

EVA Cabins' Strike Shakes Taiwanese Society

Wirunpat Punwatpinan* and Charoenchai Agmapisarn**

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Abstract

The largest and longest strike in the history of Taiwan's airline industry occurred only 2 days after the announcement of the SKYTRAX Award on the 18th of June, 2019. The strike, which lasted for 17 days, was organized by the Taoyuan Flight Attendants' Union (TFAU). More than 2,000 employees from EVA Air, the largest privately-owned Taiwanese airline, participated. The protesters demanded improved wages and contracts. Since the beginning of 2019, EVA Air has been heavily criticized for its treatment of their employee—the airline is known to be unresponsive to the employees' demands while vigorously maintaining its positive image regardless of the employees' state of mind. This strike could have been influenced by the success of the legendary 2016 strike by China Airlines, and the early 2019 strike by the pilots of the same airline.

Keywords: Aviation Strikes, Flight Attendant, Taiwanese Airlines, Flight Attendants' Union

* Graduate School of Tourism Management (GSTM), National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA)
148 Serithai Road, Khlong-Chan, Bangkapi, Bangkok 10240, THAILAND.
E-mail: wirunpat.pan@gmail.com

**Graduate School of Tourism Management (GSTM), National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA)
148 Serithai Road, Khlong-Chan, Bangkapi, Bangkok 10240, THAILAND.
E-mail: roenbkk@gmail.com

การประท้วงของพนักงานสายการบิน EVA Air สะเทือนสังคมได้ทั่วโลก

วิรุณพัชร ปุณวัตรวินันท์* และ เจริญชัย เอกมาîtreascal**

รับวันที่ 19 พฤษภาคม 2562 ส่งแก้ไขวันที่ 22 พฤษภาคม 2563 ตอบรับตีพิมพ์วันที่ 15 ธันวาคม 2563

บทคัดย่อ

เพียง 2 วันหลังจากการประกาศรางวัลของ SKYTRAX ปี 2019 การประท้วงของสายการบินที่นับว่าวนานและครั้งใหญ่ที่สุดในประวัติศาสตร์ของไต้หวันได้เกิดขึ้น การประท้วงเกิดขึ้นถึง 17 วัน โดยกลุ่มผู้ประท้วงเป็นพนักงานของสายการบิน EVA Air กว่า 2,000 คน ซึ่งนับว่าเป็นสายการบินเอกชนรายใหญ่ที่สุดในไต้หวันภายใต้การนำของสหภาพพนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินเทศายวน (TFAU) ตามข้อเรียกร้องให้มีการเพิ่มค่าแรงและเงื่อนไขการทำงานให้ดีขึ้น ตั้งแต่ต้นปี EVA Air มีเหตุการณ์ที่เป็นที่วิพากษ์วิจารณ์ในวงกว้างเกี่ยวกับความสัมพันธ์ของพนักงาน โดยการปฏิบัติของสายการบิน EVA Air นั้นแสดงถึงการเพิกเฉยต่อความรู้สึกของพนักงานและมุ่งเน้นที่จะปกป้องชื่อเสียงของสายการบินมากกว่าคำนึงถึงสภาพจิตใจของพนักงาน โดยแรงจูงใจในการประท้วงครั้งนี้อาจเป็นผลพวงมาจากการสำเร็จที่เกิดขึ้นในการประท้วงครั้งประวัติศาสตร์ของสายการบินไชนาแอร์ไลน์ (China Airlines) ในปี 2016 และการประท้วงของนักบินสายการบิน ไชนาแอร์ไลน์ เมื่อต้นปีที่ผ่านมา

คำสำคัญ : การประท้วงของสายการบิน พนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบิน สายการบินของไต้หวัน สหภาพการบิน

* คณะกรรมการจัดการการท่องเที่ยว สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์
เลขที่ 148 ถนนเสรีไทย แขวงคลองจั่น เขตบางกะปิ กรุงเทพมหานคร 10240
อีเมล : wirunpat.pan@gmail.com

**คณะกรรมการจัดการการท่องเที่ยว สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์
เลขที่ 148 ถนนเสรีไทย แขวงคลองจั่น เขตบางกะปิ กรุงเทพมหานคร 10240
อีเมล : roenbkk@gmail.com

Introduction

After the SKYTRAX Award was announced on the 18th of June 2019, the cabin attendants from one of Taiwan's largest airlines, EVA Air, participated in a demonstration. This was a demonstration that lasted longer than any strike in the history of Taiwan's airline industry following a breakdown in negotiations on pay between the company and the employees' union. The demonstration was staged by the Taoyuan Flight Attendants' Union (TFAU), which has cabin attendant representatives from both China Airlines and EVA Air.

