

'MOVING THE FEMALE PILOT AGENDA FORWARD'

SARAH BARRY

Sarah Barry - Sarah.barry@bnu.ac.uk



ABOUT ME

- Airline Pilot
- CAA & FAA
- Worked in aviation for many years
- Researcher, Senior Lecturer and Director of Education in School of Aviation & Security at Buckinghamshire New University, UK



WHY DO WE NEED THIS RESEARCH?

WHY DO WE NEED THIS RESEARCH?

- Between 1960 and 2010 women pilots increased from 1.67% to 5.39% (FAA)
- In 1994 in the UK there were 84 female pilots who held an ATPL(A) - 1.17% (CAA)
- In 2018 in the UK there were 613 female pilots who held an ATPL(A) - 5.19% (CAA)



WHAT IS THE REAL PROBLEM?
WHY ARE NUMBERS CONSISTENTLY LOW?

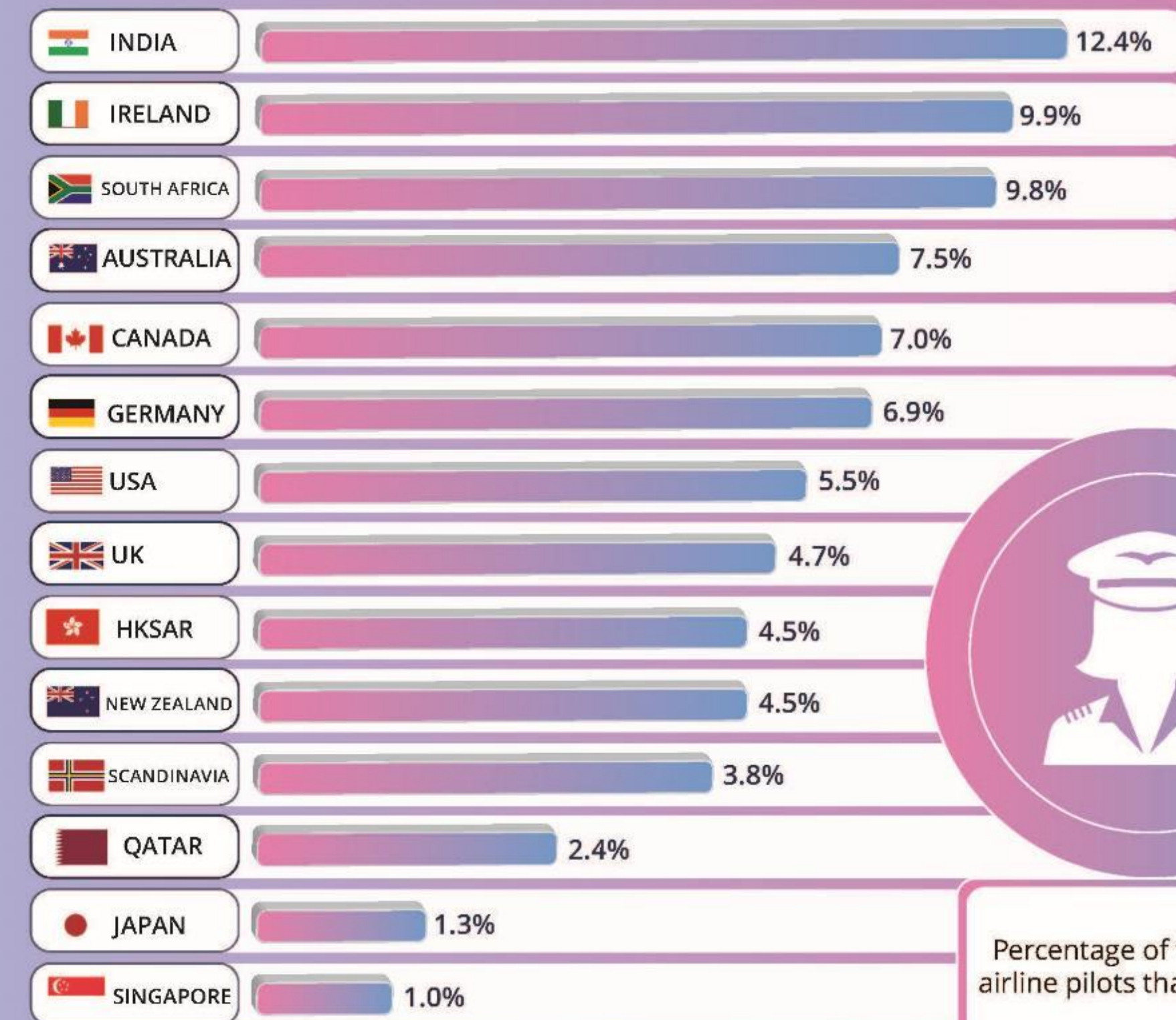
WHAT PERCENTAGE OF
PILOTS ARE FEMALE?

