Student number: 1459498

Course code: HBAPSYAP
The relationship between work behaviours, work attitudes, and perceived stress in airline industry.

Linda Lest

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts degree (Psychology Specialization) at DBS School of Arts, Dublin.

Supervisor: Dr. Barbara Caska

Head of Department: Dr. Sinead Eccles

April 2013

Department of Psychology

DBS School of Arts
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS................................................................. 4

ABSTRACT.................................................................................. 5

1. INTRODUCTION........................................................................... 6
   1.1. Absenteeism......................................................................... 6
   1.2. Job Satisfaction................................................................. 10
   1.3. Life Satisfaction............................................................... 12
   1.4. Stress.................................................................................. 13
   1.5. Workload............................................................................ 15
   1.6. Aims and Hypothesis........................................................ 16

2. METHODOLOGY........................................................................... 18
   2.1. Participants......................................................................... 18
   2.2. Design............................................................................... 20
   2.3. Materials........................................................................... 20
      2.3.1. Job Satisfaction Survey.............................................. 21
      2.3.2. Perceived Stress Scale.............................................. 22
      2.3.3. Satisfaction with Life Survey.................................... 22
   2.4. Procedure.......................................................................... 22

3. RESULTS................................................................................... 24
   3.1. One- Way Analysis of Variance........................................... 24
   3.2. Independent Samples T-test............................................... 25
   3.3. Mann – Whitney U Test..................................................... 25
   3.4. Spearman’s Rho Correlation Coefficient............................ 27
   3.5. Chi- squared Test............................................................. 28

4. DISCUSSION.............................................................................. 30
4.1. Aims..................................................................................................................30

4.2. Summary of Results.............................................................................................30

4.3. Limitations and Implications for Future Research.............................................36

4.4. Conclusions...........................................................................................................37

REFERENCES..............................................................................................................40

APPENDIX 1..................................................................................................................46
**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Big thank you to my colleagues for taking out time to fill out questionnaires. This research could not have happened without your participation. To my supervisor Barbara, thank you for your time and guidance. Supervisor sessions were always enjoyable and helped me to refocus. Thank you Paul for your love and support through this period of study. I could not have done it without you. Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my grandmother who sadly passed away shortly before this thesis was due. I will always hold you in my heart.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine what influences absenteeism in flight attendants. This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional design that was correlational and descriptive in nature, and it had one hundred and five participants. Flight attendants, who had been absent once or more reported lower job satisfaction than those with no absences, and higher stress than those who had two or more absences. Flight attendants who worked full time were found more likely to be absent from work than those who worked part-time. However the participants on part-time contract with one or more absences reported significantly higher workload than those who had not been absent. There were no significant differences in gender, age, martial status, and number of children living in the household between those who reported being absent and those who did not. No relationship between absence duration and job satisfaction and age was found.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Absenteeism

The causes underlying absenteeism can be viewed from different perspectives, because it consists of medical, psychological, and social determinants (Allebeck & Mastekaasa, 2004). Process model proposes that attendance is influenced by motivation and ability to come to work, which in turn are affected by factors such as age, education, and family size (Steers & Rhodes, 1978). According to this model motivation is influenced by job satisfaction, and various internal and external pressures to attend. Most absenteeism studies examine medical and social factors and little is known about the psychological aspects of absence (Roelen, Koopmans, Notenbomer, & Groothoff, 2011). Reducing absenteeism is a goal for many companies, and it is important to identify and target factors that cause employees to be absent. Consequently it is important to investigate the reasons behind excessive absenteeism from the workplace, because it can prove to be costly for organisations. The purpose of this study is to examine a number of variables that may influences absence in the aviation sector and more precisely in flight attendants.

Absence is defined as each day that the employee is absent from work, which can be further divided into voluntary and involuntary absences. This is because being absent from work entails a decision making process, where the person either calls in sick or goes to work despite some ill health (Hultin et al., 2011). Voluntary absences reflect work lost due to factors within the person’s control (e.g., simply choosing not to go to work), whereas involuntary absences occur because of factors outside of the person’s control (e.g., being too sick to go to work, long term illness, illness of a family member) (Darr & Johns, 2008). This study focuses on frequency and duration of absences and not on reasons for absence. Absence frequency is defined as number of absences during a certain period of time, regardless of
duration (Chadwick-Jones, Brown, Nicholson, & Sheppard, 1971). Absence duration on the other hand refers to the number of days the participant is absent on each occasion. Ramsey, Punnet, and Greenidge (2008) suggest that absence frequency is a more reliable operationalisation of absenteeism measure, as the nature of absence is usually not known.

Biskvær and Helliesen (1997) state that the results and conclusions regarding the relationship between age and sickness absence in the research literature are inconclusive. Beemsterboer, Stewart, Grothoff, and Nijhuis (2009) performed a literature review on sick leave determinants for the years 1984-2004, and found that older people (≥ 40 years) were absent more frequently and for longer periods of time. Some studies (e.g. Barnby, Ercolani, & Treble, 2000; Biskvær & Helliesen, 1997) have found the absence rates to be highest between the ages of 55 to 65, but the variation is quite small. In contrast Martocchio (1989) analysed demographic variables such as age and gender in a meta-analysis, and found that for men absence frequency decreased with age. No correlation between age and absenteeism frequency was found for women. This contradicts partially the assumption that older people are more prone to illness than younger people, and once ill they need more time to recover from that illness (Biskvær & Helliesen, 1997). It is possible that this observed difference is due to differences in occupation (e.g. manual labor versus white-collar workers). Some researchers (e.g. Schultz & Schultz, 1994; Arola, Pitkänen, Nygård, Huhtala, & Manka, 2003) suggest that younger people (<40 years) are more likely to be absent from work than older employees. Arola et al. (2003) imply that this is relevant only to short absence spells. Current study will explore the relationship between age and absenteeism in flight attendants, to determine if there are age differences in absenteeism behaviour.

A lot of research concentrates on gender differences in absenteeism. Some studies suggest that women are more likely to be absent than men (Mastekaasa, 2000; Bekker, Rutte, & Rijswijk, 2009). Interestingly these finding were restricted to short-term absences. As
gender differences were found to be smaller in longer sickness absence spells, Laaksonen, Martikainen, Rahkonen, and Lahelma (2008) propose that the overall gender difference in absenteeism is due to short absence spells being more common among women. In contrast in several countries (e.g. Luxembourg, Slovenia, Spain) men have higher sickness rates than women (Barmby et al., 2000). Evans and Steptoe (2002) report that when women and men occupy jobs where they are a gender minority (e.g. male nurses) then it may result in gender specific adverse health effects, as they found that male nurses had the highest levels of absenteeism. This has important implications to current study, as cabin crew occupation is predominantly and traditionally female. In contrast Thomas and Thomas (2009) found no gender differences in absenteeism in navy personnel.