The carrier now finds itself scrambling to solve a disagreement with more than 2,000 EVA Air cabin crew members that are insisting that an employee representative should be elected as one of the members of the airline's board, including an increased daily income, curbs on consecutive working hours, and prohibitions against reaping benefits negotiated by the union if the cabin attendants are not members of the union. It has been only three years since the first-ever demonstration in the Taiwan aviation sector by China Airlines cabin crews, who are part of the TFAU. Since then working conditions have slightly improved, including those at EVA Air, Taiwan's second-largest airline, in spite of the fact that EVA has historically prohibited unions. The aviators of China Airlines, Taiwan's largest airline, went on strike this year as well, successfully negotiating an agreement to relieve overwhelming tiredness by increasing the number of aviators. This may have been the motivation for EVA Air's employees to take action.

Background of EVA Air

EVA Air, the Taiwanese international airline, was established on March 8th, 1989, by Chang Yung-Fa, chairman of Evergreen Marine Corporation Group. The authorized capital was NT\$ 10 billion and the paid-up capital was NT\$ 2.5 billion. EVA Air, a member of Star Alliance, is presently offering services for 65 destinations that cover 4 continents; namely Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America. It is a 5-star airline, graded by SKYTRAX, with 81 aircraft composed of the Boeing 777-300 ER; the Dreamliner: 787-9, 787-10; and the Airbus: A330-300, A330-200, A321-200, and ATR72-600. EVA Air is continuously expanding its operation network and the number of aircraft it possesses. EVA Air manages and administers its business from its center at Taoyuan International Airport in Taiwan.

Table 1: EVA Air Major Shareholders (As of April 26, 2019)

Entity	Number of Shares	Percentage
Evergreen Marine Corp (Taiwan) Ltd.	753,974,969	16.00%
Evergreen International Corp.	533,348,944	11.32%
Falcon Investment Services Ltd.	501,804,309	10.65%
Evergreen Steel Corp.	233,632,933	4.96%
Chang, Yung-Fa	128,146,652	2.72%
New Labor Pension Fund	94,101,497	2.00%
Chang, Kuo-Cheng	89,781,405	1.90%
Chang, Kuo-Ming	54,346,853	1.15%
Evergreen International Storage & Transport Corp.	47,538,619	1.01%
Morgan Stanley & Co. International Plc.	43,497,836	0.92%

Note: EVA Air company profile (2019b)

Table 1 shows the substantial shareholders of EVA Air (EVA AIR, 2019b). The first three largest shareholders are Evergreen Marine Corp (Taiwan) Ltd. at 16.00%, Evergreen International Corp. at 11.32%, and Falcon Investment Services Ltd. at 10.65%.

Table 2: EVA Air Operational Data for 2018

Number of Passenger Flown	12,541,877
Revenue Passenger Kilometers (RPK)	48,368,418,455
Available Seat Kilometers (ASK)	59,835,563,790
Load Factor	80.84%
Revenue (NT\$)	99,077,690,301

Note: EVA Air company profile (2019b)

*NT\$ 1 = 0.985 baht (on 16 August, 2019)

According to Table 2, the revenue of EVA Air in 2018 was NT\$ 99 billion while the load factor was 80.84%, and the revenue passenger kilometers and the available seat kilometers were NT\$ 48 and 59 billion, respectively.

Table 3: EVA Air's Employees: (as of June 30, 2019)

Pilots	1,347
Flight Attendants	4,300
Administration Staff	5,579
Total:	11,226

Note: EVA Air company profile (2019b)

According to Table 3, the total number of EVA Air's employees is 11,226, and the number of flight attendants is 4,300, which ranks second after the number of administration staff, which is 5,579.

SKYTRAX Award 2019

SKYTRAX is the United Kingdom's international air transport grading organization that recommends airlines and airports all over the world for improving quality standards and recognizing the best international airlines through analyses of passenger satisfaction research around the world. It has been accepted as a crucial source of reference for airlines, the tourism industry, and frequent international travelers. The airline survey online is yearly carried out by SKYTRAX via phone and employing questionnaires from September 2018 to May 2019. Over 20 million travelers in more than 100 countries have replied to the questionnaires and provided feedback for 49 airports and onboard service areas.

Star Ratings are awarded to airlines according to the analysis of an airline's professional standards by the audit office of SKYTRAX. A typical rating of standards is derived from analyzing between 500 and 800 product and service delivery evaluation items. This includes airport services at the airline's center and onboard requirements across all useful and appropriate cabin/aircraft types.

SKYTRAX Star Ratings are accepted as an international benchmark of airline standards throughout the world and utilize a rating scale according to quality, ranging from the 1-Star to the exclusive 5-Star Airline award. Ratings are derived from the assessment of product and service standards for not only the onboard but also airport environments, employing a unified and consistent rating system (Skytraxratings, 2019).

