same as **being stigmatized?**

Who are stigmatizing whom? Does cabin crew come to internalize part of the stereotypical image of their work role over time? How does this occur; through repeated interaction with the crew and the job- a sort of group identity formation? Or have they experienced negative responses from others towards their profession (friends, family etc). **Internal;** How does the lack of mental stimulation, promotion, and the many automatic routines affect their work identity and sense of self? Do they start to draw links between the self and negative stereotypes (going away the entire time, non-serious etc). How do hierarchical organizational structures serve to reinforce negative assumptions about the profession (ie, chain of command, lack of promotion, responsibility, development). Participants do talk of this (MI7, M4, AL8, K3 etc).

29.01.2007

Kathy charmaz (2006). In her chapter on memo writing she illustrates a coding named being stigmatized. She explains how her participants talked about situations when they felt they were stigmatized but the concept stigma did not quite represent all that she saw and that she heard. The pain and the sorrow on their faces and in their voices cast deep shadows on their tales.

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Carina. In my research participants never talks directly about being stigmatized or stigma but their reference to 'stereotypes MI7', perceived perception of others as thinking the job is all 'party, sunbathing and socializing' (all), the lack of stimulation, boredom, the need to have an outside interest, justification of why they joined, justification of why they are still flying, indicates that they are **feeling devalued.**

Feeling devalued academically (lack of stimulation, boredom), **organizationally** (lack of promotion, lack of control over work schedule-**injustice**?), **how does this affect their sense of self worth? How does their sense of devaluation, discrimination change. Ie, do they take actions- if so which ones?**

How does being stigmatized change? How does high control versus low control compare? When control deteriorates the process holds profound implications for self and their identity. It stirs people's emotions; it affects their identity, redefines their situations and changes relationship.

25.02.07

Organizational based stereotyping; Mi7; I don't think it's for every airline, it's only on certain airlines because that's the market that they want, and they're going for a certain type of market… Virgin… they get loads of people coming in and use them because they're young and fresh and I think that's where he's quite clever… (company director),

employing these girls that look good and brilliant and one part of the interview state, is they put on the red uniform and put red lipstick on, if you don't look good... that's it, you're out but if he gets the people, he gets the passengers and they go for a lot of the businessmen, they'd rather be served by young fresh good-looking young girls, as opposed to... *(laugh)*... older... but they're sometimes mothers of babies, they'd prefer that because they feel more secure with an older female... looking after their children, for instance. I think it all depends who you want whereas we... I think (company) as a whole it's a lot bigger airline and company and they attract a bigger market as opposed to (comp 2), just going for a particular type... I mean, hence the word virgin.

Appendix 12

The researcher's recent publication

'How cabin crew deal with work stress'

Eriksen, C. (2006). How cabin crew deal with work stress. In R. Bor, and T. Hubbard. (Eds.). *Aviation mental health; psychological implications for air transportation.* pp. 209-227. Aldershot: Ashgate.