

**WOMEN RECRUITMENT IN AVIATION INDUSTRY A CASE STUDY OF EGYPT AIR****Hala Foad Tawfiq¹, Soha Mohamed Abdel Wahab², Nour Ayman Belal³****Article History: Received: 05.05.2023****Revised: 15.06.2023****Accepted: 18.06.2023****Abstract**

Human resources are the core stone for any successful business. Regarding the travel and tourism industry, the human element participates highly in the success of the tourist experience where it plays a significant role in delivering a quality job. Consequently, staffing is a significant factor in the recruitment process. Choosing and selecting right calibers lead to a highly performed organization or company. In spite of advancements achieved in gender equity in the aviation sector, yet women are still under presented as expected. The study aimed at diagnosing female employment in aviation and particularly in Egypt Air regarding the negative cultures impacts on them. Moreover, the study analyzed each and every phase of employment a female passes through, applying on the national carrier of Egypt. Moreover, Assessing the challenges and obstacles confronted by women working in aviation and Egypt Air has been gone through. To achieve this, the study used a descriptive-analytical approach identifying problems confronting women in the aviation industry. In addition, to carrying out a quantitative study in which a questionnaire was prepared and distributed to a random sample of 228 aviation professionals working in the industry and Egypt Air staff of diverse ages, educational levels, years of experience, and employment positions. The study presented many findings; the most important of these is that there are significant challenges confronting women in the aviation industry. Women are deprived from the top Managerial positions in Egypt Air and many considerations are to be taken in the process of recruitment, selection and development balancing the rate between both genders.

Keywords: Women Employment, Aviation industry, Female pilots, Maternity leave, equal opportunity.

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Tourism is the industry of People; where people are served by people and upon which they are either satisfied or not. It is the industry that depends merely on human factor. It cannot be imagined that tourists visiting a certain destination will not need help while their visitation either in the sites or in the accommodation or restaurants or even while they are transported. Human element is the base of the travel and tourism industry where they actually contribute to the success of the tourist experience. Tourists thus do not buy the tourism product separated from the skills, competencies and employees commitment. It is a complete cycle that cannot be separated from each other and the human factor has the biggest role in delivering a quality job. Tourists as human beings are very difficult to predict or to anticipate their behaviors. So, employees should be so cared about from the selection recruitment process and up to the end of the cycle. Usually people that search for a job in the aviation industry, the tourism and hospitality domain are looking and searching for a career in tourism for the possibility of travelling and visiting the world or the least; dealing with foreign people. This illusion unplanned desire contributes in the success or the failure of the industry.

Simultaneously, it is the point that addresses the Human Resources' skills development through education and training. Diverse jobs are related to the hospitality, tourism industry and aviation (Hammoud, 2023).

Moreover, to perform better services and have a competitive advantages over rivals, it is very important to pay consideration to the process of staffing. Staffing are to include both genders; males and females. This will help in better performance and success in the field where the organization works. As talented people with high competencies are the key for any success not the gender. An organization/company should believe that any and every employee is an addition; creates, enhances and improves the performance. Their outcomes will determine the rank of the company/organization among its competitors

Women in the past used to be deprived from their rights, suffering discrimination in many fields of life; education, property ownership, health, political rights and votes. Their role was confined to be just a house wife raising her children and following her husband's rules. This was widely spread globally and particularly in the Arab world. Women claimed their rights since the 19th century

and were finally successful in a feminist movement during the 20th century. The gender policies need to be adequately contextualized (Baum et al., 2016). Tourism employment is often the nexus of social and economic disadvantage for; women, youth, ethnic minorities and those with disability (McDowell, Batnitzky & Dyer, 2009).

However, the UNWTO (2019) reported that tourism is leading other global sectors in advancing gender equality. The report of the UNWTO stated that the majority of the workforce worldwide is female with a percentage of 54 against the other gender (Male) that had only 46%. Female employed in the tourism and aviation sector overpassed the percentage in the broader economy (only 39%). However, still they stay significantly underrepresented in aviation as expected. Creating a diverse aviation workforce is essential for enhanced safety, increased innovation, greater profitability and meeting the workforce demand of that industry (Lutte, 2019). Nowadays, air transportation is an essential component of tourism as the aviation industry provides 58.1 million jobs worldwide, and accounts for 3.4% of the global gross domestic product.