Current study investigates the relationship between the martial status of the employee and absenteeism. Martial status indicates if the person is single, living with partner, is married, separated, divorced or widowed. According to Barmby et al. (2000) single men have the lowest absence rates while married women have the highest absence rates. A possible explanation to this is that women are faced with multiple roles of combining paid work with family obligations (Mastekaasa, 2000). It is however important to note that Thomas and Thomas (2009) did not find a relationship between absenteeism and martial status, and also between absenteeism and parental status.

The working time of cabin crew who were involved in this study is based on rosters, which are published every four weeks and reflect the working schedule for the next six weeks. Combining roster based shift work with aspects of childcare can be challenging and it might contribute to absenteeism. The results of existing studies on the relationship between children living in the household and absenteeism are inconclusive (Bekker et al., 2009). Therefore this study will explore if there is a difference in absence frequency in participants who have children living in the household and participants who do not have children living in
the household. Mastekaasa (2000) states that the relationship between having children is generally weak for married people of both genders. According to the same study the relationship with absenteeism is a bit stronger for never married mothers, but not for single mothers who have been previously married or who are living with their partner.

Winkelmann (1996) proposed that there is a difference in absenteeism behaviour between employees who work full-time and employees who work part-time. Though the evidence for this difference is not very strong. This study will explore if there are any differences in absence frequency in flight attendants who work full-time and flight attendants who work part-time.

Ballard et al. (2006) studied the health status of Italian flight attendants. Their findings showed that the majority of flight attendants perceived their health as only fair or poor and it was found that perceived health status was related to low job satisfaction. The reasons for this are that flight attendants work in an environment where there is radiation exposure and air quality is low (MacDonald, Deddens, Grajewski, Whelan, & Hurrell, 2003). Cabin crew work irregular hours and the work they do is physically strenuous. Research indicates that work conditions, especially manual labor, contribute to absenteeism (Melchior et al., 2005). In addition flight attendants are responsible for the safety of the aircraft and all the passengers on board. Moreover they are responsible for handling emergencies of any nature (e.g. medical emergency, fire, violent passenger etc.) that occur during the flight. The findings above are similar to the results of Sveinsdottir, Gunnarsdottir, and Friðriksdottir (2007) who suggest that cabin environment might affect general well-being of flight attendants. This is mainly because of the “continual air recirculation, humidity, carbon dioxide, ozone levels and cabin pressure” (Boyd & Bain, 1998). In addition when talking about flight attendant occupation it is important to mention that for flight attendants coming into work whilst unfit to fly (i.e. too ill to safely operate) could result in safety being
adversely affected. This means that it is vital that absence is not mismanaged and that individual flight attendant would not feel pressurized to come to work while unfit (CHIRP, 2008).

1.2. Job Satisfaction

Absenteism is associated with numerous factors that in turn influence both duration and frequency. Frequency of absence spells has been associated with determinants of personal well-being, individual factors, and the atmosphere at the work place (Beemsterboer et al., 2009). Job satisfaction is commonly defined as individual’s feelings and attitudes towards their overall job and towards various aspects of their job (Spector, 2008). Job satisfaction is important because person’s feelings and attitudes towards their job might influence their behaviour. In comparison to the amount of research there is about job satisfaction there are only few studies examining its relationship with absenteeism (Notenbomer, Roelen, & Groothoff, 2006). The health care sector has been the most common area for research on the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism (Roelen et al., 2011). To discover studies on the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism in the aviation sector an extensive search was conducted on various databases (e.g. EBSCOHost Discovery Service, PsycArticles, PsycInfo, Google Scholar) by using key search words such as airline, cabin crew, stewardess, and flight attendant in various combinations with absenteeism, absence, sick leave, and job satisfaction. No studies were found about job satisfaction and absenteeism using cabin crew sample. This suggests that further research in this field is required.

Some gender differences in job satisfaction have been reported. Petterson, Arnetz, and Arnetz (1995) found that female nurses were more satisfied with their job than male nurses. They reported that low levels of absenteeism were associated with high job satisfaction, and
twice as many sick days were found among those who were dissatisfied. Beemsterboer et al. (2009) claimed that people with higher job satisfaction tended to be absent less frequently and the duration of these absences was shorter. Levy, Faulkner, and Dixon (1984) investigated work and family interaction in flight attendants and found that married flight attendants showed higher levels of stress and dissatisfaction with their job than non-married flight attendants.

A majority of studies that have investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism have reported inconclusive results, but these studies have mainly concentrated on long-term absences (Roelen et al., 2011). Nakata, Takahashi, Irie, Ray, and Swanson (2011) suggest that reduced job satisfaction may increase absenteeism, while in turn absenteeism may affect the levels of job satisfaction. A significant relationship has been observed between job satisfaction and short-term absences (Roelen et al., 2011). This is in line with findings by Marmont, Feeney, Shipley, North, and Syme (1995) who report a strong relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism. More specifically they found lower job satisfaction among those who had higher absence rates. The association was strongest for one to two day absences, and was greatly reduced for absences longer than three days. In contrast Notenbomer et al. (2006) did not find a correlation between job satisfaction and short-term sick leave absence (short-term sickness was defined as spells of up to 42 days). A possible explanation proposed to this result was that questionnaires were not anonymous.

Harrison and Martocchio (1998) suggest that work attitudes do not tell the whole story about absenteeism, because absence behaviour is more complex than just a simple correlation between job satisfaction and absence behaviour. In addition Harrison and Martocchio (1998) propose that researchers run into problems when exploring the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism, because job satisfaction is a general
attitude, whereas absenteeism is a specific behaviour. This is the reason why it is difficult to find a strong relationship.