5-Star Airline Rating: A seal of Quality Approval is awarded to airlines that exhibit a very high, overall quality performance. It recognizes high standards of the airport and onboard products along with uniform and valuable standards of staff service delivery throughout the airport and cabin service environments.

4-Star Airline Rating: Awarded to airlines that exhibit good overall quality performance, this position represents airlines enforcing good product standards across different travel cabins, and applying good standards of staff service for the onboard and home-based airport environments.

3-Star Airline Rating: This represents fair quality performance equating to an industry “average” of acceptable product and service standards. This 3-Star airline position indicates the satisfactory quality of a product across different travel cabins. A 3-Star rating does not meet 4-Star requirements because of inconsistency amongst either the product and/or flight attendant service for the onboard and home-based airport environments.

2-Star Airline Rating: This indicates airlines that exhibit a lower total quality of performance, and in some instances below the industry average across a lot of grading categories. A 2-Star grading signifies that it cannot maintain product quality consistently or indicates a lower-quality product and/or cabin attendant service for the onboard and home-based airport environments.

1-Star Airline Rating: This signifies an inferior quality of product delivered across the evaluation sectors, together with poor and/or inconsistent standards of cabin attendant staff service for the onboard and home-based airport.

There are 3 airline rating categories; namely full-service airlines, low-cost airlines, and leisure airlines.

EVA Air has been awarded as a 5-Star airline four years in a row from SKYTRAX and has won double top spots for the World's Best Airline Cabin Cleanliness and Best Economy Class Onboard Catering. EVA Air Cabin Cleanliness was Best or Second-Best five years consecutively. Additionally, EVA Air was ranked 6th among the "World's Top 10 Air carriers" in 2019. EVA Air was ranked in the Top 10 during 2015-2019. Table 4 below shows the awards won by SKYTRAX.

Table 4: EVA Air SKYTRAX AWARD 2015-2019

Category (ranking)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
World's Top 10 Airlines	9	8	6	5	6
World's Best Airline Cabin Cleanliness	1	2	1	2	1
World's Best Economy Class Catering				7	1
World's Best Airport Services	2	2	2	1	4
Best Airlines in Asia				2	4
Best Business Class Comfort Amenities		8		3	4
World's Best Airline Cabin Crew				5	5
Best Airline Staff in Asia					6
Best Economy Class Airline Seats				8	7
World's Best Economy Class Airlines				8	10

Note: EVA Air Skytrax Award 2019 (EVA AIR, 2019d)

China Airlines Demonstration and Its Impact

A historic demonstration in Taiwanese society was China Airlines' employees' demonstration in June 2016. It was the first-ever airline cabin crew demonstration in Taiwan with hundreds of cabin attendants participating in a strike at the main office of the airlines in Taipei (Hioe, 2016). China Airlines was condemned for extremely long working hours, low pay on holiday shifts, and the various changes that China Airlines has made throughout the years, which were claimed by the cabin attendants to be conditions that infringed on their rights as employees.

The victory of the demonstration was proclaimed after the Ministry of Labor complied with all of the requests of the strikers. This took place after union representatives met the Ministry of Labor to conduct negotiations, while simultaneously a group of employees marched to the Democratic Progressive Party's headquarter in order to protest. Because of the strike, more than 20,000 air passengers were stranded at the airport and 76 flights of the airline to Hong Kong, Japan, and other destinations were canceled (Chung, 2016).

Another demonstration began on the 8th of February, 2019 (Chung, 2019). Over 600 pilots of China Airlines, the largest airline in Taiwan, joined the demonstration because their negotiating unit, Pilots Union Taoyuan, was not successful in persuading the airline to lighten heavy workloads and raise salaries, the union board director Chen Pei-Pei stated. The China Airlines aviators that went on strike were calling for "full" rather than "basic" salaries—the equivalent of a 13th month each year a threefold increase, Chen further indicated. In addition, according to Chen, they required the airline to alleviate on-the-job tiredness by granting cabin attendants of four people on all over-12-hour flights and three flight attendants for all eight-hour flights. Further, there was a primary concern about the safety of China Airlines after 18 crashes and other mishaps from 1969 to 2007. As a result, airline spokesperson Jason Liu said the company was open to "restructuring" flight attendant sizes.

Over 200 flights, including several dozen to Hong Kong, were canceled after the union went on strike on February 8. As a result, nearly 50,000 passengers were stranded and the airline wasted over NT\$ 500 million (US\$ 16.2 million), officials and industrial sources stated (Chung, 2019). After 7 days of demonstrations, China Airlines signed an agreement to increase the number of aviators on various flights in order to fight off fatigue and to take steps to ensure air safety. The airline will roster three aviators on over-eight-hour flights, an increase from the present two, and have four aviators on flights longer than 12 hours, an increase from three. Consequently, under the agreement, the union agreed not to take industrial action again for the following three and a half years.

