

Research Methodology

The research questions or hypotheses and their theoretical and practical relevance, i.e., a rationale for why the research was important

The study conducted by Fraher and Gabriel (2014) explores and highlights the effects of job loss on the occupational identities of a group of United States pilots who were furloughed twice by their employees. According to the reports, September 11th 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks had an influential impact on the aviation industry, thereby, precipitating extensive restructuring and employee lay-offs. The selected research paper was based on the experiences of a group of pilots who were furloughed twice: once immediately after 9/11 and then in the late 2000s again. The paper thus discusses how the identity anchor functions in two fundamental ways when the aviation industry faces a lay-off. The research study discerned that few of the pilots moved on in order to start and retain their growth in career, without leaving their occupational identities or relinquishing their dream of flying. While the other sets of the pilot were stuck in the occupational limbo waiting to be recalled by their employee and hence unwilling to forsake their dream of flying.

Subsequently, the paper perceived the responses of the pilots to the job loss. The research further witnessed the subsequent impact of how the dream arising in childhood, linked to a long-standing archetype of flying and subsequently hardened into a shared occupational fantasy, serving as an identity anchor and how it shapes responses to the trauma of job loss. The paper further examines the study using the narrative approach how the Phäethon dream which is the childhood dream of flying serves as an identity anchor sustaining the occupational identities. This dream of flying exercises a powerful influence on the pilots and in defending it, they are prepared to endure many privations. The contribution of the aviation industry and the professionals associated in the industry is substantial and requires special importance. Generally, it has been witnessed, that the furlough airline pilot

has less dramatic traumas than the physical injuries which might threaten one's career (Maitlis, 2009) or the permanent dismissal (Gabriel et al, 2010) bringing an irreversible severance from one's employer. Additionally, the furloughs have long been a feature of a career in aviation and, therefore, have been an essential element of occupational identity. Although pilots are generally better prepared to weather the storm with the help of savings, especially if they did not have extended family and financial commitments. However, most of the pilot experiences their first furlough as a distressing event filling them with anxiety and fear for the future. Throughout the paper, the researcher focuses on the condition of the pilots and how they deal with the lay-offs situation. The paper further acknowledged how the pilots acquire new skills, making a clean break from their careers in Vimanas. Thereby, the study was of significant importance to recognise the pilot's view while they undergo a lay-off. Additionally, the paper principally discusses to highlight how the pilots, as a group of privileged professionals respond by constructing the narratives to the job loss that help sustain their occupational identities.

Research Questions:

The study involved the exploration of research questions to conduct the research.

They were as follow:

- What are the effects of job loss on the occupational identities of furloughed airlines pilot?
- How the childhood dream of flying serves as an identity anchor sustaining their occupational identities?
- How the furloughed airlines pilot reshape their identities following lay-offs?
- How the dream of flying linked to the long-standing archetype of flying hardened into a shared occupational fantasy?
- How the Phaëthon dream is linked to the mythological counterpart?

- What are the demands that furloughs make on pilots' occupational identities and how do they respond to these demands?

The epistemological and ontological assumptions which underpinned the research, and their consistency with research questions or hypotheses

A research philosophy can be viewed by the use of ontology as well as epistemology. The ontology is associated with a central question of whether social entities should be perceived as objective or subjective. Similarly, positivism, also called as objectivism, and subjectivism are identified as two important ontological characteristics. In the study conducted by Fraher and Gabriel (2014), the identification of the ontology is critically significant in order to determine the choice of the research methods via epistemology, data collection methodology, selected approach of research and analysis of data. In the research study conducted by Fraher and Gabriel (2014) the paper discusses the effects of job loss on the occupational identities of the furloughed airlines pilot, thereby, the study adopted interpretivism as an approach. The research further perceived how furloughed airline pilots and their consequent effects impacted their life. The interpretivism is contrary to the positivism regarding the beliefs and ideas. The research study tried to identify the issues and their effects through the human qualities of meaning and purposes, thus the research is interpretivism in approach. According to an interpretive, the study must be fulfilled and conducted by understanding the reality and drawing the estimations needed to achieve the objectives. In this context, the study selected and adopted this approach by discussing the value subjectivity in contrast to being objectified. The acceptance of multiple perspectives in this approach enabled the study to lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the furloughed airline pilots. Through this approach, the researcher aims at developing a better exploration and highlighting of the facts related to the phenomenon. Therefore, the adoption

of the interpretivism enabled the researcher to make a decision by taking the opinion of the individual pilots and hence concerning their study about the impacts of getting furloughed. The study by Fraher and Gabriel (2014) is an attempt at discovering the problems and challenges associated with furloughed pilots and how the childhood dream of flying serve as an identity anchor sustaining their occupational identities. Thus, the research was aimed towards finding a specific outcome based on the research question developed. The researcher uses the narrative methodology and this nature of the research was found to be extensive. Reflexivity is an attitude of systematically addressing the context of knowledge construction, especially for the ease of the researcher, at every step of the research process.