Yet, Gill (2018) stated that aviation employs around 10 million people worldwide among which women are represented by 20 per cent of those employed in air passenger transport. The range of largest aviation gender gap includes aviation executives (3%), airline pilots (5%), and maintenance technicians (2.6%).

A primary concern is the lack of significant change in the representation of women in aviation over time. Lutte (2021) added that the largest representation of females in the aviation industry world-wide is found in the cabin crew department. Many old beliefs have affected women selection. Females choosing to work in aviation think more than once. There is an old wrong perception of women that she cannot be a female pilot, female aircraft engineer or air traffic controller. This makes employment of women low in that industry (McCarthy et al., 2015). There are numerous factors that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in aviation including; negative workplace culture, challenging work/life/family balance, lack of women in leadership posts, need for leadership assurance and need for increased youth outreach (IAWA, 2021). Olney and Maybud (2019) illustrated that women face low selection, low retention, violence and harassments in the aviation employment process. He added that according to the Workforce Report from non-profit Women in Aviation International, women made up about one-third of the workforce in 1950 compared to 46.9% of the workforce in 2018. At the airport, 16.7% of FAA air traffic controllers are women and the figure is around the same for airport managers. In some areas of aviation, however, the representation

is even lower, especially female pilots at commercial airlines where the average is 5.18%. United Airlines has the highest share at 7%, but it falls to as much as 1% at Norwegian. Easy Jet falls between the two with around 5% and British Airways has a share of 5.9%. Female representation is even lower in the boardroom where only 3% of CEOs and COOs are women, and in the world's top 100 airline groups 8% are CFO. In spite of the fact that females compose almost half of the aviation human resources, still some areas are still suffering and underrepresented with women. Consequently, the industry is deprived from the females' skills and natural expertise (Mckay,2023).

Research Problem

There is still little empirical research explaining the reasons beyond the shortage of women recruitment in aviation sector in comparison with the other gender. Literally, leadership posts are clearly dominated by males. The knowledge gap between the two concepts still needs a lot of work. This research seeks to close this gap by conducting an empirical analysis of how aviation and in particular Egypt air the national carrier of Egypt; the case under study, is recruiting and staffing and how far women obtained their rights. If this is implemented, this will match the UN sustainable development goals; goal number five that aims to achieve gender equality and empower all females. This is a fundamental human right, important for peaceful and prosperous world.

Research Aim

The main aim of the research is to investigate the recruitment of females in aviation, applying on Egypt Air and the overall impact on the performance and the development of the airline. Some objectives were set in order to fulfill the research's main aim:

1. Studying the general and feminist critique of organization culture
2. Identifying the recruitment system in aviation.
3. Exploring the factors positively impacting EgyptAir's recruitment of Males over females
4. Assessing the challenges and obstacles confronted by women working in aviation and Egypt Air
5. Analyzing the importance of gender equality in recruiting women in EgyptAir
6. Suggestions and recommendations for women recruitment in the aviation industry and consequently in the national carrier of Egypt

Research Importance

This research is presented to measure and analyse the recruitment of females in aviation industry

illustrating the different percentage of men and women in many related departments. Furthermore, it presents a small-scale review of the literature on various topics concerning women. In addition, the approach of this study helps guide strategic and tactical decisions in the aviation industry, supporting gender equality in recruitment process in Egypt Air mitigating current challenges.

First: Review of Literature

1-Gender and Feminist Critiques of Organization Culture

Talking about gender directs the thoughts towards females. Males are considered as the genderless norm. Organization should put gender equality as main aim as employee's satisfaction. Distinguishing organization culture, gender equivalence helps to strengthen the role of women. Gender is linked with power. The pilot role is gendered as man gender. Moreover, aviation leadership in relation is gendered (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2003). Gender in organizations is defined as the concept related to binary image and character. Another definition related to gender is the collective relations between sexes. Moreover one more definition can define gender is the main way of signifying power. Gendered organizations means that the masculine values dominating the

organizations. Minnich (2005) stated that gender as sex in western culture is as masculine and feminine values.

