The Effect of COVID-19 on Airline Practitioners in the Philippines

Asia Pacific Journal of Management and Sustainable Development
Vol. 10 No. 1, pp 51-59
March 2022
ISSN 2782-8557 (Print)

Bautista, Leslie Y.[1], Canasa, Kamille Rose R.[2], Laurente, Abigail B.[3] Ashipaoloye, Francis K., PhD[4]
Lyceum of the Philippines University Laguna
lbautista@lpulaguna.edu.ph[1], krrcanasa@lpulaguna.edu.ph[2], ablaurente@lpulaguna.edu.ph[3], francis.ashipaoloye@lpulaguna.edu.ph[4]

Abstract – *While the tourism industry contributes to the Philippine economy, the world was struck by COVID-19 that rapidly spread across the globe. Businesses that require personal contact were halted. Researchers are investigating how COVID-19 affects airline employees on a greater level. Respondents were 125 airline practitioners. A self-made questionnaire was used and obtained 0.911 on reliability test (Cronbach Alpha). For data gathering results, respondents agree that pandemic brought effects to them and their company in terms of products and service, operations, financial, employee relations, and customer relations. Moreover, there is a significant difference when respondents were the group to profile variables (department) in terms of financial, economic, employee, and customer relation. Product and service and customer relations were found to be significant when respondents were grouped to profile variables (job status). Researchers came up with a proposed action plan on how to mitigate the effects on airline practitioners. Researchers suggest that airline companies may consider keeping the work of employees whose job status is more vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19, an effective marketing strategy can help revive the tourism industry and the government may provide jobs and financial assistance for retrenched employees so that they can have a source of income.*

Keywords – Airline business, airline practitioners, COVID-19, and tourism industry.

INTRODUCTION

Airline Industry all over the world has been evidence showing a huge increase of positive economic impacts to the global economy and helped millions of people worldwide to have jobs and source of living In the Philippines, one of the biggest sectors of the economy is the travel and tourism industry for it is an archipelago that offers diverse choices of natural, and manmade destinations, as well as unique and colorful culture and history. The booming of foreign visits to local destinations is assisted and empowered by the travel industry. While the aviation sector showed substantial growth, the world was struck by an unforeseen phenomenon One of the industries that are directly hit is the travel and tourism industry when the pandemic hit. COVID-19, or the *Coronavirus disease 2019*, is a respiratory illness transmitted through person-to-person contact and direct contact to droplets produces when an infected person sneezes or coughs. Because of the nature of the virus, most airline companies all around the world were not allowed to operate, leading to financial struggles and alike dilemmas.

The Philippines is one of the countries with the highest number of cases of COVID-19 in the Asian region. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Asian and Asia pacific regions continued to worsen in April when the passenger profits for this year declined greatly by -55 percent compared to 2019. As of March 24, 2020, the demand fell to -37 percent and continued to go down by 50 percent because of regional and intercontinental travel restrictions [1]. Airline companies in the country had to let go of their employees such as Flight attendants to lessen the expenses. A thousand jobs are risked as the demand for air travel continuously falls. Due to low demand, most of the business in the travel and airline sector halted offering products and services, decreased operation, and manpower for the meantime [2]. The Philippine Government enforce stricter health protocols because of a huge number of COVID-19 cases daily therefore, domestic flights were temporarily suspended [3].

The Philippines is now one of the top three countries in Asia with the highest number of COVID-19 cases. This is a big hit for the travel and tourism industry since one of the major industries in the country is the tourism sector, accounting for 12.7 percent of the economy. There are two major domestic airlines in the Philippines, Philippine Airlines and Cebu Pacific, with Air Asia and Sky jet to complete the top four (4) major airline companies operating in the Philippines. When an unforeseen event struck the world, it commenced an opportunity for the recalibration of the future transport regulation for the benefit of the people around the world. Since the technological inventions were focused on inflicting 'smartness' before the pandemic, the current situation caused the urgency to analyze the situation of the transport industry and how it gives way to the propagation of the virus. It is important to emphasize that collective responsibility and individual behavior have an impact on the protection of public and personal health amidst

this pandemic. Thus, Responsible Transport is a concept promulgated to adapt to the COVID-19 situation. This implies that the focus should not solely be on the environment but also community health and safety. It also highlights that individuals also have a role in achieving a socially anticipated transport result [4].