1.3. Life Satisfaction

The combination of job satisfaction and life satisfaction is commonly referred to as employee attitude in organisational setting. Life satisfaction is considered to be an indicator of overall happiness or emotional well-being. Schmitt and Pulakos (1985) have established that life satisfaction is a significant predictor of job satisfaction. Judge and Watanabe (1994) explain that a positive correlation between job and life satisfaction supports spillover hypothesis, which has been found to be accurate for most individuals. In spillover hypothesis satisfaction with one domain of life ‘spills over’ onto the other, meaning that workers who are dissatisfied/satisfied with their jobs will be dissatisfied/satisfied with their life outside work too. In contrast a negative correlation between job and life satisfaction supports compensation hypothesis, meaning that workers who are dissatisfied with their jobs seek out more pleasurable experiences outside their work and vice versa. In addition it has been suggested that job and life satisfaction are independent of each other. This is called segmentation hypothesis, which is supported by weak or non-significant correlation between job and life satisfaction (Judge & Watanabe, 1994). Judge and Watanabe (1994) findings indicate that for a significant minority there was no relationship at all between life satisfaction and job satisfaction. Other researchers have found a reciprocal relationship between life and job satisfaction, meaning that job satisfaction has an impact on person’s life satisfaction in general, and satisfaction with life has an impact on job satisfaction (Lance, Lautenschlager, & Sloan, 1989). Knowing that one’s job is an immense part of one’s life the correlation between job and life satisfaction makes sense, meaning that satisfaction with one’s work will affect their personal life and vice versa.
Melin, Fugl-Meyer and Fugl-Meyer (2003) investigated life satisfaction in Swedes and found that the participants who were receiving sickness benefit or were unemployed had lower levels of life satisfaction compared to those participants who were vocationally active. This study will examine the relationship between life satisfaction and job satisfaction, and due to the proposed relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction the relationship between life satisfaction and absence frequency will be explored as well.

1.4. Stress

Allebeck and Mastekaasa (2004) state that absenteeism research often includes stress factors outside of work, particularly when explaining relatively high absenteeism in women. In line with this the results obtained by Kivimäki, Vahtera, Griffiths, Cox, and Pentti (1997) suggest that stress experienced in individuals private life separate from work can contribute to increased absenteeism. According to Darr and Johns (2008) managers need to remain concerned about the potential negative outcomes of stress such as absenteeism, as stress intervention programs appear to be largely ineffective in reducing absenteeism. This means that the managers should focus more on increasing flexibility in work arrangements, which have shown to reduce voluntary absenteeism. This is relevant to cabin crew, as their work schedule is based on rosters for which an individual flight attendant can request various duties, but they are not guaranteed. Thus it is a common occurrence that the roster comes out including different work duties than what was requested. As a result the work and personal life can be out of balance, which in turn can act as a possible source of stress.

Mental health association Mind (2010) found that stress has forced one in five workers to be absent from work and vast majority of those have lied about the real reason for not turning up. According to the chief executive of Mind when stress related problems are not addressed then it can result in high absenteeism. It has been suggested that being absent from
work can be used as a coping strategy to allow employees to maintain and restore their health (Allebeck & Mastekaasa, 2004; Hultin et al., 2011). Additionally Mohren, Swaen, Kant, Schayck, and Galama (2005) have found that if the employee does not want to go to work they may call in sick and use a minor illness as a reason. Similarly for some flight attendants being absent from work can act as a method of controlling their roster pattern, which in turn can have a negative effect on their colleagues who have to cover for them (CHIRP, 2008).

Hamarat, Thompson, Zabrucky, Steele, and Matheny (2001) indicate age differences in perceived stress as younger adults (18 to 40 years) were found to experience significantly greater levels of perceived stress than older people. Accordingly perceived stress is suggested to be a better predictor of life satisfaction for younger adults, and as a result the use of perceived stress as a predictor of life satisfaction is conditional on the age of the individual being assessed (Hamarat et al., 2001). In addition Trzciniecka-Green, Gaczek, Pawlak, Orlowska, and Pochopin (2012) found a negative correlation between perceived stress and life satisfaction in Polish midwives, meaning that the higher the level of perceived stress, the lower the life satisfaction is. They state that midwifery occupation is a social profession, meaning that it includes continuous and close contact with other people. Therefore it can be concluded that it is similar to flight attendant occupation.

In general cabin crew occupation is very much service-orientated. Moreover cabin crew often meet the individual needs of passengers in stressful situations, and an individual passenger may request total attention of the cabin crew member at the same time as the said crew member is attending to multiple needs of other passengers (Sveinsdottir et al., 2007). In line with this Ballard et al. (2006) state that flight attendants work is often stressful, tiring and disruptive. Sharma (2007) conducted a study in order to investigate the effect of flying on Indian male and female flight attendants. It was found that stress was one of five major problems faced by flight attendants, with majority of cabin crew stating that they feel stressed
‘often’ or ‘sometimes’. Kelleher and McGilloway (2005) report similar findings as high levels of absenteeism and higher than-average levels of stress were found when they surveyed a major airline in Ireland. Current study will examine if there is any difference in levels of perceived stress between flight attendants who have been absent and flight attendants who have not been absent. In addition the relationship between perceived stress and life satisfaction will be examined.

1.5. Workload

The relationship between workload and absenteeism has shown that higher workload, is likely to results in people being absent from work more frequently (Beemsterboer et al., 2009). Barmby et al. (2002) have found that absenteeism is positively correlated with higher usual hours of work. Resent evidence by Gjerdingen, McGovern, Bekker, Lundberg, and Willemsen (2000) suggest that it is important to monitor workload for women as heavy workload may have a negative influence on women’s health under certain circumstances such as having small children living in the household.

European Union has strict rules and regulations regarding to minimum safety and related procedures for commercial and cargo fixed-wing aviation, which in the industry are commonly referred to as EU-OPS. Flight Time Limitations (FLT) is commonly referred to as block hours and these regulate the workload in the aviation sector. Block hours are set at 900 hours in 12-month period. EU OPS defines block hours as the time between an airplane first moving from its parking place for the purpose of taking off until it comes to rest on parking spot after landing (European Aviation Safety Agency, 2010). In this particular company, where the cabin crew work, the “block year” runs from May to April, meaning that hours worked in the last 365 days can often be higher than set 900 hours for full time flight attendants. This study takes into account participants’ workload in a running 365-day period,
during which the block hours can be legally higher. This can have implications for cabin crew as working higher block hours could put the person more at risk of being absent from work. Ono, Watanabe, Kaneko, & Matsumoto et al (1991) studied working hours of Japanese flight attendants and found that long working hours contribute significantly to higher complaint rates of fatigue. In relation to this Janssen, Kant, Swaen, Janssen, and Schröer (2003) found a relationship between fatigue and absenteeism. This study examines if there is a relationship between working higher block hours (over 900) in running 365-day period and the frequency of absences. Previous research suggests that factors that can lead to reduction in job satisfaction among others are too many working hours and lack of recognition (Ham, Verhoeven, Groenier, Groothoff, & Haan, 2006).

