

Airline On-the-Job-Training: Basis for an Enhanced Tourism Internship Program

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Abstract

This study focused on the Airline On-the-Job-Training as part of the requirement of the curriculum in the higher education institutions. More specifically, the study aimed to describe the profile of the intern in terms of gender, company assignment, department assigned and nature of work assigned; to determine the knowledge, skills, attitude and personality acquired from the training; to identify the problems encountered in performing the assigned tasks and to propose a plan of action to address the problems encountered in performing the tasks. The researchers used the descriptive evaluative method or descriptive design. Results showed that there was a very good over-all assessment of the respondents on the knowledge acquired. However, competitive enough in the job assignment with command of relevant general information and technology obtained the least. There was a very good over-all assessment of the respondents on the skills acquired. Seeking to improve the skills by taking initiative to learn new paradigms and methodologies ranked first. However, delivers the required amount/volume of work output within the allotted time and makes productive use of the resources e.g., terminals and or workstations assigned obtained the least.

Keywords: Airline, Internship, Work Performance, Training, Skills

INTRODUCTION

An airline is a company that provides air transport services for traveling passengers and freight. Airlines lease or own their aircraft with which to supply these services and may form partnerships or alliances with other airlines for mutual benefit. Flight attendant is not the only job title for airline industry. Jobs range from travel agents to aircraft pilots, flight engineers to cargo and freight, (<http://www.ask.com>).

According to Walker (2007), training is the process used to develop knowledge and skills needed to perform the jobs, duties and tasks found in an organization. This process in most cases, involves supervising new employees while they perform the job for a shift or two, then standing back and unleashing them on an unsuspecting public. As they gradually improve thru a process of trial and error, the customer suffers and so does business.

The Airline Training course is ideal for those seeking to work in the Airline sector. This course is suitable for those looking to a career as ground crew, cabin crew (air hostess, air steward), and check-in and customer service. The airline industry has undergone a massive overhaul since 9/11 and only those companies who were prepared to reform survived. Increased competition and cheaper fares have meant that air travel is now much more accessible to everyone which has resulted in a huge surge in the popularity of international travel, (Portobello Institute, 2013).

Airline Information System provides a process and efficient system in airlines that composed of Pricing and Revenue System, Maintenance and Engineering System, Flight Operation System, Hr Management System, Business Processing System, Finance System, Air Cargo System, Sales and Marketing System, Crew Management System, CRM System, Airport Management System and Central Management System. It is a system to book ticket on airlines, provide the easy and configurable view of how airline is performing, manage sales and marketing,

define new business scenario, cover aircraft maintenance and engineering operation, managing employee life-cycle, manage flight daily operations, provide tracking and managing cargo, schedule crew staff, (Siddhartha, 2007) .

Employability of Tourism and Hospitality Students: the researched study focused on the factors that contribute to the employability of tourism and hospitality students. Findings would be very useful in evaluating the effectiveness and relevance of tourism and hospitality curriculum offered by the school. Having the appropriate academic preparation and training gives better opportunities for graduates of tourism and hospitality courses as is it the basic requirement in the tourism industry. This fact gives better edge for graduates of Lyceum of Batangas in terms of employment aspects. Students who want to be flight attendants must possess at least the basic requirement needed in an airline. It includes height, vision, age and customer service experience and language experience, (Raszay & Dunk, 2008).

According to Nedry (2007), president of Hospitality Excellence Inc., a company working to enhance the guest experience through service excellence. Since starting her career at Disney World, she has watched the evolution and growing flexibility of grooming standards. But one thing has not changed.

According to Hogan (2008) said hospitality managers must establish themselves as a “credible voice of authority”. Communication must therefore be clear and concise, whether it be in writing, a one-on-one conversation or group presentation, (<http://www.senecac.on.ca>).