Leadership is gender dominated. Davey and Davidson (2000) stated that a post structural feminist approach was adopted to investigate commercial aviation and the experiences of female pilots in large international airlines. Difficulties are faced by the female pilots are numerous. The commercial aviation continues to be led by masculine values and practices, which result in the earlier stages of women's careers being treated as 'a rite of passage'. The first women to join the airline experienced sexism, harassment, high visibility and isolation. Although the extent of the difficulties has weakened by the time, the experience of dealing with sexism and adapting to the masculine culture continues to influence the attitudes of female pilots, especially towards gender and equal opportunities. There were challenges about the impression created by the aviation literature regarding the degree of recognition of female pilots in commercial aviation and summarizes the recommendations made to management in relation to its equal opportunities policy.

CAREERS IN AVIATION





Second: Research Methodology

This research depends on quantitative method of collecting data to analyse the exact updated information of women working in aviation

This questionnaire questions are revolving around the representation and the percentage of women in Egypt air

Data collection

This research relied on a field study through an online survey distributed to a random sample of 228 aviation professionals working in the industry and Egypt Air staff of diverse ages, educational levels, years of experience, and employment positions. More than half of the respondents 53.4%

have more than 15 years of experience, 26% have experience in Egypt Air from 10 to 15 years and 8.2% from six to ten years. The rest estimated by 12.3% were new in the company having less years of experience from one year to six years. The survey was designed with an approach that is relevant to the study problem to reduce invalid replies with obligatory or required questions for form completion

To achieve that, this research used questionnaire instrument as a quantitative tool and a descriptive-analytical technique. The first part contains socio-demographic profile of aviation professionals working in the industry and the Egypt Air staff

(gender, age, educational level, years of experience, and classification of participants). The second part contained some variables representing the recruitment of women in the company and the challenges confronted

3.3. Data Validity

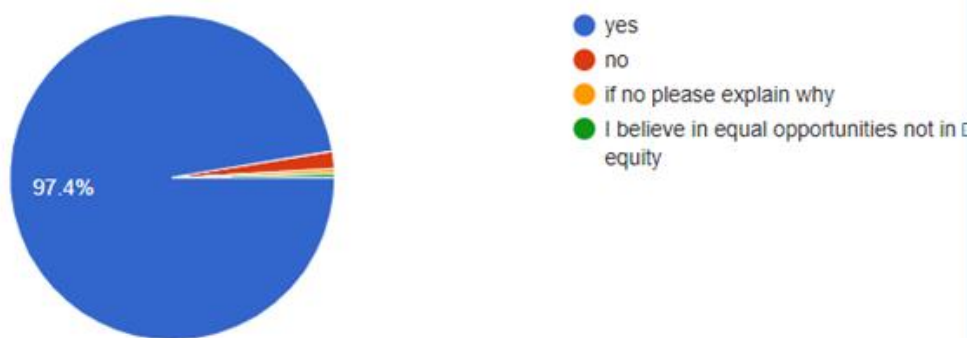
Questionnaire was distributed on aviation experts operating in the field as well as Egypt Air employees. To verify the data collection instrument utilized in this study in terms of readability, structure, and capability to assess the study's components. After receiving comments and recommendations from experts and

academics, the questionnaire instrument was revised and improved.

Results and Discussion

Belief in Women Empowerment

Depowerment of women is due to the belief and prevalence of patriarchy that subjugates women at different levels; economic, social and cultural and regards men as superiors to the other gender. By countering patriarchy women enjoy greater empowerment than before (Rawat and Basergekar, 2019).