The restart of the industry needs proper health protocols that should be placed to travel safely and responsibly as the airline sector to enter its recovery phase [5]. Additionally, for the airline industry to attain back its competitiveness, an effective virus dispersion management must be implemented by the airports because the staff may be put at risk because their colleagues might be infected without prioritizing necessary health measures [6]. As of June, and July 2020, most of the airlines started to operate with their 15-30% capacity and for them to encourage people to travel, these airports will offer ultra-low fares. Over the past months of lockdown, there is a high probability that people will grab the chance to travel via air for them to experience new surroundings [7].

This study is conducted to identify the effects of COVID-19 on Airline Practitioners in the Philippines centered on their demographic profile. Secondly, it also focuses on determining the effects of COVID-19 on Airline Practitioners in the Philippines in terms of Products and Service, Operations, Financial, Economic, Employee Relations, and Customer Relations. This study also aims to test if there is a significant difference in the effect of COVID-19 on Airline Practitioners when grouped to profile variables and propose a plan of action on how to further mitigate the effect of COVID-19 based on significant findings.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to identify the effects of COVID-19 on Airline Practitioners in the Philippines, specifically to: Identify the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of Age, Civil Status, Job Title, Department, Length of Service, and Job Status. Secondly, determine the effects of COVID-19 on Airline Practitioners in the Philippines in terms of Products and Service, Operations, Financial, Economic, Employee Relations, and Customer Relations. The third is to test if there is a significant difference in the effect of COVID-19 on Airline Practitioners when grouped to profile variables. Lastly, to propose a plan of action on how to further mitigate the effect of COVID-19 based on significant findings.

Materials and Methods

Design

A descriptive method of research was utilized to gather the needed information on the effect of COVID-19 on airline practitioners in the Philippines. This method was used because it focused on the effect brought by the pandemic. The data were collected within the borders of the Philippines.

Participants

Additionally, the respondents of the study were composed of 125 airline practitioners in the Aviation industry of the Philippines particularly those working in Ninoy Aquino International Airport. The participants of the research were randomly selected irrespective of their rank and/or file composed of airline practitioners who are still in the field, and those that have been retrenched during the time of the pandemic.

Instrument

In addition, researchers used a researcher-made questionnaire to gather the demographic profile of respondents followed by a self-made questionnaire about the effects of the pandemic on airline practitioners. The questionnaire was validated by a verified statistician and afterward, a reliability test (pilot test) was conducted on 30 respondents and the Cronbach alpha is 0.911 which means that the questionnaire is reliable and can be used.

Procedure

Researchers used Microsoft forms as a platform for the questionnaire and sent to respondents via email and Facebook messenger with the assistance of industry professionals. Rest assured that all the personal information that will be gathered will be taken with the utmost confidentiality and shall be used for educational and research purposes only. It will be discarded right away after the conduct of this study.

Data Analysis

After gathering the needed data, reliability tests, Frequency distribution and percentage, as well as weighted mean and ranking will be used for the interpretation.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. The Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Sub-variables	Highest	%	Lowest	%
Age	21-29 years old	83.2%	40-49 years old	2.4%
			50-59 years old	2.4%
Civil Status	Single	88%	Widowed	0%
Job Title	Others	84.8%	Department Head	0.8%
Department	Operation	81.6%	Administrative	4.3%
Length of Service	1-5 years	68%		
Job Status	Regular	80%	Probationary	8.8%

The table above shows the summary of the demographic profile of the respondents. As indicated in the table, 83.20 percent of the respondents are 21-29 years old. It means that during the time that the pandemic happened, most of the airline practitioners who are retained with their jobs are the millennials. On the other hand, both age brackets of 40-49 years old and 50-59 years old are the lowest when it comes to age. This data pertains that there are certain disadvantages when deploying older airline practitioners amidst the pandemic as they are more at risk compared to younger workers. Thus, multiple airline companies in the Philippines provide health insurances including medical plan, dental insurance, and life insurances to their employees. Since Airline practitioners particularly Flight Attendants ensure the safety of passengers on board, it is also necessary that they are insured and protected while doing

their duties. With this said, Airline companies shoulder the life insurance of their employees upon employment. Employees are also allowed to avail health insurance to any accredited insurance agent depending on the range of salary, monthly amortization, and plan that the employee prefers. However, like private insurance companies, age also has an impact on the cover of the health insurance. This calls for a more expensive one given the scope and cover of the health benefits that will be given to older employees in case they contract COVID-19.