Tourism students (Casuga et. al, 2013) who conducted their training in PAGSS, they knew that aviation is a wide business. They cannot say that when they are tourism student, only for airport operations is their profession. There are many departments of airlines that are suitable for their skills and abilities. It enhances more their self-confidence and their personality especially when they experienced the Flight Attendant Workshop. It encourages more to motivate them to be a flight attendant someday because of the inspiring stories of their facilitators. They know how a proper grooming was done and to take good care of all themselves also called as proper hygiene that is one of the traits that an airline crew has. It is a memorable experience for them because they know all that it is hard to have their training in airlines, but because of the opportunities, PAGSS gave them a chance to view the airport, they knew what are the responsibilities of each airline frontliners and also the different safety procedures to do in case of emergency. It is an advantage for them to apply jobs because of the experienced that they gain.

According to Cablaio et.al (2013), tourism students who had trainings at MIASCOR they had an experienced in compiling contracts with different airlines in the MIASCOR’s Executive Office. Because of that, they knew the needed services of the airlines in terms of check-in until the passenger’s flight. They also been aware with the usual issues and complaints received by the airlines and the ground handling company. They also met the different station managers even the President and CEO of each airline.

They assisted passengers in check-in, doing the final security and intercepting of late check-in bags in the boarding gate until going to aircraft. Different race of people they met at the airport. They assisted also passengers in laying over at the hotel when there are cancelled flights.

Having training at Saudi Arabian Airlines Cargo and Philippine Airlines Cargo, tourism students experienced to familiarize with the process of exports and imports of cargos. They knew also how to use Cargo Spot, the system used in reservation of cargos, and how to answer phone calls with the different freight forwarders. Before they end up their training, they memorized different 3 letter codes and flight numbers. They assisted also an Iranian to get their excess baggage to the customs department (Velasco, 2013).

And according to Mangubat (2013), trainings at Gulf Air, students had the opportunities to assists VIP’s

and business class passengers. They also attended and handled passenger inquiry.

(Borillo et.al, 2011) Based on the results of the study, it has been concluded by the researchers that the partner companies were satisfied with both the job performance and personal traits of the trainees. The business establishments were all pleased with the punctuality, courtesy, attitude towards work and sociability of the practicumers. The trainees had hard time with their efficiency in assigned tasks and adjusting to additional and unexpected work. It was also found out with this study that the more positive traits were, the better job performance of the trainees from the CITHM in LPU Batngas.

This study concerns the Tourism Students in LPU who experienced the 400 hours training program in airlines. The course is entitled Tour 10C with its description, Airlines, Tourist Attraction and Tourism Organization. Some of the tourism students chose to have their training in different countries like Unites States of America, assigned either at the front or back of the house of a hotel and in different tourism organizations like Department of Tourism in Batangas City.

The College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management offers various training before sending the student in the real world of professions which include Airline Business, Travel and Tour Operations and Ticketing and Airfares.

The Internship office has the responsibility to assign tourism students for their training. There will be a schedule for passing all their requirements needed for the training. The internship representative for tourism courses will be the one to look for possible companies or airlines that will accept on the job trainees. After passing all the requirements, a brief orientation from the Internship Office will be scheduled for the students regarding the rules and regulations while in the workplace. Another orientation must be attended by the students conducted by the companies for them to be prepared in work. After the orientation, the companies will assign the respective departments they will work on. The training instructor will demonstrate the process on how the work is done.

The Internship Office tied up with different companies like MIASCOR, MACROASIA, PAGSS, DNATA, Philippine Airlines (Cargo), Cebu Pacific Air, Manila International Airport Authority, Gulf Air and Saudi Arabian Airlines Cargo that offers the trainings in their various departments for on-the-job trainees.

The purpose of this study is for the internship office and the university to increase training programs in airline industry. Second is for the tourism students to easily grab career opportunities in airline frontiers and for them to meet the maximum standards of being flight attendants.

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the student's internship experience and determine the effectiveness of their practicum whether it helped enhance the ability to achieve the intended learning goals of the internship programs in Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study focused on the Airline On-the-Job-Training as part of the requirement for Tourism Internship Program. More specifically it described the profile of the intern in terms of gender, company assignment, department assigned and nature of work assigned; to determine the knowledge, skills, attitude and personality acquired from the training; to identify the problems encountered in performing the assigned tasks and to propose a plan of action to address the problems encountered in performing the tasks.