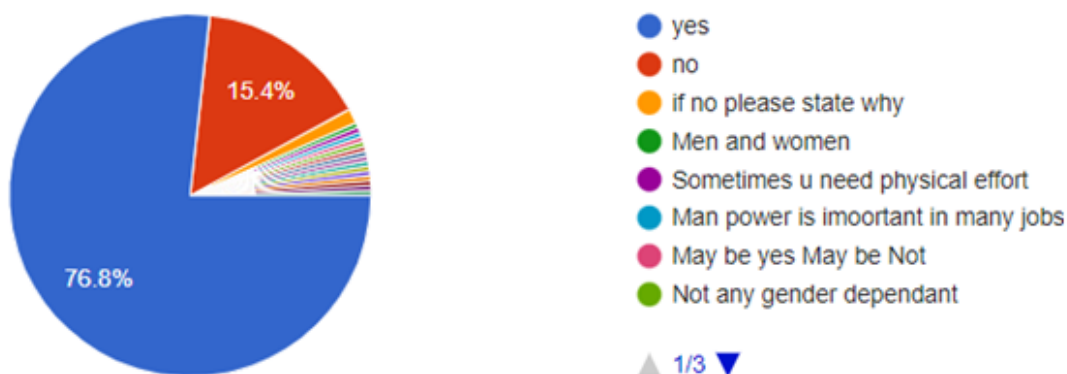


The respondents were asked about their belief of Eve empowerment where the majority (97, 4 %) answered positively and only a tiny percentage (1.8) were against the idea. (0.4%) believes in equal opportunities for both genders and not in equity. As equality simply refers to the equal treatment regardless of differences of genders, while equity recognizes the difference between people and circumstances reflected on different allocations (<https://www.marinhhs.org,2022>). The remainder percentage was neutral neither with nor without the concept.

Aviation as a Women Dependant Industry

There was a long legacy of gender bias. The World Economic Forum (2022) stated that gender parity will not be recognized before 99.5% years. Gender inequality is clear particularly in leadership posts.

In aviation, around half the percentage of CEO's is women (3%) if compared to Men (6.5%) (Guerrieri, 2020) regarding that women play a crucial role in aviation industry that should be well considered.



Most of the population sample (76.8%) approved that the industry of aviation is a highly dependent on women, while only (15.4%) consider aviation industry as male job. Others (1%) were neutral about both genders were not bias to neither males nor females and (0.4%) were neutral not sure whether it is a male's or female's dependant responding with (may be yes or may be not). The

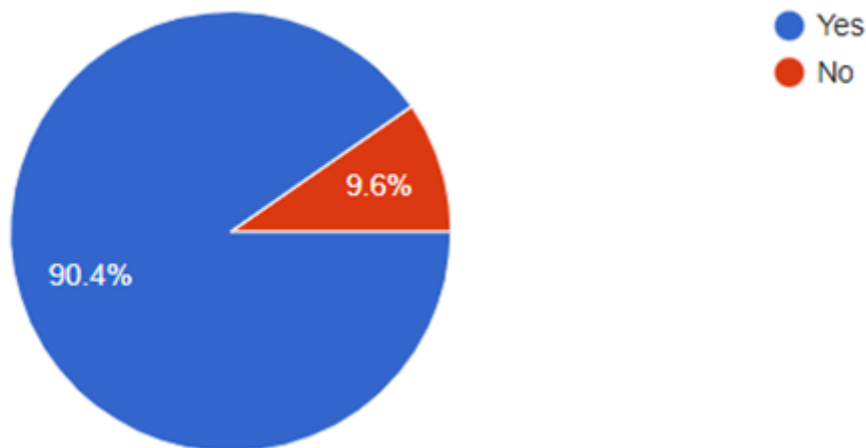
remainder percentage (6.4%) has different opinions; it sometimes needs physical effort in many jobs that could not be performed by women and man power is important for many jobs.

Aviation Magnetizes Women

The barriers holding women back from occupying male-dominated positions in the aviation industry

are hindrances and obstacles confronting the aviation industry's overall success. Many jobs in the aviation industry are perceived as men's jobs. This perception makes it harder for women to occupy

such positions, further perpetuating the idea that these jobs should be reserved for men (Graham, 2022).