5.8% of airline pilots are female

Female Pilots: % of the pilot workforce worldwide
(ISWAP, 2021)

How Countries Are Measuring Up On Gender Equality in the Flight Deck

isa²¹

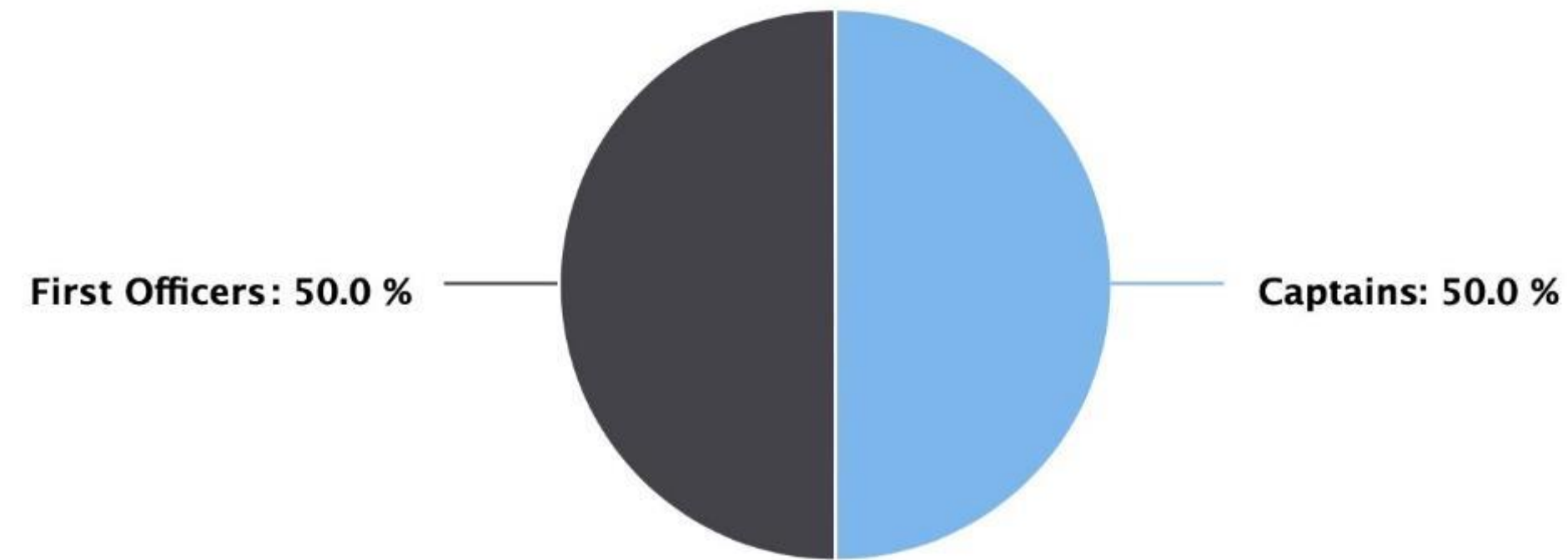