The research design and its strengths and limitations for answering the research questions or hypotheses

The research designs are broadly classified into 4 categories, i.e. descriptive, explanatory, exploratory and experimental research designs. A descriptive research design is a form of research design that provides an outlook on the process as it happens independently in nature. These theories develop the relationship between the existing variables in the research and need a descriptive method for the acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses. When the centre of attention is the cause-effect relationships, the study can be explanatory explaining which causes present which effects. In this case, the data collecting entirely depends on the research questions constructed. Since the current research discusses the effects of the job loss on the occupational identities of the furloughed airlines pilot and how they reshape their identities following their lay-off, the research is focused and concentrated towards the description of the furloughed airline pilots and to undermine their identification with the industry. Hence, the research design adopted in this study is descriptive research design. As it is known that descriptive research is aimed towards the description of situations,

phenomenon, problems and the like in a systematic manner or attempts at providing insights about, say, the living conditions of a community, problems associated with an industry or a firm, or describes attitudes towards an issue. Similarly, this study is concerned with the description of the views of furloughed airline pilots. Further, the research is based on a set of hypothesis that is required to be tested and deals with the “what” aspect of the probe, making the study research descriptive in nature. In the following research study, neither of the selected pilot groups being furloughed was viewed as a process of stigmatisation. Furthermore, through this study, it is critically analysed that occupational fantasies draw the members of a professional together, and further provide a basis for intimacy and solidarity, acting as anchors that stabilize and fix their occupational identity. The paper relied on the employees of a major US airline referred to as Vimanas who ranged between the mid-thirties and early fifties in age. Through the interviews recorded and transcribed in the research methodology, the respondents were encouraged to talk about their life, feelings, family, and work. The overall approach was consistent with the emerging reflexive approach for conducting a qualitative inquiry, wherein the researchers sought to question their own values and assumptions, their active role in the field work and the stake they have in the findings and interpretations. In the end, the paper concludes by linking the Phaëthon dream to the mythological counterpart for highlighting its shared, endured and unconscious character. The researcher has although made efforts to preserve the authenticity, consistency and objectivity of the research study. However, there were some limitations of the research conducted when the results of the study were being applied. The research study was specific primarily to US airlines employees only. Therefore, the research methodology chosen was not feasible to study the whole population and also the possible cases. Additionally, the samples for the study were not personally known to the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher was not free of assumptions and feelings of their own about the research of the inquiry. Since the field

material presented in the paper was gathered as a part of the larger study of the airline industry post 9/11. Thereby, the sampling technique assures lower precisions and hence no assurance of the representatives. The focus was only to the effects of the job loss on the occupational identities of furloughed airlines pilot and how they reshape their identities following the lay-offs. Therefore, the study was not successful in offering complete opinions of the furloughed airline pilots. Moreover, the study has surveyed the satisfaction of the pilots only through the factors related to their job loss and reshaping career. Thereby, the other factors associated with it; there this assessment of the pilots furloughed solely rely on one factor. Lastly, while analysing the perspectives of pilots were taken into consideration; the perspectives of the other people associated with the airline industry were not collected making the opinions one-sided only.

The sampling strategy that was used to select the sources of data and an appraisal of the rationale for why particular sources/respondents were selected

Sampling technique is defined as a process through which the researcher selects the required sample depending on the area of the study. Sampling helps in easier and faster collection of data, and the researcher can also improve the data accuracy (Sarantakos, 2012, p.97). Barnett (n.d., p.2) has specified that “clearly a full population study is seldom feasible in terms of accessibility, time or cost and these three factors control the sampling imperative to obtain sufficiently statistically-reliable and affordable information about the target population”. However, it is not feasible to study the whole population and all the possible cases. The sample for the study conducted by Fraher and Gabriel (2014) was not personally known to the researcher. The focus of the researchers was directed towards understanding meaning from the point of view of each respondent. It was observed that the sample was not randomly selected. The researchers were not free of feelings and assumptions of their own about the topic of their inquiry. The field material presented in this paper was collected as

part of a larger study of the airline industry post 9/11. Their study included a survey of 127 pilots, 33 of whom were subsequently interviewed. This sampling technique, however, assures lower precision and no assurance of representativeness (Taherdoost, 2016, p.23).

The paper relied on the employees of a major US airline, referred to as 'Vimanas' and ranged between mid-thirties and early fifties in age owing to the in-depth knowledge and the experiences of ten pilots, out of which nine were men and one woman, who were all 'double furloughed employees'. The selected sample offered valuable contextual material and enabled the testing of the inferences and interpretations of the scholars. The investigators used the face-to-face interview process to collect the qualitative data from the chosen respondents. Regarding qualitative data, the human brain interpretations were used along with thematic analysis and content analysis techniques to interpret the data collected through the interview process (Panneerselvam, 2014, p.187). The experience of the selected sample also helped in generating the research questions and affected the positive interpretation of the findings by providing an experientially based lens by which to understand these very industry specific narratives. They used an interview guide where the strategy of the interview was non-directive which allowed the respondents to co-determine the direction and flow of the conversation. Thus, the sampling strategy used was found to be apt for conducting further research.