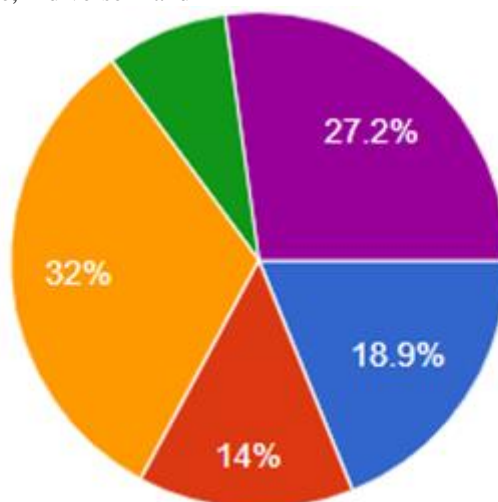


From the Figure above, the majority of respondents (90.4%) viewed the aviation industry as a magnet for women to be employed in. Most of them were attracted to work in that field that holds expectations of travel and enjoyment. This matches Ghosh (2022) who perceives the aviation industry as a low entry barrier and great pay benefits that predicts a great professional career and a sector for significant talent. The varieties of jobs also make it easy for women from various educational backgrounds to seek a suitable work environment. She added that the industry is considered a very promising one as a pool for talent and by encouraging females in there, diverse and

competency skills are then provided. Only a very small percentage of (9.6) had an opposite view.

Challenges Faced by Females in a Male Dominated Culture

Many Challenges are confronted by women on working in aviation; discrimination, sexual harassment, lack of gender support systems and finances are considered the major barriers (Wolfsteller, 2022). These challenges block the way in front of the advancement of the industry and are viewed as drawbacks to success, progress towards a healthy environment.



It is concluded from the above figure that (32%) of the population sample illustrated that the main challenges are sexual harassments and discrimination. (18.9%) viewed the field as a male gendered domain, while (14%) stated that aviation does not offer friendly training environment for

females and (27.2%) support different opinions. The remainder percentage (7.9) stated financial barriers to career entry are considered the main challenge a woman faces when entering the career of aviation.

Maternity Leave in Aviation

There are many provocations faced by a female during her working in the aviation field; work life balance, maternity leave and supporting her family. Among the most critical of all is the maternity leave a mother needs when her child is delivered. This leave was prohibited in the past and women who got pregnant were fired (asked to quit their jobs) or put on leave without being paid. Moreover, females who gave birth, if needed to retain their job, they had to go through the process from the beginning and apply without any guarantee to regain their jobs. Those discriminatory unfair rules are removed step by step and finally Singapore Airlines (the last airline in its region) announced the softening of its approach to flight attendants who fall pregnant. Globally, afterwards and through an aviation-industry labour shortage, most airline companies will no longer fire cabin crew after they give birth



More than half of the sample with a percentage of (55) regards the industry as a supportive one for females on the issue of maternity leave. While aviation has proven to be not very female friendly industry according to the remainder percentage (45%) where (32%) of the population sample, they were not agreeing and were completely against that. The remainder percentage (13%) clarified that there should be a relaxed flexible plan for females maternity leaves. Stating that the industry supports maternity leave with only very few months, others returned it to the company's regulations or the permanent presence required for jobs in aviation

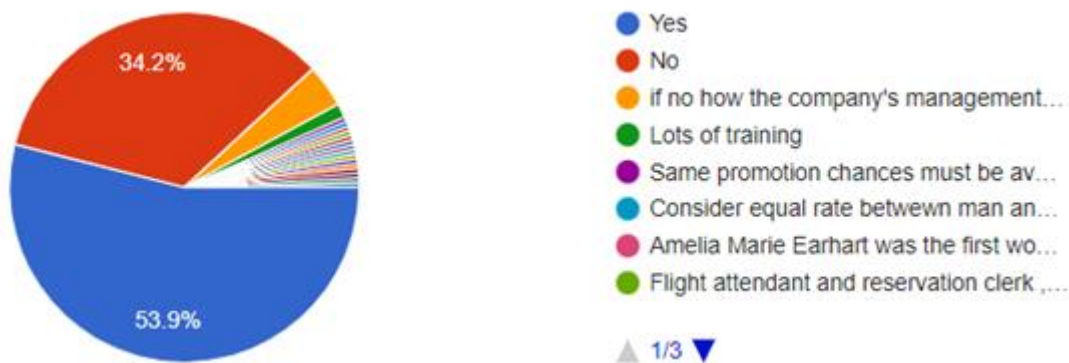
Development Opportunities for Women in Aviation