1.6. Aims and Hypothesis

This research defines absence, as each occasion an employee is absent from work. Even though absence frequency is measured retroactively it is proposed that the persons self-reported present feelings about job satisfaction, life satisfaction and perceived stress apply. Rees and Cooper (1993) recommend the use of self-reports of total absenteeism in a previous 6-month period in studies in which, for whatever reason access to actual absenteeism data is difficult. The purpose of this study was to examine work behaviours, work attitudes and stress in aviation sector. This study seeks to contribute to the understanding of absenteeism from the point of view of stress, life satisfaction and job satisfaction. The specific aim of this study was to examine the differences in gender, age, contract type, martial status, and having children living in the household in respect to absenteeism when taking into account job satisfaction, life satisfaction and perceived stress. This study also seeks to explore possible relationship between workload and absenteeism. Based on the literature above following hypothesis are proposed:
1. Flight attendants who are absent more frequently:
   a) have lower job satisfaction
   b) have higher levels of perceived stress
   c) have lower life satisfaction
2. Flight attendants who experience higher levels of perceived stress have lower life satisfaction
3. Female flight attendants are more likely to be absent from work than male flight attendants.
4. Flight attendants who work full-time are more likely to be absent from work than flight attendants who work part-time.
5. Flight attendants who are married are as likely to be absent from work than flight attendants who are not married.
6. There is a relationship between worked block hours and absence frequency when taking into account the participants contract type.
7. Older flight attendants (35 and over) are as likely to be absent from work than younger flight attendants (34 and under).
8. The duration of absences is longer for older flight attendants (35 and over).
9. Flight attendants who have children living in the household are as likely to be absent from work than flight attendants who do not have children living in the household.
10. Flight attendants who have higher life satisfaction are more satisfied with their job.
11. Flight attendants who have lower job satisfaction are more likely to have short-term absences (2 days or less).
2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Participants

One hundred and five respondents (N=105) participated in this study. Three hundred and ninety-eight questionnaires were distributed to both male and female cabin crew and one hundred and five were returned accounting for a response rate of 26%. Participation was voluntary without any incentive or reward. The population from where this sample was selected included all cabin crew working for the single hub of the airline. The exclusion criterions for this sample were employees who for the duration of data collection were on maternity or on unpaid leave. A random number table was used to generate the sample for this study. The respondents included twenty males (19%) and eighty-five females (81%). The demographics of respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Martial Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with partner</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children living in the household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contract type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>78.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Absence frequency in relation to gender is presented in Graph 1. It is visible from the graph that women have higher absence frequency compared to men (See Graph 1). This difference is due to uneven group numbers.
Graph 1. Absence frequency and gender.

2.2. Design

The current study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional design, correlational study, which is descriptive in nature. This study was carried out as quantitative research. The combination of prospective and retrospective questionnaire method was applied. The main variables included: demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status, number of children living in the household, and contract type. Predictor variables included: perceived stress, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Criterion variables included: absence frequency and duration.

2.3. Materials

The following instruments were anonymous self-administered paper-and-pen questionnaires that were compiled into a booklet along with explanatory cover letter attached to the front, and were administered to each respondent. Each participant was asked to fill out the questionnaire and to return it to the sealed box provided in the work area. The questionnaires used were Job Satisfaction Survey, Perceived Stress Scale, Satisfaction with
Life Survey and a general demographics questionnaire devised by the researcher. The demographics questionnaire included items such as age, gender, marital status and number of children living in the household. It also contained questions about number of block hours worked, contract type, and frequency and duration of absences in the last six months. The full questionnaire with cover letter can be seen in Appendix 1. The data were analysed using SPSS version 21.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, IL, USA).

2.3.1. Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)

Saane, Sluiter, Verbeek, and Frings-Dresen (2003) looked at reliability and validity of several instruments measuring job satisfaction and found that even though many different job satisfaction instruments exist only few have adequate reliability and construct validity. Spector (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) has proven to have adequate reliability and validity. Job Satisfaction Survey is a nine-subscale measure of employee job satisfaction. Each subscales consists of 4-items with 36-items in total written in each direction – positive and negative. Each item was scored from 1 to 6 on a likert scale with 1 being “disagree very much”, with 3 being “disagree slightly”, with 4 being “agree slightly” and with 6 being “agree very much”. Scores on each of nine subscales can range from 4 to 24, while scores for total job satisfaction, based on the sum of 36 items, can range from 36 to 216. High scores on the scale represent job satisfaction. In order to calculate facet total or total job satisfaction, the scores on the negatively worded items were reversed before summing with the positively worded items. The researcher followed the procedure as stated in the JSS instructions manual for missing items, as some of the items in individual returned questionnaires were missing. 20 participants out of 105 had missing items, meaning that for them the total job satisfaction score could not be summed. According to the instructions the mean score per item for the individual was computed and that mean was substituted for the missing items, as otherwise
without an adjustment the score would have been too low. Examples of some items are:
“People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places”, “I like my supervisor”, and “I don’t feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.

2.3.2. Perceived Stress Scale.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983) is a 10-item questionnaire, which measures self-perceived stress during the last month. In this questionnaire the respondents were asked to rate which category (five in total) most adequately reflects how often they have suffered from certain feelings or thoughts during the last month. The five categories are: never, almost never, sometimes, fairly often, and very often. An example of an item is: “In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?” Validity and reliability of PSS has been reported to be good (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983).

2.3.3. Satisfaction with Life Survey.

The Satisfaction with Life Survey (SWLS) is a short 5-item questionnaire that is “designed to measure global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one’s life” (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). In this survey the respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each of five statements using a seven-item scale, which ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). An example of a statement is: “So far I have gotten the important things I want in life”. Diener et al. (1985) state that SWLS is shown to have high internal consistency and high temporal reliability, and it is suitable to be used with various age groups.

2.4. Procedure
The researcher contacted the airline where the participants work via a letter from Dublin Business School to ask for written permission to access flight attendants sample in order to conduct an absenteeism survey. As a next step a list of all cabin crew was obtained from human resources in order to generate a sample that included half of all the flight attendants currently working in one of the airline hubs. The exclusion criterion was flight attendants who were on maternity or unpaid leave for the duration of collecting data. Data collection took place for the whole month of February in 2013. Participants received an individual enveloped pen-and-paper questionnaire in their work drop file. Work drop files were used, as each flight attendants need to check it at the start of their workday. All questionnaires included a cover letter with instructions for filling it in and for returning the questionnaire. It also provided information about the approximate time of participation (10 minutes). The respondents were assured about the confidentiality and anonymity of their participation and they were requested not to leave any identifying marks on the questionnaire. To analyze the data, it was inputted into SPSS and a variety of inferential tests were used to test the hypothesis for this study.
3. RESULTS

3.1. One-Way Analysis of Variance

A series of One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were performed to examine the differences in job satisfaction and perceived stress in participants who had not been absent and participants who had been absent once, or twice or more in the last six months. Absence frequency variable was assembled into three groups because only one participant had been absent three times in the last six months. The results of one-way ANOVA are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. A One-Way Analysis of Variance of absence frequency between groups/within groups for job satisfaction, life satisfaction and perceived stress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>0 absences</td>
<td>132.67</td>
<td>9.40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>1 absence</td>
<td>129.18</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.037*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 or more</td>
<td>127.00</td>
<td>7.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived</td>
<td>0 absences</td>
<td>17.21</td>
<td>7.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>1 absence</td>
<td>14.97</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.016*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 or more</td>
<td>20.89</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p is significant at .05 level.