Upon employment and regularization, airline employees receive health insurances such as medical plan, dental insurance, life insurance, as well as a Retirement benefit program. As part of pre-emptive measures, airline companies also conduct COVID-19 testing before deploying employees to duty.

Employers are now concerned with older employees being more susceptible to COVID-19. It can be further understood that younger employees have higher resistance to COVID-19 and older employees are at higher risk of obtaining the said disease. Therefore, employers may not prefer to employ them [8]. Older employees may be more affected because of the stigma that they are more at risk and more vulnerable in terms of COVID-19 [9]. However, airline companies in the Philippines operate with 100% fully vaccinated crew. The employees undergo antigen testing regularly to ensure the safety of everyone on board. Airline practitioners are required to undergo antigen testing before the company deploys them to their assigned flights. Airline companies also started their booster program as they aim to provide safe travels for both employees and passengers.

On the other hand, no respondents are widowed which would imply that the respondents are mostly single and if married, their partners are still present with them. It is also noticeable that the highest number of respondents are single. This can be further elaborated that due to the layoffs of airline practitioners, most of those working in the industry amidst the pandemic are the young professionals who can prioritize work and has stronger resistance to COVID-19. Some airline companies have issues when it comes to the marital life of their employees. Most of them prefer their cabin crews to be single in terms of civil status. One of the main reasons for this is to avoid schedule complications as being in married life has more time constraints. The priorities of a married cabin crew might change from their work to their families [10].

Furthermore, 0.8 percent of the total population is a department head while 84.8 percent are listed under “other” job titles. This includes Flight attendants, ground attendants, Airline clerks, those working in customer service, and aviation technicians and engineers. This can be interpreted that people in these jobs are more affected since they are the ones who face the passengers. As the spread of COVID-19 continues, the expected decline in consumption is being realized as jobless claims reach nearly 10 million in March 2020 [11].

In connection with this, 81.6% of the respondents are working under the Operations sector of the industry which is also the jobs listed under "others" on the job-title sub-variable. On the other hand, 4.3% are working in the administrative sector. They are comprised of Senior Managers, Managers, Department Heads, and Supervisors. The job title and the departments of the respondents have a connection with each other since the highest percentage from both sub-variables fall under the operations or those who are dealing with passengers daily, which can pertain that among all the employees in the airline industry, they are the most affected by the pandemic. In 2020, everything falls off a cliff. At the worst point in April, two-thirds of the world's fleet of aircraft was grounded, 90% of operations in the department. Never has the airline industry seen such a dramatic and sustained decline in air passenger demand. Therefore, it becomes more challenging for airlines [12].

Moreover, no respondent has worked for 16-20 years in any airline company. This can be further elaborated in the sense that older employees who have a longer length of service are paid higher and have higher insurance policies. On the other hand, 68% of the total population states that they have worked in the industry for 1-5 years. They are mostly airline practitioners who have just started their careers mostly as flight attendants. It can be understood that most of the respondents are young professionals who have just started their careers in the airline industry. Airline companies may prefer to employ airline practitioners who are the younger and less-expensive workforce. During periods of uncertainty shocks, the estimated job loss is nearly 7 percent of the airline workforce with an upper bound of over 13 percent. Major airline employment is most impacted, while low-cost and regional airline employment is least impacted. The hardest-hit employees are ones related to passenger handling and flight operations, while management employees fare slightly better during these uncertain periods [13].

Lastly, 8.8% of the total respondents are probationary. It can be elaborated that the airline companies considered the employees' employee status and focus on the contractual and probationary workers when they conducted layoffs. On the other hand, 80% of the total respondents have regular job contracts. It can be further understood how companies implement their selection criteria when engaging in layoffs. Those with regular job contracts can work full-time which will help in the recovery of the airline company rather than employing probationary and contractual workers. It can be further understood how companies implement their selection criteria when engaging in layoffs. One of the selection criteria is employee status-based. Companies prioritize employees who have regular contracts over those who are contractual and probationary [14].