Color of Their Money

After China Airlines take industrial action in 2016, the EVA Air executives preemptively increased the benefits of the cabin attendants without even making any moves or requests. Formerly, the per diem rate of EVA Air's cabin crews was \$ 63 NTD an hour (nearly \$ 2), while China Airlines flight attendants' one was \$ 3 an hour before they took industrial action. Nevertheless, if they are on duty on flights to the US, just lunch would cost about \$ 10 or even \$ 20. However, these per diem rates were inadequate to cover that. After China Airlines cabin attendants took industrial action, they received \$ 5 an hour as the rate of a daily allowance. Before the EVA Air cabin attendants took any action, executives immediately increased their rate to \$ 90 NTD an hour (roughly \$ 2.97).

As now employees have seen the success of a demonstration, this may contribute to an increase in demonstrations in the long run and towards the unionization of other industries. In addition, this may be an incentive for other airline employees to take steps to call for improving their own bad working conditions.

Cases of EVA Air's Cabin Attendants

EVA Air's treatment of its cabin attendants has been scrutinized after several cases occurred months before the present writing. The first case, which was extensively reported internationally, involved a cabin attendant being forced to clean the buttocks of a European male passenger. The second case involved a cabin attendant that was aggressively investigated by management for more than three hours because she was accused of acting in a pornographic video on the Internet.

Regarding the first case, EVA Air has been criticized for establishing a bad precedent, allowing a female attendant to clean the private parts of a male passenger. This situation occurred in spite of the fact that the man had a previous history of sexual harassment while female flight attendants fell victim to the man, including cases of passing urine in his seat, forcing cabin crew members to clean it up, and spilling a drink on himself and forcing the cabin attendants to wipe it up.

As such, despite not being extensively reported on or discussed in the Taiwanese media, the case has come under fire for an incident of sexism and racism against the employees. Moreover, criticisms have followed against EVA Air for its shabby treatment of its flight attendants. Nevertheless, EVA Air has been insensitive to attempts to find a solution to the case. That is, in spite of the fact that the man was on a no-fly list, he was still allowed to board the plane, reportedly due to there being no space for his name on the no-fly list. That a simple typo contributed to the man being allowed to board the plane is something that leaves the flight attendants doubtful about the flight-screening system for airlines in Taiwan.

The case originally was publicly known because the incident was posted on social media. Subsequently, the cabin attendant has been a representative of the Taoyuan Flight Attendant's Union in press conferences, the union that has been the leading force for unionization efforts among flight attendants and other airline workers since the historic China Airlines demonstration in the summer of 2016. Nonetheless, it is extremely likely that EVA Air will actually try to penalize the cabin attendant for declaring the case, coinciding with disciplinary steps taken by Taiwanese airlines against unions for calling for improving working conditions. While reportedly another flight was booked by the man in May, EVA Air appears to not have taken any steps to suspend his flight.

Concerning the second case, a different cabin attendant was actively investigated by airline officials for more than three hours because she was accused of being an online pornographic actress known as SukiSuki Girl. The airline had apparently obtained an anonymous letter claiming that the cabin attendant was that person, and the airline staff reportedly attempted to take her to prove that she was not her, asking pointed questions about her personal life as if finding her guilty before proving it. (Maxon, 2019)

This was done by virtue of protecting the reputation of EVA Air, even with regards to what cabin attendants do privately on their own time. By coincidence, the investigation of this cabin attendant and the first case occurred on the same day. The cabin attendant, who has remained unknown, has also been a representative

of the Taoyuan Flight Attendant's Union. Both cases have attracted attention to the poor conditions in the aviation industry for cabin attendants. Cabin attendants are forced to work long hours under poor conditions for comparatively low pay, with management frequently seeking to increase their work hours while decreasing their pay rate. These elements have been factors that contributed to the China Airlines demonstration in 2016 and other industrial demonstrations by cabin attendants in the years since then, including a demonstration by EVA Air cabin attendants in 2017. EVA Air was one of the carriers that tried to unionize following the impact of the China Airlines demonstration, in spite of the fact that EVA Air has historically banned labor unions, causing a 2017 demonstration.

The Longest Aviation Strike in Taiwan

The strike was the longest in the history of Taiwan's airline industry, from June 20th through July 10th. The strike was organized by the Taoyuan Flight Attendants' Union representing both China Airlines and EVA's cabin crew members. The strikers were all women—no male employees had been hired up to that point despite its male recruitment plan announced in the middle of the strike. According to the Taoyuan Flight Attendants Union, more than half of the airline's crew members had been taking turns joining the demonstrations. It was said that the two parties were in dispute over a raise in allowances for flying offshore—from NT\$ 90 (US\$ 3) to NT\$ 150 per flight hour. EVA Air was also asked to allow flight attendants to do just one leg—rather than the two at present—before an overnight break on nine specific regional routes. EVA Air management stated that flight attendants already received a daily allowance higher than that provided by most competitors.