A one-way analysis of variance showed a significant difference between the three groups in overall job satisfaction ($F (2, 101) =3.41, p = .037$). More specifically Tukey HSD post hoc analysis highlighted that those participants who had no ($M = 132.67, SD = 9.40$) had
significantly higher job satisfaction scores that those participants who had been absent twice or more in the last six months ($M = 127.00$, $SD = 7.78$, $p = 0.049$).

A one-way analysis of variance indicated a significant difference between the three groups in terms of perceived stress ($F (2, 102) = 4.34$, $p = .016$). Post hoc analysis confirmed that that difference was significant in nature between the group, who were absent once ($M = 14.97$, $SD = 6.22$) and the group, who were absent twice or more in the last six months ($M = 20.89$, $SD = 7.14$, $p = .011$), meaning that flight attendants who were absent twice in the last six months reported significantly higher perceived stress than flight attendants who were absent only once.

3.2. Independent Samples T-test

An independent samples t-test was performed to examine the differences in levels of job satisfaction between participants who had not been absent and participants who had been absent once or more in the last six months. An independent samples t test found that there was a significant difference in levels of job satisfaction in flight attendants who had not been absent and flight attendants who had been absent once or more in the last six months ($t_{102} = 2.47$, 2-tailed, $p = .015$). Participants who had not been absent ($M = 132.67$, $SD = 9.40$) were found to be more as satisfied with their job than participants who had been absent once or more ($M = 128.38$, $SD = 8.27$).

3.3. Mann – Whitney U test

A Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine the difference in worked block hours between participants who had not been absent and participants who had been absent once or more in the last six months. In order to obtain more accurate results the participant group was divided by contract type. For part-time workers the mean rank for no absence condition was
6.18 and the mean rank for one or more absences condition was 13.00. The Mann-Whitney U test revealed that the no absence and the one or more absences condition differed significantly in their worked block hours \((U = 2.00, \ p = .009, \ 2\text{-tailed})\). For full-time workers the mean rank for no absence condition was 33.08 and the mean rank for the one or more absence condition was 28.52. The Mann-Whitney U test showed that for full time employees the no absence and the one or more absences condition did not differ significantly in their worked block hours \((U = 375.00, \ p = .317, \ 2\text{-tailed})\). In addition a Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine if participants who had higher workload were more likely to be absent. In order to do this all participants, who had worked over 900 block hours in the last 365 days were selected for the Mann-Whitney U test. No absence condition had the mean rank of 34.96, compared to the mean rank of 40.96 for the one or more absences condition. The Mann-Whitney revealed that the no absences and the one or more absences condition did not differ significantly \((U = 590.50, \ p = .233, \ 2\text{-tailed})\).

A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to examine the differences in levels of life satisfaction between participants who had not been absent and participants who had been absent in the last six months. The mean rank for no absence condition was 57.40 and the mean rank for one or more absences condition was 48.68. The Mann-Whitney U test revealed that there was no difference in levels of life satisfaction between the participants who had not been absent and the participants who had been absent \((U = 1149.00, \ p = .141, \ 2\text{-tailed})\). This means that participants who were absent one or more times in the last six months were as satisfied with their life as participants who were not absent.

A Mann-Whitney U test was performed in order to examine the relationship between absence duration (occasion one and occasion two) and age. To examine the difference in participants age and absence duration the participants were divided into two age groups 34 and under \((n=54)\), and 35 and over \((n=51)\). The literature mentioned earlier suggest dividing
the ages into 39 and under, and 40 and over, but when participant numbers were examined this division created more equal groups. On the first absence occasion the age group 34 and under had a mean rank of 27.38 and the age group 35 and over had the mean rank of 26.43. The Mann-Whitney U test revealed that two age groups did not differ significantly on the first occasion \((U = 324.00, p = .824, 2\text{-tailed})\). On the second absence occasion the age group 34 and under had a mean rank of 9.09 and the age group 35 and over had a mean rank of 10.14. The Mann-Whitney revealed that two age groups did not differ significantly on the second occasion \((U = 34.00, p = .681, 2\text{-tailed})\).

3.4. Spearman’s Rho Correlation Coefficient

The relationship between life satisfaction \((M = 23.47, SD = 6.22)\) and job satisfaction \((M = 130.53, SD = 9.07)\), and life satisfaction and perceived stress \((M = 17.15, SD = 7.24)\) was investigated using a Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient. A Spearman’s rho correlation found that there was a moderate negative significant relationship between levels of perceived stress and levels of life satisfaction \((\text{rho} (103) = -.39, p < .01, 2\text{-tailed})\). This means that the higher is the level of perceived stress the lower is the satisfaction with life. A Spearman’s rho correlation found that there was no statistical significant association between life satisfaction and job satisfaction \((\text{rho} (103) = -.04, p > .05, 2\text{-tailed})\). The age differences in the relationship between perceived stress and life satisfaction were also explored, based on the research mentioned earlier. A moderate negative significant correlation was found between life satisfaction and perceived stress in flight attendants who were in the age group 34 and under \((\text{rho} (54) = -.46, p = .001)\), and weak negative significant correlation was found in flight attendants who were in the age group 35 and over \((\text{rho} (51) = -.295, p = .035)\).

Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient was used to explore the relationship between job satisfaction \((M = 130.53, SD = 9.07)\) and short-term absences (one or two days). In order
to do this only those participant’s were selected who had been absent for one or two days on first occasion (M = 1.26, SD = .45) or one or two days on the second occasion (M = 1.50, SD = .58). A Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient found that there was a weak positive not significant relationship between levels of job satisfaction and absence duration on the first occasion (rho (23) = .15, p = .496, 2-tailed), and a weak negative not significant relationship between levels of job satisfaction and absence duration on the second occasion (rho (4) = -.236, p = 764, 2-tailed).