Source: International Society of Women Airline Pilots 2021
www.ISA21.org

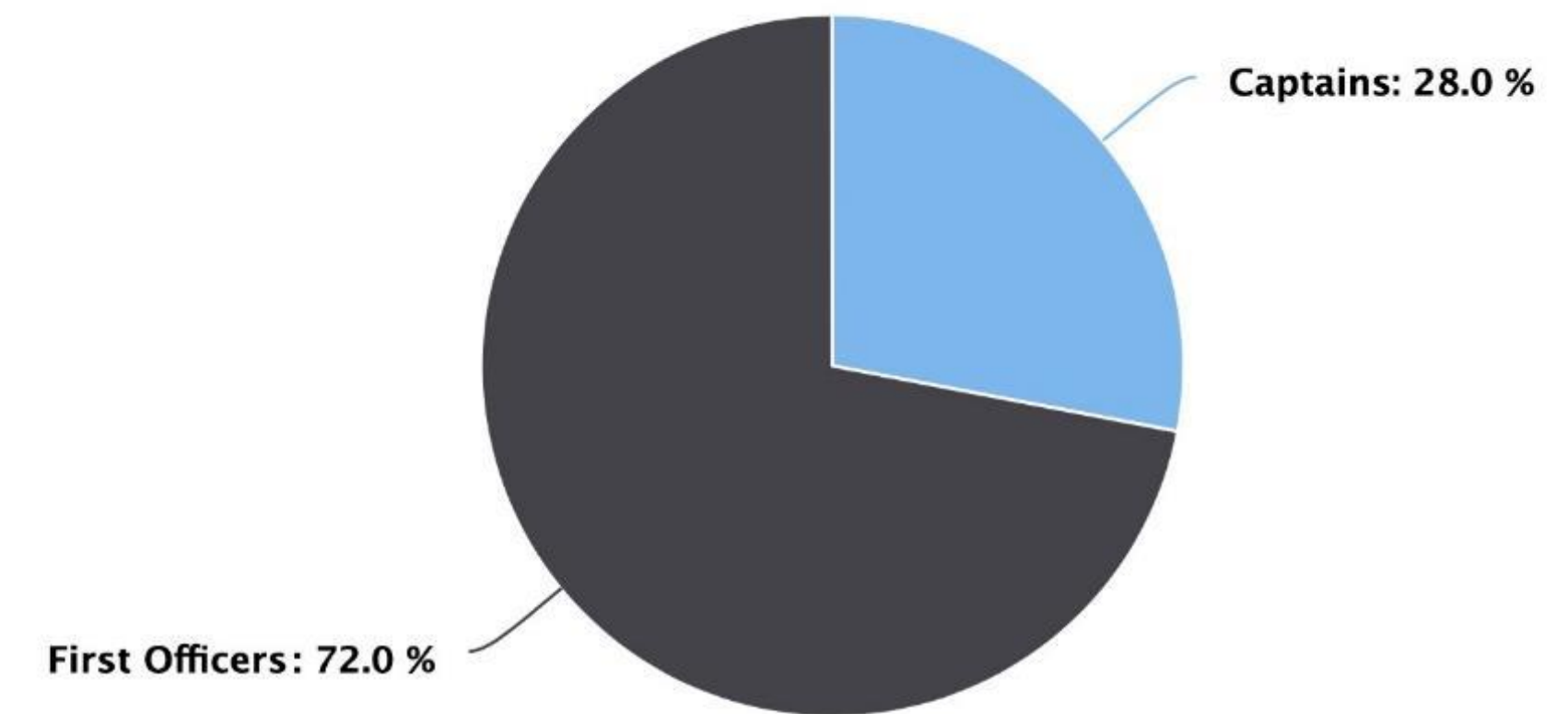
isa²¹

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF
FEMALE PILOTS ARE
CAPTAINS?