Young women are inspired to work in the aviation industry overwhelmed by the dynamic and rewarding careers this industry is promising. A

(Walters, 2022). In the Middle East Region Qatar Airways and Emirates Airline have defended their policies on pregnancy and marriage for cabin crew after the Qatar carrier came under fire over its working conditions. Particularly, Qatar Airways forbids its cabin flight attendants from marriage in their first five years of service and this is clearly stated in their contracts claiming that they have to accomplish their job perfectly as been promised when applying for the job and committing to the company's rules and regulations. They advocated that they cannot offer them ground jobs as an alternative when they are prohibited to fly (<https://www.arabnews.com/news>, 2023). In 2015, Qatar Airways also managed to get rid and let go of a policy that dismisses cabin crew members if they are pregnant within five years of employment (Walters, 2022).

woman that pursue a career in aviation is always looking for diving into an exciting world and a financial promising career. There are various careers offered in the industry; airport operations, engineering and maintenance, pilot, corporate and commercial, defence, information and technology, safety and security and finally airlines (<https://womeninaviationcareers.com.au/2023>)

Women are encouraged to join and participate in online training to develop their competencies and skills. ICAO (2021) illustrated that by skilling and reskilling women, thus facilitating the empowerment of women. This is clear in what they offer women of 50% discount on their well known ICAO courses. Courses offered are in different fields of aviation; digital transformation, safety management, 5 courses in performance based navigation and public health.

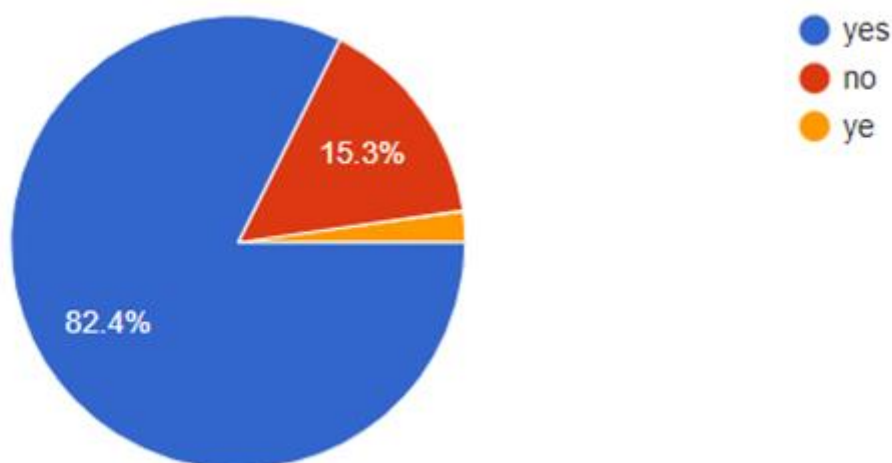


It is obvious from the above figure that positive responses regarding limited career development possibilities for women were surprisingly (53.9%), while the remainder percentage (46.1%) refused the statement, among which (34.2%) don't consider women to have limited career development opportunities. The remainder percentage (11.9%) stated that women are offered same promotional chances and equal rate between genders when positions are selected depending on qualifications without gender discrimination. They added that multi training courses are offered to employees in an equal rate regarding both genders.

Problems of Women Selection and Retention in Aviation

Selection is choosing the right person who matches the right job for successful performance, the preparation of the shortlist of suitable candidates for subsequent selection phase upon the criteria based on person specification. Ensuring a company's future capability, this is expressed in strong effective policy for retention of valued

elements. Turnover is not a simple process; on the contrary it has a financial load on behalf of the company. This financial cost is expressed in two sides. On one hand, cost of new recruitments with all its needed procedures, and on the other hand, cost of losing a resource invested in the departed employee. Besides, losing and dismissing or firing an employee weakens the credibility of the company among its present employees, as well as among the potential recruits. It indicates a problem prevailing in the company as job dissatisfaction. Moreover, a less experienced labour replaces a better one and this mirrors by its turn on the overall performance. However, some opinions regard labour turnover as a good sign that welcomes fresh blood to a place, assuming new employees have more initiative innovative potentials and better knowledge instead of those turned over who proved to have nothing new with poor performance and proved to be ill suited for the job (Hammoud,2023;Wilton,2011).