3.5. Chi-squared Test

In order to examine the relationship between contract type and absence frequency a Chi-square test was performed. In order to perform the Chi-square test the absence frequency variable was divided into two groups. First group consisted of participants who had not been absent in the last six months and second group consisted of participants who had been absent once or more in the last six months. There was a significant difference between observed and expected frequency of full-time and part-time flight attendants in their absence frequency ($\chi^2(1) = 7.01, p = .008$), as Chi-square test found a weak negative significant relationship between these two variables. Flight attendants who worked full-time were more likely to be absent once or more in the last six months than flight attendants who worked part-time.

A Chi-square test was conducted to explore the relationship between age and absence frequency. As previously mentioned the participants were divided into two age groups 34 and under, and 35 and over. Absence frequencies were divided into three groups no absences, one absence, and two or more absences. It found that there was no significant relationship between age and absence frequency ($\chi^2(2) = 3.52, p = .172$).

In order to examine the relationship between gender and absence frequencies, the absence frequencies were divided into two groups no absences, and absent once or more in
the last six months. This was done in order for each cell to have count of five or more. A Chi-square test found no significant difference between gender and absence frequency ($\chi^2(1) = .90, p = .344$).

In order to examine the relationship between having children living in the household and absence frequency the number of children variable was divided into two groups no children living in the household and one or more children living in the household. Absence frequency was divided into two groups no absences, and absent once or more in the last six months. A Chi-square test found no significant difference between having children living in the household and absence frequency ($\chi^2(1) = .01, p = .936$).

In order to examine the relationship between marital status and absence frequency the marital status variable was divided into two categories not married and married. A Chi-square test found no significant difference between marital status and absence frequency ($\chi^2(2) = 1.01, p = .603$).
4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Aims

The main focus of this study was to examine the relationship between work attitudes, work behaviours, and stress in the aviation industry, and more specifically to examine what influences absenteeism behaviour in Irish flight attendants. In order to do this, job satisfaction, perceived stress, life satisfaction and a range of demographic variables were explored. First of all, it was expected that those flight attendants who were absent more frequently have lower job satisfaction, higher levels of perceived stress, and lower life satisfaction. Furthermore, a relationship between perceived stress and life satisfaction was expected, and in addition it was predicted that flight attendants who had higher life satisfaction were more satisfied with their job. Demographic variables such as age, contract type, gender differences, number of children living in the household, and marital status in relation to absence frequency were also examined. Differences in absence duration in terms of job satisfaction and age were expected. Finally, it was investigated if there is a relationship between absence frequency and worked block hours, when taking into account if the person works part-time or full time. Several proposed hypotheses were supported whereas others were not.

4.2. Summary of Results

A significant difference was found in levels of job satisfaction between cabin crew who had not been absent and cabin crew who had been absent once or more in the last six months. On closer examination it was found that this difference was more specifically between flight attendants who had not been absent and flight attendants who had been absent twice or more in the last six months. The direction of this relationship is not known, meaning that flight attendants could have lower job satisfaction because they have more absences, or they could be absent more frequently because they have lower job satisfaction. This finding
supports the research conducted by Nakata et al. (2001) who suggest a two-way relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism. Furthermore these findings fit in with research by Marmont et al. (1995) who found a relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism, and with research by Beemsterboer et al. (2009) who claim that people who are more satisfied with their job are less likely to be absent. In general the findings of this study suggest that on average flight attendants subjected to this study feel ambivalent towards their job.

Flight attendants as a group reported slightly higher than average levels of perceived stress, and there was a significant difference in levels of perceived stress between flight attendants who had been absent once and cabin crew who had been absent twice or more in the last six months. This means that cabin crew who had been absent twice or more reported higher levels of stress than those who had been absent once. This finding is in line with Ballard et al. (2006), and Sharma (2007) who both reported high levels of stress in flight attendants. This finding supports results obtained by Kivimäki et al. (1997), which indicate that perceived stress can contribute to increased absenteeism. In addition this finding provides support to Darr and Johns (2008) statement that absenteeism is a potential negative outcome of stress, and findings by Mind (2010), which state that stress can result in high absenteeism. It is however important to note that flight attendants who were not absent reported higher levels of stress than those who had been absent once. This finding might be due to individuals using absenteeism as a coping strategy as suggested by Allebeck and Mastekaasa (2004), and Hultin et al. (2011). This means that at first flight attendant might experience higher level of stress, and then choose to be absent from work to cope and recover from that stress, and return to work when their stress levels have lowered. Correspondingly CHIRP (2008) suggests that some flight attendants may use absenteeism as a method for controlling their workload. Likewise Kelleher and McGilloway (2005) reported high levels of
absenteeism and higher-than-average stress levels in flight attendants, but interestingly they
did not investigate the relationship between stress and absenteeism.

In general flight attendants reported that they were only slightly satisfied with their
life. No significant difference in levels of life satisfaction between those who had not been
absent, and those who had been absent once or more in the last six months were found. This
outcome suggests that individual’s emotional well-being and overall happiness stayed the
same regardless to their absence frequency, as life satisfaction is considered to be an indicator
of overall happiness and emotional well-being. Therefore there seems to be a discrepancy
between this finding and that obtained by Melin et al. (2003) who state that those individuals,
who were receiving sickness benefit, which means that they had to be absent from work, had
lower life satisfaction than those who were in active employment. These findings confirm the
hypotheses 1a (flight attendants who are absent more frequently have lower job satisfaction)
and 1b (flight attendants who are absent more frequently have higher levels of perceived
stress, but not the hypothesis 1c (flight attendants who are absent more frequently have lower
life satisfaction).

A moderate negative significant relationship was found between life satisfaction and
perceived stress, meaning that the higher is the levels of stress the cabin crew experience the
lower is their life satisfaction. This is similar to research by Trzcieniecka-Green et al. (2012)
as they found a negative correlation between perceived stress and life satisfaction. In addition
age differences were observed in relationship between perceived stress and life satisfaction,
with flight attendants in the age group of 34 and under having stronger relationship between
life satisfaction and perceived stress than flight attendants in the age group 35 and over. This
is in line with findings by Hamarat et al. (2001), who suggest that perceived stress is a better
indicator of life satisfaction for younger adults.
Building on previous research it was hypothesised that there are gender differences in absenteeism, with female flight attendants more likely to be absent from work than male flight attendants. This hypothesis was not supported as no gender differences were found in absenteeism, meaning that females and males had similar absence frequencies. This is surprising as mounting body of evidence suggests otherwise. This result contradicts the findings by Bekker et al. (2009), Laaksonen et al. (2008), and Mastekaasa (2000) who all report that women had higher levels of absenteeism than men. In addition this findings is not consistent with research by Evans and Steptoe, and Barmby et al. (2000) who report that men were more likely to be absent from work than women. There may be several possibilities that could have lead to this result including prominence of females in the sample, as only 19% of participants were male.