Table 2. Summary Table on The Effect of COVID-19 on Airline Practitioners in the Philippines

	CM	VI
Product and Service	3.54	SA
Operations	3.55	SA
Financial	3.55	SA
Economic	3.37	A
Employee Relation	3.08	A
Customer Relation	3.35	A
Overall Mean	**3.41**	A

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree (A); CM: Composite Mean; VI: Verbal Interpretation

Table 2 presents the summary of the results on the effect of COVID-19 on Airline practitioners in the Philippines. The respondents agree the pandemic has brought effects to them and their company in terms of products and service, operations, financial, employee relations, and customer relations with an overall mean of 3.41. It can be further understood that the pandemic brought optimal changes to how airline practitioners provide products and services to passengers. As airline companies give importance to both employees and passengers, strict health protocols are implemented in flights which changed drastically the way airline practitioners interact with passengers. It also affects airline practitioners as they are vulnerable to the pandemic whenever they are on board. Furthermore, the operational status of the airline industry was also struck by the pandemic as it created massive job loss and hindered full capacity operation due to travel bans, restrictions, and safety protocols imposed by different countries. This created a series of obstacles that will result in more damages to airline companies and their practitioners if not resolved. Moreover, the halt of the operations of air travel triggered the drastic fall of the financial condition of airline companies causing them to create decisions that directly affect airline practitioners. Additionally, since the travel and tourism industry greatly contribute to the economy of the Philippines, its fall has created a domino effect, leaving thousands of airlines practitioners jobless, and a significant decrease in foreign visits which is one of the largest contributors to the Philippine Economy. In addition to that, the impacts of the pandemic can be seen in the number of retrenched airline practitioners over the past year. This was caused by the airline companies' financial deficits during this time. The dilemma of human resource management poses a threat to the sustainability of airline companies. Lastly, since the widespread of the virus, people prefer not to travel via air in the meantime, motivated also by the imposed travel restrictions. This lessened the number of passengers traveling, although airline companies retained existing clients and attracted new ones.

The labor force in the airline industry always carries the burden when it comes to the downturns of the tourism market. During times of economic crisis, there is an estimated 7% job loss of airline practitioners. Most of the employees that are affected by this are the ones dealing with passengers and flight operations while those that are in management, are the least affected [15]. During a health crisis, the Airline and the Travel Industry are considered as defenceless sectors and there is a huge possibility to affect their operational status if failure to manage the situation [16].

Table 3. Test of Significant Difference on the effect of COVID-19 on Airline practitioners when grouped to profile variables in terms of Age

Effect of COVID-19	f-value	p-value	I
Product and Service	1.823	.147	NS
Operation	.477	.699	NS
Financial	.645	.588	NS
Economic	.839	.475	NS
Employee Relation	.106	.956	NS
Customer Relation	.874	.475	NS

If the p-value is >.05, Not Significant (NS) I: Interpretation

Table 3 presents the comparison of the effect of COVID-19 on Airline Practitioners in the Philippines when grouped to profile variables in terms of age. It was observed there is no significant difference when grouped according to Product and Service (0.147), Operation (0.699), Financial (0.588), Economic (0.475), Employee Relation (0.956), and customer relation (0.475) since the obtained p-values were greater than 0.05 alpha level. This means that the responses do not have a significant difference and based on the ANOVA test conducted, it was found that the age of the respondents is not significant when determining the effects of COVID-19 on airline practitioners.

This means that the effect of pandemics on them is not in any way affected by their age. Regardless of if they are younger or older, the effects of the pandemic that they feel are the same since most of them are working in the same company, under the same industry. Since they are working under the same industry, and most of them are working under the same airline company, they perceive the effects of the pandemic in terms of how their companies suffered and how the respective companies cope up with it, therefore the effects of COVID-19 are affected by other variables, and not by their age.

For instance, financial losses amounting to $3.5 billion are recorded for domestic carriers Cebu Pacific, AirAsia, and Philippine Airlines. Due to this, Philippine Airlines (PAL) and Cebu Pacific decreased almost 500 jobs from March to April, which was followed by Cebu Pacific laying off 400 more probationary workers because of travel restrictions [17]. Since the effects of the pandemic are operationally based and depending on the airline companies and how they come up with the impact, it would involve other demographic variables such as length of service and Job titles, but not the age of the airline practitioners. The results demonstrate that airline stock returns decline more significantly than the market returns after three major COVID-19 announcements were made. The airline industry is one of the first industries that was affected by the event because the disease is easily passed among people. The market value of the airline business has shrunk since then [18].