METHODS

Research Design

The purpose of the study is to describe the status of the students experiencing airline on-the-job-training, hence, the researchers used the descriptive evaluative method or descriptive design. According to Russell K. Schott (2008), descriptive research is to describe things, such as the market potential for a product or the demographic and attitudes of consumers who avail the product while Key (2007), states that descriptive research is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe “what exists” with respect to variable.

Participants of the Study

The researchers utilized Tourism Students of Lyceum of the Philippines University Batangas who have already taken Airline On-the-Job-Training during summer of SY 2012-2013. From the file given by the representative of the internship office assigned in CITHM College, out of 224 tourism students, there are 82 fourth year tourism students who were deployed in different companies/airlines in Manila who experienced their 400 hours training in airlines, month of April, May and half of June 2013.

Data Gathering Instrument

In order to gather data, the researchers modified questions from the evaluation forms given by the internship office, supervised training book in airline operations and from instructors teaching airline business. It consists of three parts related to the particular title. Part 1 the respondent’s profile in terms of age, gender, company assignment, department assigned, nature of work assigned. Part 2 uses a likert scale where 5 as excellent, 4 as very good, 3 as good, 2 as fair and 1 as poor in determining the knowledge and skills acquired in the training. Part 3 is the intern’s problems encountered during the training.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers look for some topic for the research title and presented it to the adviser for consultation and approval of the topics. After the topic had been approved, the researcher went to the library and search for possible resources like books, and previous study prior to the presentation of the approved problems for the construction of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was retrieved and tallied, analyzed and interpreted.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data gathered, the following statistical tools were used: percentage and frequency distribution which determined the profile of the respondents and weighted mean which was used to determine the knowledge and skills acquired and the problems encountered during the training program. The arbitrary guide used in the study to interpret the result of the data gathered is as follows: 4.50 – 5.00 = Excellent; 3.50 – 4.49 = Very Good; 2.50 – 3.49 = Good; 1.50 – 2.49 = Fair; 1.00 – 1.49 = Poor

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Profile

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	4	4.9
Female	78	95.1
Age		
16 – 19	25	30.5
20 – 24	57	69.5
Company Assignment		
MIASCOR Aviation Group	13	15.9
MacroAsia	10	12.2
PAGSS	47	57.3
DNATA	3	3.7
Cebu Pacific Air	2	2.4
Manila International Airport	2	2.4
Gulf Air	1	1.2
Philippine Airlines/ Cargo	2	2.4
Saudi Arabian Airlines Cargo	4	4.9
Department Assigned		
Cargo Business/ Department	14	17.1
HR Department/ Recruitment Department	11	13.4
Ground Operation Department/ PSA	29	35.4
Manpower Agency	4	4.9
Environmental Department	5	6.1
Information System Department	1	1.2
Training and Quality Assurance Department	4	4.9
Administration Department	6	7.3
Engineering and Fleet Management	2	2.4
Logistics Department	1	1.2
	9	11.0
Nature of Work Assigned		
Perform administrative work	51	62.2
Manage guests/ customer relations	45	54.9
Input and retrieve data/ information using computer systems	38	46.3
Market and sell products and/ or services	13	15.9
Perform cashiering functions	10	12.2
Communicate with other departments	59	72.0
Coordinate/ assist in public relations activities	48	58.5

Table 1 presented the distribution of the respondent's profile. In terms of sex, mostly are female which composed of 78 or 95.1 percent while male got 4.9 percent. Respondents are mostly female because most tourism students enrolled in LPU-B are female.

In terms of age, most of the respondents are 20-24 years old which composed of 57 or 69.5 percent while 25 or 30.5 percent are from the age of 16-19. Airline On-the-Job-Training was taken when the respondents are 3rd Year College during summer School Year 2012-2013.