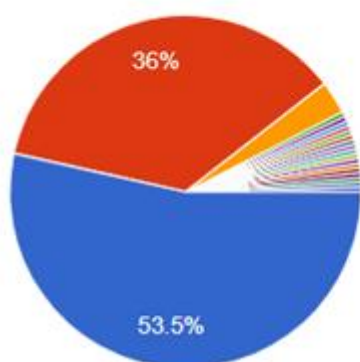
The results illustrated in the above figure stated that there is major problems in the selection process of women and also in their retention.

Seligson (2019) illustrated that advancement of women in the world of work is slow in civil aviation, where gender gaps and gender inequality are clearly noticeable in a range of occupation

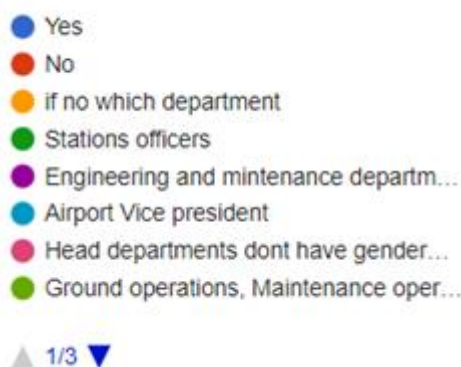
This was approved by (82.4%), while a small percentage (15.3%) considered no problems in the process of neither selection nor retention and all process are smoothly carried out with equal rates among genders. Some respondents (2.3%) were not sure and selected the answer "May be". Walters(2011) recorded that despite legislations and employees claim of equal rights to settle workforce diversity, employers and companies still have labour market inequality whether in selection or retention processes.

Gender Equity in Egypt Air’s Departments

General Equality refers to equal distribution and access to resources among both sexes. Equal



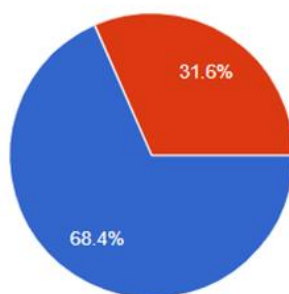
opportunities have to be offered regarding decision making . Gender Equity is also referred to as Sexual Equality. Gender Equity focuses on gender inequalities that result in discrimination between genders in opportunities of life and work based on their gender. Consequently gender equity respects and views all people the same way without discrimination with two main principles; fairness and impartiality (<https://unnitedwaynca.org>,2023; Martinez,2022). Thus, it can be said that gender equity is the path to gender equality(<https://16daysactivism.genwest.org.au>,2023).



Almost half of the respondents (53.5%) agreed that there is gender equity among Egypt Air's departments, the remainder percentage were not supporting the statement, on the contrary they regard that there is no equity among the departments of which (36%) mentioned some departments like in the stations officers, engineering, ground and maintenance department, no equity can be viewed. The remainder percentage added that cabin crew department has the highest percentage of females while the female flight engineers and female pilots are the least. In addition, the head departments have no equity.

Many occupations are usually regarded as a male dominated job. Moreover, some positions women are deprived from escalating to. Pilots, as an occupation is dominated by males with a percentage of 91% of all pilots. Despite this poor representation, there is a noticeable increase in demand for a pilot job among females (Graham, 2022). Velani (2023) announced that Air India has around 200 female pilots, making up over 40% of their workforce and 15% of their cockpit crew Nowadays, there is a recognizable development but still males are way more than females in this job all over the world. Recent efforts are done by Egypt Air and progress in the number of female pilots are achieved.