The research methods that were used to generate the data and their strengths and weaknesses for addressing the research questions or hypotheses

For ensuring adequate implementation of a research, it is imperative to understand the ideas, theories and motivations behind the adoption of specific research methods that fulfil the needs of an investigation (Cooper, Schindler and Sun 2006, p.12). As asserted by Kothari (2004, p.2), the most prominent objective of a research is to identify the answers to questions which are unexplored by the means of scientific research methods. Considering the

importance and relevance of research methodology, this section presents the ideologies and motivations of the present researchers behind the selection of research methods that are deemed to be most suitable for satisfying or addressing the research objectives. The authors used a narrative methodology, to examine how the respondents' childhood dream of flying, also referred to as the Phäethon dream, serves as an identity anchor that sustained their occupational identities. The nature of this research was also found to be extensive as the first author, a Vimanas pilot, from 1997-2004, left her career to pursue further academics. In addition to narrative methodology, they also used reflexive methodology. At each step of the research process, especially owing to the researcher's effect, reflexivity can be considered as an attitude of systematically attending the knowledge construction (Malterud, 2001, pp.483-488). In the narrative methodology, researchers extract stories and inquire about the meaning of experience through a process of creative storytelling.

The narrative method is extremely flexible and focuses on individual experience. It helps in reporting chronology of sequences and provides a causal link among individual ideas (McAlpine, 2016, pp.32-37). Narrative research also helps in understanding relevant topics and leads to collaboration. However, the respondents may fake the data and might raise questions on the ownership of the narrative. This can encourage dialogue, lead to the development of complementary and divergent understandings of a study situation and provide a context in which researchers' beliefs, values, perspectives and assumptions can be revealed. Reflexivity, on the other hand, is a significant concept in the field of qualitative research as it is directed towards the accuracy of the outcomes of qualitative research, for instance, the relationship of the interviewer and interviewee as an important component of social interaction (Atta & Edge, 2017, pp.33-45). As asserted by Kvale (2002), reflexivity is the 'asymmetrical power relations of the research interviewer and the interviewed subject'. Reflexive research design addresses the distortions or preconceptions researchers unwittingly

introduce in their qualitative designs. Thus, this section helped in guiding and critically assessing the future investigators who may decide to reproduce this study or explore an area relevant to this research work.

The analytical strategy or strategies that were used to analyse the data together with an appraisal of their strengths and weaknesses

Research data is said to be an important asset of the research study. This section will give a detailed explanation about how the research work was designed by presenting the strategies used for approaching the research, all the methods and techniques used, data collection techniques and analysis of the data. Regarding qualitative data, human brain interpretations are used along with thematic analysis and content analysis techniques to interpret the data collected through the interview process (Panneerselvam, 2014, p.187). However, the quantitative data is analysed using the various statistical tools as the information are collected in the form of numerical terms and need to be transformed into graphs and charts so that the readers understand it explicitly. The researchers believed that if they would have increased the number of respondents in their study, it would have resulted in a hindrance into working with the data. Working with the data included listening to the recorded interviews, reading the transcripts, compared the responses of the interviewees and interpretation of their data. They also explored the data to untangle the irregularities, problems and obscurities. This gives a valuable alternative to use a software that can derelict into a mechanical routine. They used the iterative, discursive and reflexive approach, the reflexive type of research approach attempts to examine researchers' interests and prejudices in their interpretations and inferences that often goes unnoticed when researchers perform formal data coding. They endured the uncertainty of the respondents among their love for

work, feelings towards their employer and hostility towards the corporate management. This however posed problems in harmonizing the selected paradoxes.

The data derived from the narrative were divided into 'First Order Codes', 'Theoretical Categories' and then were finalised into aggregates. It must, however, be ensured that the researcher sticks to proper code of conduct and the research is carried in a methodological way to produce authentic information following certain standard norms (Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler, 2005, p.138). Validity means the believability or credibility of research work, particularly the data collected for the research work. Validity also refers to the processes or instruments used in research work to see whether they can measure. On the other hand, reliability denotes the consistency of the findings (Verschuren, Doorewaard, & Mellion, 2010, p.267). Thus, data reliability of the analysis technique used by the researchers can be increased with the use of statistical techniques like ANOVA and software like SPSS.

The contribution of research to existing knowledge of the topic and to policy and practice

The contribution of the paper depicted the response of pilots to job loss. The researchers constructed a narrative to assist their occupational identities. This study is significant in depicting the important consequences of the topic which were not identified in the past. The researchers also proposed that shared occupational fantasies act as motivating factors to help them sustain through hardships and adversities.

However, it may so happen that for members of this profession, these employment fantasies may act as impedimental in acting as their job goals. This might hamper their ability to adapt to their changing surroundings and may lead them to become non-flexible. To sum up, they might tend to live in self-constructed confined and imprisoned spaces that might make them unable to escape from these confines. In the course of conducting the interviews,

the researchers came across numerous stories having terse and concise narratives. The stories had expressive and crisp beginnings, and it was maintained throughout the narration. Thus, as deduced by the researchers, conducting these interviews with more than a single individual provided clues, not just pertaining to a single conversation, but that amounted to broader perspectives of the others. Thus, it added to the literary knowledge of the research and provided additional weightage to the study.

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