Most of the respondents have taken their Airline-on-the-Job-Training at Philippine Airport Ground Sup-

port Solutions Inc (PAGSS) having 47 or 57.3 percent followed by MIASCOR Aviation Group with 13 or 15.9 percent. PAGSS offered a Flight Attendant Workshop wherein the tourism students are more engaged in this kind of industry. This company accommodates more students from Lyceum of the Philippines Batangas being the Center of Development of the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management. However, the lowest number of respondents took their training in Gulf Air, Cebu Pacific Air, and Manila International Airport which got 1-2 trainees with 2.4 and 1.2 percent only.

In terms of the Department Assigned, Ground Operation Department/ PSA got the highest ranking of 29 or 35.4 percent wherein the trainees experienced the real training in the airline industry. Responsibilities of being a ground steward are the given tasks to the trainees that they must execute. On the other hand, Information System Department and Logistics Department got 1 or 1.2 percent. This department apparently gives work not related to the tourism industry.

Regarding assigned tasks or nature of work assigned, communicate with other departments got the highest ranking of 59 or 70.0 percent while perform cashiering functions got the lowest ranking of 10 or 2.2 percent. Though trainees work in different department, communication still is a regular undertaking since these departments have one primary goal and that is to make the airline business works. Performing cashiering function is mostly not allowed to the trainees to avoid problems and untoward incidents.

Table 2. Knowledge Acquired

Knowledge Acquired	WM	VI	Rank
1. Comprehends/follows instructions clearly.	4.27	Very Good	1
2. Understands the operating procedures and techniques.	4.16	Very Good	3
3. Competitive enough in your job assignment.	4.13	Very Good	4
4. Able to organize work and analyze it.	4.18	Very Good	2
5. Has the command of relevant general information and technology.	4.12	Very Good	5
Composite Mean	4.17	Very Good	

As seen from the table, the over-all assessment of the respondents' on the knowledge acquired was very good with a composite mean of 4.17. Comprehends/follows instructions ranks first with weighted mean score of 4.27. Training is a set of a systematic processes designed to meet learning objectives related to trainees' current or future jobs. There are three categories of learning objectives: knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Knowledge objectives are of three types: declarative, procedural, and strategic. Declarative knowledge is the person's store of factual information. Procedural knowledge is the person's understanding about how and when to apply the facts. Strategic knowledge is used for planning, monitoring, and revising goal-directed activity.

Trainees must comprehend and understand the instructions of their training supervisor. Part of the orientation of the internship office of the university is to be industrious at all times especially during working hours. Able to organize work and analyze it and understands the operating procedures and techniques with the weighted mean of 4.18 and 4.16 followed respectively.

However, competitive enough in the job assignment and has the command of relevant general information and technology got the lowest mean score of 4.13 and 4.12 respectively.

A trainee must be competitive enough in his or her field of expertise. He or she must experience all the assigned tasks that a tourism student must have. The goal and objective of the internship office is to cater to all the tourism students for them to be satisfied on the establishment that they assigned to the students. That will also be the reason why a student will not be competitive if they have the assigned department which is not applicable to their program.

Trainees at MIASCOR are also given the chance to train in different departments like cargo and human resource management. Because of that, they were able to grasp tips on how the company hired their employees especially a ground or flight steward. Duties inside the cargo department gave them ideas on what to bring in a flight and labelling cargo's with their corresponding title (Kalalo et.al, 2013).

Table 3. Skills Acquired

Skills Acquired	WM	VI	Rank
1. Seeks to improve your skills by taking initiative to learn new paradigms and methodologies.	4.24	Very Good	1
2. Comfortable in presenting recommendations, suggestions and criticisms to your supervisor /peers and open to accommodate them with an objective and positive point of view.	4.16	Very Good	2.5
3. Accurate and efficient in work.	4.16	Very Good	2.5
4. Makes productive use of the resources e.g., terminals and or workstations assigned to you.	4.07	Very Good	5
5. Delivers the required amount/volume of work output within the allotted time.	4.13	Very Good	4
Composite Mean	4.15	Very Good	

Table 3 showed the over-all assessment of the respondents on the skills acquired with a composite mean of 4.15 interpreted as very good. Seeking to improve skills by taking initiative to learn new paradigms and methodologies ranked first with a weighted mean score of 4.24.