EVA Air employees first unionized in 2016, months after China Airlines flight attendants organized the first-ever strike in Taiwan's aviation industry. The current strike was then said to have been driven by the success of that recent occurrence. In the run-up to the strike, the flight attendants demanded that management address the recurrent issues regarding cases of sexual harassment, concerning which management refused to take any action. As declared by EVA Air president Clay Sun, the recruitment of male flight attendants had been the first-ever plan in decades but had to be put

on hold due to the ongoing strike. Sun added that some people did not think clearly and mistakenly found that being a flight attendant was easy and comfortable, but in fact, it is rather a stressful and challenging job where people are often blamed for their own misunderstanding.

EVA Air's policy of hiring only women as flight attendants came heavily under debate in January 2019, when flight crew members were allegedly sexually harassed by an American male passenger on a flight from Los Angeles to Taipei. One flight attendant broke into tears while recalling the incident at a press conference days later. Wang Kwo-Tsai, Deputy Minister of Transportation and Communications, stated that there would be no problems for strikers that wished to get back to work should they take their IDs back from TFAU.

Recruitment of EVA Air's Flight Attendants

The flight attendants recruited by EVA Air come from a variety of nations. They all meet the requirement of a minimum height of 160 cm, with an ideal height to weight ratio. When they stand on their tiptoes, their arms reach should be no less than 208 cm. Also, they need to be good at English, and a specialty in Chinese or Taiwanese would be preferable (EVA AIR, 2019a).

After being qualified, all crew members should receive a two-and-a-half month-long training (464 hours for trainees) on safety, service, and first aid on a yearly basis (EVA CSR, n.d.). In order to strengthen the teamwork culture in the company, EVA Air provides not only safety training courses, complying with the law but also service training courses. During the training, the cabin crew trainees that are newly hired will "stick together" to increase their bonding time, build a team spirit, and establish a good rapport with each other, and complete the comprehensive cabin crew training process so as to provide first-rate inflight service.

All of the service and safety training courses at EVA Air contain simulation equipment and include a focus on standard operating procedures (SOP) in order to provide hands-on practice through simulation. In 2015, EVA Air made an adjustment in the aircraft model of the main fleet. The company correspondingly changed

the simulation exercise equipment so that trainees would be able to carry out the real-world practice. EVA Air's training courses teach trainees to operate different kinds of in-flight emergency supplies and equipment, to do simulation exercises related to crisis management, and to acquire professional knowledge in diverse aspects of service. Trainees are not allowed to offer flight service until their evaluation is passed. EVA Air makes sure that its cabin crew members provide top-flight service for its customers and perfectly meet their needs and expectations.

In 2015, the Cabin Crew Standard Department created the "Cabin Operation Procedures Quick Reference Booklet" so that the cabin crews could easily access information about flight safety. When crew members are on duty, they can look up operating procedures quickly and offer passengers the best service. In the past, EVA Air only hired female flight attendants. However, after the strike, EVA Air made an announcement that it would hire male flight attendants, including foreigners, which is unprecedented. Clay Sun, President of EVA Air, emphasized that there is no difference between male and female flight attendants in terms of job expectations and wages, and he remarked that he believes that this is a crucial step in the company's progress (Everington, 2019).

Flight Attendants' Salary in Taiwan

The monthly salary for a flight attendant in Taiwan is around NT\$ 78,961. This includes housing, transportation, and other benefits. Flight attendants may be paid differently based on their experience, skills, gender, or location. Below is a detailed breakdown of the flight attendants' salary distribution based on many different criteria (Salaryexplorer, 2019).

