



## A STUDY ON AVIATION HIJACKING AS AN OVERVIEW

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Prabodh Ballurkar

MBA AVIATION MANAGEMENT

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Catherine Julie Aarthy C

Assistant Professor

HINDUSTAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE

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### Abstract

Aviation Hijacking is a grave threat faced across the globe and applies to every individual's life planning to travel, no matter which region they belong to. Hence, it is very important to thoroughly attend to this issue. A total of 12 articles were considered and 5 reviewed regarding aviation hijacking which suggests two main reasons for hijacking which include Personal and Political. Among them, the politically motivated outperforms in terms of damage and trauma it creates compared to the Personal motive which is usually smaller in scale is also localized, and does not point towards further repetitions. Over the years, Aviation Industry and Law Enforcement agencies across the globe have increased security systems by introducing advanced technologies in the screening process of both Luggage and Passengers, Cargo, and their staff to avoid and minimize the chances of hijacking. The results of the study indicate that the present process of screening passengers, luggage, cargo, and staff still has further scope for improvement through the use of AI-incorporated technology to identify threat perception and attend to it at initial levels, much before the devastating act.

**Keywords: Hijacking, Terrorism, Civil Aviation, Security, Political.**

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### Introduction

Hijacking or Skyjacking is the forceful, illegal, or unlawful means of taking control of an aircraft in return for a demand (U.S Code 46502 – Aircraft Piracy). The first documented aircraft hijacking was reported in Peru, Lima in the year 1931 This was done by Armed Revolutionaries on the ground while the Pilot was yet to board the aircraft. The intention was an organizational cause and there were no casualties (Gary N. Horlick., 1973). The next reported hijacking was on Macau to Hong Kong flight in the year 1948 which had a disturbing end when the aircraft crashed in the Pacific Ocean and all the 25 people onboard died (Simple Flying., 2022). In the early days of aviation, hijacking started with the sole intention of political causes by a group of people or an organization. Hijacking can be classified into two types – On the ground and In-Air. On the ground, hijacking is done before the aircraft takes off and goes airborne. In-Air or Mid-Air hijacking means when the flight is forcefully taken into control while it is taken off and is airborne. The basic causes of hijacking are political or organizational demands or personal gain or demand.

### Review of Literature

Analysis of various instances of Aviation Hijacking on a global scale over some time on these basic categories of activities such as

- Aircraft Hijacking for the release of connected Members either Arrested or Jailed
- Aircraft Hijacking for a political movement or demand
- Aircraft Hijacking for Ransomware
- Aircraft Hijacking for terrorizing (Jangir Arasly., 2005)

**Elaboration of objectives of different categories:**

- **Hijacking for Release of Members:** The primary objective in this type is the passengers onboard who are taken as hostages for the demand of the law department to release hijacking members in custody. The other goal of this hijacking is to free any convicts in prison in a given country for a crime committed either in the country or in a foreign land.

In the case of the Indian Airlines IC-814 hijacking, the hijackers onboard the aircraft which was flying from Kathmandu to Delhi hijacked the aircraft when it was in Indian Airspace and diverted the flight to Amritsar, then to Lahore with a third stopover at Dubai before finally landing at Khandahar. The investigators found the motive of hijacking was to get the Islamist terror outfits members released from Prison in India and, when the Indian Government agreed to release, the hijacking episode was concluded. (India Today., 2023)

- **Hijacking for Political Movement or Demand:** This form of hijacking is also used to sow political discord in a particular country. This sort of hijacking is quite effective in meeting the hijackers' demands. The usual targets will be highly valued VIPs or other political leaders who are accountable for the country's current plight. There have been numerous cases of this form of hijacking. If not handled properly, this hijacking might cause major upheaval in the country and around the world.

An International Flight of Pakistan International Airlines flight PK-326 was hijacked by three armed men while on its way to Peshawar from Karachi. Their demand was to get released 92 so called "Political detainees" from the jail in Pakistan. In this episode, a Pakistani ambassador was brutally shot dead when the Pakistani Government refused their demands. Also, his body was thrown on the tarmac, while all the other passengers awfully watched. (DAWN., 2021)

- **Hijacking for Ransomware:** There have been relatively few cases of this type of hijacking throughout the world. The hijacking attempt is generally carried out by a small number of individuals and usually fails. This form of hijacking is done for the benefit of one or more persons.