Skill reflects one's proficiency at specific tasks such as operating a piece of equipment, giving a presentation, or making a business decision.

Knowing and learning more about job is a good characteristic of a trainee. A trainee can improve his or her skills by initiating themselves to the assigned tasks that is related to their field. Learning more about the easy methods in solving problems undertaken in the job is also one of the acquired skills that they must apply. It was followed by comfortable in presenting recommendations, suggestions and criticisms to your supervisor /peers and open to accommodate them with an objective and positive point of view and accurate and efficient in work.

However, delivers the required amount/volume of work output within the allotted time and makes productive use of the resources e.g., terminals and or workstations assigned got the lowest mean score of 4.13 and 4.07 respectively.

Trainee must also deliver the assigned tasks on time or on the given time allotted to him or her. Most of the respondents are not able to use some of the technologies that a department have. Not only the technology but also other resources that a trainee must practice to be useful in their field.

Trainees at MacroAsia are luckily assigned at Ground Operation in Terminal 1 at NAIA International Airport. Their tasks are likely the same as the Ground steward, though they were not instructed on what to do and

only on their first day that they were instructed, the trainees enjoyed assisting passengers since one of the tasks of hospitality professional is to satisfy their guests, (Bancoro, 2013 et.al).

Table 4. Attitude Acquired

Attitude Acquired	WM	VI	Rank
1. Reports to the office with regular punctuality and finishes the duty as scheduled.	4.38	Very Good	3
2. Reliable and imbues a sense of Responsibility in handling the tasks assigned.	4.35	Very Good	4
3. Enjoys comfortable working relationship with your superiors or peers.	4.32	Very Good	5
4. Applies the virtues of integrity and honesty in all aspects of your work.	4.46	Very Good	1
5. Has the positive attitude towards criticism and towards superiors.	4.39	Very Good	2
Composite Mean	4.38	Very Good	

Table 4 showed the over-all assessment of the respondents on the attitude acquired with a composite mean of 4.38 and interpreted as very good. Applying the virtues of integrity and honesty in all aspects of work ranked first with a weighted mean score of 4.46.

Trainee must be honest at all times. He or she must be loyal in his or her work. Having a good passion on his/her work results in a positive output on his job. It was followed by the positive attitude towards criticism and towards superiors with a weighted mean of 4.39. However, reliable and imbues a sense of responsibility in handling the tasks assigned and enjoys comfortable working relationship with superiors or peers got the lowest mean score of 4.35 and 4.32 respectively.

Relationship between the training supervisor and a trainee must be good in order to have an easy doing of the assigned jobs. Strict training supervisor can affect the work responsibility of a trainee which may cause a strained relationship between them.

Table 5. Personality Acquired

Personality Acquired	WM	VI	Rank
1. Reports in work in proper attire and follows proper personal hygiene.	4.67	Excellent	1
2. Exercise self confidence and comfortable in airing your problems and difficulties with your supervisor.	4.35	Very Good	5
3. Flexible in work and in dealing with people.	4.40	Very Good	4
4. Accepts miscellaneous jobs and tasks with the proper attitude without complaining.	4.45	Very Good	2
5. Shows interest and pride with the tasks assigned to you.	4.44	Very Good	3
Composite Mean	4.45	Very Good	

Table 5 showed the over-all assessment of the respondents on the personality acquired with a composite mean of 4.45 and interpreted as very good. Reports in work in proper attire and follows proper personal hygiene

ranks first with a weighted mean score of 4.67. Tourism students, who conducted their training in PACSS, knew that aviation is a big business. There are other departments in the airline industry which are suitable to their skills and abilities. It enhances their self-confidence and their personality especially when they experienced the Flight Attendant Workshop. It encourages more to motivate them to be a flight attendant someday because of the inspiring stories of their facilitators. They know proper grooming with proper hygiene, which is one of the traits of an airline crew, (Casuga et. al, 2013).

Having a good and proper grooming is one of the acquired personalities that a trainee must have. Practicing this while they are student is one good factor to involve in their future jobs. It was followed by accepts miscellaneous jobs and tasks with the proper attitude without complaining with a weighted mean of 4.45.