A weak negative significant relationship was found between absenteeism and contract-type, meaning that flight attendants who worked full time were more likely to be absent from work. This finding support the notion raised in research by Winkelmann (1996) that indicates a difference in absenteeism behaviour between employees who work full-time and employees who work part-time. An explanation for this finding is that full-time flight attendants have higher workload and therefore less time for recovery than part-time flight attendants. Due to the higher work load there could be more chance for the onset of fatigue, which in turn has been linked to absenteeism (Janssen et al., 2003).

No significant difference was found in absence frequency between flight attendants who were married and flight attendants who were not married, and no significant difference was found in absence frequencies of flight attendants who had children living in the household and flight attendants who did not have children living in the household. These findings seem to reaffirm the findings of the study conducted by Thomas and Thomas (2009) who found that marital status and parental status had no effect on absenteeism. Bekker et al.
(2009) has proposed that the results of existing studies on the relationship between having children living in the household and absenteeism are inconclusive. Therefore this result was expected. It is important to note that research by Mastekaasa (2000) indicates a weak relationship between having children living in the household and absenteeism. This is easily explained as married people of both genders, participants who were never married, and previously married single mothers all were subjected to Mastekaasa (2000) study, whereas participant numbers were too small to draw similar conclusions from this study and thus the variables marriage and children living in the household in relation to absenteeism were examined separately.

A significant difference was found in worked block hours in flight attendants on part-time contract, when participants who had not been absent and participant who had been absent once or more were compared. On closer examination it was discovered that cabin crew on part-time contract who had been absent once or more in the last six months had worked higher block hours than those who had not been absent. Interestingly enough no significant difference was found in full-time workers. Furthermore no significant difference was found in absence frequency in those who had higher worked block hours (900 or more in the last 365 days) and absence frequency. The finding for part-time workers is partially consistent with Barmby et al. (2002) who found that absenteeism is positively correlated with higher usual hours of work. This result can be explained with low participant numbers as only twenty-three participants worked part-time. Out of these twenty-three only two were male, but they had no absences in the last six months. Female participants on part-time contract, who were absent once or more in the last six months (n=6) had all one or more children living in the household. This can be explained by Gjerdingen et al. (2000) findings, which suggest that heavy workload can have an effect on women’s health under such circumstances such as having small children living in the household. When data for full time participants
was examined then it was noticed that nearly 27% of participants did not provide data for their block hours, which could have affected the results.

No significant relationship was found between age and absence frequency, and age and absence duration, meaning that older flight attendants were as likely to be absent from work as younger flight attendants, and when they were absent there was no difference in their absence duration. The result between age and absence frequency was expected as the findings and conclusions regarding the relationship between age and absenteeism are shown to be inconclusive (Bliskvær & Helliesen, 1997). On the contrary the finding between age and absence duration is not consistent with other research such as Beemsterboer et al (2009), and Barmby et al (2000), who report the tendency for older people to be absent from work for longer periods of time. This result could perhaps be explained with small participant numbers being absent for longer periods of time, as there were fourteen participants in the older age group and twenty-one participants in the younger age group who had been absent for four days or more in the last six months. This result could be due to variations in other factors such as worked block hours, contract type and so on.

No significant relationship was found between levels of job satisfaction and levels of life satisfaction. As mentioned previously flight attendants on average felt ambivalent towards their job and were only slightly satisfied with their life at the time they were surveyed. It was hypothesised that there will be a relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction, which would support the spillover hypothesis, whereas weak or non-significant correlation between life satisfaction and job satisfaction supports segmentation hypothesis (Judge & Watanabe, 1994). Segmentation hypothesis implies that job and life satisfaction are independent of each other, meaning that they have no effect on each other. This finding is similar to Judge and Watanabe (1994) as they reported that for a significant minority there was no relationship between life satisfaction and job satisfaction.
This study has been unable to provide evidence for the relationship between job satisfaction and short term absences as proposed by Marmont et al. (1995), and Roelen et al. (2011), as no significant relationship was found between levels of job satisfaction and short-term absences (2-days or less). However this finding seems to reaffirm the findings of a study conducted by Notenbomer et al. (2006), as they did not find a relationship between short-term absences and job satisfaction. This result may be explained by looking at the differences in the reasons behind the absences and operational definition of short-term absence. Marmont et al. (1995), Roelen et al. (2011) and Notenbomer et al. (2006) all define their short-term absences differently, and some look at the reasons for absence, whereas this study looked at all the absences together. According to Harrison and Martocchio (1998) the inconsistency in results is due to a simple notion that job satisfaction is a general attitude, where as absenteeism is a specific behaviour, and thus it is hard to find a strong empirical relationship.

4.3. Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Even though the questionnaires were anonymous and confidential a limitation of this study was that the participants knew the researcher and thus may not have fully admitted the level of stress they were under, or how satisfied with their job and life they actually felt. In addition this could be an explanation for the high-level of non-responders, which has been an issue with other research conducted in the same company. The strength of this study was the design of the questionnaire, but larger sample size would have resulted in more conclusions that could have been drawn from the data. The sample size was made up predominately of women, with only twelve men reporting one or more absences compared to forty-one women (See Graph 1). The study would have benefitted from more varied sample size as there were unequal groups for gender, contract type martial status and number of children living in the
household variables. In addition the response rate could have been improved if the questionnaires were to be distributed to every flight attendant working for the airline.

As mentioned earlier absenteeism is at a very high level amongst flight attendants and therefore more studies about the reasons for absenteeism, and not just about health status are proposed. A subjective reporting of absenteeism data and no reasons for absence could have affected the results. Therefore it is proposed that future studies should concentrate on reasons for absences, such as voluntary and involuntary absences. Reasons for absenteeism were not included in this research, as it could have resulted in even lower response rate, as it would have made the questionnaire longer. In order to get a better overview for reasons underlying high levels of absenteeism it is suggested that the absenteeism data should not be self-reported.

Another major limitation to this study was that thirty participants (28.6%) did not answer the question “Number of block hours worked in the last 365 days”, which left the sample size very small when the relationships and differences between absenteeism and workload were investigated. More research about worked block hours and absence frequency in flight attendants who work part-time or full-time is proposed as differences in absence frequency were found only for the part-time flight attendants. This study solely looked at perceived stress in flight attendants, but in addition it is recommended to examine job related stress in relation to absenteeism, and also work/life balance. Moreover further studies could examine the direction of the relationship between job satisfaction and absence frequency in flight attendants. There was only limited amount of research looking at relationship between life satisfaction and absenteeism, therefore further research in that area is also recommended.