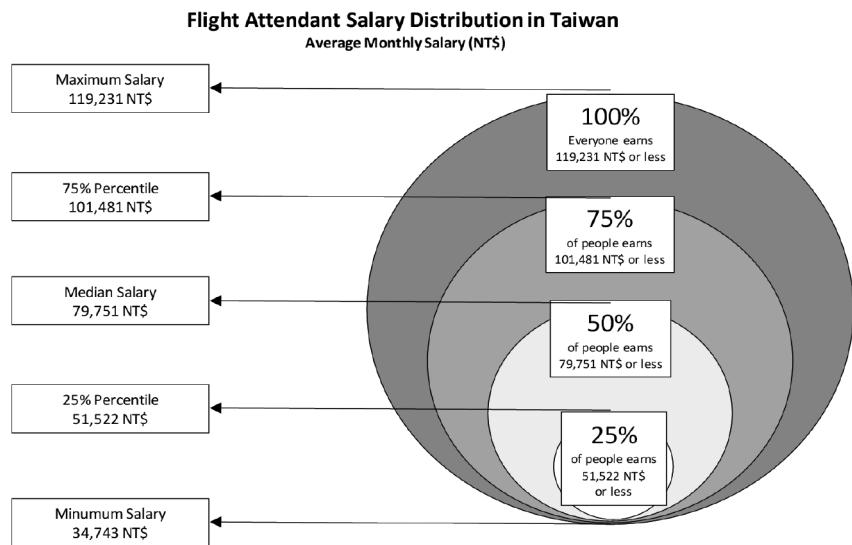


Figure 1: Flight Attendant Salary Distribution in Taiwan 2019

Note: Salary explorer (2019)

* NT\$ 1 = 0.985 baht (on 16 August 2019)

The salary range for flight attendants in Taiwan is NT\$ 34,743 per month (minimum salary) to NT\$ 119,231 per month (maximum salary). It can be observed that half of the aircrew members earn less than NT\$ 79,751 while the other half earn more than NT\$ 79,751. The diagram also shows that 25% of these workers earn less than NT\$ 51,522 while 75% of them earn more than NT\$ 51,522. In addition, 75% of people working as flight attendants earn less than NT\$ 101,481 while 25% earn more than NT\$ 101,481. These figures indicate the relationship between pay and individual performance. That is, high-performing workers appear to have a higher pay level than those whose job performance needs to be improved to the required standard.

Flight Attendant Salary Comparison by Years of Experience in Taiwan Average Monthly Salary (NT\$)

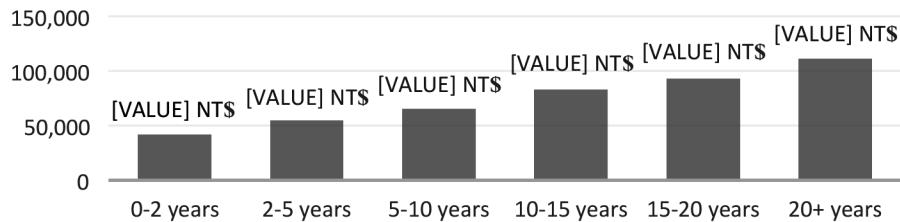


Figure 2: Flight Attendant Salary Comparison by Years of Experience in Taiwan 2019

Note: Salary explorer (2019)

* NT\$ 1 = 0.985 baht (on 16 August, 2019)

Experience level is the most important factor in determining the person's salary. To reiterate, flight attendants' pay is greatly dependent on the years of their work experience. A flight attendant with fewer than two years of experience makes approximately NT\$ 41,924 per month while someone whose expertise spans anywhere over two years of experience is expected to earn at least NT\$ 55,020 and possibly up to NT\$ 111,205 per month.

Flight Attendant Salary Comparison by Education Level in Taiwan Average Monthly Salary (NT\$)

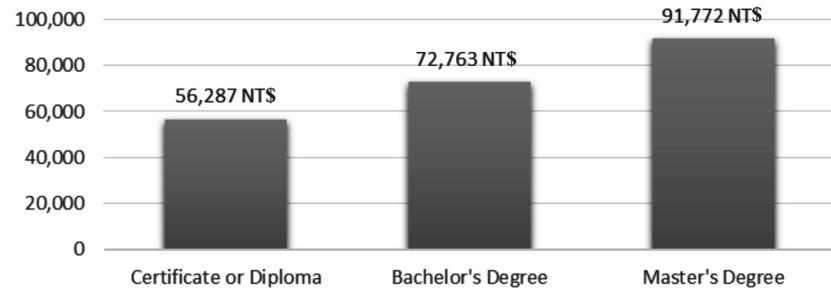


Figure 3: Flight Attendant Salary Comparison by Education Level in Taiwan 2019

Note: Salary explorer (2019)

* NT\$ 1 = 0.985 baht (on 16 August, 2019)

Apart from experience values, higher education maximizes the opportunity for a bigger salary. The chart illustrates a comparison of flight attendants' salaries by education level in Taiwan. It can be seen that employees with a master's degree earn almost two times more than the holders of lower degrees.