However, flexible in work and in dealing with people and exercise self confidence and comfortable in airing problems and difficulties with supervisor got the lowest mean score of 4.40 and 4.35 respectively.

Being a multiple intelligent person and being sociable with other person can help a trainee in applying the learning a tourism student must have.

Table 6. Problems Encountered on the Airline on the Job Training

Problems Encountered	WM	VI	Rank
1. The task is not aligned to my program.	2.50	Agree	3
2. Working hours is too short.	2.37	Disagree	5
3. Cannot relate to employee and co-interns.	2.04	Disagree	7
4. Find difficulty to communicate with the guests.	1.96	Disagree	8
5. Cannot handle passenger complaints.	1.89	Disagree	9
6. Less exposure in airline industry.	2.66	Agree	1
7. Damage/Lost on company property.	1.68	Disagree	10
8. Given limited activities/work.	2.60	Agree	2
9. Culture shock with different passengers	2.15	Disagree	6
10. Strict Training Supervisor	2.41	Disagree	4
Composite Mean	4.38	Disagree	

Table 6 showed the over-all assessment of the respondents on the problems encountered with a composite mean of 2.23 and interpreted as disagree. Less exposure in airline industry ranks first with a weighted mean score of 2.66.

Encountering few problems during the airline training is inevitable. Based on the survey, there are cases that some students were assigned in departments which were not aligned in their specific programs. The working hours were short and limited work was given, resulting in lack of experience and less exposure in airline industry. In terms of office relations, some were not able to relate to their employees and co interns. Some trainees cannot handle passenger complaints because of difficulty in communicating with guests that speak different language. Culture shock was also experienced by trainees who were able to encounter people from other countries.

The highest number of trainees in PACSS had been assigned to cargo department, logistics, engineering and others. It was followed by given limited activities/work with a weighted mean of 2.60. However, cannot handle passenger complaints and damage/lost on company property got the lowest mean score of 1.89 and 1.68 respectively.

This result states that the tourism students are aware of the different policies of the company. Trainees are very well oriented first of the representative of the internship and also coming from the training supervisor.

Trainees at Philippines Airlines Cargo are oriented on the first day of the training. The orientation is all about the rules and regulations inside the establishment like wearing all the time the identification cards whenever they go, must be on time at work premises, must attend the safety procedures while inside the PAL Cargo and submit all the requirements needed especially to finish the training hours, (Velasco, 2013 et. al).

Table 7. Action Plan

Objective	Programs/ Activities	Person Responsible
To gain more knowledge, widen the skills and develop the attitude and personality of the trainees in multitasking in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry	Add new programs that would enable students to learn Airport Management and Duties/Responsibilities of Airline Frontiers	CITHM Department
	Develop students with hands on activities like usage of Amadeus, Flight Attendant Workshop and Aircraft Simulation	CITHM Department LPU Batangas
	Personality and Teambuilding Seminars	Human Resource Department Line Agencies and Private sectors
	Values Formation and Values Re-orientation	CITHM
To build a strong relationship with the companies that can help students applied their learnings	Coordinate with different companies that will help Tourism Students to be flight ready like the Philippine Airlines Learning Center and Sapphire International Aviation Academy	Internship Office CITHM Department

CONCLUSION

Majority of the respondents were female between 20-24 years old. They were assigned at Philippine Airport Ground Service Solutions Inc. (PAGSS) in Ground Operation and doing administrative work. The respondents acquired the necessary knowledge and skills during the airline training. More so, they developed the right attitude and good personality necessary to a well rounded tourism trainee. Less exposure in airline industry is the common problem encountered by the trainees. An action plan was formulated to help improve the LPU-B's internship office in deploying tourism students to different companies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The college may improve the syllabus of the relevant professional subject to have adequate airline simulations and activities. The college and the internship office may request and coordinate with the airline establishment to provide appropriate exposure to the trainees. Also they may request to lengthen the time given to trainees to expose them in airline business. The college may plan and create good team building activities which would develop harmonious working relationship with the trainees. Further studies on other factors for evaluation of practicumers may be conducted.

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