Male Pilots



Female Pilots

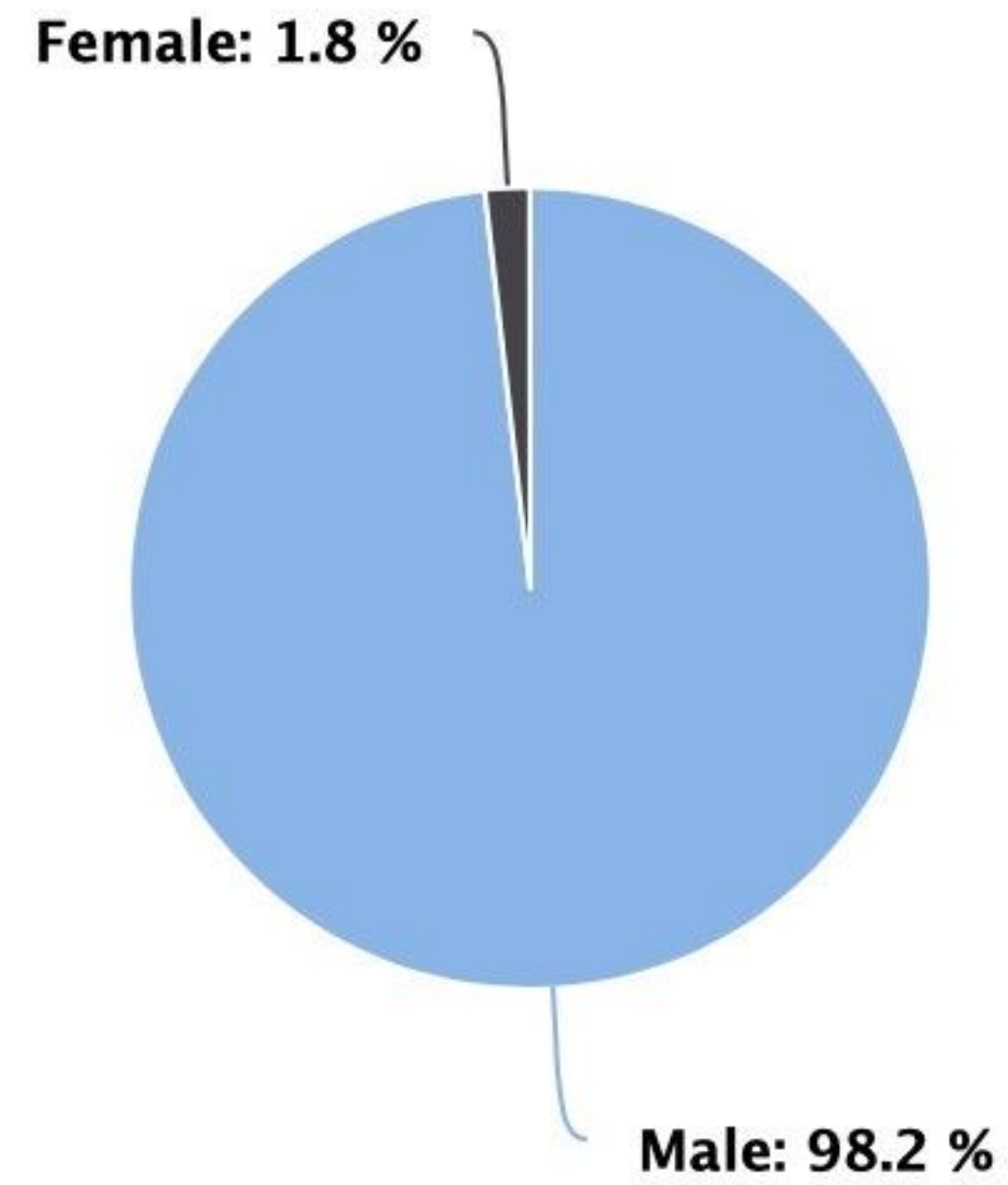


28% of female pilots are Captains, 72% are FOs

Female Captains: 1.42% of the pilot workforce
(ISWAP, 2020)

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF
TRE_s (IN UK)
ARE FEMALE?

TREs



1.8% of TREs in the UK are female

(CAA,2022)

WHY?

OTHER INDUSTRIES

- Medicine - **12% of consultant surgeons are female** (UK)(RCS, 2018) (vs **89.2%** nurses are female)(NMC, 2017)
- Maritime - **2% of seafarers are female** (IMO, 2022)
- Rail Industry - **6.5% of train drivers (UK) are female** (ASLEF, 2019)
- Aviation - **5.8% of pilots are female** (ISWAP, 2021) (vs **70%** cabin crew are female (EasyJet, 2017))

WHAT IS THE ATTRITION
RATE IN YOUR
COMPANY?

“....cultural attitudes towards women pilots in the aviation industry are biased and discriminatory.”

“The literature revealed that an aviation culture resisting female inclusion underpinned most challenges and barriers faced by female pilots.”

“....masculine culture that dominates aviation significantly diminishes women pilots' experiences and undermines their performance.”

Gorlin and Bridge (2021)

HOW CAN WE RETAIN HIGHER NUMBERS OF FEMALE PILOTS?

Training

- **Post-Covid currency**
- **Training - how is the training design informed?**
- **Do you offer any specific programmes for female pilots?**
- **Consider leadership styles M/F**

HOW CAN WE RETAIN HIGHER NUMBERS OF FEMALE PILOTS?