4.5. Conclusions
Based on our findings it can be summarised that flight attendants on average reported feeling ambivalent towards their job, had slightly higher than average levels of perceived stress, and were only slightly satisfied with their life. Over half of all participants of this study had been absent from work once or more in the last six months. Flight attendants who had been absent one or more times reported feeling less satisfied with their job, and flight attendants who had two or more absences reported higher levels of stress than those who had only been absent once. It was found that job satisfaction levels remained similar regardless if the flight attendant had short- or long-term absences. Comparison of perceived stress levels and absence frequencies indicated that being absent from work might be used as a coping strategy as participants who had one absence had lower levels of stress than those who had not been absent. Findings by MacDonald et al. (2003) propose that stress interventions that are aimed at balancing work and private life can result in higher well-being and job satisfaction. This has important implications for flight attendants as it can result in higher life satisfaction and job satisfaction, lower levels of stress and lowered absence rates. There was no significant difference in levels of life satisfaction when different absence frequencies were compared. As there was no relationship between life satisfaction and job satisfaction the findings supported segmentation hypothesis, meaning that in flight attendants subjected to this study the levels of job satisfaction and the levels of life satisfaction were independent of each other.

It was discovered that flight attendants on part-time contract who had been absent in the last six months had significantly higher workload than participants who had not been absent. This relationship did not hold for full-time workers. It was proposed that this found relationship had to do with children living in the household, as all the flight attendants who worked part-time and had one or more absences in the last six months, had all one or more children living in the household. As this research did not distinguish between sickness absence and absence
due to other factors (e.g. illness of a family member or a child, or other commitments) then the reasons for this finding cannot be explained properly. There were no significant differences in gender, age, marital status, and number of children living in the household between those who had been absent and those who had not been absent.

Another interesting finding was that flight attendants who worked full time were more likely to be absent from work than flight attendants who worked part-time. This difference could be due to higher risk for fatigue in full-time flight attendants, which in turn can have an effect on absenteeism. Therefore it is important to monitor the duties that are scheduled into individual’s roster to minimise the risk factors of fatigue.

Absenteeism is a complex behaviour which is affected both by health status of the individual and also to an extent by their work behaviours, attitudes and stress. As Allebeck and Mastekaasa (2004) state the causes for absenteeism can be viewed from different perspectives. It is important for organisations to try and find the reasons underlying absenteeism in that particular organisation, as absenteeism can prove to be costly for organisations. This is because every time one employee is absent, someone else needs to be there to replace them.
REFERENCES


Implementing rules on flight and duty time limitations and rest requirements for commercial air transport (CAT) with aeroplanes. (2010). *European Aviation Safety Agency.*


Environmental Medicine, 45, 703-714.
a measure of health status and functioning: from the UK Whitehall II study. Journal
of Epidemiology and Community Health, 49, 124-130.
Psychology and Aging, 4(4), 409-414.
Mastekaasa, A. (2000). Parenthood, gender and sickness absence. Social Science & Medicine,
50(12), 1827-1842.
Melchior, M., Krieger, N., Kawachi, I., Berkman, L. F., Niedhammer, I., & Goldberg, M.
(2005). Work factors and occupational class disparities in sickness absence: findings
year-old Swedes: In relation to education, employment situation, health and physical
activity. Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine, 35, 84-90.
Fatigue and job stress as predictors for sickness absence during common infections.
common cold, and sickness absence among white-collar employees: a cross-sectional
survey. Industrial Health, 49, 116-121.
term sickness absence among Dutch workers. Occupational Medicine, 56, 279-281.


APPENDIX 1

Dear Participant,

I am conducting a research project that explores the relationship between a number of psychological variables and absenteeism. You are invited to take part in this study by completing the attached questionnaire. Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any stage during the completion by not handing in your questionnaire. By completing and returning this questionnaire you consent to participate in this study.

I am attending Dublin Business School as part-time student and this research is part of my thesis for my undergraduate degree. I will be the only person seeing the completed questionnaires and they will not be shared with any person within the company. Findings will be presented only as overall group results and no single or individual survey responses will be provided at any point. The research is confidential and anonymous. I would ask you not to put your name, telephone number or staff number on the questionnaire. Because questionnaires are completed anonymously it will be not possible to withdraw from participation after the questionnaire has been submitted. I would very much appreciate if you could take the time to complete the attached questionnaire, which only takes 10 minutes, and place it in the box provided in the briefing area. I would like you to answer each question, but if you are not comfortable then feel free to leave any questions you wish blank. If you have any queries about the questionnaire or would like to discuss it with me further you may contact me at [redacted].

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this research study.

Yours truly,

Linda Lest
Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

- 7 - Strongly agree
- 6 - Agree
- 5 - Slightly agree
- 4 - Neither agree nor disagree
- 3 - Slightly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 1 - Strongly disagree

____ In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

____ The conditions of my life are excellent.

____ I am satisfied with my life.

____ So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

____ If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.
Instructions

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way.

For each question circle one of the following options: 0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, 4 = very often

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?
   0 1 2 3 4

2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
   0 1 2 3 4

3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?
   0 1 2 3 4

4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?
   0 1 2 3 4

5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?
   0 1 2 3 4

6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things you had to do?
   0 1 2 3 4

7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?
   0 1 2 3 4

8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?
   0 1 2 3 4

9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?
   0 1 2 3 4

10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?
    0 1 2 3 4
**PLEASE CIRCLE THE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION THAT COMES CLOSEST TO REFLECTING YOUR OPINION ABOUT IT.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Disagree very much</th>
<th>Disagree moderately</th>
<th>Disagree slightly</th>
<th>Agree slightly</th>
<th>Agree moderately</th>
<th>Agree very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the people I work with.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications seem good within this organization.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raises are too few and far between.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor is unfair to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like doing the things I do at work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The goals of this organization are not clear to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**PLEASE CIRCLE THE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION THAT COMES CLOSEST TO REFLECTING YOUR OPINION ABOUT IT.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I feel unappreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The benefit package we have is equitable.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>There are few rewards for those who work here.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I have too much to do at work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I enjoy my coworkers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>There are benefits we do not have which we should have.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I like my supervisor.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I have too much paperwork.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>There is too much bickering and fighting at work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>My job is enjoyable.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Work assignments are not fully explained.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>