Table 4 presents the comparison of effects of COVID-19 on Airline practitioners in the Philippines when grouped to profile variables in terms of Civil Status.

Table 4. Test of Significant Difference on the effect of COVID-19 on Airline practitioners when grouped to profile variables in terms of Civil Status

Effect of COVID-19	f-value	p-value	I
Product and Service	.456	.635	NS
Operation	.506	.604	NS
Financial	.046	.955	NS
Economic	.397	.673	NS
Employee Relation	.176	.839	NS
Customer Relation	.282	.755	NS

If the p-value is >.05, Not Significant (NS) I: Interpretation

It was observed that there is no significant difference when grouped according to Products and Service (0.635), Operation (0.604), Financial (0.995), Economic (0.673), Employee Relation (0.839), and Customer Relation (0.755) since the obtained p-values were greater than 0.05 alpha level. This means that the responses do not have a significant difference, and based on the ANOVA test conducted, it was determined that the civil status of the respondents is not substantial when determining the effect of COVID-19 on airline practitioners in the Philippines.

This means that the civil status of the respondents does not necessarily affect the effects of COVID-19. This can be further understood that respondents perceive the effects of the pandemic in a collective approach, and not from an individualist perspective. The respondents feel the same intensity of the impact of the pandemic since most of them are working under the same airline companies, and under the Airline industry in general regardless of if the respondents are single, married, widowed, etc. They understand the effect of the pandemic based on how their respective companies' coping mechanisms.

The industry and regulators must work together to decide on relief measures to address the current challenges and develop recovery plans for the entire aviation. Airlines are working hard to remain open for critical services [19]. It also affects the community and all the personnel working with the various sectors and service providers at the airport. It has become common for retailers and airlines to ask their personnel to take unpaid leave during this troubling time. The pandemic had a large impact on civil aviation, particularly commercial passenger airline operations. While the pandemic and the response to the pandemic continues to the aviation industry and related federal agencies face a broad array of challenges that keep evolved, airline employees and passengers safe, mitigate the spread of the disease and respond to dramatic shifts in demand for air travel. Due to extensive safety measures, many service employees must work remotely to keep service businesses running. With limited literature on leadership and virtual work in the service context [20].

Table 5. Test of Significant Difference on the effect of COVID-19 on Airline practitioners when grouped to profile variables in terms of Job title

Effect of COVID-19	f-value	p-value	I
Product and Service	1.542	.194	NS
Operation	1.766	.140	NS
Financial	.966	.429	NS
Economic	1.425	.230	NS
Employee Relation	1.613	.176	NS
Customer Relation	2.107	.084	NS

If the p-value is >.05, Not Significant (NS) I: Interpretation

Table 5 presents the comparison of effects of COVID-19 on Airline Practitioners in the Philippines when grouped to profile variables in terms of the Job title of the respondents. It was evident that there is no significant difference when grouped according to Product and Service (0.194), Operation (0.140), Financial (0.429), Economic (0.230), Employee relation (0.176), and customer relation (0.084) since the obtained p-values were greater than 0.05 alpha level. This means that the responses do not have a significant difference, and according to the ANOVA test conducted, it was revealed that the job titles of the

respondents do not in any way affect the effects of COVID-19 to respondents which are airline practitioners. It can be further elaborated that workplace hierarchy is not a variable that when determining the effects of the pandemic on airline practitioners and their companies. Since the pandemic altered the company's product and services, operations, financial, economic, employee relations, and customer relations, the after-effects are inflicted on the airline practitioners, regardless of their job titles.

Table 6. Test of Significant Difference on the effect of COVID-19 on Airline practitioners when grouped to profile variables in terms of Department

Effect of COVID-19	f-value	p-value	I
Product and Service	.799	.452	NS
Operation	.177	.838	NS
Financial	11.644	.000	S
Economic	6.909	.001	S
Employee Relation	4.201	.017	S
Customer Relation	5.324	.006	S

If the p-value is <.05, Significant (S). If the p-value is >.05, Not Significant (NS) I: Interpretation

Table 6 intends to show the comparison of effects of COVID-19 on airline practitioners in the Philippines when grouped to profile variables in terms of the department. There is no significant difference when congregated according to Product and Service (0.452) and Operation (0.838). However, in terms of Financial (0.000), Economic (0.001), Employee Relation (0.017), and Customer Relation (0.006), it is significant. This means that the responses do have a significant difference and based on the ANOVA test conducted, it was found that the department of the respondents in terms of financial, economic, employee relation, and customer relation are important when determining the effects of COVID-19 on airline practitioners.