Social Factors

- Encourage paternity leave
- Employment Practices - flexible working equality
- Workplace Culture
- Support during pregnancy and subsequent return to flying
- Support during menopause
- Acknowledge the higher cognitive, emotional and mental load on women (Hogenboom, 2021)

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

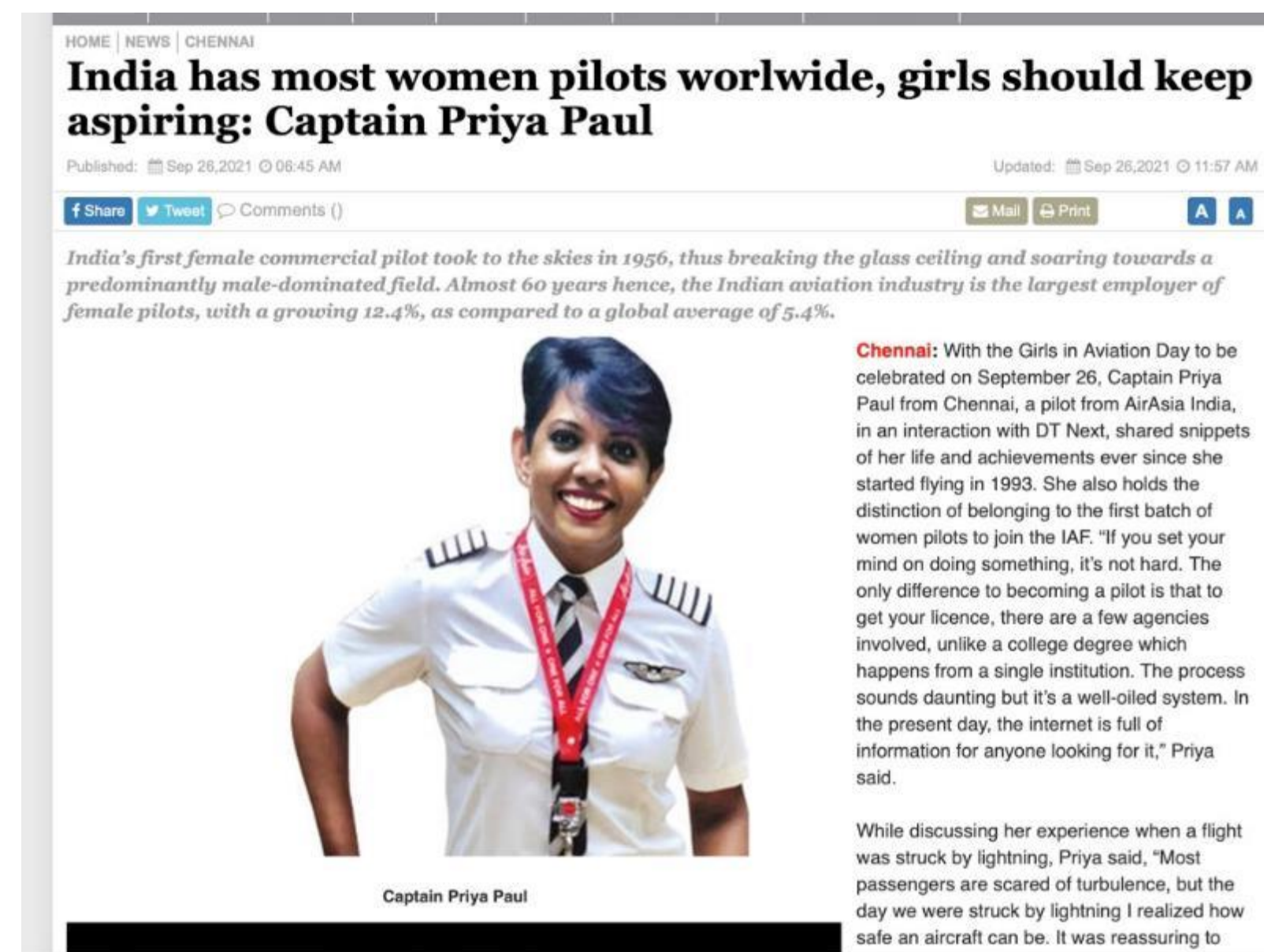
- analyse your company's attrition rates and reasons, split by gender
- understand why there may be a difference in promotion rates
- understand that societal demands are likely higher on female pilots than male pilots; mitigations
- investigate if there is a higher retention rate for female cabin crew compared to female pilots in your company
- investigate the support available to female pilots around maternity and menopause

NEXT STAGES

- Large scale survey of pilots within Europe - please support!
- New analyses of current data
- Interviews with those who have left the industry
- All support welcome; company specific data is extremely useful and would be de-identified
- Final report expected to be available from January 2026
- Interim results/ reports

POTENTIAL FOR AIRLINES TO BE INVOLVED

- I can work with you to give a company specific report on female pilots in your organisation
- I can work with you on family friendly policies
- Further research in your company is possible; the UK government currently offers financial support for this, under the Knowledge Transfer Partnership scheme - ask me for further information



QUESTIONS?
THOUGHTS?
IDEAS?