THE POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE CAREER:
A CASE STUDY OF AIRLINE BUSINESS STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Airline business is one of the most popular new curriculums of this decade. The aims of this research were to investigate the image of an airline business career from the perspective of university students in Bangkok and to examine the level of interest to pursue an airline business career. An English questionnaire was designed and developed specifically to collect the data. Also, small in-depth interviews were also conducted to gain their opinions about the image and their level of interest in the airline business. A quota sampling and non-probability random sampling was conducted to obtain 400 sample group. To get rid of gender effect, half the sample group came from male students and the other half came from female students. The findings of this study unclosed that the majority of respondents had a high level of interest in airline business career. Female students were more interested in airline business career than male students with a 0.05 level of significance. The image of airline business career was rated as a high paying career, good benefits, beautiful uniform, and with a chance to travel to various countries. In addition, the findings from the in-depth interviews also, revealed that the major obstacles that prevented high school students from choosing a career with a chance to travel as a career were their inability to communicate in English, poor body proportions, and lack of beauty.

Keywords: Airline Business, Students, Image, Career

INTRODUCTION

For the last two or decades, the economy and social of Thailand have been developing. There are many new and important curriculums in the universities that want to prepare students for many important modern occupations (Wongleedee, 2013). In the modern globalization, Airline business career is one of the most popular career among newly graduates from various colleges and university. Both male and female students often dream of the job that they can earn high income, beautiful uniform, and chance to travel around the world. It is, in fact, a job that requires the ability to communicate in English, trained personality, and highly beauty of physical proportion. In fact, the jobs in airline business is not only flight attendants, but also various job duties such as ground crew, ground operation, aviation management, airline customer services, cargo carriers and many other jobs which may require the strengths in many different skills, knowledge, and experiences.

The career in airlines business nowadays involved both domestic airlines and international airlines as well as full service airlines and low-cost airlines. However, to be in the airlines business occupation, it is important to know that there are many factors of success including personality development, business acumen, service mind, and communication skills. For example, English and other languages such as Chinese, Japanese, and Islamic languages is so vital to the success of this occupation. The entry of low cost airlines in Thailand has rapidly increased in number as well as the demand for flight attendants and ground workers. There are many reasons for the booming of low cost airlines. First, there are a big group of customers who are price sensitive and will travel with low cost airlines only without the need for full services. Second, the full service airline cannot cover many areas and many short and direct destinations effectively. Third, the demand of airlines business is a seasonal demand and it often peaks at many holidays and seasonal demand. This actually means that the demand for flight attendants and ground crews often increase and decrease with the demand of the airline business.

However, there is an important fact that the majority of airline business and industry requires for flight attendants with a strict training program in order to develop perfect and pleasant personality, beauty and grace that be able to fit in the beautiful uniform, strong enough to be able to swim at least 50 meters or 100 meters, and have basic knowledge and be able to understand the details of rules and regulation of airline business. However, because there is limited research about this airline business career, this research aims and focus the study areas to investigate the airline business career image from the perspective of students in the Bangkok, Thailand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The image of the airline business is to hire talented employees, train them, and empower them to perform their duties which is the key of success. This is because airline business and industry must rely on high performance human
resources to drive their high performance business forward, foster good teamwork, think strategically, and delivering a high standard of quality and results. The study of the airline business career in the perspective of students was based on the theory of business image. Philip Kotler (2000) the guru of business marketing, who stated that image as an essentials of the belief, thought, and satisfaction from the perspective of customers for the product, service, or the business which also includes the attitude of customers towards that particular product, service, and business organization [1] [2]. Moreover, many researchers and experts in the business image have agreed and have suggested three important techniques to measure the image of product, service, and business organization’s image from the eyes of stakeholders. The three techniques include interview stakeholders directly, use questionnaires with target customers and stakeholders, and observe customers and stakeholders talking about the products or services, as well as purchasing and using products [3]. In general, the image of airline business is very good career in perspective of consumes and stakeholders. However, Tieasan (2002) studied the image of airline business of low cost airlines and reported that airline business career was rated a good, but did not have very good image [4]. This is because low cost airline seem to be hard work and low income than the full airline business in the past. Since the career in airline business involves service quality, the understanding of SERVQUAL, which developed by Parasuraman (1988), as a tool for service quality is so vital to the airline business career. There are five dimension of this service quality. First is reliability which means the ability to perform the service in an accurate and dependable manner. Second is assurance which means the knowledge and courtesy of employee and their ability to convey trust and confidence. Third is tangible which means the appearance of physical factors such as equipment, facilities, and personal. Fourth is empathy which means the providing of individual care and attention to customers. Finally, responsiveness which means the willingness to provide help and prompt services to customers.