Flight Number 305 of Northwest Orient Airlines was kidnapped by D.B Cooper while on its way from Portland to Seattle. He demanded an amount of \$200,000 as ransom. He then jumped from the aircraft with a parachute. His real identity was never traceable. He had shown something to the flight attendant claiming to be a bomb. No

one was harmed in this case. The kidnapper after freeing the passengers, demanded a parachute to jump out of the aircraft in heavy rain. (Tom Streissguth., 2019)

- **Hijacking for Terrorism:** This appears to be the most lethal sort of hijacking. The main purpose of this sort of hijacking is to scare the authorities of a certain nation or country and publicize the terrorist or extremist group in exchange for achieving a bigger aim. This kind of hijacking has the greatest impact on aircraft and human lives. Besides this a new means of hijacking was adopted which used aircraft as a weapon of destruction by colliding it into commercial buildings in a highly populated area of a city/town.

The morning of September 11 shocked the entire World including the Aviation Industry. Two of the most popular Airlines in the United States of America were hijacked. Among them were United Airlines flight 175, American Airlines flight 11, American flight 77 and United Airlines flight 93. All were hijacked simultaneously and were used as suicide attacks. Two of them struck the World Trade Centre buildings which brought the skyscrapers trembling down to ground level. One flight struck the South Block of the famous Pentagon partially damaging the building and the last flight was fought back by the passengers which crashed in the field of Pennsylvania. All in All, 2,996 people died which included the 19 hijackers. More than 6,000 were injured, many of them critical. (Hannah Hartig, Carroll Doherty., 2021)

#### **Research Methodology**

The following findings were reached after a thorough examination of several papers relating to aviation hijacking. The research is entirely based on secondary data. The following are the study's findings:

S.No	Year	Place of Hijacking	Type of Hijacking
1	August 1, 1990	Kuwait	Political
2	August 19, 1990	USSR	Release of Members
3	October 2, 1990	China	Political
4	March 26, 1991	Singapore	Political
5	November 9, 1991	Turkey	Terrorism
6	January 22, 1993	India	Release of Members
7	February 11, 1993	USA	Political
8	March 27, 1993	India	Political
9	April 10, 1993	India	Personal
10	April 24, 1993	India	Terrorism
11	September 15, 1993	Norway	Political
12	October 25, 1993	Germany	Political
13	April 7, 1994	USA	Personal
14	December 24, 1994	France	Political
15	August 3, 1995	Afghanistan	Political
16	September 20, 1995	Iran	Political
17	September 3, 1996	Norway	Political
18	November 23, 1996	Comoros Island	Political
19	June 9, 1997	Germany	Release of Members
20	May 25, 1998	Pakistan	Political
21	April 12, 1999	Colombia	Political
22	July 23, 1999	Japan	Personal
23	December 24, 1999	Afghanistan	Release of Members
24	February 6, 2000	England	Political
25	May 25, 2000	Philippine	Personal
26	August 18, 2000	Brazil	Ransomware
27	October 14, 2000	Iraq	Personal
28	November 11, 2000	Saudi Arabia	Personal
29	September 11, 2001	USA	Terrorism
30	May 29, 2003	Australia	Personal
31	October 3, 2006	Italy	Political
32	January 24, 2007	Chad	Political
33	February 15, 2007	Spain	Personal
34	August 18, 2007	Turkey	Terrorism
35	February 8, 2008	New Zealand	Personal
36	August 26, 2008	Libya	Political
37	April 19, 2009	Jamaica	Personal
38	September 9, 2009	Mexico	Personal
39	January 5, 2011	Turkey	Personal
40	April 24, 2011	Italy	Personal
41	June 29, 2012	China	Terrorism
42	February 7, 2014	Turkey	Personal
43	February 17, 2014	Switzerland	Personal
44	March 29, 2016	Cyprus	Personal
45	December 23, 2016	Malta	Personal
46	April 15, 2018	China	Personal
47	February 24, 2019	Bangladesh	Terrorism
48	May 23, 2021	Belarus	Political
49	July 7, 2021	USA	Personal

Fig 1.0 Showing the Type of Hijacking, Year of Hijacking, Place of Hijacking

Figure 1.0 table provides practical insights into the kind and motivation of aircraft hijacking from 1990 to the present. The main observations here are the decrease in terrorism as a result of stricter legislation, the decrease in member release, and the decrease in Ransomware hijacking motivations.