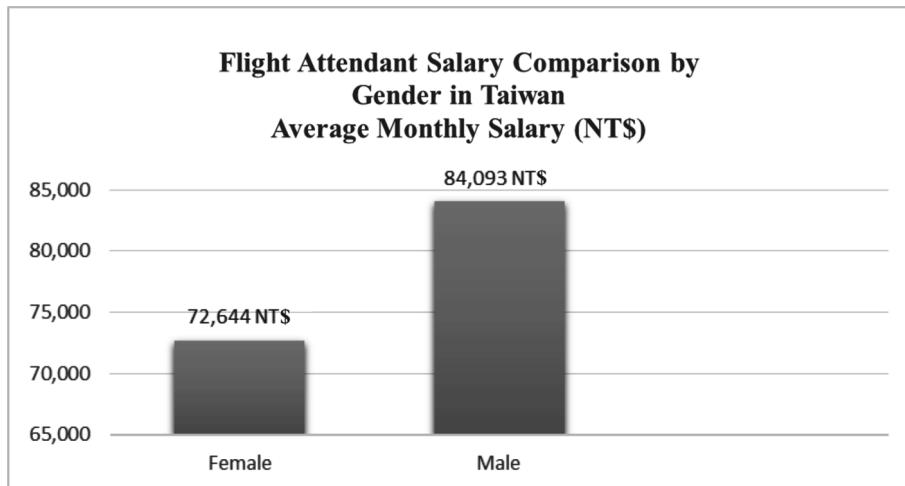


Figure 4: Flight Attendant Salary Comparison by Gender in Taiwan 2019

Note: Salary explorer (2019)

* NT\$ 1 = 0.985 baht (on 16 August 2019)

Performing the same job, female cabin staff members are however not paid the same as their male counterparts in the same organization; male cabin crew members in Taiwan earn 16% more than female employees.

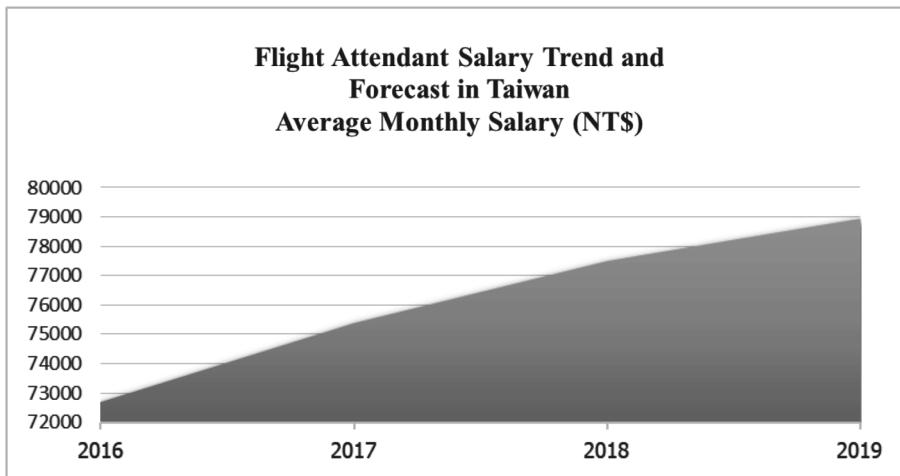


Figure 5: Flight Attendant Salary Trend and Forecast in Taiwan 2019

Note: Salary explorer (2019)

* NT\$ 1 = 0.985 baht (on 16 August 2019)

A steady rise has been observed in flight attendant salaries in Taiwan over the past few years. As displayed in the chart, salaries in 2019 are 2% higher than those of 2018, thus suggesting a slow yet continuous increase in pay in 2020 and future years.

Health Consequences of Flight Attendant Work

Griffiths and Powell, 2012, stated that the job of the flight attendant is considered an occupation where the worker is consistently exposed to cosmic ionizing radiation, circadian rhythm disruption due to night shift work and frequently crossing time zones, poor cabin air quality, elevated ozone levels, hypoxia, pesticides from cabin disinfection, high levels of occupational noise, heavy physical job demands, and verbal and sexual harassment.

Flight attendants report that they experience inflexible work hours and oppressive management while dealing with large numbers of passengers. It is a stressful job, as they often have to work on public holidays, and management highly controls their schedules. The all-women crews are, moreover, required to adhere to strict grooming standards to stay on top of their appearance on the job.

Another glaring problem that flight attendants have to face is that their job poses health risks. Insufficient nutritional intake and improper dietary habits have been reported and seem to have potentially caused numerous health issues. Furthermore, it is highlighted that unusual sleep patterns, which can be related to circadian rhythm disruption, are independent risk factors for adverse mental health conditions, including suicide (Bishop et al., 2018). Following McNeely, Mordukhovich, Tideman, Gale, and Coull (2018), there are positive associations between tenure as a flight attendant during a woman's reproductive years and infertility, miscarriages, preterm birth, and fetal abnormalities.

After the Strike

The cancellation of 2,250 flights forced by the flight attendant strike stranded around 400,000 passengers, a considerably large number, and thus cost the airline NT\$ 3.24 billion or \$ 104 million (Hioe, 2019). Multiple outcomes of the strike were observed. These include bonuses of NT\$ 300 (US\$ 10) for short flights and NT\$ 500 (US\$ 17) for transoceanic flights, overnight rests on flight routes to Tokyo and Beijing, and the representation on EVA Air's board and its disciplinary committees. Yet many of their original demands, including hourly layover allowances and double pay for working on public holidays, were not met. The union also agreed not to strike for the next three years on the condition that the management would comply with its agreement not to retaliate against the protestors in the 2019 strike.