**Methodology**

This was a mixed method of research both quantitative and qualitative method. The population of study included all students in various universities around Bangkok. By using Taro Yamane method and power analysis, the 400 sample groups were selected from the students who have been studying at least one years in various universities. An English Likert five scales was designed and developed to elicit the information from sample group. By distribute all envelops with questionnaire to 400 students and expected to receive the returned mails by four weeks. For the qualitative method, about ten informants was selected from ten universities for an in-depth interview. The content of validity was tested by using experts who had a long experiences in airline business and industry to read and approve the questionnaire. The content of reliability was tested with the pilot study of 30 target samples and utilizing Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient. All the question is expected to pass at least 0.75 of Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient. Statistical analysis was performed by using mean and standard deviation.

**Findings**

The findings of this research study revealed that, in order to reduce the gender effects, male and female students have been collected in the same proportion, or 50:50 respectively. The majority had at least one year of learning experience in university. The majority of respondents were interested in airline business career and often seek for more information later.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Interested in each factor.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Opportunity to travel and explore the world</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>0.978</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Opportunity to earn a high income and excellent benefits</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>0.778</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Opportunity for high standard of training</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>0.670</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Opportunity for wearing high image of uniform</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.799</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Opportunity for working with world class team.</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.455</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Opportunity to communicate in English.</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>0.936</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 1 revealed the important perspectives students about the factors influencing the image of airline business as follows: 1) the respondents overall rated opportunity to travel and explore the world as the number one image of airline business career with a mean of 4.83 and 0.978 SD. 2) the respondents overall rated opportunity to earn high income and excellent benefits as the number two image of airline business career with a mean of 4.78 and 0.778 SD. 3) the respondents overall rated opportunity for high standard of training as the number three image of airline business career with a mean of 4.66 and 0.670 SD. 4) the respondents opportunity for wearing high image of uniform as the number four image of airline business career with a mean of 4.54 and 0.799 SD. 5) the respondents overall rated opportunity for working with world class team as the number five image of airline business career with a mean of 4.45 and 0.455 SD. 6) the respondents rated opportunity to communicate in English as the number six image of airline business career with a mean of 4.31 and 0.936 SD.

From the findings of this research study, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents had a high level of interest in airline business career but need more information later. When examined in detail, the images of airline business career can be ranked according to the mean average as follow:

1. Opportunity to travel and explore the world
2. Opportunity to earn a high income and excellent benefits
3. Opportunity for high standard of training
4. Opportunity for wearing high image of uniform
5. Opportunity for working with world class team.
6. Opportunity to communicate in English.

Finally, the findings from the in-depth interviews with a small group of stakeholders revealed that the major obstacles that will prevent many university students who may interested in airline business career from pursuing airline business as a their jobs and long term career were their ability to communicate in English, lack of beauty of body proportions, not interested in service mind, lack of real information for applying and preparing for the jobs, and lack of physical stamina in long working hours and flexible working hours. It is important to know that service business is a very competitive work areas both in domestic level and international level. Therefore, a well prepare all in knowledge, skills, and experience are significant to the success of career in airline business. In addition, it is important for newcomers in the airlines business to understand the service quality in details. The service quality is a customer’s perception that occurs when the need of service is met above average and should be more than adequate. In other words, the newcomers in airlines business must have ability to provide service quality to meet the level of customers’ expectation.

**FUTURE STUDIES**

The limitation of this research paper was the sample group which included only high school students in Bangkok. It should include other students such as vocational students or other forms of international high school students which may represent opinions from a variety of high school students in Bangkok, Thailand. Hence, the findings may not be generalized to find the image of airline business career. Therefore, future research should use a proportion sampling technique with a diverse group of high school students. Moreover, future studies should use more in-depth interviews to find the reasons behind their interest in airline business career.

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**REFERENCES**