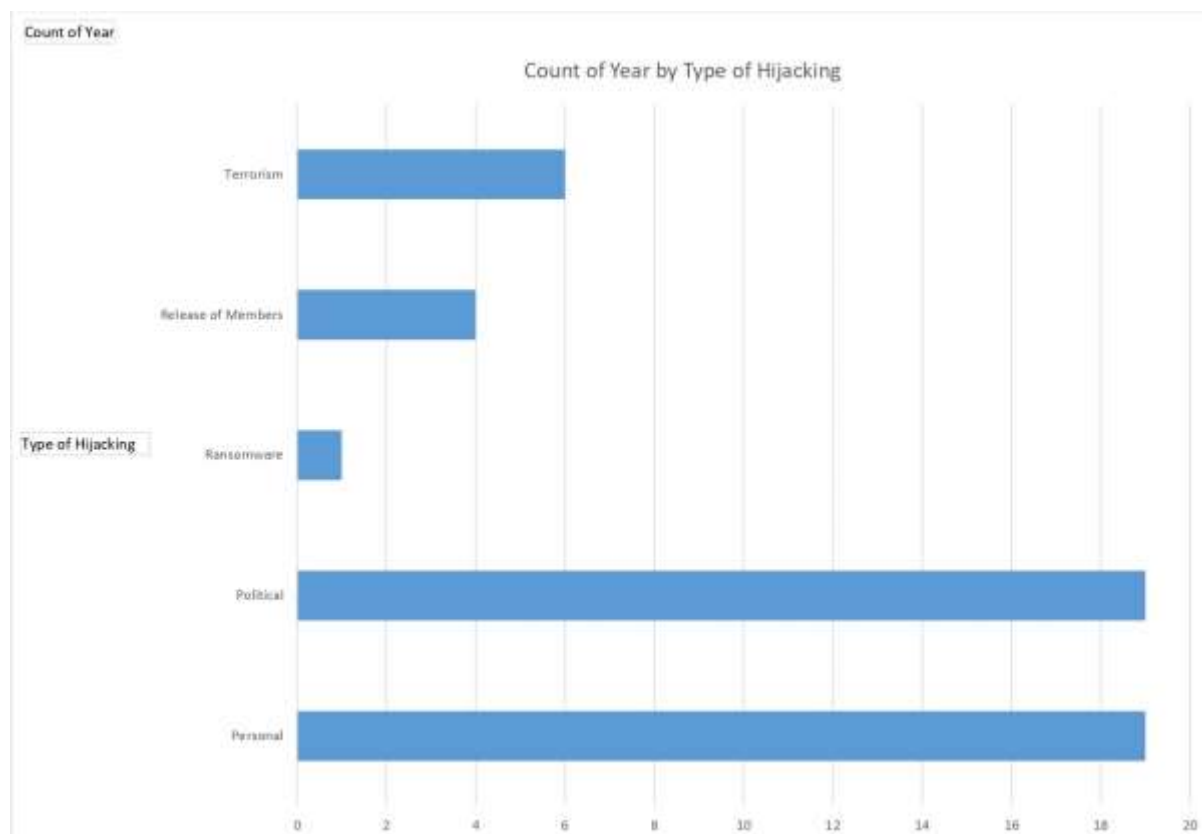


Fig 1.1 Graph showing the Count of Year by Type of Hijacking

Figure 1.1 depicts the motives and incidents of aircraft hijacking. This graph emphasizes the two most significant motives: political and personal, and it provides a clear visual picture of the crucial kinds to be focused on.

Unfortunately, An airplane hijacking is motivated mostly by political and personal motivations.

- a) **Political Hijacking:** Disruption in the state administration and the expansion of rebel organizations contribute to this hijacking motive. Constant observation and monitoring of those groups' actions and movements may have a significant impact on their control.