A week after a meeting with the chairman of the board, the strike was thought to be over, as the strikers voted to accept the terms so they could return to their work. Nonetheless, the two sides eventually failed to reach a consensus and decided to extend the strike. It was believed that EVA Air intentionally aimed to defend its authority over EVA Air workers rather than preventing the loss of profits and therefore the union's goals, as raised by one of TFAU's directors Wu Xiao-Xuan, had to be changed to protect the existence of the union.

In order to silence the dissent within the company, a fine of NT\$ 500,000 would be imposed on employees making untrue comments against the company.

Eventually, EVA Air management decided to drop the clauses and signed a non-retaliation agreement. Although such a deal was seen only as a partial victory, it was evidence of the protestors' unfaltering attempt to fight the management's attempt to dissolve the union. A press conference was later held to mark the changing force balance caused by the strike. Though the flight attendants' solidarity evidentially became strong, this movement shows that Taiwanese airline management is struggling to cease further compromise.

In spite of the non-retaliation negotiation, only a day after EVA Air resumed its normal operations, Kuo Chi-Yen, one of the heads of TFAU, Ms. Kuo has already known for denouncing an incident where she was inflicted on assisting a passenger to employ the lavatory and clean his backside, was reportedly dismissed. The EVA Air executives utilized a screenshot of her private comments to accuse her of "bullying" and "threatening flight safety" and therefore sacked her and made her available to the police for criminal investigations.

Meanwhile, the company has publicly supported a new law requiring a 30-day advance notice prior to a strike, an idea which has recently been made popular by large media outlets as an attempt to fight unionization in the media industry.

The Response of the Taiwanese Government to the Strike

Since TFAU asked for the Ministry of Labor (MOL) to rule on the EVA Air case for unethical labor practices, yet the MOL ruled in favor of the EVA's executives because of the evidence that they provided. For instance, when EVA Air's Vice-president Ho Ching-Sheng told a union activist "you had better leave yourself some way out" when the demonstrators were forming the picket line. The union at the time already requested the MOL to resolve that this behavior was an unjust labor practice as it was a serious menace to the union. However, in the end, they didn't appear, because (the government) told that (Ho) said this "during the period of taking industrial action, when feelings were tight on the not only executive but also workforce side, so (that was) his rights of speech," thus there was not unjust labor practice.

In terms of Kuo Chi-Yen's case, she called for a rule on unethical labor practices, since she claimed that EVA Air was trying to show her case as an example, and undermine the union's power by eliminating her. Nevertheless, in the end, the MOL reacted to her case that the passing on her screenshots has tarnished EVA Air's reputation as a company and therefore her sacking does not promote an unjust labor practice (The Spark (Taiwan), 2008).

How EVA Air Responded to TFAU's Strike

Upon learning that Taoyuan Flight Attendants' Union had called for a strike, EVA formed an emergency response team immediately. The company's priority was not to put passengers in great inconvenience while maintaining flight safety. During the strike, EVA Air informed passengers of the situation and used text messages to keep them up to date with their flights' status and schedules. EVA Air also worked with other airlines to transfer as many passengers to alternative flights as possible. For passengers whose flights were delayed over 6 hours, EVA Air provided refreshments, accommodations and transportation, or compensation up to \$ 250.00 US dollars. Passengers had to keep their receipts or certificates of expenditure as documents in order to claim compensation. Moreover, there was no service charge for passengers to change flights or to request a ticket refund. Additionally, passengers could visit EVA Air's website, www.evaair.com, for more information about the strike and related guidelines (EVA AIR, 2019c). To conclude, the strike had a huge impact on EVA Air. As of July 2019, the company has spent NT\$ 3.24 billion (\$ 104 million US dollars) (Hioe, 2019).

EVA Air's Next Chapter

What is the next step for the EVA Air flight attendants in TFAU? A few of their demands were not met, such as a rise in the hourly layover allowance, and double pay when working on national holidays; however, the flight attendants have reached an agreement not to go on another strike during the following three years. Hopefully, there will be no strike by the end of July 2022. Further, the EVA Air board has unprecedentedly decided to hire male flight attendants, including foreigners for

the first time in its history. Is this what the president of EVA Air believes to be an important step in the progress of the company? The impact of the EVA Airstrike has given more and more people the idea of passing laws that require advanced notice of strikes in Taiwan. Union members, not only TFAU members but also labor unions in Taiwan, should also take steps to deal with any push for the legalization of such laws.

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