Pilot Occupation in Egypt Air as a Male Dominated Job



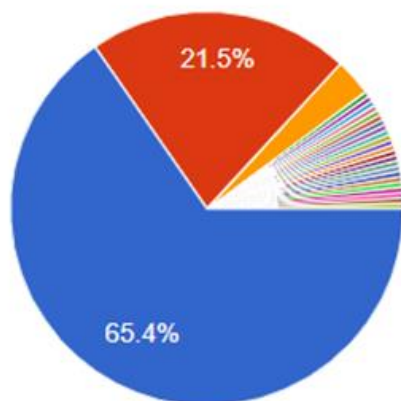
It has been proved that female pilots domain is male dominated through ages, the majority of respondents (68.4%) approved that a pilot job is a male's career. Only (31.6%) disagreed stating that females also have equal opportunities.

Challenges Faced by Female Pilots

For decades, number of female pilots is low in aviation. This is due to the challenges faced by

females who need to fly as pilots. Germain, Herzog and Hamilton (2012) summarized the challenges as:

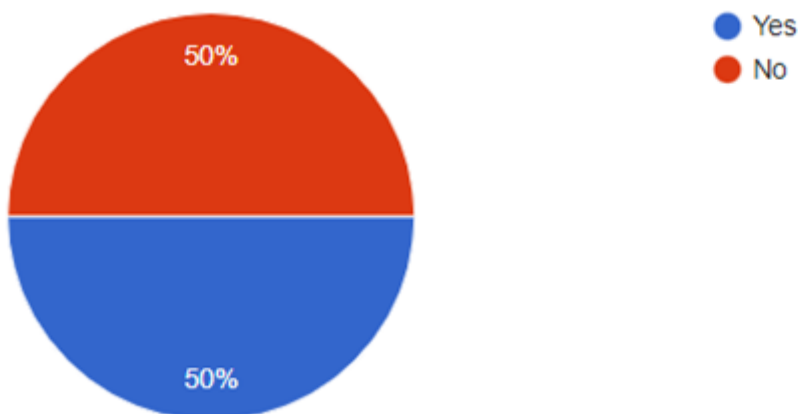
- a- Lack of acceptance and self-efficacy
- b- Lack of the organization's social support
- c- Lack of family's support
- d- Stereotyping during flight training



The majority of the sample (78.5 %) approved that female pilots face many challenges while the remaining percentage disagree with the statement. Among which (21.5%) found that there are no challenges at all confronting women and that the females have all their rights. Some respondents who believe that women confronts challenges (13.1) has different opinions of which; the psychological hardness in the Egyptian culture of males not to get orders from women, the severe and

difficult nature of the job for women to be pilots with the responsibilities of their families and children left behind their backs . They also stated that a pilot job requires accuracy, considering every detail which makes the job so difficult. Furthermore, because this profession has usually been for males, and when women make inroads into this male dominated industry, females may be confronted with unfair comments and doubt about their expertise and preciseness.

Females in the Management level in Egypt Air



This question's answer came very confusing where the sample was divided into equal percentage between supporters and arguers to the statement.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Equality is not only a principal; it is a mind-set guaranteeing a human right. It is said to be linked to sustainable development where women and men stand on the same level enjoying similar

opportunities in all spheres of life. Most respondents believed that women are already empowered in the aviation industry stating that this industry is highly woman dependent because it is a very attractive domain for that gender. Furthermore, there are multi challenges a woman faces in aviation among which; harassments, discrimination and job hardeners confronted by

women in a male job domain. Concerning maternity leaves; Egypt Air is mostly regarded as a supportive company stated by almost half of the respondents.

However, half of the population of the study illustrated that there is a limited career development in the company regarding training courses and equal rate of promotion among both genders. Mostly, the selection and retention processes are noticeably having problems regarding fair gender chances. Accordingly pilot occupation is considered a male dominated job due to the hard nature of the job and the doubt in women pilots. Females are selected equally in Egypt Air's managerial levels up till the top management and discrimination prevails.

It is recommended that Egypt Air should re consider the criteria of the recruitment and selection processes avoiding gender preferences. Top managerial levels should be regarded as an incentive for high performance and efficiency for an employee disregarding whether he is a male or a female. The company has to exert more effort to wipe the challenges a female faces in the aviation industry. Regarding the training and development environment, Egypt Air should design advanced training programs delivered for both the genders.

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