**Personal:** Hijacking just for personal advantage might be connected with severe psychiatric disorders. Proper screening of passengers, crew, and staff may considerably reduce the hazards associated with this

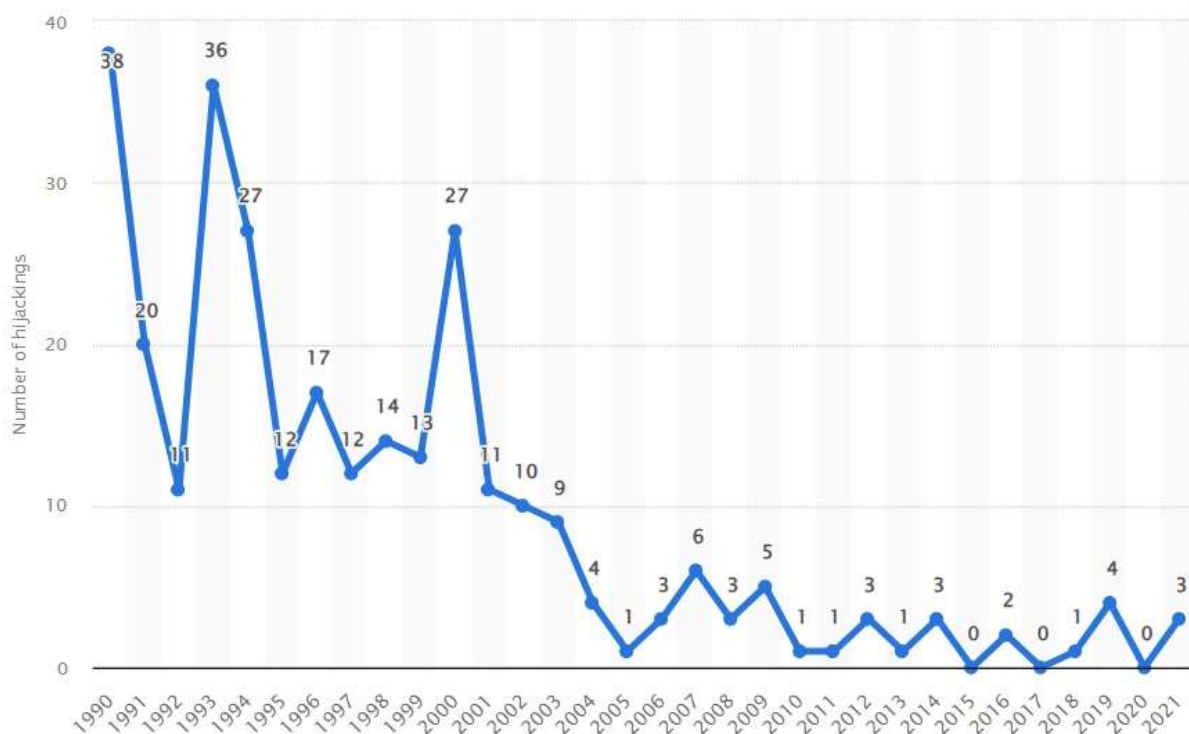


Fig 2.0 Graph showing the Number of Hijacking per year from 1990 till 2021

Figure 2.0 demonstrates an immediate decrease in aircraft hijackings since 1990. Though the incidence of hijackings has decreased dramatically, it remains a major worry since public life, public infrastructure, and immense financial value are in danger, in addition to personal anguish from the act, which is irreversible.

### Conclusion

Aircraft hijacking is the most frightening part of the global aviation sector. It needs serious consideration because it directly entails a threat to human life, as well as infrastructure harm and massive monetary loss. After analysing airplane hijacking statistics from many respectable and reliable sources throughout the world (as indicated in the table and graphs), we think that the two most frequent motivations of hijacking - political and personal - should be investigated further. It is necessary to create new and improved methods for detecting and preventing them. Though this is a severe worry for every nation and state throughout the world, and there are now adequate methods of screening and preventing it, there is still room for improvement. As practically everyone is present on digital platforms and communicates online, there is still enormous space for creating solutions to digitally screen passengers, cargo, and workers, as well as their connections and relationships. Aside from security professionals, all other crew members should be thoroughly trained to maintain a tight eye on the personnel and infrastructure environments and notify appropriate authorities if anything unusual is discovered. There may also be tools and equipment to deal with any unforeseen

circumstance that arises Mid-Flight to neutralize the hijackers, but only with utmost caution because everyone's life is at stake.

"**Prevention is always better than cure**," a medical science adage that also applies to hijacking. To avoid the feared bogey of hijacking, new technologies should be created or current ones should be improved to undertake the next level of pre-screening of personnel, passengers, and crews, as well as in the aircraft.

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