The effects of the epidemic to respondents are not influenced by their department in terms of product and service as well as the operations of their airline companies. They continue to improve and offer flexible products and services despite COVID-19 by passenger's preferences. Airline companies perceive this strategy to cope up with market needs and demands. Their operation is eventually starting but with a limited number of seats and with strict health protocols.

On the other hand, respondents are affected by their department in terms of COVID-19's effect on first, the financial aspect, during the past years, the airline industry accounts for $3.5 trillion in the global economy of the total global GDP. But as COVID-19 came into the picture, the first quarter of 2020 was the period the airline industries in Asia and Pacific experienced the most financial losses and were forced to retrenched thousands of airline practitioners. In terms of the economic aspect, it continued to worsen when the passenger profits for the year 2020 declined greatly compared to 2019. As of March 24, 2020, the demand fell and continued to go down because of regional and intercontinental travel restrictions [21]. Moreover, with regards to the employee, there is an airline workforce are had lost their jobs related to flight operations and passenger handling since the most affected of this uncertainty situation are major airlines, while regional and low-cost airlines are least affected by this [22]. Lastly is customer relation, because of COVID-19 travel restrictions and other measures had been implemented to airline companies, it is also taken into consideration by the majority of the countries worldwide that's why passengers are lesser than before and it affects the relationship between the airline companies and travelers [23].

Table 7. Test of Significant Difference on the effect of COVID-19 on Airline practitioners when grouped to profile variables in terms of Length of Service

Effect of COVID-19	f-value	p-value	I
Product and Service	1.747	.144	NS
Operation	.935	.446	NS
Financial	.753	.558	NS
Economic	1.209	.311	NS
Employee Relation	.160	.958	NS
Customer Relation	1.736	.147	NS

If the p-value is >.05, Not Significant (NS) I: Interpretation

Table 7 introduces the evaluation of the effects of COVID-19 on airline practitioners in the Philippines when grouped to profile variables in terms of length of service. It was observed there is no significant difference when grouped according to Product and Service (0.144), Operation (0.466), Financial (0.558), Economic (0.311), Employee Relation (0.958), and customer relation (0.147) since the obtained p-values were greater than 0.05 alpha level. The responses do not have a significant difference and based on the ANOVA test conducted, it was found that the length of service of the respondents is not significant when determining the effects of COVID-19 on them.

Effects of the pandemic to airline practitioner is not affected by their length of service. Regardless of how long they are in that company or if they are barely starting, they all felt the effect of COVID-19 on their work and their daily lives. Respondents came from the same locale, and they were

chosen according to where their company is established (PH-based). This could only mean that the effect to them is the same. Airline carriers are grappling hard to survive the pandemic. Airline companies even had to let go of their employees such as Flight attendants to lessen the expenses. 420,000 jobs are in danger even if the demand will start to increase in the latter part of 2020 by International Air Transport Association, or IATA as the demand fell to 36% in the year 2020. Moreover, a few employees are allowed to work but with restrictions, and public transportation is now permitted to restart with a limited capacity [24]. In line with this, the COVID-19 outbreak brought a future economic crisis. The rules and regulations that have been implemented such as travel restrictions and social distancing steered to limited labor force among all industries which may result in job loss [25].

Table 8. Test of Significant Difference on the effect of COVID-19 on Airline practitioners when grouped to profile variables in terms of Job Status

Effect of COVID-19	f-value	p-value	I
Product and Service	5.006	.008	S
Operation	.938	.394	NS
Financial	1.329	.269	NS
Economic	.701	.498	NS
Employee Relation	.394	.676	NS
Customer Relation	4.048	.020	S

If the p-value is <.05, Significant (S). If the p-value is >.05, Not Significant (NS) I: Interpretation

Table 8 intends to show the assessment of effects of COVID-19 on airline practitioners in the Philippines when grouped to profile variables in terms of their job status. It is evident that there is no significant difference when congregated according to Operation (0.394), Financial (0.269), Economic (0.498) and Employee Relation (0.676). However, in terms of Product and Service (0.008) and Customer Relation (0.020), it is significant. This means that the responses in terms of Product and Service and Customer Relation do have a significant difference and based on the ANOVA test conducted, it was found that the job status of the respondents in terms of product and service, as well as customer relation, is important when determining the effect on airline practitioners.

The effect of the pandemic in terms of operation, financial, economic, and employee relations on airline practitioners is not affected by their job status. Irrespective of their job status, whether regular, contractual, or probationary, they all felt the effect. Flight cancellations are one of the results of COVID-19 thus, it created major losses for the airline business. People felt that it is not yet safe to travel. If the spread of the virus will not be controlled, the more economic crisis will come, and many airline practitioners will be stunned and will not be able to work in the industry again. The transport sector is deeply affected by the health crisis thus, travel and flights came to limit their movements. All these constraints have a huge potential towards long-term impacts on the airline and tourism industry [26]. When governments began to adopt strict health measures, the unemployment rate bounced to 14.7%. The great depression was the last time that people experienced this level of job loss. Though during the last quarter of 2020 up until 2021, most governments already allowed the limited operation of airline companies but are guided by social distancing and with only a limited number of passengers allowed inside the aircraft [27].

Table 9. Proposed plan of action on how to further mitigate the effect of COVID-19 on airline practitioners in the Philippines

Strategies
Key Result Area: Financial **Program: Financial Sustainability** • Feasible marketing strategies such as flight promos • Partner with travel agencies, and local government to promote traveling via air domestically • Maximize the use of online platforms
Key Result Area: Economic **Program: Economic Stability** • Establish partnerships with hotels to purchase accommodations with plane tickets • Ensure good relationship between suppliers and company is well-maintained • Introduce cost-cutting
Key Result Area: Employee Relation **Program: Good Working Relationship** • Conduct training and seminars on how to maintain the quality service • Prioritize the safety and well-being of employees • Hire back employees who were retrenched
Key Result Area: Customer Relation **Program: Quality Customer Service** • Do surveys to identify the needs and wants of the passengers • Continuously provide exceptional and dependable service • Maximize the use of technology like cashless payment for airfare, online bookings, and virtual customer service.

Key Result Area: Product and Service
Program: Product and Service Safety
• Airline companies may incorporate stronger relationships towards stakeholders and suppliers
• Conduct training and seminars for employees
• Promoting domestic destinations and flights can contribute to the revitalization of the airline industry and to its employees.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Most of the respondents are between 21-29 years old, single, with other job titles other than being senior managers, managers, department heads, and supervisors. They are mostly from the operations department with a length of service of 1-5 years and regular job status. There is a significant difference when respondents were the group to profile variables (department) in terms of financial, economic, employee relation, and customer relation. Product and service as well as customer relations respectively were found to be significant when respondents were grouped to profile variable (job status). Propose a Plan of Action to Mitigate the Effects of COVID-19 on Airline Practitioners in the Philippines based on the data gathered.

The Airline companies may consider keeping the position and work of those employees who are working on departments as well as those whose job status is more vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic. Airline companies in the Philippines may continue to provide flexible products and services that are according to market demands for them to recover from their financial losses. Airline companies and their partners and stakeholders such as hotels and other tourism and hospitality establishments may develop a more effective marketing strategy that can help to revive the tourism industry as this will also have a positive effect on the airline practitioners. Airline companies may assist their employees who have been affected by their financial losses and adaptive strategies such as those working in a different department and job status who are more vulnerable amidst the pandemic. Moreover, Airline companies may also focus on departments where more employees have been laid off as well as departments that are more vulnerable to the pandemic during their operation. Airline companies may use their customer relationship to cope up with financial losses and come up with more viable ways to provide services with optimum safety. The Philippine government may think of effective ways on how to handle the spread of the virus. While the airline industry is still in recovery, researchers suggest that the government may provide jobs and financial assistance for employees that were retrenched wherein they can have a source of income and start a small business. The College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management may utilize the findings of this study to further improve its curriculum. Future researchers may replicate or add other variables not utilized in this study.

REFERENCES

[1] Clifford, C. (2020). IATA - COVID-19 Impact on Asia-Pacific Aviation Worsens.

[2] PwC Philippines. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on the Philippine Tourism Industry.

[3] Schofield, A. (2020). Philippine Airlines drops all domestic Manila service in face of COVID-19 spike | Routesonline, August 04, 2020.

[4] Budd, L., & Ison, S. (2020). Responsible Transport: A post-COVID agenda for transport policy and practice. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 6, 10.1016/j.trip.2020.100151

[5] Kolb, K. (2020). Readying for 'the new normal' — Global safety protocols for the aviation industry | Travelport, June 17, 2020.

[6] Rozzi, S. (2020). Planning the "new normal" passenger experience: Defining effective protective measures against COVID-19 at airports | ACI World Blog,

[7] Dron, A. (2020). Air travel in the post-Covid-19 age - the new normal?, June 05, 2020.

[8] Whitman Legal Solutions, LLC – JDSupra (2020). COVID-19 and Age Discrimination

[9] Farrier, T. (2021). Why do/did some airlines require female flight attendants to be single? - Quora. Quora. https://www.quora.com/Why-do-did-some-airlines-require-female-flight-attendants-to-be-single

[10] Wolfers, K. (2020). COVID-19. By the end of May, most world airlines will be bankrupt|CAPA. https://centreforaviation.com /analysis/reports/covid-19-by-the-end-of-may-most-world-airlines-will-be-bankrupt-517512

[11] Hockley, L. (2020). How is the aviation industry responding to the COVID-19 pandemic? *Airport Review*.https://www.internationalairportreview.com/article/114585/aviation-industry-covid-19-pandemic/

[12] Maneenop, S., & Kotcharin, S. (2020). The impacts of COVID-19 on the global airline industry: An event study approach. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 89, 10.1016/j.jairtraman.2020.101920

[13] Mattew, G. (2020, March 19). Managing Downsizing by Means of Layoffs. SHRM. https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/managingdownsizing.spx

[14] Sobieralski, J. B. (2020). COVID-19 and airline employment: Insights from historical uncertainty shocks to the industry. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 5, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2020.100123

[15] Warsihantari, N. K. D., & Putra, I. G. N. (2018). Air Asia Crisis Communications Strategies and Malaysia Airlines: A Content Analysis. *Jurnal Komunikasi Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia*, 3(1), 18–27. http://doi.org/10.25008/jkiski.v3i1.145

[16] Camus, M. (2020). Inquirer Business, Fate of 420,000 workers on the line amid PH airline industry's grounding

[17] Maneenop, S., & Kotcharin, S. (2020). The impacts of COVID-19 on the global airline industry: An event study approach. *Journal of Air Transport Managemen*t, 89, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2020.101920

[18] Rooley, J. (2020, July 9). How COVID-19 has affected the aviation industry and its approach to risk - Willis Towers Watson. WillisTowers Watson.https://www.willistowerswatson.com/en-GB/Insights/2020/06/how-covid-19-has-affected-the-aviation-industry

[19] Bartsch, S., Weber, E., Büttgen, M., & Huber, A. (2021). Leadership matters in crisis-induced digital transformation: how to lead service employees effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic. Journal of Service Management, 32(1), 71–85. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOSM-05-2020-0160

[20] Clifford, C. (2020). IATA - COVID-19 Impact on Asia-Pacific Aviation Worsens.

[21] Sobieralski, J. B. (2020). COVID-19 and airline employment: Insights from historical uncertainty shocks to the industry. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 5, 100123. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2020.100123

[22] Monmousseau, P., Marzuoli, A., Feron, E., & Delahaye, D. (2020). Impact of Covid-19 on passengers and airlines from passenger measurements: Managing customer satisfaction while putting the US Air Transportation System to sleep. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 7, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2020.100179

[23] Ocampo, R. (2020). Philippine tourism's halt stands as virus count continues to soar, June 01, 2020

[24] Nicola, M., Alsafi, Z., Sohrabi, C., Kerwan, A., Al-Jabir, A., Iosifidis, C., Agha, M., & Agha, R. (2020). The socio-economic implications of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19): A review. In International Journal of Surgery 78, 185–193). Elsevier Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijsu.2020.04.018

[25] Nižetić, S. (2020). Impact of coronavirus pandemic on air transport mobility, energy, and environment: A case study. *International Journal of Energy Research*, 44(13), 10953–10961. https://doi.org/10.1002/er.5706

[26] Fairlie, R., Couch, K., & Xu, H. (2020). The Impacts of COVID-19 on Minority Unemployment: First Evidence from April 2020 CPS Microdata. https://doi.org/10.3386/w27246